

**P.R. GOVERNMENT COLLEGE (A), KAKINADA**  
**NAAC Accredited "A" Grade Institution**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**Study Material for students**



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**TOPIC: BATTLE OF PLASSEY 1757**

### **Alivardi Khan (1750-56):**

Alivardi Khan became the Nawab of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa in 1740. He was a man of considerable ability and shrewdness. But he was troubled by the unceasing raids of the Marathas, who ravaged Bengal with terrible cruelty. At last he was forced to purchase peace by ceding Orissa to the Marathas and promising them to pay 12 lakhs of rupees annually as the Chauth of Bengal. This arrangement freed him from the Maratha troubles. He was allowed to set his house in order and he ruled wisely. He kept on good terms with the English. But he did not allow them to fortify their settlements.

### **Siraj-ud-daula (1756-157):**

Alivardi Khan died in 1756. He was succeeded to the Nawabship of Bengal by his grandson (son of his youngest daughter) Siraj-ud daula. But his title was challenged by his cousin (son of Alivardi Khan's second daughter) Shaukat Jung; His claim was supported by Alivardi's eldest daughter. Moreover they were seeking the support of the English, whose attitude was hostile to his accession. He heard about the activities of the English in the Carnatic, He was afraid of the repetition of the same in Bengal. So, the enmity of his rivals and the hostile attitude of the English were the two main problems that he was called upon to face soon after his accession.

Siraj-ud-daula was a young man of 23 years. He was self-willed and self-indulgent. But at first he displayed commendable energy and promptitude in checking the activities of his enemies.

### **Siraj-ud-daula and the English:**

Right from his accession Siraj found that the English were not favourably disposed to his assumption of power. They sympathised the cause of his rivals. They also offended him by abusing their trade privileges and by giving shelter to his enemies. Lastly they were further fortifying their settlements without the permission of the Nawab under the pretext of the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe, in which the English and the French participated. Suspecting their evil designs Siraj ordered the English to dismantle their recent fortifications. But his orders were not cared for. The attitude of the English made him angry. He marched against the English. Cassimbazaar, an English settlement, was seized. Calcutta was also captured. There, it is said that 146 English prisoners were confined in a small room for the night and in the morning it was found that only 23 survived. This incident has been known as the Black Hole Tragedy.

The news of the English disaster at Calcutta reached Madras. The Madras Council immediately despatched a fleet under Admiral Watson and the troops under Clive. Clive recovered Calcutta. There took place an indecisive engagement between Clive and Siraj. Subsequently peace was concluded between them. It restored the privileges of the Company. The English were permitted to fortify Calcutta. They were also allowed to conquer Chandernagore from the French.

### **The Battle of Plassey (23rd June, 1757):**

Both Siraj-ud-daula and the English were not true to the treaty. Both of them wanted time to improve their resources. Siraj-ud-daula's rule was unpopular. Mir Jafar, brother-in-law of Alivardi Khan and commander-in-chief of Siraj, and some other disaffected nobles were engaged in a secret plot to overthrow the young Nawab. Keeping his eyes on the throne of Bengal Mir Jafar started negotiations with Clive, who readily supported the plot. The negotiations were conducted through Omichand, a banker. He was promised 30 lakhs of rupees for keeping the affairs secret. Clive prepared two drafts of the treaty with Mir Jafar. One was false and the other genuine. The false one contained the demands of Omichand whereas there was no mention of his demands in the genuine document. Watson, who was an honourable and honest man, refused to sign the false document. There upon Clive forged his signature and showed the document to Omichand. Mir Jafar agreed to pay 175 lakhs of rupees to the English for their help in addition to the compensation for their losses.

After completing his preparations Clive picked up a quarrel with Siraj-ud-daula and marched against him at the head of his army. Siraj-ud-daula entrenched his army at Plassey. In the battle that followed Clive scored an easy victory due to the treachery of Mir Jafar. Siraj fled from the battlefield but was captured and put to death. The Battle of Plassey (1757) was one of the decisive battles of Indian history. It witnessed the foundation of British rule in India. It made the English supreme in Europe. Mir Jafar was made the Nawab of Bengal. The new Nawab of Bengal gave a large amount of money to the English officers. Clive's share of the treaty was £234,000. A Zamindari of 24 Paraganas was granted to the company.

