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Advent of the Europeans in India

Though we talk of ancient, medieval and modern periods in history, history is a continuity. It is not always easy to distinguish clearly when one period ends and another begins. So if we think of the history of modern India as beginning with the advent of the Europeans, we need to go back to what is generally considered the medieval period, i.e., the fifteenth century itself. Indeed to a time even before the Mughals came and established their empire.

The Portuguese in India

The Quest for and Discovery of a Sea Route to India

After the decline of the Roman Empire in the seventh century, the Arabs had established their domination in Egypt and Persia. Direct contact between the Europeans and India declined and, with that, the easy accessibility to the Indian commodities like spices, calicoes, silk, and various precious stones that were greatly in demand was affected. In 1453, Constantinople fell to the Ottoman Turks, who were on the ascendant. Merchandise from India went to the European markets through Arab Muslim intermediaries. The Red Sea trade route was a state monopoly from which Islamic rulers earned tremendous revenues. The land routes to India were also controlled by the Arabs. In the circumstances, the Europeans were keen to find a direct sea route to India.

Fifteenth-century Europe was gripped by the spirit of the Renaissance with its call for exploration. At the same time, Europe made great advances in the art of ship-building and navigation. Hence, there was an eagerness all over Europe for adventurous sea voyages to reach the unknown corners of the East.

The economic development of many regions of Europe was also progressing rapidly with expansion of land under cultivation, the introduction of an improved plough, scientific crop management such as crop rotation, and increased supply of meat (which called for spices for cooking as well as preservation). Prosperity also grew and with it the demand for oriental luxury goods also increased.

Venice and Genoa which had earlier prospered through trade in oriental goods were too small to take on the mighty Ottoman Turks or to take up major exploration on their own. The north Europeans were ready to aid Portugal and Spain with money and men, even as the Genoese were ready to provide ships and technical knowledge. It is also to be noted that Portugal had assumed the leadership in Christendom's resistance to Islam even as it had taken on itself the spirit of exploration that had characterised the Genoese.

Historians have observed that the idea of finding an ocean route to India had become an obsession for Prince Henry of Portugal, who was nicknamed the 'Navigator'; also, he was keen to find a way to circumvent the Muslim domination of the eastern Mediterranean and all the routes that connected India to Europe. Pope Nicholas V gave Prince Henry a bull in 1454, conferring on him the right to navigate the "sea to the distant shores of the Orient", more specifically "as far as India" in an attempt to fight Islamic influence and spread the Christian faith. However, Prince Henry died before his dream became a reality.

In 1497, under the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), the rulers of Portugal and Spain divided the non-Christian world between them by an imaginary line in the Atlantic, some 1,300 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands. Under the treaty, Portugal could claim and occupy everything to the east of

the line while Spain could claim everything to the west. The situation was thus prepared for the Portuguese incursions into the waters around India.

It was in 1487 that the Portuguese navigator, Bartholomew Dias, rounded the Cape of Good Hope in Africa and sailed up the eastern coast; he was well convinced that the long sought after sea route to India had been found. But it was only ten years later that an expedition of Portuguese ships headed out to India (in 1497) and arrived in India in slightly less than eleven months' time, in May 1498.

From Trading to Ruling

Vasco Da Gama

The arrival of three ships under Vasco Da Gama, led by a Gujarati pilot named Abdul Majid, at Calicut in May 1498 profoundly affected the course of Indian history. The Hindu ruler of Calicut, the Zamorin (Samuthiri), however, had no apprehensions as to the European's intentions. As the prosperity of his kingdom was due to Calicut's position as an entrepot, he accorded a friendly reception to Vasco Da Gama. The Arab traders, who had a good business on the Malabar coast were apprehensive and were not keen on the Portuguese getting a hold there.

For centuries, the trading system in the Indian Ocean had had numerous participants—Indians, Arabs, Africans from the east coast, Chinese, Javanese, among others—but these participants had acted according to some tacit rules of conduct and none had sought overwhelming dominance though all were in it for profit. The Portuguese changed that: they wanted to monopolise the hugely profitable eastern trade by excluding competitors, especially the Arabs.

Vasco da Gama stayed in India for three months. When he returned to Portugal, he carried back with him a rich cargo and sold the merchandise in the European market at a huge profit. The importance of direct access to the pepper trade was made clear by the fact that elsewhere the Europeans, who had to buy through Muslim middlemen, would have had to

View

The landing of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 ... is generally regarded as the beginning of a new era in world history, especially in the relationship between Asia and Europe. Although Asia and Europe had been in commercial relations with each other since antiquity, the opening of the direct sea-relations between the two was not only the fulfilment of an old dream (according to the Greek historian, Herodotus, the Phoenicians had rounded Africa in the 6th century BC) it presaged big increase of trade between the two. This, however, was only one of the objectives of the Portuguese. For the Portuguese, the opening of a new sea-route to India would give a big blow to the Muslims, the Arabs and Turks, who were the traditional enemies of Christianity, and were posing a new threat to Europe by virtue of the growing military and naval power of the Turks. A direct sea-link with India would displace the virtual monopoly of the Arabs and Turks over the trade in eastern goods, especially spices. They also vaguely hoped by their exploration of Africa they would be able to link up with the kingdom of the legendary Prior John, and be in a position to attack the Muslims from two sides. Thus, the commercial and religious objectives supported and justified each other.

—**Satish Chandra**

spend ten times as much for the same amount of pepper. Not surprisingly, other profit-seeking merchants of European nations were tempted to come to India and trade directly.

A voyage was undertaken by **Pedro Alvarez Cabral** to trade for spices, negotiating and establishing a factory at Calicut, where he arrived in September 1500. There was an incident of conflict when the Portuguese factory at Calicut was attacked by the locals, resulting in the death of several Portuguese. In retaliation, Cabral seized a number of Arab merchant ships anchored in the harbour, and killed hundreds of their crew besides confiscating their cargo and burning the ships. Calicut was bombarded by Cabral. Later, Cabral succeeded in making advantageous treaties with the local rulers of Cochin and Cannanore.

Vasco da Gama once again came to India in 1501. The Zamorin declined to exclude the Arab merchants in favour

of the Portuguese when Vasco Da Gama combined commercial greed with ferocious hostility and wreaked vengeance on Arab shipping wherever he could. His rupture with the Zamorin thus became total and complete. Vasco da Gama set up a trading factory at Cannanore. Gradually, Calicut, Cannanore and Cochin became the important trade centres of the Portuguese.

Gradually, under the pretext of protecting the factories and their trading activities, the Portuguese got permission to fortify these centres.

Francisco De Almeida

In 1505, the King of Portugal appointed a governor in India for a three-year term and equipped the incumbent with sufficient force to protect the Portuguese interests. Francisco De Almeida, the newly appointed governor, was asked to consolidate the position of the Portuguese in India and to destroy Muslim trade by seizing Aden, Ormuz and Malacca. He was also advised to build fortresses at Anjadiva, Cochin, Cannanore and Kilwa. What Almeida, however, encountered along with the opposition of the Zamorin, was a threat from the Mameluke Sultan of Egypt. Encouraged by the merchants of Venice whose lucrative commerce was now at risk due to the Portuguese interference, the Egyptians raised a fleet in the Red Sea to stop the advance of the Portuguese. In 1507, the Portuguese squadron was defeated in a naval battle off Diu by the combined Egyptian and Gujarat navies, and Almeida's son was killed. Next year, Almeida avenged his defeat by totally crushing the two navies. Almeida's vision was to make the Portuguese the master of the Indian Ocean. His policy was known as the **Blue Water Policy** (*cartaze system*).

View

As long as you may be powerful at sea you will hold India as yours; and if you do not possess this power, little will avail you a fortress on shore.

