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Tender Heart High School,
Sector 33B, Chandigarh
Class VIII

Subject:- History and Civics

Mili Bhatnagar

Chapter 8
Traders to Rulers -(1)

Good Morning Students!

In this chapter we will study about how the Europeans came to India and ultimately they ruled over India. More specifically it were the British who ruled for about 200 years, defeating major powers in due course of time.

We are aware of India's trade relations with the west from early times. It was from the seventeenth century onwards that the trading companies for Portugal, Holland, England, France and Denmark set up trading posts in the coastal areas. Goods such as spices, cloth, indigo and silk were in great demand in Europe. As the competition in trade increased, the only way to ensure profit was the monopoly of trade. In course of time, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Danes were ousted from Indian trade. The British and the French became the key players.

The English East India Company of England was started by some British merchants and was given exclusive right to trade with the East by Queen Elizabeth I. Similarly the French East India Company was formed in 1664 with their base in Pondicherry.

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Anglo French rivalry in India

The Wars fought between French and the British in Carnatic were called as the Carnatic Wars. The first Carnatic war was the result of the war in Europe. It ended without any proper result. In the second Carnatic War the French were defeated and the British became the dominant force. The third Carnatic War was a result of conflict between the two rivals in Europe and ended with the defeat of the French.

Bengal became the centre of power of the British from where they gained control over rest of India. The English East India Company obtained the right to do duty-free trade in 1717. But misuse of this privilege led to enormous loss for the Nawab of Bengal. The matter worsened when Siraj-ud-daulah became the Nawab of Bengal. In 1757 the Battle of Plassey was fought between the British and Siraj-ud-daulah. The betrayal on the part of Nawab's commander-in-chief Mir Jafar resulted in the defeat of the Nawab. Another battle was fought in 1764 between Mir Qasim, Shuja-ud-daulah and Shah Alam II on one side and British on the other. It made British indirectly masters of Bengal. Military and revenue came under British control. The Nawab had all responsibility, but no stable source of income. In the Dual Government System the peasants suffered.