# 1 | Establishment of European and British Rule in India

Various races, travelers from all over the world have been coming to India for centuries. India has always been the center of attraction of the world. The main reason for this is India's economic prosperity. India has had commercial and cultural ties with different parts of the world since ancient times (Harappan civilization).

In the 15th century , significant social and religious changes took place in Europe which we know as 'Renaissance'. Is there any relation between renaissance and history of India ? To verify this, we will try to understand why the Europeans came to India from the 15th century itself.

Reasons for the Arrival of Europeans in India

In 1453 AD, the Turks conquered Constantinople. It was the headquarter of trade route between India and Europe. With the conquest of Constantinople by the Turks, Indian goods stopped flowing to Europe and the western countries of the world. The Europeans were in dire need of Indian spices. They stopped getting these things. India exported Cotton, silk, spices, indigo, niter, timber, opium in large quantities to Europe. The people of Europe were largely carnivores and needed Indian spices to preserve their meat. Cotton cloth was equally essential. As the land trade stopped, the Europeans tried to reach India finding new waterways.
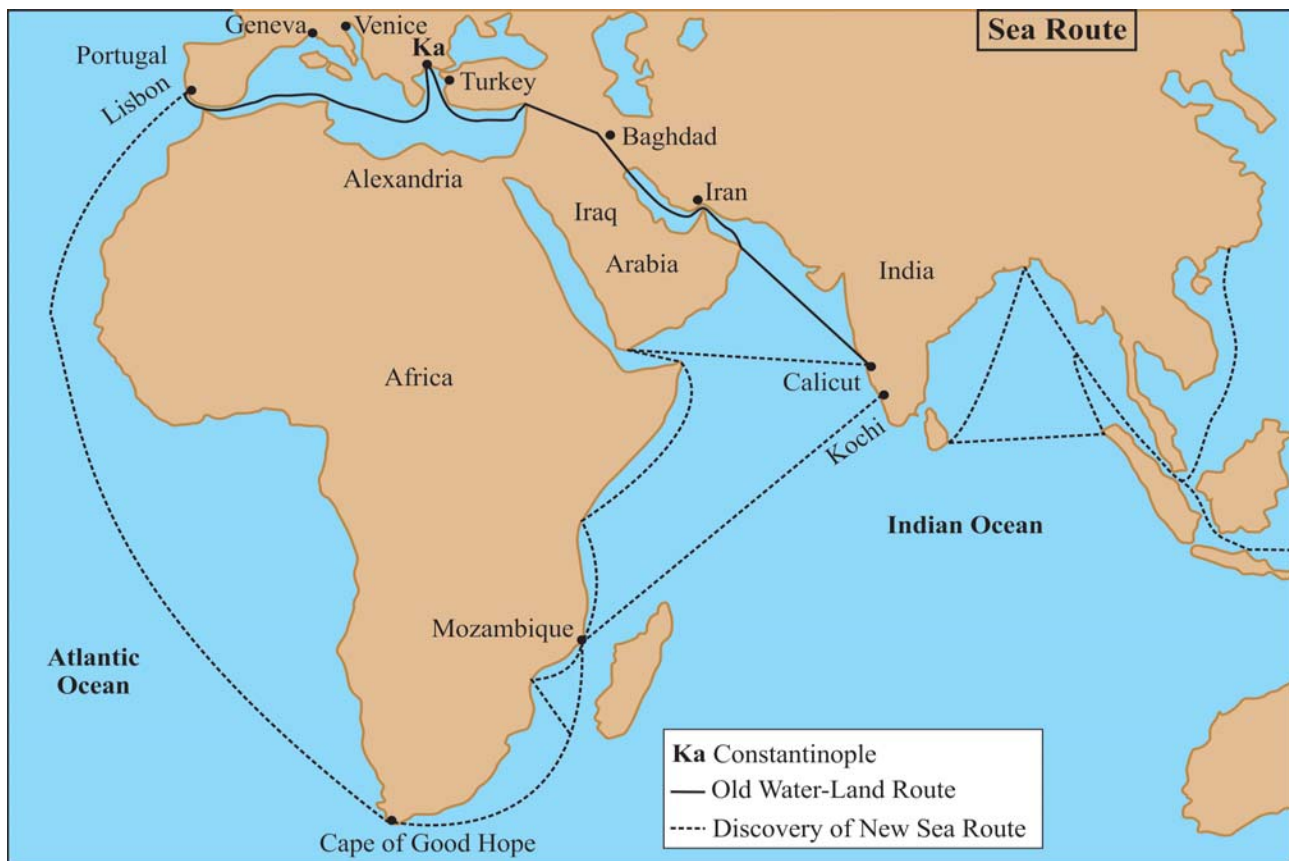
Sea-Route

Arrival of the Europeans in India

As we have seen, the reason for Europeans coming to India was trade. European nations like Portugal, Spain, Holland worked hard to find a waterway to India. Portuguese sailor Vasco-da-Gama

reached Calicut in 1498 AD. He discovered a new sea route from Portugal to Africa and Africa to India. With this the Europeans started coming to India.