—Francisco De Almeida

Alfonso de Albuquerque

Albuquerque, who succeeded Almeida as the Portuguese governor in India, was the real founder of the Portuguese power in the East, a task he completed before his death. He secured for Portugal the strategic control of the Indian Ocean by establishing bases overlooking all the entrances to the sea. There were Portuguese strongholds in East Africa, off the Red Sea, at Ormuz; in Malabar; and at Malacca. The Portuguese, under Albuquerque bolstered their stranglehold by introducing a permit system for other ships and exercising control over the major ship-building centres in the region. The non-availability of timber in the Gulf and Red Sea regions for ship-building also helped the Portuguese in their objectives. Albuquerque acquired Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510 with ease; the principal port of the Sultan of Bijapur became "the first bit of Indian territory to be under the Europeans since the time of Alexander the Great". An interesting feature of his rule was the abolition of *sati*.

The Portuguese men who had come on the voyages and stayed back in India were, from Albuquerque's day, encouraged to take local wives. In Goa and the Province of the North they established themselves as village landlords, often building new roads and irrigation works, introducing new crops like tobacco and cashew nut, or better plantation varieties of coconut besides planting large groves of coconut to meet the need for coir rigging and cordage. In the cities, such as Goa and Cochin, they settled as artisans and master-craftsmen, besides being traders. Most of such Portuguese came to look upon their new settlements, rather than Portugal, as home.

View

Bitter persecution of Muslims was one serious drawback of Albuquerque's policy. This could have been due to his resolve to further the interests of his countrymen by complete extinction of Muslim commercial interests in the East. During his rule, Albuquerque did his best to strengthen the fortifications of Goa and enhance its commercial importance. In order to secure a permanent Portuguese population in India he encouraged his men to take Indian wives. (*The Gazetteer of India*, Vol. II)

Nino da Cunha

Nino da Cunha assumed office of the governor of Portuguese interests in India in November 1529 and almost one year later shifted the headquarters of the Portuguese government in India from Cochin to Goa. Bahadur Shah of Gujarat, during his conflict with the Mughal emperor Humayun, secured help from the Portuguese by ceding to them in 1534 the island of Bassein with its dependencies and revenues. He also promised them a base in Diu. However, Bahadur Shah's relations with the Portuguese became sour when Humayun withdrew from Gujarat in 1536. Since the inhabitants of the town started fighting with the Portuguese, Bahadur Shah wanted to raise a wall of partition. Opposing this, the Portuguese started negotiations, in the course of which the ruler of Gujarat was invited to a Portuguese ship and killed in 1537. Da Cunha also attempted to increase Portuguese influence in Bengal by settling many Portuguese nationals there with Hooghly as their headquarters.

Favourable Conditions for Portuguese

In India, excepting Gujarat, ruled by the powerful Mahmud Begarha (1458-1511), the northern part was much divided among many small powers. In the Deccan, the Bahmani Kingdom was breaking up into smaller kingdoms. None of the powers had a navy worth its name, nor did they think of developing their naval strength. In the Far East, the imperial decree of the Chinese emperor limited the navigational reach of the Chinese ships. As regards the Arab merchants and ship-owners who until then dominated the Indian Ocean trade, they had nothing to match the organisation and unity of the Portuguese. Moreover, the Portuguese had cannons placed on their ships.

Portuguese State

The general tendency is to underestimate the Portuguese hold in India. However, the Estado Português da India (State of the Portuguese India) was in fact a larger element in Indian history than it is given credit for. Many of the coastal parts

of India had come under Portuguese power within fifty years of Vasco da Gama's arrival. The Portuguese had occupied some sixty miles of coast around Goa. On the west coast from Mumbai to Daman and Diu to the approaches to Gujarat, they controlled a narrow tract with four important ports and hundreds of towns and villages. In the south, they had under them a chain of seaport fortresses and trading-posts like Mangalore, Cannanore, Cochin, and Calicut. And though their power in Malabar was not consolidated, it was enough to ensure influence or control over the local rulers who held the spice growing land. The Portuguese established further military posts and settlements on the east coast at San Thome (in Chennai) and Nagapatnam (in Andhra). Towards the end of the sixteenth century, a wealthy settlement had grown at Hooghly in West Bengal.

Envoys and ambassadors were exchanged between Goa and many of the major kingdoms in India of the time. Treaties were signed between Goa and the Deccan sultans in 1570 which were regularly renewed as long as their kingdoms lasted. The Portuguese always had a role to play in the successive battles for the balance of power between Vijayanagara and the Deccan sultans, between the Deccanis and the Mughals, and between the Mughals and the Marathas.

Interestingly, the Portuguese, the first Europeans to come to India, were also the last to leave this land. It was 1961 before the Government of India recaptured Goa, Daman and Diu from them.

Portuguese Administration in India

The head of the administration was the viceroy who served for three years, with his secretary and, in later years, a council. Next in importance came the *Vedor da Fazenda,* responsible for revenues and the cargoes and dispatch of fleets. The fortresses, from Africa to China, were under captains, assisted by 'factors', whose power was increased by the difficulties of communication and was too often used for personal ends.

Religious Policy of the Portuguese

The Moors were the bitter enemies of the Portuguese in North Africa. So were the Arabs. Arriving in the East, the Portuguese brought with them the same zeal to promote Christianity and the wish to persecute all Muslims. Intolerant towards the Muslims, the Portuguese were initially quite tolerant towards the Hindus. However, over time, after the introduction of the Inquisition in Goa, there was a change and Hindus were also persecuted.

But, in spite of this intolerant behaviour, the Jesuits made a good impression at the court of Akbar, mainly due to the Mughal emperor's interest in questions of theology.

In September 1579, Akbar forwarded a letter to the authorities at Goa requesting them to send two learned priests. The Church authorities in Goa eagerly accepted the invitation, seeing in it a chance to convert the emperor to Christianity, and with him his court and the people. Jesuit fathers, Rodolfo Aquaviva and Antonio Monserrate were selected for the purpose. When they reached Fatehpur Sikri on February 28, 1580, they were received with honour. Aquaviva and Monserrate went back in 1583, belying the hopes the Portuguese entertained of Akbar's conversion to the Christian faith. The second mission called by Akbar in 1590 also ended on a similar note in 1592. The third mission, again invited by Akbar, arrived in 1595 at Lahore (where the court was then residing) and continued as a sort of permanent institution, thereby extending its influence on secular politics. Fathers Jerome Xavier and Emanuel Pinheiro were the leaders of the mission, and their letters from the court became very widely known for the information they provided on the latter part of Akbar's reign.

Prince Salim, on ascending the throne as Jahangir, assuaged the Muslims by neglecting the Jesuit fathers. Gradually, however, his temporary estrangement from the Jesuits ended, and in 1606 he again renewed his favours to them. The elegant and spacious church at Lahore was allowed to be retained by them along with the collegium or the

priests' residence. In 1608, twenty baptisms were carried out in Agra, the priests publicly acting with as much liberty as in Portugal.

Jahangir's conduct was such that the Jesuit priests became hopeful of bringing him within the Christian fold. However, these hopes were belied. Moreover, arrogant actions on the part of the Portuguese viceroys created a rift with the Mughal emperor.

Portuguese Lose Favour with the Mughals

In 1608, Captain William Hawkins with his ship *Hector* reached Surat. He brought with him a letter from James I, King of England, to the Mughal court of Jahangir requesting permission to do business in India. Father Pinheiro and the Portuguese authorities did their best to prevent Hawkins from reaching the Mughal court, but did not succeed. Jahangir accepted the gifts Hawkins brought for him and gave Hawkins a very favourable reception in 1609. As Hawkins knew the Turki language well, he conversed with the emperor in that language without the aid of an interpreter. Pleased with Hawkins, Jahangir appointed him as a mansabdar of 400 at a salary of Rs 30,000 (apparently, he never received it). Hawkins was also married to the daughter of an Armenian Christian named Mubarak Shah (Mubarikesha).

