

Impact of the Battle of Plassey: A Review

Sk Anoar Ali

Ph.D Research Scholar, Rkdf University, Ranchi, Jharkhand (State Aided College Teacher, Department of History, Sukumar Sengupta Mahavidyalaya, Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal)

ABSTRACT: The natural riches, treasury, and local labour of Bengal were mercilessly exploited after the English India Company had established its dominance there. Economic exploitation had a negative impact on Indian culture and social life throughout that time. An extended era of discontent, poverty, and exploitation started once the Mughal dynasty's administrative, legal, financial, and military systems were destroyed. In other words, it contributed to India's extraordinary poverty and general backwardness while causing riches to flow from India to England. The Nawab of Bengal rebelled against the company as a consequence of the exploitation, which precipitated the Battle of Plassey. The post-Plassey political and economic architecture of Bengal is thoroughly discussed in the current work. It shows how the English East India Company changed and operated in the middle of the eighteenth century. It also focuses on how the Corporation paved roads to the political power of India.

KEYWORD: natural riches, local labour, British force, Mughal dynasty's administrative, political and economic.

INTRODUCTION: It's been a while since I've done this, but I've been meaning to for a while. I've been meaning to do it for a while, but I've been too busy. The major reason for the conflict was the tense relationship between Siraj-Ud Daulah and the British. The Nawab's adversaries and conspirators were openly supported by Britishers, and this infuriated Siraj-Ud-Daulah, who eventually rebelled against the British by taking possession of Calcutta Fort and imprisoning the British authorities. The Bengal Nawab was defeated in the conflict, which took place at Palashi on the banks of the Bhagirathi River close to Calcutta on June 23, 1757.

The Battle of Plassey was a significant turning point in contemporary Indian history and helped to solidify British dominance in that country. This fight was fought between the East India Company commanded by Robert Clive and the Nawab of Bengal (Siraj-Ud-Daulah) and his French Regiment. This conflict is sometimes referred to as the "decisive event" that led to the British establishing their long-term control in India. The conflict took place in the Mughal Empire's last years of rule (called later Mughal Period). The Battle of Plassey was fought during the rule of Mughal emperor Alamgir-II.

The East India Company had a substantial presence in India notably at Fort St. George, Fort William and Bombay Castle.

As a last option, the British formed an alliance with the Nawabs and princes in return for security from both internal and foreign invasion, as well as promises of concessions.

The issue occurred when the partnership was broken under the Nawab of Bengal's tenure (Siraj-Ud-Daulah). In June 1756, the Nawab began capturing the Calcutta fort and locking up several British officials. In Fort William, the convicts were housed in a dungeon. Just a small number of the inmates survived the captivity in which over a hundred individuals were imprisoned in a cell designed for around six people, which is why this tragedy is known as the Black Hole of Calcutta. The East India Company prepared an assault, and Robert Clive bought off Mir Jafar, the army's supreme commander, by promising to crown him Nawab of Bengal.

On June 23, 1757, the Battle of Plassey took place near Calcutta at Palashi on the banks of the Bhagirathi River.

After three hours of ferocious combat, it began to rain heavily. In addition to the main cause being the betrayal of Mir Jafar, one of the reasons for the loss of the Nawab was the lack of preparedness to protect their weaponry during the torrential rain that turned the tables in favour of the British force. Robert Clive's army of 3,000 troops destroyed Siraj-Ud-army Daulah's of 50,000 warriors, 40 cannons, and 10 war elephants. After 11 hours, the fight was over, and Siraj-Ud-Daulah retreated after losing. According to Robert Clive, the British forces caused the deaths of 22 individuals and injuries to 50 more. Over 500 soldiers, including some important officials, were lost by the Nawab army, and many of them even sustained double losses.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND:

The assault by the East India Company on Chandranagor, a French colony, which Siraj saw as a breach of the Treaty of Alinagor, was the immediate cause; The additional long-term cause was

- Siraj-ud-Daulah was dissatisfied with the flagrant abuse of its trade advantages, which had a negative impact on the Nawab's finances.
- Political exiles like Krishna Das, son of Raj Vallabh, who escaped after stealing a sizable amount of valuables against the nawab's wishes, were granted sanctuary by the East India Company.
- The British fort in Calcutta was besieged by Siraj-ud-Daulah, who thereafter took it over.
- The East India Company conspired with the Siraj-ud-Daulah officers who were dissatisfied with the Nawab. For example o Mir Jafar, who was the top military commander of Siraj-ud-Daulah o Jagat Seth was a banker of Bengal. o Rai Durlabh, a representative of the Nawab's court. o Officer in command of Calcutta, Omichand. The agreement stated that Mir Jafar would become the Nawab of Bengal, who would pay the firm for its services. It is clear that the English triumph at the Battle of Plassey was predetermined by the strengthening of this English Company's position.

