

KNOWLEDGE ORGANISER

The Freedom Fight_Indian National Movement

The arrival of the East India Company marks the beginning of the modern period of the Indian History. The **modern period** is also known as the **colonial period** because India then became a colony of the British. The other European trading companies such as those of the Portuguese, Dutch and French were also established in India.

The English East India Company

A group of English merchants formed the English East India Company for exploring the possibility of trade with East and Southeast Asia and India. On 31 December 1600 Queen Elizabeth I, the ruler of England, signed a Royal Charter granting monopoly to the East India Company to trade with East India.

Expansion of the English East India Company rule in Bengal

The Battle of Plassey

When?	1757
Why?	The Company officials refused to pay tax on their private trade causing a huge loss of revenue to Bengal. They also misused the power to issue <i>dastaks</i> in order to avoid taxes on their private trade. Further, the English were ordered to demolish their fortification at Calcutta however, they did not obey even after the orders were repeated. The refusal of the British to do so enraged the Nawab of Bengal Siraj-ud-daulah; he attacked the English factory at Cassimbazar and seized it. Soon, he captured Fort William after a feeble resistance by the British.
What happened further?	After hearing the capture of Calcutta, the Company officials at Madras sent a large military expedition under Robert Clive and Admiral Watson. Without any serious fighting, they recaptured Calcutta. The English exploited the internal situation in Bengal by intrigue and treachery. They conspired with Mir Jafar, the Commander-in-Chief of Siraj-ud-daulah and also won over the leading men of Nawab's court such as Manikchand (the officer in charge of Calcutta), Omichand (a rich merchant) and Jagat Sheth (banker). With their support, the English forces defeated Siraj-ud-daulah in the Battle of Plassey. He was assassinated after the defeat.
How far was the impact?	English proclaimed Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal. The Company got free trading rights in the province of Bengal. Robert Clive and his colleagues acquired the <i>zamindari</i> of 24 <i>Parganas</i> and a large amount of money for the Company. The Battle of Plassey proved to be significant for the British as it paved the way for the British conquest of Bengal and eventually establish their foothold in the whole of India.

The Battle of Buxar

When?	1764
Why?	Mir Jafar was only a puppet in the hands of the English; in practice all the affairs were managed by Robert Clive. Mir Jafar was unable to satisfy the Company's heavy demands as he had purchased his position. When he protested, the Company deposed him and placed his son-in-law, Mir Qasim, as the Nawab of Bengal. Soon, Mir Qasim realised his dependence on the Company and tried to free himself from its control. Mir Qasim formed an alliance with Shuja-ud-daulah (the Nawab of Awadh) and Shah Alam II (the Mughal emperor).
What happened further?	The battle was fought at Buxar between the Company forces and the joint forces of Mir Qasim and his allies. The Battle of Buxar resulted in the defeat of Mir Qasim, and Mir Jafar was reinstated.
How far was the impact?	The Nawab had to pay Rupees fifty lakhs every month but the Company wanted more money to finance its wars, and meet the demands of trade and its other expenses. In 1765, the Mughal emperor appointed the Company as the <i>Diwan</i> of the provinces of Bengal. The <i>Diwani</i> allowed the Company to use the vast revenue resources of Bengal. This solved a major problem that the Company had earlier faced. From the early eighteenth century its trade with India had expanded. But it had to buy most of the goods in India with gold and silver imported from Britain. This was because at this time Britain had no goods to sell in India. The outflow of gold from Britain slowed after the Battle of Plassey, and entirely stopped after the assumption of <i>Diwani</i> . Now revenues from India could finance Company expenses. These revenues could be used to purchase cotton and silk textiles in India, maintain Company troops, and meet the cost of building the Company fort and offices at Calcutta.

Further, the Anglo-Maratha wars, the Mysore wars and the Anglo-Sikh wars established the Company as the paramount or supreme power in India.

What makes the year 1857 memorable for India?

Discontent among the ruling families

The court proceedings were monitored by the British Residents due to which the freedom of the rulers was curbed. The British did not recognise the claim of the adopted son of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi as the heir to the kingdom. The British refused to continue the pension of ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II to his adopted son, Nana Saheb. The dethronement of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah infuriated the Company's sepoy as most of them came from Awadh.

