

History of India (c. 1757–1947 CE)

UNIT I: Political Condition in Post-Mughal Period and Rise of Regional Powers; European Trading Companies; Battles of Plassey and Buxar; Robert Clive and Dual Administration in Bengal

(A) Political Condition in Post-Mughal Period and Rise of Regional Powers

Decline of the Mughal Empire

- Death of Aurangzeb in 1707 marked the beginning of Mughal decline.
- Weak successors lacked military and administrative abilities.
- Continuous wars exhausted the imperial treasury.
- Growth of regional and provincial ambitions.
- Corruption and inefficiency in administration.
- Repeated invasions from outside India.
- Economic crisis due to excessive military expenditure.

External Invasions

Nadir Shah's Invasion (1739)

- Persian ruler Nadir Shah invaded India.
- Defeated Mughal forces at the Battle of Karnal.
- Looted Delhi and carried away the famous Peacock Throne and Koh-i-Noor diamond.
- Exposed the weakness of the Mughal Empire.

Ahmad Shah Abdali's Invasions

- Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah Durrani invaded India several times.
- Defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat.
- Further weakened Mughal authority.

Rise of Regional Powers

Meaning

- Provincial governors and local rulers became independent due to Mughal weakness.
- Emergence of autonomous states and kingdoms across India.

Bengal

- Founded by Murshid Quli Khan.
- Became virtually independent from Mughal control.
- Prosperous due to agriculture and trade.

Awadh (Oudh)

- Founded by Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk.
- Capital at Lucknow.
- Became a wealthy and influential state.

Hyderabad

- Founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah I in 1724.
- One of the strongest regional states.

Maratha Confederacy

- Expanded after the decline of Mughal power.
- Important leaders: Balaji Vishwanath and Baji Rao I.
- Dominated large parts of India before the Third Battle of Panipat.

Mysore

- Ruled by Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.
- Strong resistance against British expansion.

Sikh Power

- Organized under Maharaja Ranjit Singh.
- Established a powerful Sikh kingdom in Punjab.

Significance of Regional Powers

- Ended Mughal political unity.
- Created political fragmentation.
- Provided opportunities for European intervention.
- Paved the way for British expansion in India.

(B) European Trading Companies in India

Background

- Discovery of sea routes increased European interest in Indian trade.
- Main objectives: trade in spices; access to textiles and raw materials; commercial profits.

Portuguese

Arrival

- Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in 1498.

Important Features

- First Europeans to establish trade in India.
- Established trading centres at Goa, Cochin, Daman and Diu.

Important Governors

- Francisco de Almeida
- Afonso de Albuquerque

Decline

- Corruption and mismanagement.
- Competition from Dutch and English companies.

Dutch East India Company

Establishment

- Formed in 1602.

Trading Centres

- Pulicat
- Nagapattinam
- Cochin

Trade

- Focused mainly on spice trade.

Decline

- Defeated by the English.
- Lost influence after the Battle of Bedara (1759).

English East India Company

Establishment

- Founded in 1600 by a royal charter of Elizabeth I.

Arrival in India

- Captain William Hawkins visited Jahangir's court.
- Sir Thomas Roe obtained trading privileges.

Major Trading Centres

- Surat
- Madras
- Bombay
- Calcutta

Importance

- Became the most powerful European company in India.
- Combined trade with military expansion.

French East India Company

Establishment

- Founded in 1664.

Important Settlements

- Pondicherry
- Chandernagore
- Mahe
- Karaikal

Important Governor

- Joseph François Dupleix.

Decline

- Defeated by the English in the Carnatic Wars.
- Lost political influence in India.

Comparison of European Companies

Company	Arrival	Major Centre	Outcome
Portuguese	1498	Goa	Declined
Dutch	1602	Pulicat	Defeated by English
English	1600	Calcutta	Established British rule
French	1664	Pondicherry	Defeated in Carnatic Wars

(C) The Battle of Plassey and the Battle of Buxar: Establishment of British Rule

Battle of Plassey (1757)

Background

- Conflict between the English East India Company and Nawab of Bengal.
- Nawab: Siraj ud-Daulah.
- Company abused trading privileges.
- Fortification of Calcutta without permission.

Date and Place

- 23 June 1757.
- Plassey (Palashi), Bengal.

Main Leaders

- British: Robert Clive.
- Bengal: Siraj ud-Daulah.

Causes

- Misuse of Dastaks (free trade permits).
- British fortifications.
- Conspiracy of Mir Jafar and other nobles.

Result

- Siraj ud-Daulah defeated.
- Mir Jafar made Nawab.
- Beginning of British political power in India.

Significance

- Foundation of British Empire in India.
- Company gained immense wealth and influence.

Battle of Buxar (1764)

Background

- Mir Qasim opposed British interference.
- Formed an alliance with Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-Daula.

Date and Place

- 22 October 1764.
- Buxar (Bihar).

Main Leaders

- British: Hector Munro.
- Alliance of Mir Qasim, Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-Daula.

Result

- British victory.
- Decisive military success.

Significance

- Confirmed British supremacy in India.
- Enabled the Company to control Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- Led to the Treaty of Allahabad (1765).

Treaty of Allahabad (1765)

Main Provisions

- Mughal Emperor granted Diwani rights to the Company.
- Company obtained revenue collection rights in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- Awadh became a buffer state.

Importance

- Beginning of Company's territorial rule.
- Revenue resources strengthened British power.

(D) Robert Clive and Dual Administration in Bengal

Robert Clive

Introduction

- Key architect of British power in India.
- Won the Battle of Plassey.
- Twice served as Governor of Bengal.

Contributions

- Strengthened Company authority.
- Introduced administrative reforms.
- Established Dual Administration.

Dual Administration (1765–1772)

Introduction

- Introduced by Robert Clive after obtaining Diwani rights in 1765.
- Known as the "Double Government" system.

Features

Diwani

- Revenue collection and civil administration.
- Controlled by the East India Company.

Nizamat

- Police, justice and criminal administration.
- Nominally under the Nawab.

Actual Situation

- Company enjoyed power without responsibility.
- Nawab had responsibility without power.

Objectives of Dual Administration

- Maximize Company profits.
- Avoid direct administrative responsibility.
- Maintain appearance of traditional rule.

Defects of Dual Administration

- Administrative confusion.
- Corruption among Company officials.
- Exploitation of peasants.
- Decline of agriculture and trade.
- Weak law and order.

Bengal Famine of 1770

- Severe famine occurred during this period.
- Millions died.
- Administration failed to provide relief.

Abolition of Dual Administration

- Abolished in 1772 by Warren Hastings.
- Company assumed direct control over administration.