Objectives: The current work carefully explores the situation of political and economic infrastructure of Bengal in post-Plassey era. It portrays the changes in the character and operation of the English East India Company in the mid of eighteenth century. It also emphasizes how the Corporation helped India gain political clout.

Who Fought the Battle of Plassey?

222	ISSN 2690-9626 (online), Published by "Global Research Network LLC" under Volume: 4 Issue: 3 in Mar-2023 https://globalresearchnetwork.us/index.php/ajshr
	Copyright (c) 2023 Author (s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY).To view a copy of this license, visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Participants of Battle of Plassey	Role in the Battle of Plassey
Siraj-Ud-Daulah (Nawab of Bengal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involved in Black-Hole Disaster (imprisoned 146 English individuals who were confined in a very small chamber owing to which 123 of them died of asphyxia) (imprisoned 146 English persons who were lodged in a very tiny room due to which 123 of them died of suffocation) ➤ Negatively impacted by the EIC's pervasive abuse of trade privileges ➤ Attacked and seized the English fort at Calcutta, it brought their hostility into the open
Robert Clive (EIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gave asylum to political fugitive Krishna Das, disappointing Siraj-Ud-Daulah ➤ Misuse of trade privileges ➤ Fortified Calcutta without the nawab's permission
Mir Jafar (Commander-in-Chief of Nawab's army)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bribed by East India Company (EIC) (EIC) ➤ Was slated to become the Nawab by EIC after collaborating with Siraj-Ud-Daulah ➤ lied to Siraj-Ud-Daulah during the conflict
Rai Durlabh (One of the Commanders of the Nawabs Army)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Joined his army with Siraj-Ud-Daulah's but did not participate in the battle ➤ Betrayed Siraj
Jagat Seth (Influential Banker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Involved in the conspiracy involving the imprisonment and ultimate killing of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah
Omi Chand (Bengal Merchant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A key figure in the conspiracy against the Nawab and a party to the treaty that Robert Clive negotiated prior to the Battle of Plassey in 1757

IMPACT OF THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY: The impacts of the Battle of Plassey are as follows:

Political Impact –

The British Company's colonialization of India began with the Battle of Plassey.

- By installing puppet Nawab Mir Jafar on the throne of Bengal, the British Company indirectly established its political influence over that nation.
- Bengal was used as a springboard by the British Company to realise his imperial aspirations.

ECONOMIC IMPACT-

- The abuse of privileges and other forms of theft were the first to deplete riches.
- Mir Jafar gave the British Company the Diwani right 25 (twenty-five) paragona. And now the money from this area was to flow in the favour of British Corporation.
- Mir Jafar also gave a great sum of money not only to Lord Clive but also to other British commanders.
- After the Battle of Plassey British company maintained a monopoly over trade and commerce in Bengal.
- Thus Bengal formerly a prosperous province of the Mughals' Empire was becoming an area of Hunger, Famine, and Deprivation.

CULTURAL IMPACT: The British Company understood after the Battle of Plassey that India could be subdued with the cooperation of the Indian people since they had no idea of nationalism, exposing the moral weakness of the Indian people.

Shift of power: Following the Battle of Plassey, Mir Jafar became a Nawab of Bengal. Mir Jafar was a puppet Nawab that the business exploited just to satisfy its financial demands. So, that business could swiftly push its colonial interests. Mir Jafar was unable to satisfy the company's rapacious expectations since the business itself had an imperial bent. As a consequence, Mir Jafar began to become less important in the company's imperial game. The claim that he and Dutch were conspiring was made against him as a result, but the truth was that he didn't pay the significant sum of money the corporation had asked in revenue. Because of the arrangement the British firm reached with Mir Kasim, the transfer of authority occurred in September 1760. Several historians saw Bengal's transition of power as a kind of revolution.