Resentment among peasants and artisans

The peasants and zamindars resented the high revenue demands. They were exploited by the moneylenders who confiscated their land for failure to pay back their loans. The British laid more emphasis on commercial crops such as indigo due to which the self-sufficient village economy was destroyed. The British policy also discouraged Indian handicrafts. Artisans and craftspersons were ruined and were forced to look for the alternate source of income.

Causes of the Great Uprising of 1857

Discontent among sepoys and immediate cause

The sepoys were fed and lodged in a worse manner than their British counterparts. They were treated with great contempt. They had a strong sense of resentment as they were paid much less than their British counterparts. They had no prospect of promotion to higher posts. The Enfield Rifle introduced by the British needed a special type of cartridge which was covered with greased paper. The paper had to be bitten off before loading the cartridge into the rifle. The grease used in the paper contained beef and pig fat.

Indian responses to reforms

The British passed several laws to reform the India society. Some of the legislations sought to remove socio-religious abuses such as Sati, and to encourage widow remarriage. Such activities filled the people with fear that the British were not only destroying their religion but also their social and traditional way of life.

Some important personalities

A sepoy named Mangal Pandey at Barrackpur refused to use the new Enfield rifle and fired at Lieutenant Baugh. He was arrested and executed.

Nana Saheb, the adopted son of the last Peshwa Baji Rao II, who had been living near Kanpur led the uprising. He ousted the British garrison from the city and proclaimed himself the Peshwa.

Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi joined the rebel sepoys and fought against the British forces. The British forces under Sir Hugh Rose occupied the fort and the city of Jhansi.

Kunwar Singh, a discontented zamindar, was the chief organiser of the uprising in Arrah (Bihar).

The uprising was organised under the leadership of Begum Hazrat Mahal, the queen of last deposed Nawab Wajid Ali Shah at Lucknow.

Avantibai Lodhi of Ramgarh raised and led an army of four thousand against the British who had taken over the administration of her state

How far was the impact of the Great Uprising of 1857?

- The British Parliament passed a new Act in 1858 and transferred the powers of the East India Company to the British Crown in order to ensure a more responsible management of Indian affairs. The Indian States made to acknowledge the paramountcy of the British Crown as their Sovereign Paramount (their supreme ruler).
- The Governor-General of India was given the title of Viceroy, that is, a personal representative of

the Crown. Lord Canning was the Governor-General during the time of the uprising. He was to continue as the Viceroy.

- All ruling chiefs of the country were assured that their territory would never be annexed in future. They were allowed to pass on their kingdoms to their heirs, including adopted sons. However, they were made to acknowledge the British Queen as their Sovereign Paramount. Thus the Indian rulers were to hold their kingdoms as subordinates of the British Crown.
- Thorough reorganisation of the Indian army was another important outcome of the uprising. It was decided that the proportion of the European soldiers to Indian sepoys would be increased in the army to prevent future uprisings. The Indian soldiers would be recruited from the Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans.
- The British believed that the Muslims were responsible for the uprising. Therefore their land and property was confiscated on large scale.
- The British Government also proclaimed to abstain from all interference with the religious and social customs of the Indian subjects.

A new beginning for India

The impact of the colonial rule on India

Impact on society

- The decision to make English as the medium of Indian education failed to take into account the Muslims and women.
- The government was not willing to spend on education more than the money allotted for the purpose and relied on the 'filtration theory'. According to the theory, the government would educate a handful of Indians who would expect to educate the masses and spread modern ideas among them.
- The establishment of the British power consequently led to the dissemination of colonial culture and ideology that resulted in a critical analysis of the indigenous culture and institutions. The British rule in India from 1757 to 1858 witnessed an outburst of intellectual activity and change in the outlook towards the socio and religious ideas. This was largely due to the introduction of English education. It enabled the Indians to get acquainted with Western ideas and knowledge.
- A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked a new beginning called Indian Renaissance with a view to transform India into a modern nation.

