

THE ENGLISH

In 1600, the English East India Company was established through a charter signed by Queen Elizabeth I in 1600. The charter granted the company the permission to trade with India. In 1608, Captain Hawkins visited the court of Jahangir but he was denied any trading rights. However, in 1619, when Sir Thomas Roe visited the court, they were allowed to set up their first factory in Surat. Gradually, the company was successful in setting up its factories at other places also such as Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai.

The agents of the English company soon became familiar with Indian customs and languages. They learnt Persian, the official language of the Mughals. The English agents of this period lived like Indians, intermarried Indians, and most of them settled here permanently'. All this gave the English an edge over their other European rivals.

The English set up their factories in Masulipatnam (1611), Agra, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Broach (1619), Armagaon near Pulicat (1626), Hariharpur and Balasore (1633), Patna, Dakha, Kasimbazar (1635), Fort St George in Chennai (1639), Hoogli (1651), settlements in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa (1658), Mumbai (1668) and Sutanuti (1690), Kalikota and Govindpur (1698). Later they founded the city of Kolkata which included the regions of Sutanuti, Kalikota and Govindpur. In 1700, they fortified the factory at Sutanuti and named it Fort William. In 1686, the English fought war against the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. They lost all their control over the settlements and factories in India to the Mughals. They were pardoned when they surrendered in 1690. In 1691, they were granted a Farman by the Mughal emperor. They

exempted from paying customs duties in Bengal through the Furman.



MAP 3.1 Locations of Various Colonies in India

In 1717 the Mughal emperor, Farukhsiyar (1713 - 1719), granted the British another farman, thus extending the privilege to British in Gujarat and Deccan - who by then had already established themselves in the south and the west - a grant of 38 villages near Kolkata, acknowledging their importance to the continuity of international trade in the Bengal economy. As the Dutch and the French, the British also brought silver bullion and copper to pay for transactions, helping the smooth functioning of the Mughal revenue system and increasing the benefits of local artisans and traders. The fortified warehouses of the British brought extraterritorial status, which enabled them to administer their own civil and criminal laws and offered numerous employment opportunities as well as asylum to foreigners and Indians.

The British factories successfully competed with their rivals as their size and population grew. The original clusters of fishing villages (Chennai and Kolkata) and the series of islands (Mumbai) became the headquarters of the British administrative zones or presidencies as they generally came to be known. The factories and their immediate environs, known as the white town, represented the actual and symbolic pre-eminence of the British in terms of their political power as well as their cultural values and social practices. Meanwhile, their Indian collaborators lived in the 'black town' separated from the factories by several kilometres.

Spread of British on East and West Coast of India during the Seventeenth Century

Anglo-Dutch hostilities from 1652 to 1654 drew the English and the Portuguese closer on the western coast of India. According to a secret article in the marriage treaty of 1661 with Portugal, the Portuguese possessions in the East were guaranteed by England against the Dutch, and the island of Mumbai was included as a part of dowry of Catherine of Braganza, the new queen of Charles II. In 1668, Charles II transferred Mumbai to the East India Company on an annual payment of 10 pounds. Mumbai gradually rose to prosperity during the administration of Sir George Oxenden (1662-1669), Gerald Aungier (1669-1677) and Sir John Child (1682-1690). In 1687, the seal of the western Presidency was shifted from Surat to Mumbai. In 1611; the English started a factory in the southeast at Masulipatnam. In 1632, they obtained Golden farman from Sultan of Golconda and in 1639 were permitted to build a fortified factory in Chennai, known as Fort St George, which later superseded

Masulipatnam as the headquarters of the English in the East coast.

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