

New Terms

- ❑ **Renaissance** : New awareness; Popular movement in the 15th century in Europe which infused different fields of national life with new consciousness.
- ❑ **Reformation** : Movement active in Europe, to rid Christianity of its evils.

Introduction

Change is the perpetual law of nature while every thing in the world is mortal. Mortal changes happen not only in nature but in the social, economic and cultural lives of people living in different parts of the world as well. In the past three centuries, many such special changes have taken place which have revolutionized the complete human life. These changes can be felt and seen in everyday life of man.

Time Period

History is a constant flow of events which cannot be tied within fixed boundaries of time though the historians have divided it into ancient, Medieval and modern periods, but the durations are not the same in different parts of the world. For example, Modern Age began in Europe in the 16th century, as a result of Renaissance and Reformation Movements. It is also known as the Age of Reason. But Modern Age began in India in the 18th century when the country came under the British rule.

Modern Age : An Observation

The Modern Age of Indian history begins with the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 AD. The great Mughal Empire was disintegrating into independent states and the British power was on the rise. In its midst, the Marathas were trying to rise as claimants to the political power of the declining Mughals, but they were defeated by the British. Literally, the 18th century in the country was a period of political upheavals and stalled economy. The British and the French were mutual political and business rivals.

Finally, the British victory over the French shattered their dreams of establishing an empire in India.

Between 1757 to 1857, the British were busy in establishing and expanding their empire in India. They established their power in Bengal and Awadh, defeated the Marathas and conquered Burma and Sind. The Sikhs too were defeated.

The British rule in India had great social, economic and political effects. This encouraged many socio-religious reforms and cultural regeneration. Due to the spread of English education, Indians were introduced to western science, philosophy, literature and ideology, which gave rise to high ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The feeling of universal nationalism too rose among the Indians. The press played the role of a powerful weapon in the hands of nationalist Indians, in spreading liberal and political ideas among them. At the same time, the exploitative and discriminatory policies of the British gave rise to huge dissatisfaction in all the sections of the society. The rebellion of 1857 shook the foundations of the British empire in India. In 1858 AD, company's rule ended and the reigns of power came into the hands of the British empress.

In 1905 began the struggle for national freedom. The period between 1919 AD to 1934 AD is called the Gandhian Age of People's Movements. Gandhi led the non-violent national movement against the British rule. Some revolutionaries too made important contributions for the same cause.

After independence in 1947 began the work of national reconstruction and rebuilding of national economy. On 26th January 1950, India became a

sovereign democratic republic. Sardar Patel amalgamated different states into the Indian Union. States were reorganized in phases to satisfy regional aspirations.

After independence, India is on the road of peace and prosperity. Today, Indian economy is strong and the country is developing at a fast pace.

Subcontinent and the Changing Names of Its States

Modern India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka make up the Indian subcontinent. Of these, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh were inseparable parts of the British Indian Empire which was called Hindustan till 1947. Myanmar (Burma) and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) too were parts of the British Asian Empire till 1937.

The India Freedom Act (1947) divided India into two parts. Baluchistan, Sind and North-West Frontier went to Pakistan. Punjab and Bengal were divided with their Muslim majority parts being included in Pakistan. Radcliffe demarcated the boundaries, thus two units of Pakistan—East and West Pakistan—were located on two sides of India. Later in 1971, East Pakistan became an independent country as Bangladesh.

Main Events of the Eighteenth Century

The 18th century is believed to be the darkest period of Indian history. The great Mughal Empire finished with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 AD. The Mughal Empire had begun to disintegrate during the last 25 years of his reign. Rajputs, Jats, Bundelas, Satnamis and the Sikhs rebelled. The rise of the Marathas in the Deccan shook the foundations of the Mughal Empire during Aurangzeb’s reign only. The invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 AD diminished the Mughal power. The attacks of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748-1757 AD) and the Third Battle of Panipat (1761 AD) proved fatal for the Marathas and the Mughals. These conditions gave opportunities to East India Company to establish their power in Bengal which paved the way for the establishment of eventual British power in India.

