HISTORY OF INDIA: 1700-1857

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Editorial Board
Dr. Chander Shekhar Singh, Dr. Ravindra Pratap Singh
Dr. Shachindra Mohan, Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary

Content Writers
Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary

Academic Coordinator
Deekshant Awasthi

E-mail: ddceprinting@col.du.ac.in
history@col.du.ac.in

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Reviewer

Dr. Shachindra Mohan

External Reviewer

Prof. Anisha Srivastava
Sri Aurobindo College (Evening)
University of Delhi

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Unit I: India in the 18th Century: Background, Debate

Lesson 1: India in the Eighteenth Century: Background, Debates



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LESSON 1
INDIA IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: BACKGROUND, DEBATES

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

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1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Describe the reasons behind the decline of the Mughal Empire and the emergence of regional political entities.
- Outline the major political powers that rose during this time.
- Recognize the regional differences within the Indian economy of the period.
- Identify the characteristics of society and culture in the 18th century.
- Enumerate the challenges involved in understanding the eighteenth century.

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the 18th century marked a pivotal juncture in the annals of Indian history, as the once-mighty Mughal Empire began to wane, heralding the emergence of diverse regional powers and the ingress of European trading



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ventures onto Indian soil. This epoch, spanning from the early 1700s to the latter half of the century, witnessed a profound transformation in the socio-political landscape of the Indian subcontinent.

In the early decades of the 18th century, the Mughal Empire, under the formidable reign of Aurangzeb, attained the pinnacle of its territorial expanse. Aurangzeb's ambitious military campaigns had extended Mughal dominion to the southern frontiers of the subcontinent, consolidating imperial authority over vast swathes of territory. However, the demise of Aurangzeb in 1707 precipitated a period of tumult and disintegration within the Mughal realm. The ensuing power vacuum engendered a proliferation of autonomous regional entities, each vying for supremacy amidst the waning influence of the central authority. Notable among these emergent polities were Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, the Marathas, and the Sikh Confederacy, which asserted their sovereignty over their respective domains, heralding the decentralization of political power in the subcontinent.

The latter half of the 18th century witnessed a seismic shift in the geopolitical landscape of India, catalysed by the incursion of European trading companies onto its shores. Around the mid-18th century, European powers such as the Portuguese, British, and French began to assert their commercial interests in India, competing fiercely for dominance in the lucrative trade routes of the subcontinent. This period witnessed the intensification of conflicts between European powers, notably the Anglo-French rivalry, which manifested in a series of military engagements across Indian territories.

The French Indian conflict and the British-Indian conflict emerged as salient features of the latter half of the 18th century, as European powers sought to expand their commercial foothold in India through coercive means. The Anglo-French struggle for supremacy culminated in pivotal engagements such as the Battle of Plassey (1757) and the Battle of Wandiwash (1760), which decisively tilted the balance of power in favour of the British East India Company.

By the close of the 18th century, the British East India Company had emerged as the paramount European power in India, consolidating its control over vast territories through a combination of military conquest and diplomatic

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machinations. The Company's ascendancy culminated in the establishment of British colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent, marking the onset of a new phase in India's history.

Simultaneously, the decline of the Mughal Empire was precipitated by a series of internal revolts and external incursions, culminating in the cataclysmic events of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The rebellion, also known as the First War of Indian Independence, dealt a fatal blow to the remnants of Mughal authority, paving the way for British annexation of Mughal territories and the formalisation of British colonial rule over India.

The eighteenth century in India is a subject of extensive historical debate, reflecting various interpretations and perspectives. This period, marked by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of regional powers, has been examined through different lenses, each offering unique insights into the socio-political and economic transformations that took place.

1.3 BACKGROUND

In Indian history, the eighteenth century was a period when enduring traditions were declining. The Mughal Empire was never as insecure in history as it was in the 18th century. The Mughal forts faced frequent attacks from Afghan marauders (Nadir Shah: 1739 and Ahmad Shah Abdali: 1748–1767), the Marathas (Peshwagan) and other warrior peasant groups (Jat, Rohilla and Sikh), and the military bureaucracy (Mansabdari system) which ruled the empire. We're finding ourselves incapable of doing anything. The economic system of the Mughal Empire had completely broken down and as a result, the standard of living of the elite and gentry as well as their dependents, was adversely affected. The empire was bankrupt and political governance and economic integrity had disappeared. Two emperors of the Mughal dynasty, Ahmed Shah (1748-54) and Shah Alam (1759-1816) were blinded and Alamgir II (1754-1759) was murdered by the elite class in factional feuds.



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The speed with which all these events were happening in the 18th century was astonishing. The Mughal kingdom was at its regional peak during the administration of Aurangzeb in 1700. But around 1730, many of its parts were fragmented into regional states due to political reasons. Some of these, such as the Nawabi of Awadh or the Nizamat of Bengal, emerged as successor states and others, such as the Marathas and Jats, were the result of long-term and violent opposition to the Mughal Kingdom. In the next thirty years, India's political fortunes seem to be turning in a different direction. The British East India Company was a European power. It was successful in conquering many areas in Eastern India and also started interfering in other markets of the subcontinent. Based on these successes in political matters, the Company was slowly but surely moving towards starting a colonial state. Given these amazing changes, it is no wonder that people of that time began to think that their world was turning upside down. Seeing these changes, many modern historians have been attracted to the study of the 18th century and that is why the study related to the 18th century has become the centre of exciting debate among historians. This has brought significant development in the history and writing of this century. There is considerable disagreement in interpretations on many aspects, but there is consensus on some topics.

In accordnace with the old explanation, the fall of the Mughal Empire was due to the religious fanaticism policy of Aurangzeb. It is now unanimously rejected. While Aurangzeb faced opposition from the Maratha, Jat and some Rajput clans, he equally faced opposition from the Muslim elite and officials, which ultimately led to increased factionalism and conflicts in the Mughal imperial court. On the other hand the powerful Rajput rulers remained loyal to the empire. The old stereotype that this century was a period of moral decline and cultural decline is also rejected. Now special attention is being given to the study of balanced and active cultural life of regional areas. Many of these regional states carried forward the legacy of Mughal culture and integrated it into the cultural heritage of the region. Lucknow and Hyderabad became major centres of patronage and cultural development of literature and art. Eighteenth-century Banaras emerged as a centre of religious education and pilgrimage as well as

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a centre of banking and trade in North India. In Bengal, Nadia was the centre of Sanskrit education and Dayabhaga was Hindu legal education. Meanwhile, Vishnupur became a flourishing centre for various styles of regional architecture and music. Under the patronage of the Maratha rulers in South India, Tanjore became a centre of famous religious, musical and theatrical traditions.

Today, historians do not consider the fall of the Mughal Empire and its consequences as the result of religious fanaticism and the weakness of some particular ruler, but as the result of a structural failure occurring through a structural process and not the result of any individual failure. But there is much disagreement over the causes and nature of this structural failure. Some people consider this decline to be the result of an economic crisis caused by a hyper-exploitative ruling class. Some believe that this entire process is a result of regional revival, which ultimately encourages long-term economic disorder. There are also different explanations for the changing relationship between the state and society. What were the patterns and processes of economic development? The question of disputes over the dispensation of wealth arising from development in the kingdom and local areas, etc.

But the 18th century was not limited to the fall of the Mughal kingdom and the consolidation of regional states. By the middle of this century, many other fundamental changes were taking place in the subcontinent. There are many explanations from historians about these, but they do not agree with each other. There are many areas of debate, including the company's transformation from business to political power. Second, were the roots of colonialism in India exogenous or local, and third, what were its social and economic impacts? In these, the questions of continuity and change and what is the importance of all these in the new colonial structure, all these questions are entangled with each other.



1.4 DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL KINGDOM

Following the demise of Aurangzeb, the once-mighty Mughal Empire embarked on a precipitous decline, culminating in its fragmentation and eventual relegation to a mere shadow of its former glory. The reigns of successive emperors were marked by internal strife, political instability, and debauchery, exacerbating the empire's woes and hastening its descent into oblivion. A climate of insecurity and apprehension gripped India for the ensuing 150 years, as the struggle for power within the Mughal dynasty further undermined imperial authority. Factionalism and court intrigues proliferated, sapping the empire's strength and cohesion, while external pressures from regional powers and European trading ventures exacerbated its vulnerabilities.

The decline of the Mughal Empire looms large in the historiography of 18th-century India, with scholars grappling with a myriad of factors contributing to its demise. From economic crises and administrative inefficiencies to social unrest and religious discord, a complex tapestry of forces converged to precipitate the empire's unravelling. Ultimately, the decline of the Mughal Empire serves as a poignant reminder of the ephemeral nature of imperial power and the inexorable march of history. Its legacy, though tarnished by the tumult of its final years, endures as a testament to the rich cultural heritage and grandeur of India's past. Here we can understand the historical perspective related to the decline of the Mughal Empire for the following reasons.

1.4.1 Political Reasons

Let us discuss the political reasons which led to the decline of Mughal Empire through the following points:

- **Absence of Succession Rules:** The Mughal state in India was founded on the basis of power. After Babur, most rulers tried to gain the throne through strength and succeeded by the same means. As a result, there was

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no established rule of succession among the Mughals. After Babur's death, there were struggles for the throne between Humayun and his brothers, Jahangir against Akbar, Shah Jahan against Jahangir, Prince Akbar against Aurangzeb, and among Aurangzeb's sons after his death. This pattern continued in the future as well. In fact, during or after the emperor's lifetime, conflicts would arise among ambitious claimants to the throne. This often led to civil wars.

In these struggles, Mughal nobles, courtiers, governors, landholders, mansabdars (military commanders), and even the women of the royal palace participated. This resulted in factions and conspiracies dominating the court. These conflicts gradually caused enormous losses to the Mughal prestige, power, wealth, and population. In such a situation, divisive elements grew stronger, bringing the empire to the brink of collapse.

- **Weak Successors of Aurangzeb:** After Aurangzeb, a major reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire was the succession of weak and incompetent rulers. From Bahadur Shah I to Bahadur Shah Zafar, none of the rulers possessed the necessary character, political, military, or administrative skills. Most of their time was spent in indulgence and luxury. They completely lacked strong willpower. As a result, on one hand, regional elements became active and powerful, the administrative system became lax, and the wazir and other important officials concentrated all power in their own hands. On the other hand, the influence of selfish and ambitious nobles increased in the court. These people made the emperor a puppet of their hands. The Mughal emperors had to endure humiliation at their hands.

  For a while, the Sayyid brothers even became 'kingmakers'. After their fall, many war officials, and nobles continued to act independently. The situation deteriorated to the extent that Jahandar Shah was murdered, Farrukhsiyar was blinded and deposed before being murdered in captivity, Ahmad Shah was deposed by his wazir, Imad-ul-Mulk, Alamgir II was murdered, and Shah Alam II did not dare to return to Delhi before 1772 due to fear of his



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wazir. These weak rulers destroyed the power and prestige of the emperor, paving the way for the decline of the empire.

- **Ambition of Provincial Governors:** Taking advantage of the weakness of the Mughal emperors, provincial governors began to increase their influence. As the central power weakened, they became uncontrolled. They started attempting to establish their own independent rule in their respective provinces. As a result, many provinces slipped out of Mughal control. The emperors lacked the power to keep their governors in check. Consequently, from the time of Muhammad Shah, the process of the empire's disintegration began. Mughal power ended in Hyderabad, Awadh, Bengal, Gujarat, Malwa, Bundelkhand, Punjab, and Rajputana. The Marathas had already driven them out from the south. Thus, Mughal rule was confined to the area around Delhi.
- **Factionalism among the courtiers:** In the last years of Aurangzeb's rule, his high court elites began to be dividing into different groups and exerting pressure on the government. Although these groups were formed on the basis of clan or family relationships, personal interests or concerns were paramount. These groups maintained continuous unrest in the country. One of the major groups among these groups was the Turanis or Central Asian elites. Asaf Jah during the reign of Muhammad Shah. Nizam-ul-Mulk, Kamruddin and Zakaria Khan were the main leaders of this Turani faction. While the main leaders of the Parishiyai group were Amir Khan, Ishaq Khan and Saadat Khan. These groups had included their respective people. Most of them were from Central Asia or Persia. These two factions, known as Mughal or foreign factions, rivalled the Hindustani factions during that period, whose leaders were Syed Abdullah Khan and Syed Hussain Ali, popularly known as the Syed Bandhu had opened a front against each other. The Syed brothers had the support of Hindus. Each group claimed to be the emperor's well-wisher and used to listen to the emperor. There was conflict between these groups which was disturbing the peace in the country and the administration continued to be ignored. They could not

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unite even during foreign invasions, and even sometimes conspired with foreign attackers.

- **Administrative Corruption:** Administrative corruption also played an important role in the decline of the empire. Initially, appointments in the Mughal administration were based on merit. However, later on, important positions were given based on the emperor's personal wishes and the pressure of nobles. As a result, experienced and competent officials were replaced by inefficient and selfish individuals. This had disastrous consequences. The administrative system broke down, and corruption and bribery became rampant. Important positions and ranks (mansabs) were given in exchange for money. The number of mansabdars (rank holders) increased rapidly. In local governance, the influence of these mansabdars and jagirdars (landholders) grew excessively. They misused this influence for their own benefit. The negative effects of the jagirdari system became detrimental to the empire in the post-Mughal period.

  On one hand, the administrative system remained weak, and on the other, the emperor was engrossed in indulgence. In such a situation, it became increasingly difficult to control the vast Mughal Empire, and the empire gradually descended into decline.

- **Foreign Origin of the Mughals:** Many scholars believe that the foreign origin of the Mughals also contributed to the decline of the empire. The Mughals came from Central Asia and settled in India. Hence, they ruled with Central Asian ideals and policies in mind. They had to rely mostly on foreigners for administration. Indians were neglected in the administration and were never fully accepted. While it is true that the Mughals came from outside, they settled permanently in India and never thought of returning. Akbar's policies made most Indians supporters of the Mughals.

- **Foreign Invasions:** Foreign invaders also contributed to worsening the Mughal's weak position. The Mughals did not adequately secure the northwestern frontier. Consequently, in the 18th century, this border allowed Afghans (Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali) to invade India.



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These invasions were motivated by the then-current political situation in India. These invaders destroyed the remaining prestige of the empire. Muhammad Shah was taken captive by Nadir Shah, Delhi was burned down, and all its wealth was destroyed. Ahmad Shah defeated the Marathas, who were the Mughal protectors, making the Mughals helpless. Shah Alam had to make a treaty with the British. Thus, the Mughals' independent rule ended, and they became pensioners of the Company, remaining emperors in name only.

- **Rise of European Powers in India -** From the 16th century, European powers began to increase their influence in India. Under the guise of trade, they also became interested in political activities. By the 18th century, the Portuguese and the British became the most powerful in India, with the British surpassing the Portuguese. After the Carnatic Wars and the Battle of Plassey, the British started to establish political control in India. The Mughals were so incompetent that they could not control the British. In the Battle of Buxar, Shah Alam was also defeated by the British. The Mughals' power and prestige were completely destroyed. The British made the Mughals their pensioners and took control of the entire empire and administration. In 1858, the British finally ended Mughal rule.

1.4.2 Economic Reasons

In this section, we will study the economic reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire.

- **Weak Economic System:** The weakening of the economic system became a major reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire. Under this we mainly find the crisis of the Jagirdari system and the agricultural system. Historian Satish Chandra says that the Mughal Empire declined due to the crisis in the Jagirdari system. This happened because the number of jagirdars was more but the number of jagirs was less. Amirs were the chief state officials in the Mughal Empire. The recipient of Mansab was called Mansabdar, he was paid through Jagir. Apart from other responsibilities, Mansabdars

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also had to maintain their own army. The salary and maintenance of these soldiers were done from the income of the jagir only. These soldiers were the basis of the power of the Mansabdar and helped in collecting land revenue. During the last period of Aurangzeb's rule, the Mughal administration failed to maintain the Jagirdari system permanently. This unsuccessful Jagirdari system continued even after the death of Aurangzeb, which became the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The crisis in the agricultural system was directly related to the Mansabdari system. According to historian Satish Chandra, the crisis of the Mansabdari system could have been stopped by developing an agricultural and non-agricultural economy. We find that the Mughal Empire maintained a large army for its security, for whose protection more revenue was required. At the same time the rich wanted to get maximum revenue from their estates. This burden of revenue fell mainly on agriculture. The burden of revenue on the farmers increased and they were deprived of even the basic necessities of life. It also had an impact on the relationship between the Mughal power and the farmers. For this reason, sometimes farmers refused to pay the revenue. Historian Irfan Habib says that due to this protest by the farmers, the political and social system of the Mughal Empire started weakening. As a result, surplus production in the agricultural sector also decreased and economic growth slowed down.

- **Changes in Regional Economies:** During the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, significant economic changes were taking place at the regional level across the Indian subcontinent. Local economies began to exhibit greater dynamism and diversification, with increased agricultural productivity, expansion of trade networks, and the rise of artisanal and manufacturing activities. These changes led to the growth of prosperous regional economies that were less dependent on the central Mughal administration. For instance, regions such as Bengal, Gujarat, and the Deccan witnessed the emergence of vibrant commercial centers. The proliferation of cash crops like cotton and indigo, and the flourishing



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textile industry in these areas, contributed to economic prosperity. These developments facilitated the rise of regional powers that could sustain themselves economically without relying on the central Mughal treasury.

- **Rise of Portfolio Capitalists and Upstarts:** Another crucial aspect of the eighteenth-century Indian economy was the rise of portfolio capitalists and upstarts who began to play a decisive role in regional politics and economic activities. These individuals and groups, often comprising merchants, bankers, and financiers, accumulated substantial wealth and used it to gain political influence. They provided crucial financial support to regional rulers and aspiring chieftains, enabling them to challenge Mughal authority. These portfolio capitalists operated in a complex web of commercial and financial networks that extended across regional and international markets. They financed trade, facilitated the movement of goods, and invested in various enterprises. Their economic power allowed them to exert considerable influence over regional rulers, often dictating terms and conditions that favoured their interests.

The influence of these capitalists and upstarts is evident in the rise of powerful states like Hyderabad and Mysore, where local rulers like the Nizam and Hyder Ali relied heavily on the financial backing of merchants and bankers. This phenomenon underscores the shift in the locus of economic and political power from the central Mughal administration to regional actors who were better positioned to harness local resources and drive economic growth.

1.4.3 Role of Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb practically disintegrated the huge Mughal Empire established by Akbar. The decline of the Mughal Empire started in from the initial period of Aurangzeb and due to his shortsighted policies, the foundation of the Mughal rule started weakening. Due to his religious policies, he not only massacred non-Muslims but also implemented illiberal policies against his Hindu subjects. As a result, his lifelong attempt to rule India ended in chaos.

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Aurangzeb's absence in Delhi from day to day gave opportunity to opportunists who were determined to remove the Mughals from power. Aurangzeb had to face many rebellions during his reign and these rebellions shook the foundation of the Mughal Empire. In Agra, Jats were bent on rebellion, while in the south, the idea of Swaraj was being promoted under the leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji. These rebellions gained strength due to Aurangzeb's tough grassroots attitude towards the Marathas, Jats and Rajputs. Aurangzeb had refused to give them regional autonomy.

Aurangzeb, driven by ambition, relentlessly sought to expand his empire's boundaries, despite the heavy toll on lives and property. However, his inability to secure favourable treaties left his realm increasingly vulnerable, with a mounting list of adversaries. While Aurangzeb's conquest of Bijapur and Golconda is often hailed as a triumph over the Sunnis, it inadvertently cleared the path for the burgeoning power of the Marathas by removing a significant barrier. His paranoid disposition led to an autocratic rule, centralising all governance powers, which infuriated the nobility and elite officials. The aristocrats bore the brunt of Aurangzeb's autocracy, stripped of their status and rights, rendering them profoundly impacted by his reign.

Aurangzeb foresaw the perilous power struggle that would ensue among his sons and, in a bid to forestall it, divided the empire into four equal parts. Despite his efforts, civil strife erupted even before his demise. Ultimately, Bahadur Shah I triumphed amidst the chaos, yet the inevitability of civil conflict among Mughal successors became glaringly apparent. The toxic brew of enmity, jealousy, and rivalry among the princes catalyzed the disintegration of illustrious Mughal India, precipitating the decline of provincial powers.

1.4.4 Religious Reasons

Although Mughal emperors generally adopted a policy of secularism in India, the religious policy of the Mughal emperors gradually became narrower after Akbar. Many scholars believe that the religious narrow-mindedness adopted by Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb was politically motivated rather than



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religious. However, it cannot be denied that the narrow policies of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb unintentionally made the majority of Hindus oppose the Mughals. They began to feel that the Mughals were discriminating against them and oppressing them on religious grounds. This sentiment was further fuelled by self-serving politics. As a result, the Mughals began to lose the sympathy of the general populace. Taking advantage of this, the Rajputs, Marathas, Jats, Satnamis, and Sikhs raised the banner of rebellion. Even Aurangzeb could not fully control them. Anti-Mughal campaigns continued even after Aurangzeb. Religion became dominant over politics, and it became difficult for the Mughals to suppress these rebellions. These uprisings weakened the foundations of the empire and paved the way for its destruction.

1.4.5 Military Weaknesses of the Mughals

The establishment and expansion of the Mughal Empire in India were based on military strength. As long as the Mughal military power was well-organised, the empire continued to grow. However, with the weakening of this military power, the process of the empire's decline began. The organisation and structure of the Mughal administration were based on military needs. In this system, it was essential for the central authority to be powerful. Only a competent administrator could efficiently run this system. Despite many flaws, Akbar was able to maintain control over this organisation. However, after him, the military system became weaker. The Mughal army was based on the mansabdari system, but over time, this very system became the main cause of the Mughal army's weakness. When the emperors were weak, the mansabdars (rank holders) began to increase their influence. Their army's loyalty was not towards the emperor. The soldiers in the mansabdars' armies were not always of good quality, so even if they supported the emperor, they were not very effective. The Mughal army consisted of soldiers from various castes, regions, and nations, so they could not work together effectively in times of crisis. They lacked a sense of nationalism.

Initially, the foundation of the Mughal military strength was the Rajputs, but gradually, by alienating them from the army, the Mughals hurt themselves.

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Indiscipline and luxury also crept into the Mughal army. Internal conflicts among commanders, poor strategies, lack of a navy, reliance on outdated weapons, proficiency only in field battles, and ignorance of guerrilla warfare were some of the reasons that destroyed the Mughal army's capabilities, leading to repeated defeats. The Mughal army also suffered due to unnecessary continuous wars and succession struggles.

1.4.6 Rise of New Social Groups

The economic transformations of the period were accompanied by the rise of new social groups that played crucial roles in regional politics and economy. The decline of Mughal authority allowed for the emergence of powerful local chieftains, zamindars (landholders), and merchant classes who began to assert their influence. These groups often had their own military forces and administrative structures, further weakening the central authority of the Mughal rulers. In many cases, these new social groups were able to establish semi-autonomous or fully independent states. The Marathas in western India, the Sikhs in Punjab, and the Jats in northern India are notable examples of such regional powers. These groups not only challenged Mughal supremacy but also established new political entities that contributed to the fragmentation of the empire.

1.4.7 Failure to Appropriate Regional Surplus Resources

A significant factor in the decline of the Mughal Empire was the failure of its rulers to effectively appropriate the surplus resources generated at the regional level. The traditional Mughal revenue system, which relied heavily on the jagirdari (land grant) system, became increasingly inefficient and corrupt. As regional economies became more self-sufficient and local elites gained more power, the central Mughal administration struggled to collect adequate revenue to maintain its vast bureaucracy and military. The inability to tap into regional wealth meant that the Mughal state faced severe fiscal crises. This financial weakness hampered the empire's ability to respond to external threats and internal rebellions, further accelerating its decline. The erosion of



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central control over revenue collection also led to widespread corruption and administrative inefficiency, undermining the effectiveness of Mughal governance. The decline of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century was a complex process influenced by a multitude of factors beyond mere economic pressure and poverty. Significant changes in local economies, the rise of new social groups, the failure of Mughal rulers to appropriate regional surplus resources, and the emergence of portfolio capitalists and upstarts all played pivotal roles in shaping the historical trajectory of the period. Understanding these dynamics provides a more nuanced and comprehensive view of the decline of one of India's greatest empires, highlighting the interplay among economic, social, and political forces in the historical progression of the region.

Apart from these reasons, the vastness of the Mughal Empire, the inadequacy of communication and transportation facilities, a flawed social structure and system, the lack of peace and security, intellectual decline, and Aurangzeb's faulty policies also contributed to the disintegration and downfall of the Mughal Empire.

1.5 RISE OF REGIONAL POWERS

In the 18th century, new political aspirants got the opportunity to create small local kingdoms on the basis of region, religion and fanaticism. The 18th century provided these through massive re-mobilization of resources and military expansion. On the other hand, there were foreign traders like the English East India Company, who did not want to miss any opportunity to expand and increase their wealth. This century provided a vast terrain of domination and oppression.

Historians like C.A.Bayly and Andre Vink argue that the emergence of new states in the declining Mughal Empire was not a new phenomenon. This was showing the completion of the already existing process of expansion and development and the wavering Mughal system could not stop it. There are many such instances, where those who took advantage of the economic transformation became rulers themselves and were entangled in a tug-of-war of conquering

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and suppressing each other. These rulers, imbued with local sentiments, took administrative powers into their own hands and followed the policies of military expansion. As a result of these policies, new methods of revenue collection and revenue management were implemented immediately. David Washbook has named this as military financialism.

Some of these states such as Bengal, Awadh and Hyderabad can be called succession states. As a result of the weakening of the central administrative system of the Mughal rulers, the governors of the Mughal provinces declared themselves autonomous and thus these states emerged. The rebellion of local satraps, zamindars and peasants against Mughal power gave rise to the Maratha, Afghan, Jat and Punjab states. The form of politics in these two types of states or regions was different to some extent and due to local conditions there were mutual disputes between them. Despite this, these states maintained Mughal institutions and systems in many areas of administration. Along with the succession states and the rebel states, there were some other states like Rajputana, Mysore and Travancore that enjoyed considerable autonomy for the past decades. All these states became completely independent in the 18th century.

1.5.1 Maratha

After Aurangzeb's death, his second son and claimant to the throne, Azam, freed Sahu, the great grandson of Shivaji and son of Sambhaji, from captivity. After Sambhaji's death by hanging in 1689, Shah was arrested and presented before Mughal court. On reaching Satara in January 1708, Sahu ji was coronated. After Sambhaji's death, Sambhaji's step brother Rajaram took over the leadership of the Marathas and he continued to fight against the Mughals till his last breath. His widow Tarabai, a powerful and domineering woman, declared herself regent on behalf of her son. At such a time, due to the arrival of Sahu, the Maratha Satraps were in a dilemma, resulting in the civil war. Sahu emerged victorious with the help and advice of Balaji Vishwanath, a prominent Maratha officer. Respecting the invaluable services of Balaji Vishwanath, Sahu gave him the post of Peshwa i.e. Prime Minister in 1713. From now on Chhatrapati remained only the nominal

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top post of Marathas. Balaji Vishwanath made Peshwai hereditary with his ability and efficient administration. Through an agreement with the Sayyid brothers, Sahu was recognised as the king of Shivaji's home state and was also allowed to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the six Mughal provinces in the south.

His son and successor to the post of Peshwa, Bajirao, had taken Maratha power to its peak. To get the support of Hindu satraps against everyone's common enemy, the Mughals, he propagated and popularised the ideology of Hindu Padshahi. After Shivaji, Bajirao is considered the great master of guerrilla warfare. Bajirao who was popularly known as Nana Sahib. The Maratha Empire expanded from Cuttack to Attock and captured Delhi in 1760. But the Maratha victory over Delhi did not last long and they had to face a crushing defeat at the hands of the Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Abdali in the battle of Panipat in 1761. Despite their defeat, the Maratha, led by the succeeding Peshwas, were still very active in the policy of expansion and growth of their empire. During the rule of Peshwa Madhav Rao, the Marathas under the leadership of Mahadji Scindia captured Delhi again in 1771.

The prestige of the Marathas suffered a setback in the Anglo-Maratha War (1776–82). This war culminated in the Treaty of Salabai(1782). During the reign of Peshwa Bajirao II (1798–1818), a Subsidiary Treaty of Bassein (1802) was signed and led to the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803–05). The third war between the British and the Marathas (1817-18) ended Maratha power. The post of Peshwa was abolished and the British granted Bajirao II a small pension and sent him to Bithoor near Kanpur. To satisfy the Marathas' pride, nominal king Pratap Singh was installed on Satara's throne.

The Marathas, under leaders like Shivaji and later the Peshwas, built a formidable confederacy that stretched across large parts of India. Their power was rooted in a combination of military prowess, administrative acumen, and a vibrant local economy. The Maratha agrarian base was strengthened by the cultivation of cash crops and efficient land revenue systems. Additionally, the Marathas benefited from a decentralized polity where local chieftains (sardars) wielded significant power, fostering a sense of regional identity and loyalty.

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Their ability to mobilize resources and troops quickly allowed them to challenge Mughal authority effectively and carve out a vast empire.

Lesson 2 discusses in detail as to how three Anglo-Maratha Wars were fought, resulting in the merger of the Maratha Kingdom into the Bombay Presidency.

1.5.2 Awadh

During the reign of the Mughals, the Awadh province included the main Awadh, Banaras, some parts around Allahabad and some areas to the west of Awadh and Kanpur. After the death of Subedar Saadat Khan of Awadh in 1724, his nephew Safdar Jang took over the rule of this province. After taking over the administration, this new Subedar started ruling independently. In 1748, Safdar Jang was appointed wazir of the Emperor of Delhi but it was Javed Khan who was the real power behind the throne of Delhi. The Afghans also opposed him and forced him to sign a peace treaty in 1752. But soon he got Javed Khan murdered and tried to take over the entire power of the state. Due to his excessive ambition, many nobles and kings of the Delhi court became angry with him. Safdar Jang suffered a severe defeat in the civil war that followed and was forced to go to Awadh in 1753, where he soon died.

His son Suja-ud-Daula held the post of Subedar of Awadh. There were rapid changes in Indian history in the middle of the 18th century. In this, Subedar of Awadh Suja-ud-Daula played an important role. His relations with Wazir Imad-ud-Mulk of Delhi were very bad. As a result, new conspiracies were hatched between the two every day. Imad-ud-Mulk took over all the powers from Emperor Alamgir II and forced Ali Gauhar (later Shah Alam II) to take refuge in Awadh. After the death of the Emperor, Ali Gauhar declared himself the Emperor and named Suja-ud-Daula as his wazir.

In 1763, Mir Qasim, the Nawab of Bengal, met Suja-ud-Daula after his defeat at the hands of the East India Company and asked for help. Both Suja-ud-Daula and Shah Alam II agreed to support Mir Qasim against the British.

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But the British defeated this combined army in the Battle of Buxar (1764). Shah Alam II became a pensioner of the British, the province of Suja-ud-Daula came under the control of the British and Mir Qasim had to flee to save his life. As a result, this war deeply harmed the independent rule of the Subedar of Awadh.

In Awadh, under Nawabs like Saadat Khan and Shuja-ud-Daula, the region experienced significant economic and administrative reforms that bolstered its autonomy. Awadh's fertile plains were highly productive, and the region became a major centre for the production of food grains, textiles, and luxury goods. The Nawabs invested in infrastructure, including irrigation and road networks, enhancing agricultural.

1.5.3 Sikh

After the assassination of Guru Gobind Singh by the Afghans in 1708, the Sikhs got a new leader in the form of Banda and the Sikhs started the fight for independence against the Mughals. He defeated the Mughal army in Sirhind and captured it. Banda Bahadur was appointed as the governor of Sirhind and also captured the entire land between Sutlej and Yamuna and assumed the title of Sacha Padshah i.e. true ruler. Alarmed by these developments, the Mughal Administrator Bahadur Shah marched against Banda and laid siege to Lohgarh but soon died in 1712. Without wasting any time, Banda recaptured Lohgarh and built a second fort at Gurudaspur. Emperor Farrukhsiyar ordered Kashmir Governor Samad Khan to attack the Sikhs. Banda was defeated and continuously pursued. He was forced to surrender to the Mughals on December 17, 1715 and was ultimately crucified. The disoriented Sikhs found another leader in the form of Kapur Singh and started harassing the Mughals again.

Nadir Shah's invasion (1739) weakened the Mughal rule in Punjab. This helped the Sikhs to increase their financial resources and expand their army. Even after the first plunder, the attacks by the Afghans continued under the Abdali's leadership. He attacked India for the fourth time in 1756. The Mughal emperor was so frightened that he handed over Punjab, Kashmir and Sirhind to

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Abdali. Abdali appointed his son Timur Shah as governor of the Indian territory and Jahan Khan as his Wazir. Due to the killing of Sikhs, the Sikhs revolted and the Marathas supported them. The joint army of Marathas and Sikhs attacked the lands occupied by Abdali and expelled the Afghans from many areas. They plundered Sirhind and completely crushed the invaders. To establish his supremacy in India, Abdali had to fight the Marathas at Panipat in 1761 in his fifth invasion. After the defeat of the Marathas, Abdali returned to Afghanistan but on the way the Sikhs harassed him a lot.

The Sikhs found a very good path to freedom from the troubled conditions of Punjab. They organised in Amritsar in 1764 and proclaimed the first Sikh sovereign state and minted their own coins bearing the inscription Degh Teg Fateh (Victory to Charity and Arms). After Abdali's final departure from India, the Sikhs captured Lahore between 1767 and 1773. Now the jurisdiction of the Sikhs extends from Saharanpur in the east to Attock in the west and from Multan in the south to Kangra and Jamuna in the north. Later Lord Dalhousie annexed the Sikh state on March 29, 1849 and annexed it to the British Empire.

The Sikhs, under leaders like Guru Gobind Singh and later Maharaja Ranjit Singh, established a powerful and independent state in Punjab. The rise of the Sikh power was rooted in a dynamic social and religious movement that mobilized the local peasantry and warrior classes. The agricultural prosperity of Punjab, combined with the strategic use of resources, enabled the Sikhs to build a strong economic base. The Khalsa, a militarized community of Sikhs, played a crucial role in resisting Mughal and Afghan invasions. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh Empire further consolidated its power by modernizing the army, investing in infrastructure, and fostering trade and industry. This economic and military strength allowed the Sikhs to maintain a significant degree of autonomy and challenge Mughal authority effectively.

The British annexation of Punjab was possible after three Anglo-Sikh Wars (discussed in detail in Lesson 2).



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1.5.4 Ruhela or Rohilla

In the sixteenth century, the Mughals defeated the Afghans and became the masters of India and completely ousted the Afghans from power. Despite being out of power, there were some settlements of Afghans in Allahabad, Darbhanga, Odisha and Sylhet. There was a similar Afghan settlement in Rohilkhand, which was settled by an Afghan soldier named Dawood. David and his followers worked as mercenaries for local landlords and later started doing the same work for the royal administrators in that area. David's successor, Ali Mohammad Khan, began to put into action an ambitious plan to expand his fiefdom. Gradually, by eliminating the local zamindars and jagirdars, he created a huge estate in Bareilly district. He captured the land of Mohammad Salih in 1727. This land was given to Mohammad Salih by the royal court. Mohammad Khan declared himself the Nawab of this huge estate. With the intervention of Shahi Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan, he agreed to do the work of revenue collection for the Mughal Emperor in place of Mohammad Salih. During the invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali, he started capturing the lands of the Mughals and had to face the forces of King Harnand Arora. Raja Harnand Arora was the governor of Moradabad.

In a decisive battle, Ali Mohammad Khan defeated Raja Harnand Arora and killed him. Due to the war, the power and prestige of this Rohilla chieftain reached their peak and thousands of Afghans came under his leadership. Ali Mohammad Rohilla had by now conquered some Parganas of Bareilly and Badaun and had also captured Pilibhit and some parts of Kumaon state. By 1748 he took control over the entire Bijnor.

