

The Advent of Europeans in India

1. Arrival of Europeans

- **1498:** Vasco da Gama reached **Calicut**, opening a direct sea route between Europe and India.
- Led to **competition** among the Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, and Danes.
- Marked the beginning of **European trade dominance** and eventual **colonial rule**.

2. Causes Behind the Portuguese Voyage

- **Fall of Constantinople (1453):** Arabs controlled routes; Europeans lost direct access to Indian goods.
- **Renaissance spirit:** Desire for sea exploration.
- **Advancements** in navigation & shipbuilding.
- **Treaty of Tordesillas (1494):** Non-Christian world divided → Portugal got the eastern sphere.

3. Important Portuguese Governors & Policies

Vasco da Gama

- Reached Calicut (1498); welcomed by **Zamorin**.
- Arab merchants opposed Portuguese entry.
- Portuguese aimed to **monopolise eastern trade**.

Francisco de Almeida (1505-09)

- First Governor of Portuguese India.
- Policy: **Blue Water Policy (Cartaze system)** → naval dominance through the issue of passes.
- Defeated Egyptians/Mamluks; targeted Muslim trade.

Alfonso de Albuquerque (1509-15)

- Expanded Portuguese power; seized **Goa (1510)**.
- **Permit system**, control of shipbuilding centres.
- Encouraged **intermarriage**, abolished **sati**.

Nino da Cunha (1529-38)

- Shifted HQ from **Cochin to Goa**.
- Acquired **Bassein (1534)**; conflict with **Bahadur Shah**.

4. Decline of the Portuguese

- Rise of powerful states in **Egypt, Persia, and India**.
- **Marathas** captured Salsette & Bassein (1739).
- Harsh **religious policies**, Jesuit activities, Inquisition at Goa.
- Loss of naval/military superiority.

5. Significance of Portuguese

- Introduced **naval warfare**, heavy ships, and advanced artillery.
- Strong **organisational skills**, mapping, and dockyards.
- Introduced crops: **chilli, potato, tomato, cashew, papaya, pineapple**.
- Began the era of **European colonialism** in India.

6. Advent of the Dutch

- **Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1602**.
- Authority to wage war, conclude treaties.
- Centres: **Masulipatnam (1605); Pulicat (1610)**.

7. Advent of English

Formation

- 1599: Merchant Adventurers formed an English company.
- **1600**: Queen Elizabeth I granted a charter → **exclusive trading rights**.

Establishing Foothold

- **1609**: Hawkins failed to secure Surat due to Portuguese opposition.
- **1611–16**: Factory at Masulipatnam.
- **1612**: Thomas Best defeated the Portuguese → Jahangir allowed the factory at **Surat (1613)**.

Expansion

- **Bombay (1662)**: Gift to Charles II → leased to Company (1668).
- **Madras (1639)**: Fortified factory; HQ of the English in South.
- **Bengal**:
 - 1651: Shah Shuja permitted trade.
 - 1686–1690: Conflict → settlement at **Sutanuti**.
 - 1700: **Fort William** established; became Bengal presidency.

8. Advent of French

- **French East India Company (1664)**; 50-year monopoly.
- Reorganisation as **Perpetual Company of the Indies (1720)**.
- Faced Dutch rivalry; lost several early factories.
- **Pondicherry (1674)**: Main French base.

9. Advent of Danes

- **Danish East India Company (1616).**
- Factories at **Tranquebar** and **Serampore**.
- Focused more on **missionary activity**.
- Sold settlements to the British in **1845**.

10. Why English Succeeded Over Others

- **Efficient company structure** with an elected board.
- **Naval superiority** of the Royal Navy.
- **Industrial Revolution** advantages.
- Highly disciplined & skilled **military**.
- **Stable government** back home.
- Less aggressive **religious zeal**.
- Effective use of **debt markets** (Bank of England).

MCQs

1. Which of the following was the earliest European power to establish a trading post in India?

- A. Dutch
- B. Portuguese
- C. English
- D. French

Correct Answer: B

2. With reference to early European factories in India, which one is correctly matched?

- A. Dutch – First factory at Surat
- B. English – First factory at Masulipatnam
- C. Portuguese – First factory at Pulicat
- D. French – First factory at Calicut

Correct Answer: B

3. Consider the following statements about the decline of Portuguese power in India:

1. The Dutch challenged the Portuguese monopoly in the Indian Ocean.
2. The Mughal capture of Hugli weakened Portuguese influence.
3. The Portuguese failed to control the spice trade effectively.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Correct Answer: D

4. Which of the following was the last European trading power to come to India?

- A. Portuguese
- B. English
- C. Dutch
- D. French

Correct Answer: D

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