

CLASS - VIII

Subject - SST (History) Chapter - 2

The Expansion of British Power

The 17th and 18th centuries were witnesses to an enormous increase in world trade. As the English East India Company ruled the Indian sea, free of all European rivals, they conquered India in no time.

The Portuguese in India

India had commercial relations with the countries of the west since ancient times. Vasco-de Gama a Portuguese navigator, found out a new sea route to India. He reached the port of Calicut on 20 May 1498 with a fleet of four ships and 118 sailors on board. He received a warm welcome from the Hindu king, Zamorin. Portuguese were the first traders to come to India.

The Dutch

Trading centers of the Dutch were set up at Surat, Ahmedabad, Nagapatnam and Masulipatnam.

The French

In India, the early French settlements included Pondicherry, Chandernagore, Mahe and Karaikal. In 1668 the first French factory was established at Surat.

The British

The English East India Company was granted monopoly of trade with the East by Queen Elizabeth. Subsequently, during the reign of the Stuart King James I in England, Sir Thomas Roe undertook a trip to India

As his envoy and obtained from the Mughal Emperor Jahangir the right to trade and establish factories at Surat, Ahmedabad and Broach. The British built Fort William in Kolkata. They traded in cotton, tea, indigo and salt peter.

For nearly 20 years from 1744 to 1763, the French and the English waged three bitter wars for control over the trade, wealth and territory of India. These wars are generally known as the Carnatic wars.

Expansion of the British Empire

After establishing their stronghold over Bengal they focussed on Mysore which was then being ruled by Haider Ali. The Nizam the Marathas and the Nawab of Carnatic united against Haider Ali but Haider bought them by promising territorial gain. He attacked on Arcot and reached till Madras and forced the English to conclude a treaty with them for mutual restitution of each other territories. The English also promise to help Haider if he was ever attacked by another power.

Like Mysore the Marathas also posed a challenge to the British in 1817 when Peshwa Baji Rao II attacked the British Residency. In return the British defeated the Marathas. The title of Peshwa was withdrawn and his territories annexed to the British Empire.

Annexation of Awadh

In 1856 Lord Dalhousie went on to annex Awadh on the pretext of mis-governance in the state. Wajid Ali Shah, the ruler of Awadh had been a loyal British ally. So Dalhousie became very unpopular because of this act.

Doctrine of Lapse

Dalhousie who came to India as governor-general in 1848 used the Doctrine of Lapse as a means of extending the empire. In India, every Hindu had a right to adopt a male child as his heir in the absence of natural heir. This was sanctioned by both religion and society. However, when Lord Dalhousie came to India, he decided that the rulers of the dependent states would have to seek permission of the British to adopt an heir to the throne. Thus the British acquired the right to sanction or refuse such an adoption by dependent Indian ruler.

Structure of Administration

Civil Service

Lord Cornwallis established the Indian Civil Service in 1858 which came to be called the 'Steel frame of the Indian Administration'. He separated the commercial and revenue branches of administration. Promotions were based on seniority. His regulations are called Cornwallis Code.

The Army

In the Company's army were mostly Indian while the officers were exclusively British. The highest position held by an Indian soldier, also called a sepoy, was that of a Subedar.

The Judicial System

Under the Regulating Act 1773, the Supreme Court at Calcutta was established with Elijah Impey as its Chief Justice. By the act of 1784,

It was decided only in the cases of the English and the Indians would be tried under their own traditional law. In 1793, the famous Cornwallis Code was compiled for the guidance of the officers of the new judicial service. In 1833, a graded structure of court came into being. In 1865, High Courts were established at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The codification of laws was meant to establish judicial equality in the laws applied to both the rulers and ruled. This was the principle of Rule of Law.

HOME WORK

Ques - Answer these questions

- (i) Mention any three Indian goods in which the English East India Company traded.
- (ii) What caused the Carnatic wars?
- (iii) What do you understand by the doctrine of Lapse?
- (iv) Write the traditional centers of the Dutch.
- (v) When did Vasco-de-Gama come to India?

Ques - Learn and write name the following

- (i) An Islamic scholar - Mufti
- (ii) An administrative unit - Parganas
- (iii) A magistrate or judge - Qazi
- (iv) A holistic rank in the army - Subedar
- A Portuguese navigator - Vasco-de-Gama

Ques - Fill in the blanks

- (i) The British army in India consisted mostly of Indian soldiers called _____.
- (ii) Lord _____ established the Indian civil service in 1858.
- (iii) _____ were the first traders to come to India.
- (iv) In _____ the first French factory was established at Surat.

Que 1 Choose the correct option.

- (i) The first traders to come to India were
(a) Portuguese (b) Dutch (c) British (d) French
- (ii) The capital of Tipu Sultan was
(a) Mysore (b) Avadh (c) Mangalore (d) Seringapatam
- (iii) The first factory of English East India Company was established at
(a) Bombay (b) Madras (c) Surat (d) Allahabad