In a war with the Mughals, he forced the Mughal Emperor to sign a peace treaty. Ali Mohammad was appointed Faujdar of Sirhind as Char Hazari Mansabdar. After the death of Ali Mohammad in September 1748, internal strife and disputes started, Mughal Governor Safdar Jung took full advantage of them. He instigated Bangash Sardar Qaim Khan to drive out the Afghans from Rohilkhand. In this attempt, Kaim Khan was defeated and killed in the battle and his jagir situated on the eastern bank of the Ganges was captured by the Rohillas.

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The status quo remained until the third battle of Panipat (1761). The Rohilla and Bangash Afghans supported the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali and as a result acquired some jagirs. Hafiz lived peacefully under the leadership of Rahmat Khan from 1761-1768. Hafiz Rahmat Khan was a great warrior and wise ruler. The situation started worsening when the Marathas and the Nawab of Awadh came forward with these developments. Meanwhile, a third party also entered the fray, whose name was East India Company. The British assisted the Nawab of Awadh in the war against the Rohillas. After the defeat of the Rohillas, the Nawab of Awadh took away almost all the land of the Rohillas and left a small area of Rohilkhand in Rampur for Faizal Khan, son of Ali Mohammad Khan Rohilla.

1.5.5 Bundela

Chhatrasal Bundela receives credit for establishing Bundela State. Chhatrasal had isolated a part of Bundelkhand during Aurangzeb's last days. After Aurangzeb's death, he decided to become independent from the Mughals and started ignoring orders from Delhi. But soon he changed his stubborn attitude and sent his sons to meet Bahadur Shah. This meeting took place at a time when Bahadur Shah had launched a campaign against his brother Mirza Muhammad Kambakhsh. Chhatrasal was pleased with this step, so the Mughal emperor granted Mansabdari to him. In return, Chhatrasal helped the Emperor in his campaign against Banda and joined him in the attack on Lohgarh. However, in 1720, Mohammad Khan Bagsh was appointed as the administrator of Allahabad. Mohammad Khan was one of the Sayyid brothers. The Sayyid brothers had severe enmity with the king. The entire land of Bundelkhand, as well as the part under the jurisdiction of Chhatrasal, came under Allahabad administration. Mohammad Khan handed over the responsibility for the occupied part of Chhatrasal to Diler Khan. Due to this, the Bundelas rebelled, and Diler Khan was defeated in 1721.

In 1723, the Mughal emperor ordered Mohammad Khan to attack Chhatrasal. In this campaign, Mohammad Khan was successful in capturing the eastern part of Bundelkhand. Bundela had lost most of the land under his



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control. Chhatrasal again started attacks with renewed vigour and enthusiasm and recaptured all the lost territory. In this campaign, Chhatrasal sought help from Peshwa Bajirao in the war against the Mughals and with the help of Peshwa, he gave a massive defeat to Mohammad Khan Bangash and Kaim Khan who were helping him. Chhatrasal died at the age of 82 and his sons Harde Raj and Jagat Raj divided the kingdom among themselves. Peshwa had helped the Bundles, and a small part of the state was given to them as Jagir. With the division of the state, the fame and glory of the Bundala's gradually began to weaken, and their prestige was lost.

1.5.6 Jat

During Aurangzeb's reign, bands of Jats formed gangs notorious for their robberies, particularly in the region between Delhi and Agra, where they even seized some territory. Led by chieftains like Rajaram, Bhajja and Chudaman, they held sway until 1721 when Churaman's defeat by Sawai Jai Singh II marked a turning point, causing their grip to weaken. Historian Sir Jadunath Sarkar notes that until the mid-18th century, the Jats lacked centralised leadership or a coherent state structure. However, under the leadership of Churaman's nephew, Badan Singh, the Jats underwent a transformation. Badan Singh united disparate Jat clans, fostering a collective sense of identity and governance. His death in 1756 saw Suraj Mal, described by historians as the Plato or Ulysses of the Jat community, ascend to power. Suraj Mal exhibited remarkable political acumen, expanding his realm to encompass territories including Agra, Dholpur, Mainpur, Hathras, Meerut, and others. He demonstrated military prowess by resisting Abdali's siege and aiding the Marathas in the third battle of Panipat. Suraj Mal's vision extended to state-building, as he adopted Mughal revenue systems to strengthen governance. However, upon his demise in 1763, the Jat state faltered, fracturing into smaller zamindaris, marking the end of their brief but significant period of political prominence.

The Jats, a powerful agrarian community in northern India, established themselves as a significant regional power under leaders like Suraj Mal. The Jat

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kingdom of Bharatpur, in particular, became known for its military prowess and economic resilience. The Jats leveraged their control over fertile agricultural land to build a strong economic base, focusing on the production of cash crops and the efficient management of irrigation systems. Suraj Mal's strategic acumen in fortification and defense enabled the Jats to resist Mughal incursions and assert their independence. The economic stability provided by agriculture and trade allowed the Jats to maintain a formidable military force and play a crucial role in the regional politics of northern India.

1.5.7 Jaipur and Other Rajputana States

Jaipur (formerly known as Amber) in eastern Rajasthan was ruled by the Kachwaha clan of Rajputs. In the early 1700s, Jai Singh Sawai, the ruler, took several actions to greatly increase his power. He (i) arranged to have his jagir (land grant) located near his home territories and (ii) obtained permanent rights to collect land taxes through farming (a system where the state rents land tax collection rights to individuals). By the time he died in 1743, Jai Singh (after whom Jaipur was named) had become the most important ruler in the region. Meanwhile, most other Rajput states were frequently involved in minor disputes and internal conflicts. For instance, Ajit Singh of Marwar was killed by his own son.

In the 1750s, Suraj Mal, the Jat ruler of Bharatpur, adopted a modified version of Mughal revenue administration for his lands, similar to what Jai Singh had done. However, during this period, Jaipur's fortunes were in serious decline. Threatened by the Marathas, Jaipur had to resort to short-term financial measures. Additionally, a series of crop failures in the 1750s and 60s weakened agriculture. The second half of the eighteenth century saw an economic depression and a decline in Jaipur's political power. This made Jaipur a vulnerable target for the Marathas, especially Mahadaji Sindhia.

The states mentioned so far, except for the Marathas, were all landlocked. This didn't mean that trade wasn't important to them—Ranjit Singh's kingdom,



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for example, was heavily involved in trade. However, not having access to the sea made these states more vulnerable, especially during a time when the dominant power was the English East India Company, which started as a maritime trading company.

1.5.8 Hyderabad and Karnataka

In 1724, Chin Vichalch Khan, a prominent figure at the royal court, laid the groundwork for the autonomous state of Hyderabad and assumed the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jahan. Although never openly declared independence from Delhi, he wielded de facto autonomy, enforcing his authority over disobedient landlords and economically influential Hindus. Through leniency towards the latter, he cultivated an elite class supportive of his rule, solidifying his position.

Following Nizam Asaf Jahan's demise, Hyderabad encountered numerous setbacks. Marathas from Mysore and Karnataka encroached upon its territories, exacerbating its woes. However, the ascension of Nizam Ali Khan in 1762 heralded a period of rejuvenation. Under his stewardship until 1803, he resolved border disputes with neighbours and restored political equilibrium in Hyderabad.

Hyderabad, under the leadership of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah, emerged as a powerful and autonomous state in the Deccan. The region’s economic foundation was bolstered by its strategic position on trade routes and its rich agricultural base. Hyderabad became a hub for trade in textiles, diamonds, and spices, attracting merchants and artisans from across the subcontinent and beyond. The Nizam’s administrative reforms, which included efficient revenue collection and the establishment of a stable bureaucracy, further strengthened the state’s economic base. The region’s economic prosperity enabled the Nizam to maintain a powerful military and assert his independence from Mughal authority, effectively decentralizing power in the Deccan.

Karnataka, once a Mughal province in the south, operated under the quasi-independence of the Nizam of Hyderabad, distancing itself from Delhi's authority. Similarly, the Lieutenant Governor of Karnataka, the Nawab of Karnataka,

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asserted independence from the Viceroy of the South. However, post-1740, internal strife over the Nawabi destabilised Karnataka, opening avenues for direct intervention by European trading companies in Indian political affairs.

1.5.9 Mysore

Following the decline of the Mughal Empire, Mysore emerged as a virtually independent entity. Though ruled by a Hindu dynasty, power was largely centralised in the hands of the Dalwai, or Prime Minister, who overshadowed the nominal ruler. When the enterprising Haider Ali entered the state's service, Naniraj Delwai held the position of Prime Minister. Despite Haider Ali's lack of formal education, his boldness, determination, and astute insight were evident. Ambitious and shrewd, he capitalised on the turmoil of the times to consolidate his authority, displacing Naniraj and seizing control. Suppressing local chieftains in South India, he expanded Mysore's territory through conquests in Sunda, Bednore Kanara, Sara, and Guti. This aggressive expansion positioned Mysore as a significant rival to the Marathas, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and even the British in South India.

Mysore, under rulers like Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, developed into a formidable regional power with a strong economic and social base. The state invested heavily in agriculture, irrigation, and military innovation. Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan introduced modern military techniques and weapons, making Mysore a significant military threat to both the British and neighbouring Indian states. Economically, Mysore benefited from its strategic location, which facilitated trade and commerce. The state’s silk and sandalwood industries thrived, contributing to its wealth. The rulers of Mysore also promoted administrative reforms and encouraged the development of local industries, which provided a stable economic foundation for their political ambitions and resistance against Mughal and British encroachment.

In Lesson 2, you will learn in detail as to how Mysore became an East India Company dependent nation.

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1.5.10 The State of Travancore

Martanda Varma, who ruled the southern Kerala state of Venad (Travancore) from 1729 to 1758, implemented several strategies to strengthen his control. He (i) established a strong standing army of about 50,000 soldiers, (ii) reduced the influence of the Nayar aristocracy, previously relied upon for military support, and (iii) fortified the northern boundary of his kingdom, known as the "Travancore line". Additionally, he supported the Syrian Christians, a significant trading community, to limit European trade involvement. Pepper was the main commodity, but other goods also became royal monopolies, requiring a license for trade. These policies were largely continued by his successor, Rama Varma, who ruled from 1758 to 1798 and successfully defended the kingdom against the powerful new threat of Mysore.

1.5.11 Bengal

After assuming the position of Governor or Nizam of Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan gradually steered Bengal towards independence from the Mughal Empire. He wielded the exceptional authority to serve as both Nazim and Diwan concurrently, a privilege that significantly bolstered his authority. Leveraging his adeptness as a proficient revenue administrator, Murshid Quli laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Bengal state. Within his province, influential intermediaries, namely landlords, assumed the role of revenue collectors, thus ascending as a new elite class alongside the burgeoning prominence of merchants and financiers.

Following Murshid Quli Khan's demise in 1727, his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din assumed governance over Bengal until 1739. In that fateful year, Alivardi Khan seized power by deposing Shuja-ud-din's son, Sarfaraz, and claiming the Nawab's mantle for himself. Under the reigns of these three Nawabs, Bengal experienced prolonged periods of tranquillity and maintained a systematic administration, fostering an environment conducive to commerce and industry. It was during Alivardi's rule that Bengal nearly broke away from Mughal control.

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However, Alivardi Khan encountered formidable challenges from external forces, most notably the Marathas, whose incursions posed a significant threat. Eventually, Alivardi opted for a compromise with the Marathas, agreeing to pay them Chauth and relinquish control over the province of Orissa. Nevertheless, Maratha raids inflicted substantial damage on Bengal's trade, particularly disrupting commerce with northern and western India.

Alivardi Khan designated his son, Siraj-ud-Daula, as his successor before his death in 1756. However, contention arose over Siraj-ud-Daula's ascension, exacerbated by factionalism among courtiers who viewed the ambitious and impulsive young Nawab as a threat. This internal strife weakened Bengal's administration, providing an opportune moment for the English East India Company to establish its influence. The infamous conspiracy of Plassey in 1757 marked the Company's decisive intervention, ultimately leading to the downfall of Siraj-ud-Daula's rule.

Bengal, under the leadership of Murshid Quli Khan and later Alivardi Khan, became a prosperous and autonomous region. The fertile delta region supported a thriving agrarian economy, with rice and other crops forming the backbone of local wealth. Additionally, Bengal's strategic location and extensive river network facilitated a booming trade, both inland and overseas. The rise of a wealthy merchant class and the development of artisanal industries, particularly textiles, provided a strong economic base that supported the independent Nawabs of Bengal. The region's economic prosperity and efficient administration enabled it to resist Mughal central control and maintain its autonomy until the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

The decline of the Mughal Empire was significantly influenced by the rise of these regional powers, each of which established firm political control based on dynamic social and economic foundations. Hyderabad, Mysore, the Sikhs, and the Jats each developed strong local economies and social structures that acted as centrifugal forces, drawing authority away from the central Mughal administration. By leveraging their economic resources, administrative reforms, and military innovations, these regional powers were able to assert



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their independence and contribute to the fragmentation and decentralization of the Mughal Empire. Understanding these dynamics provides a comprehensive view of the complex factors that led to the decline of Mughal central authority and the emergence of powerful regional states in eighteenth-century India.

Refer to Lesson 2 for a detailed discussion on Supremacy of the East India Company in the governance of Bengal.

1.6 ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The most significant event in the politics of the 17th and 18th centuries was the rise and expansion of British power in India. This marked the start of a new lesson in Indian history. Here, we'll explore how the British arrived in India and how they extended their influence.

1.6.1 From Business Company to Political Power

In the mid-18th century, the English East India Company underwent a significant transformation, evolving from a mere trading enterprise into a formidable political force. Since its inception on December 31, 1600 CE, until 1744 CE, the Company has steadily expanded its trade and influence across India. To counter the rising dominance of the Portuguese and Dutch, the Company adopted a strategy of both warfare and infiltration within the Mughal court. By the late 18th century, the only major rival to the English East India Company in India was the French East India Company, with whom they engaged in conflict after entering the fray relatively late.

The genesis of the British Empire is commonly traced back to 1757, a pivotal year marked by the Company's victory over the Nawab of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey. Prior to this triumph, the stage was set in South India, where the British honed their military prowess and diplomatic skills in clashes with the French Company during the Carnatic Wars (1744-1763), spanning a quarter of a century. Despite its newfound political clout, the English East India Company

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had maintained its identity as a trading entity for 150 years. However, the events of the 18th century would propel it towards a trajectory of imperial expansion and dominance in the Indian subcontinent. What was the reason for the increase in its political aspirations during this time? The reason for the expansion of European companies in India from 1730 was the expansion of European production and trade and the rise of aggressive national states in Europe. The decline of Mughal dominance in India obviously provided a great opportunity for the spread of the influence of these companies. The Company's desire to earn more revenue from taxes led it to establish an empire. The Company needed more money to maintain its business and pay the salaries of its armies and to meet this need it found the best way to acquire some territories. The company's double selfishness was fulfilled in its conquest of Bengal. On one hand he provided protection to his business and on the other hand he took control over the revenue of Bengal. His aim was to collect the extra revenue of Bengal and spend it on the goods of Bengal. The price of goods obtained from Bengal increased from 400,000 pounds in 1765 to 1 million pounds by the end of the 1770s.

1.6.2 Anglo-French Conflict in South India

After the demise of Nizamul Mulk, Hyderabad state, which had previously gained independence from central rule, plunged into instability. This period of upheaval, illustrated by the succession conflicts in Karnataka, created openings for foreign companies to interfere in the region.

First Karnataka War

The First Karnataka War took place in 1742 due to war between the two countries within Europe. By 1745, this war in India had become a war between the British East India Company and the French East Company. These two companies were rivals of each other in business and political influence in India. The English army attacked French ships near Pondicherry, but the French soon captured Madras. On this occasion, the Nawab of Karnataka, responding to the appeal of the British to save Nadras, attacked the French forces. But his forces were defeated by a



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small force of the French at St. Thomas near Madras. With the end of the war in Europe, the war between the two companies temporarily ended. The question of supremacy had not yet been finally resolved. Therefore, after 1748 the possibility of conflict started again.

Second Karnataka War

The second war of Karnataka was the result of the diplomatic efforts of Dupleix, the French Governor of Pondicherry. The internal disputes over the succession to the thrones of Hyderabad and Karnataka had reached a serious stage. Eager to receive lucrative presents from these states, Dupleix quickly decided to support Chanda Sahib in Karnataka and Muzaffar Jung in Hyderabad. These preliminary preparations proved useful when the French and their allies defeated their opponents in 1749. The French gained both territorial and economic benefits. He obtained Northern Sarkar, Machhalipattam and some villages around Pondicherry. To maintain political influence, a representative of the French was appointed in the Nizam Darwar of Hyderabad. The British took revenge for their defeat in 1750. Robert Clive implemented his clever plan and captured Arcot with the help of 200 British soldiers and 300 Indian soldiers. Chanda Sahib now had no option but to protect his capital. He broke the siege of Trichnapalli and as a result freed Muhammad Ali. This was in line with Clive's expectations. The French efforts to regain their lost power were hampered by the lack of support from the French government. They had to suffer heavy losses in the conflicts between America and India and hence they accepted a humiliating peace in exchange for costly conflicts. Thus, the attempt to change the character of the Company into that of a state proved to be very disastrous for the French East India Company. The French government was not only corrupt and decadent but also failed to understand future developments and plans. Dupleix was recalled to France in 1754 after negotiations with the English Company effectively ended the French election.

Third Karnataka War

Due to the war breaking out in Europe, the war between the two companies started again in 1756. Under the leadership of Count de Lally, France sent an army to

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India to help the French army, but its ships were sent back, and the French army was defeated in Karnataka. The British took over the position that the French had in the court and region of Hyderabad. Their influence in India ended with the defeat of the French in the Battle of Wandivash in 1760.

The situation of war-like peace once again belonged to Europe. By the Treaty of Paris of 1783, the French Company remained merely a trading organisation without any political rights. The conflict between the English and French companies was a turning point for the British to consolidate their power in India. After 20 years the British had proved their superiority over the French. The experiences he learned from these wars in Karnataka were applied in other parts of the country as well.

Note: You can see more about the details of Karnataka war in Lesson 2.

1.6.3 Bengal's Victory: Plassey to Buxar

Bengal became the inaugural region under British political control, marking a significant shift after the defeat of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in the Battle of Plassey in 1757. Mir Qasim ceded the zamindari of 24 parganas to the company in 1757, followed by the transfer of the zamindari of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong in 1760. These concessions empowered company officials to suppress Nawab's administrators and farmers, while also exploiting their commercial privileges.

In parallel to Siraj-ud-Daula's defiance, Mir Qasim contested encroachments on his sovereignty. Alongside the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor, he confronted the British in the Battle of Buxar in 1764, which resulted in a decisive victory for the company. This episode underscores the evolving political landscape characterised by shifting power dynamics.

Dual Government System

The Dual Government System was introduced in Bengal through the Treaty of 1765. Under this arrangement, Clive assumed the role of Governor of Bengal, with the East India Company effectively becoming the ruling authority. The

Nawab's position became ceremonial, and his military force was disbanded. Administration duties were delegated to five sub-subedars, who ostensibly acted on behalf of the Nawab but were appointed by the Company.

The Company gained direct control over revenue collection through the Sub-Dewan, consolidating its power. By having the same individual oversee both the Diwani and Subedar offices, the Company further strengthened its position, with the Nawab being held accountable for any misconduct by Company officials. During the years 1766 to 1768, the Company amassed an estimated Rs 57 lakh in revenue not just from Bengal. Prominent British figures, including Clive, acknowledged the unjust and corrupt nature of Company rule, which resulted in severe impoverishment for the people of Bengal.



Fig. 1.1 *Robert Clive and Mir Jafar after the Battle of Plassey*

1.6.4 Restructuring of the Political System

As a result of serious administrative mistakes, the company abolished the dual system of government in 1772. The Company was basically a business organisation; it did not have an administrative structure to administer the state. To streamline political power, changes in its constitution were inevitable. The British government used to make rules for the functioning of the company. As a result, the Regulating Act of 1773 had an impact on its work.

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Implementation of Western Institutions

The Regulating Act›s significance lies in its establishment of a structured framework for British governance in India, heralding the introduction of institutions modelled after the British system. Under this act, the Governor General and his council were tasked with overseeing Bengal›s administration while also supervising Bombay and Madras. Additionally, a Supreme Court was instituted in Calcutta to administer justice in accordance with British standards. Although the East India Company already possessed an administrative apparatus, including an army, tax collection mechanisms, and judicial authority, the Regulating Act formalised and expanded upon these existing structures. Initially, the company simply extended its pre-existing system, but by the close of the century, English principles had permeated deeply into Indian administration.

The separation of the judiciary from the executive was a notable development, leading to the establishment of civil courts presided over by judges. The popularity of these courts was evident, with thousands of cases being adjudicated annually by the early 19th century. During Cornwallis› tenure, attempts were made to establish a police system. While the reliance on Indian personnel for various services persisted, it was now regulated differently. As the Company consolidated its power, the authority of the Nawabs and their aides waned, paving the way for the establishment of a robust state apparatus in which compliance with directives was expected from the populace. Despite the continuation of traditional practices, there was a fundamental shift in governance. Initially, Company officials operated akin to the Nawabs, employing traditional methods and adopting Mughal revenue collection practices. However, over time, British control over administration and policymaking intensified. The British government exerted increasing influence over the Company›s affairs, ultimately replacing the indigenous governance system with an imperialist one aligned with British interests. This transition marked a significant departure from past practices, laying the groundwork for a new era of colonial rule in India.



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1.7 THE ECONOMY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN INDIA

The eighteenth century was marked by significant economic instability, with little continuity between its early and later parts. This period saw a lot of political turmoil in India, with states constantly being formed and dissolved. Military raids caused disruptions, including the destruction of irrigation systems, seizure of cattle, and forced migrations. These actions negatively impacted economic stability and hindered growth.

When viewed from Delhi, the 18th century seems very bleak. The city faced repeated destruction from attacks by Nadir Shah, Ahmad Shah Abdali, and the Rohillas, who controlled Delhi from 1761 to 1771. However, this negative perspective wasn›t shared by people in other parts of India, like Trivandrum, Pune, Patna, or Jaipur. The political decentralization of the time led to economic changes, making Delhi and Agra's experiences unique. Conditions varied across regions. Some areas, like Bengal, Jaipur, and Hyderabad, experienced growth in the first half of the century, while others, like Travancore, Mysore, and Punjab, flourished later. No single timeline of economic prosperity or decline applies to all regions of India during this period. Despite some challenges, the 18th century economy performed well in agriculture, inland trade, and urbanization. Certain areas, like Punjab and parts of North India, saw agricultural decline due to interstate warfare, but these issues were managed through effective land and labour management. Data from Taqsem papers compared with the Ain-i-Akbari shows that declining agricultural production and fluctuating prices were due to a lack of labour and peace, not a shortage of cultivable land. While rising prices benefited peasants, the benefits were unevenly distributed among different peasant groups. States collected tribute from agricultural production systems, connecting villages to widespread networks of trade and exchange.

Except for a major subsistence crisis in South India from 1702 to 1704, the first seventy years of the eighteenth century in India were largely free of famine.

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However, the Bengal famine of 1770, which killed about a third of the population, occurred soon after the British colonization, followed by another severe famine in North India in 1783. A favourable land-labour ratio allowed mobile peasants and tribal workers to negotiate fair terms with land controllers. Yet, high revenue demands often led to peasants abandoning their lands, especially in North India. Some village leaders turned revenue farms into hereditary estates, while others faced pressure from powerful states like Tipu's Mysore.

Overall, the eighteenth century saw a gradual increase in population, production, prices, and wages. Despite political fragmentation, inland trade in grain, cloth, and cattle flourished. Merchant institutions operated across political boundaries, managing the transportation of goods, credit, and insurance. Artisanal labour, particularly weavers, resisted excessive demands from social groups and the state. Even intrusive states like late-eighteenth-century Mysore targeted intermediaries rather than labourers.

Evidence from Bengal and Madras indicates that urban labourers fared worse in the early colonial period compared to the immediate precolonial period. While inland trade thrived, Indian shippers and merchants involved in export trade declined due to European competition. The significant Gujarati port city of Surat lost its prominence around 1720. Despite a resurgence in demand for Indian goods in West and Southeast Asia and Europe in the late eighteenth century, British merchants and shippers dominated the trade, reaping most of the profits at the expense of Indian traders.

As the old commercial centres of Surat, Masulipatnam, and Dhaka declined, colonial port cities like Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta became more prominent. While the Mughal capitals of Delhi and Agra declined, regional capitals such as Lucknow, Hyderabad, various Maratha cities, and Seringapatam rose in importance. Urbanization was higher in 1800 than it had been a century earlier. In these urban centers, the balance of power shifted between rulers and merchants, with some commercial and financial leaders beginning to take on state-like powers.



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For several reasons, the mid-eighteenth century marks a significant shift in the economy. When the English East India Company took control of Bengal›s revenues, the flow of money changed. Previously, Bengal received gold and silver in exchange for its exports, but this no longer happened. In the late eighteenth century, peasants were forced to grow cash crops like indigo and opium, which negatively impacted food crop production. Another reason that the latter half of the eighteenth century differs from the period before 1750 is the changing nature of war. Post-1750, warfare became more disruptive to civil life and economic production and much more expensive due to new technologies. The widespread use of firearms, employment of mercenaries, and maintenance of standing armies all had harmful effects.

1.8 THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

In the eighteenth century, social life in India reflected traditions from the past. While there were some common elements of cultural unity across the country over the centuries, social patterns varied greatly. Society was divided into layers based on religion, region, tribe, language, class, and caste. Hindus, for instance, were divided into numerous castes, which determined their social status from birth. Inter-caste marriages and dining were prohibited. Traditionally, one›s caste determined their profession, but by the eighteenth century, there was some degree of social and professional mobility. For example, Brahmins began adopting various professions and engaging in trade. Despite these changes, caste remained a major source of division in society. Muslims were also affected by factors like race, caste, tribe, and social status. Within Islam, there were significant religious differences between Shias and Sunnis, while Iranians, Afghans, Turanis, and Indian Muslims had distinct identities. People who converted to Islam often brought their caste with them. Families, typically patriarchal, formed the basic social unit, although Kerala had a matrilineal system. Women were expected to embody the ideals of daughters, wives, and mothers. In North India, women from upper classes followed purdah, remaining secluded. Child marriages were

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common, seen as a social duty between families. Among the upper classes, polygamy and dowry were prevalent, but the most concerning practices of eighteenth-century India were sati and the treatment of widows among Hindus.

The education system didn›t adapt to the needs of the era. The curriculum focused on subjects like literature, languages, law, religion, philosophy, and logic, but didn›t include physical and natural sciences, technology, or geography. Progressive ideas were lacking as the emphasis was on theoretical concepts. Basic education was widespread, but higher education was mainly available in Sanskrit and Persian. Additionally, education was not accessible to women and people from lower castes.

1.9 THE CULTURAL MILIEU

Many argue that the eighteenth century saw a decline in material and cultural aspects of life. However, such a negative view of the 18th century may not be entirely justified. Despite economic decline, Delhi produced significant poets, philosophers, and thinkers like Shah Waliullah and Mir Taqi Mir. Additionally, as regional courts gained importance, they became major patrons of high culture, supporting music, visual arts, and literature. Cultural traditions thrived in dispersed centers such as Awadh, Bikaner, Lahore, and Thanjavur. Thanjavur, especially under the Marathas, exemplified cultural flourishing, with high-quality literary works in Tamil, Telugu, Sanskrit, and Marathi. Notably, the Karnataka tradition of Indian classical music flourished in 18th century Thanjavur, with composers like Tyagaraja, Muttuswami Dikshitar, and Syama Sastri. The period also witnessed the development of a unique painting style in Thanjavur, blending northern influences with local textile painting traditions.

This vitality wasn›t limited to high society alone. Many theatre, musical, and literary traditions of the time incorporated influences from folk culture. The blending of popular Hinduism and Islam added a unique flavour to cultural activities related to pilgrimages and festivals. Long-distance pilgrimages from



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Varanasi to Rameswaram became more common, reflecting a general trend of increased mobility. Post-Mughal states often hired mercenary soldiers and clerks from other regions. For example, in eighteenth-century Hyderabad, Kayasthas from the north were employed in large numbers. In Mysore, Maharashtrian Brahmans held fiscal offices as early as the 1720s. Musicians, scholars, and artists were also highly mobile, quickly gravitating towards emerging political centres like Ranjit Singh›s Lahore, where high-quality Persian literature was produced alongside Punjabi works. Meanwhile, new developments in architecture and painting emerged. In Kangra, a significant new school of painting focused on Vaishnava themes. Cultural assimilation was the result of mutual influence and respect between religions. For instance, the Marathas supported the shrine of Sheikh Moinuddin Chishti in Ajmer, and the Raja of Tanjore funded the shrine of Shaikh Shahul Hamid of Nagaur. Tipu Sultan of Mysore supported the Sringeri temple, and Muslims participated in Hindu festivals just as Hindus joined Muharram processions. Much of what is considered India's "traditional" culture today can be traced back to this period and the preceding century.

1.10 18TH CENTURY: A DARK AGE

In recent times, the conventional portrayal of the 18th century as a period of darkness has come under scrutiny. Historically, this era has been characterised by chaos and anarchy, marked by the collapse of the once-mighty Mughal Empire and the failure of regional powers supremacy in the late 18th century. Notably, scholars from Cambridge University and their established dominance. It is argued that stability was only achieved with the ascent of British Indian counterparts, who delve into Indian history, have labelled the 18th century as a dark age, juxtaposing it with the British rule in India. However, there are several issues with accepting this narrative at face value. Firstly, the influence of the Mughal Empire was not as pervasive or comprehensive as commonly believed. Large swathes of India, particularly in the northeastern and southern regions, remained beyond its grasp. Furthermore, numerous social groups operated outside of the

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Mughal influence. Therefore, attributing the decline of the Mughal Empire as the sole basis for analysing the transformative shifts occurring at an all-India level may be inherently flawed.

In recent discourse, some scholars have advocated for a reassessment of historical perspectives, proposing that the establishment of regional political powers was a more significant characteristic of the 18th century than the rise and fall of pan-Indian empires. This perspective challenges the conventional narrative by emphasising the diverse and multifaceted nature of political dynamics during this period. Indeed, the 18th century witnessed the emergence of various regional powers across the Indian subcontinent, each vying for supremacy within their respective territories. These regional entities often exerted significant influence over their domains, shaping local governance structures and socio-economic systems. Moreover, the proliferation of regional powers introduced a degree of political fragmentation, leading to a more decentralised political landscape. This decentralisation enabled greater autonomy for local rulers and facilitated the development of distinct regional identities and cultures. Furthermore, the rise of regional powers brought about significant geopolitical realignments, as alliances and rivalries between different states reshaped the political map of India.

These developments underscore the dynamic and fluid nature of power relations during the 18th century, challenging simplistic narratives that portray the era as uniformly chaotic and devoid of stability. It is imperative to recognise the nuanced complexities of the 18th century, moving beyond simplistic dichotomies of darkness and enlightenment. By acknowledging the diverse array of political actors and the multifaceted nature of power dynamics, scholars can offer a more nuanced understanding of this pivotal period in Indian history.

In conclusion, while the 18th century may have been characterised by upheaval and transformation, it also witnessed the emergence of vibrant regional powers that played a crucial role in shaping the socio-political landscape of the Indian subcontinent. By reassessing traditional narratives and embracing a more nuanced approach, historians can unravel the intricate tapestry of historical events and offer fresh insights into the complexities of India›s past.



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1.11 DEBATE AND PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING THE HISTORY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN INDIA

Historians studying Mughal India and colonialism have debated the nature of the eighteenth century. Early studies often viewed this period as a "Dark Age" due to the collapse of Mughal political power, suggesting economic and social decline. However, later research has looked at the economy and society of the eighteenth century from regional perspectives before colonial rule began in the latter half of the century. This debate often revolves around the idea of "continuity versus change." Indian historians generally see the colonial conquest, which began in the mid-eighteenth century, as a significant turning point in Indian history. So, the main questions about the eighteenth century are whether the fall of the Mughal Empire led to a decline in socio-economic structures and whether the arrival of colonialism represented a fundamental break in Indian history or not. Was the eighteenth century a time of darkness or a period of economic growth? Did it represent a significant change or was it characterized by continuity and change? How did British influence expand in India during this time? These questions, along with others about politics, society, economy, religion, and culture, have sparked considerable debate among historians studying the eighteenth century.

Traditionally, historians viewed India›s eighteenth century as a dark era marked by warfare, political instability, and economic decline sandwiched between the stable and prosperous periods of Mughal and British rule. However, recent Indian historians have challenged this view, emphasizing the connections between the earlier Mughal and later British states, as well as the emergence of smaller successor states after the decline of Mughal power.

The political upheaval throughout the century raises questions about whether the fall of the Mughal Empire led to a breakdown of central authority, resulting in an era of anarchy that led to the rise of regional kingdoms and eventually paved the way for British colonial dominance. It's important to consider whether the decline of the Mughal state reflects a failure of Indian society

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and whether the vacuum created by the collapse of central authority was filled by regional powers such as the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal and the Nizam of Hyderabad in the first half of the century. Furthermore, was the emergence of the British East India Company as a political power a significant change for Indian society, economy, and politics, or did it mark the beginning of two centuries of British colonial rule in India?

Thus, the eighteenth century in India has been a subject of significant historical debate, reflecting various interpretations and perspectives. These major schools of thought include the nationalist perspective, the Cambridge School, the Aligarh School, and the revisionist interpretations, which are as follows:

- **Nationalist View:** The nationalist perspective on the eighteenth century in India is deeply rooted in the context of the Indian independence movement. Nationalist historians, such as R.C. Majumdar, viewed this period as one of decline and disintegration, attributing the fragmentation of the Mughal Empire to the internal weaknesses of the Indian polity. They argued that the political vacuum created by the decline of central authority facilitated British colonial expansion. According to this view, the British exploited the divisions and lack of unity among Indian states to establish their dominance. Nationalist historians often emphasised the resilience of Indian society and its ability to adapt to changing circumstances. They highlighted the continuity of Indian culture and civilization despite political upheavals. This perspective aimed to instill a sense of pride and unity among Indians during the struggle for independence, countering colonial narratives that portrayed Indian society as static and backward.
- **Cambridge School:** The Cambridge School of historians, led by scholars such as Anil Seal and John Gallagher, offered a different interpretation of the eighteenth century. They argued that the period should not be seen solely as one of decline but rather as one of transformation and adaptation. The Cambridge School emphasised the role of local and regional elites in shaping the political landscape. They



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contended that these elites were active participants in the process of state formation and that their alliances and rivalries played a crucial role in the emergence of new regional powers. According to the Cambridge School, the British did not simply impose their rule on a fragmented and declining society but rather entered into complex negotiations with local rulers and elites. This perspective challenges the nationalist view by suggesting that the rise of British power was not a straightforward process of conquest but a result of intricate interactions with Indian states.

- **Aligarh School:** The Aligarh School, associated with historians like Irfan Habib and Athar Ali, provided a Marxist interpretation of the eighteenth century. They focused on the economic and social structures of the period, arguing that the decline of the Mughal Empire was primarily due to economic factors. The Aligarh School highlighted the role of agrarian crisis, declining productivity, and the exploitation of peasantry as key reasons for the weakening of central authority. Irfan Habib, in particular, emphasised the impact of colonial exploitation on Indian society and economy. He argued that the British East India Company's policies exacerbated existing economic problems, leading to widespread impoverishment and social unrest. The Aligarh School's analysis underscored the importance of understanding economic and social conditions to fully grasp the complexities of the eighteenth century.
- **Revisionist Interpretation:** In recent years, revisionist historians have offered new insights into the eighteenth century by challenging traditional narratives. They argue that previous interpretations have often oversimplified the period and neglected its diversity and dynamism. Revisionists emphasise the need to look beyond the binary of decline and transformation, instead focusing on regional variations and the agency of different social groups. One significant contribution of revisionist historians is the recognition of the role of women, marginalized communities, and non-elite actors in shaping historical

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processes. They have highlighted the ways in which these groups navigated the changing political and economic landscape, contributing to the complexity of the period. Additionally, revisionists have explored the cultural and intellectual developments of the eighteenth century, emphasising the vibrancy of Indian society despite political challenges.

