

## 2. Europe and India

During the modern period, the various happenings in Europe had its impact on India. Therefore, while studying the period of modern Indian history, we have to study the events happening in Europe during this period.

**Period of Renaissance :** In history of Europe, the last phase of mediaeval period i.e. 13th to 16th century is known as the Period of renaissance. During this period reformation, religious reform movement and geographical discoveries laid the foundation of the modern era. Hence this period is also known as the 'Age of Renaissance'.

During this period, in the field of art, architecture, philosophy etc. there was a revival of Greek and Roman tradition which gave momentum to an overall development. During the Renaissance humanitarianism was given great impetus. There was a change in the outlook of treating each other as a human being. Instead of religion, man became centre

point of all ideologies.

The reform movement spread throughout all sectors of human life. Through knowledge, science as well as different sections of art, we can observe the discoveries of reform movement.

The art and literature of renaissance period depict sentiments and emotions of human being. Literature was produced in local language for better understanding to the common people. During 1450 AD, Johannes Gutenberg, from Germany discovered the printing press. Due to this discovery new ideas, concepts and knowledge reached to all sections of society.

**Religious Reform movement :** The independent intellectuals attacked the old religious ideologies of Roman Catholic Church. The Christian priests were taking advantage of the ignorance of the people and were indulged in unnecessary rituals. They looted the people in the name of religion. The movement that began against it is known as 'Religious Reform Movement'. Due to this movement, human freedom and rationalism gained more importance.

**Geographical discoveries :** In 1453 AD, the Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople (Istanbul) which was the capital of Byzantine Empire. The overland trade routes joining Asia and Europe went through this city. Since the Turks blocked this route, there was a need of finding alternative trade routes for the European countries to reach Asia. This led to a new phase of geographical discoveries.



**Leonardo da Vinci :** He is recognised as an all round personality of the period of Renaissance. He was well versed in different branches of science and art. He had mastery over varied subjects such as sculpture, architecture, mathematics, engineering, music, astronomy etc. But he became world renowned as a painter. His paintings of 'Monalisa' and 'The Last Supper' became immortal.



### Let us know

#### **Geographical discoveries :**

During 15th century, European sailors went on expedition to discover sea route to India.

- In 1487 AD Bartolomeu Dias, a Portuguese sailor, began his expedition in search of India. But reached the tip of African continent, which we now know as the 'Cape of Good Hope'.
- In 1492 AD, Christopher Columbus set on his journey to India by sailing towards west but reached on the eastern coast of the continent of America.
- In 1498 AD, Portuguese sailor Vasco-da-Gama managed to sail past the Cape of Good Hope and reached the Indian coast in Calicut.



### Do it.

- On an outline map of the World show the new sea routes and regions discovered by the sailors.

#### **Intellectual Revolution in Europe :**

Due to the changes during the Renaissance period, Europe proceeded from mediaeval to modern age. Intellectual revolution took place in the same period. The society starts stepping out of the past ignorance and blind faith. The pre established customs and traditions came to be seen from a critical point of view. All these changes are addressed as 'Intellectual Revolution' which gave further momentum to scientific discoveries in Europe.

**Revolution in political sphere :** In the early stage of beginning of Modern period in Europe many political changes

took place. Due to the various revolutionary events during 18th as well as 19th century, this period is known as the 'Age of Revolutions'. During this period, there was development of Parliamentary Democracy in England. There was a change in the form of Cabinet System. The Bill of Rights 1689 laid limitations on the power of the King. The sovereignty of Parliament was established.

#### **American war of Independence :**

With the background of revolutionary development in Europe, it is equally important to think about the American War of Independence. With the discovery of America, the European countries turned their attention towards this continent. The Imperialist European countries took control of different regions of America and established their colonies. England established thirteen colonies on the East coast of America. Initially England had nominal domination over these colonies, but later English Parliament laid oppressive restrictions and taxes on these American colonies. The people in America revolted against it. England declared war to suppress these colonies. American colonies organised the army under the leadership of George Washington and finally won against England. This event is known as 'American War of Independence'. A new nation known as the United States of America, with a federal government, written constitution and based on the principles of Democracy, was born.

**French Revolution :** In 1789 AD, the people of France revolted against the uncontrolled and unjust monarchy and feudalism and established a Republic. This event is known as 'French Revolution'. The French Revolution gave to the world the three values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

In World history, among the political revolutions, the American war of Independence and French Revolution have a very important place.

**Industrial revolution :** In the latter period of 18th century, there were many technological innovations in Europe. There was production with the help of machines running on steam. The cottage industries were replaced by big factories. Machines came to be used instead of handlooms. Railway and steamer became the mode of transportation. The age of Machines began and that is known as 'Industrial Revolution'.

