

Battle of Plassey, June 23 1757 - NCERT Notes on Modern Indian History for UPSC

The Battle of Plassey was a major turning point in modern Indian history that led to the consolidation of the British rule in India. This battle was fought between the East India Company headed by Robert Clive and the Nawab of Bengal (Siraj-Ud-Daulah) and his French Troop. This battle is often termed as the 'decisive event' which became the source of ultimate rule of British in India. The battle occurred during the reign late reign of Mughal empire (called later Mughal Period). Mughal emperor Alamgir-II was ruling the empire when the Battle of Plassey took place.

A few historians, while answering the question as to when did the British rule start in India, cite the Battle of Plassey as the source.

This article will talk about the Battle of Plassey in detail to help IAS Exam aspirants understand it for both prelims and mains (GS-I). You can also download the Battle of Plassey notes PDF from the link provided.

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What is the Battle of Plassey?

It is a battle fought between the East India Company force headed by Robert Clive and Siraj-Ud-Daulah (Nawab of Bengal). The rampant misuse by EIC officials of trade privileges infuriated Siraj. The continuing misconduct by the EIC against Siraj-Ud-Daulah led to the battle of Plassey in 1757.

Causes of the Battle of Plassey

Majorly, the reasons for the Battle of Plassey to take place were:

- The rampant misuse of the trade privileges given to the British by the Nawab of Bengal
- Non-payment of tax and duty by the workers of the British East India Company

Other reasons that supported the coming of this battle were:

- Fortification of Calcutta by the British without the Nawab's permission
- Misleading Nawab on various fronts by British
- An asylum was provided to Nawab's enemy Krishna Das

The East India Company had a strong presence in India majorly at Fort St. George, Fort William, and Bombay Castle.

The British resorted to having an alliance with the Nawabs and princes in exchange for security against any form of external and internal attack and were promised concessions in return for their safety and protection.

The problem arose when the alliance was disrupted under the rule of Nawab of Bengal (Siraj-Ud-Daulah). The Nawab started seizing the fort of Calcutta and imprisoning many British Officials in June 1756. The prisoners were kept in a dungeon at Fort William. This incident is called the Black Hole of Calcutta since only a handful of the prisoners survived the captivity where over a hundred people were kept in a cell meant for about 6 people. The East India company planned an attack and Robert Clive bribed Mir Jafar, the commander-in-chief of the Nawab's army, and also promised him to make him Nawab of Bengal.

The Battle of Plassey was fought at Palashi, on the banks of Bhagirathi river near Calcutta on June 23, 1757.

After three hours of intense fighting, there was a heavy downpour. One of the reasons for the defeat of Nawab was the lack of planning to protect their weapons during the heavy downpour which turned the table in favour of the British army apart from the major reason being the treachery of Mir Jafar.

Siraj-Ud-Daulah's army with 50,000 soldiers, 40 cannons and 10 war elephants was defeated by 3,000 soldiers of Robert Clive. The battle ended in 11 hours and Siraj-Ud-Daulah fled from the battle post his defeat.

According to Robert Clive, 22 men died and 50 were injured from the British troops. The Nawab army lost about 500 men, including several key officials and many of them even suffered several casualties.

Who Fought the Battle of Plassey?

The table below will inform the IAS aspirants to know the participants of the battle of Plassey and their significance on the battle:

Participants of Battle of Plassey

Role in the Battle of Plassey

Siraj-Ud-Daulah (Nawab of Bengal)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in Black-Hole Tragedy (imprisoned 146 English persons who were lodged in a very tiny room due to which 123 of them died of suffocation) Adversely affected by the rampant misuse of trade privileges by the EIC Attacked and seized the English fort at Calcutta, it brought their hostility into the open
Robert Clive (EIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gave asylum to political fugitive Krishna Das, disappointing Siraj-Ud-Daulah Misuse of trade privileges Fortified Calcutta without the nawab's permission
Mir Jafar (Commander-in-Chief of Nawab's army)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bribed by East India Company (EIC) Was to be made the Nawab by EIC for conspiring against Siraj-Ud-Daulah Cheated Siraj-Ud-Daulah during the battle
Rai Durlabh (One of the Commanders of the Nawabs Army)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joined his army with Siraj-Ud-Daulah's but did not participate in the battle Betrayed Siraj
Jagat Seth (Influential Banker)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involved in the conspiracy involving the imprisonment and ultimate killing of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daulah
Omi Chand (Bengal Merchant)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One of the principal authors of the conspiracy against Nawab and associated with the treaty negotiated by Robert Clive before the Battle of Plassey in 1757

Effects of Battle of Plassey

Apart from the British getting political power of Northern India but only after Nawabs, there were several other effects in many forms that came out as a result of the Battle of Plassey. They can be categorised as:

- Political Effects
- Economic Effects

Political Effects

- The Battle of Plassey resulted at the end of the French forces.
- Mir Jafar was crowned as the Nawab of Bengal
- Mir Jafar was unhappy with the position and instigated the Dutch to attack the British in order to consolidate his foundation.
- The Battle of Chinsura was fought between the Dutch and British forces on November 25, 1759.
- The British installed Mir Qasim as the Nawab of Bengal.
- The British became the paramount European power in Bengal.
- Robert Clive was titled "Lord Clive", Baron of Plassey and also obtained a seat in the British House of Commons.

Economic Effects

- The economy of India was affected severely.
- Post the victory, the British started imposing severe rules and regulations on the inhabitants of Bengal in the name of tax collection.