

History of India (c. 1757-1947 CE)

UNIT II: Expansion and Consolidation of British Rule in India

(A) Expansion and Consolidation of British Rule under Warren Hastings (1772-1785)

Introduction

- Warren Hastings was appointed Governor of Bengal in 1772.
- Became the first Governor-General of Bengal under the provisions of the Regulating Act of 1773.
- Considered the real architect of British administrative expansion in India.
- His main objective was to strengthen the political and financial position of the East India Company.

Administrative Reforms

Revenue Reforms

- Introduced reforms in revenue collection in Bengal.
- Abolished the Dual Government system introduced by Robert Clive.
- Revenue administration brought directly under Company control.
- District Collectors appointed for revenue collection.

Judicial Reforms

- Established Mofussil Diwani Adalats (Civil Courts).
- Established Mofussil Faujdari Adalats (Criminal Courts).
- Established Sadar Diwani Adalat at Calcutta as the highest civil court.
- Established Sadar Nizamat Adalat as the highest criminal court.

Administrative Measures

- Reduced corruption among Company officials.
- Improved record-keeping and financial management.
- Increased Company revenues.

Relations with Indian States

Rohilla War (1774)

- Fought between the Rohillas and the Nawab of Awadh with British support.
- Resulted in British criticism of Hastings' policies.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782)

- Originated from succession disputes among the Marathas.
- Ended with the Treaty of Salbai.
- Restored peace between the British and Marathas.

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–1784)

- Fought against Hyder Ali and later Tipu Sultan.
- Ended with the Treaty of Mangalore.
- Restored territories captured during the war.

Significance

- Laid the foundation of British administration in India.
- Strengthened Company control over Bengal.
- Initiated British territorial expansion.

(B) Expansion and Consolidation under Lord Cornwallis (1786–1793)

Introduction

- Served as Governor-General from 1786 to 1793.
- Introduced major administrative, judicial, and revenue reforms.
- Known as the “Father of Civil Services in India.”

Administrative Reforms

Civil Service Reforms

- Increased salaries of Company officials.
- Prohibited private trade by Company servants.
- Recruitment based on merit and efficiency.
- Reduced corruption.

Police Reforms

- Introduced a regular police system.
- Districts divided into police jurisdictions.
- Darogas appointed to maintain law and order.

Judicial Reforms

Cornwallis Code (1793)

- Comprehensive set of administrative and judicial regulations.
- Separation of executive and judiciary.
- Established hierarchy of courts: District Courts, Provincial Courts and Sadar Courts.

Features

- Equality before law in theory.
- Europeans exempted from Indian courts in many cases.
- Increased judicial efficiency.

Permanent Settlement (1793)

Features

- Introduced in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.
- Zamindars recognized as hereditary landowners.
- Land revenue fixed permanently.

Objectives

- Ensure stable revenue for the Company.
- Create a loyal landlord class.

Merits

- Revenue certainty.
- Encouraged some agricultural investment.

Demerits

- Exploitation of peasants.
- High burden on cultivators.
- Did not improve agricultural productivity significantly.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790–1792)

- British allied with Hyderabad and Marathas against Mysore.
- Defeat of Tipu Sultan.
- Ended with the Treaty of Seringapatam.
- Mysore lost nearly half of its territory.

Significance

- Strengthened British administration.
- Expanded British political influence.
- Permanent Settlement shaped agrarian relations for decades.

(C) British Relations with the Marathas

Background

- After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Marathas emerged as a major power.
- The Maratha Confederacy consisted of Peshwa, Scindia, Holkar, Bhonsle and Gaekwad.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775–1782)

Causes

- Succession dispute after the death of Peshwa Madhavrao.
- British support to Raghunath Rao.

Result

- Treaty of Salbai (1782).
- Status quo restored.

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–1805)

Causes

- Internal conflicts among Maratha chiefs.
- Peshwa accepted Subsidiary Alliance through the Treaty of Bassein.

Result

- British victories at Assaye and Laswari.
- Marathas lost large territories.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818)

Causes

- Growing resentment against British interference.
- Resistance against Subsidiary Alliance.

Result

- Defeat of the Marathas.
- Peshwaship abolished.
- British supremacy established in India.