Portuguese (Firangi) : Vasco-da-Gama came to Calicut in 1498 AD. King Samudrik (Zamorin) ruled in Calicut at that time . He allowed the Portuguese to carry on trade of spices. In order to strengthen their position and gain security, Portuguese built a fort in Cochi (1503 AD) and Kannur (1505 AD).

In 1505 AD, Portugal sent its Viceroy Francisco-de-Almeida to establish a Portuguese rule in India. His successor, Viceroy Alfonso-de-Albuquerque, conquered several ports, including Goa, and established Portuguese rule in India. Goa became their capital in 1530 AD . After conquering Vasai in (1534 AD), Diu in (1535 AD) and Daman in (1559 AD), they began to venture into the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese defeated the sultans of Ahmednagar, Calicut and Bijapur. They carried spices from India to Europe and while returning, they loaded their ships with horses from Central Asia. So they were also called the 'Lord of the Sea'. This meant that , any other nation who wanted to use Indian sea route for trade , had to seek permission from the Portuguese to trade by sea. They were massively involved in piracy in sea. In Goa, they converted a large number of Hindus into Christians.

Dutch (Valanda) : Like the Portuguese, the Dutch from Holland were also attracted to come to India to make a profit from trade. At first they invaded Sri Lanka in 1658 AD and took the charge of trade of spices in their hands. They established their trade in Bengal (1632 AD) and in the Malabar area (1650 AD). They obtained a decree from the ruler of Golconda and established their position in 'Masulipatnam' (Machilipatnam).

After 1650 AD, periodically, major wars were fought between England and Holland (Dutch). Dutch were defeated in these wars. As a result their trade monopoly came to an end in India.

Danish : After the Dutch, the Danish people from Denmark also came to India. They established a fort (Kothi) in Sirampur, Bengal. But they could not progress in trade.

British : The East India Company was founded in England in 1600 AD. Its objective was to trade with the nations of the East and establish a monopoly on them. In 1613 AD., the British got a decree from Jahangir and established their first fort at Surat. Thomas Roe obtained permission from Jahangir to trade in India (in 1615 AD) . They started a trading company in Balasore (1633 AD) and a trading post (1651 AD) on the banks of Hoogly River. It was called a factory. Factory had a warehouse where goods were stored and company officials used to sit. The goods for export were kept here. A trading post was set up at Qasim Bazaar in Patna and placed under the control of Fort St. George. The British got the 'Zamidari' of three villages named Sutanuti, Kalighat and Gobindapur (in 1698 AD). They built a new colony called 'Fort William' now known as Kolkata.

French : In 1639 AD, a French officer named Franco Martin took Madras (Chennai) on lease from the King of Chandragiri and established a trading centre. The French East India Company was founded in 1664 AD. In (1668 AD) they established the first trading centre in Surat. Their headquarter was at Masulipatnam. They founded Pondicherry (Puducherry) in 1673 AD. The wars fought between the Dutch and the French in Europe had affected India also. The French were defeated as the British supported the Dutch. In 1739 AD they established control over Karaikal and began large scale commercial activities in the South. But on the issue of establishing a monopoly in the South, the French had Karnataka wars with the British in which the French were defeated. The French lost their power in India except Pondicherry in 1761 AD. They were even barred from fortifying at Pondicherry (Puducherry).

The British in Bengal : From Trade to Institutions

The British built their first factory (trading centre) in Bengal (1651 AD). In 1717 AD, Emperor Farrukh Shiyar allowed them to trade freely in Bengal, Bihar and Odisha and allowed them to also lease other areas around Calcutta (Kolkata). After 1740 AD, the British fortified their factory (Fort William) and their relations with Siraj-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Bengal, strained. Siraj-ud-Daula invaded Fort William on June 15, 1756 and defeated the British.