The grant of trading facilities to the English offended the Portuguese. However, after negotiations, a truce was established between the Portuguese and the Mughal emperor. The Portuguese stopped the English ships from entering the port of Surat. A baffled Hawkins left the Mughal court in 1611, unable to counter the Portuguese intrigues or check the vacillating Mughal policies. However, in November 1612, the English ship *Dragon* under Captain Best along with a little ship, the *Osiander,* successfully fought a Portuguese fleet. Jahangir, who had no navy worth its name, learnt of the English success and was greatly impressed.

The Portuguese acts of piracy also resulted in conflict with the imperial Mughal government. In 1613, the Portuguese offended Jehangir by capturing Mughal ships, imprisoning many Muslims, and plundering the cargoes. An enraged Jahangir ordered Muqarrab Khan, who was the then in charge of Surat, to obtain compensation. However, it was during the reign of Shah Jahan, that the advantages which the Portuguese enjoyed in the Mughal court were lost forever. Also lost were the hopes of converting the royal family and Mughal India to Christianity, a hope that the Portuguese held because of the welcome accorded to them and their religion by Akbar and Jahangir.

Capture of Hooghly

On the basis of an imperial farman circa 1579, the Portuguese had settled down on a river bank which was a short distance from Satgaon in Bengal to carry on their trading activities. Over the years, they strengthened their position by constructing big buildings which led to the migration of the trade from Satgaon to the new port known as Hooghly. They monopolised the manufacture of salt, built a custom house of their own and started enforcing strictly the levy of duty on tobacco, which had become an important article of trade since its introduction at the beginning of the 17th century.

The Portuguese not only made money as traders but also started a cruel slave trade by purchasing or seizing Hindu and Muslim children, whom they brought up as Christians. In the course of their nefarious activities, they seized two slave girls of Mumtaz Mahal. On June 24, 1632, the siege of Hooghly began, ending in its capture three months later. Shah Jahan ordered the Bengal governor Qasim Khan to take action against the Portuguese. A siege of Hooghly finally led to the Portuguese fleeing. The Mughals suffered a loss of 1,000 men, but also took 400 prisoners to Agra. The prisoners were offered the option to convert to Islam or become slaves. The persecution of Christians continued for some time after which it died down gradually.

Decline of the Portuguese

By the 18th century, the Portuguese in India lost their commercial influence, though some of them still carried on trade in their individual capacity and many took to piracy and robbery. In fact, Hooghly was used by some Portuguese as a base for piracy in the Bay of Bengal. The decline of the Portuguese was brought about by several factors. The local advantages gained by the Portuguese in India were reduced with the emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia and North India and the rise of the turbulent Marathas as their immediate neighbours. (The Marathas captured Salsette and Bassein in 1739 from the Portuguese.)

The religious policies of the Portuguese, such as the activities of the Jesuits, gave rise to political fears. Their antagonism for the Muslims apart, the Portuguese policy of conversion to Christianity made Hindus also resentful.

Their dishonest trade practices also evoked a strong reaction. The Portuguese earned notoriety as sea pirates. Their arrogance and violence brought them the animosity of the rulers of small states and the imperial Mughals as well.

The discovery of Brazil diverted colonising activities of Portugal to the West.

The union of the two kingdoms of Spain and Portugal in 1580-81, dragging the smaller kingdom into Spain's wars with England and Holland, badly affected Portuguese monopoly of trade in India.

The earlier monopoly of knowledge of the sea route

View

The Portuguese entered India with the sword in one hand and the crucifix in the other; finding much gold, they laid aside the crucifix to fill their pockets, and not being able to hold them up with one hand, they were grown so heavy, they dropped the sword, too; being found in this posture by those who came after, they were easily overcome.

—**Alfonso de Souza**, the Portuguese Governor in India (1542-45)

Portuguese Rise and Fall

1498:	Arrival of Vasco-da-Gama at Calicut and his grand reception by the local king, Zamorin.
1503:	Establishment of the first Portuguese fort at Cochin.
1505:	Establishment of the second Portuguese fort at Cannanore.
1509:	Defeat of the combined fleet of Gujarat, Egypt and Zamorin by the Portuguese governor Francisco Almeida.
1510:	Alfonso Albuquerque, the Portuguese governor, captures Goa from Bijapur.
1530:	Declaration of Goa as the Portuguese capital.
1535:	Subjugation of Diu.
1559:	The Portuguese capture Daman.
1596:	Ouster of the Portuguese by the Dutch from South-east Asia.
1612:	Loss of Surat to the English.
1663:	The Dutch win all Portuguese forts on the Malabar coast to oust the Portuguese from India.

to India held by the Portuguese could not remain a secret forever; soon enough the Dutch and the English, who were learning the skills of ocean navigation, also learnt of it. As new trading communities from Europe arrived in India, there began a fierce rivalry among them. In this struggle, the Portuguese had to give way to the more powerful and enterprising competitors. The Dutch and the English had greater resources and more compulsions to expand overseas, and they overcame the Portuguese resistance. One by one, the Portuguese possessions fell to its opponents. Goa which remained with the Portuguese had lost its importance as a port after the fall of the Vijayanagara empire and soon it did not matter in whose possession it was. The spice trade came under the control of the Dutch, and Goa was superseded by Brazil as the economic centre of the overseas empire of Portugal. In 1683, after two naval assaults, the Marathas invaded Goa.

Significance of the Portuguese

Most historians have observed that the coming of the Portuguese not only initiated what might be called the

European era, it marked the emergence of naval power. The Cholas, among others, had been a naval power, but it was now for the first time a foreign power had come to India by way of the sea. The Portuguese ships carried cannon, and this was the first step in gaining monopoly over trade—with the threat or actual use of force. The Portuguese declared their intention to abide by no rules except their own, and they were intent on getting a decisive advantage over the Indians and over the Indian Ocean trading system.

In the Malabar of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese showed military innovation in their use of body armour, matchlock men, and guns landed from the ships. The Portuguese may have contributed by example to the Mughal use of field guns, and the 'artillery of the stirrup'. However, an important military contribution made by the Portuguese onshore was the system of drilling groups of infantry, on the Spanish model, introduced in the 1630s as a counter to Dutch pressure. The practice was adopted first by the French and English, and later taken up by the Marathas and Sikhs, and such armies of sepoys became new tools of empire in India.

The Portuguese were masters of improved techniques at sea. Their multi-decked ships were heavily constructed, designed as they were to ride out Atlantic gales rather than run before the regular monsoons; this permitted them to carry a heavier armament. Their use of castled prow and stern was a noteworthy method by which to repel or launch boarding parties. Indian builders adapted both to their own use. However, the Portuguese skill at organisation—as in the creation of royal arsenals and dockyards and the maintenance of a regular system of pilots and mapping and pitting state forces against private merchant shipping—was even more noteworthy.The Mughals and Marathas may certainly have learnt from the Portuguese but the more certain heirs of this knowledge were other Europeans, especially the Dutch and English, in Asia.

In India, the memory of religious persecution and

cruelty detracts from the other contributions made by the Portuguese in the cultural field. However, it cannot be forgotten that the missionaries and the Church were also teachers and patrons in India of the arts of the painter, carver, and sculptor. As in music, they were the interpreters, not just of Portuguese, but of European art to India.

The art of the silversmith and goldsmith flourished at Goa, and the place became a centre of elaborate filigree work, fretted foliage work and metal work embedding jewels. However, though the interior of churches built under the Portuguese have plenty of woodwork and sculpture and sometimes painted ceilings, they are generally simple in their architectural plan.

