

Part III- WORKSHEET

Std. 8 – History Chapter 2 - From Trade to Territory - The Company Establishes Power

Let's discuss

Note for the teacher: This worksheet may be used by the teacher for discussion.

This worksheet covers short and long questions and source based questions.

Q 1: What is a royal charter?



Fort William, the headquarters of the British East India Company in Kolkata, India

Suggested Answer:- In 1600, Queen Elizabeth, the ruler of England, granted a charter to the East India Company. The charter gave the Company the sole right to trade with the East and no other English trading group could compete with it in the East. In those days, mercantile trading companies made profit mainly by excluding competition. Lack of competition enabled them to buy cheap and sell dear.

Q2: Why did the English East India Company feel it necessary to involve itself in feuds amongst Indian rulers?

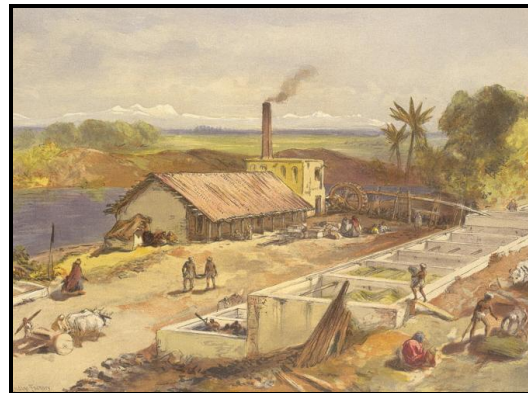


The English East India Company originally came as a small trading company. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the French were already trading with India. With the royal charter, they could not prevent other European powers from entering the Eastern markets. To eliminate rival competition and secure markets the English East India Company resorted to various unfair practices. Trade was carried on with arms and trading posts were protected through fortification. This effort to fortify settlements and carry on profitable trade also led to intense conflict with local rulers who were not united. The company therefore found it difficult to separate trade from politics and exploited our own weakness to emerge on the political horizon.

Q3: How did the East India Company establish trade in India and enter the political scene?



East Indiaman



Indigo dye factory in Bengal

In 1600, the East India Company got a charter from the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I, granting it the sole right to trade with the East. Initially, the prime objective of the Company was the expansion of trade.

East India Company started its first factory in West Bengal, on the banks of the River Hugli, in 1651. This was the base from which the Company's traders, known at that time as "factors",

operated. The factory had a warehouse where goods for export were stored, and it had offices where Company officials would sit.

As trade developed, the Company asked local merchants, who acted as middle men for them, to come and settle near the 'factory'. By 1696, the Company built a fort around the settlement of merchants. In 1698, the company got Zamindari rights for 3 villages, from the Mughal ruler. Thus they entered the political scene in India.

Q4: Write a short note on the wars between the Marathas and the British East India Company?



Battle of Assaye during the Second Anglo-Maratha War

The Marathas were divided into many states under different chiefs (sardars) belonging to dynasties such as Sindhia, Holkar, Gaikwad and Bhonsle. These chiefs were held together in a confederacy under a Peshwa (Principal Minister) who became its effective military and administrative head based in Pune.

To suppress the Marathas, the Britishers fought three wars with them.

First Anglo-Maratha War: – The first war ended with the Treaty of Salbai. There was no decisive victory after this war.

Second Anglo-Maratha War: – The second war resulted in the British gaining Orissa, Agra and Delhi.

Third Anglo-Maratha War: – The third war broke the power of the Marathas.

The Company now had complete control over the territories south of the Vindhya.

Q5: What were the administrative reforms introduced by Warren Hastings especially in the sphere of justice.



Warren Hastings



The judges and officers of Hindu (top row) and Muslim (bottom row) law in the Recorder Court in Bombay, 1805

Warren Hastings introduced several administrative reforms especially in the sphere of justice.

Each district was to have two courts -

- a criminal court (faujdari adalat) and
 - a civil court (diwani adalat)
1. Maulvis and Hindu pandits interpreted Indian laws for the European district collectors who presided over civil courts.
 2. The criminal courts were still under a qazi and a mufti but under the supervision of the collectors.

However this system of courts had its own drawback, as the local laws, based on different schools of the dharmashastra, were differently interpreted by each Brahmin pandit.

- In 1775, a digest of Hindu laws was compiled by 11 pandits.

- N.B. Halhed translated this digest into English.
- By 1778 a code of Muslim laws was also compiled for the benefit of European judges.
- Under the Regulating Act of 1773, a new Supreme Court was established.
- A court of appeal – the Sadar Nizamat Adalat, was also set up at Calcutta.
- The principal figure in an Indian district was the Collector.
- Collector's 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 collectorate became the new centre of power.

Q 6: Read the following extract taken from NCERT text book and answer the questions that follow.

The Nawab Complains

In 1733 the Nawab of Bengal said this about the English traders:

When they first came into the country they petitioned the then government in a humble manner for liberty to purchase a spot of ground to build a factory house upon, which no sooner granted but they built a strong fort, surrounded it with a ditch which has communication with the river and mounted a great number of guns upon the walls. They have enticed several merchants and others to go and take protection under them and they collect a revenue which amounts to Rs100, 000 ... They rob and plunder and carry a great number of king's subjects of both sexes into slavery into their own country....

They have enticed several merchants and others to go and take protection under them.

Questions:

(i) What intention did the English traders show initially?

(ii) How did their activities divert later on?

Answers:

(i) When the English traders first came to India they were very humble and polite. They showed interest only in trade. They petitioned the then government in a humble manner for liberty to

purchase a plot of ground to build a factory house for storing their goods for export and for offices the Company officials to sit.

(ii) Slowly and steadily the English traders began to be impolite and rude; refusing to pay taxes, writing disrespectful letters, and trying to humiliate the nawab and his officials. They built a strong fort, surrounded it with a ditch which had communication with the river and mounted a great number of guns upon the walls. They took great number of the king's subjects (men and women) into slavery.

Q 7: Read the following extract taken from NCERT text book and answer the questions that follow.

How did Clive see himself?

At a hearing in front of a committee in Parliament, Clive declared that he had shown admirable restraint after the Battle of Plassey.

This is what he said:

Consider the situation at which the victory at Plassey had placed me! A great prince was dependent on my pleasure; an opulent city lay at my mercy; its richest bankers bid against each other for my smiles; I walked through vaults which were thrown open to me alone, piled on either hand with gold and jewels! Mr. Chairman, at this moment I stand astonished at my moderation.

Questions:-

(i) What is the hearing referring to?

(ii) What were Clive's justifications?

(iii) What was the final outcome of the hearing?

(i) The Battle of Plassey was the first major victory for the Company. After the battle in 1772 Robert Clive was cross examined by the British Parliament which was suspicious of his vast wealth. He had come to Madras (now Chennai) from England in 1743 at the age of 18. When in 1767 he left India his Indian fortune was worth £401,102. The hearing refers to this cross-examination of Clive.

(ii) Clive tried to justify his wealth which he referred to as moderate, by explaining to the British Parliament his situation in India after the Battle of Plassey. He describes himself to be in the

midst of luxury, where prince's , bankers and a wealthy city were ready to offer him all their wealth in gold and jewels just to win favours from him and keep him happy; and in fact expresses that he is astonished that his wealth was moderate and he could have amassed even more.

(iii) Although Robert Clive was acquitted, he committed suicide in 1774.

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