Battle of Plassey (1757 AD) : News of the British defeat at Calcutta reached Madras (Chennai). The British quickly sent an army to Calcutta (Kolkata) under the leadership of Clive. Manekchand, a trustworthy of the Nawab, took a bribe and handed over Calcutta (Kolkata) to the British. The Britishers now resorted to diplomacy in which bribery was predominant. They got the support of the Nawab's commander in chief of army Mir Jafar as they promised to make him Nawab. At the same time, they got the big leaders of Bengal, Jagat Seth, Rai Durlabh and Amichand on their side.

In March 1757 AD, the British invaded the French colony and challenged the Nawab's sovereignty. On June 23, 1757, a battle took place between Clive's and the Nawab's army at a place called Plassey near Murshidabad. The Nawab's generals confronted the British but the Nawab's army was defeated due to Mir Jafar's betrayal. Mir Jafar was made Nawab and Siraj-ud-Daula was captured and killed. The Nawab gave jagir of 24 parganas to the Britishers and allowed them to trade without excise duty. After the battle of Plassey, the whole of Bengal came under the control of the British and from here they became the owners of the institution in place of merchants. Not only this, their path of victory of India started from here. By 1818 AD, the whole of India was under the British rule.

Know This

Plassey's original name was Palash. The British pronounced it Plassey. There were Palash (Khakhro/ Kesudo) trees here. Colour was prepared from the petals of flowers of these trees. These colours were used in the festival of Holi.

Battle of Buxar (1764 AD) : Mir Qasim, Nawab of Bengal, met Nawab of Awadh and Mughal Emperor and planned to expel the Britishers from India. The army of these three consisted of about 50,000 soldiers, whereas the company's army was of 7072 soldiers . The Battle of Buxar (October 22, 1764) was fought between these three rulers of India and the British army under the leadership of Major Munro. The British won and the war of Plassey made their motive firm. There was no one in India to challenge the British who had defeated the three rulers together. The Battle of Buxar gave the British the civil rights of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (Odisha) i.e. they became the masters formally, where as the administrative responsibility rested with the Nawab. Thus the Dual System (Dwimukhi rule) came into existence.

Mysore War

Mysore became the most powerful state in South India after the end of the Vijayanagar Empire (1761 AD) under the leadership of Hyder Ali. Hyder Ali trained the soldiers in the European method and equipped them with arms. The British became concerned about Hyder Ali's rapidly growing power and authority. Therefore, four Mysore Wars were fought with the state of Mysore. (1767-69 AD, 1780-84 AD, 1790-92 AD and 1799 AD). The first two battles were fought with Haider Ali and the other two with Haider Ali's powerful son Tipu Sultan.

The First Mysore war ended without any result. Because of Hyder Ali's death in 1782 AD, the second Mysore war continued. Eventually, a treaty was signed between the two sides. Tipu Sultan was defeated in the third Mysore War and suffered heavy losses. Tipu Sultan died in the Fourth Mysore War and the British overthrew a powerful ruler and consolidated their empire. The British handed over the state of Mysore to the former Wadiyar dynasty and a Subsidiary Alliance was imposed on it.

Maratha War

In 1761 AD, the Marathas were defeated in the Third Battle of Panipat fought against Ahmedshah Abdali of Iran. As a result Maratha empire got divided among the Sindhias, Holkars, Gaekwads and Bhonsles. These dynasties were under the control of the Peshwa (supreme minister). Peshwa's headquarter was in Pune.

There were several wars between the Marathas and the British. The Treaty of Salbai (1782 AD) was signed after the First War (1775 AD to 1782 AD). Both decided to return each other's territories, thus no one was defeated. The Second Maratha War took place between 1803 AD - 1805 AD. Wellesley established authority of the British on the Marathas. With this war, the territories of Odisha, Agra (located in the North of Yamuna) and Delhi came under control of the British. The Maratha power was crushed in the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817 AD-1819 AD). The Peshwa was removed from Pune and sent to Bithur near Kanpur with a pension. Now, the power of the company was established from Vindhyachal to all parts of South India. British rule was completely established over India.

British Rule-Administration

After establishing the empire in India, the British also established their own administrative system and made extensive changes in the administration of India. Their main goal was to make England rich by exploiting India economically. Thus the new administrative system was for protecting British interests rather than working for the welfare of the Indian people. They established the structure of modern administrative system in India.

Government Structure : From 1773 AD onwards, they controlled the administration of India through various charters. The Governor General of India was appointed and Supreme Court was established by the The Regulating Act (1773 AD). The Governor General was the supreme head of the Indian administration and a three-member council was appointed to assist him. The British Parliament abolished the commercial monopoly of the company through Charter Act of 1813 AD and placed it fully under the control of the British Parliament under the Charter Act of 1813 AD. The Charter Act of 1833 AD appointed the Governor-General with vast powers, who could also form legislatations over whole India. A legal member was appointed in the Governor-General's Council. Under the Charter Act of 1853 AD, the British Parliament increased its dominance over the East India Company and took over most of its powers.

