

## Grade VIII

### Lesson 3. Glimpses of the Past

#### PROSE

#### Soul of the chapter

#### **The company's Conquests and British Rule (1757- 1849)**

The East India Company was extending its power in the 18th century. The rivalry between the Indian princes and their short sightedness gave a chance to the English merchants and the company to get successful in their ventures. The rule of the East India Company was looked as a blessing by many as it restored some peace and order. The others, however, viewed the dethroning of their Indian kings as a shame and regretted submitting under the outsider's rule. Tipu Sultan of Mysore lay down his life fighting the British.

India, at the point, was steeped into religious orthodoxies and superstitions. Practices like untouchability, child marriages and low social status given to women were just a few to mention. The Britishers, on the other side, were far sighted and industrious. They scorned the Indians for these evil practices as well as for their dishonesty. Their laws crippled the Indian industries and strengthened their rule. The English goods were imported to be sold in the Indian markets without any import duty, while, the Indian farmers were levied with heavy taxes on their produced. This burden on the Indian farmers led to famine and death of several thousand Indians.

#### **Ram Mohan Roy(1772- 1833)**

Ram Mohan Roy was a learned man from Bengal who valued the Indian tradition, but understood that the society was in need for reform. He understood that the essence of all religions was the same. Therefore, respect and tolerance is the key to a united social existence.

At the same time, he was attracted by the scientific and modern forms of knowledge and realised that anything that could be explained through reason should be accepted as the truth. He travelled to England and thereafter accepted the rule by British, but only if they were



willing to fulfil their responsibilities towards their Indian subjects. He also started newspapers in India, but the suspicious British soon stopped them in 1823.

### **Oppression (1765- 1835) and Dissatisfaction (1835- 1856)**

This phase was entirely marked by the oppressive policies of the British. They imposed Regulation III on the Indians, according to which Indians could be jailed without trials. They heavily exported their English goods to the Indian markets and made huge profits on the basis of this. They also profited through private businesses they established in India. With every passing day, the Indian industries were ruined, while the British increasingly prospered.

Deep rooted dissatisfaction had seeped among the Indians by this time. The British tried to replace the Persian and Sanskrit language with their English language. They taught English language to the Indians without any uniformity and created a new class of intellectuals who could work as clerks or middle men between the Indians and the British. These intellectuals invested a lot of faith in the English education and the English policies. The reality, however, was that British cared little about Indians. Many Indians lost their existing jobs and positions. By 1856, the British had established their rule on nearly the whole of India.

### **The Sparks (1855- 57)**

The discontent had risen to such a level that it was now taking the form of a rebellion. Taxes ruined the peasants and the new land rules had made the Santhals in Bengal desperate. They massacred Europeans and their supporters. Similar situation was to be seen within the India Company's army. The Indian soldiers were quick to understand that their English counterparts were getting a much better salary, bungalows to live in and servants to attend them. The Indian soldiers were merely losing their religion and age old customs by travelling to distant lands, which was considered against their customs. They also found out that the grease used on the bullets was made from the fat of cows and pigs, which was a blasphemy for most Indians. They soon spread their message to their brethren in the villages to be ready with support in case of an open revolt.



## Revolt and the Fight for Freedom 1857

Finally, the revolt began it got wider and wider. The sepoys marched to Delhi. The landlords also offered their support. All alike, sung praises of Bahadur Shah, their Emperor and shouted slogans like "Death to the foreigner." The War of Independence was initiated. People rose in rebellion in Bareilly, Kanpur and Allahabad. Many former rulers like Begum Hazrat Mahal of Lucknow, popular leaders like Maulvi Ahmedulla of Faizabad and others joined the upsurge against the foreigners. Azimulla Khan told Tatya Tope that Peshwa Nana Saheb should be chosen as the leader in the war for independence. Kunwar Singh and various other patriots pounced and fought against the foreigners all over North India.

### NCERT Corner

### Comprehension Checks

1. Look at the picture 1 and recall the opening lines of the original song in Hindi. Who is the singer? Who else do you see in this picture (Refer Picture of NCERT page no 36)

"Ae mere wat ankelogon, Zaraaankhmeinbhar lo paani, jo shaheed hue hain unki zara yaad karo kurbaani" are the opening lines of the song sung by Lata Mangeshkar. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the Independent India Lal Bahadur Shastri and Indira Gandhi can also be seen in the picture, sitting in the audience.