#### **First Governorship of Clive (1757-1760):**

After the battle of Plassey the Calcutta council elected Clive to the Governorship of Bengal. Clive defended Mir Jafar against his internal and external enemies. In 1759 he repulsed a Mughal invasion of Bihar for which he was made a Mansabdar for 6000 and was given a Jagir. He also maintained effective control over Mir Jafar. In 1759 Clive defeated the Dutch, who grew jealous of the rising power of the English, and captured their stronghold at Chinsura. Thereafter the Dutch ceased to be a political power. In 1760 Clive left for England.

#### **Deposition of Mir Jafar (1760):**

Mir Jafar began his administration with heavy financial obligations to the Company. As he gave large amounts of money to Clive and others he was faced with serious financial problems. Neither he could run the government nor he could meet his obligations to the Company. Hence, the Company authorities at Calcutta decided to remove him. They also anticipated some financial gains with change of rulers. Hence Mir Jafar was replaced by his son-in-law Mir Kasim. The latter ceded Burdwan, Midnapore and Chittagong to the Company. The members of the Calcutta Council were given rich presents.

#### **Mir Kasim (1760-'64):**

Mir Kasim was an able ruler. But he was not allowed to introduce useful and benevolent reforms. The selfish officials of the Company were afraid that such reforms might prevent their unlawful acquisition of wealth. They unjustly fought for duty-free private trade, which would cause much

financial loss to the Nawab and place the Indian traders at a great disadvantage. Mir Kasim wanted to check it. So he abolished all transit duties and thereby placed the Indian and the English traders on a footing of equality. The policy of Mir Kasim infuriated the English. They marched against him and defeated him in a number of battles. Mir Kasim fled away and took shelter in Oudh. Mir Jafar was reinstated to the Nawabship of Bengal.

### **Battle of Buxar (1764):**

The cause of Mir Kasim was taken over by Shuja-ud-daula, the Nawab-Wazir of Oudh and Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor. But their combined forces were defeated by Major Munro at Buxar in 1764. This is an important battle in the history of British in India. The Mughal Emperor himself was defeated in this battle. This battle completed the work of Plassey and ensured British success in Bengal and Bihar. The power of the Nawab-Wazir was broken and the titular Mughal Emperor sought British protection. Mir Kasim fled north-west where he died in obscurity. Mir Jafar died in 1765. His son Nizam-ud-daula was made the Nawab of Bengal for which the English were rewarded richly.

### **Clive's Second Governorship (1765.67):**

The court of Directors were alarmed at the corruption and misrule of the Company servants. Therefore they sent Clive again as the Governor of Bengal. He introduced reforms to remove the abuses in the Company administration. He abolished the practice of receiving personal presents by the Company servants. They were forbidden from indulging in private trade. He stopped the payment of double batta to the soldiers in times of peace.

### **Treaties of Allahabad (1765):**

The battle of Buxar placed the Mughal Emperor and his wazir, the Nawab of Oudh, at the mercy of the English; Clive concluded two treaties with them in 1765.

1. By the first treaty Oudh was restored to Shuja-ud-daula.
2. In return he gave Kara and Allahabad to the Company besides a war indemnity of 50 lakhs of rupees.
3. A defensive alliance was signed. According to it the Company promised to support the Nawab against an outside attack provided he paid for the services of the troops sent to his aid.
4. By the second treaty the Company gave the Mughal Emperor Kara and Allahabad, which were taken from the Nawab of Oudh.
5. It also promised him to pay 26 lakhs of rupees annually as a tribute. In return he granted to the Company the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

6. The Mughal Emperor regularised the English possession of the Northern Circars and recognised their supremacy over the Nawab of the Carnatic.

Diwani means the right to collect revenue. Thus the British were empowered to collect revenue in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. But Nizamat was given to the Nawab of Bengal. Nizamat means administrative responsibility. Now there were two masters over these places-one to maintain law and order and the other to collect revenue. This type of Government was known as "Double Government". Later it was found to be unworkable and hence abolished during the Governorship of Warren Hastings. Thus the wars in the Carnatic and the Battles of Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) in Bengal and the consequent treaties of Allahabad (1765) enabled the British to establish their authority in India firmly. No European power could challenge their authority.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY