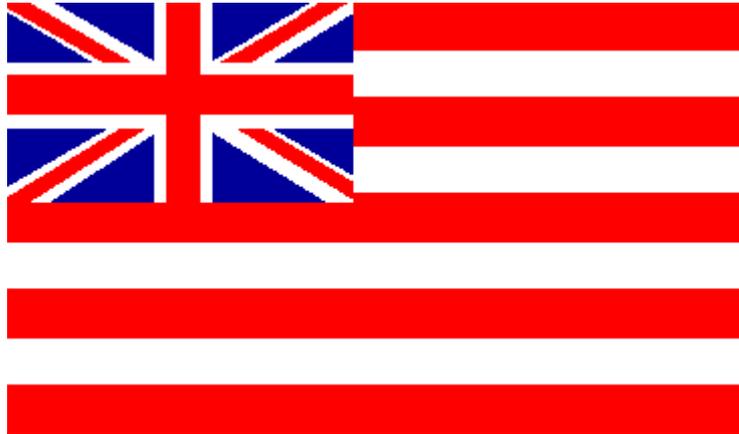


UNIT 91 – UPSC - East India Company

India's History : Medieval India : Charter to the English East India Company - 1600

East India company



In the sixteenth century the English started trade with the east. The English had to pay high prices for goods bought from the east. Lured by the Portuguese profits the English too wished to have their share of wealth and profits. Attaining power in this area would result in getting goods at prices they decide. Besides this the defeat of the Spanish Armada had made England the mistress of the seas. In 1500 a group of merchants under the Chairmanship of Lord Mayor formed an association in London to trade with India. In 1600 Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to the governor of a company of merchants to trade freely with the countries of the east. Voyages were made to South East Asia to trade in spices. Attention towards India was diverted due to the Dutch influence in the Spice islands and getting raw materials for the English. The vast Indian mainland could be a market for the finished goods. The voyage to India was led by Captain Hawkins. He landed at the west coast of Surat and succeeded to get some trade concession for the company from Emperor Jahangir. He also secured permission to set up a factory at Surat. The Portuguese influence in the Mughal Court proved an obstacle to the English trade. In 1612 Captain Best defeated the Portuguese fleet near Surat thus reducing their influence. He secured permission for building of a factory at Surat. In 1615 King James I of England sent Sir Thomas Roe as his ambassador to the court of Jahangir, and secured permission for the company to set up factories. Thus factories were set up at Ahmedabad, Broach and Agra