The Dutch

Commercial enterprise led the Dutch to undertake voyages to the East. Cornelis de Houtman was the first Dutchman to reach Sumatra and Bantam in 1596. In 1602, the States-General of the Netherlands amalgamated many trading companies into the East India Company of the Netherlands. This company was also empowered to carry on war, to conclude treaties, to take possession of territory and to erect fortresses.

Dutch Settlements

After their arrival in India, the Dutch founded their first factory in Masulipatnam (in Andhra) in 1605. They went on to establish trading centres at different parts of India and thus became a threat to the Portuguese. They captured Nagapatam near Madras (Chennai) from the Portuguese and made it their main stronghold in South India.

The Dutch established factories on the Coromandel coast, in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. In 1609, they opened a factory in Pulicat, north of Madras. Their other principal factories in India were at Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karaikal (1645), Chinsura (1653), Baranagar,

Kasimbazar (near Murshidabad), Balasore, Patna, Nagapatam (1658) and Cochin (1663). Participating in the redistributive or carrying trade, they brought to the islands of the Far East various articles and merchandise from India. They carried indigo manufactured in the Yamuna valley and Central India, textiles and silk from Bengal, Gujarat and the Coromandel, saltpetre from Bihar and opium and rice from the Ganga valley.

Anglo-Dutch Rivalry

The English were also at this time rising to prominence in the Eastern trade, and this posed a serious challenge to the commercial interests of the Dutch. Commercial rivalry soon turned into bloody warfare.

The climax of the enmity between the Dutch and the English in the East was reached at Amboyna (a place in present-day Indonesia, which the Dutch had captured from the Portuguese in 1605) where they massacred ten Englishmen and nine Japanese in 1623.

This incident further intensified the rivalry between the two European companies. After prolonged warfare, both the parties came to a compromise in 1667 by which the British agreed to withdraw all their claims on Indonesia, and the Dutch retired from India to concentrate on their more

View

The Dutch rivalry with the English, during the seventeenth century, was more bitter than that of the Portuguese. The policy of the Dutch in the East was influenced by two motives: one was to take revenge on Catholic Spain, the foe of their independence, and her ally Portugal, and the other was to colonise and establish settlements in the East Indies with a view to monopolising commerce in that region. They gained their first object by the gradual decline of Portuguese influence. The realisation of their second object brought them into bitter competition with the English.

—**R.C. Majumdar, H.C. Raychaudhuri** and **K. Datta** in *An Advanced History of India*

profitable trade in Indonesia. They monopolised the trade in black pepper and spices. The most important Indian commodities the Dutch traded in were silk, cotton, indigo, rice and opium.

Decline of the Dutch in India

The Dutch got drawn into the trade of the Malay Archipelago. Further, in the third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74), communications between Surat and the new English settlement of Bombay got cut due to which three homebound English ships were captured in the Bay of Bengal by the Dutch forces. The retaliation by the English resulted in the defeat of the Dutch, in the battle of Hooghly (November 1759), which dealt a crushing blow to Dutch ambitions in India.

The Dutch were not much interested in empire building in India; their concerns were trade. In any case, their main commercial interest lay in the Spice Islands of Indonesia from where they earned a huge profit through business.

The English

Charter of Queen Elizabeth I

Francis Drake's voyage around the world in 1580 and the English victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588 generated a new sense of enterprise in the British, encouraging sailors to venture out to the East. As the knowledge grew of the high profits earned by the Portuguese in Eastern trade, English traders too wanted a share. So in 1599, a group of English merchants calling themselves the 'Merchant Adventurers' formed a company. On December 31, 1600, Queen Elizabeth I issued a charter with rights of exclusive trading to the company named the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies'. Initially, a monopoly of fifteen years was granted, which in May 1609 was extended indefinitely by a fresh charter. As the Dutch were already concentrating more on the East

Indies, the English turned to India in search of textiles and other commodities of trade.

Progress of the English Company

Foothold in West and South

Captain Hawkins arrived in the court of Jahangir in April 1609 itself. But the mission to establish a factory at Surat didn't succeed due to opposition from the Portuguese, and Hawkins left Agra in November 1611. In 1611, the English had started trading at Masulipatnam on the south-eastern coast of India and later established a factory there in 1616. It was in 1612 that Captain Thomas Best defeated the Portuguese in the sea off Surat; an impressed Jahangir granted permission to the English in early 1613 to establish a factory at Surat under Thomas Aldworth. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe came as an accredited ambassador of James I to the court of Jahangir, staying on there till February 1619. Though he was unsuccessful in concluding a commercial treaty with the Mughal emperor, he was able to secure a number of privileges, including permission to set up factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach.

The English company did not have a smooth progress. It had to contend with the Portuguese and the Dutch in the beginning. But the changing situation helped them and turned things in their favour. Bombay had been gifted to King Charles II by the King of Portugal as dowry when Charles married the Portuguese princess Catherine in 1662. Bombay was given over to the East India Company on an annual payment of ten pounds only in 1668. Later Bombay was made the headquarters by shifting the seat of the Western Presidency from Surat to Bombay in 1687. So there was tacit peace between the English and the Portuguese now. There was also an Anglo-Dutch compromise as mentioned earlier by which the Dutch agreed not to interfere with the English Company's trade in India. Thus the English were rid of two arch-rivals in India.

The English Company's position was improved by the 'Golden Farman' issued to them by the Sultan of Golconda in 1632. On a payment of 500 pagodas a year, they earned the privilege of trading freely in the ports of Golconda. A member of the Masulipatnam council, the British merchant Francis Day, in 1639 received from the ruler of Chandragiri permission to build a fortified factory at Madras which later became the Fort St. George and replaced Masulipatnam as the headquarters of the English settlements in south India. Thereafter, the English extended their trading activities to the east and started factories at Hariharpur in the Mahanadi delta and at Balasore (in Odisha) in 1633.

Foothold in Bengal

Bengal was then a large and rich province in India, advanced in trade and commerce. Commercial and political control over Bengal naturally appeared an attractive proposition to the profit-seeking English merchants. Bengal was also an important province of the Mughal empire.

Shah Shuja, the *subahdar* of Bengal in 1651, allowed the English to trade in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs 3,000, in lieu of all duties. Factories in Bengal were started at Hooghly (1651) and other places like Kasimbazar, Patna and Rajmahal. Nevertheless, despite the privileges of the *farmans,* the Company's business was now and then obstructed by customs officers in the local checkposts who asked for payment of tolls. In pursuance of its changed policy, the Company wanted to have a fortified settlement at Hooghly so that force could be used if necessary. William Hedges, the first agent and governor of the Company in Bengal, appealed to Shayista Khan, the Mughal governor of Bengal in August 1682, for redressal of the grievance. As nothing came out of the appeal, hostilities broke out between the English and the Mughals. Four years later, Hooghly was sacked by the imperial Mughals in October 1686. The English retaliated by capturing the imperial forts at Thana (modern

Garden Reach), raiding Hijli in east Midnapur and storming the Mughal fortifications at Balasore. However, the English were forced to leave Hooghly and were sent to an unhealthy location at the mouth of the River Ganga.

After the Mughal raid on Hooghly, **Job Charnock**, a company agent, started negotiations with the Mughals so as to return to a place called Sutanuti. Charnock signed a treaty with the Mughals in February 1690, and returned to Sutanuti in August 1690. Thus, an English factory was established on February 10, 1691, the day an imperial farman was issued permitting the English to "continue contentedly their trade in Bengal" on payment of Rs 3000 a year in lieu of all dues.