Impact of British policies

- The British discrimination against the Indians was evident in the Acts passed by them. The Arms Act, 1878, did not allow Indians to manufacture, possess or sell firearms.
- The Vernacular Press Act, 1878, allowed confiscation of newspapers and printing press by the British Government, if the content published was found objectionable.
- The Illbert Bill proposed in 1883 allowed Indian judges to preside cases concerning Europeans. Amendments made to the same bill after objections by the Europeans infuriated the Indians.

National consciousness

The rise in national consciousness inevitably led to the formation of many associations throughout the country. Indian Association, Bombay Presidency Association, Mahajan Sabha of Madras and Poona Sarvajanik Sabha were some of the important political associations formed in the latter half of the 19th century.

The formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885, under the leadership of Allan Octavian Hume infused a new vigour in the people. It quickened the political consciousness of the masses. W.C. Bonnerjee was the first President of the Congress. The initial phase of the Indian National Movement was restricted to demands for political and economic reforms such as admission of elected members in Legislative Councils, decrease in military expenditure, introduction of Public Service Examination in India at the same time when they were held in England, among others.

Early Nationalists	Assertive Nationalists
Early Nationalists believed in bringing about change in society through constitutional reforms. Pherozeshah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjee were some of the eminent Early Nationalists. Early Nationalists were of the belief that the British believed in justice and would concede to their demands, sooner or later. They were very critical of the economic exploitation of India for the benefit of the people of England.	Leaders such as Bipin Chandra pal, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Aurobindo Ghose, among others, were very unhappy with the methods of the Early Nationalists. They were of the belief that the Early Nationalists did not connect themselves with the masses or the youth. They believed in a more aggressive approach to be free from the oppressive policies of the British. These leaders are known as Assertive Nationalists and their approach is termed as Assertive Nationalism. Assertive Nationalists did not agree to the Early

	Nationalists' idea of a government under British rule. They believed in complete freedom through self rule or 'Swaraj'.
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The Early Nationalists and Assertive Nationalists did not agree to each other's way of functioning. This led to the split in the Congress in 1907.

Partition of Bengal

Partition of Bengal The year 1905 was a decisive moment in Indian history. The partitioning of Bengal by Lord Curzon spelled out the intentions of the British quite clearly. People realised that the British were following the policy of 'Divide and Rule'. They were not concerned about India and its people. Although the reason given was that of administrative convenience, Partition of Bengal was aimed at weakening the epicentre of the Indian National Movement. The chief motives were to restrict the influence of Bengali politicians and to divide the Bengali people. Indians throughout the country were enraged at the decision. Both the Early Nationalists and the Assertive Nationalists protested against the decision. Protest meetings were held throughout the country. More than 500 protest meetings were held in East Bengal (now Bangladesh) alone.

How did people participate in the freedom fight?

Swadeshi Movement

The leaders of the Indian National Movement realised that they needed a new approach to achieve the ideal of forming a government. The genesis of the Swadeshi Movement can be traced to the anti partition movement that took place to object the partition of Bengal. The Swadeshi Movement emphasised on the use of indigenous goods and clothes. It also advocated the use of Indian languages and urged the people to pursue national education. One of the important features of the Swadeshi movement was the emphasis on self-reliance or self help. The Swadeshi Movement campaigned for the boycott of foreign goods and institutions.

Some important events

- Dr. Annie Besant and Lokmanya Tilak started the Home Rule Movement that demanded Self rule for the Indians.
- The Early Nationalists and the Assertive Nationalists reunited in 1915. The historic Lucknow Pact signed in 1916 between the Congress and the Muslim. The two organisations decided to work together towards achieving the goal of self-government.
- The Indians contributed to the World War I significantly. Indians leaders hoped that the British would give in to their demands if they helped them.
- The Montague-Chemsford Reform, 1918, culminated in the Government of India Act, 1919, which stressed upon increased participation of the British in the administration.

Satyagraha –The distinctive technique

Simon Commission

The Simon Commission was sent to make changes to the structure of the Indian Government. As the Commission did not include any Indian and was not ready to accept the demand for Purna Swaraj, Indians boycotted the Commission and posters of 'Simon Go Back' were seen in many places. The Simon Commission was greeted with hartals and protests were held throughout the country. Lal Lajpat Rai, one of the famous leaders succumbed to his injuries during a lathi charge and died on 17 November 1928.