2. In picture 2 what do you understand by the Company's "superior weapons" (Refer Picture 2 of NCERT page no 37)

The Company's 'superior weapons' could mean the game of mind that the British played to establish and spread their rule in India. Also their superior guns and artillery are referred as the Company's "superior weapons"

3. Who is an artisan? Why do you think the artisans suffered? (Refer to Picture 3 of NCERT Page no 38)

The artisans are skilled craftsmen who manually created goods. They suffered with the coming of the British because the British imported their goods to India at a bulk scale. The artisans could not keep pace with the quantity of machine manufactured goods that flooded the Indian markets even when the artisan's skill was of a much higher quality.



**4. Which picture, according to you, reveals the first sparks of the fire of revolt  
(Refer to Picture 4 of NCERT Page no 39)**

Picture 4 reveals the first spark of revolt when the Europeans were massacred by the 'Santhals' of Bengal in 1855.

**Working with the Text**

**Answer the following questions.**

**1. Do you think the Indian princes were short-sighted in their approach to the events of 1757?**

The Indian princes were surely short-sighted to the events of 1757 because they failed to understand the consequences of the foreign help that they sought to in order to resolve their internal matters.

**2. How did the East India Company subdue the Indian princes?**

The Indian princes fought against each other and sought the help of the British to gain control of the situation. This, in reality, soon turned them puppets in the hands of the British. The British, thereafter, managed to subdue and control them.

**3. Quote the words used by Ram Mohan Roy to say that every religion teaches the same principles.**

According to Ram Mohan Roy, "Cows are of different colours. But the colour of their milk is the same. Different teachers have different opinions, but the essence of different religions is the same."

**4. In what ways did the British officers exploit Indians?**

British officers exploited Indians in multiple ways. They reduced the Indians into nothingness by passing the Regulation III. They imposed heavy taxes on the Indian farmers and reformed the land laws too. They imported English goods in bulk without paying import duties and crippled the Indian artisans.

**5. Name these people.**

- (i) The ruler who fought pitched battles against the British and died fighting.
- (ii) The person who wanted to reform the society.
- (iii) The person who recommended the introduction of English education in India.
- (iv) Two popular leaders who led the revolt (choices may vary)



(i) Tipu Sultan

(ii) Ram Mohan Roy

(iii) Lord Macaulay

(iv) Tatya Tope and Peshwa Nana Saheb

**6. Mention the following.**

**(i) Two examples of social practices prevailing then.**

**(ii) Two oppressive policies of the British.**

**(iii) Two ways in which common people suffered.**

**(iv) Four reasons for the discontent that led to the 1857 war of Independence.**

(i) Untouchability and child marriage.

(ii) Regulation III and import of British goods without import duty.

(iii) The farmers were heavily taxed and many Indians lost their jobs.

(iv) (a) Taxes that ruined the farmers.

(b) Change in the laws related to land.

(c) Disparity in the perks privileges and wages of British soldiers and the Indian soldiers.

(d) The grease used on the bullets was made from the fat of cows and pigs.

**Working with Language**

In comics, what the characters speak is put in bubbles. This is direct narration. When we report what the character speaks, we use the method of indirect narration.

**Study These Examples**

**First farmer** : Why are your men taking away the entire crop?

**Second farmer** : Your men have taken away everything.

**Officer** : You are still in arrears. If you don't pay tax next week, I'll send you to jail.

- The first farmer asked the officer why his men were taking away the entire crop.
- The second farmer said that their men had taken away everything.
- The officer replied that they were still in arrears and warned them that if they did not pay tax the following week, he (the officer) would send them (the farmers) to jail.



# 1. Change the following sentences into direct speech.

(i) **First man** we must educate our brothers.

**Second man** And try to improve their material condition.

**Third man** For that we must convey our grievances to the British Parliament.

The first man said that \_\_\_\_\_

The second man added that \_\_\_\_\_

The third man suggested that \_\_\_\_\_

The first man said that you must educate their brothers. The second man added that they had to try to improve their material condition. The third man suggested that they must convey their grievances to the British Parliament.

(ii) **First soldier** The white soldier gets huge pay, mansions and servants.

**Second soldier** We get a pittance and slow promotions.

**Third soldier** Who are the British to abolish our customs?

The first soldier said that \_\_\_\_\_

The second soldier remarked that \_\_\_\_\_

The third soldier asked \_\_\_\_\_

The first soldier said that the white soldier got huge pay, mansions and servants. The second soldier remarked that they only got a pittance and slow promotions. The third soldier asked who were the British to abolish their customs.