Taking advantage of the declining Mughal power, independent states began arising. Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, Ruhelkhand, Mysore, Rajputana, etc. became sovereign states. The three Carnatic Wars (1744-63 AD) proved decisive in the favour of the British.

The political instability in India gave rise to competition among European trading powers to establish their dominance in the country. This had an opposite effect on the social, economic and cultural life of the country. Agriculture came to a standstill as the peasants were weighed down by high tax rates. Trade was the main economic activity and Indian handicrafts were famous the world over. But the growth in trade gave rise to a new wealthy class which was not interested in adopting technical changes. Different arts and crafts too declined. The British took the Indian trade into their own hands, which finally destroyed the Indian artisans and craftsmen.

Sources of History

The sources of history about the Modern Age is divided into two—primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources : Original documents, literary evidences, archaeological remains, audio cassettes, films, video tapes of events and interviews of important people, etc. are the primary sources of modern history.

Secondary Sources : Writings and creations of renowned historians and scholars, articles, reviews, books and newspapers are secondary sources of



India in 18th century

modern history. They help us to recreate history. Such books and records are kept safe in the libraries.

Know This

The Bengal Gazette published in 1780 AD, was the first newspaper of India. The other popular newspapers were 'Times of Pioneer' and 'Madras Mail' in English and 'Kesari' of Lokmanya Tilak in Marathi.

To Recapitulate

- Modern Age began in Europe in the 16th century and in India, in the 18th century.
- The Modern Age of Indian history began after the death of Aurangzeb.
- Disintegration of Mughal Empire gave rise to many sovereign states.
- The English and French were mutual political and business rivals in which English was the victors.
- Between 1757-1857 AD, the British established themselves in India and expanded their empire.
- Increasing dissatisfaction in the society gave rise to the rebellion of 1857. Company's rule ended and the power came into the hands of the British crown.
- In 1905, the struggle for freedom began.
- On 26th January, 1950, India became a democratic republic.
- Sardar Patel unified the states which were reorganized in different phases.
- There are two sources for the history of Modern Age : Primary and Secondary.



Exercise

A. Tick the correct option :

1. When did the rule of East India Company end in India?

(a) 1857 AD <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) 1858 AD <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) 1947 AD <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) 1757 AD <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Which Battle of Panipat proved fatal for the Marathas?

(a) First <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Second <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Third <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) None of these <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Whose invasions shook the foundations of the Mughal Empire?

(a) Tamarlane <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) Ahmad Shah Abdali <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) Nadir Shah <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Shivaji <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Whose division led to the creation of Bangladesh?

(a) India <input type="checkbox"/>	(b) East Pakistan <input type="checkbox"/>
(c) West Pakistan <input type="checkbox"/>	(d) Sri Lanka <input type="checkbox"/>

B. Fill in the blanks :

1. The rule of the company ended in _____ AD.
2. _____ was the last Mughal Emperor.
3. Archaeological remains are the _____ source of history.
4. The border between India and Pakistan was demarcated by _____.

C. Write whether True or False :

1. East Pakistan is now called Bangladesh. _____

2. Till 1937 AD, Burma and Ceylon were parts of the British Empire.
3. Modern Age began in India and Europe at the same time.
4. The three Carnatic Wars proved decisive for the British.

D. Match the following :

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Primary source of history | (a) Revolt of 1857 |
| 2. Between 1919 AD and 1934 AD | (b) Establishment of British Empire in India |
| 3. Between 1757 AD and 1857 AD | (c) Gandhian Age of People's movement |
| 4. End of East India Company | (d) Original documents, archaeological evidences, films & audio cassettes |

E. Short Answer Questions :

1. When did modern age begin in India?
2. When did India become a republic?
3. What are the primary sources of modern Indian history?
4. What are the secondary sources of modern Indian history?

F. Long Answer Questions :

1. Briefly describe the Modern Age in India.
2. Give an outline of important events in India in the 18th century.
3. Throw light on the changing nomenclature of the Indian subcontinent and its states.
4. Write about the different sources of modern Indian history.

Project & Activity

- ▲ Comment upon any two British historical buildings located in your state.