In this way, the eighteenth century in India is a period of great complexity, and the various historical interpretations reflect this richness. The nationalist view underscores the period's role in shaping modern Indian identity, while the Cambridge School emphasises the agency of regional elites and the nuanced process of British expansion. The Aligarh School provides a critical analysis of economic and social structures, highlighting the impact of colonial policies. Revisionist historians, on the other hand, call for a more inclusive and multi-faceted understanding of the period.

In-Text Questions

1. The British East India Company established its power after:
   A) 1757 B) 1761
   C) 1768 D) 1771
2. Aurangzeb had depleted the military and financial resources by fighting a long war in the:
   A) East India B) North India
   C) Deccan D) None of these
3. Aurangzeb died in the year:
   A) 1700 B) 1710
   C) 1725 D) 1707
4. Ahmad Shah Abdali was the ruler of:
   A) Afghanistan B) Iran
   C) Iraq D) None



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5. Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded North India…….. times between 1748 and 1761.
   A) 3 B) 4
   C) 5 D) 6
6. During which century did the Mughal Empire decline?
   A) 18^{th} B) 16^{th}
   C) 19^{th} D) 20^{th}
7. Which of the following enjoyed the Jat rank of 7000?
   A) Asaf Jah B) Murshid Quli Khan
   C) Both A & B D. None
8. Who were the Telugu warrior chiefs?
   A) Nayakas B) Jathas
   C) Misl D) All
9. Who was a powerful governor of Bengal?
   A) Saadat Khan B) Murshid Quli Khan
   C) Asaf Jah D) Alivardi Khan
10. During whose rule did Jagat Seth become prosperous in Bengal?
    A) Murshid Quli khan B) Saadat Khan
    C) Alivardi Khan D) Asaf Jaha
11. Sawai Jai Singh founded his new capital here:
    A) Malwa B) Amber
    C) Jodhpur D) Jaipur
12. Dalkhalsa was set up in 1699 by:
    A) Guru Nanak Dev B) Guru Tegh Bahadur
    C) Guru Gobind Singh D) Guru Har Kishan
13. Small political groups of the Sikhs were called:
    A) Khalsa B) Misls
    C) Dalkhalsa D) Jathas

14. Chauth was the …….. of the land revenue.
    A) 10% B) 20%
    C. 25% D) 30%
15. Who was the founder of the Maratha empire?
    A) Shivaji B) Tipu Sultan
    C) Raja Jai Singh D) None of these
16. Shivaji adopted the title of Chhatrapati in:
    A) 1701 B) 1760
    C) 1752 D) 1762
17. Tax levied by the Marathas was called:
    A) Zat B) Sardeshmukhi
    C) Umara D) Chauth
18. Under whose leadership did Bharatpur emerged as a strong Jat State?
    A) Churaman B) Suraj Mal
    C) Jawahir Shah D) Nadir Shah
19. Kunbis were the …….
    A) Farmers B) Maratha warriors
    C) Maratha peasant warriors D) Priests
20. Which part of India was associated with the peasant and zamindari rebellions?
    A) Southern and Eastern parts B) Northern and Southern parts
    C) Northern and western parts D) Eastern and Western parts

1.12 SUMMARY

- It has become evident that the 18th century cannot be simplistically categorised as a dark and anarchic period. While the decline of the Mughal



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Empire was a significant aspect, it was not the sole defining feature of this era. Equally noteworthy was the rise of regional powers, which emerged as key players in the political landscape of the mid-18th century. Additionally, the ascension of British power in the region during this period cannot be overlooked.

- Throughout this transitional period of the eighteenth century, a notable continuity of traditions persisted across various political systems, including those of the Mughals, regional powers, and the British.
- However, inherent differences were also evident among these systems.
- Under the new political order, institutions that had previously operated within the framework of the Mughal Empire assumed different roles and functions.
- The emergence of regional powers can be categorised into three main types: successor states, new states, and independent states.
- While some successor states demonstrated political stability, others, like the Marathas, positioned themselves as contenders for establishing a pan-Indian empire. However, external pressures and internal weaknesses thwarted their ambitions.
- States founded by groups such as the Sikhs, Jats, and Afghans experienced relatively short lifespans, unable to supplant the Mughal Empire.
- Although certain regional powers achieved economic prosperity and military advancements, they lacked the resources and authority to govern at a national level. Modernization efforts remained limited, and many of these states ultimately succumbed to the more efficient British administration.
- The rivalry with the French marked the initial phase of British ascendance, with the conquest of Bengal representing a pivotal moment in their consolidation of power.
- Initially, British rule operated through indigenous institutions, but beginning in 1773, they initiated constitutional reforms aimed at restructuring

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governance. While the primary focus of British rule lay on exploiting colonial economies, the institutional framework they established was a blend of Mughal and English traditions.

- British dominion in India was intricately linked to their broader imperial ambitions, forming an integral component of Britain's global imperial system.
- The eighteenth century is a special time in Indian history because it is between two big empires. Recently, historians have paid more attention to this century, finding important social changes that are just as important as the fall of the Mughal Empire. One major change was the rise of regional states, which grew due to local economic development and new ways of collecting taxes. These regional states often fought each other, creating a war economy that supported the governments of the time.
- In the second half of the eighteenth century, the English East India Company began to expand and influence the region, causing big changes in local politics and economies. This led to social problems and many popular uprisings.
- Despite political instability, the eighteenth century was rich in cultural development. This is one of the interesting contradictions of the time – political fragmentation alongside cultural creativity. This can be explained by strong regional support for the arts and the rise of talented artists with new ideas.

1.13 GLOSSARY

- **Mansabdars:** They are the ones who used to collect revenue on their land and pay salaries to their soldiers and also performed administrative responsibilities.

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- **Jagirdari system:** This was a system of land ownership and revenue collection in the Mughal Empire, where jagirs (land grants) were given to nobles and officials in exchange for military or administrative services. However, the crisis in this system emerged when there were more jagirdars than available jagirs, leading to economic instability and weakening of the empire.
- **Peshwa:** The Peshwa was the prime minister of the Maratha Empire. Initially appointed by Chhatrapati Shivaji, the position became hereditary under the efficient administration of Balaji Vishwanath. The Peshwas held significant power, often overshadowing the nominal authority of the Maratha ruler. They played a crucial role in expanding Maratha influence across India until the decline of their power following conflicts with the British.
- **Sikhs:** The Sikhs, followers of Sikhism, they emerged as a significant political and military force in Punjab during the decline of the Mughal Empire. Led by charismatic leaders like Banda Singh Bahadur and later Kapur Singh, they fought against Mughal oppression and external invasions, eventually establishing their own sovereign state. The Sikhs played a crucial role in shaping the political landscape of 18th century India.
- **Rohilla:** It refers to a group of Afghan settlers in Rohilkhand, led by figures like Ali Mohammad Khan Rohilla. They established a significant presence in the region through military conquests and alliances, ultimately facing conflicts with both Mughal authorities and neighbouring powers like the Nawab of Awadh and the British East India Company.
- **Anglo-French Conflict:** It describes the series of wars and diplomatic manoeuvres between the British East India Company and the French East India Company in South India during the 18th century. These conflicts, known as the Carnatic Wars or the Karnataka Wars, were part of the broader struggle for dominance in India between European colonial powers.

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- **Dual Government System:** It is a political arrangement established by the British East India Company in Bengal following the Treaty of 1765. Under this system, the Company effectively controlled administration and revenue collection, while maintaining the Nawab of Bengal as a ceremonial figurehead. This arrangement facilitated the Company's economic and political control over Bengal, leading to significant exploitation and impoverishment of the local population.

1.14 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. A
2. C
3. D
4. A
5. C
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. C
11. D
12. C
13. B
14. C
15. A
16. D



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17. B
18. B
19. C
20. B.

1.15 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Was the 18th century a time of overall decline? Explain.
2. What do you think about the "empire-centric" view of history? Do you think the 18th century was a time of chaos and disorder?
3. How would you describe the 18th century in terms of different regions becoming lively centres of social and economic activities?
4. How do historians look at the 18th century from a regional perspective?
5. What was the state of the Indian economy during the 18th century?
6. What stayed the same and what changed in the Indian economy during the 18th century?

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Unit II: Expansion and Consolidation of British Power

Lesson 2: Expansion and Consolidation of British Power: Bengal, Mysore, Maratha and Punjab (1700-1857)

Lesson 3: Expansion and Consolidation of British Power: Ideologies/Strategies of Raj (1700-1857)



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LESSON 2
EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH POWER: BENGAL, MYSORE, MARATHA AND PUNJAB (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

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2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Comprehend the enlargement of the British Empire in India and examine the progression of British dominance in regions such as Bengal, Mysore, the Maratha territories, and Punjab.

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- Grasp the historical context surrounding the British conquest of Bengal.
- Learn about the power transition from the Bengal Nawabs to British control and analyse the factors contributing to this shift in power and its broader significance.

2.2 INTRODUCTION

The British colonial expansion in India started in the mid-18th century and continued until the annexation of Awadh in 1856. During these hundred years, colonial rule in India both expanded and strengthened. In the previous lesson of this unit, the general features of colonial expansion in India were examined. These features were common in most cases of the British conquest of India, with regional variations. The circumstances surrounding the annexation of Awadh differ significantly. By 1856, Awadh, a kingdom with considerable revenue, found itself encircled by British territories, making its annexation inevitable. In contrast, states like Hyderabad managed to survive by willingly relinquishing their sovereignty to British authority. Additionally, the aftermath of the 1857 rebellion, sparked by the annexation of Awadh, undermined the policy of complete assimilation advocated by Lord Dalhousie. Post-1857, the British Raj adopted a strategy of fostering alliances with Indian monarchs, positioning them as loyal allies and natural leaders of their people. Consequently, the survival of numerous princely states, both large and small, including Kashmir and Hyderabad, until Indian independence and partition, owes much to the events of the 1857 uprisings.

2.3 GROWTH OF ENGLISH TRADE

At the end of Elizabeth I's reign, the British began to show interest in trading with eastern countries. On December 31, 1600, the Queen signed a charter granting a company of London merchants' exclusive rights to trade in the East Indies for 15 years, specifically targeting the Spice Islands. However, by 1608, the British



reached Surat and sought additional trading privileges from the Mughal court. Despite William Hawkins' presence at the Mughal court between 1609 and 1611, he faced significant opposition from the Portuguese, limiting his success. It was only after the British defeated the Portuguese in 1612 that Emperor Jahangir granted permission for the British to establish factories in Surat. From 1615 to 1618, Sir Thomas Roe, the British ambassador at Jahangir's court, secured several concessions for the company, leading to the establishment of factories in Agra, Ahmedabad, and Bhroach by 1668. In 1668, Charles II transferred the Portuguese-occupied Bombay to the company, prompting the English East India Company to move its headquarters from Surat to Bombay. The company also set up factories at Masulipatnam on the south coast in 1611 and at Amargaon near Pulicat in 1626. In 1639, they leased Madras from the Maharaja of Chandragiri and constructed the Fort of St. George there.

Following these expansions, the British extended their activities northward, establishing factories in Hariharpur and Balasore in Orissa, Kasim Bazar and Hooghly in Bengal, and Patna in Bihar.

2.4 TRENDS OF BRITISH EXPANSION

Trends of British Expansion can be seen as follows:

2.4.1 Rivalry between the British and the French in the South

The political rivalry between France and Britain in Europe led to competition between them in India. France was not very active in India in the late seventeenth and early 18th centuries and hence the British did not pay attention to them. But between 1720 and 1740, there was a sudden boom in French trade, which became a matter of concern for the British. On the other hand, the involvement of these two countries as rivals in the struggle for succession in Austria (1740-1748) also increased the animosity between them in India.

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2.4.2 Karnataka or Carnatic War

The conflicts in Karnataka, also known as the Carnatic Wars, were essentially extensions of the European wars between France and Britain, and they significantly influenced the control of India during the 18th century.

Carnatic War I (1746-1748)

This war was an extension of the European War of Austrian Succession (1740-1748). In September 1746, the British navy, led by Barnet, captured some French warships. This alarmed the French Governor General, Dupleix, who sought help from Governor Bourdeau in Mauritius. The French defeated the British and captured Madras. However, before Britain could retaliate, the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (1748) was signed in Europe, ending the war and returning Madras to the British, thus temporarily establishing peace.

Carnatic War II (1749-1754)

After the First Karnataka War, Dupleix's ambitions grew. He began meddling in the internal politics of South Indian kingdoms. When Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jahan of Hyderabad died in June 1748, his grandson Muzaffar Jung and his second son Nasir Jung both claimed the throne. Simultaneously, Chanda Sahib challenged the authority of Nawab Anwaruddin of Karnataka. Dupleix saw an opportunity and aimed to make Karnataka dependent on France. In 1749, Dupleix defeated and killed Nawab Anwaruddin at the Battle of Ambur, installing Chanda Sahib as his puppet ruler. Muhammad Ali, Anwaruddin's son, retreated to Trichinopoly and sought British support. In 1750, after the assassination of Nasir Jung, Dupleix installed Muzaffar Jung as the Nizam of Hyderabad. Muzaffar Jung then appointed Dupleix as the governor of all Mughal territories south of the Krishna River and allowed a French military contingent under Bussy to stay in Hyderabad. However, Dupleix's attempt to besiege Trichinopoly failed. British officer Robert Clive captured Arcot, disrupting French plans. In 1752, the French surrendered near Trichinopoly, and Chanda Sahib was killed. Muhammad Ali was installed as the Nawab of Karnataka by the British. This defeat led to Dupleix's recall to



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France in 1754, and an interim treaty was signed, agreeing that both British and French would not interfere in Indian rulers' disputes.

Carnatic War III (1756-1763)

The Third Karnataka War was part of the global Seven Years' War (1756-1763). In 1757, the French sent Count de Lally to India. Meanwhile, the British East India Company had strengthened its position by defeating Siraj-ud-Daula at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, gaining control over Bengal. In June 1758, Count de Lally captured Madras. However, the British, led by Sir Eyre Coote, defeated Lally at the Battle of Wandiwash on January 22, 1760, and captured French commander Bussy. The British then besieged Pondicherry, and after eight months, Lally surrendered in January 1761. The fall of Pondicherry marked the decline of French power in India. The Treaty of Paris (1763) restored French territories, including Pondicherry, to the British, solidifying British dominance in India.

2.5 ESTABLISHMENT AND EXPANSION OF BRITISH POWER IN INDIA

The British began establishing their presence in Eastern India in the early 17th century, with their first settlements in Hariharpur and Balasore in Orissa in 1633. They later set up factories in Hooghly in 1651, with permission from the Mughal Viceroy of Bengal, Shah Suja, paying an annual fee. This marked the start of British trade in silk, cotton textiles, saltpeter, and sugar. In 1658, they acquired land in Sutanuti, Kalikata, and Govindpur villages, where they built Fort William and appointed Sir Charles Eyre as its first president. The British gained special privileges through a royal decree in 1717, allowing duty-free trade and issuing passes for goods movement, leading to tensions with the Nawab of Bengal.

Between 1757-1765, the British expanded their influence in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, becoming more involved in Indian politics. They were particularly concerned with Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta, keeping an eye on Maratha, Mysore, and Hyderabad powers in the south. The British faced challenges from

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various Indian rulers, including Marathas, Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, Nawabs of Awadh, Rohila Sardars, Jats, and Sikhs. Governor Generals like Warren Hastings and Lord Dalhousie used military power and diplomacy to defeat Indian rivals and expand British control. By 1857, the British had established dominance over India.

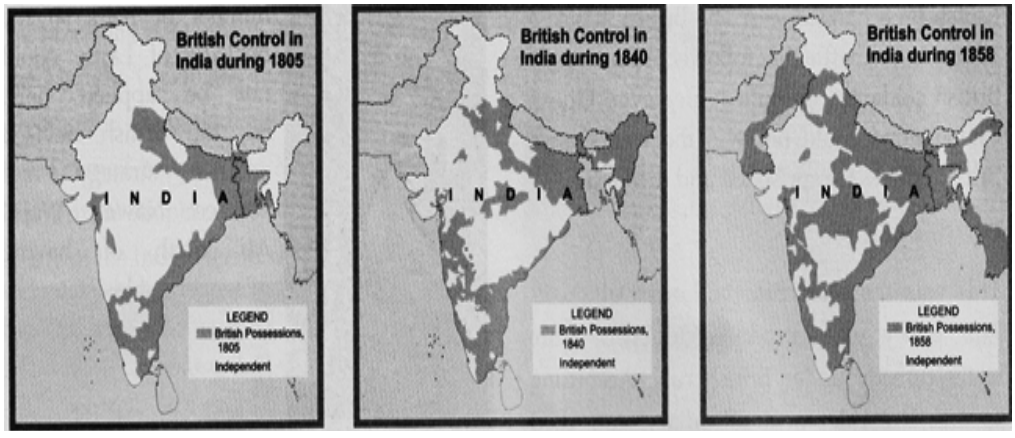


Fig. 2.1 *British Control in India from 1805-1858*

2.5.1 Bengal

As we discussed in Lesson 1, the consolidation of British authority in Bengal in 1757 occurred predominantly in two stages. The initial phase encompassed the Battle of Plassey, followed by the Battle of Buxar. During this period, Bengal's political landscape was in a dire state. Exploiting the disorder and fragility of the Mughal Kingdom, the Alivardi Khan had declared themselves autonomous Nawabs by 1740 AD. He tried to establish an administrative system in Bengal and tried to strengthen his position by making a treaty with the Marathas; but despite this, the condition of Bengal kept worsening day by day. With his death in 1756 AD, the bad days of Bengal finally inspired the British to take political advantage. It was in such a situation that the Plassey Battle took place.



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Reasons for the Battle of Plassey

There were many reasons for the Battle of Plassey in 1757 AD. After the death of Alivardi Khan in 1756, his grandson Siraj-ud-Daula, whom Alivardi Khan had nominated as his successor during his lifetime, became the Nawab of Bengal. Siraj-ud-Daula's condition was extremely critical at this time. On one hand, he had many opponents within the state who were opposing the Nawabi succession and wanted to seize power themselves. Prominent among such people were Ghaseti Begum, Shaukat Jung, Rajvallabh, Jagat Seth, Amichand, and Mir Jafar. Their objective was to remove the Nawab from the throne through a conspiracy and install a Nawab of their choice, who could protect their interests. To fulfill his objectives he even became a traitor.

By this time, due to Anglo-French competition, both English and French were sieging their respective settlements. Apprehensive of their activities, the Nawab stopped them from doing so. The French agreed with him, but the British paid no attention to him. Such a situation was humiliating for the Nawab. The British were also misusing the right of 'Dastak' at this time. Not only this, they were also giving help and shelter to the enemies of the Nawab. The Nawab tried to control these difficulties and was successful to some extent. He captured Qasim Bazaar. In the same context, the 'black hole accident' also happened. When news of this reached Madras, Clive and Watson reached there with the army. Not content with merely coercing the Bengal Nawab into signing the humiliating Treaty of Alinagar on 9th February, 1757, the British aimed to further solidify their control over the region. He decided to remove the Nawab from the throne. For this, a conspiracy was hatched in which the Nawab's opponents supported the British.

Battle of Plassey

Under similar circumstances, a battle took place between the British and Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in the field of Plassey on June 23, 1757. Clive accused the Nawab of breaking the Treaty of Alinagar and set out to fight with the army. The Nawab was defeated in the war due to the betrayal of the Nawab's commander Mir Jafar; Siraj-ud-Daula was captured and murdered in Murshidabad. Thus, this war ended the dynasty of Alivardi Khan in Bengal and imposed British control over Bengal.

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Importance of the Battle of Plassey

Describing the importance of the Battle of Plassey, historian G Thi Maslison writes, "*There has been no war whose immediate and permanent consequences have been so significant*." After this war, the rule of Bengal passed to Mir Jafar, who granted numerous privileges and immense wealth to the British. Additionally, by securing a foothold in Bengal, the British paved the way for their conquest of North India. With Bengal's support, the British also succeeded in defeating the French. The greatest advantage was that a Nawab ascended to the throne of Bengal who was a puppet in the hands of the British, allowing them to further consolidate their power.

Battle of Buxar

The Battle of Plassey marked the inaugural phase of British dominance in Bengal, a process solidified by the Battle of Buxar in 1764 AD. Initially, the fledgling Nawab attempted to appease the British by offering financial incentives, only to find himself increasingly beholden to their demands. Bengal grappled with an atmosphere of chaos while the Nawab faced mounting pressure for additional funds. Simultaneously, the incursions by Aligohar and disruptions caused by the Dutch exacerbated the Nawab's plight. Recognizing their inability to manage the turmoil, the British ousted Mir Jafar and installed his son-in-law Mir Kasim as the new Nawab in 1760. Mir Jafar, deemed a traitor for his treachery, reaped the consequences of his actions, eliciting little sympathy from observers.

Amid the euphoria of assuming the mantle of Nawab, Mir Qasim pledged to cede the districts of Burdwan, Midnapore, and Chittagong to the East India Company. Mir Qasim, possessing greater competence and experience compared to Mir Jafar, swiftly comprehended that his prospects were bleak unless he liberated himself from British influence. Subsequently, he relocated his capital from Murshidabad to Munger. These actions aroused suspicion and anger among the British, prompting them to depose Mir Qasim from power. In response, Mir Qasim granted native traders the freedom to engage in unrestricted trade, placing them on par with English traders. This move was perceived as a direct affront by the British, leading them to opt for military intervention. The initial clash between



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the opposing forces unfolded at the Battle of Udayanala, resulting in the defeat of the Nawabi army. In retaliation for his setback, Mir Qasim orchestrated the Patna Massacre. Following a subsequent defeat inflicted by Major Adams, Mir Qasim fled and sought sanctuary with Shuja-ud-Daula, the Nawab of Awadh. Once more, the British reinstated Mir Jafar to the Bengal throne. In exchange, Mir Jafar reinstated the prior privileges and concessions to the British. Meanwhile, Mir Qasim sought support from the Nawab of Awadh, Shuja-ud-Daula, and the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II. Together, they forged an alliance to confront the British. The opposing armies clashed at the Battle of Buxar on October 22, 1764. In this pivotal engagement, the combined forces of Mir Qasim, Shuja-ud-Daula, and Shah Alam II suffered defeat, culminating in a victory for the British. Subsequent to their loss, Mir Qasim and the Nawab of Awadh fled, while Shah Alam II proceeded to negotiate a treaty with the British.

Importance of the Battle of Buxar

From a historical vantage point, the Battle of Buxar surpassed the significance of the Battle of Plassey. While the Battle of Plassey marked the outset of the process, the Battle of Buxar brought it to fruition. Plassey afforded the British an opening to penetrate Bengal's political landscape, whereas Buxar solidified their dominion over the region. In the Battle of Plassey, the British defeated only the Nawab of Bengal through cunning and deception. Nonetheless, in the Battle of Buxar, the British decisively vanquished the unified armies of Bengal, the Nawab of Awadh, and the Mughal Emperor. This conflict markedly augmented British supremacy. Furthermore, the Mughal Emperor succumbed to company control, further solidifying British sway over Indian affairs. Following this pivotal engagement, the British embarked on an unstoppable trajectory, ultimately ascending to rulership over all of India. Historian George Mallison noted, "Whether you consider it a duel between natives and foreigners or a significant event with permanent and vast consequences, Buxar will be counted among the most decisive." Ramsey Muir also remarked, "Buxar finally put the shackles of **company** rule over Bengal."

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Achievement of Diwani in Bengal

The outcome of the Battle of Buxar shattered the power and prestige of both the Nawab of Awadh and the Mughal Emperor. In a bid to salvage their dignity, they each entered into a treaty with the British. The Treaty of Allahabad was concluded with Shuja-ud-Daula and Shah Alam in August 1765. As per the terms of this treaty, Clive returned to India for his second term as the Governor of the company. The East India Company permanently secured the Diwani rights of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa from the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. In exchange, the company committed to an annual pension of Rs 26 lakh to the Mughal Emperor. Additionally, the company obtained the territories of Kara and Allahabad from the Nawab of Awadh, subsequently transferring them to the Mughal Emperor. As a result, British dominance was firmly established in Bengal between 1757 and 1765. The pivotal battles of Plassey and Buxar, coupled with the Treaty of Allahabad, catapulted the British to the status of rulers of Bengal. They transitioned from mere traders to effective administrators in India.

Dual Rule in Bengal

Following the demise of his father Mir Jafar in 1765, Najmuddaulah was permitted by the Company to ascend as Nawab, under the stipulation that the company would designate a Naib Subedar to oversee the administration of the Nizamat. The Company subsequently appointed Mohammad Raha Khan to the roles of Naib-Diwan and Naib-Nizam. As a result, the company established complete control over the police and judicial powers of Bengal. In history this system is known as 'dyarchy'. Under this system, the company had the rights to administration, revenue collection and civil justice and internal peace, criminal justice and all administrative responsibilities were left to the Nawab. This was a system in which both 'rights' and 'responsibilities' were separated. By the first Treaty of Allahabad (August 12, 1765), the company got the diwani (right to collect revenue) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The company appointed Mohammad Raza Khan in Bengal, Shitab Rai in Bihar and Raidurlabh in Orissa for civil work. In this way the Nawab's independent rule in Bengal ended.

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Effect: Initially, there was a short-term increase in trade, but apart from this, this period (1765-72) was a period of extreme difficulties for Bengal, which broke down the administrative and economic structure. Since the Company had the right to free trade, Indian trade was disrupted. Due to excessive land tax collection by the British, the condition of agriculture and farmers became worrisome. Meanwhile, in 1770, there was a famine in Bengal which caused massive losses of life and property. It is noteworthy that the Governor of Bengal at this time was a courtier. This system created a confusing administrative machinery, creating an atmosphere of anarchy, resulting in a near breakdown of law and order in the region. In the same context, K.M.Panikkar said that "the British established a kingdom of dacoits in Bengal between 1765 and 1772."

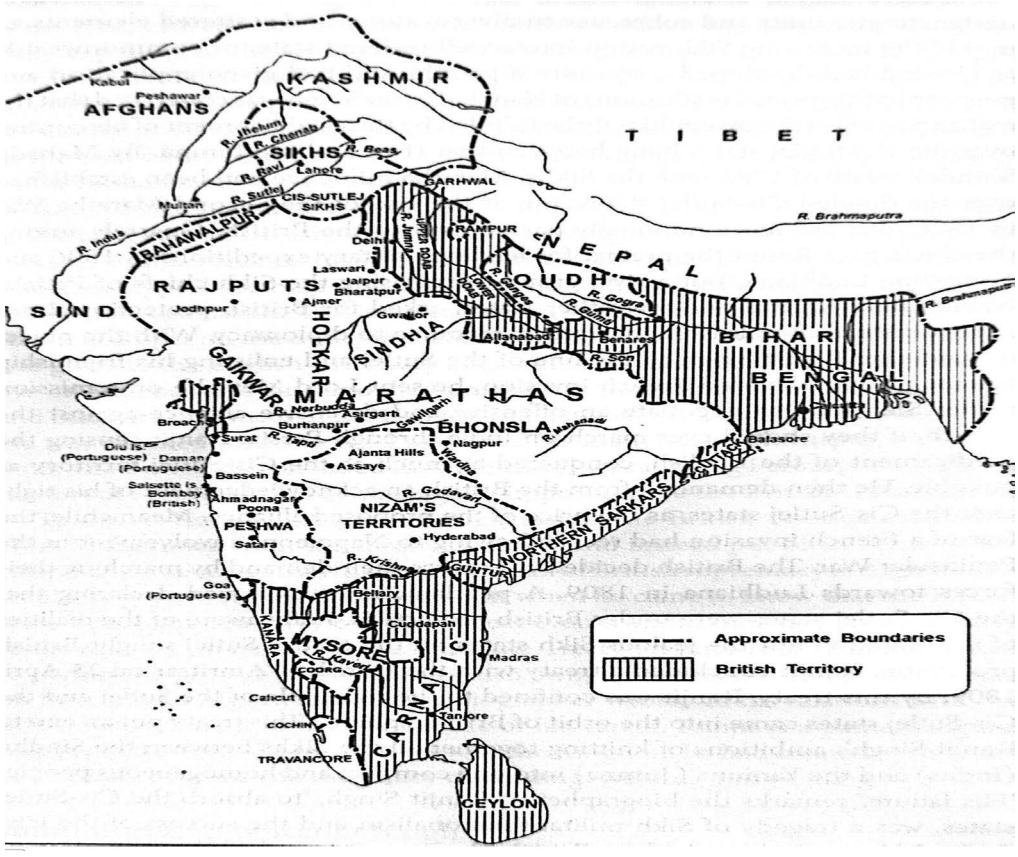


Fig. 2.2 *India in 1805*

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2.5.2 Mysore

As mentioned in Lesson 1, following the downfall of Vijayanagara, Mysore emerged as an autonomous state under the governance of the Wadeyar dynasty, owing partly to the strategic brilliance of Hyder Ali and partly to its central location in the southern plateau. The Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 dealt a crippling blow to Maratha's authority in the north and weakened its influence in the south. This conflict played a pivotal role in the ascent of Hyder Ali. Rising from the ranks as a Nayak in the army, by 1788 he had seized political control, ousting the original ruler and establishing himself as the unchallenged leader of Mysore.

First Anglo-Mysore War (1767-69)

At first, Hyder Ali thought the British government was against him. The British, along with the Marathas and the Nizam of Hyderabad, joined forces against Hyder Ali. However, Hyder Ali managed to win over the Nizam and the Marathas using clever tactics. Together, they attacked Arcot, which was in a dispute with Hyder Ali over land. After a back-and-forth struggle lasting about one and a half years, Hyder Ali suddenly attacked Madras. Scared, the Madras government had to sign a treaty on April 4, 1769, which was humiliating for them. The treaty's main points were giving back conquered lands and agreeing to a defensive alliance.

Second Anglo-Mysore War (1780-84)

The second war mainly erupted due to growing distrust between the East India Company and Hyder Ali. The ruler of Mysore accused the Company of not honouring the terms of the 1769 treaty when the Marathas attacked Mysore in 1771. Meanwhile, Hyder Ali found the French more supportive in supplying his military needs. When the British captured a French colony under Hyder Ali's protection, it further fuelled tensions. In 1779, Hyder Ali, along with Nizam and the Marathas, formed an alliance against the British. In July of that year, Hyder Ali's son, Tippu Sultan, invaded Karnataka, defeated the English army under Colonel Bailly, and captured Arkot. However, he faced a devastating loss against



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the British at the Battle of Porto Novo in 1781. In 1782, Hyder Ali managed to defeat the British army led by Colonel Vaidyas. Throughout a series of battles with victories and setbacks, Hyder Ali passed away in 1782, leaving much of his unfinished work to his son Tipu Sultan, as neither side was able to decisively defeat the other. Eventually, a treaty was signed in Mangalore in 1784, that involved returning conquered territories to each other, and peace was restored between the two parties.

Third Anglo-Mysore War (1790-02)

The war started because Travancore, a small state allied with the East India Company, was attacked. With support from the Nizam and Maratha armies, the British fought against Tipu Sultan. In 1792, the English army, led by the new Governor General Lord Cornwallis, marched to Srirangapatnam and defeated the Mysore forces, making them sign a treaty. In the Treaty of Srirangapatnam, Tipu Sultan had to give up nearly half of his land to the winning side. The British gained Baramahal, Dindigul, and Malabar, while the Marathas received Moo-Bhaag in the Tungamadda region, and the Nizam got control of the area from Krishna to Pennar. Additionally, the defeated ruler of Mysore was required to pay a war indemnity of over three crore rupees.

Fourth Anglo-Mysore War (1799)

The new Governor General Wellesley desired Tipu Sultan to abandon his alliance with the French and join forces with the British. Tipu Sultan had sent a letter to Afghan Zaman Shah, encouraging an attack on Punjab, which further angered the British. With the support of the Marathas and the Nizam, Wellesley declared war against Tipu Sultan in February 1799. Srirangapatnam fell under British control on May 4, 1799. Tipu Sultan was killed, and his son surrendered. The East India Company annexed Kanara, Coimbatore, Srirangapatnam, and other territories in the East, and installed the head of the ancient Hindu Wadiyar dynasty as the ruler of Mysore. The new Mysore state, led by a Hindu monarch, entered into a subsidiary treaty with the British in July 1799, thereby becoming a state dependent on the Company.

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2.5.3 Maratha

The political powers that emerged in India on the remains of the Mughal Empire. Among them, the Marathas emerged as the most prominent power. The conflict between the Mughals and the Marathas had been going on since the time of Shivaji, the founder of Maratha power. Aurangzeb tried to keep the Marathas under control, but despite internal strife during the time of his incompetent successors, Maratha power continued to grow. In the 18th century, three Peshwas, Balaji Vishwanath (1713-20), Bajirao I (1720-40), and Balaji Bajirao or Nana Saheb (1740-61) made unprecedented contributions and growth of Maratha power. As a result of these, the Marathas became so powerful that they started dreaming of ousting the Mughals and conquering Delhi, but at the same time, their power was deeply hurt by their defeat in the third battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761. Taking advantage of this, the British destroyed the Maratha power forever.

First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-82)

The internal resentment of the Marathas and the day-by-day increasing ambition of the British were most responsible for the First Anglo-Maratha War. The young Peshwa Madhava Rao died in 1772. After this there were one struggle after another for succession. Madhavrao's uncle Raghunath Rao hatched a conspiracy and murdered Madhavrao's brother and successor Narayan Rao in 1773. Although Raghunath Rao became the Peshwa, he began to see a threat to his Peshwa due to the birth of Narayan Rao's posthumous son, named Sawai Madhav Rao. He became so desperate that he signed the Treaty of Surat (1775) with the Bombay government to secure his position with the help of British troops. During this time, the British were successful in separating Mahad ji Scindia from the Peshwa dispute and this treaty was concluded with his mediation. In this treaty, Raghunath Rao promised to give up his rights over Salsette and Bassein and not to make any alliance with the enemies of the Company. In the war that followed, a series of victories and defeats continued until both sides understood the futility of the war and the war ended in the form of the Treaty of Salabai (1782). The Treaty



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of Salabai led to peace between the British and the Marathas for twenty years and this treaty also helped the British put pressure on the Marathas in Mysore.

Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-05)

The void created in Maratha power by the deaths of two rising administrators, Mahadji Scindia (1794) and Nana Fadnavis (1800), was difficult to fill. There was a fierce rivalry for power between Mahadji Scindia's successors, Daulat Rao Scindia and Jaswant Rao Cholkar, both of whom wanted control over the administration of Poona. In 1802, Holkar managed to defeat the forces of Daulat Rao, and Peshwa Bajirao II near Poona. Peshwa Bajirao II fled to Bassein and there he signed a subsidiary treaty with the British on December 31, 1802. This was a deep blow to Maratha's pride. In 1803, Scindia and Bhonsle went to war with the British. He faced defeat at the hands of Arthur Wellesley and Lord Lake. By the Treaty of Devgaon (17 December 1803), Bhonsle gave up his control over Balasore and Cuttack provinces.

Scindia, through the Treaty of Surji Arjan village (30 December, 1803), handed over the area of Ganga-Yamuna Doab as well as Ahmednagar, Madhauch to the company and gave up all its claims on the Mughal Empire. The Nizam, Gaekwad, and Peshwa agreed to a subsidiary alliance by another treaty of Burhanpur in 1804 and Scindia agreed to the Lordship. However, in 1804 Holkar had to engage in another conflict with the company and suffered defeat at the hands of Fraser and Lake in November 1804. After the defeat of Jaswant Rao Holkar, the Treaty of Rajpur Ghat (25 December 1805) took place. Through this treaty, Maratha Sardar had to give up his claims on the places north of Chambal, Bundelkhand, Peshwa and other allies of the company. With this treaty the Second Anglo-Maratha War ended.

