

Course Name- B.A.L.L.B. IIInd Sem.

Subject- History

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Topic- Advent of British and National  
Awaking

# Arrival of the British

Arrival of the British and the establishment of British East India Company was the outcome of the Portuguese traders who earn enormous profit by selling their merchandise in India. Being motivated by the successful business stories of the Portuguese a group of English merchants - 'Merchant Adventurers' formed a company- the East India Company in 1599 AD. The Company received a royal charter from Queen Elizabeth I on December 31, 1600 AD authorizing it to trade in the East. Queen was herself a share holder in the East India Company.

## Expansion in West and the South

Subsequently in 1608 AD, the East India Company sent Captain William Hawkins to the court of the Mughal emperor Jahangir to secure royal patronage. He succeeded in getting royal permit for the Company to establish its factories at various places on the Western coast of India. Then in 1615 AD, Sir Thomas Roe was sent by Emperor James I of England to Jahangir's court, with a plea for more concession for the Company. Roe was very diplomatic and thus successfully secured a royal charter giving the Company freedom to trade in the whole of the Mughal territory.

## Expansion in the East

After establishing its factories in south and west India, the company started to focus on east India particularly Bengal a significant province Mughal empire. The governor of Bengal Sujauddaula in 1651 AD, allowed the English Company to carry out its trade activities in Bengal. A factory in Hugli was established and three villages -Sutanati, Govindapur and Kolkata- were purchased in 1698 AD by the Company to build a factory over there. Subsequently Fort William was raised in order to provide protection around the factory.

# Rise of Nationalism among Indians

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The British rule was largely responsible for a new awakening among the Indians. The British exploitation enraged the Indians. Several factors contributed to the rise of Nationalism among the Indians.

## **1. Political Unification:**

India became politically unified under British hegemony. It also brought administrative unity inside the country. Under one rule, one administrative framework, one set of law, judicial court, administrative officers, etc. became same anywhere and everywhere inside the country. It created awareness among Indians that this vast united India belong to them and by way, created nationalism within them.

## **2. Development in the means of communication and transport:**

Lord Dalhousie made a lasting contribution for Indians by introducing railways, telegraph and new mode of postal system. Roads were connected with India from one end to the other. Though, all these were meant to serve imperial interest, the people of India capitalized it.

The railway compartment reflected a unit<sup>^</sup> India. All persons, from North to South and East to West, rich and poor and master and servant – all were found inside it. It narrowed down gap among them and gave them the feeling that they all belonged to this vast India which was under the grip the British Raj.

### **3. Impact of Western Education:**

The introduction of English education in 1835 was a milestone in the British administration. It was primarily meant to create an educated Indian mass who would be faithful servants to the British Raj. However, with the gradual march of time, the English educated Indians became the pioneers in the socio-politic-economical and religious reforms in India.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Feroz Shah Mehta, Dadabhai Naoroji, Surendra Nath Banarjee championed the course of liberty, equality humanitarianism etc. The role of Mazzini, Garibaldi and Cavour in the unification of Italy, the unification of Germany by Bismark, the French Revolution, and American War of Independence etc. influenced their mind. Thus, gradually, the English educated Indians became the torch-bearers of Indian nationalism and aroused national consciousness in the minds of millions of Indians.

### **4. Rediscovery of Indian's glorious past:**

The nineteenth century Indian Renaissance created several avenues in the field of oriental studies. Western scholars like Max Muller, Sir William Jones, Alexander Cunningham, etc. translated several ancient Sanskrit texts of this land and established before the people the glorious cultural heritage of India.

Inspired by them, the Indian scholars like R.D. Banerjee, R.G. Bhandarkar. Maha Mohapdyaya Hara Prasad Sastri. Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc. rediscovered India's past glory from the history of this land. This encouraged the people of India who felt that they were the ancestors of

grand monarchs of this country and ruled by foreigners. This flared up the fire of nationalism.

### **5. Socio-Religious Reform Movements:**

The national awakening in the nineteenth century was largely due to the socio-religious movements launched by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Vivekananda, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Annie Basant etc. equality, individual liberty, abolition of social disparity and so on. This reformed the minds of Indians and awoke them from centuries of thralldom.

### **6. Growth of Vernacular Literature:**

The influence of western education prompted the educated Indians to reflect the idea of liberty, freedom and nationalism through the vernacular literature. They aimed at arousing the mass to oppose British rule being surcharged by the spirit of nationalism. Bankim Chandra Chatteijee's 'Anand Math' (which contained the song Vande Mataram) and Dinabandhu Mitra's play 'Nil Darpan' extorted tremendous influence upon the people and created anti-British feelings among them.

