

**Note****10**

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BATTLES FOUGHT IN THE COLONIAL ERA

In the previous lessons we learnt how the native Indians were recruited in the British Army and the establishment of the three Presidencies. The British wanted to make themselves as the sole rulers in India. Moreover, they also had their differences and animosity with the Dutch and French on matters of trade and commerce. A number of wars were fought between these nations. Let us see the major battles fought by the British in their quest to establish supremacy and domination in India.



Objectives

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- List the Wars fought by the British to establish their power in India.

10.1 The Anglo Dutch Wars

The British could not tolerate the presence other Europeans especially the Dutch who were having a great deal of trade when they entered India. It was a kind of business rivalry where the British wanted to have a monopoly on trade. Therefore, to suppress their power the British went to war against the Dutch in India as well as in European seas. There were four Anglo- Dutch Wars between 1652 to 1783. The war between the Dutch and British was mainly over the trade interests and they were entirely naval in character.

The First Anglo Dutch War in 1652-1654 was fought in the waters of Goodwin Sands, the Second War in 1665-67, the third war in 1672, and the fourth in 1770-1773. Then there was the Seven Years War (1756-63). This was the last major conflict before the French Revolution to involve all the great powers of Europe. In India, the outbreak of this war in Europe changed the long running conflict between the French and the British trading companies for influence of power. The war spread beyond Southern India and into Bengal, where British forces under Robert Clive recaptured Calcutta from Nawab Sirajud-Daulah, who had the support of French, in the Battle of Plassey in 1757.



Note



Intext Questions

10.1

1. How many Anglo- Dutch Wars took place between 1652 to 1783?
2. When was the Battle of Plassey fought?

10.1.1 The Battle of Adyar- 24 October 1746

This battle was a part of the First Carnatic War between the English and the French. This particular battle was between the French East India Company and the forces of the Nawab of Arcot to recapture Fort St George. Nawab of Arcot, who was a close ally to the British, gave his army. His son Mahfuz Khan led his troops to regain the fort from the French. In the battle that followed, Khan was forced to retreat to South of Adyar River and later he captured the area of Santhome. However, The French forces, which included native Indians, trained by the French, attacked the British from the seaside. They used effective guns effectively and a pitched battle followed. The effective artillery fire broke the defences of the Khan's troops and the French retained control over St George Fort. It will be later battles in which the British finally managed to defeat the French and remove them from India.

10.1.2 The Battle of Wandiwash -22 January 1760

This battle was a part of Seven Year War, which weakened the French position. It was a decisive victory for the British who ended the French dominance in Southern India. Wandiwash was besieged by the French forces with an approximate strength of 2000 men under the command of Thomas Arthur de Lally. Similar strength of British force under the command of Colonel Eyre Coote arrived at Wandiwash to relieve the fort. Lally could see some unrest like situation so he sent his troops to make a charge along with artillery, followed by a cavalry charge where his army could not resist the determined musketry (Musket is a rifle which was long and used in 17 and 18th century). Lally moved his infantry into the battle. Accurate artillery fire from the British artillery destroyed an important ammunition dump. This caused a collapse of one flank of the French forces and they were forced to retreat to Pondicherry.

10.1.3 The Mysore Wars

There were four military confrontations in India between the British and the rulers of Mysore during the years 1767-69, 1780-84, 1790-92 and 1799. During 1761 a Muslim adventurer by name Hyder Ali who was a commander in chief made himself as the ruler of Mysore and started expanding his rule. In 1766 The East India Company joined hands with the Nizam of Hyderabad to fight against Hyder Ali but later the Nizam withdrew and the British were left alone to face Hyder Ali. In the first war Hyder Ali appeared before the company and dictated peace. In the second war in 1780 Hyder Ali joined hands with the Marathas to fight against the British and established himself in Karnataka. After the death of Hyder Ali in December 1782 the Britisher's made peace with Tipu Sultan, son of Hyder Ali. A treaty called the Treaty of Manglore was signed in 1784.

When Tipu's name was dropped from the company's "friends" list by Governor General Lord Cornwallis the third Mysore war began in 1790. Tipu was stopped in 1792 at Seringapatam (now Shrirangapatana, Karnataka) and was forced to surrender half of his dominions. Tipu then requested France for help in fighting the British, which was agreed and given. Governor General Lord Mornington undertook the fourth war and in a fierce battle Tipu died and the British defeated his troops

10.1.4 The Maratha Wars

There were three Anglo-Maratha Wars between the army of British East India Company and the Maratha Empire during the years 1775-1782, 1803-1805, 1816-1819. The first war began with the treaty of Surat and ended with the treaty of Salbai. After the fall of Mysore in 1799-1800 the Marathas were the only major power left outside the control of British India and during the second Maratha war the British again defeated the Marathas.



Do you Know?

Shivaji created a body of professional army in place of irregular army. The army was put under a chain of command and was paid in cash. The importance of Navy was realized very early by the Shivaji and a strong Navy was created which was stationed at Kolaba. Similarly Forts were also maintained properly as it played a vital role in the defence mechanism. The officers were appointed especially at forts to take special care of it.

The smallest unit of Cavalry consisted of 25 troopers and was placed under a Havaldar. The Cavalry was divided into two classes-Bargis and Shiledars. The Bargis were given the horses and arms by the state while the Shiledars had to find them on their own. The smallest unit of Infantry consisted of 9 soldiers and was placed under Naik.

The third Maratha war was the final and decisive conflict between the Maratha Empire and the British East India Company. This war left the company in control of most of the India. At the end of the war, all of the Maratha powers had surrendered to the British. Marathi language was recognized in the Bombay Presidency and started after 1820.



Intext Question

10.2

1. Who was the commander in chief who later became the ruler of Mysore?
2. Who was Hyder Ali's Son?



What You Have Learnt

- The colonial powers were at war with each other.
- The reasons for the several wars they fought were rivalry over trade and



Note

Module - III

Battles Fought in the Colonial Era

Military History of the Colonial Era



Note

commerce and jealousy.

- The wars led to expansion and control of power by the British over large territory
- The British used different tactics to win over the native forces.



Terminal Exercises

1. When and between whom was the seven years' war fought?
2. How were the French forces able to retain control over St. George's fort?
3. What were the causes for the third Mysore war?
4. Which Maratha war led to the complete control of India?



Answers to Intext Questions

- 10.1** (i) Four (ii) 1757
- 10.2** (i) Hyder Ali (ii) Tipu Sultan