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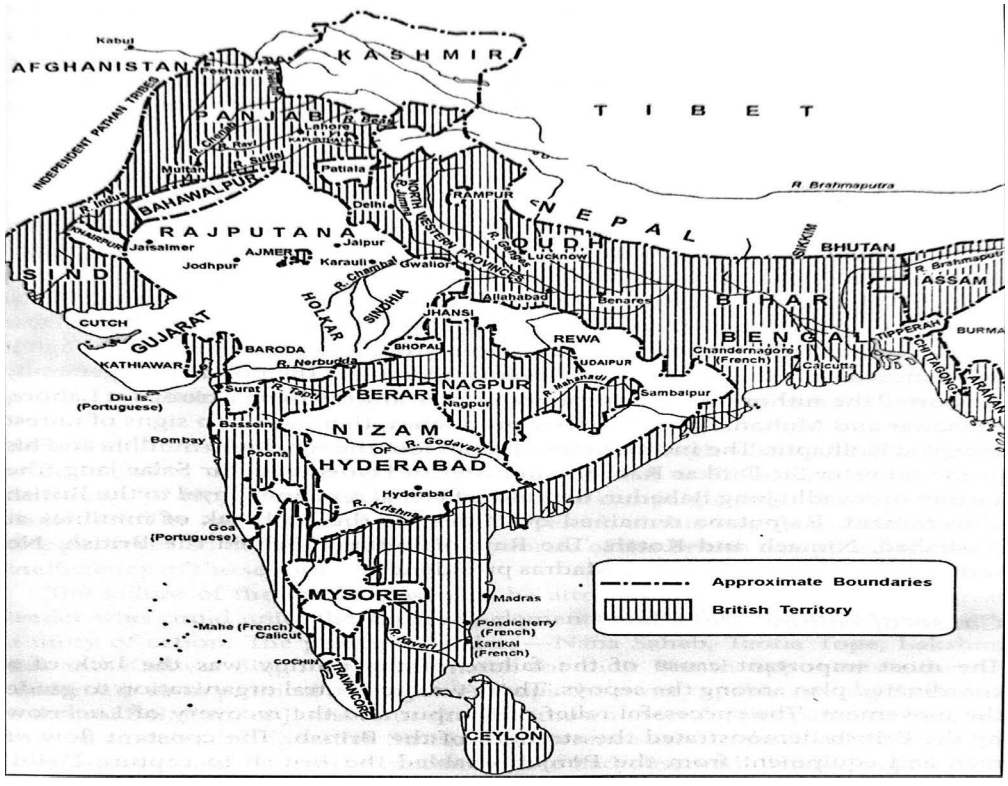


Fig. 2.3 *India in 1858*

Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-18)

The Second Anglo-Maratha War shattered the political power of the Maratha chieftains. But they were still active and making desperate efforts to regain their lost freedom. The Peshwa was shivering under the strict control of the British and it was he who took the first step towards regaining his lost power. Elphinstone, the English Resident at Poona, forced the Peshwa to sign a new treaty on June 13th, 1817. By this treaty, the Peshwa gave up his claim to the post and also the leadership of the Maratha confederacy. On the other hand, Lord Hastings also forced Daulat Rab Scindia to sign the Treaty of Gwalior on November 5th, 1817. Peshwa Bajirao II, in despair, made a last attempt to get rid of the British stranglehold and attacked the British at Kirkee near Poona. Daulat Rao Scindia, Appa Rao of Nagpur and Malhar Rao Holkar also took up arms against the



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British. Peshwa had to face defeat at Kirkee and similarly all three mentioned above had to face defeat. The Peshwa's army suffered its final defeat at Ashti and surrendered on June 2nd, 1818.

In this way, the struggle of the Marathas against the British power ended completely and a new arrangement was made with the Maratha chieftains. The Peshwa gave up his title and rights forever and in return was granted a pension of Rs 8 lakh. He was forced to move to Bithoor near Kanpur to spend the rest of his life. However, a small district near Satara was left for Shivaji's descendants as kings of Satara. The remaining part of the Peshwa's kingdom was merged into the Bombay Presidency.

2.5.4 Punjab

Sikhs gained prominence in the mid-18th century. As mentioned in Lesson 1, during the struggle against the Mughals and Afghans, they were organized into special types of squads called misl and the leader of the misl was called misldar. The number of these misls increased in subsequent years and they divided a large part of Punjab among themselves. Ranjit Singh was born in 1780. As Sardar of the Sukerchakia Misl, Ranjit Singh established a Sikh state by uniting all the Misls. Ranjit Singh died in June 1839. After that, his kingdom ended within the next 10 years. The war between the British and the Sikhs for control of Sikh territories is called the 'Anglo-Sikh War'.

First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-48)

After the death of Ranjit Singh, chaos and anarchy spread across the Sikh Empire. The army started taking political decisions. But the situation did not change, meanwhile, two rulers were killed in violence until Ranjit Singh's youngest son, Dilip Singh, who was a minor, ascended the throne in September 1843 and assumed the reign as regent of his mother, Rani Zinda. It was over. But, instead of improving, the situation kept worsening day by day. Lahore Darbar wanted to get rid of the control of the army. Therefore, he instigated the army to fight against the British in the hope that this would reduce the army's strength. In December

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1845, the Sikh army crossed the Sutlej and attacked the British lands. The Sikh army was defeated in one encounter after another and the British captured Lahore on 20 February 1846. After this defeat, the Treaty of Lahore was signed on March 9, 1846. Through this treaty, the Sikhs had to give Jalandhar Doab, Kashmir and its dependent territories to the British. The minor Dilip Singh was recognized as the Maharaja and appointed a Resident in Lahore. A supplementary treaty was signed on December 16, 1846. According to which, a provision was made to form a governing Council of eight chieftains to run the administration, the head of which was British Resident Sir Henry Lawrence.

Second Anglo-Sikh War (1848–49)

This arrangement did not last long and in 1848, the Governor of Multan, Dewan Mulk Raj, rebelled against the British. By September, the situation had become more serious when a large army of Sikhs joined Mulkraj. The small rebellion had now taken a big shape and realizing its seriousness, Dalhousie declared war. The battles of Ramnagar (November 16th, 1848) and Chillianwala (January 13th, 1849) led to the decisive battle of Gujrat (a town near the Chenab) on March 29th, 1849. Dalhousie annexed the entire Punjab through a proclamation and made Maharaja Dilip Singh a pensioner and sent him to England along with his mother Queen Zinda. The administration of Punjab was handed over to a board of directors. This board was also dissolved in 1853 and in its place, John Lawrence was made the Chief Commissioner of Punjab.

Third Anglo-Sikh War (1849)

The third battle was fought on January 13, 1849, at Chilianwala. On February 21, Lord Gough fought the Sikhs again at Derajat. The Sikhs were completely defeated and surrendered at Rawalpindi. This defeat ended the Sikh kingdom. On March 29, 1849, Lord Dalhousie took control of Punjab on his own authority. With Punjab annexed, British territories in India extended to the natural borders in the northwest.

Moreover, with the Sikhs' power destroyed, there was no longer any active force that could threaten British security in India.



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British Wars and Conflicts

Year	War/Conflict	Associated Treatises
1757	Battle of Plassey	--
1764	Battle of Buxar	Treaty of Allahabad
1767-1769	First Anglo-Mysore War	Treaty of Madras
1779-1784	Second Anglo-Mysore War	Treaty of Mangalore
1790-1792	Third Anglo-Mysore War	Treaty of Seringapatam
1799	Fourth Anglo-Mysore War	--
1803-1805	Second Anglo-Maratha War	Treaty of Bassein
1809	Between Punjab's Ranjit Singh and British	Treaty of Amritsar
1817-1819	Third Anglo-Maratha War	--
1843	Conquest of Sindh	--
1845-1846	First Anglo-Sikh War	Treaty of Lahore
1848-1849	Second Anglo-Sikh War	--

In-Text Questions

1. Who was the Nawab of Bengal defeated by the British in the Battle of Plassey?
   A) Siraj ud-Daulah B) Mir Jafar
   C) Alivardi Khan D) Mir Qasim
2. The Treaty of Allahabad (1765) granted the diwani rights of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to:
   A) British East India Company
   B) French East India Company
   C) Portuguese East India Company
   D) Dutch East India Company

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3. Who was the ruler of Mysore during the Third Anglo-Mysore War?
   A) Hyder Ali B) Tipu Sultan
   C) Krishna Raja Wadiyar III D) Chikka Devaraja Wadiyar
4. The British victory in the Third Anglo-Mysore War resulted in the Treaty of:
   A) Mangalore B) Seringapatam
   C) Srirangapatna D) Mysore
5. The Maratha Confederacy was defeated by the British in the:
   A) Battle of Buxar B) Battle of Plassey
   C) Battle of Panipat D) Battle of Koregaon
6. The Treaty of Bassein (1802) was signed between the British and:
   A) Peshwa Baji Rao II B) Tipu Sultan
   C) Maharaja Ranjit Singh D) Nana Sahib
7. Who among the following was NOT a Sikh ruler of Punjab during British expansion?
   A) Maharaja Ranjit Singh B) Maharaja Gulab Singh
   C) Maharaja Duleep Singh D) Bahadur Shah II
8. The British introduced the Doctrine of Lapse during the tenure of which Governor-General?
   A) Lord Cornwallis B) Lord Dalhousie
   C) Lord Hastings D) Lord William Bentinck
9. The Battle of Panipat (1761) saw the Marathas defeated by:
   A) British East India Company B) Mughal Empire
   C) Durrani Empire D) Sikh Empire
10. Who was the British Governor-General responsible for the annexation of Awadh?
   A) Lord Cornwallis B) Lord Wellesley
   C) Lord Dalhousie D) Lord William Bentinck



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11. The British initiated the Permanent Settlement in Bengal during the governor-generalship of:

A) Lord Wellesley B) Lord Cornwallis

C) Lord Dalhousie D) Lord William Bentinck

2.6 SUMMARY

- The political rivalry between France and Britain in Europe led to competition between them in India. But between 1720 and 1740, there was a sudden boom in the trade of the French, which became a matter of concern for the British.
- After establishing their power in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa between 1757-1765, the British's interest in Indian politics increased further.
- After three conflicts with the State of Mysore, the British power concluded a subsidiary treaty in July 1799. Due to this situation of Mysore state, it became state dependent on the company.
- The political powers that emerged in India in the eighteenth century were based on the remains of the Mughal Empire. Among them, the Marathas emerged as the most prominent power.
- In the 18th century, three Peshwas's Vishwanath, Bajirao I and Balaji Bajirao or Nana Malach made unprecedented contributions to the development of Maratha power. As a result of these, the Marathas became so powerful that they started dreaming of ousting the Mughals and conquering Delhi, but at the same time, their power was deeply hurt by their defeat in the third battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761. Taking advantage of this, the British destroyed the Maratha power forever. Similarly, two 'Anglo-Sikh wars' took place between the British and the Sikhs for control over Sikh areas.

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- When the British East India Company came to India in 1600, it was purely a trading company. But later, taking advantage of the weak political condition of India and the prevailing anarchy, the company followed an armed trade policy.
- By 1764, following the Battle of Buxar, the East India Company had eliminated most of its European adversaries and significant native rivals, including Bengal. Therefore, India was now a free territory for British expansion. The British learned some important lessons during their conquest of India, which were followed by the expansion of British power.
- The British believed that in the absence of a solid nationalist ideology in India, they could easily fulfil their political aspirations by taking advantage of the mutual disputes between Indian rulers. Following this policy, the East India Company expanded territorially in India.

2.7 GLOSSARY

- **Nawab:** This term refers to a native governor or nobleman during the Mughal Empire. The title was originally conferred by the Mughal emperors and later used by regional rulers and high-ranking officials in India.
- **Confederacy:** Derived from the Anglo-French word "Confederate cie," it means a league or union, whether of states or individuals. Historically, it refers to an alliance formed for mutual support and cooperation.
- **Farman:** This term denotes a royal decree or order, typically bearing the seal of the emperor. It was used in the context of Persian, Ottoman, and Mughal empires to signify official orders issued by the sovereign**.**
- **Espionage:** This refers to the practice of spying or using spies, particularly by governments, to obtain political and military information. It involves clandestine activities aimed at gathering intelligence on adversaries or competitors.

2.8 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. A
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. D
6. A
7. D
8. B
9. C
10. C
11. B

2.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Why is the Battle of Buxar considered more important than the Battle of Plassey in the history of India?
2. What did the following terms indicate in the context of the Marathas?
   (a) Chauth
   (b) Sardeshmukhi
3. Throw light on the expansion of the English East India Company from 1600 to the middle of the eighteenth century.
4. Throw light on the expansion of the British Empire in India after the Treaty of Allahabad (1765) and till the Rebellion of 1857.

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LESSON 3
EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION OF BRITISH POWER: IDEOLOGIES/ STRATEGIES OF RAJ (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

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3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Learn why Europeans were interested in trading and politics in India.
- Understand why the English and the French fought in India in the 1700s.
- Know how the British gained control in Bengal.
- Understand how British power spread across India.
- Learn about the agreements called Subsidiary Alliances made by Lord Wellesley.
- Know how the Doctrine of Lapse policy by Lord Dalhousie helped the British expand their control in India.

3.2 INTRODUCTION

The period of British colonial rule in India, commonly referred to as the Raj, was a defining lesson in India's history, spanning nearly two centuries from the mid-18th to the mid-20th century. The Raj was characterized by a complex interplay of colonial ideologies, political systems, administrative strategies, and socio-economic transformations that left a profound and lasting impact on Indian society, politics, economy, and culture. At its core idea, the Raj was underpinned by the belief in British superiority and the notion of the *"White Man's Burden"* – the idea that it was the duty of the British to civilize and uplift the supposedly backward societies they encountered. This ideological framework justified various aspects of British rule, including political control, economic exploitation, and cultural dominance. Strategically, the British employed a range of tactics to consolidate and maintain their grip on power in India. These included the divisive policy of *"divide and rule,"* which exploited



existing social, religious, and regional divisions among the Indian population to prevent the emergence of unified resistance. Additionally, the British established a centralized administrative apparatus, dominated by British officials, which effectively marginalized traditional Indian power structures and institutions. Economically, the Raj was marked by the systematic exploitation of India's resources and markets for the benefit of British industries and commerce. Indian agriculture was transformed to serve the interests of British trade, while Indian industries were suppressed or undermined to ensure a captive market for British manufactured goods. Despite the resistance and resilience of the Indian people, the Raj endured for nearly two centuries, shaping the trajectory of Indian history in profound ways. However, it also sowed the seeds of its own demise, as the contradictions and injustices inherent in colonial rule eventually fuelled the rise of Indian nationalism and the struggle for independence. In this introduction, we glimpse the multifaceted nature of the Raj – a complex tapestry woven from the threads of colonial ideologies, strategic governance, economic exploitation, and the aspirations of colonized people striving for freedom and self-determination.

3.3 COLONIAL IDEOLOGIES

The East India Company, originally a group of British merchants, became a ruling power in India through territorial acquisition. This colonial encounter was complex, as many local rulers lost their power. The British brought their cultural elements into Indian society, creating a relationship where they were dominant due to their advanced technology and strong military, which could easily suppress any resistance. However, the harsh realities of colonialism meant the British needed to justify their rule ideologically. The connection between ideology and policymaking was further complicated by India's vast size and diversity. Political needs and the British focus on gathering information rather than immediately pursuing full political control added to these challenges. This lesson explores how imperial ideologies directly and indirectly influenced Indian politics.

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3.3.1 The Orientalist Ideology in Raj

During the British colonial period, Orientalist images were prevalent in various forms, including literature, art, and academic discourse. They depicted the East, particularly India, as a land of mystique, backwardness, and exoticism. Orientalist scholars and artists often portrayed Eastern cultures as inferior to Western civilization, reinforcing colonial attitudes of superiority. These images were instrumental in justifying British colonial rule by framing it as a civilizing mission, where the British were portrayed as bringing progress, enlightenment, and modernity to the supposedly backward and primitive East. This ideological framework helped legitimize British imperialism and control over colonized territories, including India.

In the context of colonial India, the perception of the 'East' as exotic and inferior evolved from medieval Christian iconography to Enlightenment rationalism and orientalism, which persisted into colonial times, influencing British attitudes and policies towards India. This perception, rooted in a sense of cultural and racial superiority, shaped colonial governance strategies. Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of British India, recognized the importance of understanding India's history and culture to effectively govern the diverse colonial society. This led to the establishment of institutions like the Asiatic Society of Bengal, which aimed to study Indian languages, traditions, and religion. Scholars-administrators like William Jones, H.T. Colebrooke, and others played crucial roles in this endeavor, making significant contributions to fields like philology, archaeology, and history. Their efforts not only helped in creating a narrative of Indian history that justified colonial rule but also provided the knowledge necessary for effective governance. This included the study of Indian languages, both classical (Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic) and vernaculars, as well as the codification of Indian law to establish a legal framework conducive to British control. Moreover, the establishment of training institutions like Fort William College and Haileybury College provided British administrators with the necessary skills and knowledge in Indian languages, culture, and history to govern effectively. The concept of 'oriental despotism,' applied by scholars like



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Alexander Dow and Robert Orme, further shaped British understanding of pre-colonial Indian state structures, portraying Indian rulers as absolute despots ruling through an administrative elite. Overall, the pursuit of knowledge about India's past and present was intricately linked to the project of colonial governance, reflecting the colonial mindset of cultural superiority and the need for control.

Civilizing Mission

The "Civilizing Mission" was a central ideological pillar of British colonialism during the Raj in India. It was based on the belief that the British had a moral obligation to bring civilization, progress, and enlightenment to the supposedly "backward" societies they ruled over, including India. Under the guise of this mission, the British justified their colonial enterprise as a benevolent endeavor aimed at uplifting and modernizing Indian society. They introduced Western education, legal systems, and administrative structures, claiming that these reforms were necessary to civilize the Indian population and prepare them for self-governance under British guidance. However, the Civilizing Mission served as a convenient justification for British colonial exploitation and domination. It provided a moral veneer for policies of economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, and political control. British colonialists often portrayed themselves as enlightened benefactors, while simultaneously perpetuating systems of racial hierarchy and cultural imperialism. Moreover, the Civilizing Mission was deeply intertwined with notions of racial superiority, with the British viewing themselves as inherently superior to the indigenous peoples they ruled over. This attitude informed various aspects of colonial governance and interactions with Indian society, reinforcing hierarchies of power and privilege that favoured British interests.

The White Man Burden Theory

The "White Man's Burden" theory emerged during the era of European colonialism, particularly during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and it was famously articulated in a poem of the same name by Rudyard Kipling in 1899. This theory encapsulated the belief that it was the duty of the white, Western

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colonial powers to "civilize" and "uplift" the peoples of the non-Western world, whom they perceived as inferior and backward. At its core, the White Man's Burden theory justified colonialism as a moral and humanitarian mission. It portrayed colonial conquest and rule as a burden that the superior white race had to bear for the betterment of the supposedly "lesser" races. The theory suggested that it was the duty of the white colonizers to bring civilization, Christianity, education, and modernity to the colonized peoples, who were perceived as incapable of governing themselves. However, beneath this veneer of benevolence lay a deeply paternalistic and imperialistic worldview. The White Man's Burden theory served to rationalize and legitimize the exploitation, oppression, and domination inherent in colonial rule. It provided a moral justification for the economic exploitation of colonial resources, the imposition of Western cultural norms and values, and the suppression of indigenous cultures and identities. Critics of the White Man's Burden theory argue that it was a self-serving ideology used to justify and perpetuate the injustices of colonialism. They contend that far from being a benevolent mission, colonialism was driven by economic interests, racial arrogance, and the desire for power and control. Moreover, they point out that the so-called "civilizing" mission often led to cultural imperialism, violence, and the destruction of indigenous ways of life. In the context of British colonial rule in India, the White Man's Burden theory played a significant role in shaping colonial policies and attitudes. It provided a moral justification for British imperialism, framing the subjugation of India as a noble endeavor to uplift and enlighten its people. However, it also served to perpetuate systems of racial hierarchy and inequality, reinforcing the power dynamics between the colonizers and the colonized.

Racial Supremacy

Racial supremacy refers to the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over others. During the period of British colonial rule in India, racial supremacy was a pervasive ideology among many British officials and settlers. It fuelled attitudes of racial arrogance and entitlement, shaping colonial policies and interactions with the Indian population. At the heart of racial supremacy was the belief in the



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superiority of the white, European race over non-white races, including Indians. This belief was often based on pseudoscientific theories of racial hierarchy and social Darwinism, which posited that certain races were inherently more advanced and civilized than others. British colonists viewed themselves as members of a superior race destined to rule over and "civilize" the supposedly inferior peoples of the colonies. Racial supremacy manifested in various aspects of colonial governance and society in India:

- **Social Hierarchies:** British colonial society in India was structured along racial lines, with Europeans occupying the highest rungs of the social hierarchy, followed by Eurasians (people of mixed European and Indian descent), and then Indians. This hierarchy was reflected in areas such as employment, education, and access to public services.
- **Legal Discrimination:** British colonial laws and regulations often discriminated against Indians based on race. For example, certain privileges and rights were reserved exclusively for Europeans, while Indians were subjected to discriminatory laws and restrictions.
- **Cultural Hegemony:** British colonialism sought to impose Western cultural norms, values, and institutions upon Indian society, marginalizing indigenous cultures and traditions. The English language was promoted as a symbol of cultural superiority, while Indian languages and cultural practices were denigrated or suppressed.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Racial supremacy justified the economic exploitation of India by the British, who viewed Indian resources and labour as theirs for the taking. This exploitation enriched British industries and commerce at the expense of Indian welfare and development. Despite the pervasive influence of racial supremacy in colonial India, it also faced resistance and opposition from Indian nationalists, intellectuals, and activists who challenged the racial hierarchies and injustices perpetrated by colonial rule. The struggle against racial supremacy was a key aspect of the broader movement for Indian independence, which sought to dismantle

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colonial power structures and assert the rights and dignity of all Indians, regardless of race or ethnicity.

Paternalism

Paternalism, in the context of British colonial rule in India, refers to a governing philosophy characterized by the attitude of a "benevolent father" towards the colonized population. Under the paternalistic rule, colonial administrators portrayed themselves as caring and protective figures who claimed to act in the best interests of the Indian population, often without their consultation or consent. Key features of paternalism during the Raj included:

- **Authoritarian Governance:** British colonial administrators wielded significant power and authority over Indian society, often making decisions on behalf of the population without their input. This top-down approach to governance was justified by the belief that the British knew what was best for the Indian people.
- **Limited Political Participation:** Paternalistic rule restricted the political agency of Indians, as colonial subjects were often excluded from decision-making processes and denied meaningful representation in the colonial administration. Instead, power was concentrated in the hands of British officials and elites.
- **Social Engineering:** British colonial policies aimed to reshape Indian society according to Western norms and values, under the guise of modernization and progress. This included initiatives such as Western-style education, legal reforms, and social welfare programs, which were implemented without regard for local customs or preferences.
- **Cultural Assimilation:** Paternalistic attitudes towards Indian culture often manifested in attempts to assimilate Indians into British ways of life. For example, English language instruction was promoted in schools, and Western dress and manners were encouraged as symbols of modernity and civilization.



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- **Justification of Exploitation:** Paternalistic rhetoric served to justify the economic exploitation of India by the British, framing colonialism as a noble mission to uplift and improve the welfare of the Indian population. This obscured the underlying motivations of colonialism, which were driven by economic interests and imperial ambitions. Despite the paternalistic veneer of British colonial rule, it was often accompanied by coercion, exploitation, and injustice. Many Indians resented being treated as passive subjects in their land and demanded greater autonomy and self-determination. The paternalistic approach of the British administration ultimately contributed to the growth of nationalist sentiment in India and fuelled the struggle for independence from colonial rule.

3.3.2 The Utilitarian Ideology of Raj

The discourse delves into Utilitarianism's nuanced application within the colonial Indian context. Notably, figures such as James Mill and John Stuart Mill wielded substantial influence in shaping colonial policies, particularly in the realms of governance, legislation, and economic frameworks. At the core of Utilitarian philosophy lay the principle of maximizing overall happiness or utility, often at the expense of individual liberties. This ideology, heavily influenced by economists such as Ricardo and Malthus, advocated for policies aimed at bolstering state revenue and enhancing agricultural productivity. Specifically, Utilitarians proposed the remodeling of the Indian revenue system based on the law of rent, which posited that landlords accrued surplus value merely by land ownership. In the colonial Indian context, where the East India Company held significant sway as the supreme landlord, Utilitarians envisioned the state claiming the entirety of economic rent.

In the context of India, Utilitarianism presented both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, Utilitarian thinkers like James Mill and John Stuart Mill influenced colonial policies, advocating for governance structures and economic systems aimed at maximizing overall happiness or utility. Their emphasis on legislative measures and economic reforms, such as the remodeling of the revenue

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system based on the law of rent, held the potential to improve state revenue and agricultural productivity. Applying Utilitarian principles in colonial India encountered practical problems and ethical issues. Policies that aimed to prioritize collective well-being over individual freedoms were often criticized for being paternalistic and ignoring local rights and traditions. While Evangelicals focused on education and personal development in society, Utilitarians emphasized the importance of legislation, the power of law, and its enforcement. James Mill believed that the happiness of Indians depended on the laws, the form of government, and the way taxes were collected. Utilitarians opposed the liberal idea of separating powers and wanted the legislature to be the supreme authority, with the judiciary and executive simply carrying out its decisions. The Utilitarian idea that the government's main goal should be to promote happiness rather than liberty, by protecting people and their property, suited the colonial rulers. They believed that good government and laws could replace the need for self-government. While they thought representative democracy was the way to achieve good government, they didn't think it would work in India. Utilitarians criticized Cornwallis's Permanent Settlement for not clearly defining and recording the rights of farmers. They preferred a detailed record of land ownership and rights called 'records of rights' as part of the settlement process. They believed this would give clear legal status to property rights, replacing the vague and unwritten customary rights that existed before. In the new system, peasants would own their land outright, giving them the right to sell, mortgage, or pass it on to their heirs. This ownership would be legally protected by well-designed laws, written down in clear codes. However, this could only happen in a system like ryotwari, where the state directly managed relations with most farmers.

Eric Stokes, a Utilitarian thinker, explained in his book "*The English Utilitarians in India*" that rent is the extra advantage gained from cultivating fertile land compared to less fertile land. Land with lower fertility just covers the cost of cultivation and normal profit. But more fertile land generates a surplus, known as rent. This can be calculated by subtracting cultivation costs and normal profit from the total produce. Ricardo, another Utilitarian economist, argued that rent is a monopoly value because land is limited and varies in quality, allowing



landlords to claim it as their own. He believed landlords didn't provide any useful service but lived off others like parasites. Implementing Utilitarian reforms in colonial India was difficult due to the complex socio-economic situation, administrative challenges, and limited local knowledge.

3.3.3 The Liberalism Ideology of Raj

During the British Raj in India, liberalism played a complex and evolving role in shaping governance, policies, and societal dynamics. British liberalism, influenced by thinkers such as John Locke and Adam Smith, emphasized individual rights, free markets, and limited government intervention. However, the application of liberal principles in colonial India was often selective and tempered by imperial interests and paternalistic attitudes. British colonial administrators, influenced by liberal ideas, introduced certain reforms aimed at modernizing and liberalizing aspects of Indian society and economy. These reforms included the establishment of institutions such as the Indian Civil Service, the introduction of English education, and legal reforms that aimed to codify laws and establish a uniform legal system. Furthermore, liberalism in the British Raj intersected with utilitarianism, particularly in economic policies. Utilitarian principles, focused on maximizing overall happiness or utility, often influenced colonial economic policies, such as the remodeling of the revenue system based on the law of rent. However, the application of liberal principles was also marked by contradictions and inconsistencies. While British administrators promoted liberal values such as individual rights and free trade, they also perpetuated colonial exploitation and undermined indigenous institutions and practices. The introduction of land revenue systems, for example, often resulted in dispossession and impoverishment of Indian peasants. Moreover, liberalism in the British Raj was shaped by racial hierarchies and paternalistic attitudes towards the Indian population. British liberals often viewed themselves as benevolent guardians of progress and civilization, justifying colonial rule as a civilizing mission. This paternalistic approach led to policies that restricted Indian political participation and reinforced social hierarchies based on race and class. In summary, liberalism in the British

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Raj represented a complex interplay of ideals, interests, and power dynamics. While liberal principles influenced certain aspects of colonial governance and policymaking, they were often subordinated to imperial interests and shaped by paternalistic attitudes towards the Indian population.

3.4 STRATEGIES OF BRITISH RAJ

The British Raj in India, spanning nearly two centuries from the mid-18th to the mid-20th century, represents one of the most consequential periods in Indian history. During this time, the British Empire established colonial rule over the Indian subcontinent, shaping its socio-political, economic, and cultural landscape in profound ways. The British Raj was characterized by a complex interplay of power dynamics, economic exploitation, cultural imperialism, and resistance movements, leaving a legacy that continues to influence contemporary India. This section explores the strategies employed by the British Raj to establish and maintain colonial control over India, examining military conquest, administrative reforms, economic exploitation, cultural hegemony, and other key aspects of British colonial rule. Here are some following details:

3.4.1 Diplomatic Engagement

It includes:

Ring of Fence Policy

The Ring Fence Policy, also known as the "ring-fencing" strategy, was a tactic employed by the British Raj to create buffer zones around their settled territories. This policy was implemented by the first Governor-General of Bengal, “Warren Hastings”. This policy aimed to establish a protective ring of strategically located princely states and tribal territories surrounding British-administered territories. The British would either directly control these buffer areas or maintain influence through alliances with local rulers. By doing so, they sought to secure their borders, prevent invasions or uprisings from neighboring regions, and maintain



stability within their territories. This policy helped the British Raj to consolidate and extend their control over India by strategically managing the political landscape and minimizing external threats. It also served to isolate potentially rebellious regions and prevent them from uniting against British rule. Overall, the Ring Fence Policy was an integral part of the British strategy for maintaining dominance in the Indian subcontinent during the colonial period.

Subsidiaries Alliance

The Subsidiary Alliance was a policy implemented by the British East India Company during its rule in India, primarily in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was devised by British Governor-General Lord Wellesley. Under the Subsidiary Alliance system, Indian princely states were required to accept British protection and maintain British troops within their territories. In return, the British guaranteed the protection of the princely state from external threats and pledged not to interfere in its internal affairs. However, in practice, the British often manipulated the internal politics of these states to maintain control. Key elements of the Subsidiary Alliance included:

- **British Troops:** Princely states were required to station British troops within their borders, ostensibly for protection against external threats. These troops were often used to exert British influence and control over the state.
- **Disbandment of Native Armies:** Princely states were forced to disband their own armies or limit their size, weakening their ability to resist British influence or assert independence.
- **Puppet Rulers:** The British often installed puppet rulers or manipulated the succession within the princely states to ensure compliance with British interests.
- **Financial Obligations:** Princely states had to pay for the maintenance of British troops stationed in their territories, often leading to financial strain and dependency on British support.

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- **Loss of Autonomy:** Despite the promise of non-interference in internal affairs, princely states under the Subsidiary Alliance effectively lost much of their autonomy as British influence and control extended into various aspects of governance. The Subsidiary Alliance was instrumental in expanding British control over Indian territories without direct annexation. It allowed the British East India Company to extend its influence and dominance across the Indian subcontinent while maintaining a façade of local autonomy.

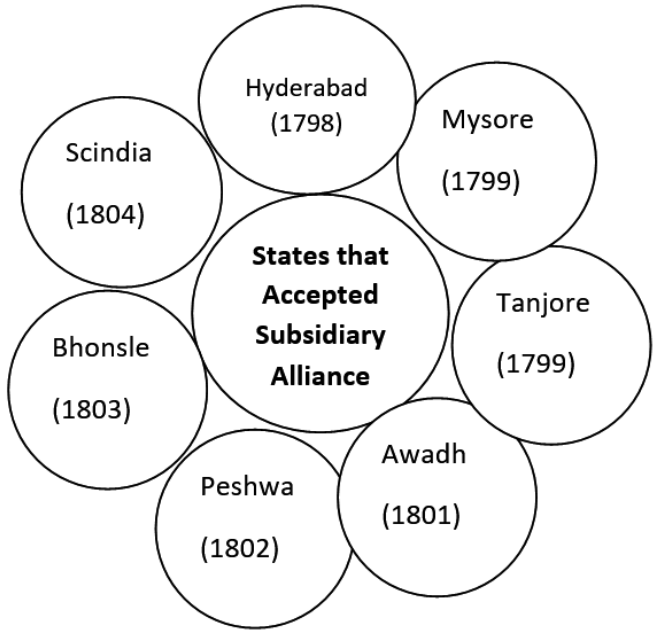


Fig. 3.1 *States that accepted Subsidiary Alliance*

Doctrine of Lapse

The Doctrine of Lapse was a policy introduced by Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General of India from 1848 to 1856, during the British rule in India. Under this doctrine, if a ruler of a princely state died without a natural heir, the British East India Company would annex the state and take control of its territory.



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This policy was implemented with the rationale of preventing the consolidation of power by local rulers and ensuring stability within the territories under British control. The Doctrine of Lapse was controversial and faced criticism from various quarters. Some argued that it violated the traditional principles of inheritance and succession in Indian society. Others viewed it as an aggressive expansionist policy aimed at furthering British control over Indian territories. The application of the Doctrine of Lapse led to the annexation of several princely states, including Satara, Jhansi, Nagpur, and Sambalpur, among others. These annexations significantly expanded British territory in India and contributed to the growing resentment among Indian rulers and subjects towards British rule. Overall, the Doctrine of Lapse played a significant role in the consolidation of British power in India during the mid-19th century, but it also fuelled opposition and resistance against colonial rule.

Implementation of Doctrine

It is important to note that the policy to expand the Company's territories was set by the Court of Directors back in 1834, well before Dalhousie arrived in India. However, it was Dalhousie who actively and energetically put this policy into action to extend the Company's control. The following were the important states annexed under the pretext of this policy:

- Satara in 1848
- Jaitpur and Sambhalpur in 1849
- Baghat in 1850
- Udaipur in 1852
- Jhansi in 1853
- Nagpur in 1854

In 1856, Awadh was included in the British Empire based on mis-governance, at that time Nawab of Awadh was Wazid Ali Shah and he was the last Nawab of Awadh.

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3.4.2 Policy of Divide and Rule

British Strategy to Prevent Unified Resistance

The British employed various strategies to prevent unified resistance against their colonial rule in India:

- **Divide and Rule:** As mentioned earlier, the British actively fostered divisions among the Indian population based on religion, caste, ethnicity, and language. By exacerbating these divisions, they aimed to weaken any potential united front against their rule.
- **Princely States and Tribes:** The British entered into treaties with various princely states and tribal leaders, often employing the Subsidiary Alliance system. This ensured that these entities remained loyal to the British, thus preventing them from joining forces with other groups to resist colonial rule.
- **Selective Co-option:** The British selectively co-opted Indian elites into the colonial administration and rewarded those who collaborated with them. This strategy helped to neutralize potential sources of opposition and divide the Indian population.
- **Repression and Surveillance:** The British employed a combination of repression and surveillance to suppress dissent and monitor potential threats to their rule. They maintained a strong military presence and enacted laws such as the Sedition Act to quell any signs of resistance.
- **Controlled Education:** The British controlled the education system in India, promoting a curriculum that emphasized loyalty to the colonial regime and undermined indigenous knowledge and traditions. This helped to perpetuate British influence and prevent the emergence of a unified nationalist movement.
- **Limited Communication and Travel:** The British imposed restrictions on communication and travel within India, making it difficult for dissenting



groups to coordinate and organize resistance movements across different regions.