Civil Services : Governor General Cornwallis launched Civil services in India. He imposed anti-corruption restrictions by banning company employees from doing trade, separated the revenue system and the judiciary. Systematic services with salary were assigned to the Collector.

Wellesley set up a training institute for the British officers in India to train them for Civil Services, which is known as Fort William College in Calcutta. Prior to this, most of the appointments were made by the Board of Directors of the East India Company. During the time of Dalhousie, the British Parliament advocated the introduction of competitive examinations for admission to the Civil Services under the Charter Act of 1853 AD. Later, rules were made to allow Indians also to appear in competitive examinations and join such Civil services.

Until 1850 AD, the higher administration appointed only English officers to high positions in important departments such as civil services, army, police and the judiciary. Indians were appointed only to general positions and low paid jobs such as clerks and soldiers.

Army : The British rule in India came into existence due to their special military policy. Their aim was to conquer India as well as to suppress India's internal rebellions and to expand the British Empire. They were successful in that. Many Indians joined the Company's army as soldiers. Only the British could become high officials. The Indians could not hold position higher than subedars in army. The Soldiers received regular monthly salaries.

> **Know this**
> By 1857 AD, there were 2,65,900 Indian soldiers out of a total of 3,11,400 in the Company's army.

Police : The British police force was as important as the army. It was started by Governor General Cornwallis. He replaced the traditional Indian feudal police department with a modern police department. At the district level, the District Superintendent of Police (DSP) was appointed as the police officer. They started police stations at different places and appointed a Faujdar (Sub-inspector). A gaurd was appointed in the villages. Even in the police force, only the British could hold high positions. Indians worked as the constables (Sepoy).

Judiciary : Warren Hastings started the judiciary in India. The Supreme Court of India was established under The Regulating Act of 1773 AD. The British established two types of courts in the judiciary - Civil and Criminal. Cornwallis (1793 AD) made significant changes in the judicial system. He started four provincial courts and established Civil courts in each district under the chairmanship of a District Judge. Civil courts were established over District Courts, where as the courts of the Registrar and Taluka courts were established under the District Courts. The judges were referred to as 'Munsif' and 'Amin', and they were Indians. However, the Indian judges were appointed at a lower level. They formed the same law for all. They applied English laws in place of Hindu and Muslim laws. William Bentinck was the first to appoint Indians on high positions in the judiciary. High Courts were established in Calcutta (Kolkata), Madras (Chennai) and Mumbai. By enacting laws in clear written form, modern laws were introduced in 1833 AD.

The British government thus established the rule of law in India and adopted a policy of uniform law for all. The law did not make discrimination on the basis of caste, religion or class. The doors of the court were opened for the general public. Although the British administration was a modern one, its purpose was to strengthen the British Empire in India. So, the Indians could not take enough advantage of this administrative system. The British dealt arbitrarily against the Indians through these laws. That is why an atmosphere of mistrust was created in India by the British rule.

(**Note :** Annual events given in this unit are for understanding, not to be part of the assessment.)

Exercise

1. Answer the following questions in one sentence :

(1) Which European nations had tried to find a sea route to India ?

(2) Why were the Europeans in need of Indian spices ?

(3) Which war resulted in the introduction of Dual System (Dwimukhi) rule in Bengal ?

(4) Under which Act was the Supreme Court established ?

2. (A) Write short notes :

(1) Battle of Plassey   (2) Battle of Buxar   (3) Anglo-Maratha war   (4) Mysore war

(B) Write the answers of the following questions :

(1) The European people were forced to find a sea route to India. Explain the statement.

(2) Write a concise note on the British police force.

(3) The British rule created an atmosphere of mistrust in India. Explain the statement.

(4) State the consequences of the Second Anglo-Maratha war.

3. Find the correct option from the following options and write the correct answer :

(1) Which city was the capital of the Portuguese in India ?

(A) Daman   (B) Diu   (C) Goa   (D) Dadra and Nagar Haveli

(2) The European people who settled in Masulipatnam after receiving a decree from the ruler of Golconda were ....

(A) English   (B) Dutch   (C) French   (D) Danish

(3) Which English officer started the judiciary in India ?

(A) Dalhousie   (B) Wellesley   (C) Clive   (D) Warren Hastings

---

Activity

● Learn more about the 'American Revolution' from your teacher.

●