A zamindar in Bardhaman district, Sobha Singh, rebelled, subsequently giving the English the pretext they were looking for, to fortify their settlement at Sutanuti in 1696. In 1698, the English succeeded in getting the permission to buy the zamindari of the three villages of Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata (Kalighat) from their owners on payment of Rs 1,200. The fortified settlement was named **Fort William** in the year 1700 when it also became the seat of the eastern presidency (Calcutta) with Sir Charles Eyre as its first president.

Farrukhsiyar's Farmans

In 1715, an English mission led by John Surman to the court of the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar secured three famous *farmans*, giving the Company many valuable privileges in Bengal, Gujarat and Hyderabad. The *farmans* thus obtained were regarded the **Magna Carta** of the Company. Their important terms were—

- In Bengal, the Company's imports and exports were exempted from additional customs duties excepting the annual payment of 3,000 rupees as settled earlier.
- The Company was permitted to issue *dastaks* (passes) for the transportation of such goods.

Formative Years of the East India Company

1600 : The East India Company was established.
1609 : William Hawkins arrived at Jahangir's court.
1611 : Captain Middleton obtained the permission of the Mughal governor of Surat to trade there.
1613 : A permanent factory of East India Company was established at Surat.
1615 : Sir Thomas Roe, the ambassador of King James I, arrived at Jahangir's court. By 1618, the ambassador succeeded in obtaining two *farmans* (one each from the emperor and Prince Khurram) confirming free trade with exemption from inland tolls.
1616 : The Company established its first factory in the south in Masulipatnam.
1632 : The Company got the golden *farman* from the Sultan of Golconda which ensured safety and prosperity of their trade.
1633 : The Company established its first factory in east India in Hariharpur, Balasore (Odisha).
1639 : The Company got the lease of Madras from a local king.
1651 : The Company was given permission to trade at Hooghly (Bengal).
1662 : The British King, Charles II, was given Bombay as dowry for marrying a Portuguese princess (Catherine of Braganza).
1667 : Aurangzeb gave the English a *farman* for trade in Bengal.
1691 : The Company got the imperial order to continue their trade in Bengal in lieu of payment of Rs 3,000 a year.
1717 : The Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar issued a *farman*, called Magna Carta of the Company, giving the Company a large number of trade concessions.

- The Company was permitted to rent more lands around Calcutta.
- In Hyderabad, the Company retained its existing privilege of freedom from duties in trade and had to pay the prevailing rent only for Madras.
- In Surat, for an annual payment of 10,000 rupees, the East India Company was exempted from the levy of all duties.
- It was decreed that the coins of the Company minted at Bombay were to have currency throughout the Mughal empire.

Apparently, the English East India Company managed to earn a number of trading concessions in Bengal from the Mughal authority by means of flattery and diplomacy.

But the English had to vanquish the French before they could be rid of competitors and establish their complete sway over India.

Merging of Two English Companies

After the English revolution of 1688, the Whigs, with their enhanced influence, opposed the monopoly of the East India Company. Thus a rival company was formed which deputed Sir William Norris as its ambassador to the court of Aurangzeb (January 1701-April 1702) to gain trading privileges for itself. The new company, however, proved a failure. Under pressure from the Crown and the Parliament, the two companies were amalgamated in 1708 under the title of 'United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies'. This was the East India Company—from 1708 to 1873—which was to establish British political power in India.

The French

Foundation of French Centres in India

Although the French harboured a wish to engage in the commerce of the East since the opening years of the sixteenth century, their appearance on the Indian coasts was late. Indeed, the French were the last Europeans to come to India with the purpose of trade. During the reign of Louis XIV, the king's famous minister Colbert laid the foundation of the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (French East India Company) in 1664, in which the king also took a deep interest. The *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* was granted a 50-year monopoly on French trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The French king also granted the company a concession in perpetuity for the island of Madagascar, as well as any

other territories it could conquer. The Company spent a lot of its money and resources in trying to revive the colonies of Madagascar but without any success. Then in 1667, Francois Caron headed an expedition to India, setting up a factory in Surat. Mercara, a Persian who accompanied Caron, founded another French factory in Masulipatnam in 1669 after obtaining a patent from the Sultan of Golconda. In 1673, the French obtained permission from Shaista Khan, the Mughal Subahdar of Bengal, to establish a township at Chandernagore near Calcutta.

Pondicherry—Nerve Centre of French Power in India

In 1673, Sher Khan Lodi, the governor of Valikondapuram (under the Bijapur Sultan), granted Francois Martin, the director of the Masulipatnam factory, a site for a settlement. Pondicherry was founded in 1674. In the same year, Francois Martin replaced Caron as the French governor.

The French company established its factories in other parts of India also, particularly in the coastal regions. Mahe, Karaikal, Balasore and Qasim Bazar were a few important trading centres of the French East India Company.

After taking charge of Pondicherry in 1674, Francois Martin developed it as a place of importance. It was indeed, the stronghold of the French in India.

Early Setbacks to the French East India Company

The French position in India was badly affected with the outbreak of war between the Dutch and the French. Bolstered by their alliance with the English since the Revolution of 1688, the Dutch captured Pondicherry in 1693. Although the **Treaty of Ryswick** concluded in September 1697 restored Pondicherry to the French, the Dutch garrison held on to it for two more years. Once again, under Francois Martin's able guidance Pondicherry flourished and turned out to be the most important settlement of the French in India. Again there

was a bad turn in the fortunes of the French company in India when the War of Spanish Succession broke out in Europe. Consequent to this, they had to abandon their factories at Surat, Masulipatnam and Bantam in the early 18th century. The French in India had another setback when Francois Martin died on December 31, 1706.

Reorganisation of the French Company

In 1720, the French company was reorganised as the 'Perpetual Company of the Indies' which revived its strength. This was further enhanced by the stewardship of two active and wise governors, Lenoir and Dumas, between 1720 and 1742. Further, the French India was backed by the French possession of Mauritius and Reunion in the southern Indian Ocean.

The Anglo-French Struggle for Supremacy: the Carnatic Wars

Background of Rivalry

Though the British and the French came to India for trading purposes, they were ultimately drawn into the politics of India. Both had visions of establishing political power over the region. The Anglo-French rivalry in India reflected the traditional rivalry of England and France throughout their histories; it began with the outbreak of the Austrian War of Succession and ended with the conclusion of the Seven Years War. Specifically in India, the rivalry, in the form of three Carnatic wars, decided once for all that the English and not the French were to become masters of India.

In 1740, the political situation in south India was uncertain and confused. Nizam Asaf Jah of Hyderabad was old and fully engaged in battling the Marathas in the western Deccan while his subordinates were speculating upon the consequences of his death. To the south of his kingdom lay the Coromandel coast without any strong ruler to maintain a balance of power. Instead, there was the remnant of the old Vijayanagara empire in interior Mysore, Cochin and

Travancore in the Malabar coast, and on the east the small states of Madura (Madurai), Tanjore (Thanjavur) and Trichinopoly (Thiruchirapally). The decline of Hyderabad was the signal for the end of Muslim expansionism and the English adventurers got their plans ready. Also, there was the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore, providing the Peshwa of Pune an excuse for interference whenever he pleased.

First Carnatic War (1740-48)

Background Carnatic was the name given by the Europeans to the Coromandel coast and its hinterland. The First Carnatic War was an extension of the Anglo-French War in Europe which was caused by the Austrian War of Succession.

Immediate Cause Although France, conscious of its relatively weaker position in India, did not favour an extension of hostilities to India, the English navy under Barnet seized some French ships to provoke France. France retaliated by seizing Madras in 1746 with the help of the fleet from Mauritius, the Isle of France, under Admiral La Bourdonnais, the French governor of Mauritius. Thus began the first Carnatic War.

