

7th Standard- Social Science

History-Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

By 1765, the British had captured major chunks of Indian territory in eastern India.

After Aurangzeb's death, the Mughal Empire started to decline because of weak and inefficient rulers.

States like Hyderabad, Awadh, Bengal and states under the control of Sikhs and Marathas declared independence.

The declining power of the Mughals also gave rise to the regional powers like the Jats, Sikhs and Marathas.

The Crisis of the Empire and the Later Mughals

- After reaching its zenith, Mughal empire started declining under Emperor Aurangzeb. This was because of Aurangzeb's military and religious policy which depleted the financial resources of the Mughals.
- Under his succession, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. It became difficult to check governors and mansabdars.
- In the midst of this crisis, Nadir Shah's invasion in 1739 and invasions of Afghan ruler Ahmed Shah Abdali between 1748-1761, weakened the Mughal empire.

- The nobility was divided into two major groups Iranis and Turanis. For a long time, the later Mughal emperors were puppets in the hands of either one or the other of these two powerful groups.

The emergence of New States

- With the decline of Mughal authority, the governors consolidated their authority.
- Broadly speaking, the states were divided into three overlapping groups; old Mughal provinces like Awadh, Bengal and
- The Hyderabad States which enjoyed consideration independence like Watan Jagirs and several Rajput principalities and the last group included states like Marathas, Sikhs and the Jats.

The Old Mughal Provinces

- These included the states of Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.
- Hyderabad state was founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. The state was constantly engaged in a struggle against the Marathas.
- Awadh was founded by Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat Khan in 1722.
- The rich alluvial plains allowed the development of the region.
- Bengal was founded by Murshid Quli Khan. He commanded revenue administration of the state. Under Alivardi Khan the state became prosperous.

The Watan Jagirs of the Rajputs

- Many Rajput Kings, particularly those belonging to Amber and Jodhpur had served under the Mughals with distinction.
- They got considerable autonomy and thus were called Watan jagir.
- Maratha expansion after the 1740s put a restriction on the growth of Rajput expansion.

Seizing Independence

The Sikhs

- The Sikh arose as a power under Guru Gobind Singh who inspired the Khalsa with the belief that their destiny was to rule.
- Maharaja Ranjit Singh reunited the Sikhs as a powerful group and established his capital at Lahore in 1799.

The Marathas

- The Maratha kingdom rose under Shivaji. After Shivaji's death, Peshwa led the Maratha empire to its zenith.
- Marathas collected huge revenue from taxes of church and Sardsh mukhi in the entire kingdom.
- Maratha chiefs included Peshwa, Sindhia, Gaekwad and Bhonsle. Their territory touched near Delhi in its peak stages.

The Jats

- Jats were powerful in areas near Delhi under the leadership of Churaman.
- They were prosperous agriculturalists.
- Under Suraj Mai, the kingdom of Bharatpur emerged as a strong state.
- Jats even built a garden palace at Dig.

With the decline of the Mughal Empire, new political groups began to emerge in the sub-continent during the first half of the 18th century.

The Mughal Empire lost its glory and started facing a variety of crises towards the closing years of the 17th century.

Emperor Aurangzeb is held responsible for this. He had depleted the military and financial resources of his empire by fighting a long war in the Deccan.

Under his successors, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. Nobles appointed as governors became more powerful. They began to control the offices of revenue and military administration. This created a political and economic crisis.

The attack of Nadir Shah the ruler of Iran, on Delhi in 1739 aggravated the crisis. He plundered the city of Delhi and took away immense amounts of wealth.

Soon Ahmad Shah Abdali became active. He invaded north India five times between 1748 and 1761.

The competition amongst different groups of nobles further weakened the empire. These were two major groups or factions—the Iranis and Taranis (nobles of Turkish descent). For a long time, the later Mughal emperors were puppets in the hands of either one or the other of these two powerful groups.

Through the 18th century, the Mughal Empire gradually fragmented into a number of independent, regional states.

The states of the 18th century can be divided into three overlapping groups.

States that were old Mughal provinces such as Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughal as Watan jagirs,

States under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and others like the Jats.