Overall, these strategies were aimed at maintaining British dominance by preventing the emergence of a unified resistance movement among the diverse Indian population. While these tactics were effective in the short term, they also fuelled discontent and ultimately contributed to the eventual downfall of British colonial rule in India.

Methods of Divide and Rule

The policy of "Divide and Rule" was a strategic approach employed by the British during their colonial rule in India. It involved exploiting existing divisions among the Indian population based on factors such as religion, caste, ethnicity, and language to maintain control and suppress potential challenges to their authority. Key aspects of the Divide and Rule policy included:

- **Fostering Divisions:** The British authorities deliberately exacerbated tensions between different religious and ethnic communities in India, such as Hindus and Muslims, by favouring one group over the other in certain situations. This tactic created mistrust and animosity between communities, making it difficult for them to unite against British rule.
- **Manipulating Leadership:** The British often manipulated local leadership structures by favouring certain rulers or elites within Indian society who were willing to collaborate with them. By co-opting influential figures and granting those privileges and authority, the British further reinforced divisions within the Indian population.
- **Institutionalizing Differences:** The British implemented policies that institutionalized divisions, such as separate electorates based on religion, which perpetuated communal tensions and prevented the emergence of a unified Indian identity.
- **Exploiting Cultural Differences:** The British also exploited cultural differences by promoting Western education and values while denigrating

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indigenous traditions and languages. This cultural hegemony served to reinforce British authority and undermine indigenous cultures and identities.

Overall, the Divide and Rule policy was a deliberate strategy employed by the British to weaken potential sources of resistance and maintain control over India by fostering divisions and preventing unity among the Indian population. While it contributed to the perpetuation of communal tensions and conflict in India, it also played a significant role in the preservation of British colonial rule for nearly two centuries.

3.4.3 Administrative Centralization

Administrative centralization refers to the concentration of administrative authority and decision-making power within a central government or authority. In the context of British colonial rule in India, administrative centralization was a key aspect of their governance strategy. Under British colonial administration, India was divided into provinces and districts, each with its own administrative structure. However, ultimate authority rested with the central government in British-controlled areas. The central government, located initially in Calcutta and later in Delhi, had significant control over various aspects of governance, including finance, defense, foreign affairs, and law enforcement. Key features of administrative centralization in British India included:

- **Centralized Bureaucracy:** The British established a centralized bureaucratic system to administer their colonial territories. Senior British officials, such as the Governor-General and Provincial Governors, wielded significant authority over local administrators.
- **Uniform Laws and Regulations:** The British introduced uniform laws and regulations across their Indian territories, ensuring consistency in governance and administration. This facilitated centralized control and reduced regional disparities.



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- **Revenue Administration:** The British implemented a centralized revenue administration system, including land revenue collection and taxation. Revenue policies were formulated at the central level and implemented uniformly across the country.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Major infrastructure projects, such as railways, telegraphs, and postal services, were planned and executed under centralized authority. These projects aimed to facilitate governance, trade, and communication across the vast Indian subcontinent.
- **Judicial System:** The British established a centralized judicial system with the High Courts at the apex, ensuring uniformity in legal administration and interpretation of laws across different regions.
- **Education and Social Policies:** The British introduced centralized education policies and social reforms aimed at modernizing Indian society according to British ideals. This included the establishment of English-medium schools and universities, as well as initiatives related to healthcare and sanitation.

Overall, administrative centralization was a fundamental aspect of British colonial governance in India, enabling the efficient exercise of authority and control over a vast and diverse territory. However, it also contributed to the concentration of power in the hands of British officials and exacerbated feelings of alienation and resentment among the Indian population.

3.4.4 Economic Exploitation

Economic exploitation refers to the practice of extracting wealth or resources from a region or population for the benefit of a dominant group or entity, often at the expense of the exploited group's well-being and development. During the period of British colonial rule in India, economic exploitation was a central aspect of their governance strategy. Some key features of economic exploitation by the British in India include:

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- **Resource Extraction:** The British extracted vast quantities of natural resources from India, including raw materials such as cotton, indigo, tea, and spices. These resources were often shipped to Britain for processing and manufactured goods were then sold back to India at high prices, creating a significant trade imbalance.
- **Land Revenue System:** The British implemented a land revenue system that heavily taxed Indian farmers, often leading to widespread poverty and indebtedness. The Permanent Settlement in Bengal and the Ryotwari System in other regions placed a heavy burden on agricultural communities, with a large portion of the revenue collected flowing to British coffers.
- **Commercial Monopoly:** The British East India Company established monopolies over key industries and trade routes in India, stifling competition and hindering local economic development. Indian artisans and manufacturers were marginalized as British manufactured goods flooded the market.
- **Unequal Trade Policies:** The British imposed tariffs and trade regulations that favoured British goods over Indian products. This protected British industries while undermining Indian industries and handicrafts, leading to deindustrialization and unemployment.
- **Financial Drain:** India served as a source of revenue for the British Empire, with wealth extracted from the colony used to finance British imperial expansion and industrialization. Indian wealth was often siphoned off to Britain in the form of taxes, tariffs, and profits repatriated by British companies.
- **Infrastructure Investment for British Interests:** While the British did invest in infrastructure such as railways, roads, and ports in India, these projects primarily served British interests, facilitating the movement of goods and resources for export rather than promoting Indian development.

Overall, economic exploitation under British colonial rule significantly hindered India's economic growth and development, perpetuating poverty,



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inequality, and dependency. The legacy of economic exploitation continues to impact India's socio-economic landscape to this day.

3.4.5 Suppression of Dissent

During British colonial rule in India, the suppression of dissent was a systematic and often brutal tactic employed by the colonial authorities to maintain their dominance and quell any opposition to their rule. This suppression took various forms, including the enactment of repressive laws aimed at curtailing freedom of speech, assembly, and the press. Laws such as the Sedition Act and the Press Act were used to silence dissenting voices and stifle any criticism of colonial policies or the British administration. Additionally, censorship was extensively used to control the flow of information, with newspapers, books, and other forms of media being censored or banned if they were deemed seditious or subversive. The British authorities also employed arbitrary arrests and detentions as a means of suppressing dissent. Political activists, leaders of independence movements, and other dissenters were often arrested without trial and detained under harsh conditions, sometimes facing torture and abuse in detention centers. Furthermore, the colonial administration maintained a vast network of spies, informants, and surveillance systems to monitor the activities of political dissidents and nationalist organizations. This surveillance network played a crucial role in identifying and neutralizing potential threats to colonial rule. In addition to surveillance and arbitrary arrests, the British authorities resorted to tactics such as exile and banishment to isolate and marginalize dissenting voices. Political leaders and activists deemed particularly troublesome were often exiled from their homes and communities, depriving them of their support base and making it difficult for them to organize resistance. Finally, in cases of widespread unrest or rebellion, the British authorities did not hesitate to use force to suppress dissent. Military forces were deployed to quell protests, strikes, or uprisings, often resulting in casualties and loss of life among civilians. Overall, the suppression of dissent was a central strategy employed by the British colonial authorities to maintain their grip on power in India. Despite these efforts, resistance to colonial rule

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persisted, eventually culminating in India's independence movement and the eventual overthrow of British rule.

3.4.6 Role of Army and Police

The British Empire's rise in the 18th century was marked by strategic use of power, especially through its military and policing forces. This section will explore how the British used these instruments to expand and consolidate their power in India and other parts of the world.

1. **The British Army:** The British Army was the primary tool for the expansion of British influence. It was not just a fighting force but also a symbol of British strength and authority. The army's effectiveness lay in its organisation, discipline, and advanced weaponry, which often outmatched those of local rulers and other European competitors.
   - **Military Campaigns and Battles:** The British fought numerous battles to establish control over territories. Key victories in battles such as Plassey (1757) and Buxar (1764) against Indian rulers like the Nawabs of Bengal were crucial. These victories were not just military triumphs but also helped in establishing British dominance over large and wealthy regions.

     The British also engaged in conflicts with European rivals like the French. The Seven Years' War (1756-1763) was significant as it ended French ambitions in India, leaving the British as the dominant European power.
   - **Establishment of Forts and Garrisons:** The British built forts and established garrisons across strategic locations. These forts served as military bases, administrative centres, and symbols of British power. Key examples include Fort William in Calcutta and Fort St. George in Madras.



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These military establishments helped in maintaining order and provided secure bases from which the British could launch further military campaigns.

- **Local Recruitment:** The British Army in India heavily relied on recruiting local soldiers, known as sepoys. This recruitment strategy provided the British with a large, relatively inexpensive, and locally knowledgeable fighting force.

  By incorporating local soldiers, the British could exert control more effectively, as these soldiers often knew the terrain and could communicate with local populations.

2. **The Role of the Police:** While the army was crucial for conquest and large-scale control, the police played an essential role in maintaining order and enforcing British rule on a day-to-day basis.

   - **Law and Order:** The British established police forces to maintain law and order in the territories they controlled. This was vital for ensuring the smooth running of their administration and economic activities.

     The police were responsible for suppressing local rebellions, preventing crime, and enforcing British laws and regulations.

   - **Surveillance and Intelligence:** The police were instrumental in gathering intelligence and keeping an eye on potential threats to British rule. They monitored the activities of local leaders, political groups, and any movements that could challenge British authority.

     This surveillance helped in preempting rebellions and dissent, allowing the British to act swiftly to suppress any threats.

   - **Administrative Control:** The police were often used to enforce policies that facilitated British economic interests, such as tax collection and the implementation of land revenue systems.

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They played a key role in the British strategy of indirect rule, where local rulers were allowed to govern under British supervision. The police ensured that these local rulers remained loyal to the British.

3. **The Synergy between Army and Police:** The British strategy of expansion and consolidation relied on the effective coordination between the army and the police. The army was used for major military operations and to establish control over large territories. Once control was established, the police took over to maintain order and enforce British rule.

   - **Transition from Military to Civil Administration:** After conquering a region, the British would gradually transition from military to civil administration. The army would hand over control to civil authorities, with the police taking the lead in maintaining order and enforcing laws.

     This transition was crucial for establishing a sustainable and stable British administration in the newly conquered territories.

   - **Repression of Rebellions:** The synergy between the army and police was evident in the suppression of rebellions. The army would be called in to deal with large-scale uprisings, while the police would handle smaller disturbances and maintain general order.

     The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 was a significant example where the army played a critical role in suppressing the rebellion, while the police helped in rounding up rebels and restoring order in affected areas.

The expansion and consolidation of British power in the 18th century were heavily dependent on the effective use of the army and police. The British Army's victories in key battles, establishment of forts, and recruitment of local soldiers allowed the British to expand their control over vast territories. The police, on the other hand, were crucial for maintaining law and order, gathering intelligence, and enforcing British rule on a day-to-day basis. The coordination between these two forces ensured that the British could establish and maintain a stable administration, paving the way for the establishment of the British Empire.

3.5 INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM

The institutional mechanisms of the British Raj in India played a pivotal role in shaping colonial governance, administration, and societal dynamics during the nearly two centuries of British rule. These mechanisms were meticulously designed to consolidate British control, exploit India's resources, and maintain social order in accordance with imperial interests. This essay delves into the various institutional frameworks established by the British colonial administration, examining their functions, impact, and enduring legacies. From the Indian Civil Service to land revenue systems, from the legal framework to the education system, these institutional mechanisms served as instruments of colonial domination, shaping the lives and experiences of millions of Indians while laying the groundwork for India's post-colonial trajectory. Through a critical analysis of these institutional mechanisms, we gain insight into the complexities of colonial governance and its lasting repercussions on Indian society and governance structures. The efforts of Raj can be seen in the following sub-sections.

3.5.1 Indian Civil Services

The Indian Civil Services (ICS) was a strategic cornerstone of British colonial governance in India, meticulously crafted to consolidate and perpetuate British control over the subcontinent. Lord Cornwallis is known as the father of Civil Services in India. Established in 1858 following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the ICS provided a meticulously structured administrative framework through which British policies were implemented across diverse regions. Despite ostensibly being open to Indian candidates, British officers overwhelmingly dominated the top echelons of the civil services hierarchy, ensuring continued British influence and control. The merit-based recruitment process, while ostensibly fair, often favoured candidates with a British education and worldview, perpetuating British hegemony within the bureaucracy. The ICS acted as a conduit for indirect rule,

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with British officers serving as intermediaries between the colonial administration and the Indian populace, effectively implementing policies that served British interests. Furthermore, the control exerted by the British over the education system ensured that future civil servants were indoctrinated with British values and perspectives, further solidifying their allegiance to colonial rule. In essence, the Indian Civil Services epitomized the British Raj's strategy of centralized administration, British dominance, and controlled education, ultimately serving as a linchpin in the perpetuation of colonial exploitation and rule in India.

3.5.2 Legal Framework

The legal framework implemented by the British Raj in India was a meticulously crafted strategy designed to consolidate and perpetuate colonial rule. Central to this strategy was the imposition of a comprehensive system of codified laws, which replaced the diverse customary laws and legal systems that had existed across the Indian subcontinent. By introducing British laws, primarily based on English common law, the colonial administration ensured the establishment of a legal framework conducive to British interests and the maintenance of colonial dominance. Moreover, the British Raj established a centralized judiciary with High Courts at the apex, ensuring consistency in legal interpretation and administration throughout the colonial territories. This centralized judicial system served as a powerful tool for enforcing colonial laws and upholding British authority. However, the selective application of laws often favoured British interests, enabling the suppression of dissent and the stifling of opposition to colonial rule. Laws such as the Sedition Act and the Press Act were frequently used to curtail freedom of speech and silence critics of British policies. Furthermore, the British legal framework in India fundamentally altered land ownership patterns through the introduction of land tenure systems like the Permanent Settlement and the Ryotwari System. These systems not only facilitated revenue extraction from Indian farmers but also reinforced British economic exploitation of the subcontinent. Additionally, the legal framework played a role



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in maintaining social order by codifying and enforcing social hierarchies, such as caste distinctions, while simultaneously undermining indigenous systems of governance and justice. In essence, the legal framework of the British Raj in India was intricately intertwined with the colonial project, serving as a fundamental instrument of governance and control. While ostensibly providing a system of justice, it ultimately served to entrench colonial exploitation, undermine indigenous legal traditions, and perpetuate British dominance over the Indian subcontinent.

3.5.3 Educational Policies

The British Raj introduced several educational policies to strengthen their control over India. One major policy was the Charter Act of 1813. Before this act, the British East India Company didn't focus much on education in India, seeing it as unnecessary or even risky for their rule. However, concerns about governance and the need for a more educated bureaucracy led to a change. The Charter Act of 1813 set aside 100,000 rupees each year to promote education in India. This was the first time the British officially acknowledged the importance of education in the country. However, it was not solely altruistic; education was seen as a means of training a class of Indians who would be loyal to British rule and assist in its administration. One important part of the act was setting up Sanskrit and Arabic colleges in Calcutta (now Kolkata) to encourage the study of classical Indian languages. This was meant to create a group of local scholars who could bridge the gap between British officials and the Indian people. Despite these efforts, before 1857, British educational policies were mainly about training clerks and assistants to serve British interests. They focused on Western education, often ignoring Indian traditions.

Basically, the British wanted to educate Indians in a way that would benefit their rule. This helped create a group of educated Indians who could help with administration. However, it also planted the seeds for Indian nationalism and the push for independence.

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In-Text Questions

1. Ring of Fence Policy implemented by:
   A) Lord Cornwallis B) Lord Wellesley
   C) Lord Dalhousie D) Warren Hastings
2. Subsidiary Alliance Policy was implemented in British Raj by:
   A) William Bentinck B) Lord Wellesley
   C) Lord Cornwallis D) Robert Clive
3. Doctrine of Lapse Policy was started by which Governor-General:
   A) Lord Dalhousie B) Lord Cornwallis
   C) Robert Clive D) Vasco de Gama
4. Governor-General who known as the Father of Civil Services in India:
   A) Lord Cornwallis B) Robert Clive
   C) Vasco de Gama D) Lord Wellesley
5. Utilitarian principles was established by:
   A) James Mill & John Stuart Mill B) Lord Macaulay
   C) E.H. Car D) Jeremy Bentham
6. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was established in which Governor-General period:
   A) William Bentinck B) Robert Clive
   C) Warren Hastings D) Lord Cornwallis
7. Liberalism Ideology in the British Raj was influenced by:
   A) John Locke and Adam Smith B) Lord Macaulay
   C) William Jones D) Robert Clive
8. The Asiatic Society of Bengal was founded by:
   A) William Jones B) Warren Hastings
   C) Robert Clive D) Lord Cornwallis



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9. In which act allocation of lakh rupees per year for education in British Raj:
   A) Regulating Act 1773 B) Charter Act 1793
   C) Charter Act 1813 D) Charter Act 1833
10. The Permanent Settlement in Bengal was firstly introduced by which Governor-General:
   A) Lord Cornwallis B) Robert Clive
   C) Warren Hastings D) Lord Dalhousie

3.6 SUMMARY

- The British Raj in India was characterized by a complex interplay of ideology and strategic policies aimed at consolidating and perpetuating colonial rule.
- Rooted in notions of racial and cultural superiority, British imperialism justified its domination of India through the belief in a "civilizing mission" to bring progress and enlightenment to the Indian subcontinent.
- This ideology was operationalized through various strategies, including the divisive tactic of "Divide and Rule," economic exploitation through unequal trade policies and land revenue systems, repressive governance tactics to suppress dissent, promotion of English-medium education to anglicize Indian elites, and the imposition of British laws and legal systems to enforce colonial control.
- These strategies were interconnected and mutually reinforcing, serving to uphold British hegemony and perpetuate colonial exploitation. However, they also fuelled resistance and sowed the seeds for the eventual struggle for independence, marking the end of British colonial rule in India and the dawn of a new era in Indian history.

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3.7 GLOSSARY

- **East India Company:** This was a trading company set up in 1600 called The Company of Merchants of London Trading into the East Indies. It started trading with India and ruled over India until 1858.
- **Dual or Double Government:** This system started in Bengal after the Battle of Buxar. The Company collected taxes directly, while the Nawab handled the police and judicial duties.
- **Subsidiary Alliance System:** Lord Wellesley used this system to make Indian states part of British power. Indian rulers under British protection got rid of their armies and instead kept British troops. The British controlled their foreign affairs and protected them from enemies.
- **Doctrine of Lapse:** Introduced by Lord Dalhousie, this policy allowed the British East India Company to take over princely states if the ruler was incompetent or died without an heir.
- **Charter Acts:** These were laws passed by the British Parliament to control the East India Company. They gave the company trading rights and the power to rule India until 1858. The acts were renewed in 1793, 1813, 1833, and 1853, each time for 20 years.
- **Rule of Law:** This means the law applies to everyone equally. No one is above the law, and everyone must follow it.
- **Equality before the Law:** This principle means everyone is treated the same under the law. No person or group has special legal privileges, and the law applies equally to all.

3.8 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. D



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2. B
3. A
4. A
5. D
6. C
7. A
8. A
9. C
10. A

3.9 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Explain the utilitarian point of view in the development policies in India.
2. Trace the efforts of British historians and thinkers in re-making India as a replica of Britain.
3. Describe positivism as a tool of knowing the colonial society in India.

3.10 REFERENCES/SUGGESTED READINGS

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Unit III: Making of a Colonial Economy

Lesson 4: Making of a Colonial Economy: Land Revenue Settlements (1700-1857)

Lesson 5: Making of a Colonial Economy: Commercialization of Agriculture (1700-1857)

Lesson 6: Making of a Colonial Economy: Deindustrialization in Colonial India (1700-1857)



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LESSON 4

MAKING OF A COLONIAL ECONOMY: LAND REVENUE SETTLEMENTS (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Early Land Settlement Under the Colonial State
4.4 Permanent Settlement in Bengal
  4.4.1 Factors Behind Permanent Settlement
  4.4.2 Settlement with Zamindar
  4.4.3 Condition of Peasants
  4.4.4 Impact of Permanent Settlement
  4.4.5 Disappointment with the Permanent Settlement
4.5 Ryotwari Settlement
  4.5.1 Evaluation of the Ryotwari System
  4.5.2 Ryotwari System in Madras
  4.5.3 Ryotwari System in Bombay
  4.5.4 Impact of Ryotwari System
4.6 Mahalwari Settlement
  4.6.1 Mahalwari Settlement in Practice
  4.6.2 Different Land Tenure under Mahalwari Settlement
  4.6.3 Impact of Mahalwari Settlement
  4.6.4 Difference between Zamindari, Ryotwari, and Mahalwari System
4.7 Summary
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4.9 Answers to In-Text Questions
4.10 Self-Assessment Questions
4.11 References/Suggested Readings

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4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Study land relation in British India.
- Know about different land settlements under colonial state.
- Study the impact of such land settlement.
- Look into regional dimension of land settlement under colonial State.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Colonialism engendered a societal structure distinct from both the capitalist framework of Britain and the pre-colonial or pre-capitalist structures observed in historical India. India under British dominion neither mirrored capitalist Britain nor resembled the pre-colonial Mughal era. This disparity is particularly evident in the evolution of agrarian relations. Landlordism, whether in the zamindari or ryotwari regions of British India, emerged as a novel phenomenon absent in the Mughal period, attributable to the policies and interventions of British governance aimed at restructuring Indian agriculture. While Indian agriculture did not conform strictly to capitalist principles, it exhibited numerous capitalist features, such as establishing private property rights over land and facilitating widespread buying and selling.

The onset of British colonial rule precipitated profound alterations within Indian society, particularly evident in the agrarian sphere. A shift from feudalism to a semi-feudal system occurred, marking a transition from communal landholding to privatized ownership, thereby abolishing traditional peasant occupancy rights. Concurrently, the implementation of a legal framework grounded in principles of private property and contractual agreements aimed to protect these newfound property rights. Furthermore, India's integration into the



global capitalist market facilitated increased commercialization of agriculture and heightened engagement in commodity-money transactions. Conversely, early colonial economic policies prioritized the extraction of surplus agricultural produce, employing feudal methods of surplus appropriation. The pursuit of maximal land revenue extraction resulted in significant depletion of productive resources, relegating India to a supplier of raw materials for British industries and a market for their manufactured goods. Central to this transformation were three distinct land revenue settlement systems: the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa (1793); the Ryotwari settlement, predominantly implemented in the Bombay and Madras Presidencies during the early nineteenth century; and the Mahalwari settlement, which governed revenue collection in various regions, including central India, the Northwestern Provinces, and the Punjab, introduced around the same period.

The same capitalist processes that fostered economic advancement in England and propelled it towards an advanced capitalist status paradoxically perpetuated underdevelopment in India. Colonialism disrupted pre-existing societal and economic structures, yet the resultant colonial society and economy proved equally obstructive to modern economic progress as the preceding pre-capitalist arrangements. The economic surplus in colonial India was generated through diverse means, from traditional agricultural practices to plantation agriculture, modern mining, and factory production.

Colonialism can be delineated into three distinct phases, each characterized by specific forms of exploitation. Consequently, each stage corresponded to a unique pattern of subjugation of the colonial economy, society, and political structure.

4.3 EARLY LAND SETTLEMENT UNDER COLONIAL STATE

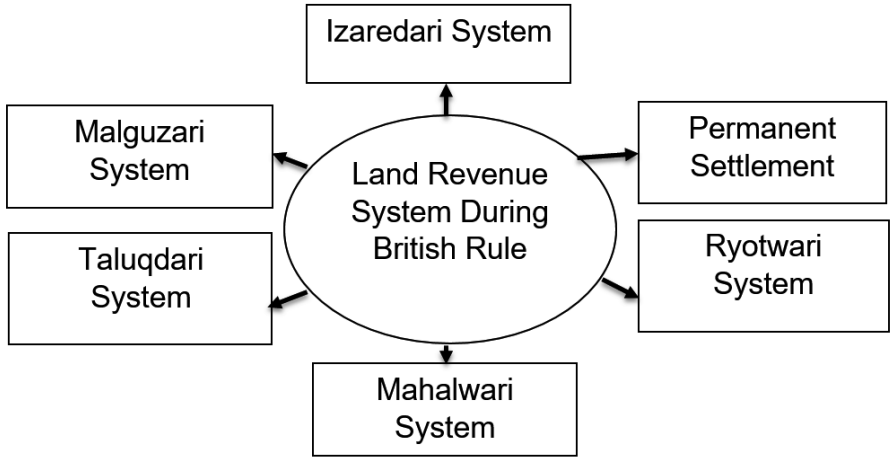
The primary objective of the British East India Company upon assuming Diwani rights in 1765 was the maximization of revenue collection, leading to the

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imposition of heavy taxes on agriculture in India. To ensure efficient assessment and collection of revenues, the British government implemented new revenue settlements. Initially, the Company's servants engaged in unbridled plunder, retaining collections for themselves, which did not contribute to the Company treasury and posed the risk of peasant desertion due to impoverishment. Thus, a shift towards a regular taxation system was necessary.

The colonial state conducted various revenue settlement experiments and endeavours to understand Indian agriculture and revenue systems between 1765 and 1793. These settlements, including annual, quinquennial, and decennial types, were categorized based on the intervals at which revenue assessments were revised. Despite initial hopes that the Nawabi administration's revenue regime would suffice, the greed and corruption of Company officials, coupled with their administrative interference, rendered the system dysfunctional, contributing to the devastating famine of 1770. In response, Warren Hastings introduced the farming system in 1772, whereby the right of revenue collection for a specified period was auctioned to individuals promising the highest returns. These revenue farmers often resorted to oppressive tactics to maximize collections during the contract period, leading to widespread exploitation of cultivators. However, many revenue farmers overestimated land yields and subsequently lost their contracts for failing to deliver promised amounts.

By the mid-1880s, corruption and underperformance plagued the revenue administration in the Bengal Presidency, prompting Lord Cornwallis to initiate reforms. Cornwallis launched efforts to gather comprehensive knowledge about prevalent revenue settlements and agricultural practices in India, exemplified by the establishment of the Amini Commission in 1888 tasked with compiling data for British authorities.



4.4 PERMANENT SETTLEMENT IN BENGAL

It can be seen in the points given below.

4.4.1 Factors behind Permanent Settlement

Economic Reasoning

The colonial administration aimed to establish a consistent and enduring source of revenue. The existing revenue systems were deemed ineffective, causing hardship for farmers, failing to generate the expected revenue for the Company, and hindering the affordable purchase of Indian goods. Recognizing the flaws in the current corrupt system, authorities sought a complete overhaul.

Political Motivation

Another crucial factor was the need to gain support from a reliable landowning class. With a lack of legitimacy, the colonial government urgently required backing from influential native elites to maintain its rule. Ensuring a stable revenue source and securing the allegiance of powerful local elites were seen as essential for the long-term stability of colonial authority in India.

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Given the limited local knowledge and resources of the colonial administration, forming stable alliances was crucial. The Permanent Settlement was one of the initial steps taken to strengthen British control in India. Despite their limitations, the Company sought to offer incentives to gain support from at least a portion of the Indian population. Consequently, they identified zamindars in Bengal as a pre-existing group already embedded in society, ready to collaborate and further British interests.

4.4.2 Settlement with Zamindar

The Permanent Settlement introduced a significant shift in the land revenue system, focusing on collecting revenue from zamindars rather than directly from peasants. This settlement, implemented in Bengal and Bihar in 1793, aimed to simplify revenue collection by assigning ownership rights to zamindars, who were expected to improve land productivity akin to English landlords. Given the vast number of cultivating families in these provinces, estimated to be around four to five million, collecting revenue directly from them would have been complex and prone to corruption. Therefore, the British government opted for a simpler approach of collecting revenue from a smaller number of large zamindars. Under, the Permanent Settlement, every piece of agricultural land in Bengal and Bihar became part of a zamindari. Zamindars were obligated to pay a fixed tax on their land, and in return, they gained ownership rights, allowing them to sell, mortgage, or transfer their zamindari. However, failure to pay taxes resulted in the government seizing the zamindari and auctioning it off to a new owner.

While zamindars became the proprietors of the land, actual cultivation was carried out by numerous peasants who were now reduced to tenants of the zamindars. Although Cornwallis mandated written agreements (pattas) specifying tenant obligations, these were often not issued, leaving peasants vulnerable to zamindar exploitation. The Permanent Settlement imposed heavy and oppressive taxes on land, with a significant portion of the produce going to the government and zamindars, leaving only a fraction for the cultivators. This oppressive tax burden necessitated coercive methods for revenue collection, leading to further



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exploitation of peasants. Zamindars were granted legal authority to seize tenants' property for non-payment of rent, and they often resorted to illegal tactics such as physical violence and harassment to enforce payments.

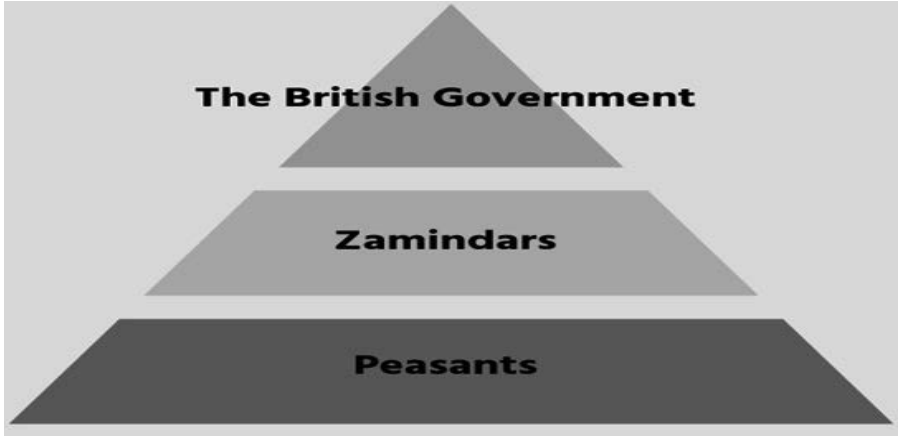


Fig. 4.1 *Zamindari System*

4.4.3 Condition of Peasants

The peasants, who were the ones cultivating the land, were now relegated to the status of tenants under the control of zamindars. Cornwallis mandated that zamindars issue written agreements, known as pattas, to each cultivator, specifying their payment obligations. This measure was intended to prevent exploitation by zamindars. However, in practice, these agreements were often not issued, leaving peasants vulnerable to the whims of the zamindars.

This lack of documentation was not accidental. The Permanent Settlement imposed hefty and burdensome taxes on land, with a significant portion of the produce allocated to the government and zamindars, leaving a meagre share for the cultivators. According to estimates by John Shore, a knowledgeable official, out of crops worth ₹ 100, only ₹ 40 was left for the cultivator, with ₹ 45 going to the government and ₹ 15 to the zamindar. Such oppressive taxation necessitated coercive methods for revenue collection.

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To meet the demands of the state, zamindars were allowed to seize tenants' property if rent was not paid, without needing permission from a court of law. This legal avenue for harassment, combined with illegal tactics such as locking up or physically assaulting non-compliant tenants, further exacerbated the plight of cultivators. Overall, the Permanent Settlement disproportionately favoured zamindars and the British government at the expense of the actual cultivators, significantly worsening their position in society.

4.4.4 Impact of Permanent Settlement

The Cornwallis Code, encompassing Regulation I of 1793 and subsequent enactments, delineated the essential prerequisites for participants in the Permanent Settlement. It introduced two pivotal provisions:

- Zamindars and revenue collectors underwent a transformation into landlords, assuming dual roles as state-appointed revenue agents and proprietors of entire zamindaris. Their ownership rights became hereditary and transferable, while cultivators were relegated to the status of tenants, stripped of traditional entitlements to pastoral and forest lands, irrigation canals, and safeguards against rent hikes.
- Zamindars were mandated to remit $10/11^{th}$ of their rental income from peasants to the state, retaining only $1/11^{th}$. Any increments in rental income resulting from agricultural expansion or enhanced extraction capabilities were permissible for retention. However, failure to meet revenue obligations punctually entailed the risk of land seizure.

In Bengal, while the zamindari system wasn't a novelty, the pre-Permanent Settlement era mandated zamindars to respect peasants' occupancy rights and constrained their ability to arbitrarily escalate land revenues. However, the enactment of Regulations such as VII of 1799 and V of 1812 erased existing peasant land rights, transferring the burden of hefty revenue demands onto them, often leading to illicit levies. Consequently, this bolstered zamindars' coercive powers, precipitating a decline in cultivators' circumstances.



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Concurrently, the old zamindars faced financial ruin, facilitating the rise of a new landlord class. This transition favoured individuals previously involved in commerce, government service, zamindar patronage, and minor zamindars. While some established estates succumbed to the rigors of the new Sale Law, lesser-known estates flourished due to fixed revenue demands.

Over time, the expansion of cultivated areas led to an increase in land rents. Despite this growth, zamindars remained bound to pay the fixed revenue to the state, thereby preventing the government from claiming its rightful share in the surplus. Consequently, the state incurred sustained financial losses due to the static nature of revenue collection.

Furthermore, many landlords exhibited little interest in land improvement, preferring instead to lead opulent lives in urban centres. This phenomenon gave rise to absentee landlordism, leaving cultivators vulnerable to the whims of distant zamindars. As a result, grievances of cultivators often went unaddressed, as they lacked direct ties to the government, and zamindars showed little inclination to resolve their issues, given their fixed revenue obligations to the state. The Permanent Settlement also had adverse effects on agrarian production, as a significant portion of agricultural yields was claimed by zamindars, discouraging investment in farming activities. This imbalance in resource distribution contributed to food scarcity, exacerbating the incidence of famines. Additionally, the settlement fostered a socio-economic divide in rural society, delineating it into two distinct classes: *the privileged zamindars* and *the impoverished landless labourers*.

Scholarly discourse persists regarding whether the primary beneficiaries were urban or rural. While some contend for rural elements such as zamindars' agents, others argue for the involvement of urban entities. The Permanent Settlement also engendered subinfeudation, wherein zamindars delegated rent collection to intermediaries, fostering intricate hierarchies of tenure holders, particularly prevalent in eastern Bengal districts.

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4.4.5 Disappointment with the Permanent Settlement

When Cornwallis implemented the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, he anticipated that this system would also be adopted in other British territories. Indeed, the Madras Government started to implement it in the regions under its jurisdiction. However, British officials soon began to question the benefits of this system as its flaws became increasingly apparent.

A significant flaw, from their perspective, was that the Permanent Settlement did not allow for any increase in taxation, while the Company's expenses, driven by continuous wars, kept rising. Lord Wellesley, Governor-General from 1798 to 1806, even redirected funds from England intended for purchasing trade goods to cover his military costs. Consequently, officials began considering ways to boost the government's revenue. Some believed that the zamindars had been let off too lightly in 1793, and this error should not be repeated in the future. By 1811, authorities in London had already cautioned against implementing permanent settlements without conducting a thorough and detailed survey of the land.

4.5 RYOTWARI SETTLEMENT

British officials were also exploring alternative methods of assessing and collecting land tax. The Ryotwari system was initiated by Alexander Reed in Baramahal in 1792 and further implemented by Thomas Munro in 1801 when he assumed responsibility for revenue administration in the Ceded Districts. It was introduced gradually in various regions: Baramahal between 1792 and 1798, Coimbatore in 1799, districts ceded by the Nizam of Hyderabad to the East India Company in 1800 (including Bellary, Anantpur, Cudappah, and Kurnool), and the Carnatic districts in 1801 (comprising North and South Arcot, Nellore, Chittur, Madura, etc.). Munro departed from the traditional practice of collecting revenue from zamindars and instead opted to collect directly from villages, subsequently assessing each ryot or cultivator. This system conferred individual proprietary rights to peasants, distinguishing between public and private ownership. The state



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was recognized as the supreme landlord, with peasants obtaining title through the payment of annual cash rents to the government. Initially, the ryotwari system was implemented as a field-based system, where a government official surveyed each field and determined its revenue. If the cultivator agreed to the terms, they undertook cultivation; otherwise, the land remained fallow. However, this system required detailed surveys, with surveyors visiting each field to assess soil quality and area accurately and set revenue rates acceptable to peasants. In practice, assessments often relied on guesswork and resulted in unreasonably high revenue demands, posing a significant burden to the state. Consequently, the system fell out of favour and was nearly abandoned after Munro's departure for London in 1807.

