



Mains Practice Question

Q. Of all the battles fought by British in India, the Battle of Buxar paved the way for expansion and consolidation of British Empire in India. Examine. (250 words)

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Approach

- Write a brief about the battle of Buxar as the introduction.
- Elaborate the consequences of the battle to show how it paved way for expansion and consolidation of the British Empire in India.

Introduction

- The Battle of Buxar was fought on 22 October 1764 between the forces under the command of the British East India Company, led by Hector Munro, and the combined armies of Mir Qasim, Nawab of Bengal till 1763; the Nawab of Awadh; and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II.
- British East India Company emerged victorious defeating the Mughal forces.
- The war ended by the signing of the Treaty of Allahabad in 1765.

Body

The Battle of Buxar had far-reaching implications in the consolidation of the British Empire in India. It influenced the politico-economic conditions of Bengal in particular and of India in general.

Symbolic Victory

- Unlike the battle of Plassey which was more of British conspiracy, the battle of Buxar was a full-fledged war which established the British prowess in warfare.
- The defeat of the Great Mughal House was very significant and it stamped the British troops as one of the potent forces of the Indian subcontinent.

Economic Avenues

- The Treaty of Allahabad formally gave the British East India Company the right to exact revenue from the eastern province of Bengal which turned the economic fortune of the company.
- It provided the company of huge resources which it could divert for strengthening its army which was a vital cog in furthering British goal of territorial conquest.
- The balance of payment which until now was in favor of India shifted in favor of Britishers, they could now finance their own trade from the revenue generated from their territories of Bengal Orissa and Bihar.

Expansionist Motives

- The British victory at Buxar ensured that there were no significant forces left to challenge its position in the eastern part of the subcontinent.
- The defeat of the Nawab of Awadh created a buffer state which effectively created a wall between

the Britishers and the notorious Marathas.

Political Stronghold

- Following the Treaty of Allahabad (1765), Robert Clive set up the infamous dual system of administration in Bengal wherein the Company acquired the real power, while the responsibility of administration rested on the Nawab of Bengal.
- Under the 'dual' or double government system, the Company got both the Diwani (revenue) and nizamat (civil administration) functions of Bengal.
- Thus virtual power went into the hands of Britishers without any responsibility which created confusions, anarchy and economic loot of India began.

Residents in the Indian States

- After the Battle of Buxar (1764), the Company appointed Residents in Indian states. They were political or commercial agents and their job was to serve and further the interests of the Company.
- Through the Residents, the Company officials began interfering in the internal affairs of Indian states.
- This policy was made more effective and further developed into Subsidiary Alliance by Lord Wellesley.

Conclusion

- The Battle of Buxar enhanced the power of the East India Company. It managed to extend its jurisdiction beyond the boundary of Bengal.
- It got an opportunity to enter successfully into the politics of India. It helped the British to carve out their empire in India.
- In the words of Sir James Stephen, "the Battle of Buxar deserves far more credit than the battle of Plassey as the origin of the British power in India."

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