Famous revolutionaries of the time

Revolutionary nationalists such as Bhagat Singh, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Sukhdev and others wanted to fight against the colonial rule through a revolution of workers and peasants. For this purpose they founded the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA) in 1928 at Ferozeshah Kotla in Delhi. On 17 December, 1928, Bhagat Singh, Azad and Rajguru assassinated Saunders, a police officer who was involved in the lathi-charge that had caused the death of Lala Lajpat Rai. On 8 April, 1929, Bhagat Singh and B.K. Dutt threw a bomb in the Central Legislative Assembly. The aim, as their leaflet explained, was not to kill but "to make the deaf hear", and to remind the foreign government of its callous exploitation. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were executed on March 23, 1931. Bhagat Singh's age at that time was only 23. Chandrashekhar Azad, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Surya Sen, Jatin Das, etc. were also famous revolutionaries of the time.

Important Movements of the Indian freedom struggle

While the Civil Disobedience Movement continued throughout the country, the Viceroy suggested a **Round Table Conference** between the Indian political leaders and representatives of the British government. A second Round Table Conference was held in London in the latter part of 1931. Here, Gandhiji represented the Congress. However, his claims that his party represented all of India came under challenge from three parties: from the Muslim League, which claimed to stand for the interests of the Muslim minority; from the Princes, who claimed that the Congress had no stake in their territories; and from the brilliant lawyer and thinker B.R. Ambedkar, who argued that Gandhiji and the Congress did not really represent the lowest castes. The Conference in London was inconclusive, so Gandhiji returned to India and resumed civil disobedience.

Government of India Act, 1935

The combined struggles of the Indian people bore fruit when the Government of India Act of 1935 prescribed provincial autonomy and the government announced elections to the provincial legislatures in 1937. The Congress formed governments in 7 out of 11 provinces. In September 1939, after two years of Congress rule in the provinces, the Second World War broke out. Critical of Hitler, Congress leaders were ready to support the British war effort. But in return they wanted that India be granted independence after the war. The British refused to concede the demand. The Congress ministries resigned in protest.

Quit India Movement

Mahatma Gandhi decided to initiate a new phase of movement against the British in the middle of the Second World War. The British must quit India immediately, he told them. To the people he said, "do or die" in your effort to fight the British – but you must fight non-violently.

Indian National Army

Subash Chandra Bose secretly left his Calcutta home, went to Singapore, via Germany, and raised the Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA). To free India from British control, in 1944, the INA tried to enter India through Imphal and Kohima but the campaign failed. The INA members were imprisoned and tried. People across the country, from all walks of life, participated in the movement against the INA trials. He took the help of Japan to fight the British but Japan's loss to the former dealt a blow to his plans. '**You give me blood and I will give you freedom**' was one of

his most popular slogans.

Tryst with Destiny

There was a dramatic change in the political situation in India after the end of the Second World War. Although Britain along with its allies had won the Second World War, they were steadily losing the battle with the Indians. The change of power in Great Britain was an important development too. The Labour Party, led by Prime Minister Clement Atlee decided to lift the ban on the Congress and send a Cabinet Mission to India. The **Cabinet Mission** was to transfer the power in the hands of the Indians through the formation of an interim government. A Constituent Assembly was to be formed to frame the Indian Constitution.

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India presented a plan to divide India into two countries – India and Pakistan as the Muslim League was adamant on the formation of Pakistan. His plan came to be known as the **Mountbatten Plan**. The **Indian Independence Act, 1947** was passed by the House of Commons in Britain. It was decided that 15 August 1947 would be the date to transfer power. The Muslim League announced 'Direct Action Day' on 16 August 1946 for mass agitation for the demand of Pakistan. Riots broke out in Kolkata and spread throughout the country. Hundreds of people were killed and thousands had to flee from their homes.

15 August 1947 was the day India became free from British rule. **Jawaharlal Nehru** became the Prime Minister of independent India. The happiness of India's freedom was somewhat marred by the violence caused due to the partition of the country.

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