TRADE TO TERRITORY: Writing in triumph to the Company's directors on 26 July 1757, Clive concluded that "After 'this great revolution, so happily brought about, seems complete in every respect'. The conquest of the Indian sub-continent by British Empire has different stages and phases and it evolved throughout the history. Every European came India as traders. Over the time, they transform themselves and expand their business as well as influence in Indian economic and political life. Amongst all, the British were not ready to satisfy with trade only. The more they spent their time in India the more they learnt about the weaknesses and strengths of Indian people and ruling class. Disintegration of Indian political powers and decline of central authority during 1st half of eighteenth century, created the most favourable circumstances for British traders to sneak into internal affairs of Indian. These circumstances provided them an opportunity to think and be more than just a trader. Being a successful trader, they had their direct relations with ruling class. This close relation helped them to understand the loop and holes of Indian ruling class. French being a late comer was somehow did lake in experience and boundness as compare to Britishers. Another thing that made Britishers more effective and stronger with the passage of time, their backup by British empire at home and their attitude towards learning about Indian cultural, social and political system. In its initial phase the company was only engaged in trade and commercial activities in Bengal. Bengal was one of the most resourceful provinces of Mughal India. A huge chunk of revenue to Delhi came from this province. This wealthy nature led it to be an independent province from the Mughal dominance of Delhi during first half of eighteenth century. And it came under the control of nawabs of Bengal from Alivardi Khan to Siraj Ud Daula. But the story did not end here. Almost every emerging power either it was from within India or from foreign soil, wished to get control of this province. In this race, English were on fourfront. From the mid of the eighteenth-century, English East India Company succeeded to get the permit for movement of free trade in Bengal. They started misusing this permission and stared acting as a free and independent trader with no restrictions. Seen them getting out of control, Nawab of Bengal Siraj Ud Daula, felt a threat to his dominance. So, he put some terms and conditions before them, but it had been too late to regulate them by these means. Left with no other option, Nawab of Bengal planned to teach them a lesson with military conquest. The result of all these conflict and confusion yielded as a famous battle of Plassey, fought on 23rd June 1757 at Plassey. East India company won the battle with the conspiracies and diplomacy more than their militia strength and combat. This victory paved the way for the English to annex Bengal and then conquest of whole India. This battle raised their morale to become the main contender of the ruler of India to be. After getting control over the revenue of Bengal, English got an opportunity to organise a strong and smart army to conquer rest of India. Similarly, the trade and other privileges enjoyed so far by them were not only increased but became safer and sounder. According to Sir Alfred Lyall, Clive's victory in 1757 was followed by the occupation of Bengal. However, victory at Plassey passed the Bengal in the possession of company, which received a formal transfer from the Mughal in 1765. Achariya says in his work, Codification in British India, that authorities in England determined that the inhabitants of this town (Calcutta) are all British subjects, because the town was conquered by Admiral Watson and Colonial Clive. The territorial ambitions of the company were not viewed as much trustworthy in England.

ROAD TO THE CONQUEST OF INDIA: After the battle of Plassey, Clive wrote on 7th January 1759 to one of the Principal Secretary of the state, William Pitt. *“But so large a sovereignty may possible be an object too extensive for a mercantile company. I flatter myself.... that there will be little or no difficulty in obtaining the absolute possession of these rich kingdoms.... Now I leave you to judge whether an income yearly of two million sterling with the possession of three provinces ...be an object deserving the public attention”*. It is true that English east India company did not hold the town of Calcutta on the terms of military conquest or any aggression. But they entered in Bengal as a revenue collector and got a Sanand from the nawab for the free trade movement in Bengal. This was the first and the basic stage, which latter become the footprint of English conquest of India. The revenue they collected from Bengal helped them to get a financial stability, confidence and sparked their greediness of loot and plundering day after day.

EAST INDIA COMPANY: FROM COMMERCIAL COMPANY TO POLITICAL POWER: The English East India Company was founded with the intention of doing business in India. Yet around the middle of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company evolved from a business organization into a political force. In addition to the many other reasons, the end of Mughal authority undoubtedly offered the East India Company a fantastic chance to grow. With relation to Bengal, the Plassey (1757) and Buxar battles were primarily planned as a result of the British and Bengali Nawabs' economic rivalry (1764). Further to that, the degradation in the administration supplied an opportunity to the English Company to perform a vital role in the politics of Bengal. With Plassey's treachery, the company's focus moved from money collection to expanding its dominion in India. The Company made the decision to purchase the prosperous Bengal area in order to preserve its commerce and military might. The Company's goal to transfer Bengal's excess income as tribute via the investment channel resulted in several adjustments to the way the Company operated. Moreover, the Company was given the impetus to reinvent itself in terms of prospectus and activity by the shifting economic conditions in Europe, such as the arrival of the industrial revolution and the erosion of state power in India.

CONCLUSION: The renowned Bengali poet Nabin Chandra Sen is credited with saying that India experienced an eternity of sadness after the battle of Plassey. The Company was thereafter allowed absolute freedom of commerce in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa. It is important to note that these three states had the biggest revenue collections, which contributed to the English Company's increased wealth. This made it possible for them to gather a powerful army and afford the price of conquering the remainder of the nation.

REFERENCES:

1. Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar. (2004) *From Plassey to Partition and After*. Orient Longman. New Delhi; 40-50.
2. Brown, Judith. (1994) *Modern India: origin of an Asian Democracy*. Oxford university press. 45-51.
3. Golbraith, John S. (1960) *Comparative studies in Societies and History*. Cambridge University Press. 2:150-168.
4. Marshall, PJ. (2005) *The Eighteenth century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution*. Oxford University Press. New Delhi, Oxford; 28-43.
5. Seeley, John Robert. (1936) *The expansion on England*. Velhagem & Klasing. Chicago; 254- 269.
6. Stokes, Eric. (1960) „The political ideas of English Imperialism’ an inaugural lecture. Oxford University Press. 1960; 6-8.
7. Watson, Ian Bruce. (1980) *Foundation for Empire: English Private Trade in India 1659-1760*. Vikas. Delhi;; 52-70.