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BATTLE OF PLASSEY/POLASHI

June 23, 1757

BACKGROUND

The Consolidation of Mughal Authority, 1610–1704

- With Islam Khan's arrival, the Mughal era of Bengal's history effectively began. The capital was shifted to Dhaka.
- From 1610 to 1715, the Mughals would use Dhaka as a base
- > for integrating diverse peoples into their social and bureaucratic system and
- for transforming into arable land the vast stretches of forest that still covered most of "Bhati," or the eastern delta.
- Later in 1717, Murshid Quli Khan shifted the capital to Murshidabad, named for himself.

BACKGROUND

- The Mughal Empire, which had controlled most of the Indian subcontinent, was in a state of decline in the 18th century following the death of the emperor Aurangzeb.
- The British East India Company had arrived in India in the 17th century after being given a royal charter in 1600 to pursue trade in the East Indies that included the right to form its own army.
- By the middle of the 18th century, it had established a strong military presence in India.
- In the Bengal region it had a strong garrison in place at Fort William in Calcutta (now Kolkata).

FRANCO-BRITISH IMPERIAL COMPETITION

- The British were then in conflict with the French East India Company.
- From 1746 the rival companies fought the Carnatic Wars for advantage in southeastern India and sought influence over local rulers throughout the subcontinent.
- The Battle of Plassey, considered to be part of the global Seven Years' War (1756–63), was a continuation of Franco-British imperial competition, and it marked a decisive British victory, contributing to the decline of the French East India Company.

ALIVARDI KHAN

- Under the rule of Murshid Quli Khan (1700-1727), Shujauddin (1727-1739), and Alivardi Khan (1739-1756), Bengal experienced unprecedented progress.
- Rule of Alivardi Khan: He ruled for 15 years and successfully repelled the Marathas.
- **Company fortifying its settlements:** Taking advantage of the Maratha incursions in Bengal, the English East India Company obtained permission from the Nawab to dig a ditch and construct an entrenchment around their settlement of Fort William.
- **Alivardi Khan's concern:** Later, Alivardi Khan became concerned about the growing power of European companies in the Carnatic region.
- Realising this, he was urged to expel the Europeans from Bengal. However, Alivardi Khan passed away in 1756 before any action could be taken.
- He was succeeded by his grandson, Siraj-ud-daula, the son of Alivardi's youngest daughter.

SIRAJ AL-DAWLAH

- In 1756 Sirāj al-Dawlah became nawab of Bengal and adopted a pro-French policy. He was unhappy with the fortifications at Fort William and with British interference in local political affairs.
- The nawab captured Calcutta and Fort William that year and infamously had 146
 British prisoners confined in a small, cramped dungeon, where, according to one
 prisoner, 123 of them died of suffocation and dehydration.
- The incident was used by the British as a justification for revenge.
- Robert Clive was sent from Madras (modern Chennai) to retake Calcutta. By February 1757, the British had taken Calcutta, and in March, Clive conquered the French fort of Chandernagore.
- The nawab's forces and the British then squared off in a series of minor battles.

SIRAJ AL-DAWLAH

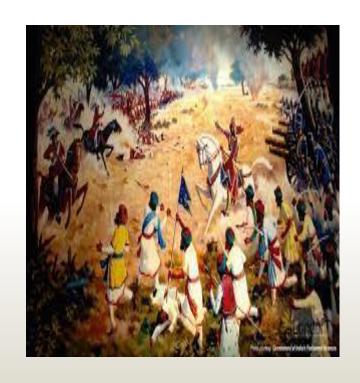
- Siraj inherited numerous troubles from his grandfather. He had a rival in his cousin, the Nawab of Purnea, Shaukat Jang.
- Challenges: He faced challenges from his hostile aunt, Ghasiti Begum, as well as a rebellious commander of the army, Mir Jafar, who was married to Alivardi Khan's sister.
- There was a dominant group in his court comprising Jagat Seth, Omichand,
 Rai Ballabh, Rai Durlabh and others who were opposed to him.
- Actions in haste: Impulsive by nature and lacking experience, Siraj felt insecure, which led him to make decisions that proved to be counterproductive.