Result The First Carnatic War ended in 1748 when the ***Treaty of Aix-La Chapelle*** was signed bringing the Austrian War of Succession to a conclusion. Under the terms of this treaty, Madras was handed back to the English, and the French, in turn, got their territories in North America.

Significance The First Carnatic War is remembered for the Battle of St. Thome (in Madras) fought between the French forces and the forces of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Carnatic, to whom the English appealed for help. A small French army under Captain Paradise defeated the strong Indian army under Mahfuz Khan at St. Thome on the banks of the River Adyar. This was an eye-opener for the Europeans in India: it revealed that even a small disciplined army could easily defeat a much larger Indian army. Further, this war

adequately brought out the importance of naval force in the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan.

Second Carnatic War (1749-54)

Background The background for the Second Carnatic War was provided by rivalry in India. Dupleix, the French governor who had successfully led the French forces in the First Carnatic War, sought to increase his power and French political influence in southern India by interfering in local dynastic disputes to defeat the English.

Immediate Cause The opportunity was provided by the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the independent kingdom of Hyderabad, in 1748, and the release of Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic, by the Marathas in the same year. The accession of Nasir Jang, the son of the Nizam, to the throne of Hyderabad was opposed by Muzaffar Jang, the grandson of the Nawab, who laid claim to the throne saying that the Mughal Emperor had appointed him as the governor of the Carnatic. In the Carnatic, the appointment of Anwar-ud-din Khan as the Nawab was resented by Chanda Sahib.

The French supported the claims of Muzaffar Jang and Chanda Sahib in the Deccan and Carnatic, respectively, while the English sided with Nasir Jang and Anwar-ud-din.

Course of the War The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din at the Battle of Ambur (near Vellore) in 1749. Muzaffar Jang became the subahdar of Deccan, and Dupleix was appointed governor of all the Mughal territories to the south of the River Krishna. A French army under Bussy was stationed at Hyderabad to secure French interests there. Territories near Pondicherry and also some areas on the Orissa Coast (including Masulipatnam) were ceded to the French.

Having failed to provide effective assistance to Muhammad Ali at Trichinopoly, Robert Clive, then an agent

Rise and Fall of Dupleix in India

Joseph Francis Dupleix, born in 1697, was the son of a wealthy Farmer-General of Taxes and Director-General of the Company of the Indies. He got a high post at Pondicherry in 1720, allegedly on the basis of influence of his father. At Pondicherry he made a lot of money by private trade, which was then permitted to servants of the French company. In December 1726, he was suspended owing to drastic change in the constitution of the French company and some confusions arising out of that. In 1730, Dupleix won his case, and was appointed as governor of Chandernagore as compensation. In 1741, he was appointed as the Director-General of French colonies in India. Later, he was conferred the title of Nawab by the Mughal emperor and the Subahdar of Deccan, Muzzaffar Jang.

According to historians, Dupleix possessed qualities of an administrator, a diplomat, and a leader besides having political insight with a broad vision.

Dupleix in the Role of Administrator

In 1741, Dupleix became the Governor-General of Pondicherry. He found Pondicherry facing several problems—Maratha invasion, famine, uncultivated land and chaotic conditions in the Carnatic. Apart from these, the Directors of the Company, sought a drastic cut in expenditure of the French East India Company, owing to the priority given to the French colonies in North America. So, Dupleix reduced public expenditure, despite opposition of his council, and balanced income and expenditure, coupled with a cut on salaries of officers. However, he decided to disobey the directors on the matter of fortification of settlements. He enhanced the defences of Pondicherry, even spending a large sum from his personal wealth. He made Pondicherry the emporium of commerce in south India by taking practical steps to develop the trade of the colony. Later, the Directors of the Company praised Dupleix for taking the right decisions, even in contradiction of the directors.

Dupleix as a Master of Diplomacy

The analysis of the first two Carnatic wars proves the diplomacy of Dupleix as a leader who visualised the path of the European conquest of India.

Dupleix used the Nawab of Carnatic to forbid the English from

waging war in his territories so that the French settlements at Pondicherry could be protected till the French forces acquired enough strength. In return the nawab was promised Madras after the English got defeated. But Dupleix, using his diplomacy, didn't give Madras to the nawab and even defeated him at St. Thome (1746).

Dupleix convinced Admiral La Bourdonnais to break promises made to the English, citing examples from history that promises made under certain circumstances were never binding. Further, he said that since the position of the governor-general was superior to that of the commander of navy, the compact entered into between the latter and the English was *ultra vires.* Thus, he was able to convince his subordinate to do what was considered unethical in general terms, but best suited for one's nation.

Dupleix was the first European to interfere in the internal politics of the Indian rulers. He supported Muzzaffar Jang for Hyderabad and Chanda Sahib for Carnatic and his candidates emerged successful and, in return, gave great concessions to Dupleix.

Dupleix was, in fact, the originator of the practice of subsidiary alliance in India. He placed a French army at Hyderabad at the expense of the subahdar.

Why Dupleix Failed in India

Dupleix was recalled in 1754 due to the initial defeat of the French army in the Second Carnatic War and the heavy cost incurred by the company due to Dupleix's political decisions. Many historians have called the recall of Dupleix by the directors as a blunder—a result of a compromise between France and England over issues in America; however, there were some weaknesses in Dupleix also, which can be put in brief as follows:

(i) Dupleix suffered from an over-sanguine temperament. He hoped too often for too long, thus losing the advantage in critical situations.

(ii) The peers of Dupleix didn't like his autocratic behaviour and on many occasions quarrelled with him on this matter.

(iii) Dupleix was not a man of action: he planned a campaign, directed his lieutenants, but never led an army in the battlefield like Lawrence or Clive. The French failed to capture Trichnopoly (1752-53) because the schemes thought out by Dupleix could not be turned into action by his commanders.

('factor') of the English company, put forward the proposal for a diversionary attack on the governor of Madras, Saunders. He suggested a sudden raid on Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, so as to relieve the pressure on Trichinopoly. He reasoned that in such an event Chanda Sahib would rush to save his capital. Thus, in August 1751, with only a force of 210 men Robert Clive attacked and captured Arcot. As expected, Chanda Sahib hastened to his capital, taking a force of 4,000 men from Trichinopoly, but failed to get back the fort even after a siege of 53 days, from September 23 to November 14. Now Mysore, Tanjore and the Maratha chief, Morari Rao, came to the aid of Trichinopoly, and of Clive and Stringer Lawrence. Trichinopoly was first relieved of its siege, while General Law of France with Chanda Sahib remained cooped up in the island of Srirangam. They were forced to surrender in June 1752 when Muhammad Ali executed Chanda Sahib, the British failing to interfere.

Views

The struggle between Dupleix and Clive in India, the defence of Arcot and the deeds which led to the founding of our Indian Empire… all these events were part of a desperate struggle for supremacy between England and France.

—J.R. Seeley

We may regard Dupleix as the most striking figure in the short Indian episode of that long and arduous contest for transmarine dominion which was fought out between France and England in the eighteenth century, although it was far beyond his power to influence the ultimate destiny of either nation in India, and although the result of his plans was that 'we accomplished for ourselves against the French exactly everything that the French intended to accomplish for themselves against us' (Clive). It is certain, moreover, that the conception of an Indian Empire had already been formed by others besides Dupleix, and that more than one clearheaded observer had perceived how easily the whole country might be subdued by an European power.

—Alfred Lyall

Result The French authorities, annoyed at the heavy financial losses that Dupleix's policy involved, decided to recall him in 1754. Godeheu succeeded Dupleix as the French Governor-General in India. Godeheu adopted a policy of negotiations with the English and concluded a treaty with them. The English and the French agreed not to interfere in the quarrels of native princes. Also, each party was left in possession of the territories actually occupied by them at the time of the treaty. According to historians, the fear of serious repercussions in America prompted the French to suspend hostilities in India.