## Speaking and Writing

### 1. Playact the role of farmers who have grievances against the policies of the government.

Rewrite their 'speech bubbles in dialogue form first.

**First Farmer** These foreigners are worst than our Indian princes.

**Second Farmer** Yes, you are absolutely right. They have taken away our entire crop.

**Third Farmer** As if this wasn't enough, they have levied heavy taxes on us and arrears too.

**First Farmer** The rain gods don't seem to be very happy either. The famine would ruin our entire family.

**Second Farmer** Despite, so much suffering, we are further threatened that we would be put into jail.



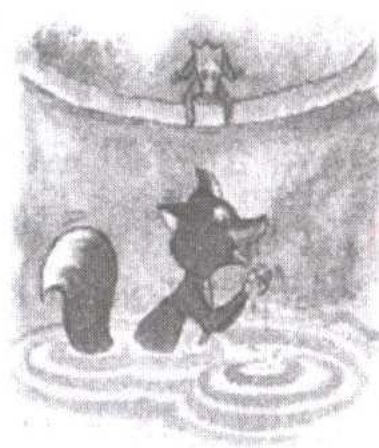
**Third Farmer** Someone was talking about some Regulation III, which says that Indians could be Jailed without any trial.

**Second Farmer** We are damned forever. Death be to the foreigner.

2. Look at the pictures.



"Hello ! Is this water sweet?"



"Too sweet! I've had so much, I might faint."



"Let me taste it."



"Thanks for the help.  
Come out when you can."



"My mother used to say: Be careful how you take the advice of people you don't know."



(i) Ask one another questions about the pictures.

Where is the fox?

How did it happen?

What is the fox thinking?

Who is the visitor?

What does she want to know?

What is the fox's reply?

What happens next?

Where is the goat?

Where is the fox now?

What is the goat thinking?

**Ans:** Do it yourself

(ii) Write the story in your own words. Give it a title.

**Ans: The Clever Fox**

A fox accidentally fell into the water. It did not know what to do or how to get out of the water. At that very instance, a goat arrived there. It asked the fox a silly question: "is the water sweet?" The fox pretends that it was inside the well only to drink plenty of the sweet water in the well. Hearing this, the goat gets tempted. It wanted to sip the water too. The fox asks the goat to jump into the well and enjoy its water. The goat, not thinking, jumps into the well. The fox had been waiting for the opportunity. It immediately climbs the back of the goat and jumps out of the well and sarcastically tells the goat to come out whenever it can.

The goat understands that it had been fooled by the clever fox and remembers its mother's saying: "Be careful how you take the advice of people you don't know."

### 3. Read the following news item.

#### **History becomes fun at this school**

**Mumbai:** Students in the sixth grade of a certain school in Navi Mumbai love their history lesson thanks to a novel teaching aid. It is not surprising given the fact their study material includes comic books and they use their textbooks for reference to put things into perspective. Besides, students are encouraged to tap other sources of information as well. During history classes, students pore over comic strips of historical periods, enact characters of emperors and tyrants and have animated discussion on the subject. History has become fun.





In the class students are asked to read the comic strip, aloud, after which they break up into groups of four, discuss what they have heard and write a summary. Each group leader reads his group's summary aloud and the whole class jumps into discussion and debate, adding points, disagreeing and qualifying points of view. A sixth grade student says, "It's a lot of fun because everyone gets a chance to express themselves and the summary takes everyone's ideas into account."

According to the school principal the comic strip format and visuals appeal to students. A historian feels that using comics in school is a great idea. Comics and acting help students understand what characters in the story are actually thinking.

**(adapted from The Times of India, New Delhi, October, 2007)**

**Based on this news item, write a paragraph on what you think about this new method of teaching history.**

This new method of teaching sounds very promising because students understand better through visuals and popular culture such as comic reading. This method is a good alternative to the boring text book reading sessions. Since, these are activity based sessions, students participate with a lot of energy and enthusiasm.

This method blurs the line between playing and learning and therefore, in the most suitable method. Acting the roles of various characters, the students are made to apply their knowledge and think as the characters would have thought which forces them to be imaginative and creative.