BATTLE OF POLASHI

The Battle of Polashi was fought on 23rd June 1757 AD near the town of Polashi in Bengal.

The British East India Company army, led by Robert Clive, defeated an Indian army.

Indian army- 50000 East India Company-3000



BATTLE OF POLASHI (SIGNIFICANCE)

The battle is significant because it marked the beginning of British rule in India.

Before this, the British had only been trading in India.

After the battle, they began to take control of more and more territory, until they eventually controlled all of India.



CAUSES OF BATTLE OF POLASHI

- ■Misuse of the trade privileges given to the British by the Nawab of Bengal.
- □Non-payment of tax and duty by the workers of the British East India Company.
- □Fortification of Calcutta by the British and expanding power.
- □An asylum was provided to Nawab's enemy Krishna Das.
- □ Ignoring Nawab Siraj al-Dawlah.

WHY DID SIRAJ LOSE THE BATTLE?

- □Treachery and non-cooperation by the army chief of the Nawab.
- □Young Nawab was deficient of experience, prudence, intelligence and steadiness.
- □He depended on Mir Zafar after knowing about conspiracy.
- □Did not evaluate warning of his grandfather Alivardi Khan about the conspiracy of English and French.

CONSEQUENCES OF BATTLE OF POLASHI

- The British Company's colonialisation of India began with the Battle of Polashi.
- By installing puppet Nawab Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal, the British Company indirectly consolidated its political authority over Bengal.
- The British Company received the Diwani right from Mir Jafar. And the British Company would benefit from the revenue from this area.
- Lord Clive and other British officers received enormous financial rewards from Mir Jafar.

CONSEQUENCES OF BATTLE OF POLASHI

- The economy of India was affected severely.
- Post the victory, the British started imposing severe rules and regulations on the inhabitants of Bengal in the name of tax collection.
- Following the Battle of Plassey, Bengali trade and commerce were exclusively controlled by the British corporation.
- As a result, Bengal, once a prosperous province of the Mughal Empire, began to become a place of hunger, famine, and deprivation.

BRITISH RULE

Socioeconomic and Political Condition

BACKGROUND OF BATTLE OF BUXER

Mir Jafar was installed as a puppet Nawab of Bengal by Clive soon after the Battle of Polashi.

Despite being a puppet Nawab, Mir Jafar tried to alter the power equations and was in touch with the Dutch East India Company, which was also willing to expand to Bengal.



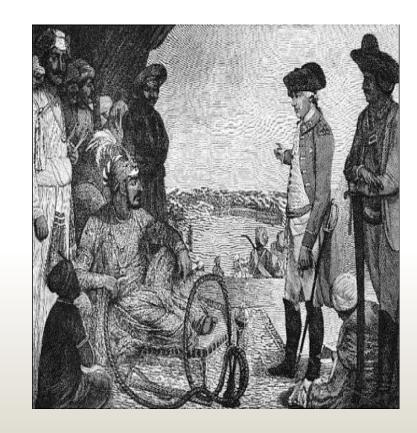


BACKGROUND OF BATTLE OF BUXER

Hence, the British withdrew Mir Jafar & installed his son-in-law, Mir Qasim, as the new Nawab of Bengal.

Upon becoming the Nawab, Mir Qasim shifted his headquarters from Murshidabad (present-day West Bengal) to Munger (present-day Bihar).

He wanted independence and opposed the British East India Company officials showing insubordination (refusal to obey) to his government and their abuse of legal instruments like Dastak.

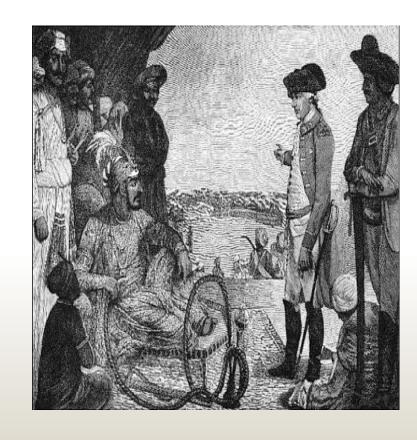


BACKGROUND OF BATTLE OF BOXER

Mir Qasim allied with the Mughal Emperor (Shah Alam II) and Nawab of Awadh (Shujah-ud-Dowlah), who were unhappy with the British East India Company's expansionist quest.

