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# BPSC

64th BPSC Common Combined (Main)  
Competitive Examination

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*Revised Study Materials*

## GENERAL STUDIES

PAPER - 1



Published by  
**Develop India Group**

## HISTORY OF MODERN INDIA AND INDIAN CULTURE

*The History of Modern India will cover history of the Country from about the middle of nineteenth century and would also include questions on important personalities who shaped the freedom movement and social reforms. The part relating to Indian culture will cover all aspects of Indian culture from the ancient to modern times.*

### THE EUROPEANS IN INDIA

#### The Portuguese

Vasco-de-Gama landed at Calicut in 1498. In his wake came the Portuguese to trade with India. The Portuguese soon had a monopoly of the highly profitable eastern trade for nearly a century. Under the viceroyalty of Captain-General Alfonso de Albuquerque, a series of forts were established so as to dominate the East Indies and the Arabian Sea. The object of the former measure was to control the spice trade at its principal sources from Java to the Molucca Islands and of the latter to cut off the Arab-managed spice trade from South India to Egypt and the Persian Gulf. The system worked with remarkable success for about a century and then broke down because of the challenges from other European powers.

#### The Dutch

Holland sent the first fleet to the east in 1595. They went straight to the source of the spice trade in the East Indies, established themselves at Jakarta and proceeded to turn out the Portuguese. In 1602, the Dutch East India Company was formed and the Dutch parliament gave it a charter empowering it to make war, conclude treaties, etc. They then proceeded to develop a great Asian network by establishing a chain of posts through Ceylon and Capetown to connect themselves with their home

base. India came within their purview only as a link in this commercial chain. It was a source of textiles for sale in the East Indies in exchange for spices while the extreme south and Ceylon were valuable for their own supplies of pepper, cardamom and cinnamon. They established their earliest factory at Pulicat, followed by others at Cochin and Negapatam.

#### The English

An English East India Company to trade with the East was formed in 1600. Queen Elizabeth (1588-1603) was one of the shareholders of the company. The Dutch were well entrenched in south-east Asia so the English turned to India, particularly for its textiles and spice trade.

The English set up a factory at Surat in 1608 and Captain Hawkins to Jahangir's court to obtain Royal favours. Later in 1615 Sir Thomas Roe was successful in getting an imperial farman to trade and establish factories in all parts of the Mughal Empire. But they could do nothing so long as the Portuguese controlled the sea. The main trading settlements of the Portuguese were at Cochin, Goa, Daman and Diu. In 1612-14, at Swally off Surat, the English defeated the Portuguese and then at Onnuz in the Persian gulf in 1614. The Portuguese clashed with the Mughal power in Bengal in 1631 and were driven out of their settlement at Hugli. The Dutch

## GENERAL STUDIES (PAPER - 1) (300 MARKS)

were forced out of their last possession in India by the British by 1695. The English had given up all claims to Indonesia by 1667 to the Dutch.

From this time, the English company steadily developed its activities. Surat was its centre of trade till 1687 but by 1623 it had established factories at Broach, Ahmedabad, Agra and Masulipatam (1611). They soon shifted the centre of their activity to Madras. Its lease had been given to them by the local Raja in 1639. Here they built their factory called Fort St. George. The island of Bombay was acquired by the British from the Portuguese as a part of the dowry to King Charles II for marrying a Portuguese princess in 1688 and was soon fortified. In Eastern India the English opened their first factory in Orissa in 1633. In 1651 it was given permission to trade from Hugli in Bengal. They opened factories at Patna, Balasore, Decca and other places in Bengal and Bihar. But soon hostilities broke out between the English and the Mughal Emperor in 1686 after the former had sacked Hugli and declared war on the Emperor. The war ended disastrously for them and the English once again lapsed into the role of humble petitioner and sought pardon.

A pattern of trade developed. From Gujarat in the west, the main articles were cotton piece-goods, cotton yarn and indigo from the Malabar coast, pepper and such other spices as could be brought second-hand from Ceylon and the East Indies; from Madras and the south-east coast again piece-goods, yarn and sugar; and from Bengal silks and saltpetre. The opium trade was to come later. In return, India bought metals such as tin, lead and quicksilver, novelties, especially mechanical ones, tapestries and ivory. The balance of payment was always in favour of India and had to be met with

silver bullion by the company. The English had to face further competition. In 1664, the French had also formed a company to trade with India. They established themselves at Pondichery. The French company was closely tied to the state, so much so that its fortunes rose and fell with the careers of ministers. It was only in the beginning of the eighteenth century that its fortunes began to soar leading to fierce competition between the French and English traders.

### BRITISH EXPANSION IN INDIA

As the trade of both the company and of private individuals in Asia grew in the first half of the 18th century, Indian rulers came under increasing pressure to yield political concessions. At that time, Indian powers were still capable of containing the pretensions of the European trading companies on land and the British, with their garrisons of 500 or so men at their principal settlements, did not think they could achieve much. But the disintegration of the Mughal Empire and the dispatch of forces to India in 1740s to fight one another (the British and French were at war with each other in Europe), by the British and the French on a large scale, changed the scene and made possible the acquisition of a British Empire in India. The British quickly built up armies capable not only of defeating the French but of coercing Indian rulers hitherto immune to European military pressure.

### The Carnatic Wars

The companies clashed for the first time in the Mughal Subah of Carnatic which had become nearly independent. Dupleix was then the chief official of the French company at Pondicherry. The French opened hostilities by sacking Fort St George and expelling all Englishmen out of Madras (1746) and capturing it. Alarmed at the growing power of