**4. Find the chapters in your history book that correspond to the episodes and events described in this comic. Note how the information contained in a few chapters of history has been condensed to a few pages with the help of pictures and 'speech bubbles.'**

Do it yourself

**5. Create a comic of your own using this story. Once, the Sun and the Wind began to Quarrel, each one saying that he was stronger than the other. At least they decided to test each other's strength. A man with a cloak around his shoulders was passing by.**

The wind boasted, "Using my strength I can make that man take off the cloak". The Sun agreed. The wind blew hard. The man felt so cold that he clasped his cloak round his body as tightly as possible. Now, it was turn of the Sun which shone very hot indeed. The man felt so



hot that he at once removed the cloak from his body. Seeing the man taking of the cloak, the wind conceded defeat.

Do it yourself

## Chapter Practice

### Very Short Answer Type Questions

- 1. What were the two conflicting views with which the Indians welcomed the British during the years 1757 and 1849?**

The Indian princes looked at the British as help sent by the Gods. The native people, however, regretted that they had become slaves to the foreigners.

- 2. Why had the Indians lost respect in the eyes of the British?**

The British realised that the natives were incapable of honesty. They were unworthy of trust and therefore, they lost respect before the British.

- 3. Ram Mohan Roy's concept of knowledge was very different from that of the traditional idea of knowledge in the Indian scheme of things. Why?**

Ram Mohan Roy put a lot of emphasis on knowledge being scientific and practical. This modern form of knowledge was very different from the traditional ways of looking at life.

- 4. Why did Ram Mohan Roy go to England?**

Ram Mohan Roy went to England to see what made the British powerful. On his return, he accepted the British as their ruler, but only if the British were willing to take responsibility of their citizens.

- 5. Why was Regulation III oppressive?**

The Regulation III, passed in the year 1818, was oppressive because it refused to acknowledge the existence of Indian before law. It entailed that the Indians could be jailed without any trial.

- 6. Who suggested that English education may be introduced in India and when?**

An Englishman, named Thomas Babington Macaulay in the year 1835 suggested that English education may be introduced in India. Soon, Macaulay's Minutes were passed to implement the same.



**7. What were the grievances of the native people during 1835- 56?**

The native men could see that their kings had become puppets in the hands of the British. British cared little about the Indians and were also making attempts at converting Indians into their faith/religion.

**8. During 1855- 57, what way was adopted by the rebels to send their message to the villagers?**

The rebels sent their message that the emperor would soon need the services of the villagers by sending chapattis from village to village.

**9. Name the people who participated in the First War of Independence 1857.**

Begum Hazrat Mahal of Lucknow, Maulvi Ahmedulla of Faizabad, Azimulla Khan, Tatya Tope and Kunwar Singh from Bihar were few among many, who participated in the 1857, struggle for independence.

**10. In which languages was the Indian education conducted initially?**

Persian and Sanskrit were the two languages in which Indian education was conducted.

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**Short Answer Type Questions**

**1. Why did the Indian soldiers feel that they had lost their religion on account of the British?**

The Indian soldiers had to travel to different lands. This was not permitted by their religion. Also, the grease used on the bullet was made from the fat of pigs and cows, something that was considered as a blasphemy to their religion.

**2. Why did Tipu fight with the British till his last breath?**

Tipu Sultan of Mysore was a far-sighted ruler. He understood that the British were taking advantages of the fights between the Indian princes and would later fulfil their ulterior motives. Therefore, Tipu Sultan fought against the establishment of the British rule in India.

**3. Was Ram Mohan Roy against his culture?**

No. Ram Mohan Roy was not against his culture. Rather, he was a great admirer of his ancient culture and invested a lot of faith in its capacities to attain great merits. However he believed that his society was in need of reform because superstitions had ruined it.



#### **4. Why was Mangal Pandey executed?**

The discontent in the East India Company's army was increasing day by day as the Indian soldiers had understood that they were being discriminated against. Mangal Pandey, one of the sepoys, led a rebellion against the regiment and attacked one of the adjutants. He was executed for daring to rebel.

#### **5. How did the masses help the rebels?**

Through chapattis and lotus flowers a message was sent to the masses by the rebels that their services would be needed. The masses stood in full support. They also gave shelter to patriots, safeguarding them from the British police imprisoning them.

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### **Long Answer Type Questions**

#### **1. Which all spheres of the Indian society were targeted by the British in gaining control over the Indians?**

The British, being merchants, first and foremost targeted the economic bases of the Indians. They ruined the cottage and small-scale industries, thereby hitting the backbone of the country.

They also targeted the social and religious practices of the Indians leading to stabilisation of the moral fabric of the Indian existence. Politically, they had already turned the Indian kings and princes into puppets to play with. Also, the changes in existing laws were introduced with an aim to reduce Indians into nothingness before the legal bodies.