He limited the trade benefits enjoyed by the British.

Appointed foreign experts to train his army, which also disappointed the British East India Company.



BATTLE OF BOXER

The Battle of Buxar (22 October 1764) took place between the forces of the British East India Company and the combined army of an alliance of Bengal Nawab Mir Qasim, Awadh Nawab Shuja-ud-Doulah, and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.

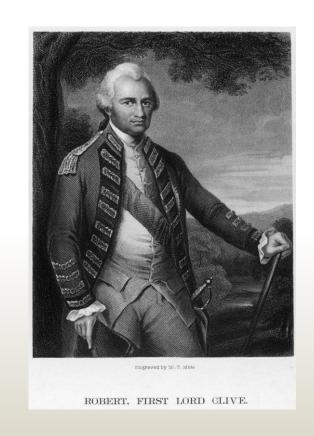
This battle resulted in the Treaty of Allahabad (1765).

এবার কার বোকামিতে বক্সারের যুদ্ধ হেরেছিল বাংলার নবাব? Battlefield of Buxar | Labid Rahat - YouTube

BATTLE OF BOXER

Under the Treaty of Allahabad, the Mughal Emperor surrendered the sovereignty of Bengal and Bihar to the company.

Thus, Robert Clive became the first Governor of Bengal.



CAUSES OF BATTLE OF BOXER

- ☐Mir Qasim wanted to function as an independent monarch of Bengal Subah and streamline his administration's functioning.
- ☐ He opposed the misuse of Dastak by the British East India Company.
- □ Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II and Awadh's Nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah were also unhappy with the British East India Company's expansion in Bengal.
- □ Nawab Mir Qasim reportedly hired some experts who were actually in direct conflict with the British.



SIGNIFICANCE

 The Battle of Buxar provided the Company with political influence and absolute control over Awadh Mughal empire, following the Treaty of Allahabad in 1765.

• Over the next hundred years, they seized the entire Indian subcontinent, Myanmar and parts of Afghanistan.

SIGNIFICANCE

After the Battle of Buxer the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam conceded 'Diwani rights' to the British. The Mughal provincial administration had two main branches - nizamat and diwani.

MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

 Nizamat meant civil administration Diwani meant revenue administration.

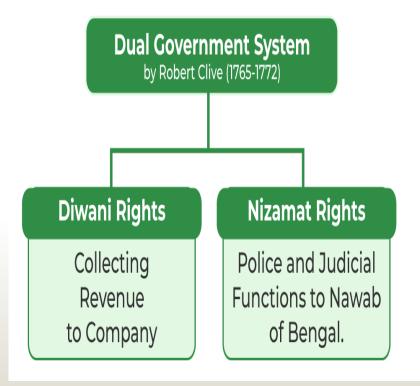
 The provincial subahdar was in charge of nizamat (he was also called Nazim).

 Diwan oversaw revenue administration.

DUAL ADMINISTRATION

□The word "Diwani right" referred to the authority to manage and collect taxes in a specific area.

□The agreement gave the Company authority to levy taxes and manage funds throughout the Mughal Empire's at-the-time provinces of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.

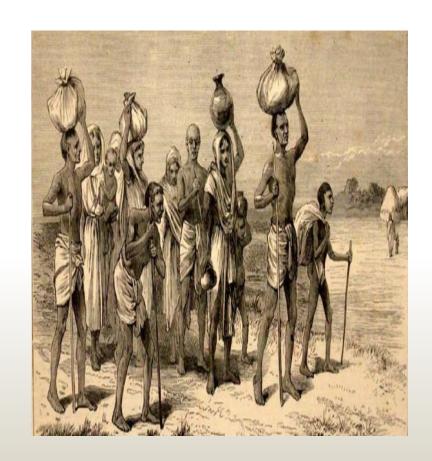


CONSEQUENCES OF DUAL ADMINISTRATION

- □Company increased the rates of revenue and harsh measures were used to collect revenue.
- □The welfare of people was completely neglected by both the company and nawab.
- □British appointed collector to collect revenue, people were forced to pay high rates. As they were not capable to pay, they left the villages or fled to other villages.
- □Company's policies led to famine in Bengal in 1770.

