

DAILY CLASS NOTES

BPSCMODERN HISTORY





Regional State

Bengal

Introduction:-

- * Bengal was an important region for the British East India Company due to its immense economic wealth as the richest province in India, its strategic location for trade and expansion, and the political power gained after the Battle of Plassey.
- ❖ The company could exploit Bengal's resources like silk, saltpeter, and cotton, which fueled the Company's profits, and the revenue from the region provided the financial muscle for its military and political ambitions.

The importance of Bengal can be understood in following points:-

Economic importance:-

- Financial power:- Bengal was a wealthy province with a flourishing economy based on fertile lands and trade. Murshid Quli Khan reformed the land revenue system and centralized finances, which enhanced the province's prosperity. This enabled Bengal to operate as a self-sufficient state, as it did not have to depend on Delhi for its military and administrative expenses.
- Rich in resources:- Bengal was known for its fertile land and was a major producer of valuable goods like silk, cotton, indigo, and saltpeter, which were in high demand in Europe.
- Source of economic profit: Control over Bengal allowed the Company to exploit these resources and also gain vast revenue from taxation, which funded its operations and military.
- Major trade centre:- The province's rich industries and commerce, along with its strategic location on the Bay of Bengal, made it a primary center for the company's profitable trade.

Political and strategic importance:-

* Rise of Murshid Quli Khan:- Distance from Delhi allowed the Mughal-appointed administrator Murshid Quli Khan (who became Nawab in 1717) to consolidate power and establish a new capital at Murshidabad, further away from Delhi's influence. While still offering nominal loyalty to the Mughal emperor, he ruled with a free hand, establishing a dynasty of independent nawabs.



- * Building local alliances:- With the central power distant, the nawabs were able to build strong local power bases, securing the support of influential zamindars (landlords) and financial elites. This strengthened their control over Bengal's rich resources and weakened the central government's reach.
- * Political power:- The Battle of Plassey in 1757 gave the company control of Bengal, transforming it from a trading entity into a political power.
- ❖ Administrative control:— By becoming the Diwan, the company assumed administrative control, allowing it to implement policies that benefited its economic interests and secure a steady source of revenue.
- ❖ Military strength:- The revenue from Bengal helped the company maintain and expand its military forces, which was essential for protecting its interests and conquering new territories.
- * Limited presence and influence of other European powers:- The limited presence and influence of other European powers in Bengal allowed the British East India Company to focus on consolidating its position without major military threats or commercial rivals. This enabled the British to concentrate their resources on undermining the local Nawab, Siraj-ud-Daulah, which was a crucial step toward establishing their dominance.

Geographical & Strategic Importance:-

- * Far away from Delhi:- The geographical distance between Delhi and Bengal played a crucial role in enabling Bengal's de facto independence during the decline of the Mughal Empire. As the central authority in Delhi weakened after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, the long distance made it difficult for the imperial court to enforce its will on the far-off province.
- * Strategic location:- Its location provided access to other parts of India and facilitated trade with Southeast Asia and China, making it an ideal base for further expansion.
- * Buffer from instability:- The distance from Delhi also meant that Bengal was geographically insulated from many of the direct threats that plagued the later Mughals, such as invasions by the Marathas and Persians. This stability allowed Bengal's independent nawabs to focus on consolidating their own power.



- * Coastal Region of Bengal:- Bengal's coastal access made it an ideal location for a naval base for trade and for protecting commercial interests. Its major ports, particularly Calcutta (Kolkata), became central to the British colonial enterprise in Asia.
- ❖ Gateway for expansion: The coastal base in Bengal allowed the British East India Company to make inroads into Northern India without having to compete with established Portuguese interests in other ports like Bombay (Mumbai) and Goa.

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