



Mains Practice Question

Q. What were the factors that led to the advent of Europeans in India? (150 words)

06 Mar, 2019 GS Paper 1 History

Approach

- Give a brief introduction about all major European powers which came to India.
- Elaborate the factors that led to the advent of Europeans in India.

Introduction

- The landing of Vasco da Gama at Calicut in 1498 with three ships is generally regarded as the beginning of a new era in world history, especially in the relation between Asia and Europe.
- British were not the only trading nation to come to India. There were a few other European countries such as Portuguese, Dutch, and French who aspired to establish commercial relations with India. They first came to India in search of trading opportunities, but circumstances made them the masters of this vast country. And the British emerged winner from among all European powers.

Body

The factors that led to the advent of Europeans in India -

- **Weak rulers and fragmented regional powers:** Aurangzeb was the last of the powerful Mughal rulers. He established control over a very large part of the territory that is now known as India. After his death in 1707, many Mughal governors (subadars) and big zamindars began asserting their authority and establishing regional kingdoms. As powerful regional kingdoms emerged in various parts of India, Delhi could no longer function as an effective centre.
- **Vast wealth of India:** It was the immense wealth of India that attracted the Europeans to this country which they came to know from the accounts of Marco Polo and some other sources.
- **Heavy demand for Indian commodities:** Heavy demand for Indian commodities like spices, calicoes, silk, various precious stones, porcelain, etc caught the attention of the European traders from the early medieval period.
- **Advancement in navigational technologies:** For a long time Europeans failed to establish a direct trade relation with India as all the major land routes to this country were then controlled by the Arabs. In the 15th century, Europe achieved great advancement in the art of ship building and navigation.
- **Quest of the expansion of the market:** Industrialization greatly increased the economic, military, and political strength of the European societies, along with government support and need for market expansion to fulfill their capitalist desire.

Conclusion

- During the second half of the 19th Century and the first half of the 20th Century a powerful national struggle against British imperialism developed in India. This struggle was the result of a clash of interests between those of the Indian people and those of the British rulers.

- The very nature of the foreign rule resulted in nationalistic sentiments arising among the Indian people and produced the material, moral, intellectual and political conditions for the rise and development of a powerful national movement.

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