FAMINE OF 1770

- The British forced farmers to harvest cash crops like poppy and indigo for export rather than food crops like paddy. This resulted in a shortage of grains for the people.
- There was a minor shortage of crops in 1768 which was not an alarming situation.
- But in 1769, there was a monsoon followed by severe drought. Deaths caused by starvation started in 1769, but the company officials ignored this situation.
- By 1770, the death count was increasing and almost 10 million people fell victim to this man-made devastation.



Permanent settlement

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT

□Permanent Settlement was introduced by Governor-General Lord Cornwallis in 1793.

It was first introduced in Bengal and Bihar and later in Madras and Varanasi.

□Permanent Settlement was an agreement between the British East India Company and the Landlords of Bengal to fix the land revenue.

☐ This system was also known as the Zamindari system.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT (BACKGROUND)

- ☐ The Diwani right over Bengal was awarded to the British East India Company.
- □The British East India Company's officials were neither trained nor had any knowledge of local laws.
- □Thus, the landlords were not adequately supervised and became corrupt.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT (BACKGROUND)

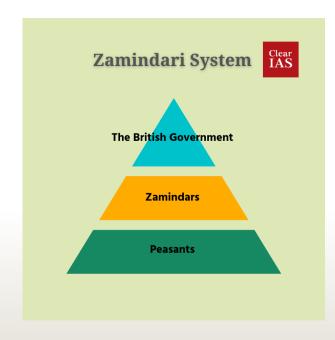
- □In 1770, there was a terrible Famine in Bengal which killed about ten million people.
- ■British officials felt that
- investments in the land should be encouraged and
- > the state of agriculture should be improved.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT (FEATURES)

The Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 had the following features:
□The Zamindars who were earlier only tax collectors became landlords under this system.
□Zamindars had the right to transfer or sell the property.
□Zamindars were given hereditary rights for a succession of land under their ownership.
□The land revenue to be collected was fixed and was agreed to not increase in the future.

PERMANENT SETTLEMENT ACT (FEATURES)

- It was fixed that 10/11th of the land revenue collected was to be given to the British and 1/11th of it was to be retained by the zamindar.
- The zamindar must give a patta (a land deed) to the tenant describing the area of the land and the rent to be paid for it.
- If the zamindars failed to pay the fixed revenue amount, then their properties were confiscated by the British and sold via auction.
- The major outcome of the Permanent Revenue Settlement in Bengal was a division of society into two:
 - Landlords and
 - > Tenants.



IMPACT ON ZAMINDERS

- ☐Since the revenue to the British was fixed, they benefitted from the increased production of the land.
- □The revenues were fixed high in the Permanent Settlement system and thus the zamindars found it difficult to settle.
- □Their properties were confiscated by the British, in case of failure to pay the fixed revenue.

IMPACT ON ZAMINDERS

Absentee
Landlordism
and political
power

□Zamindars often sublet their lands and settled in cities. This created middlemen between the zamindar and the people. This resulted in Absentee Landlordism.

□The zamindars also served as intermediaries for other political aspects of the British.

IMPACT ON PEASANT

- ☐ The cultivators found the Permanent Settlement System very oppressive.
- ☐ They were reduced to the mercy of zamindars.
- □They often took loans from money lenders to pay the tax and were in turn exploited by them.
- □In case they failed to pay the tax, they were evicted from the land they were cultivating.



IMPACT ON COMPANY

- The Permanent Settlement system of 1793 ensured regular income flow. It secured a fixed and stable income for the company.
- One of the main aims of the Permanent Settlement Act 1793 was to improve the state of agriculture and thereby productivity. However, the zamindars were not interested in improving the land and thus took no step toward the same.
- By the first decade of the nineteenth century, there was an increase in cultivation and the prices in the market rose. However, this meant an increase in income only for the zamindars and the company made no extra profit because the revenue amount was fixed permanently.

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