#### **2. What happened with the introduction of English education?**

The English education not only replaced the traditional forms of education, especially the modes/languages in which education was imparted, but also created a new class of intellectuals. These intellectuals served as middle men between the native Indians and the British. Since the English education was not introduced uniformly, this new class invested a lot of faith in English mannerisms and looked down upon their brethren.

#### **3. On the basis of your reading of the text, write a character sketch of Ram Mohan Roy.**

Ram Mohan Roy was a very learned man from Bengal. He was unbiased and objective in his perspectives about his society. He realised both merits and demerits of his society. He could foresee that various social evils and superstitions were ruining Indian society. He, therefore, tried to bring about a reform in his society. He started his newspaper for such causes. He was



also a great appreciator of the Western thinking for it laid emphasis on practical and scientific forms of knowledge. He did a lot of work for women.

#### **4. What were the superstitions that were being spread by the religious leaders of the time?**

The religious leaders of the time talked about ideas like untouchability and child marriage, ideas that were orthodox and regressive in nature. They also preached against women "All the misery in the world is due to women." This led to women enjoying a lower social status. The religious leaders of the time also encouraged people to believe that travelling to distant lands would make them lose their religion. Many other such regressive ideas were being spread by the religious leaders of the time.

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### **Value Based Questions**

#### **1. Do you think that a society should always resist change or reform in order to preserve its traditional values?**

No. The society should not always resist the changes or reforms that occur because with the changing times certain traditional ideas and values may become obsolete and therefore, meaningless. Also, certain rituals suppress the existence of certain sections of the society. If there is no reforms, these sections, would always remain oppressed and subjugated. For instance, the women, lower caste and lower class people.

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### **Extract Based Questions**

#### **Extract 1**

**Directions (Q.Nos.1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

"Being merchants, the British wanted quick profits, their heavy taxes forced farmers to abandon their fields.

But your men are taking all my crop!

You are still in arrears. If you don't pay next week. I will send you to jail. Inevitably famines followed. Between 1822 and 1836 fifteen lakh Indians died of starvation."



**1. How many Indians died during the years 1822 and 1836?**

- (a) Ten thousand      (b) Fifteen lakh      (c) Fifty thousand      (d) Forty lakh  
(b) Fifteen lakh

**2. What was the reason behind these deaths?**

- (a) Floods      (b) Famines      (b) Earthquake      (d) Volcanic eruptions  
(b) Famines

**3. What did the British impose on the Indian farmers?**

- (a) Heavy taxes      (b) Services taxes      (b) Regulation II      (d) Regulation III  
(a) Heavy taxes

**4. Why were the farmers unable to pay arrears?**

The farmers were unable to pay the arrears because their entire crop was being taken away by the British. The famines further destroyed the crop. So, the farmers had no profits but losses.

**5. How did the British threaten the farmers?**

The British threatened the Indian farmers that they would be put into jail if they don't pay the arrears.

**6. What characteristic trait of the British made them earn huge profits?**

The British were merchants. So, they were good at earning profits by focussing on the dynamics of the market.

### Extract 2

**Directions (Q. Nos. 1- 6) Read the extract given below and answer the following questions.**

"All the time British officers in India drew big salaries and also made fortunes in private business. By 1829, Britain was exporting British goods worth seven crore rupees to India. The British prospered on the Company's loot while Indian industries began to die. Governor-General Bentinck reported back home-

"The bones of cotton weavers are bleaching the plains of India."

**1. What was the value of the British goods exported to India in 1829?**

- (a) Five crores      (b) Six crores      (c) Seven crores      (d) Eight crores  
(c) Seven crores

**2. Which Englishman reported the plight of India to England?**

- (a) Babington Macaulay      (b) General Bentinck







**3. How does the speaker explain the problem to his wife?**

- (a) By giving the example of cows and milk
- (b) By giving the example of great leader
- (c) By giving the example of religious leaders
- (d) By giving the example of different teachers
- (a) By giving the example of cows and milk.

**4. What did the speaker think about his culture?**

According to the speaker the ancient Indian culture was great and the Indians were capable of greater achievements. However, superstitions and differences based on religion were running their society.

**5. According to the speaker, how could they save their society.**

According to the speaker, their society needed to be reformed.

**6. What were the speaker's views about religion?**

The speaker thought that different religions were taught by different teachers, who had varied opinions. However, the essence or the message of all religions was the same.

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Next Generation School