Industrial Revolution began in England and then spread in other parts of West. During this period England enjoyed industrial prosperity and came to be described as 'World Factory'.

**Rise of Capitalism :** With the discovery of new sea routes, began a new era of trade between Europe and Asia. Many traders came forward to trade with Eastern countries through the sea route. It was not easy to carry out trade single handedly and hence many traders came together and started trade. Thus there was rise of many Trading Companies. Trade with Oriental countries was very profitable and responsible for economic prosperity. Hence European rulers started giving military protection and trade concessions to these trading companies. This led to accumulation of wealth in Europe. This property was used in the form of capital for trade and Commerce which led to rise of capitalist economic system in Europe.

**Colonialism :** Colonialism means one country exploiting another country by making it into a colony. A powerful country on the basis of economic and military strength occupies another region and establishes its political Supremacy.

This is known as Colonialism. This tendency of Colonialism led to rise of imperialism among the Europeans.

**Imperialism :** Imperialism means a system in which a powerful country controls other countries by establishing its overall domination and establishing many colonies. Many countries from Asian and African continent fell prey to this imperialist aspiration of the European Nations.

**Imperialism of British East India Company in India :** There was competition among European countries for acquiring trade Monopoly in India. The British established British East India Company in 1600 AD to carry out trade in India. This company took permission from Emperor Jahangir and established its factory in Surat. The trade between India and England was carried out through this company.

**Struggle between English and French :** England and France were rivals in the competition for trade in India. Due to this there were three Wars fought between them which are known as 'Carnatic Wars'. In the third Carnatic War England finally defeated France. Therefore, now there was no strong European competitor for British East India Company in India

**Foundation of rule of India Company in Bengal :** The Bengal province was one of the most prosperous province in India. In 1756 AD Siraj-ud-Daulah became the Nawab of Bengal. East India Company officers misused the trade concessions obtained from Mughal Emperor in Bengal province. The English built fortification around the factory at Kolkata without the permission of the Nawab. Hence Siraj-ud-Daulah captured the factory at Kolkata. This created



discontent in England. Robert Clive diplomatically bribed Mir Jafar, the Commander in chief of the Nawab's army and also promised to make him the Nawab of Bengal. Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah and the British Troops met at Plassey in 1757 AD. But under the leadership of Mir Jafar the Nawab's army made no move to actually join the battle and hence Siraj-ud-Daulah was defeated.

Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal with the support of British but later he started protesting against the British and hence, his son-in-law, Mir Kasim was made the Nawab. Mir Kasim tried to put restrictions on the illegal trade of British and hence once again Mir Jafar was made the Nawab of Bengal.

To restrict the activities of British in Bengal, Mir Kasim, Shuja-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Ayodhya and Mughal Emperor Shah Alam formed an alliance and ran a campaign. In 1764 AD battle of Buxar was fought in Bihar. After this battle, British East India Company got the right to collect the revenue from Bengal province as per the Treaty of Allahabad. In this manner, the foundation of British rule in India was laid in Bengal.

**British-Mysore struggle :** Hyder Ali from Mysore State rebelled and took control of Mysore. After the death of Haider Ali, his son Tipu Sultan became the ruler of Mysore. He tried his best to fight against the British. At the end, Tipu Sultan died in the battle at Srirangapatna in 1799. In this manner the British took control of the Mysore territory.



**Tipu Sultan**

**British control over Sindh :** To strengthen the British power in India, the English turned their attention towards North West frontier. They feared that Russia might attack India through Afghanistan and hence the English started establishing their influence over Afghanistan. The route towards Afghanistan went through Sindh. The British understood the importance of Sindh and hence captured it in 1843.

**Fall of Sikh power :** In the beginning of 19th century the power in Punjab was



**Ranjit Singh**

in the hands of Ranjit Singh. After the death of Ranjit Singh, his minor son, Duleep Singh came to the throne. On his behalf, his mother Queen Jindan looked after the state affairs, but could not keep control over the officers. Taking advantage of this situation the British bribed some of the Sikh Sardar. The Sikh community thought that the British will attack Punjab and hence they launched an attack on the British. In this first Anglo Sikh war the Sikhs were defeated. But still Duleep Singh remained on the throne. But the growing impact of British over Punjab was not acceptable to the Sikhs. Mulraj, officer of Multan, revolted against the English. Thousands of Sikh soldiers participated in the war against the British. In the second war the Sikhs had to face defeat again. In 1849 the British finally captured the entire region of Punjab.

The Marathas were important strong rulers in India. How did the British strengthen their foundation of rule in India by defeating the Marathas will be studied in the next chapter.