

SECTION 5

Clive and His Administration

1. Early Career of Clive—Robert Clive was born in 1725 at Market Drayton, a small town in England. His father, a clergyman, became so much tired of him, because of his turbulent habits, that he got him enrolled as a clerk in the East India Company at the age of 19 and heaved a sigh of relief only when he sailed for India in 1744. He little knew that one day his naughty boy would bring fame to his family and prove to be the founder of the English empire in India. In India, Clive worked for some time as a clerk but soon he got tired of clerical job so much so that he decided to put an end to such a wretched life. Twice he tried to shoot himself but both the time the gun did not go off. At this he thought that God must have spared him for some great work. Soon he left his clerical job and joined the army as a ordinary soldier. Slowly he rose to the position of a commander.



Clive

2. Rise to Power, 1751-57 A.D.—Clive proved a great success as a

soldier. Soon he became popular among his companions for his undaunted courage and great political insight. He achieved wonders and within a short time he completely changed the destiny of the English East India Company in India.

(1) *Siege of Arcot, 1751*. Clive gave the first example of his military talents in the Second Carnatic War (1749-55) when in 1751 he captured Arcot, the capital of Carnatic, and nullified all the plans of Dupleix. Thus, he saved the English prestige in the Deccan when it was at the point of being lost and won success and honour for his country.

(2) *Recapture of Calcutta, January 1757*. In June 1756, Siraj-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal attacked and captured Calcutta. This was another humiliation for the English, but here too Clive came to their rescue. With the help of Admiral Watson he recaptured Calcutta in January 1757 and with a master-stroke of policy he at once concluded a treaty with Siraj-ud-Daulah whereby the latter agreed to pay the losses incurred by the English. By concluding this treaty with the Nawab of Bengal Clive showed himself to be man of great insight, for there was every chance of the coalition of the Nawab of Bengal with the Dutch who were still very powerful in India.

(3) *Capture of Chandranagar, March 1757 A.D.* Chandranagar, the chief seat of the French in Bengal, had till recently become a great centre of intrigues between the French and the Nawab of Bengal. To leave such a place would have been very prejudicial to the English interests. So Clive attacked and captured Chandranagar in March 1757. Now a coalition between the French and the Nawab of Bengal became almost impossible.

(4) *Battle of Plassey, June 1757 A.D.* Then Clive very cleverly won over Mir Jafar, the commander of Siraj-ud-Daulah's forces to his side and with only 3,200 soldiers he gave a crushing defeat to Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah (with 50,000 soldiers) in the famous Battle of Plassey in June 1757. By winning this battle Clive greatly strengthened the position of the English in Bengal and provided them a key to the conquest of India.

3. Clive's First Governorship of Bengal, 1757-60—The success of Clive in the Battle of Plassey immortalised his name and he was rewarded with the Governorship of Bengal in 1757. He remained on this post for three years i.e., from 1757-60. The following were the chief events of this period :

(1) *Defeat of Shah Alam, 1759 A.D.* The Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam (1759-1806), in coalition with Shuja-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Oudh, invaded Bihar in 1759, but Clive defeated them near Patna and forced them to retreat. Mir Jafar was so pleased at this that he rewarded Clive with a Jagir whose annual income was £ 30,000 a year.

(2) *Defeat of the Dutch of Chinsura, 1759 A.D.* Mir Jafar the New

Nawab of Bengal, soon became tired of the English and in order to get rid of them he entered into a conspiracy with the Dutch of Chinsura. Clive could not allow things to pass that way. The Dutch were attacked and defeated in 1759. Consequently they were rendered completely harmless in India.

(3) *Capture of Northern Circars, 1759 A.D.*—The capture of Northern Circars by Clive in 1759, when Bussey was recalled by Lally to the South, was another stroke of his masterly-hand. With his wakening eyes Clive noticed every bit of change and made best use of the opportunity for the benefit of the British. When he founded the Northern Circars being left unprotected by the French, he sent an expedition under Colonel Forde and captured it very easily. Consequently, the French influence in the Hyderabad Court also came to an end.

In this way Clive, during the First Governorship of Bengal (1757-60); greatly consolidated the British power both in Bengal and the Deccan. In 1760 he fell ill and left for England. There he was greatly honoured, and was awarded the title of "Lord" and was created a Peer in the Upper House.

4. Clive's Second Governorship of Bengal, 1765-67 A.D.—After Clive's departure Vanistart was made the Governor of Bengal. He remained on this post for five years (1760-65) but he completely failed in checking the prevailing abuses. Confusion and disorder prevailed everywhere and almost every servant of the Company began to amass wealth by fair or foul means. They began to indulge in private trade, accept illegal presents and to sell their passes to Indian merchants in return for heavy amounts. As a result of their unfair means the administration of Bengal was completely crippled. Under these circumstances the Directors of the Company were forced to send Clive once again to India to effect reforms in the Company's administration. Clive arrived in India in 1765, and remained the Governor of Bengal for a year and a half. During this period (1765-67) of his second Governorship Clive mainly devoted himself to the task of reforming the Company's civil and military services and reorganising the internal administration of Bengal.