Implications It became evident that the countenance of Indian authority was no longer necessary for European success; rather Indian authority itself was becoming dependent on European support. Muhammad Ali in the Carnatic and Salabat Jang in Hyderabad became clients rather than patrons.

Third Carnatic War (1758-63)

Background In Europe, when Austria wanted to recover Silesia in 1756, the Seven Years War (1756-63) started. Britain and France were once again on opposite sides.

Course of War in India In 1758, the French army under Count de Lally captured the English forts of St. David and Vizianagaram in 1758. Now, the English became offensive and inflicted heavy losses on the French fleet under Admiral D'Ache at Masulipatnam.

Battle of Wandiwash The decisive battle of the Third Carnatic War was won by the English on January 22, 1760 at Wandiwash (or Vandavasi) in Tamil Nadu. General Eyre Coote of the English totally routed the French army under Count Thomas Arthur de Lally and took Bussy as prisoner.

Pondicherry was gallantly defended by Lally for eight months before he surrendered on January 16, 1761. With the loss of Jinji and Mahe, the French power in India was reduced to its lowest. Lally, after being taken as prisoner of war at London, returned to France where he was imprisoned and executed in 1766.

Result and Significance The Third Carnatic War

View

While the English received supplies of food and money from Bengal, recruits of men from Europe, and grain from their northern settlements, the French could receive nothing but what came to them laboriously by land. The first were constantly strengthened, the second was constantly weakened. And this enabled Coote to establish his military superiority over Lally in the field and to hem him within the walls of Pondicherry.

—H.H. Dodwell

(The Cambridge History of India, Vol V)

proved decisive. Although the ***Treaty of Peace of Paris*** (1763) restored to the French their factories in India, the French political influence disappeared after the war. Thereafter, the French, like their Portuguese and Dutch counterparts in India, confined themselves to their small enclaves and to commerce. The English became the supreme European power in the Indian subcontinent, since the Dutch had already been defeated in the Battle of Bidara in 1759.

The Battle of Plassey, in 1757, is usually regarded by historians as the decisive event that brought about ultimate British rule over India. However, one cannot quite ignore the view that the true turning point for control of the subcontinent was the victory of British forces over the French forces at Wandiwash in 1760. The victory at Wandiwash left the English East India Company with no European rival in India. Thus they were ready to take over the rule of the entire country.

Significantly, in the Battle of Wandiwash, natives served in both the armies as sepoys. It makes one think: irrespective of which side won, there was an inevitability about the fall of India to European invaders. There was a lack of sensitivity to geopolitics of the day as well as a lack of foresight on the part of native rulers.

Causes for the English Success and the French Failure

The English company was a private enterprise—this created a sense of enthusiasm and self-confidence among the people.

About the Goods in Trade Initially

There are accounts by various European travellers and traders about the activities in port towns such as Surat which give details of the intricate steps that went into the creation of fabrics collectively called 'Indian'.

Great demand was there for cotton longcloth, (usually 35 to 50 m in length), salempores (staple cotton cloth), and morees (superior quality cotton cloth). Other much desired fabrics were the painted cloths and prints, the silks and dyes. These textiles were not just in demand in Europe but also in other parts of Asia. Indians had traded in textiles for centuries before the Europeans arrived. In China, Japan and the Indonesian archipelago, Indian cotton was popular for its lightweight, yet strong qualities. When the Dutch, English and French acquired materials from India, it was not only for their home countries, but for transport to Malacca or Java, for example, where they were traded for spices. By the 18th century, the French had coloured patterned handkerchiefs specially woven for particular island markets - which proved a successful entrepreneurial effort.

A corollary to the trade in textiles and spices was the trade in slaves. It is generally considered that slave trade concerned Europe, Africa, and the Americas (the 'New World'), but this ignores the fact that trade between Europe and Asia also helped to sustain slavery. French ships took European goods to Asia, where they acquired cowry shells and Indian textiles that were highly valued in West Africa. Traders exchanged these goods in Africa for slaves, who were sent to the colonies of France in the Americas. "The circle was completed," says the Yale Center for the Study of Globalisation, "when sugar and other goods from the Americas were loaded on board and shipped back to France."

When the French East India Company started trading in India, they entered an already well established, complex economic system, an intricate network of production, negotiation, delivery, and distribution. Large commercial fleets as well as prosperous shore-based businesses were run by Indian merchants. Weavers and merchants worked with overland freight operators and brokers, who worked with exporters and ship owners. These agents had also to negotiate with local state officials for commercial privileges. The European traders had to learn well established rules and practices and successfully collaborate with indigenous envoys.

The factories of all the European trading groups were to be found in practically at the same places. At the peak of the Indian trade, the demand for Indian goods exceeded the supply by weavers and other artisans; even so there was no serious rivalry initially. But as the three companies—the Dutch, the English and the French—grew more competitive, the English, better funded and better conversant in local business practices and customs, were able to expand their factory outposts to larger industrial towns under their jurisdiction. Gradually, these commercial strongholds turned into political enclaves, ultimately enabling the English to expand and consolidate their power and control all over India.

With less governmental control over it, this company could take instant decisions when needed without waiting for the approval of the government. The French company, on the other hand, was a State concern. It was controlled and regulated by the French government and was hemmed in by government policies and delays in decision-making.

The English navy was superior to the French navy; it helped to cut off the vital sea link between the French possessions in India and France.

The English held three important places, namely, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras whereas the French had only Pondicherry.

The French subordinated their commercial interest to territorial ambition, which made the French company short of funds.

In spite of their imperialistic motives, the British never neglected their commercial interests. So they always had the funds and the consequent sound financial condition to help them significantly in the wars against their rivals.

A major factor in the success of the English in India was the superiority of the commanders in the British camp. In comparison to the long list of leaders on the English side —Sir Eyre Coote, Major Stringer Lawrence, Robert Clive and many others—there was only Dupleix on the French side.

The Danes

The Danish East India Company was established in 1616 and, in 1620, they founded a factory at Tranquebar near Tanjore, on the eastern coast of India. Their principal settlement was at Serampore near Calcutta. The Danish factories, which were not important at any time, were sold to the British government in 1845. The Danes are better known for their missionary activities than for commerce.

Why the English Succeeded against Other European Powers

Of all the European nations who came as traders to India after new sea routes were discovered, England emerged as the most powerful and successful by the end of the eighteenth century. The major factors which can be attributed for the success of the English against other European powers—Portugal, the Netherlands, France and Denmark—in the world in general and in India in particular were as follows:

Structure and Nature of the Trading Companies

The English East India Company, formed through amalgamation of several rival companies at home, was controlled by a board of directors whose members were elected annually. The shareholders of the company exercised considerable influence, as the votes could be bought and sold through purchase of shares. The trading companies of France and Portugal were largely owned by the State and their nature was in many ways feudalistic.

In the French company, the monarch had more than 60 per cent share and, its directors were nominated by the monarch from the shareholders who were supposed to carry on the decisions of two high commissioners appointed by

the government. The shareholders took very little interest in promoting the prosperity of the company, because the State guaranteed a dividend to the shareholders. The lack of public interest could be inferred from the fact that between 1725 and 1765, there was no meeting of the shareholders and the company was simply managed as a department of the State.

Naval Superiority

The Royal Navy of Britain was not only the largest; it was most advanced of its times. The victory against the Spanish Armada and against the French at Trafalgar had put the Royal Navy at the peak of the European naval forces. In India too, the British were able to defeat the Portuguese and the French due to strong and fast movement of the naval ships. The English learnt from the Portuguese the importance of an efficient navy and improved their own fleet technologically.