Hyderabad state (1724-1748) was founded by Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah. He was one of the most powerful members at the court of the Mughal Emperor Farrukh Siyar. He was given the charge of the Deccan. Soon he became powerful there and declared himself the actual ruler of that region. Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled independently.

The state of Awadh was founded by Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan in the year 1722. He did not like the Mughal influence in the Awadh region and therefore reduced the number of officeholders or jagirdars appointed by the Mughals. He also reduced the size of jagirs and appointed his own loyal servants to vacant positions.

Murshid Quli Khan took control of Bengal and began to command the revenue administration of the state. He transferred all Mughal jagirdars to Orissa in order to reduce the Mughal influence in Bengal. He ordered a major reassessment of the revenues of Bengal. Revenue was collected in cash with great strictness from all zamindars.

The Rajput Kings, of Amber and Jodhpur, were given permission by the Mughals, to enjoy considerable autonomy in their water jagirs. Soon, these rulers began to extend their control over adjacent regions.

Raja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur held the governorship of Gujarat and Sawai Raja Jai Singh of Amber was governor of Malwa. They also tried to extend their territories by seizing portions of imperial territories neighbouring their watans. Nagpur was conquered and annexed to the house of Jodhpur while Amber seized large portions of Bundi.

In the 18th century, the Sikhs organised themselves into a number of bands called jathas and later on mils. Their combined forces were known as the grand army (dal Khalsa).

Guru Gobind Singh had inspired the Khalsa with the belief that their destiny was to rule. Their well-knit organisation enabled them to put up a successful resistance to the Mughal governors first and then to Ahmad Shah Abdali who had seized the rich province of the Punjab and the Sirhind from the Mughals. The Khalsa declared their sovereign rule by striking in 1765.

The Sikh territories extended from the Indus to the Jamuna in the late 18th century but they were divided under different rulers such as Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Shivaji carried out the Maratha Kingdom. He built a powerful Maratha army and challenged the Mughals in the peninsula.

After the death of Shivaji, Peshwas took control of the Maratha Kingdom. Poona became its capital.

Between 1720 and 1761, the Maratha empire expanded and gradually chipped away at the authority of the Mughal Empire. Malwa and Gujarat were seized from the Mughals by the 1720s. By the 1730s the Maratha King was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula.

After raiding Delhi in 1737, the frontiers of Maratha domination expanded rapidly into Rajasthan and Punjab in the north, into Bengal and Orissa in the east and into Karnataka and the Tamil and Telugu countries in the south.

The jats consolidated their power during the late 17th and 18th centuries. Under their leader, Churaman, they acquired control over territories situated to the west of the city of Delhi, and by the 1680s they had begun dominating the region between the two imperial cities of Delhi and Agra.

Subadar: Government of a province or state.

Diwani: The offices of revenue.

Faujdari: Military administration.

The Iranis and Taranis: Nobles of Turkish descent.

Coffers: Treasury.

Nayaks: Telugu warrior chiefs.

Jagirdari: Land ownership.

Ijaradars: Revenue farmers.

Watan Jagirs: States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughals. Jathas. Bands

Misls: Small political groups of Sikh warriors.

Peshwa: Principal minister.

Chauth: 25% of the land revenue claimed by zamindars.

Sardishmukhi: 9-10% of the land revenue paid to the head revenue collector in the Deccan. Subahdar Governorship of a province or state.

Later Mughals: The Mughal emperors who succeeded after Aurangzeb.

Kunbis: Maratha peasant-warriors.

1707 – Aurangzeb died.

1739 – Nadir Shah invaded Delhi.

1713-1719 – Farrukh Siyar reigned the Mughal Empire.

1754-1759 – Alamgir 11 reigned the Mughal Empire.

1724-1748 – Asaf Jah remained the Nizam of Hyderabad.

1722 – Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan was appointed Subadar of Awadh.

1699 – The year in which Khalsa was instituted.

1708 – Guru Gobind Singh died.

1715 – Banda Bahadur was captured

1716 – Banda Bahadur was executed.

1799 – Maharaja Ranjit Singh established his capital at Lahore.

1627-1680 – The period of Shivaji.

1761 – Third battle of Panipat.