4.5.1 Evaluation of the Ryotwari System

It includes:

1. The Ryotwari system did not alter the peasants' ownership rights, nor did it emancipate them from zamindar exploitation. Instead, it replaced numerous landlords with the British government. Although it aimed to free cultivators from exploitation, it did not significantly improve their circumstances. The imposition of high land revenue rendered many unable to pay, resulting in the loss of land ownership through confiscation by the government.
2. Across most regions, the fixed land revenue was exorbitant, leaving people with meagre resources for sustenance. Moreover, the government reserved the authority to increase land revenue arbitrarily, exacerbating the financial burden on cultivators.
3. Cultivators were obligated to pay land revenue even when their crops were partially or entirely destroyed by natural calamities such as droughts or floods. This policy further strained their already precarious economic situation, as they were compelled to fulfill revenue obligations regardless of their crop yields.

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4.5.2 Ryotwari System in Madras

Upon Munro's return as Governor of Madras in 1820, significant changes were initiated. Munro advocated for the Ryotwari system, emphasizing its compatibility with Indian land tenure practices and its suitability for local conditions. Additionally, the financially strained Madras government found the system appealing due to its ability to retain the entire agricultural surplus without interference from a zamindar class.

As a result, the Ryotwari system was expanded across most of the Madras Presidency, albeit in a more oppressive form. Unlike the earlier version, which relied on detailed surveys, the system was now introduced in many districts without surveys. Revenue amounts were arbitrarily fixed, often referencing past payments made by individuals. This method of assessment, known as the 'put-out' system, set land revenue roughly at half the gross produce on unirrigated lands and three-fifths on irrigated lands. The incidence of land revenue varied significantly between districts and villages, and peasants were no longer afforded the freedom to refuse cultivation if they disagreed with assessment rates. Coercion, including torture, was frequently employed to compel unwilling peasants to pay revenue.

The impact of the Ryotwari system on the rural economy of Madras was overwhelmingly negative. Cultivating peasants became increasingly impoverished and indebted, with no resources available for agricultural expansion. The land market practically ceased to exist, as purchasing land meant succumbing to exorbitant revenue demands.

Furthermore, the system failed to eliminate intermediaries. Mirasidars and Brahman caste privileges remained intact, preserving the traditional village structure and even strengthening it in some areas. Mirasidars seamlessly transitioned into lower levels of revenue administration and acquired fertile agricultural tracts following their official appointments, leading to heightened bribery, corruption, and oppression of the common peasantry.



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In general, the redefinition of property rights under the Ryotwari system bolstered the power of rural magnates. While some districts saw challenges to traditional mirasidar rights, overall, the condition of small peasants worsened, except in isolated pockets where conditions improved.

4.5.3 Ryotwari System in Bombay

The Ryotwari system was introduced in the Bombay Presidency, beginning in Gujarat after its annexation in 1803. Initially, hereditary officials known as Desais and village headmen (Patel) were involved in revenue collection under British supervision. However, this arrangement failed to meet British expectations, leading to direct revenue collection from peasants by around 1813. The system was extended to the Peshwa's territories in 1818 under Mountstuart Elphinstone's supervision, but soon, issues similar to those faced in Madras emerged in Bombay as well. Officials imposed excessively high assessment rates, and revenue collectors sought to increase revenue whenever possible.

The implementation of the Ryotwari system in Bombay occurred in two phases. The first phase involved a survey for land classification and assessment conducted by R.K. Pringle, based on Ricardian theories. However, Pringle's calculations were found to be erroneous, resulting in overly high assessments. When attempts were made to collect these rates in the Pune district, many cultivators fled to the Nizam of Hyderabad's territory. Around 1835, the Pringle scheme was replaced by a reformed system devised by Wingate and Goldsmid. This system aimed to set assessments at affordable levels based on soil quality and land location. By 1847, this new settlement, based on a thirty-year arrangement, covered most of the Deccan.

The impact of the Ryotwari system on agrarian relations in the Deccan, particularly in light of the Deccan riots of 1875, has sparked debate among historians. Some argue that the system caused minimal disruption in rural society, merely continuing the decline in village headmen's authority that began

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before British rule. Others contend that it led to significant social upheaval by undermining village headmen's authority, resulting in a status revolution in Maharashtra villages and ultimately culminating in the Deccan riots.

While the consequences of the Ryotwari settlement may have been less dramatic than those of the Permanent Settlement, they nonetheless reordered traditional agrarian relations fundamentally. Actual cultivating peasants obtained ryot titles in many areas, but non-cultivating landlords could also register as ryots, leading to differentiation within the peasantry in terms of wealth and status. Initially, moneylenders showed little interest in seizing cultivators' lands due to high taxes. However, with the introduction of revised rates under the Wingate and Goldsmid scheme, land gained sale value, prompting moneylenders to seize land from peasant debtors, evicting or turning them into tenants. This process caused significant social tension and was a major factor behind the Deccan riots of 1875.

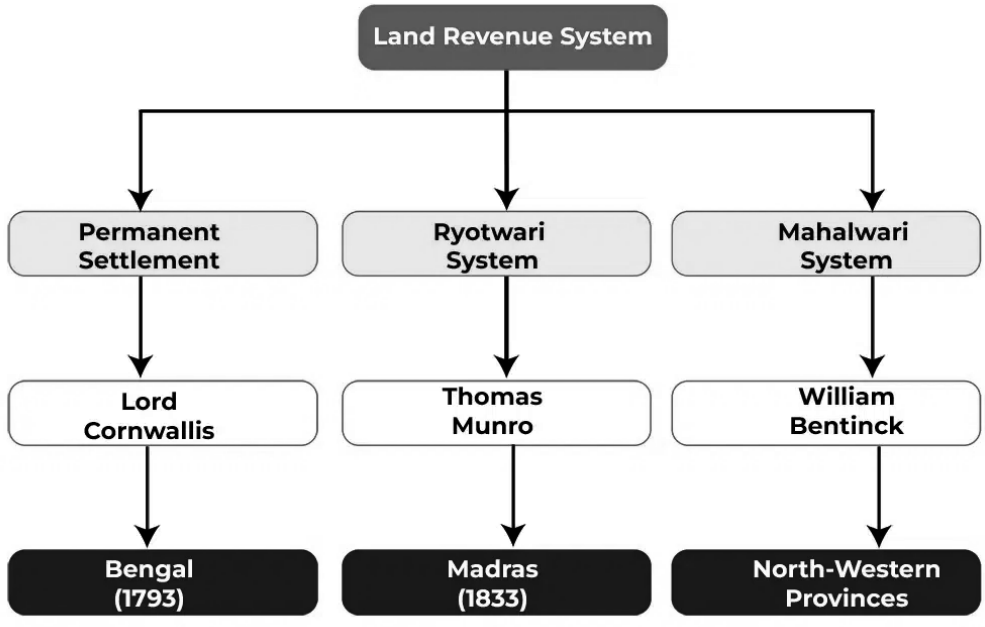


Fig. 4.2 *Land Revenue System*



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4.5.4 Impact of Ryotwari Settlement

The social ramifications of the ryotwari settlements were comparatively less pronounced. In numerous regions, the actual cultivating peasants were documented as occupants or 'ryots,' thereby securing title to their land holdings. However, the tax burden was often so severe that many peasants contemplated abandoning some of their land, necessitating measures to dissuade such actions. Additionally, non-cultivating landlords could have their names recorded as occupants or owners of specific holdings, while the cultivation itself was carried out by their tenants, labourers, or even bonded workers. This phenomenon was particularly prevalent in irrigated regions like Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, where numerous 'ryots' possessed extensive land holdings. The absence of limitations on land ownership for ryots resulted in significant disparities in wealth and social status among them. Nevertheless, moneylenders and other non-cultivating individuals showed limited interest in acquiring land due to the substantial tax liabilities associated with land ownership. Consequently, small peasants, despite facing oppression from tax collectors, were relatively shielded from the threat of expropriation by moneylenders or landlords.

The introduction of the reformed ryotwari system, which gradually emerged in Bombay after 1836 and Madras after 1858, alleviated the burden of land revenue to some extent and conferred saleable value upon the land. Consequently, landowners could anticipate profits from land ownership, as the state no longer absorbed the entirety of the produce as taxes. However, this change precipitated a shift in dynamics, with money-lenders seizing the lands of peasant debtors and either evicting them or reducing them to tenant status. This process engendered significant social tension and catalysed a major rural uprising in the Bombay Deccan in 1875.

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4.6 MAHALWARI SETTLEMENT

The Mahalwari settlement, the third significant revenue arrangement, was implemented in regions including the Northwestern Provinces, parts of central India, and the Punjab in 1822. Notably, this settlement occurred after the Permanent Settlement and slightly after the ryotwari settlement. The Mahalwari settlement, spearheaded by Holt Mackenzie, who served in the territorial department as a secretary to the Government, was the first systematic effort to organize revenue under this scheme. Regulation 7 of 1822, which outlined the rules governing the Mahalwari settlement, was shaped by Mackenzie. His fundamental concept was that zamindars and taluqdars were the rightful owners of the land, and surveys were essential to delineate the rights and obligations of zamindars, cultivators, and others. Surveys were commissioned to determine rent rates and payment methods prevalent in each field of every village. However, these surveys were often inaccurate, leading to inflated dues as collectors sought to maximize revenue. Unfortunately, the high rates proved detrimental to village communities, causing them loss instead of fostering growth. By 1833, the plans for detailed surveys were abandoned in favour of rough estimates of a village's revenue potential for the state. These estimates were based on recent payments made by tenants to landowners. The total revenue for the entire mahal (a revenue unit) was then calculated based on these estimates, with half of it designated as government dues. However, these estimations were often inflated, exacerbating the situation for cultivators.

One significant outcome of the Mahalwari settlement was the reduction of control held by taluqdars over land. While the government favoured village zamindars over taluqdars, it was primarily to maximize revenue extraction. Consequently, village zamindars, too, faced increased pressure from the government, leading to their eventual ruin. Over time, land began to shift into the hands of moneylenders and merchants, particularly in commercialized districts



where landholders suffered from business collapses and export depressions after 1833. Overall, the Mahalwari settlement resulted in impoverishment and dispossession for cultivating communities in North India during the 1830s and 1840s, contributing significantly to the discontent that eventually erupted in the revolt of 1857.

4.6.1 Mahalwari Settlement in Practice

However, the practical implementation of this law proved challenging. The calculations often lacked accuracy, and collectors tended to skew them to increase government revenue. Instead of benefiting village communities, the new Mahalwari system often led to their ruin by imposing unrealistic tax assessments. In 1833, it was decided to abandon the detailed effort to regulate all rights and payments, opting instead for a rough estimate of what each village could afford to pay to the State. Subsequently, these estimates were based on the rents paid by tenants to landowners. The Settlement officer would calculate the theoretical revenue yield of all lands in the village or mahal, with half of this amount ultimately owed to the government. However, these calculations involved significant guesswork, and the estimates tended to be inflated, resulting in higher payments to the State.

4.6.2 Different Land Tenure Under Mahalwari Settlement

It includes:

1. **Proprietary tenures:** In this system of land tenure, ownership of the land was vested in a single proprietor known as the "Lambardar." The Lambardar acted as the representative of the village cooperative body and held primary responsibility for rent payments. This arrangement encompassed various particular features and unique characteristics, varying across different regions and localities.

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2. **Pattidari Tenure:** In this arrangement, a comprehensive register is maintained, documenting all co-parceners within the village. This includes not only the heads of divisions like Puttees, Thokes, or Behrees, but also every individual who occupies land, manages its produce, or collects rents—whether as proprietors or as agents for one or two proprietors who jointly hold the land and share its produce or rents. Under this system, each village is entirely divided according to ancestral shares, with the revenue liability assigned to each individual corresponding to their land fraction as outlined in the distribution list.

3. **Muqqadmi Tenure:** The Muqaddami Tenure, found in the Paragana South Haveli of Gorakhpur division, was linked to the mandidari tenure. Under this system, a muqaddam or managing headman acted as an intermediary between cultivators and zamindars, tasked with rent collection and permitted to retain a portion of the collected rent. This arrangement resembled a form of Mufassal settlement or engagement.

4. **Bhaichara Tenure:** The term 'Bhaichara' refers to the practice of brotherhood, which involves the distribution of land holdings based on equal artificial lots. Essentially, it represents an evolved version of the Pattidari tenure, where lands were allocated according to the principle of equalized artificial lots or holding rights. In this system, the land was divided into specific plots rather than being defined as a fraction of the whole. The rights and interests of each co-sharer of the Mahals (land units) were determined not only by their ancestral shares but also by custom or possession. Typically, the land revenue was paid by a chief representative of the co-parceners known as the Lambardar.

4.6.3 Impact of Mahalwari Settlement

As a result of this situation, significant portions of land transitioned into the possession of moneylenders and merchants, who either displaced traditional

cultivators or reduced them to precarious tenant status. This trend was most pronounced in highly commercialized districts, where the land revenue demands had been pushed to their maximum levels. In these areas, landholders suffered greatly from business collapses and export depressions, particularly after 1833. By the 1840s, it became increasingly common to find no buyers willing to acquire land sold due to unpaid land revenue. The taxes imposed in these cases were so high that buyers could not expect to profit from the purchase. Overall, the Mahalwari settlement resulted in widespread impoverishment and dispossession among the cultivating communities of North India during the 1830s and 1840s. This discontent manifested in popular uprisings in 1857, during which villagers and taluqdars across North India expelled government officials, destroyed official records, and removed new auction purchasers from villages.

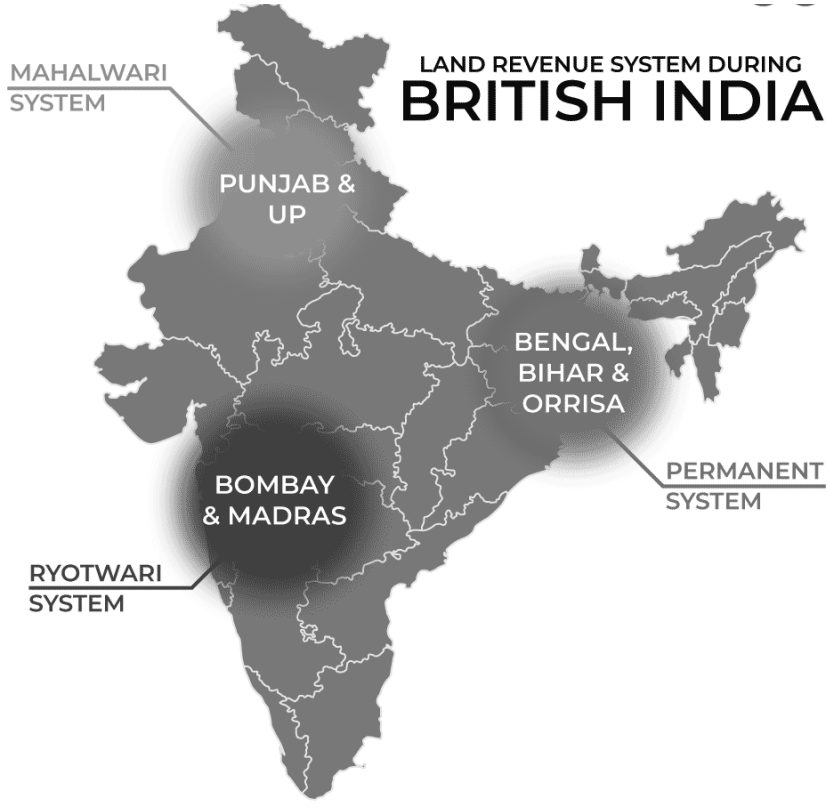


Fig. 4.3 *Land Revenue System during British India*

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4.6.4 Difference between Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari System

	Permananent Settlement	Ryotwari	Mahalwari
Why named so?	Permanent nature of revenue rates (90.9%) and settlement between govt. and Zamindari	Ryot=Peasant=Cultivator Ryot will directly pay to govt.	Mahal=Grouped villages A head of Mahal will collect and pay revenue to company
When	1793	1820	1822
% of British India	19	51	30
Where	Bihar,Bengal,Eastern UP,Odisha,Northen Madras	Bombay,Madras,Sindh,Berar ,Chhattisgarh,Maharashtra, Assam	Western UP,Punjab,Central Region,NWFP
By Whom	Lord Cornwallis	Thomas Munro	Holt Mackenzie,RM Bird,William Bentinck
Who will collect revenue?	Zamindar	Govt. No intermediary	Head of Mahal
Permanent or Temporary rates of revenue	Permanent/Fixed rate of revenue (10/11 of base figure) irrespective of production	Temporary, 20 to 30 Years	Temporary, periodic revision
Patta given to Peasants by	Zamindar=Intermidiate between company and peasants	Govt.	
Ownership rights of	Zamindars	Individual peasant	Individual Peasant
Rate of revenue/tax	10/11=90.9%	50 to 60% of production for dry,irrigated land	Very high rate of taxation
Other info	Zamindari=Hereditary rights with Sunset law, Absentee Landlordism, Indebtness	Prior survey/assessment before levying the tax	Mahal=Temporary zamindari system No hereditary rights, Modified form of Zamindari system

In-Text Questions

1. What type of commission was established in 1888 to compile data about revenue settlements and agricultural practices in India?
   A) The Amini Commission
   B) The Revenue Assessment Commission
   C) The Agricultural Reform Commission
   D) The Cornwallis Commission
2. Who initiated reforms in the Bengal Presidency due to corruption and underperformance in the revenue administration?
   A) Warren Hastings
   B) Lord Cornwallis
   C) Nawabi administration
   D) The British East India Company
3. What system did Warren Hastings introduce in 1772 for revenue collection?
   A) The barter system B) The farming system
   C) The cooperative system D) The feudal system
4. What was the primary objective of the British East India Company upon assuming Diwani rights in 1765?
   A) To promote cultural exchange
   B) To maximize revenue collection
   C) To establish educational institutions
   D) To improve healthcare systems
5. What were written agreements called under the Permanent Settlement?
   A) Contracts B) Agreements
   C) Pattas D) Deeds

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6. What was the primary aim of the Permanent Settlement introduced by the colonial administration?
   A) To empower peasants economically
   B) To establish a consistent revenue source
   C) To reduce the influence of zamindars
   D) To simplify land ownership for peasants
7. Who initiated the Ryotwari system in Baramahal in 1792?
   A) Thomas Munro B) Alexander Reed
   C) Mountstuart Elphinstone D) R.K. Pringle
8. What distinguished the Ryotwari system from the Permanent Settlement?
   A) It empowered zamindars as landlords
   B) It imposed fixed taxes on cultivators
   C) It replaced British officials with local elites
   D) It collected revenue directly from villages
9. In Madras, who advocated for the expansion of the Ryotwari system upon his return as Governor?
   A) Thomas Munro B) Alexander Reed
   C) Mountstuart Elphinstone D) R.K. Pringle
10. What factor led to significant social tension and rural uprisings in Bombay in 1875?
   A) Land revenue reductions
   B) Implementation of the Permanent Settlement
   C) Introduction of the Ryotwari system
   D) Seizure of land by moneylender
11. In which year was the Permanent Settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallis in India?
   A) 1765 B) 1793
   C) 1820 D) 1857



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12. Who intiated the Mahalwari settlement in 1822?
    A) Alexander Reed
    B) Thomas Munro
    C) Holt Mackenzie
    D) Mountstuart Elphinstone
13. How did cultivating communities respond to the Mahalwari settlement during the 1830s and 1840s?
    A) They experienced prosperity and growth
    B) They faced impoverishment and dispossession
    C) They gained control over land revenue
    D) They collaborated with government officials
14. What was one significant outcome of the Mahalwari settlement regarding the control of land?
    A) Increase in control held by taluqdars
    B) Increase in control held by village zamindars
    C) Reduction of control held by taluqdars
    D) Government's complete control over land
15. The Mahalwari system was primarily implemented in which regions?
    A) Bengal and Bihar
    B) Madras and Bombay
    C) Punjab and North-Western Provinces
    D) Assam and Orissa

4.7 SUMMARY

- The Permanent Settlement, implemented in Bengal and Bihar in 1793, shifted the responsibility of revenue collection from peasants to zamindars. While zamindars gained ownership rights, actual cultivation was carried out by peasants who became tenants of the zamindars. This system led to exploitation and impoverishment of peasants, with oppressive taxes and coercive revenue collection methods.

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- The Ryotwari Settlement, introduced in various regions between 1792 and 1801, collected revenue directly from cultivators. Despite aiming to free cultivators from exploitation, the system imposed high land revenue, leading to loss of land ownership and exacerbating peasants' economic hardships.
- The Mahalwari Settlement, initiated in 1822 in regions like the Northwestern Provinces and the Punjab, aimed to organize revenue collection under the ownership of zamindars and taluqdars.
- However, inflated revenue assessments and increased pressure from the government led to the ruin of village zamindars and the transfer of land into the hands of moneylenders and merchants, contributing to the impoverishment and dispossession of cultivating communities. These settlement systems had significant social and economic consequences, including exploitation, increased debt burden on peasants, and social tensions, ultimately contributing to widespread discontent and uprisings, such as the revolt of 1857.

4.8 GLOSSARY

- **Agrarian Surplus:** It is the amount of a cultivator's production that exceeds their basic subsistence needs.
- **Diwani:** The authority to collect revenues is known as diwani.
- **Ijaradari:** It is the practice of revenue farming where the contract for collecting revenue was awarded to the highest bidder.
- **Inams:** Inams are the land grants and rights awarded in exchange for specific services.



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- **Khud-Kast:** Lands cultivated by the owner themselves are known as khud-kast.
- **Lambardars:** They are the prominent landowners in Mahalwari-settled areas of North India, assigned a number in the collector's registers and made responsible for collecting revenues from their village or Mahal.
- **Mahal:** Mahal means an estate.
- **Malguzars:** They are the landowners in the Central Provinces and some other regions of Northern India.
- **Ryotwari:** It is a land-settlement system where cultivators were granted proprietary rights to the land, and the state directly collected land revenues from these peasant proprietors.

4.9 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. C
6. B
7. B
8. D
9. A
10. D

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11. B
12. C
13. B
14. C
15. C

4.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Describe the main features of the Mahalwari settlement in British India during the early 19th century.
2. Discuss the consequences of Mahalwari Settlement had on landownership and rural communities.
3. Describe the Ryotwari system implemented by British officials in India during the early 19th century.
4. Compare and contrast the implementation and outcomes of the Ryotwari system with other revenue settlements such as Permanent and Mahalwari Settlement.
5. Give a detailed overview on the Permanent Settlement.

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LESSON 5
MAKING OF A COLONIAL ECONOMY: COMMERCIALIZATION OF AGRICULTURE (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

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5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Understand the level of commercial activity prior to British colonization;
- See the transformations brought about by the arrival of British rule;
- Study the varied organizational structures adopted for the emerging commercial agriculture;
- Know the impact of these developments on the Indian economy and agricultural practitioners.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

The British colonial rule in India brought about significant changes in the agricultural sector, primarily driven by the introduction of new land revenue policies and the commercialization of agriculture. These policies were implemented to serve the interests of British industries and trades, with little consideration for the welfare of Indian peasants.

The commercialization of agriculture under British rule meant that agricultural crops and goods were produced primarily for sale in the market rather than for the sustenance of the peasants themselves. This shift marked a departure from traditional subsistence farming practices. The commercialization process began during British rule and aimed to supply raw materials for British industries rather than supporting India's industrial development, which lagged far behind that of Britain and other European nations in the eighteenth century. The commercialization of agriculture had several outcomes. Firstly, it proved advantageous to British planters, traders, and manufacturers, as they could access raw materials at lower rates and exploit Indian agricultural produce for profit.



Additionally, Indian traders and moneylenders also benefited to some extent by acting as intermediaries for British trade, thereby accumulating significant wealth.

Overall, the commercialization of Indian agriculture during British rule was characterised by the exploitation of Indian resources for the benefit of British economic interests, with limited benefits accruing to Indian traders and intermediaries in the process.

5.3 DEFINING COMMERCIALIZATION

Commerce is the process of trading items within a market environment. This transaction is facilitated through the use of a universally accepted medium called "money" to quantify the worth of the objects being exchanged. The monetary value assigned to a good is known as its "price," whereas the actual object is called a "commodity." In commercial transactions, commodities are traded at a price specified in units of money. While goods may have additional qualities, such as cultural or nutritional importance, commercialization involves considering them only in terms of their market worth as commodities, measured in monetary terms. Commercialization refers to the process of assessing the financial worth of a product and then facilitating its transaction between a purchaser and a vendor.

Commercialization is the process by which objects are turned into commodities and social interactions into business transactions. It promotes increased involvement in market transactions and prioritises the assessment of commodities according to pricing systems. Commercialization permeates society with goods, expands the scope of trade across physical borders, and makes everyday life dependent on market transactions. As a result, the process of commercialization brings about substantial changes in civilisations that previously placed little or no value on markets, altering human experiences and cultural norms.

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5.4 COMMERCIALIZATION IN PRECOLONIAL INDIA

Prior to colonization, Indian society was not entirely unfamiliar with marketplaces. Even in ancient India, agricultural items were exchanged in marketplaces. The farmers had to sell their produce in the market in order to make money since the Mughal Empire received payment for their land in cash. Up to half of the product was brought to market, providing enough revenue for brokers, moneylenders, and specialty retailers. The Mughal Empire's successor nations kept collecting taxes in cash. As a result, the continuation of commercial systems was not significantly hampered by the decline of the Mughal Empire.

All things considered, nevertheless, the predominant unit of social interaction in India was the fundamentally self-sufficient village community, where families, castes, and sects conducted trade with little reliance on currency or marketplaces. Such civilisations were essentially forced to engage in commerce by British imperialism, which drastically altered India's social structure. Thus, it seems that Indian commercialization is a historical process characterised by a breach based on the alienation of tradition and modernity, which still coexist in an uncomfortable way in India.

5.4.1 Commercialization in British India

Under colonial rule, the commercialization of agriculture in India was part of a broader historical shift. Marx noted a new international division of labour emerging in the early 19th century, where colonial powers transformed their colonies into suppliers of raw materials for their industries. India was coerced into becoming a producer of raw materials like cotton, indigo, opium, and tea, primarily for British industries. This change severed the traditional ties between agriculture and handicrafts and fully subjugated the Indian economy to the needs of the British metropolitan economy.



The British East India Company, the most powerful successor to the Mughals, aggressively pursued the commercialization of Indian agriculture. As a trading company granted a monopoly of eastern trade by the British government, its primary objective was to procure Indian goods for sale in Europe. Initially reliant on importing British gold and silver bullion to finance purchases in India, the company sought to maximise revenue to reduce dependence on imports.

To achieve this, the company aimed to purchase Indian goods at the lowest possible prices, thereby remitting substantial Indian revenue to Britain. The company diverted funds overseas, unlike Indian rulers, who reinvested tax revenues locally. Initially, Indian exports were mainly non-agricultural, but with the rise of the cotton industry in Britain, the focus shifted to exporting agricultural products as raw materials for British industries, avoiding competition with domestic manufacturers.

5.4.2 Factors Behind Commercialization

The British land revenue systems in India shifted the focus from traditional subsistence farming to cash crops. Farmers were required to pay taxes in cash, which necessitated the cultivation of cash crops to generate income for tax payments. This shift towards cash crops was driven by the British industrial policy in India, which aimed to utilise Indian agricultural products for their industries. Cash crops like cotton, tobacco, indigo, and tea became essential for British industries, leading to their cultivation by Indian farmers. Secondly, infrastructural developments such as railways, shipbuilding, and roads further propelled the commercialization of agriculture, which created a favourable environment for businesses. These developments created employment opportunities, but they also led to the displacement of traditional agricultural workers due to new land settlement policies implemented by the British.

Thirdly, to foster loyalty and support, the British created a wealthy class in India, comprising landlords or zamindars in Bengal and moneylenders in western India. These wealthy individuals provided farmers with loans to cultivate cash crops, which required more investment than traditional crops.

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Fourthly, the Industrial Revolution in England also played a significant role in the commercialization of Indian agriculture. British industries saw an increase in demand for raw materials, driving the production of agricultural goods to meet this demand. Additionally, events such as the opening of the Suez Canal and the American Civil War further accelerated the commercialization process. The disruption of cotton supplies from America during the Civil War increased the demand for Indian cotton, prompting farmers to cultivate cotton instead of food grains.

Furthermore, British policies such as one-way free trade facilitated the entry of manufactured items like textiles and jute into Indian markets, encouraging the commercialization of agriculture as these items found ready demand among Indian consumers. Overall, a combination of British policies, industrialization, infrastructure development, and global events contributed to the commercialization of agriculture in colonial India.

5.5 REGIONAL DIMENSIONS OF AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALIZATION IN INDIA

In North and Central India, agricultural commercialization faced distinct regional dynamics. In less developed areas of Punjab, such as the western and southeastern parts, peasants encountered challenges like high revenue demands, uncertain harvests due to insufficient rainfall, and exploitative lending practices. These conditions led to a form of exploitation similar to the Dadan system in Bengal, where peasants became heavily indebted and often had to surrender their land to creditors.

However, in central Punjab and canal colonies established later in the nineteenth century, improvements in irrigation infrastructure, particularly canal construction, facilitated agricultural expansion. Peasants in these areas benefited from increased crop production, such as cotton and sugarcane. Despite these improvements, the prevalence of agriculturist moneylenders remained a concern,



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as they provided loans to peasants but often seized land when debts could not be repaid.

Moving to Western India, the focus shifts to the significance of cotton as a commercial crop. A robust cotton export business, dating back to the 1780s, emerged in regions like Gujarat. Initially, the British East India Company sought to control cotton supplies, but private British traders resisted these efforts. The American Civil War further bolstered cotton exports to Britain, prompting increased cotton cultivation in regions like the Bombay-Deccan area.

In Eastern India, specifically the Bengal Presidency, land revenue policies were fixed in perpetuity, with zamindars having the authority to enhance rents. The introduction of a uniform coinage system, as well as the availability of silver and gold coins, facilitated monetary transactions and contributed to the growth of the money market. However, increased rents placed significant burdens on peasant producers, often leading to indebtedness and land alienation, as peasants had to mortgage their land or crops to meet their obligations**.**

In South India's Madras Presidency, the Ryotwari settlement was implemented, focusing on regions like the dry delta of Krishna and Godavari, where rice cultivation became prominent due to improved irrigation. Rice became the primary crop, with most other goods being imported in exchange. The Kaveri delta region also saw surplus rice production, dominated by large landholders known as Mirasidars, who received recognition under the Ryotwari system. Tenants working on their land were not granted formal documentation, whereas bonded labourers received grains as wages. The emergence of substantial middle-class peasants with direct market access drove changes in the agrarian economy. Marwari moneylenders migrated to the region, offering credit. However, scholars note that dependence on moneylenders was not the primary feature of the economy; instead, cooperative credit societies and joint-stock banks gained significance. Various regions specialise in growing different cash crops like cotton, sugarcane, and spices. Some landlords discouraged commercial crop cultivation by imposing high rent rates. Cash debts were extensive in Tamil areas but rare in dry Telugu districts. A study on tobacco cultivation in Guntur

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district highlighted the involvement of the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Corporation Limited, reminiscent of earlier policies by the East India Company, which supplied inputs to artisans and dictated low selling prices.

5.6 MAJOR CASH CROPS

The British strategically selected export crops such as cotton, silk, opium, indigo, sugar, and tea, focusing on products that could not be produced in Britain or directly targeting lucrative markets like China. Cotton and silk, being non-native to Britain, were prioritised for export. Opium and tea were aimed at the Chinese market, with opium being exported against China's consent and tea being cultivated in India to challenge the Chinese monopoly.

Indigo and sugar were encouraged as plantations in India to reduce British reliance on South American plantations. Importantly, none of these crops competed with or replaced British products, which aligns with British commerce's interests. Additionally, these crops were valuable in relation to their bulk, as their price per unit weight was high. Given the high transport costs during that period, exporting cheap bulky goods risked eroding profits, making it essential to focus on goods with a high value relative to their weight to ensure profitability for exporters.

- **Cotton:** Indian cotton emerged as a crucial cash crop, with exports to England starting in 1783 and growing substantially by 1841, primarily benefiting Lancashire mill owners, European firms, and the native elite. In western India, European companies like Adam and Company and Raleigh Brothers dominated the cotton trade from Bombay. While indigenous business interests were involved in ginning and pressing companies, their role was mainly seen as a profitable investment. However, European managing firms used these companies to bolster their export trade, effectively controlling the country's export crops, including raw cotton. Indian middlemen perpetuated financial



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dependency among peasants by providing advances and purchasing cotton before it ripened.

- **Indigo:** Indigo was a significant export crop in Bengal and Bihar, cultivated through coercion and forced into production by peasants. Indigo, which was initially introduced by European adventurers and East India Company agents in the late 18th century, remained a major export commodity until the mid-19th century. Many indigo planters were former slave drivers from the West Indies, and force was widely used to compel peasants to grow indigo, despite it being unprofitable for them. Advances were forced upon peasants, leading to indebtedness and insecurity. Peasants became bonded slaves, facing harassment and humiliation. The oppressive conditions sparked a peasant revolt, known as the "blue mutiny," in 1860, which ended much of the indigo cultivation. Additionally, the invention of synthetic chemical dyes in the late 1860s further reduced the demand for natural indigo, contributing to its decline.
- **Opium:** The East India Company had a significant interest in poppy cultivation in Bihar and neighbouring districts, which were part of the Bengal Presidency. The company maintained complete control over the production and sale of opium, primarily exported to China. The Bengal opium monopoly was considered a major victory for the company. Poppy cultivators were coerced into maintaining production levels after being offered unfavourable prices. The Koeri caste, prominent among poppy growers, faced pressure from village headmen, known as mahtoos, who held them in subjugation. This led to the development of a triangular trade network centred on opium, as described by Tan Chung**.**
- **Tea:** The British introduced tea cultivation in India during the 1830s to challenge Chinese tea's dominance in global markets. With government support, European-owned tea plantations expanded rapidly, primarily for export. These plantations were exclusively controlled by Europeans,

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who remitted most of their profits and salaries abroad. Workers in these tea gardens faced severe oppression, often recruited from distant tribal communities with false promises.

- **Raw silk:** From the onset of its rule, the East India Company expressed keen interest in Bengal silk. In 1770, directors from London noted that Bengal silk had the potential to replace Italian and Spanish silk utilised by British weavers. Consequently, experts were enlisted to enhance silk production techniques in India, and workshops known as 'filatures' were established to spin silk thread from cocoons for export. The company, through its agents and officials, exerted pressure on mulberry tree growers (whose leaves fed the silkworms) and filature workers to maintain low silk prices, thereby enabling contractors to reap substantial profits. Silk remained a significant export commodity until the latter part of the 19th century.
- **Sugarcane:** Sugarcane, native to India, has a long history of production of Gur and Chene within the country, extensively consumed domestically for centuries. However, in the 1830s, as indigo prices and sales declined, capital began shifting towards sugar production for the burgeoning London market, where demand was rising and import duties were reduced. European speculators were allocated large land areas in eastern Uttar Pradesh to establish sugar plantations. Local peasants, traditionally involved in gur production for local and regional markets, were coerced into producing thickened sugarcane juice (known as mb) for delivery to the planters, who processed it into sugar.

Like the indigo system, peasants received advances and were obligated to deliver their produce to the factories at a predetermined, low price. Planters reaped significant profits, leading to a surge in exports; for instance, sugar exports from Calcutta skyrocketed from less than 1,600 tonnes in 1833–34 to over 80,000 tonnes by 1847—a fifty-fold increase. However, this prosperity was short-lived. Following a decline in sugar prices after 1848, most factories closed, and exports



nearly ceased. Indian gur merchants and khandsaris subsequently reverted to their traditional trade routes, selling to Mirzapur and central India.