Significance

- Ended Maratha political power.
- British became the paramount power in India.

(D) British Relations with Mysore

Rise of Mysore

- Mysore emerged as a strong state under Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.
- Opposed British expansion in South India.

First Anglo-Mysore War (1767–1769)

Result

- British defeated.
- Treaty of Madras (1769).

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780–1784)

Causes

- British violation of previous agreements.

- Conflict over French alliances.

Result

- Treaty of Mangalore (1784).
- Status quo restored.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790–1792)

Result

- Tipu Sultan defeated.
- Treaty of Seringapatam.
- Loss of territory.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

Causes

- Fear of Tipu's alliance with France.
- Expansionist policy of Lord Wellesley.

Result

- Death of Tipu Sultan.
- British occupation of Mysore.
- Installation of the Wodeyar dynasty under British control.

Significance

- Ended Mysore as a major military power.
- Strengthened British dominance in South India.

(E) Lord Wellesley and the Policy of Subsidiary Alliance (1798–1805)

Introduction

- Lord Wellesley served as Governor-General from 1798 to 1805.
- Followed an aggressive policy of expansion.
- Introduced the Subsidiary Alliance System.

Objectives

- Prevent French influence in India.
- Extend British political control.
- Reduce military threats to the Company.

Main Features of Subsidiary Alliance

- Indian ruler must accept British troops within his territory.
- Ruler must pay for maintenance of troops.
- No independent foreign relations without British approval.

- No European officers other than British allowed.
- British Resident stationed at the ruler's court.
- Failure to pay subsidy led to territorial annexation.

States that Accepted

- Hyderabad (1798).
- Mysore (1799).
- Awadh (1801).
- Peshwa under Treaty of Bassein (1802).

Advantages for the British

- Expanded influence without direct annexation.
- Reduced military expenses.
- Increased political control.

Disadvantages for Indian States

- Loss of sovereignty.
- Financial burden.
- Increased British interference.

Significance

- Became a major instrument of British imperial expansion.
- Prepared the ground for direct British rule.

(F) Lord Hastings and Relations with Indian States (1813–1823)

Introduction

- Lord Hastings served as Governor-General from 1813 to 1823.
- Abandoned the policy of non-intervention.
- Pursued a policy of paramountcy.

Policy of Paramountcy

Meaning

- British authority recognized as supreme over Indian states.
- Indian rulers could not conduct independent diplomacy.

Objectives

- Establish complete British supremacy.
- Eliminate challenges from Indian powers.

Gurkha War (1814–1816)

Causes

- Boundary disputes with Nepal.

Result

- Treaty of Sugauli.
- Nepal ceded territory to the British.
- Recruitment of Gurkhas into the British army began.

Pindari War (1817–1818)

Background

- Pindaris were irregular military groups associated with Marathas.

Result

- Pindaris suppressed.
- British control extended in Central India.

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817–1818)

Result

- Complete defeat of the Marathas.
- Annexation of Peshwa's territories.
- British supremacy firmly established.

Relations with Rajput States

- Many Rajput states accepted British protection.
- Entered subsidiary arrangements.
- Became dependent allies.

Significance

- Established British paramountcy over India.
- Ended major indigenous political resistance.
- Marked the beginning of British political supremacy across the subcontinent.

Quick Examination Points

Warren Hastings

- Abolished Dual Government.
- Judicial reforms.
- First Governor-General of Bengal.

Lord Cornwallis

- Permanent Settlement (1793).
- Cornwallis Code.
- Civil Service reforms.

Lord Wellesley

- Subsidiary Alliance.
- Defeat of Tipu Sultan.
- Treaty of Bassein.

Lord Hastings

- Policy of Paramountcy.
- Defeat of Pindaris and Marathas.
- Treaty of Sugauli.

Important Treaties

Treaty	Year	Importance
Salbai	1782	Ended First Anglo-Maratha War
Mangalore	1784	Ended Second Anglo-Mysore War
Seringapatam	1792	Ended Third Anglo-Mysore War
Bassein	1802	Peshwa accepted Subsidiary Alliance
Sugauli	1816	Ended Gurkha War