(1) *Reform of Services.* Soon after his arrival in India, Clive took up the task of reforming and reorganising the Company's civil and military services. (i) First of all, the servants of the Company were *forbidden to receive gifts and accept presents* from the Indians. (ii) Similarly, the servants of the Company were *forbidden to indulge in private trade*. (iii) Clive fully knew that unless and until the servants of the Company were compensated for the loss which they incurred in giving up their private trade and discarding their gifts, his early reforms would be of no use. Hence, he advocated increased salaries but when the Directors did not agree to his proposal he *paid an allowance* to the senior servants out of the profit arising from the monopoly

in salt trade. (iv) Lord Clive had also to deal with the military side of the administration. The practice of paying the *Double Bhatta* (or field allowance) to the military officers was abolished. These allowances were paid to the military officers during war times when they were on active duty but they had begun to get them even in peace times. So long as these allowances were paid by the Indian rulers the Company did not object to it but when the Company itself had to pay the same from its own pocket, it felt it much and hence the *Double Bhatta* was stopped. (v) Clive set up a fund known as *Lord Clive's Fund* with a view to helping those servants of the Company who were in financial difficulty. Such a fund performed a useful purpose, especially when the company had no system of giving pensions to its servants.

(2) *Foreign Affairs—Treaty of Allahabad, 1765 A.D.* When Clive arrived in India he was dazzled to find both the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-Daulah, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh, at the mercy of English. The whole of Northern India lay prostrate at the feet of the East India Company. Men like Sir Eyre Coote had even advocated a March to Delhi, but Clive moved very cautiously. He signed the Treaty of Allahabad with Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-Daulah in 1765 and brought about a close to the Battle of Buxar. By this treaty, Oudh was given back to Shuja-ud-Daulah with the exception of the districts of Kara and Allahabad, in return for a huge war indemnity (of Rs. 50 lakhs). In this way, instead of annexing Oudh Clive made it a buffer state between the English and Marathas. Shah Alam was also given a decent treatment. He was allowed an annual pension of 26 lakhs of rupees and the districts of Allahabad and Kara were also given to him to maintain his royal dignity and prestige. The Mughal Emperor, in return for this decent treatment, granted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English. Thus, the English East India Company became a great political power in India.

(3) *Dual Government in Bengal, 1765-72 A.D.*—From 1765 to 1772 the administration of Bengal was carried on by two powers, the British and the Nawab of Bengal and hence this system came to be known as the 'Daul System' in the history of India. This system of government was introduced by Clive in 1765 and as it proved defective it was brought to an end by Warren Hastings in 1772.

(a) *Origin of the Dual Government.* In 1763 Mir Qasim was deposed and the administration of Bengal was once again entrusted to Mir Zafar. Mir Jafar, however, died in February, 1765 and was succeeded by his son Nazim-ud-Daulah. The new Nawab handed over the 'Nizamat' or defence and criminal justice to the English. In August 1765, the Mughal Emperor also handed over the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the Company. In this way, the English Company became the virtual head of Bengal and the Nawab receded into the background. But the English Company was not prepared to shoulder

all the responsibility as the ruler of Bengal because, as Clive felt it, the Company had neither the means nor the experience to shoulder the burden of administration. Moreover, he did not want to incur the hostility of the native powers by assuming the full charge of Bengal. Hence, a novel experiment was made by Clive. The Company was to defend the country from foreign invasions and was to collect the revenue of the three provinces, while the Nawab was responsible for internal administration and maintenance of peace and order. The Nawab was to get Rs. 53 lakhs from the Company to run the administration. As Nazim-ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal was as yet a minor, two Naib Wazirs (or Deputy Nawabs) were appointed to assist the Nawab of Bengal. Muhammad Raza Khan was to look after the administration of Bengal while Raja Shitab Rai was to act as the Deputy Nawab of Bihar and Orissa. Thus, there was a division of administration into two water-tight compartments. The responsibility of introducing such a system fully rests on Clive's shoulders. Clive gave various causes of its introduction but the Indian historians still allege that Clive hesitated to shoulder responsibility all at once because he wanted to make it known to the Indian people that the previous machinery was completely discredited due to its inherent weaknesses and misrule.

(b) *Defects in the Dual System.* The Dual System in Bengal worked from 1765 to 1772, when it was discontinued by Warren Hastings. There were many defects in this system. (1) This system soon led to the complete *break-down of administration* in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The Company had all the power but no responsibility, while the Nawab had all the responsibility but no power. This divorce of power from responsibility once again led to the revival of the old abuses. (2) None among the servants of the Company and the Nawab knew about their rights and duties. Hence they began to quarrel among themselves and '*made confusion more confounded and corruption more corrupt*' (Kaye). (3) *The plight of the people* became very miserable especially when both the servants of the Company and the servants of the Nawab began to fleece them most disgracefully. (4) Instead of collecting the revenue, the Company sold 'Revenue Agencies' to the big Zamindars who suppressed the cultivators very much and sucked even the last drop of their blood. The cultivators almost became *faqirs* or beggars and so cultivation suffered a lot. Consequently, in 1769-70 there occurred a severe famine in Bengal which took away one-third of its population in its wake. (5) Lawlessness prevailed everywhere and the whole country was infested with thieves. Consequently, the *trade and commerce* of the country suffered a lot. (6) Bribery and corruption became the order of the day and justice became a by-word. Money decided everything and culprits went scot free. (7) While the servants of the Company were greatly increasing their bank balances (by indulging in corruption, bribery and their private trade), the Company's coffers became empty and financial bankruptcy started on its face. In fact everything went

wrong due to Dual government in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.

(c) *End of the Daul System, 1772 A.D.*—This system of the Dual government introduced by Clive in 1765 continued to work, though adversely, under the next two Governors of Bengal, i.e. Verelst (1767-69) and Cartier (1769-72) but because of its above-mentioned defects it was abolished by Warren Hastings in 1772.

In 1767, Clive sailed for England on grounds of ill-health but this time he was received there with mixed feelings. He was prosecuted for corruption and abusing his powers but later on he was acquitted with the remarks: "*That Robert Clive at the same time rendered great and meritorious service to his country.*" But, this prosecution preyed so heavily on his mind that he committed suicide in 1774.