



# DAILY CLASS NOTES

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## BPSC MODERN HISTORY

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Lecture - 04

European Company



European Company

## The Advent of Europeans in India:-

### Introduction:-

The advent of Europeans in India began with Vasco da Gama's arrival in 1498, which marked the discovery of a new maritime trade route around Africa to India. This event significantly transformed global trade dynamics and initiated a period of European colonial expansion into the Indian subcontinent.

The arrival of Europeans in India was primarily driven by economic, political, and religious motivations:

- ❖ Economically, they sought lucrative trade routes and valuable commodities like spices, silk, cotton, and other goods.
- ❖ Politically, their aim was to establish dominance and expand their empires — a pursuit of glory.
- ❖ Religiously, there was a strong desire to spread Christianity and counter the influence of Islam — a motive often summed up as God.

This convergence of "God, Gold, and Glory" laid the foundation for a long period of European involvement and eventual colonization in India.

### Condition of Europe in the 15th Century:-

- ❖ The 15th century in Europe was a period of transition, marking the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Era.
- ❖ It was a time of both crisis and recovery. The continent was still reeling from the effects of the Black Death (plague)—a creeping death that caused widespread devastation.
- ❖ Despite the suffering, this era also witnessed the rise of the Renaissance and the early stirrings of the Enlightenment, signaling a rebirth in art, science, and human thought.
- ❖ A significant turning point came with the fall of Constantinople on 29th May 1453, which marked the end of the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire) and the rise of the Ottoman Turks as a dominant power in the region.

### Socio-Economic Conditions During The 15th Century:-

#### 1. Population Recovery

- After the devastation caused by the Black Death (mid-14th century), Europe's population began to recover gradually.
- Decline in mortality led to the expansion of towns and rural settlements.

2. **Economic Growth:** Revived agriculture, increased trade, and the rise of craft production led to a more vibrant economy.
3. **Rise of the Merchant Class:** A powerful *bourgeoisie* (middle class) began to emerge, especially in urban areas.
4. **Health and Inequality:** Although health standards improved compared to the plague years, epidemics continued to appear sporadically.
5. **Technological Advancements:** Invention and use of navigation tools like the magnetic compass, astrolabe, and improvements in cartography (map-making) revolutionized sea travel.

### European Exploration (15th–17th Century)

#### 1. Background:

- Driven by the Renaissance spirit of inquiry, economic motives, and religious zeal.
- Major objectives included finding new trade routes, especially to India and Asia, bypassing Ottoman control.

#### 2. Maritime Advancements:

- Invention and use of navigation tools like compass, astrolabe, and improved cartography.
- Development of better ships like caravels and use of gunpowder for naval dominance.

#### 3. Key European Powers:

- **Portugal:** Led the early phase with explorers like Prince Henry the Navigator, Vasco da Gama (reached India in 1498).
- **Spain:** Sponsored Christopher Columbus (1492), Magellan's circumnavigation.
- Later followed by Dutch, English, and French explorers.

#### 4. Formation of Maritime Empires:

- European powers established coastal trading posts, colonies, and naval bases.
- They created global maritime empires, connecting Europe with Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

### European Conditions in the 15th Century

- ❖ The 15th century marked a phase of transition in Europe, representing the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Era.

- ❖ It was a period of both crisis and recovery:
  - *Crisis:* The Black Death (Plague) caused large-scale population loss and economic disruption.
  - *Recovery:* The Renaissance emerged, and new forms of political organization developed.
- ❖ On 29 May 1453, the fall of Constantinople took place after a 55-day siege by the Ottoman Turks under Sultan Mehmed II.
  - This ended the Byzantine Empire (Christian).
  - With the Ottomans controlling Constantinople, traditional trade routes to Asia were blocked, compelling Europeans to search for new routes to the East.

### Why India was Important to Europe

- ❖ India became a center of attraction for Europeans due to its valuable products:
  - *Spices:* pepper, cinnamon, cardamom, cloves.
  - *Textiles & Raw Materials:* silk, cotton, jute, indigo.
  - *Other goods:* saltpetre, fine fabrics, packaging material.
- ❖ India's tropical climate was favorable for the production of such goods, which Europe could not produce in its temperate climate.

### Why Europeans Needed These Products

- ❖ Europe's cold and temperate climate made such goods scarce or unavailable.
- ❖ Spices were vital:
  - To preserve meat and other foods.
  - To enhance flavor in European cuisine.
- ❖ Textiles and luxury items suited the lifestyle, culture, and aristocratic tastes of European societies.
- ❖ Thus, India's products became indispensable for European life and economy.

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# BPSC

## MODERN HISTORY

**DMP - 03**

### Model Answer

1. Discuss the advent of Europeans in India in the context of the 15th-century European conditions and explain why India became a center of attraction for them. (8 Marks)

Ans:-

#### Approach:-

- ❖ **Introduction:-** Give a brief introduction about the advent of Europeans in India
- ❖ **Main Body:-** Highlight the European company's condition and exploration in India during the 15th century.
- ❖ **Conclusion:-** Conclude by writing its significance in India.

The advent of Europeans in India began with Vasco da Gama's arrival at Calicut in 1498, which opened a new maritime trade route via the Cape of Good Hope. This marked the beginning of European involvement in India, driven by the motives of "God, Gold, and Glory."

#### Condition of Europe in the 15th Century:

- ❖ The 15th century marked the transition from the **Middle Ages** to the **Early Modern Era**.
- ❖ Europe faced both **crisis and recovery**:
  - Black Death caused massive population loss and economic disruption.
  - The **Renaissance** encouraged scientific inquiry and exploration.
- ❖ The **Fall of Constantinople (1453)** to the Ottoman Turks blocked traditional trade routes, pushing Europeans towards maritime exploration.
- ❖ Growth of the **merchant class** and advances in **navigation technology** (compass, astrolabe, cartography, caravels) enabled long voyages.

#### European Exploration and Arrival in India:

- ❖ Portugal took the lead in maritime discoveries under Prince Henry the Navigator.
- ❖ Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in 1498, establishing direct trade with India.
- ❖ Later, Spain, the Dutch, English, and French entered India, setting up trading posts and maritime empires.

#### Why India was Important to Europe:

- ❖ India was rich in **spices** (pepper, cinnamon, cloves), **textiles** (cotton, silk, jute), **indigo**, and **saltpetre**.
- ❖ India's **tropical climate** favored the production of goods unavailable in Europe's temperate climate.
- ❖ These products were vital for **food preservation, enhancing cuisine, and luxury consumption** in Europe.

**Conclusion:**

The European entry into India was the result of internal European crises, technological advancements, and the lure of Indian commodities. What began as a pursuit of trade in 1498 gradually evolved into political control, laying the foundation for colonial expansion in India.

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