5.7 IMPACT OF COMMERCIALIZATION

The various impacts of commercialization includes:

5.7.1 Inequality

Generally, commercialization should have functioned as a catalyst for enhancing agricultural productivity. However, the actual occurrence of this was hindered by inadequate agricultural coordination, outdated technology, and insufficient money among many peasants. Only the affluent farmers reaped the benefits, hence exacerbating income disparities within the rural community.

One could argue that if the wealthy became wealthier but the impoverished remained in their status or made only slight improvements, it would not be considered a favourable state of progress.

Indian merchants and moneylenders, who acted as intermediaries for the British and profited greatly from the commercialization of Indian agriculture, were also beneficiaries.

5.7.2 Instability

Indian farmers faced new dangers and difficulties when the country shifted to commercial agriculture. Traditional threats, such as floods and droughts, persisted, but farmers faced new dangers due to their dependence on faraway markets.

Landlords in Uttar Pradesh lost money, land was deserted, and the money-lending system collapsed because of declining cotton and indigo prices. At the same time, rural Bengal was dealing with comparable issues. Major companies engaged in export commerce and financing went bankrupt between 1830 and 1853, adding to the economic upheaval. These businesses went bankrupt because

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they kept shipping indigo to Britain even when prices were dropping. There was already a severe scarcity of currency in India before the government's actions, including shipping bullion to London, made matters worse.

At the end of the day, farmers who were pressured or convinced into growing commercial crops ended up bankrupt and struggling due to the increasing economic instability caused by the commercialization of agriculture. The devastating effects of falling global market prices on India's cultivators show how susceptible rural populations are to market forces.

5.7.3 Escalating Reliance on Moneylenders

The impoverished peasant faced immense pressure to sell his harvest immediately after reaping, often at unfavourable prices, to fulfil obligations to the government, landlord, moneylender, and family. This vulnerable position left the peasant at the mercy of grain merchants, who frequently also served as village moneylenders. These merchants, with their dominant bargaining position, could dictate terms and purchase produce well below market value, reaping a significant portion of the profits from the growing agricultural trade.

Moneylenders played a pivotal role in this system by providing cash advances to farmers for cultivating commercial crops. However, failure to repay these loans on time resulted in the transfer of peasant land ownership to the moneylenders. Despite the commercialization of agriculture, the growth of the land market was stunted because the primary beneficiaries were the traders and intermediaries associated with the colonial companies.

The indigo cultivators were often provided loans by the planters as a means of ensnaring them in a cycle of debt. As noted by an English official, once a farmer received an advance, it was exceedingly difficult for them to clear their debt, effectively rendering them akin to bonded labourers in the indigo factory. In such circumstances, obtaining loans from other sources was virtually impossible, as repayment seemed improbable.



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Interestingly, the planters themselves had little desire for the advance to be repaid, as it would result in the farmer's liberation from their control. Similarly, in the case of opium cultivation, peasants accepted advances out of fear of reprisal from village leaders and government authorities if they refused. These examples illustrate a lack of a free market environment, where individuals were constrained in their actions by the power dynamics and coercion exerted by the planters and authorities.

5.7.4 Reduced Food Production and Increased Famines

The commercialization of Indian agriculture led to a reduction in the cultivation area dedicated to food crops as commercial non-food grains replaced traditional food crops. Between 1893–94 and 1945–46, commercial crop production increased significantly by 85 percent, while food crop production decreased by 7 percent. This shift had severe repercussions on the rural economy and often resulted in devastating famines, claiming many lives.

For instance, the collapse of the jute economy in the 1930s preceded a catastrophic famine in Bengal in 1943. Historian Sekhar Bandopadhyay suggests that while it's challenging to establish a direct link between commercialization and famines, the cultivation of cash crops in certain regions may have displaced food grains from prime agricultural land, leading to a decline in overall food output.

Even as colonial rule ended, food crops still occupied 80 percent of the cultivated acreage. However, the aggregate production of food crops failed to keep pace with population growth. Some historians argue that the growth of trade and market integration through infrastructure development may have enhanced food security and mitigated famine risks in colonial India. However, this assertion remains contentious, particularly in light of the Bengal famine of 1943, which occurred after a prolonged period of declining per capita rice availability in the province.

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5.7.5 Linking Indian Agriculture to Global Market

The commercial revolution in agriculture had a significant consequence: the integration of the agricultural sector into the global market. In world markets, fluctuations in prices and business cycles began to impact the fortunes of Indian farmers to an unprecedented extent. Farmers began prioritising market demand and prices over their own domestic needs when choosing which crops to cultivate. As a result, the peasant class suffered adverse effects from market imbalances. They encountered stiff competition in the market, which adversely affected ordinary peasants who lacked the resources and infrastructure to compete effectively. This shift towards market-oriented agriculture underscored the vulnerability of small-scale farmers in the face of global economic forces.

5.7.6 Peasant and Tribal Revolts of 19th Century in the Consequences of the Commercialization of Agriculture

In the nineteenth century, India experienced significant changes in its agricultural practices due to British colonial policies. These changes, often referred to as the commercialization of agriculture, led to a shift from subsistence farming—growing food for one's own use—to producing crops for sale in markets. This shift had profound and often devastating consequences for peasants and tribal communities, leading to numerous revolts and uprisings.

1. **The Commercialization of Agriculture:** Before British rule, Indian agriculture was primarily subsistence-based. Farmers grew food crops like rice, wheat, and pulses to feed their families and sold any surplus in local markets. However, the British aimed to integrate India into the global economy to serve their economic interests. They encouraged the cultivation of cash crops—crops grown for sale rather than for local consumption. This included cotton, indigo, opium, and tea.
2. **High Taxes and Debt:** To maximize revenue, the British imposed high land taxes on farmers. These taxes were often fixed, regardless of the farmer's



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actual harvest. When harvests were poor, many peasants couldn't pay these taxes and fell into debt. To meet these financial demands, peasants borrowed money from landlords and moneylenders at high interest rates. Over time, many farmers were unable to repay these debts and lost their land to these moneylenders, becoming landless labourers.

3. **Impact on Food Security:** The focus on cash crops also affected food security. Since farmers were encouraged or forced to grow crops like cotton and indigo, less land was available for food crops. This made it harder for peasants to grow enough food to feed their families. Famines became more common, and many people suffered from hunger and malnutrition.
4. **Tribal Displacement:** Tribal communities, who lived in forests and practiced shifting cultivation (moving from one plot to another), were severely affected. The British took over their lands for plantations, mining, and infrastructure projects. Tribes lost their traditional rights and access to forest resources, leading to their displacement and impoverishment.
5. **Peasant and Tribal Revolts:** These harsh conditions sparked numerous revolts and uprisings across India. Some of the most notable ones include:
   - ***The Indigo Rebellion (1859-60)*:** In Bengal, British planters forced peasants to grow indigo, a plant used to make blue dye. The planters paid very low prices for the indigo and often treated the peasants harshly. In response, the peasants refused to grow indigo, destroyed indigo factories, and attacked planters. This rebellion gained significant attention and highlighted the exploitation of peasants.
   - ***The Deccan Riots (1875)*:** In the Deccan region of Maharashtra, farmers were heavily indebted to moneylenders. The moneylenders charged exorbitant interest rates and often took over the farmers' lands when they couldn't repay their loans. Frustrated and desperate, the farmers revolted. They attacked moneylenders, burned their records, and seized lands. The British government eventually intervened, enacting laws to protect peasants from such exploitation.

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- ***The Santhal Rebellion (1855-56)*:** The Santhals, a tribal community in present-day Jharkhand, rose against British policies and the oppression by landlords and moneylenders. The British had taken over their lands for railway construction and plantations, displacing the Santhals and disrupting their way of life. The rebellion was led by brothers Sidhu and Kanhu, who organized a large uprising. Although the British eventually suppressed the rebellion, it highlighted the grievances of tribal communities.
- ***The Munda Rebellion (1899-1900)*:** Led by Birsa Munda, this rebellion was a significant uprising by the Munda tribe in Bihar and Jharkhand. The Mundas were angered by the exploitation and oppression by landlords, missionaries, and the British administration. Birsa Munda advocated for the restoration of tribal rights and the establishment of Munda Raj (Munda rule). The rebellion saw fierce battles between the Mundas and the British forces. Despite Birsa Munda's capture and death, the rebellion left a lasting legacy and led to some reforms in tribal areas.
- ***The Pabna Revolt (1873-76)*:** In the Pabna district of Bengal, peasants protested against oppressive practices by landlords who charged excessive rents and evicted tenants arbitrarily. The peasants formed associations to resist these practices, organized mass protests, and refused to pay unjust rents. The revolt forced the British government to enact the Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885, which provided some protection to tenants.

6. **Consequences of the Revolts:** These revolts had several important consequences:
   - ***Awareness and Reforms*:** The uprisings drew attention to the plight of peasants and tribal communities, prompting some legal and administrative reforms. For instance, the Bengal Tenancy Act aimed to protect tenants' rights.



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- ***Strengthening of Colonial Rule*:** In many cases, the British responded to the revolts by strengthening their control. They increased their military presence and implemented stricter laws to prevent future uprisings.
- ***Legacy of Resistance*:** The revolts left a legacy of resistance and highlighted the injustices faced by peasants and tribes. They inspired future movements and leaders in the struggle for India's independence.
- ***Economic Impact*:** The constant unrest and revolts affected agricultural productivity and the rural economy. The British realized the need to balance revenue extraction with the well-being of the agricultural population.

The commercialization of agriculture in nineteenth-century India had profound impacts on peasants and tribal communities. The shift to cash crops, high taxes, debt, and displacement led to widespread suffering and sparked numerous revolts. These uprisings highlighted the exploitation and injustices faced by the rural population and had lasting effects on India's social, economic, and political landscape.

In-Text Questions

1. What was the primary purpose of commercial agriculture under colonial rule in India?
   A) Meeting local food demands
   B) Providing employment opportunities
   C) Supplying raw materials for British industries
   D) Exporting finished goods to other colonies
2. What was one consequence of commercialization in colonial India?
   A) Decrease in the power of landlords
   B) Increase in the autonomy of peasants
   C) Strengthening of traditional social structures

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D) Consolidation of the landlord-moneylender alliance

3. Which part of the Indian economy became highly monetized under colonial rule?
   A) Agriculture
   B) Handicrafts
   C) Education
   D) Healthcare
4. What effect did commercialization have on the traditional union between agriculture and handicrafts in India?
   A) Strengthened it
   B) Erased it completely
   C) Had no impact
   D) Made it more flexible
5. Before British rule, what was the dominant unit of social exchange in Indian society?
   A) Self-sufficient village community
   B) Metropolitan city markets
   C) International trade routes
   D) Royal courts
6. What is commercialization?
   A) Exchange of goods for goods
   B) Measurement of goods in terms of money for exchange
   C) Production of goods for personal use only
   D) Distribution of goods within a local community
7. Which crop became prominent in the dry delta regions of Krishna and Godavari under the Ryotwari settlement?
   A) Cotton
   B) Sugarcane
   C) Rice
   D) Spices
8. Which Indian district highlighted the involvement of the Indian Leaf Tobacco Development Corporation Limited in tobacco cultivation?
   A) Guntur
   B) Balaghat
   C) Baghpath
   D) Kaveri

9. What was a significant feature of the agrarian economy in South India's Madras Presidency?
   A) Dependence on moneylenders B) Cooperative credit societies
   C) Joint-stock banks D) All of the above
10. What facilitated monetary transactions and contributed to the growth of a money market in Eastern India?
   A) Introduction of a uniform coinage system
   B) Availability of silver and gold coins
   C) Both A and B
   D) None of the above
11. Who were the large landholders recognized under the Ryotwari system in the Kaveri delta region?
   A) Zamindars B) Mirasidars
   C) Agriculturist moneylenders D) Bonded labourers
12. In which Indian presidency was the Ryotwari settlement implemented?
   A) Bengal Presidency B) Bombay Presidency
   C) Madras Presidency D) Delhi Presidency
13. What historical event further bolstered cotton exports from India to Britain?
   A) The American Civil War B) The Industrial Revolution
   C) The Opium Wars D) The French Revolution
14. What crop became a significant commercial crop in Western India, particularly in regions like Gujarat?
   A) Rice B) Cotton
   C) Sugarcane D) Spices
15. Which region in India saw improvements in irrigation infrastructure through the construction of canals, benefiting peasants with increased production of crops like cotton and sugarcane?
   A) Western India B) Central Punjab
   C) Eastern India D) South India

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5.8 SUMMARY

- Commercialization, defined as the valuation of goods in terms of money and their subsequent exchange in the market, was not a new concept to Indian society, even before British rule. However, the prevailing unit of social exchange was typically the self-sufficient village community.
- With the advent of British imperialism, commerce was imposed on Indian society, leading to a significant restructuring of social dynamics.
- Under colonial rule, India underwent a transformation in its role within the global economy.
- The colonial powers established a new international division of labour, wherein colonies like India became primary suppliers of raw materials for industries in metropolitan countries.
- Consequently, India was forcibly converted into a producer of raw materials for British industries, disrupting the traditional synergy between agriculture and handicrafts and resulting in the complete colonisation of the Indian economy. This process also solidified the landlord-moneylender alliance's dominance over peasants, facilitated by increased economic monetization and legal recognition of private property.
- Although the specific patterns of commercialization varied across different regions of India, the landlord-moneylender nexus gained traction uniformly, exerting control over agricultural production and economic transactions.

5.9 GLOSSARY

- **Kumri:** It is the practice of shifting cultivation in Western India, also known as Jhum, Podu, and other names in different regions.



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- **Agrarian Surplus:** It is the portion of a cultivator's production that surpasses his/her basic subsistence requirements.
- **Arakattis:** They are licensed labour contractors responsible for recruiting workers for plantations.
- **Debt-servicing:** It is the payments made to cover the costs of borrowed money, including interest charges.
- **Rate of Return:** It is the profit earned on an investment.

5.10 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. C
2. D
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. B
7. C
8. A
9. D
10. C
11. B
12. C
13. A
14. B
15. B

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5.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How do you define the process of commercialization of agriculture?
2. What are the factors behind commercialization?
3. Write short on cash crops.
4. Discuss the regional dimension of commercialization in colonial India.
5. What is the overall impact of commercialization?

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LESSON 6
MAKING OF A COLONIAL ECONOMY: DEINDUSTRIALIZATION IN COLONIAL INDIA (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

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6.1 Learning Objectives
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6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Understand what Deindustrialization is.
- Understand about Drain theory
- Know how deindustrialization destroy native industries.
- Learn what is the impact of deindustrialization on India
- Know how impacted village economy

6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the 17th century, trade between India and Europe heavily favoured India. During this time, Indian cotton became the most significant Asian import into the West, surpassing pepper and other commodities. Cotton textiles accounted for 83% of the total trade of the East India Company, significantly enhancing the Indian textile sector and perhaps generating substantial job opportunities for a large proportion of the population. During this era, there was a continuous influx of bullion into India from countries that were purchasing it, as the East India Company's profits primarily stemmed from the sale of Indian goods abroad. Consequently, the company sought to open new markets for Indian goods in Britain and other countries, prompting Indian rulers to tolerate and even encourage the establishment of the company's factories in India.

Nevertheless, this circumstance started to shift with the English triumph at the Battle of Plassey. Upon acquiring the Diwani of Bengal, the East India Company faced less pressure to export bullion into Bengal to fund its investments.

Instead, the firm used monies acquired from the Bengal plunder, earnings generated from duty-free inland commerce, and excess Diwani royalties to support its investments. Consequently, the corporation gradually ceased to



engage in fair competition and instead resorted to monopolising local markets by compelling manufacturers to sell their items to the company at artificially low rates set by the company. The British exploitation of India before 1813 may be described as the exploitation carried out by commercial capital under the framework of mercantilism. The primary goal of the East India Company was to get a significant amount of Indian produced products at the most competitive prices in order to generate enormous profits via their sale in Britain and other international markets. Nevertheless, their irresponsible and chaotic efforts to boost their acquisitions while reducing prices had a negative impact on the conventional Indian export sector, including the production of cotton textiles.

The British exploited Indian resources to enhance their own commerce and industries, resulting in a harmful influence on the Indian economy. This exploitation resulted in the subjugation of peasants and the exhaustion of resources. The land revenue systems implemented by the British resulted in the transfer of wealth from India to England, causing a significant drain on India's economy. The urban handicraft industry saw a dramatic decline as a result of the arrival of cheaper imported items and British policies that prioritised their own craft workers over Indian craftsmen. In the past, Indian artists received assistance from indigenous kings. However, with the expansion of British control, these monarchs vanished, resulting in a lack of patronage for the artisans.

The British colonial rule had a profound impact on India's political, social, and economic environment. Their economic policies intensified poverty and misery among the general population. Their actions included actively undermining India's self-sufficient village economy, resulting in a continuous flow of income from India to England without any corresponding economic advantages for India. This, in turn, worsened poverty in the country.

6.3 THE MEANING OF DE-INDUSTRIALIZATION

De-industrialization refers to a long-lasting and substantial decrease in industrial activity. Quantitative assessments of industrial expansion or decline often rely

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on metrics such as the share of national revenue attributed to industry and the proportion of the population that relies on it. An upward trend in these ratios signifies the process of industrialization, while a downward trend implies industrial decline or de-industrialization.

The decline of Indian industry and the transition to a mostly rural economy attracted considerable attention in both Colonial India and Britain, capturing the interest of many political and economic groups. Indian nationalists cited the decimation of Indian craft industries during the early period of British rule as proof of exploitation under the British government. Meanwhile, proponents of free trade in Britain condemned the East India Company's monopolistic dominance over India, denouncing its role in weakening the country's traditional crafts.

When the British acquired power in India, they systematically initiated the process of deindustrialization, which had a profound impact on the Indian economy and society. Here's how they did it:

- **Destruction of Local Industries:** The British policies aimed to weaken and destroy local Indian industries that competed with British products. Indian textiles, which were once renowned worldwide, were particularly targeted. British imports were sold at lower prices due to subsidies, which led to the collapse of the traditional Indian textile industry.
- **Imposition of Tariffs and Duties:** The British imposed heavy tariffs and duties on Indian manufactured goods while allowing British products to enter India duty-free or at a lower rate. This created an uneven playing field and led to the decline of Indian industries.
- **Promotion of Raw Material Extraction:** The British focused on extracting raw materials from India to support their own industries in Britain. They encouraged the cultivation of cash crops like cotton, indigo, and tea, which were exported to Britain, while discouraging the development of local industries.



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- **Infrastructure Development for British Interests:** Infrastructure such as railways and ports was developed primarily to facilitate the export of raw materials from India to Britain and to import British manufactured goods into India. This infrastructure development did not support the growth of Indian industries but instead integrated India into the British economic system in a subordinate role.
- **Economic Policies and Regulations:** British economic policies and regulations were designed to benefit British economic interests. For example, the deindustrialization was furthered by policies that restricted Indian entrepreneurs and discouraged investment in local industries.
- **Market Control:** British control over the Indian market meant that Indian consumers were forced to buy British manufactured goods, further undermining local industries. This control was reinforced through trade agreements and legislation that favored British interests.

6.4 DEBATE ON DE-INDUSTRIALIZATION

According to Dr. D. R. Gadgil, there are three main elements that have led to a rapid deterioration in the creative value and commercial importance of Indian handicrafts in the early 19th century. The following factors are specified: Firstly, the indigenous Indian courts, who historically acted as patrons of ornamental arts and handicrafts, employed highly skilled artisans on a regular wage basis. Furthermore, the arrival of foreign rule brought forth a variety of effects that significantly changed the socio-political environment. British control led to the emergence of new social classes, including the European bureaucratic class and the educated elite of the indigenous population. The earlier group showed a preference for things made in England, whereas the latter group, influenced by Western norms, criticised the local workmanship. Furthermore, the intrusion of increasingly sophisticated kinds of mechanised manufacturing presented

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significant rivalry**.** On the other hand, Western scholars like Morris D. Morris have contested the 'imperial exploitation thesis' proposed by Indian national writers and publicists. Instead, they argue that colonial rule potentially fostered economic activity in India in unprecedented ways. They suggest that by the end of the colonial period, India may have experienced economic growth compared to the beginning. A. and D. Thomer have analysed census data from 1881 to 1931, focusing on workers engaged in agriculture and manufacturing. Their findings indicate that the industrial distribution of the modern working force remained relatively stagnant during this period. However, they acknowledge the likelihood of a significant shift from industry to agriculture occurring between 1815 and 1880. Additionally, they note that handloom weavers, while facing challenges, likely did not experience a decrease in numbers or overall well-being during this time.

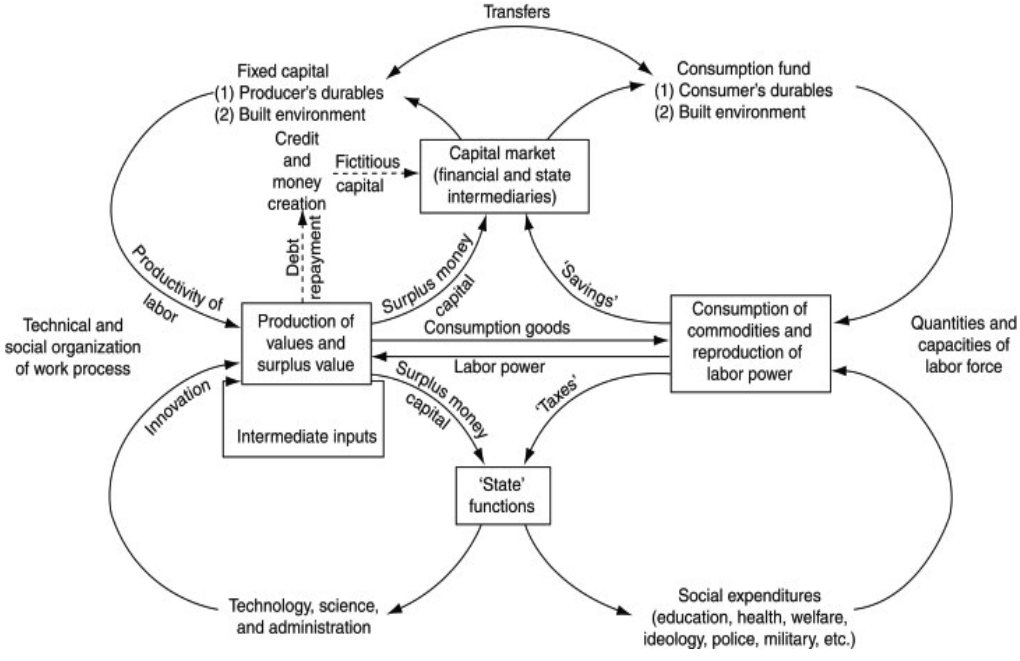


Fig. 6.1 *An overview of Deindustrialization*



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The debate on de-industrialization in India includes various perspectives and merits further examination:

- **Morris de Morris:** One of the key figures in this debate was Morris de Morris, who argued that British policies led to the de-industrialization of India. His work highlighted the systematic dismantling of Indian industries and the adverse effects of British economic policies on the Indian economy.
- **Other Scholars:** Scholars like Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt also contributed to this debate. Naoroji, in his work "*Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*," argued that British policies led to the impoverishment of India. R.C. Dutt's "*The Economic History of India*" similarly emphasized how British rule negatively impacted Indian economic structures.
- **Contemporary Views:** Modern historians and economists have revisited the debate, analyzing various aspects of British economic policies and their impact on India's industrial development. The debate continues to evolve as new evidence and perspectives emerge, providing a more nuanced understanding of the process of de-industrialization.

The systematic process of de-industrialization under British rule involved the destruction of local industries, imposition of unfavorable tariffs, and promotion of raw material extraction for British interests. The debate on de-industrialization, including the contributions of figures like Morris de Morris and other scholars, sheds light on the complex economic impacts of British colonial policies on India's industrial landscape.

6.5 EARLY TRADE WITH EUROPE

The British commercial capital's exploitation of India before 1813 may be described as occurring within the context of mercantilism. The major aim of

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the East India Company was to acquire Indian produced products at the most economical price in order to maximise profits via their sale in Britain and other international markets. Nevertheless, their assertive and uncontrolled efforts to boost sales while reducing prices had a negative influence on the conventional Indian export sector, including the production of cotton textiles.

Because there is a scarcity of dependable numerical data on indigenous industrial production during this time, historians and economists have heavily relied on qualitative evidence to comprehend the British exploitation of the Indian economy and its harmful impact on artisans and the agricultural population. In addition to the company's exploitation, British textile producers in the UK exerted influence on the government to implement import restrictions and prohibitions on high-quality Indian textiles. Starting in 1720, British industrial interests effectively banned the importation of Indian silks and printed calicoes into Britain. Additionally, they placed high taxes on the domestic use of Indian textiles. In 1813, Parliament imposed additional tariffs on these items. Prior to 1813, Indian businesses, particularly the textile industry, saw detrimental consequences in two distinct ways. Initially, the company's attempts to lower the cost of purchasing Indian cotton items effectively transformed weavers into bonded labourers, forcing them to sell their products at rates below the market value and even punishing them for any failures to meet expectations. Furthermore, the East India Company, which had a monopoly on commerce in India, encountered resistance from marginalised merchants and burgeoning British manufacturers who saw the company's imports into Britain as endangering their own businesses. The decrease in the proportion of Indian cotton piece goods in the company's investments and exports was significant as a result of a change in Indian exports from manufactured goods to basic products. This transition was followed by a proportional rise in the proportion of manufactured products in India's import. However, throughout time, the colonial administration began to systematically exploit the richness of India, including its natural resources and raw materials.

6.6 COLONIAL STATE AND DRAIN OF WEALTH

The previous leaders showed profound concern over the economic hardships endured by the peasants throughout the period of British colonial control in India. They expressed their opinions openly in order to reveal the economic exploitation of farmers and labourers caused by British imperialism. Eminent economists like Dadabhai Naoroji and R. C. Dutt, among others, astutely detected this exploitation. The incessant drain of income from India to England, without commensurate economic benefits for India, has emerged as the principal catalyst for the escalating poverty in the nation. Dadabhai Naoroji developed the 'Drain Theory' to explain this exploitation, with terms such as the 'material and moral drain' and 'bleeding drain.' In his 1901 book "*Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*," he cited Adam Smith's work "*An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of Indian Poverty*." In this book, he elaborated on the Drain Theory, which later became a fundamental aspect of Indian nationalism.

Different researchers have offered estimates of the outflow of money from India to England, but they vary in their calculations and the time periods they examine. George Wingate's estimate of the drain from 1834 to 1851 was 4,222,611 pounds a year, but William Digby's estimate for the period from 1757 to 1815 ranged from 500 to 1000 million pounds. During the period 1897, Dadabhai Naoroji calculated that the outflow bullion was worth ₹ 359 crores over the period of 10 years from 1883 to 1892.

Dadabhai Naoroji also recognised the external outflow as a significant element that contributed to India's destitution. He noted that India's declining gross national income, limited imports, poor quality of life, and small tax returns were direct consequences of British colonial authority. He ascribed India's poverty to the substantial depletion of the country's resources, both domestically and internationally.

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The process of wealth depletion in India was complex, including several elements originating from both inside and outside the country. The depletion of India's resources occurred as a result of the complicated systems that permitted the unilateral movement of cash in foreign commerce, therefore syphoning off the excess created. Dadabhai delineated many elements that influenced the operation of this transfer of resources, including India's colonial position, the onerous load of costly administration and military occupation, and the ineffectiveness of public spending in generating domestic employment.

Following the Battle of Plassey in 1757, which solidified British supremacy in India, there was a substantial change in the nation's economic environment. The process of wealth depletion from Bengal started as early as 1757, when substantial fortunes were forcibly extracted from Indian kings, Zamindars, and ordinary citizens and thereafter sent to Britain. The opium trade became a lucrative enterprise, with the excess being sent to England. Dadabhai Naoroji used British administrators from previous eras to substantiate his drain hypothesis, emphasising the significant outflow of money that was recognised by notable individuals such as Lord Cornwallis in 1790. He stressed that the economic outflow was facilitated via both yearly fees in India and England.

6.7 CAUSES OF DRAIN OF WEALTH

During the colonial administration system, it was typical for European workers to send money to England to support their families and children's education. In addition, workers of the East India Company often reinvested their money back in their native country. Remittances were also sent to buy British products, which were intended for both British workers' use and for purchases in India. Furthermore, the government's acquisition of goods produced in England played a role in this financial influx.



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The annual levies in England included a range of expenses:

1. A significant amount of public debt was amassed by the East India Company, mostly for the purpose of removing Indian monarchs from their respective realms. By the year 1900, the debt had reached a staggering amount of £224 million, the majority of which was earmarked for investment in economic undertakings such as the building of railroads and public infrastructure.
2. Dividends were distributed to the stockholders of the East India Company.
3. The expenses included disbursements for retirement benefits, leaves of absence for British military personnel, outlays for the administrative centre of the India Office in London, and remittances to the British War Office. These allegations were a consequence of India being under foreign jurisdiction.
4. The opium trade with China had a substantial impact on the external economic outflow, since income surpluses and savings obtained through corruption were transported to England through China.

The British government's internal economic exploitation of India paralleled its foreign exploitation:

1. Resources were extracted from domestic production via taxes, and these goods essentially constituted an outflow of money to foreign countries.
2. The internal drain occurred due to unbalanced exports that did not generate imports as a consequence.
3. Dadabhai Naoroji observed that Indian public finance was deficient in both effectiveness and usefulness for the Indian economy since expenditures in railroads and road transportation largely served imperialistic objectives.
4. Dadabhai Naoroji's perspective on public spending was aligned with the ideas of progressive English individuals during the mid-nineteenth

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century, demonstrating a compassionate comprehension of India's economic circumstances. He expressed his opinions on government spending as early as 1871 in his writings on the trade of India and financial administration.

The British colonial administration had a tremendous influence on the Indian economy, resulting in substantial transformations and difficulties. The stagnation of agriculture was caused by the commercialization of the industry, high demands for land income, the rise of landlords, growing levels of indebtedness, and the resulting poverty of producers. The British rulers' economic exploitation worsened poverty, increasing its scope. In addition, the implementation of different land tax schemes, the outflow of capital, and the decline of industrialization exacerbated the effects on India's economic terrain.

6.7.1 The Exact Process of Drain of Wealth in British India

The drain of wealth from India during British rule can be explained simply by describing the vicious circle generated through the Council of Bills and Home Charges. Here's how it worked:

- **Home Charges:** The British government transferred a large portion of Indian revenue to Britain as home charges. This money was used for the salaries and pensions of British officials, railway construction, and other administrative expenses. Essentially, Indian wealth was continuously being sent to Britain.
- **Passing of Bills:** The British Parliament and the Viceroy's Council passed laws that allowed them to exploit India's economic resources and send the profits to Britain. These laws were designed to weaken Indian industries and make India a market for British goods.
- **Economic Pressure:** Because of the home charges, India was under significant economic pressure. A large amount of Indian wealth was leaving the country, making its economic condition worse.



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- **Cycle of Debt:** To cover its administrative and development needs, the Indian government had to take loans. These loans were often from British banks, creating a cycle of debt that kept increasing.
- **Lack of Development:** With so much money leaving the country and going into debt repayment, there were not enough resources left for development in India. This led to increased poverty and backwardness in India, while Britain grew richer.
- **Impact on Society:** This cycle had severe effects on Indian society. The rural economy suffered, industries closed down, and unemployment rose. This created widespread dissatisfaction and led to feelings of rebellion among the Indian population.

The drain of wealth from India was a process where British policies and laws ensured that Indian wealth continuously flowed to Britain. This created a vicious cycle of economic pressure, debt, and lack of development, severely impacting Indian society while enriching Britain.

6.8 DEINDUSTRIALIZATION OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES

The introduction of British authority in India is responsible for the collapse of indigenous industries, especially handicrafts. The primary catalyst for this shift was the competition presented by machine-manufactured items imported from Britain, particularly in the textile industry. Britain's ability to engage in large-scale manufacturing enabled it to inundate Indian markets with affordable goods, posing a significant challenge to India's traditional handicraft sector.

At first, British imports to India, particularly woollen textiles, had a restricted level of market access. Nevertheless, the advent of industrialization brought about a substantial change in this situation. The problem was exacerbated by British trade policies that encouraged the exportation of British machine-made goods to India. In the 19th century, there was a period of Industrial capitalism

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when British entrepreneurs and merchants aggressively pursued economic opportunities in India using free trade principles.

The culmination of this attack occurred with the loss of the East India Company's monopoly on Indian commerce by the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813, which profoundly transformed the character of Indo-British trade. India, once a major exporter, saw a shift to become an importer, as English textiles gained dominance in Indian markets, resulting in the downfall of the Indian weaving industry. As a result, a kind of free trade that heavily favoured one side, especially in the cotton textile industry, was promoted after 1813. This had the effect of putting Indian goods at a disadvantage in English markets, while benefiting British products in India.

The preferential tariff policies implemented from 1878 to 1895 were designed to address a crisis in the British industrial sector. Their goal was to create a captive market in India, which would be made possible by the growing railway network. The transition had a significant influence on the market for Indian commodities, leading to the abandonment of ancestral professions by many craftsmen.

The Indian handicrafts industry suffered significant destruction, as acknowledged by the administration of William Bentinck in 1834. The government expressed sorrow over the difficult situation faced by cotton weavers. Similarly, Karl Marx attributed the demise of Indian handloom to British involvement. The railways also had a substantial impact on worsening the collapse of traditional industries by enabling the movement of commodities and the acquisition of raw resources.

6.9 CAUSES OF THE DESTRUCTION OF INDIGENOUS INDUSTRIES

Initially, the urban handicrafts sector had a rapid decline mostly as a result of the surge in less expensive imported products and the strategies used by



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British imperialism. In the past, Indian artists depended on support from local governing states, creating high-end and mid-range products that were mostly bought by nobility. Nevertheless, the preference for handcrafted items like jewels and kitchenware diminished due to the rise of British administration and the absorption of local nations. As a result, craftsmen experienced joblessness and resorted to farming for their means of living.

Furthermore, the British commercial strategy had adverse consequences for artisans and craftspeople in India. Native craftspeople had difficulties in acquiring raw materials for their own manufacture due to the British's insistence on farmers growing cash crops essential for their businesses. The British adopted a range of strategies to weaken indigenous industries, taking advantage of skilled craftsmen in the production of cotton and silk fabrics in Bengal, ultimately causing the collapse of the textile industry in the area. These exploitative regulations prioritized British interests while disregarding the development of Indian industries.

Furthermore, the expansion of enterprises using advanced technology throughout the 18th century, notably in England, required raw materials sourced from India. England implemented high tariffs on commodities exported from India while imposing low tariffs on imports into India, thereby showing preference for British industrial output. Consequently, the influx of high-quality and more affordable British goods inundated the Indian market, resulting in increased prices for Indian items and a loss of market share. Ultimately, this led to the deterioration of Indian commerce and industry.

Furthermore, British colonial administration had a detrimental effect on handicrafts by weakening the authority of guilds, who were responsible for ensuring high standards and controlling trade among urban craftsmen. The elimination of these overseeing entities resulted in the emergence of problems such as the adulteration of materials and substandard craftsmanship, which caused a decrease in the creative and financial worth of products created by skilled craftsmen.

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Additionally, the presence of European manufacturers intensified the demise of indigenous industry. The enhanced transportation infrastructure, including roads, trains, and the Suez Canal, expedited the dissemination of European merchandise across India. Although European textiles were of lower quality compared to Indian textiles, their price allowed even the impoverished to purchase them, resulting in a notable market shift towards imported machine-made items.

6.9.1 Decline of Traditional Craft

During the pre-British era, village artisan industries played an important role in making the village economy self-sufficient and fulfilling most of its industrial needs. With minimal external competition, villages operated as independent economic units. However, under colonial rule, the influx of inexpensive British and non-British machine-made goods resulted in the destruction of village industry. The introduction of transportation systems like railways and buses facilitated the transportation of goods to villages, further exacerbating the situation.