Bharatendu Harish Chandra's play 'Bharata Durdasha' reflected the miserable condition of Indian mass under British rule. Besides several eminent poets and writers in different languages, e.g. Rabindranath Tagore in Bengali. Vishnu Shastri Chipulunkar in Marathi. Laxminath Bazbama in Assamese, Mohammad Hussain Azad and Altaf Hussain Ali in Urdu etc. contributed a lot to rouse nationalism among the local people through their writings.

## **7. Press and Newspaper:**

Press and magazines played a dominant role in injecting national feelings in the minds of Indian. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer of Indian press and journalism. He edited 'Sambad Kaimiudi' in Bengali and 'Mirat-ul-Akhbar' in Persian. Gradually, several newspapers were edited in different parts of the country in several languages. To mention a few notable ones.

The 'Amritbazar patrika', 'Hindu Patriot', 'Indian Mirror', 'Bengalee'. 'Sanjivani', 'Sudharani', in Bengali; the 'Maratha'; 'Kesari', 'Native Opinion', 'Indu Prakash in Maharashtra'; 'The Hindu', 'Kerala Patrika', 'Andhra Prakashika' in Madras; 'The Tribune', 'Akhbar-i-Am', 'Koh-i-Noor in Punjab' etc. were the important publications that reflected the colonial rule of the Britishers and aroused nationalism in the minds of Indian people.

## **8. Economic Exploitation of British:**

A nation of shop-keepers, the British people paralyzed Indian economy by draining wealth from this country. The industrial revolution in England helped in the productive process and she needed markets all over the world for selling its products and also needed raw-materials for its factories. Indian was robbed away in both the ways i.e. by providing market for the British goods and supplying raw materials for the factories of England.

The creation of absentee landlords by the Britishers and in association with them the local money-lenders exploited the Indian mass and made

them poorer and poorer. The adverse effects of British exploitation were reflected in Indian economy.

Dadabhai Naoroji with his theory of agricultural decay; G. V. Joshi and Ranade with their charges against the ruin of Indian Handicrafts, brought before the people the exploitative policy of the Britishers which ruined the Indian economy, factory, handicraft etc. and brought untold miseries to the people and made them poor. The hungry bellies became angry against the British.

### **9. Racial Antagonism:**

The Englishmen considered themselves as superior in all respects than the Indians. They never wanted to offer the Indians higher jobs even though they were qualified and intelligent. The age limit for Indian Civil Service Examination was kept at twenty one and the examination was held at England.

Aurobinda Ghosh was declared disqualified in horse-riding and could not get through that examination, even if he had qualified the written examination. Thus, the colonial rule was well apparent before the educated Indians who became the vanguard in spreading discontent against the British rule among the Indian mass.

### **10. The Atrocities of Lord Lytton:**

The administration of Lord Lytton discharged venom in the minds of Indian people. He celebrated a ceremony at Delhi Durbar when Queen Victoria assumed the title Kaiser-i-Hind (the Empress of India) when the country was famine-stricken.

He imposed heavy tax on the people of India and spent a large chunk of money in the Afghan war. During his time, the Arms Act was passed

which prohibited the Indians from keeping arms without license. His Vernacular Press Act infuriated Indians.

### **11. The Ilbert Bill Controversy:**

During the period of Lord Ripon as Viceroy, the Ilbert Bill was passed. It empowered the Indian judges to try the Europeans.

It created hue and cry among the Europeans and their pressure led to reform the bill inserting a clause that an Indian would try a European in the presence of a European witness. This clearly exposed the malafide intention of the British authority and clearly projected their racial antagonism.

### **The memory of the Revolt of 1857:**

When nationalism was flaring up in the minds of Indian people, the memory of the Great Revolt of 1857 flashed back before them. The heroic action of Nana Saheb, Tatya Tope, Rani Laxmi Bai and other leaders of the Revolt became fresh in their mind. It inspired the people to cherish with their memory and to give a toe fight to the British.

### **12. The Birth of Indian National Congress:**

The birth of Indian National Congress in 1885 gave a final spark to the growth of national consciousness among the Indians. Soon, the National Congress gained momentum in the nook and corner of India. It expressed the desires of the people before the British authorities. Through many mass movements and their important leaders the courses became able to give an ideological fight to the British Raj and bring freedom to India.

Thus, these factors encouraged nationalism. A new spirit was instilled in to the body, mind and soul of the Indians. They now rose up from slumber and jumped into the freedom struggle. The sun of British raj was



about to set. The birth of Indian National Congress in 1885 galvanized the process. This Indian National Congress played a vital role in achieving India's independence.