Industrial Revolution

The Industrial Revolution started in England in the early 18th century, with the invention of new machines like the spinning Jenny, steam engine, the power loom and several others. These machines greatly improved production in the fields of textile, metallurgy, steam power and agriculture. The industrial revolution reached other European nations late and this helped England to maintain its hegemony.

Military Skill and Discipline

The British soldiers were a disciplined lot and well trained. The British commanders were strategists who tried new tactics in warfare. Technological developments equipped the military well. All this combined to enable smaller groups of English fighters defeat larger armies.

Stable Government

With the exception of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Britain witnessed stable government with efficient monarchs.

Other European nations like France witnessed violent revolution in 1789 and afterwards the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon's defeat in 1815, significantly weakened France's position and from then on it was forced to side with Britain. The Italians were united as a nation as late in 1861. The Dutch and Spain were also involved in the 80-years war in the 17th century which weakened Portuguese imperialism. The Dutch East India Company, affected by bankruptcy in 1800 coupled with the revolution in 1830, was forced to sell its possessions to Britain and quit Asia.

Lesser Zeal for Religion

Britain was less zealous about religion and less interested in spreading Christianity, as compared to Spain, Portugal or Dutch. Thus, its rule was far more acceptable to the subjects than that of other colonial powers.

Use of Debt Market

One of the major and innovative reasons why Britain succeeded between the mid-eighteenth century and the mid-nineteenth century, while other European nations fell, was that it used the debt markets to fund its wars. The world's first central bank—*the Bank of England*—was established to sell government debt to the money markets on the promise of a decent return on Britain's defeating rival countries like France and Spain. Britain was thus enabled to spend much more on its military than its rivals. Britain's rival France could not match the expenditure of the English; between 1694 and 1812, first under the monarchs, then under the revolutionary governments and finally under Napoleon Bonaparte, France simply went bankrupt with its outdated ways of raising money.

Summary

Why a Sea Route to India

(i) Spirit of renaissance in the 15th-century Europe.
(ii) European economy growing rapidly, leading to prosperity and demand for luxury goods; increase in the supply of meat requiring spices for preservation.
(iii) Capture of Constantinople in 1453, and Syria and Egypt later by the Ottoman Turks calling for a new route to reach India without dealing with Arabs and Turks.
(iv) Venice and Genoa too small to stand up to the Turks.
(v) Spain and Portugal aided with money and men by the North Europeans and by ships and technical knowledge by the Genoese.
(vi) The Portuguese the pioneers followed by the Dutch, English, Danes and the French respectively to reach India.

The Portuguese

Vasco Da Gama discovered sea route to India in 1498.

Vasco's second visit in 1502 led to the establishment of trading stations at Calicut, Cochin and Cannanore.

Francisco de Almeida (1505-09) First governor, initiated the blue water policy (cartaze system).

Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515) Considered to be the founder of the Portuguese power in India: captured Goa from Bijapur; persecuted Muslims; captured Bhatkal from Sri Krishna Deva Rai (1510) of the Vijayanagar; and initiated the policy of marrying with the natives of India and banned the practice of *sati* in his area of influence.

Nino de Cunha (1529-38) shifted the capital from Cochin to Goa in 1530. In his rule, Diu and Bassein came under the Portuguese occupation from Gujarat King Bahadur Shah. Bahadur Shah got killed in 1537 at Diu while negotiating with the Portuguese.

Factors for Decline of the Portuguese in India (a) emergence of powerful dynasties in Egypt, Persia and north India and the appearance of the Marathas as neighbours; (b) political fears aroused by the activities of Jesuit missionaries, and hatred of persecution (such as inquisition) that caused reaction against Portuguese spiritual pressure; (c) rise of the English and Dutch commercial ambitions challenging the Portuguese supremacy; (d) rampant corruption, greed and selfishness along with piracy and clandestine trade practices of the Portuguese administration in India; (e) diversion of Portuguese colonising ambitions towards the West due to the discovery of Brazil.

The Dutch

(i) The United East India Company of the Netherlands ***(Verehgidge Oost Indische Compagnie),*** formed in March 1602 by the Charter of Dutch Parliament, had the powers to wage wars, make treaty and build forts.

(ii) **Dutch Factories in India** Masulipatnam (1605), Pulicat (1610), Surat (1616), Bimlipatam (1641), Karikal (1645), Chinsurah (1653), Cassimbazar (Kasimbazar), Baranagore, Patna, Balasore, Nagapatam (1658) and Cochin (1663).

(iii) **Decline in India** The defeat of the Dutch in the Anglo-Dutch rivalry and the shifting of Dutch attention towards the Malay Archipelago.

(iv) **Battle of Bidara (1759)** The English defeated the Dutch.

The English

Factors for Foundation Drake's voyage round the world, and English victory over the mighty Spanish Armada leading to great ambitions.

Formation English East India Company was formed on December 31, 1600 by the charter issued by Queen Elizabeth I, which gave the company monopoly to trade in the East Indies for 15 years.

Settlements in India (i) With Captain Thomas Best's victory over the Portuguese (1612), the English established their first factory at Surat (1613). Subsequently Sir Thomas Roe secured permission from Jehangir to establish factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach.

(ii) Bombay came under the control of the Company, with Charles II (who received it as a part of the Portuguese dowry) leasing it out to the English Company for an annual rent of 10 pounds.

(iii) Madras with the Fort St. George replaced Masulipatnam as the English headquarters on the east coast, when the former was given by the Chandragiri chief to the English in 1639.

(iv) The city of Calcutta grew from the development of three villages Sutanuti, Gobindapur and Kalikata secured from the Mughal governor of Bengal. The fortified settlement was named Fort William (1700) and it became the seat of British power in India till 1911.

Farrukhsiyar's Farmans In 1717, the Mughal Emperor Farrukhsiyar's farmans, called Magna Carta of the East India Company, gave significant privileges to the Company in Bengal, Gujarat and Hyderabad.

Problems of Company at Home In 1635, a rival company named Courteen Association later called the Assada company, formed by Sir William Courteen, was given license to trade by Charles I. In 1657, both the companies merged.

In 1698, another rival company emerged. In 1702, the rivalry between the old and the new company came to an end, but their final amalgamation took place in 1708 under the title 'The United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies, after the arbitration of the Earl of Godolphin. This Company ruled in India till 1858.

The French

Foundation In 1664, Colbert, a minister of Louis XIV, laid the foundations of *Compagnie des Indes Orientales.*

Settlements in India Pondicherry, developed as headquarters, was granted to Francois Martin, the director of Masulipatnam factory, by Valikondapuram governor Sher Khan Lodi in 1673. Finally incorporated into Indian Union in 1954.

Anglo-French Rivalry in India The Anglo-French rivalry in India coincided with the wars between the English and French in Europe.

Causes ● For protection and expansion of commercial interests.
● Political developments in the south India and Europe provided pretexts to contest their claims which culminated in three Carnatic wars.

First Carnatic War (1740-48) It was an extension of the Anglo-French rivalry in Europe and ended in 1748 with the Treaty of **Aix-La Chapelle.**

Second Carnatic War (1749-54) Although inconclusive, it undermined the French power in South India vis-à-vis the English.

Third Carnatic War (1758-63) ● A decisive war, known for the Battle of Wandiwash (1760-61);
● An echo of the Anglo-French struggle in Europe.
● By the **Treaty of Paris** (1763), the French were allowed to use Indian settlements for commercial purposes only and fortification of settlements were banned.

Causes of the French Failure ● Inadequate Military and Financial Support
● France's Involvement in Europe
● Ill-managed Policy of Imperial France
● Lack of Commercial Incentive to the French Company
● Sound Commercial Base of the English Company