

History lesson 2: Trade to territory (Notes part 2)

War with the Marathas

- After the defeat in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761, marathas were divided into many states under different chiefs (sardars) belonging to dynasties such as Sindhia, Holkar, Gaikwad and Bhonsle.
- Chiefs were held together in a confederacy under a Peshwa (Principal Minister) .
- Anglo-Marathas war were fought between these and the company.
 - The first war that ended in 1782 with the Treaty of Salbai, there was no clear victor.
 - The Second Anglo- Maratha War (1803-05) resulting in the British gaining Orissa and the territories north of the Yamuna river including Agra and Delhi.
 - The Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-19 crushed Maratha power, the Peshwa was removed and Company now had complete control over the territories south of the Vindhyas.

The claim to paramountcy

- Under Lord Hastings (Governor-General from 1813 to 1823) a new policy of "paramountcy" was initiated which claimed its power was greater than that of Indian states.
- In order to protect its interests it was justified in annexing or threatening to annex any Indian kingdom.
- In the late 1830s the East India Company became worried about Russia as Russia might expand across Asia and enter India from the north-west.
- They fought a prolonged war with Afghanistan between 1838 and 1842 and established indirect Company rule there.
- Sind was taken over in 1843.
- After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, two prolonged wars were fought with the Sikh kingdom and in 1849, Punjab was annexed.

The Doctrine of Lapse

- Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General from 1848 to 1856 devised a policy that came to be known as the Doctrine of Lapse.
 - It declared that if an Indian ruler died without a male heir his kingdom would "lapse", that is, become part of Company territory.
- Many kingdoms were annexed under this rule:
 - Satara in 1848
 - Sambalpur in 1850
 - Udaipur in 1852
 - Nagpur in 1853
 - Jhansi in 1854
 - Awadh in 1856

Setting up a New Administration

- Warren Hastings (Governor-General from 1773 to 1785) played a significant role in the expansion of Company power.
- British territories were broadly divided into administrative units called Presidencies. There were three Presidencies:
 - Bengal
 - Madras
 - Bombay.
- Each was ruled by a Governor and the supreme head of the administration was the Governor-General.
- From 1772 a new system of justice was established.

- Each district was to have two courts
 - a criminal court (faujdari adalat)
 - a civil court (diwani adalat)
- In Civil courts, Maulvis and Hindu pandits interpreted Indian laws for the European district collectors.
- The criminal courts were still under a qazi and a mufti but under the supervision of the collectors.
- The collector main job was to collect revenue and taxes and maintain law and order in his district with the help of judges, police officers and darogas.

The Company army

- From the 1820s, the cavalry requirements of the Company's army declined because the British empire was fighting in Burma, Afghanistan and Egypt where soldiers were armed with muskets and matchlocks.
- In the early nineteenth century, the British began to develop a uniform military culture.
- The soldiers were given European-style training and were subjected to drill and discipline.

Conclusion

- The East India Company was transformed from a trading company to a territorial colonial power.
 - By 1857 the Company came to exercise direct rule over about 63 percent of the territory and 78 percent of the population of the Indian subcontinent.
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