Famines also contributed to the decline of village artisan industries. During famine periods, impoverished artisans, especially weavers, had to seek alternative forms of employment as manual labourers. The decline of village handicrafts, although universal, was influenced by various social, economic, and local factors. The handloom industry, for instance, suffered greatly from the influx of cheap machine-made cloth, leading to a significant decline after 1850. Efforts to revive the industry, such as those led by Indian leaders like Gandhi and organisations like the All-India Spinners Association, had limited success. The introduction of machinery in rural production, such as iron plows and cane crushing machines, deteriorated carpenters' economic position. However, some carpenters found employment in modern industries in urban areas. Blacksmiths experienced minimal impact as the demand for their repair work remained steady in villages, although many migrated to towns and found employment in modern engineering workshops.



Tanners faced significant challenges as India's tanning industries were also linked to the global market. Many village tanners were forced to become land labourers, although some found employment in town tanning industries. The importation of cheap synthetic dyes had a severe impact on the village dyeing industry, nearly destroying it. The village pottery industry remained relatively resilient, as a significant portion of the population could only afford pottery due to financial constraints. In agricultural areas, rural artisans often engage in peasant crafts as supplementary sources of income, using locally sourced raw materials. Traditional crafts such as basket weaving saw little benefit from the challenge posed by machine-made imported items.

6.9.2 Consequence of Destruction of Traditional Handicrafts

The gradual decline of village industries disrupted the agricultural and industrial foundations of the village economies, leading to its dependency on external sources for industrial goods. Consequently, the village ceased to function as a self-sufficient economic unit and became reliant on the broader national and even global economy. However, this transformation also had positive implications, like the erosion of village artisan industries, while weakening the traditional village autocratic structure, contributed to the emergence of national consciousness and a shared national identity. Despite the decline of native handicrafts, there was no corresponding rise in indigenous manufacturing or mechanised industry. Even as modern industries began to emerge after 1850 and absorbed some of the displaced artisans, a significant portion resorted to agricultural labour for sustenance. This shift created an imbalance between industry and agriculture in India, placing excessive pressure on agricultural resources and adversely affecting both the economic conditions of those dependent on agriculture and the overall efficiency of agricultural practices. The decline of India's handicrafts and artisan industries also had repercussions on urban centres renowned for their manufacturing prowess. Cities like Dacca, Surat, and Murshidabad, which were once bustling industrial hubs, experienced depopulation and economic decline as their traditional industries faltered and eventually collapsed.

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6.10 IMPACT OF DEINDUSTRIALIZATION

The demise of indigenous industries was worsened by the removal of native rulers, who no longer provided support to these businesses.

The significant outflow of resources and cash from India to England resulted in a noticeable improvement in the socio-economic circumstances of the English population. The financial outflow simultaneously enabled increased investments in the English agricultural and industrial sectors from 1750, thereby accelerating the agricultural transformation of the eighteenth century and the later industrial revolution. Karl Marx emphasised the consequences of this economic situation, arguing that the British government intentionally dismantled local handloom and textile crafts, replacing them with cotton goods made in England, which led to the process of deindustrialization. This coordinated transformation occurred as a result of the decline in support from indigenous rulers for artisanal endeavours, the imposition of foreign control, and the strong rivalry from growing machine industries.

During the period of British control, there was a significant movement of people from ancient towns to newly established commercial centres, mostly situated in cities. This resulted in the growth and establishment of new urban centers. Nevertheless, this movement led to the deterioration of several towns with important historical value, including Mirzapur, Murshidabad, and Malda, as focus and economic activity migrated towards emerging cities like Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta.

The decline of urban handicrafts, resulting from the withdrawal of support from the royal patrons, caused a reduction in the population of ancient Indian cities. Craftsmen who were displaced from their customary jobs resorted to agriculture as a means of earning a living.

The implementation of railroads by the British had a transformative effect on transportation in India, causing several ancient cities to lose their importance as trade routes altered. Once thriving cities such as Mirzapur, located across



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the Ganges River, saw a decline in their significance due to the introduction of railroads. This development reduced the relevance of conventional trade routes and methods of transportation.

Decline of the Art and Crafts Industry: The waning of India's art and crafts sector resulted in the unemployment of artisans and craftsmen, compelling several individuals to pursue jobs in agriculture. Nevertheless, the agricultural sector, which was already under pressure due to British commercial policies, was unable to accommodate the additional labour, leading to a rise in concealed unemployment.

Urban stagnation and epidemics often afflicted many ancient cities, rendering them vulnerable to illnesses and resulting in frequent outbreaks of epidemics such as plague and cholera. The impact of these diseases on urban populations exacerbated the flight away from historic towns. The concurrent expansion of business and trade facilitated the emergence of new urban centres, therefore contributing to the downfall of existing ones.

6.11 RURALISATION OF INDIAN ECONOMY

With the onset of deindustrialization, India's economy progressively shifted its focus towards agriculture. A significant number of workers employed in manufacturing sectors in industrial hubs like Dacca, Murshidabad, Surat, and other locations experienced job losses, compelling them to relocate from urban areas to rural regions in pursuit of means of subsistence. The transition to agriculture as the main method of supporting oneself, prioritising the production of agricultural commodities and raw materials, while neglecting industrial advancement, has been referred to as a movement towards the ruralisation or peasantization of the Indian economy.

British authors throughout the 19th and 20th centuries often portrayed India as mostly an agrarian country, a perspective that was reinforced by intentional economic measures implemented by Britain. The objective of these strategies

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was to demolish India's rival handicraft industries and strengthen its agricultural sector to function as a primary supply of raw materials for Britain's industrial machinery.

Starting in 1769, the British East India Company initiated measures to encourage the production of raw materials in India while repressing its industrial capabilities. This included compelling silk workers to move to facilities operated by the company and banning the manufacturing of silk in people's homes. In 1783, British legislators stated their intention to restructure India's economy with the sole purpose of benefiting Britain's industrial sector.

According to historian R. C. Dutt, this policy continued until at least 1833, causing significant damage to India's indigenous industries in Favour of British production. The emergence of Britain's industrial revolution required a change in its tactics of exploiting colonies, resulting in the promotion of free trade capitalism instead of mercantile capitalism in India.

Following World War I, Britain aimed to use India's agricultural capacity, although the perceived inferiority of Indian raw resources presented a hurdle. In order to tackle this issue, the British government encouraged British citizens to establish permanent residence in India. This was made easier by the elimination of limits on immigration and property ownership in the Charter Act of 1833. British investment was directed towards the development of India's plantation industries, including tea, coffee, indigo, and jute. The government provided assistance via regulations like the Assam Wasteland Rules.

The shift from industry to agriculture in India gained momentum from 1815 to 1880, resulting in a substantial portion of the population relying on agriculture by the late 19th and early 20th centuries. However, despite this change, there was not a corresponding rise in agricultural productivity, which resulted in the poverty of rural areas.

A multitude of historical, political, economic, and social problems impeded the modernization of Indian agriculture, resulting in its lack of progress despite

a burgeoning population. The lack of progress led to frequent famines and escalating poverty throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries.

In-Text Questions

1. What was the primary commodity that significantly boosted Indian trade with Europe in the 17th century?
   A) Pepper B) Bullion
   C) Cotton textiles D) Other commodities
2. What percentage of the total trade of the East India Company was accounted for by cotton textiles during this period?
   A) 50% B) 67%
   C) 83% D) 100%
3. What characterized the British exploitation of India within the framework of mercantilism before 1813?
   A) Free competition
   B) High prices for Indian goods
   C) Low prices for Indian goods
   D) Support for Indian artisans
4. Who were adversely affected by the influx of cheaper imported goods during British rule?
   A) Indian rulers B) British merchants
   C) Urban handicraft industries D) Peasant farmers
5. Who were vocal about exposing the economic struggles faced by peasants under British rule?
   A) Mughal rulers
   B) Indian industrialists
   C) British administrators
   D) Early Indian leaders and economists

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6. How did Dadabhai Naoroji perceive investments in railways by the British?
   A) A means to improve transportation for local trade
   B) A strategy to boost agricultural productivity
   C) Serving imperialistic interests
   D) A way to empower local communities
7. When did the significant wealth drainage from Bengal to Britain begin?
   A) 1600 B) 1757
   C) 1765 D) 1857
8. Who developed the concept of the "Drain Theory" to explain India's economic exploitation under British rule?
   A) R. C. Dutt B) Jawaharlal Nehru
   C) Dadabhai Naoroji D) Mahatma Gandhi
9. Who posited that India experienced a process of de-industrialization?
   A) B.D. Basu B) Mohan Malaviya
   C) R.C. Dutt D) Mahatma Gandhi
10. According to historians like H.H. Wilson, what was one of the reasons for the decline of Indian industries?
   A) Lack of skilled labour
   B) Introduction of modern machinery
   C) British exploitation and policies
   D) Economic sanctions from other countries
11. According to Dr. D.R. Gadgil, what were the primary factors contributing to the decline of Indian handicrafts?
   A) Growth of indigenous manufacturing
   B) Patronage from colonial rulers
   C) Alien governance and competition from mechanized industries
   D) Introduction of modern transportation systems



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12. How did the introduction of railways impact old Indian towns?
    A) It revitalized their economies
    B) It decreased their significance as trade routes shifted
    C) It led to an increase in population
    D) It strengthened their traditional industries
13. How did the decline of native handicrafts affect the village economy?
    A) Increased self-sufficiency
    B) Dependency on external sources for industrial goods
    C) Strengthening of traditional autocratic structures
    D) Growth of indigenous manufacturing
14. Who were among the notable pioneers of the textile industry in Bombay during the late 19th century?
    A) Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
    B) Ratan Tata, J.R.D. Tata, Dorabji Tata
    C) Dinshaw Petit, Nusserwanji Petit, Bomaiyi Wadia, David Sassoon, and others
    D) Mukesh Ambani, Anil Ambani, Gautam Adani
15. Who remarked that "The history of cotton and textiles is not only the history of the growth of modern industry in India but, in a sense, it might be considered the history of India itself"?
    A) Jawahar Lal Nehru B) DD Basu
    C) Rabindranath Tagore D) RC Dutta

6.12 SUMMARY

- This lesson highlights the company's achievement in modifying India's economic framework, underscoring the need to obtain substantial amounts from the nation to cover domestic expenses.

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- The imperialist rule had a detrimental influence on traditional Indian industry, however the extent of this damage varied across different sectors.
- Cottage crafts, which were often pursued as supplementary professions during periods of agricultural inactivity, used easily accessible raw materials like basket weaving and coir work. These crafts managed to maintain their resilience against competition from foreign machine-made products.
- Similarly, the modest manufacturing endeavours carried out by potters, smiths, and carpenters saw little impact due to the replacement of their goods with imported commodities. Nevertheless, the export of hides from the nation had a significant impact on workers in the leather and cobbling industries.
- Indian politicians attributed British rule as the main catalyst for poverty and misery among Indians.
- Early nationalist leaders, like Dadabhai Naoroji, analysed the issue from a politico-economic perspective rather than only an economic one.
- Dadabhai often used British characters such as Lord Cornwallis and J. S. Mill in his works to exemplify how Britishers looted India.
- The British were attracted by India's vast riches and engaged in extensive looting, transporting cash and resources to England.
- With the spread of education, people began to systematically examine the fundamental factors contributing to India's poverty.
- The existence of structural problems in the nation's political-economic framework became apparent. This idea emphasised the transfer of money from India to the metropole, which gave rise to industries in England but caused deindustrialization in India.
- Historically, Indian artists and artisans were supported by local ruling authorities, resulting in the production of upscale and moderately priced goods mostly purchased by the aristocracy. However, as British dominance



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was established, and local kingdoms were incorporated into the British Empire, support and preferential treatment for these administrations diminished.

- The decline of local industries was exacerbated by the displacement of indigenous rulers, who no longer provided patronage to these enterprises.

6.13 GLOSSARY

- **Deindustrialization:** It is the process of substantial and long-lasting decline in industrial activity within a region or country.
- **Exploitation:** It is the act of taking advantage of someone or something for one's own benefit, often unfairly or unjustly.
- **Drain of wealth:** It is the transfer of wealth or resources from one country to another, typically from a colony to a colonizing power, resulting in economic depletion in the former.
- **Handicrafts:** These are products made by hand, often with traditional methods and tools, usually with a focus on artistic or cultural significance.
- **Ruralisation:** It is the process of shifting economic focus and activity from urban centres to rural areas, often involving a transition towards agriculture as the primary means of livelihood.
- **Mercantilism:** It is an economic system characterized by government control of trade, with the goal of accumulating wealth, often through the acquisition of colonies and the extraction of resources.

6.14 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. C
2. C

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3. C
4. C
5. D
6. C
7. C
8. C
9. C
10. C
11. C
12. B
13. B
14. C
15. A

6.15 SELF- ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. What were the causes of the de-industrialization?
2. What were the causes of the decline of the traditional handicraft industry in the colonial period in India?
3. Describe the colonial state and drain of wealth in the 18th Century in India.
4. Describe the trade with Europe in the early stages of the 18th century in India.
5. What was the Impact of De-industrialization in India?

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Unit IV: Social and Religious Reform Movements

Lesson 7: Social and Religious Reform Movement: An Overview of the Reformist Movements of the 19th Century (1700-1857)

Lesson 8: Social and Regional Reform Movement: Indigenous and Modern Education (1700-1857)

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LESSON 7

SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORM MOVEMENT: AN OVERVIEW OF THE REFORMIST MOVEMENTS OF THE 19TH CENTURY (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

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7.3 Social and Cultural Awaking
- 7.3.1 Nature
- 7.3.2 Causes

7.4 The Brahmo Samaj
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7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Learn about the reasons and methods behind different reforms in India.
- Gain insight into the key reformers and their views on Indian society.
- Understand the scope and approach of these reforms and their limitations.
- Understand the historical context of the social and religious reform movements.



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- Describe the life and work of Raja Rammohan Roy.
- Discusses the Brahmo Samaj.
- Learn about the life & contributions of Swami Dayanand Saraswati.
- Discuss the activities of the Arya Samaj.-. Comprehend Swami Vivekananda's impact both in India and abroad.

7.2 INTRODUCTION

In the 19th century, India experienced several reform movements across different regions. These movements aimed to modernise Indian society by restructuring it. This section provides an overview and analysis of these socio-religious reform movements, emphasising their importance.

After the Battle of Plassey in 1757, a series of events happened in India until the Revolt of 1857. These events deeply affected India. The British rule led to big changes in how people lived and what they believed. They destroyed Indian politics, changed the economy, and attacked social traditions and culture. This gave the impression that the West was merely using India as a base from which to extract resources and exert cultural control. People started to resist this political control and were forced to think a certain way. This resistance grew stronger over time.

The western influence targeted the India's core belief systems. Since removing British power seemed impossible, Indians focused on social, religious, and cultural aspects influenced by the West. This led to self-examination and religious reform in the early 1800s. In the latter half of the century, this movement gained more traction. Western ideas like Christianity and rationalism made Hindus and Muslims rethink their traditions. They realised that their original religions had been tainted by blind adherence to old customs, meaningless rituals, and harmful superstitions. The goal of both Hinduism and Islam was to free oneself from these negative aspects so that spiritual life could develop, leading individuals and society to freedom and happiness.

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Under British rule, socio-religious reform movements in India led to increased national awareness among Indian people and were also influenced by liberal ideas from the West. The main objective of these movements was to reform and reconstruct society and religion at the national level. Social reformers believed that to revive their faith they would have to get rid of those elements that did not resemble the core beliefs. All reformers believed that their political failures and problems came from moral degradation and social degradation caused by the neglect of true religion.

Historiographical Thinking on Social and Religious Reform Movements in Colonial India

Historiographical thinking about the social and religious reform movements in colonial India involves examining the complex interplay between colonial consciousness, colonial modernity, and the varied responses of revivalist and reformist movements. The following aspects are crucial in understanding these movements:

1. **Colonial Consciousness and Modernity:** The concept of colonial consciousness refers to the awareness and impact of British colonial rule on Indian society and its institutions. Colonial modernity introduced Western ideas of governance, science, and education, which created a context in which Indian reformers had to navigate their responses. This consciousness influenced the nature and direction of social and religious reform movements.
    - ***Colonial Modernity:*** The British colonial rule brought about significant changes in India's socio-political landscape. Modernity, characterized by the adoption of Western science, rationality, and administrative practices, prompted a re-evaluation of traditional Indian practices and beliefs. Reformers were often caught between embracing these new ideas and retaining their cultural heritage.



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2. **Revivalist and Reformist Movement:** The debate over **revivalist and reformist movements** highlights the duality in the approaches to change within the Indian society. Revivalist movements aimed to return to perceived golden ages of past Hindu or Islamic traditions, often as a reaction to colonial rule, while reformist movements sought to modernize and improve society by critiquing and reforming traditional practices.
   - ***Revivalism vs. Reformism:*** Revivalist movements, such as those led by figures like Swami Vivekananda and the Arya Samaj, sought to rejuvenate traditional Indiareligions and practices, often as a reaction to colonial influence. In contrast, reformist movements, including those spearheaded by reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, aimed to modernize Indian society by critiquing and reforming social norms and practices that they viewed as outdated.
   - ***Two Sides of the Same Coin:*** Revivalist and reformist movements can be seen as two sides of the same coin. While revivalists sought to reclaim and emphasize traditional values and practices, reformists aimed to adapt and modernize those practices. Both responses were influenced by the colonial experience, as they sought to address the challenges posed by British rule.
3. **Perceptible Ambivalence amongst Reformers:** The perceptible ambivalence among reformers reflects the tension between adopting modern Western ideas and preserving traditional Indian values. Reformers often grappled with the challenge of integrating new concepts while addressing the needs and expectations of their communities.
   - ***Ambivalence:*** Reformers exhibited ambivalence as they navigated the tension between modernity and tradition. For example, while advocating for social reforms such as the abolition of sati or child marriage, they also had to contend with the preservation of cultural and religious identities. This ambivalence is evident in the ways reformers balanced their reformist agenda with respect for traditional values.

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4. **Inner Tensions of Colonial Modernity:** The inner tensions of colonial modernity refer to the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the process of modernization under colonial rule. These tensions are reflected in the social and religious reforms that emerged during this period.
   - ***Contradictions and Conflicts***: The introduction of Western education and ideas often conflicted with traditional beliefs and practices. Reformers faced the challenge of addressing the social issues within their communities while dealing with the overarching influence of colonial rule. These contradictions were evident in debates over issues such as women's rights, education, and social reform.

Historiographical thinking about social and religious reform movements in colonial India must consider the interplay of colonial consciousness, colonial modernity, and the dynamics of revivalist and reformist movements. The ambivalence among reformers and the inner tensions of colonial modernity highlight the complex and often contradictory nature of the reform process. Understanding these factors provides a nuanced view of how Indian society responded to and navigated the challenges of colonial rule and modernity.

7.3 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AWAKING

The social and cultural awakening included:

7.3.1 Nature

The British rule in India catalysed profound social transformations, deeply influencing Indian life and thought. Western culture's impact ushered in a spirit of rationalism, replacing blind faith in traditions, beliefs, and conventions. The rationalising effect of English education initially influenced religious and social ideas, eventually shaping political consciousness. Western knowledge spurred movements like the Brahmo Samaj, the Prarthana Samaj, and the Theosophical



Society, while orthodox Indian sentiments led to the formation of the Arya Samaj. Throughout the nineteenth century, nearly every aspect of Indian life and society underwent significant change under British influence.

In addition to the emergence of new religious sects, orthodox Hinduism underwent profound shifts, with calls for the eradication of social abuses and the introduction of modern social reforms. Educational paradigms and literary expressions underwent revolutionary changes, reflecting the socio-religious reform movement's spirit and the dawn of the modern age. British imperialism in India precipitated a complex interplay of cultural exchange and resistance, shaping India's trajectory towards modernity. Western influence prompted Indians to critically reevaluate their traditions and embrace rationalism. English education, initially geared towards producing a class of administrators and intermediaries, inadvertently fostered a spirit of questioning and enlightenment among the educated elite. This intellectual awakening laid the groundwork for social reform movements that challenged entrenched norms and practices.

The impact of British rule on Indian society was multifaceted. On one hand, it engendered a cultural renaissance characterised by the emergence of reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj, which sought to reconcile Indian spirituality with modern rationality. The Brahmo Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, advocated for monotheism, social reform, and the abolition of caste distinctions. Similarly, the Prarthana Samaj, established in Bombay in 1867, aimed to promote monotheism, social equality, and women's rights. Simultaneously, the Theosophical Society, founded by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott in 1875, sought to explore the spiritual heritage of humanity and foster universal brotherhood. These movements represented attempts to synthesise Western rationalism with Indian spirituality, reflecting a broader trend towards religious and cultural reform in response to British influence. Conversely, orthodox Indian sentiments coalesced in movements like the Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati in 1875. The Arya Samaj sought to purify Hinduism of perceived corruption and revive Vedic

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traditions. Rejecting Western influence, the Arya Samaj emphasised the authority of the Vedas and advocated for social and religious conservatism.

The nineteenth century witnessed a confluence of socio-religious reform movements and the articulation of modern political consciousness. These movements were fuelled by a desire to challenge social injustices and advocate for progressive change. The demands for social reform cut across caste and religious lines, reflecting a nascent sense of Indian identity and solidarity. The impact of British rule extended beyond religious and social spheres to encompass education and literature. The introduction of English education led to a paradigm shift in educational methods and curriculum. English-medium schools proliferated, providing access to Western knowledge and ideas. This educational revolution empowered a new generation of Indians with the tools to engage critically with their society and the world. Literature, too, underwent a transformation under British rule. Vernacular languages flourished alongside the rise of Indian literature in English. Writers like B. C. Chattopadhyay, Rabindranath Tagore, and Raja Rao pioneered a new literary aesthetic that synthesised Indian themes with Western literary forms. Their works grappled with the complexities of modernity, identity, and social change, reflecting the cultural and intellectual ferment of the times. The impact of British imperialism on Indian society was profound and far-reaching. While it brought about significant social, cultural, and intellectual transformations, it also engendered resistance and resurgence.

The nineteenth century witnessed a dynamic interplay of tradition and modernity, as Indians grappled with the challenges and opportunities presented by colonial rule. Through socio-religious reform movements, educational initiatives, and literary expressions, Indians sought to navigate the complexities of a changing world while asserting their cultural identity and aspirations for self-determination.

7.3.2 Causes

The reform movement of the 19th century in India was propelled by a multitude of factors, chief among them being the establishment of British colonial rule. The



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British administrative system, shaped by its origins as a commercial enterprise, exhibited unique characteristics that fostered an environment conducive to intellectual growth. The Council form of government, adopted from the outset, facilitated deliberative decision-making through mutual discussions and majority voting. Additionally, the supremacy of civil authority over the military in the administrative hierarchy contributed to a relatively mild administrative practice.

The efforts of Orientalists played a significant role in reinvigorating India's historical consciousness. Figures such as Sir William Jones, Charles Wilkins, and H.H. Wilson embarked on pioneering work to illuminate India's rich past. Their scholarly endeavours helped revive interest in India's cultural heritage and served as a catalyst for intellectual exploration. Another catalyst for the reform movement was the determined missionary activity aimed at Christianizing India. While the early British East India Company refrained from interfering in the socio-religious lives of Indians, the Charter Act of 1813 marked a significant shift. These missionaries, often employing derogatory language to denigrate Hindu gods and religious practices, sought to convert Indians to Christianity. Their fervent efforts, particularly in the initial stages, attracted some impressionable young minds to Christianity. In response to the missionary onslaught on their religion and social customs, Indian intellectuals recognised the imperative of reform. Led by figures like Rammohan Roy, they endeavoured to address the perceived evils within Indian society while simultaneously defending its cultural and religious traditions. Rammohan Roy emerged as a pivotal figure in this awakening, advocating for religious and social reform while challenging the denigration of Hinduism by missionaries. The reform movement of the nineteenth century encompassed a broad spectrum of initiatives aimed at revitalising Indian society. It sought to reconcile tradition with modernity, address social injustices, and advocate for progressive change. The movement was characterised by a diversity of voices and approaches, reflecting the complexity of Indian society and the challenges posed by colonial rule.

One of the central objectives of the reform movement was to eradicate social evils and promote social equality. Leaders like Rammohan Roy and

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Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar championed causes such as the abolition of Sati, the promotion of widow remarriage, and the eradication of caste-based discrimination. Their efforts paved the way for legislative reforms that sought to transform Indian society along more equitable lines. The reform movement also encompassed religious revivalism and the cultural renaissance. Figures like Swami Vivekananda and Dayananda Saraswati sought to revitalise Hinduism by emphasising its philosophical and spiritual dimensions. They sought to counter missionary propaganda by promoting a proud and assertive Hindu identity rooted in India's ancient traditions. Moreover, the reform movement spurred the growth of nationalist sentiment and paved the way for India's struggle for independence. The awakening of national consciousness was fuelled by a sense of pride in India's cultural heritage and a desire for self-determination. Leaders like Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Dadabhai Naoroji mobilised popular support for the cause of independence, laying the groundwork for the eventual overthrow of British rule.

In conclusion, the Indian reform movement of the 19th century was a multifaceted phenomenon driven by a confluence of factors. It represented a response to the challenges posed by colonialism and a quest for social, cultural, and political renewal. The movement's legacy endures in independent India's commitment to democracy, social justice, and secularism.

7.4 THE BRAHMO SAMAJ

It can be understood through the following points:

7.4.1 Raja Rammohan Roy

Raja Rammohan Roy is called the "*Father of Modern India*" because he played a major role in taking India from ancient times to modern times. Even though he grew up in a difficult period of Indian history, he was still special. He was the first to make his fellow Indians realise things. Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo

Samaj, which believed in one God. This was the beginning of the movement for social and religious transformation in India. He did not just focus on Hinduism, he also wanted Indians to get western education. They founded newspapers, fought for press freedom, pushed for change in politics and the way things were run, and worked hard to eliminate unfair treatment of people.

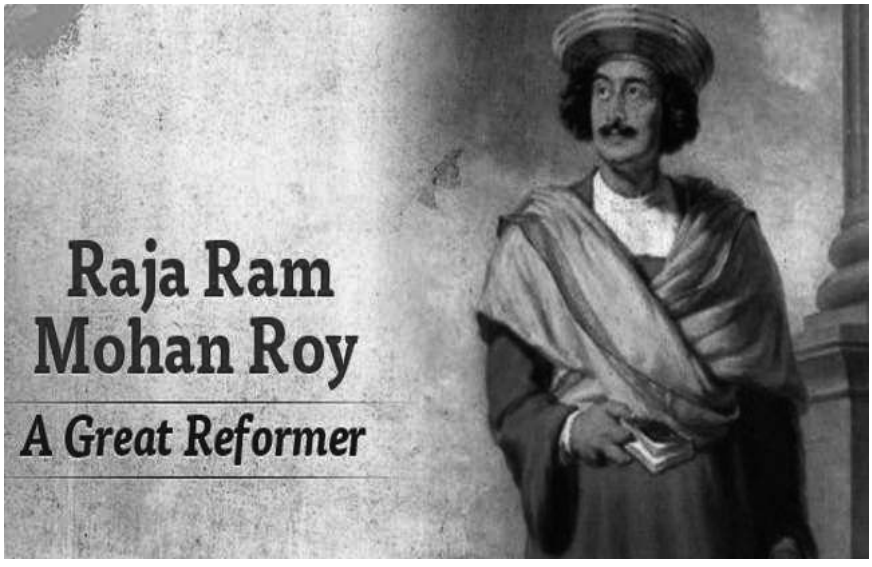


Fig. 7.1 *Raja Ram Mohan Roy*

7.4.2 Atmiya Sabha

Raja Rammohan Roy held Hinduism in high esteem, but he trusted that Hindus hadn't grasped their religion accurately. He strongly opposed practices like idol worship, rituals, sati (widow burning), child marriage, and other customs. He advocated for gender equality In Kolkata in 1815, supporters of his views formed a group called the "Atmiya Sabha."

7.4.3 Brahmo Samaj

Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo Samaj on August 20, 1828, in Calcutta. "Brahmo" means someone who believes in Brahman, and "Samaj" means a group

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of people. He wanted this group to bring together people from different religions and make them realise they are all God's children. Anyone could join the Samaj, no matter what religion, caste, or creed they belonged to. Raja Rammohan Roy and his followers used to go to a Christian church for prayers. Later, some of his followers started demanding a place of their own to worship. He started a prayer room called 'Brahma Sabha' in Kolkata on August 20, 1828, by renting a house from Ram Kamal Basu. It was officially opened to the general public on January 23rd, 1830 and was later renamed Brahmo Samaj.

7.4.4 Principles of Brahmo Samaj

It includes:

1. There is one God who created and takes care of the world. God has endless power, wisdom, love, and goodness.
2. People's souls live forever and can improve forever. They are responsible for their actions towards God.
3. No created thing, including people, should be worshipped as God. God talks directly to people's souls, so there's no need for prophets or holy books to talk to God.
4. Truth is the only religion for Brahmos. The Vedas and other holy books aren't always right. All religious teachings and books should only be respected if they match what God tells people's souls.
5. People should worship God every day by loving and obeying what God wants.
6. Everyone is the same to God. So, there shouldn't be unfair treatment because of someone's caste, skin colour, race, or gender.
7. Brahmos don't believe in worshipping statues, killing animals for God, or doing rituals.

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7.4.5 Religious Reforms

After gaining enough understanding of various religious beliefs, Raja Rammohan Roy began to share his own religious perspectives. Here are some of his significant religious reforms:

- **Spread of Monotheism:** Raja Ram learned about Islam, Christianity, and the Upanishads and started promoting monotheism, the belief in one God. He taught that there's only one God and encouraged everyone to treat each other like brothers and sisters, no matter their background.
- **Opposition to Idol Worship:** Rammohan didn't like idol worship because he thought God didn't have a physical form. He believed the best way to find happiness was through thinking deeply about spirituality and worshipping the Supreme Being. He said the best kind of worship was one full of patience, love, kindness, and no hate. Anyone could join the Brahmo Samaj, which helped people from different religions get along better.

7.4.6 Social Work

Rammohan Roy was deeply unhappy with the harmful practices present in Indian society. Many wrongful actions were justified by religion. He aimed to eliminate these social evils that had taken root under the guise of religion. Below are some of the social initiatives started by Raja Rammohan Roy.

- **Abolition of Sati Practice:** Raja Rammohan Roy wanted to make life better for Indian women. He really didn't like the cruel tradition of sati, where widows had to burn themselves alive on their husband's funeral pyre. In 1818, he sadly watched his sister-in-law, Alakamanjari, do sati, and he couldn't stop her. He felt so upset and sorry about it that he promised to keep fighting until Sati was stopped for good. Many people joined him in his fight. Finally, in 1829, the British government, led by Lord William

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Bentinck, made sati illegal and said people who did it would be punished. Rammohan Roy's hard work paid off, and sati was no longer allowed.



Fig. 7.2 *Sati Practice*

- **Opposition to Polygamy:** Raja Rammohan Roy didn't like the idea of one person having many wives or buying girls for marriage. He especially didn't like a system in Bengal called kulinism, where girls from lower castes were married to men from higher castes. These men didn't really want a marriage; they just wanted more wives, like a business deal. Rammohan Roy criticised this system because he believed marriage should be about love and respect, not about business or treating people unfairly based on their caste. Because husbands often abandoned their wives after marriage to seek another spouse, the young brides were left vulnerable, relying on their fathers or brothers for support. Raja Rammohan Roy highlighted that Hindu scriptures only permitted men to remarry under specific and rare circumstances. Therefore, he opposed the practice of polygamy.



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- **Opposition to the Caste System:** Raja Rammohan Roy really didn't like it when people treated others badly because of their caste or if they thought some people were "untouchable." He thought everyone should be treated equally, no matter what caste they were born into. He even said that people from different castes should marry each other and eat together. This was a big deal because it went against what many people believed at the time. Rammohan Roy wanted to change society so that everyone could be treated fairly, no matter their background.

7.4.7 Supported the Farmers

Even though he owned a lot of land and was wealthy, Raja Rammohan Roy didn't like it when rich landowners treated farmers and workers unfairly. He wanted the government to make rules so that landlords couldn't charge farmers too much rent. He thought farmers and landowners should get along well, so he asked the British government to make laws to protect farmers' rights to rent land. Rammohan Roy wanted everyone to be treated fairly, no matter if they were rich or poor.

7.4.8 Freedom of Press

During Raja Rammohan Roy's time, there wasn't much freedom for newspapers, and most news was only in English. But Rammohan Roy changed that by starting two newspapers: one in Persian called "Miratulakhbar" (The Mirror of News) and one in Bengali called "Samvad Kaumudi" (The Moon of Intelligence). The Indians had to ask the British for permission to publish news. But Roy thought a free press was important for freedom. In 1823, he and others asked the British government to let newspapers be free. They said this would benefit both the rulers and the people. In 1835, Sir Charles Metcalfe, who was in charge at the time, got rid of rules about newspapers because of Roy's work. This meant newspapers could be free to publish what they wanted.

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7.4.9 Educational Works

Some of the educational works of Roy are as follows:

- **Promotion of Western Education:** Raja Rammohan Roy really liked Western education. He helped start the Hindu College in Calcutta in 1817 to teach English. He also created the Anglo-Hindu School to encourage more English learning. He thought the government should spend money on teaching Western subjects instead of just Sanskrit. In 1835, Lord William Bentinck made a big rule supporting Western education. This was what Rammohan Roy wanted, and it made his dreams come true.
- **Support for Women's Education:** In traditional Indian society, female education was prohibited, and women were not encouraged to pursue schooling. Rammohan Roy, however, strongly advocated for women's education.
- **Literacy Work:** From 1815 to 1820, Rammohan Roy wrote 14 important books in Bengali and 10 in English. He realised that Hindu religious texts were hard for regular people to understand because they were in Sanskrit. So, he translated them into English, Bengali, and Hindi, making what he called the Abridged Version Vedandasaar. In 1820, he wrote a book called "The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness." He also helped make Bengali writing more like regular writing, not just poetry. He even wrote the first Bengali grammar book. For about fifty years, the Brahmo Samaj made Hinduism better and supported ideas that weren't just about religion. This group played on important role in making Bengal and India better. They wanted things like more freedom for people, everyone being together, and making society fairer. They were an example for other groups who wanted the same things.



7.5 THE ARYA SAMAJ

It can be observed through the following points:

7.5.1 Background

Swami Dayanand Saraswati started the Arya Samaj. It was different from the Brahmo Samaj because it was more traditional and strong-willed. While the Brahmo Samaj and the Prathana Samaj were influenced by Western ideas and Indian responses to Western thinking. Swami Dayanand Saraswati's reform movement looked into India's past for inspiration. The Arya Samaj based its main ideas on India's old scriptures and religions, especially from the time of the Vedas.

7.5.2 Early Life of Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883)

Swami Dayanand Saraswati, an important Hindu scholar and reformer, started the Arya Samaj. He was born on February 12, 1824, in Tankara, Gujarat. He began questioning traditional Hindu beliefs, especially about God, at a young age. He didn't like the idea of having many gods or idol worship. One night, he fasted and watched to see if Lord Shiva would accept offerings made to his idol. Instead, he saw a mouse eating the offerings, which made him doubt if this god could protect people if he couldn't even protect his own offerings. After his younger sister and granduncle died, he thought a lot about life and death. In 1846, he left home to avoid getting married and find answers about life. He lived as a wandering ascetic for about fifteen years, seeking knowledge. He settled in Mathura, where he studied the Vedas under the blind sage Virjanand. After learning, Virjanand requested that he teach others. Dayanand Saraswati travelled all over India, giving speeches against the caste system, idol worship, and child marriage. He debated with religious scholars and priests, showing his

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deep knowledge of the Vedas. Many people came to hear him speak, and even kings asked him to talk.

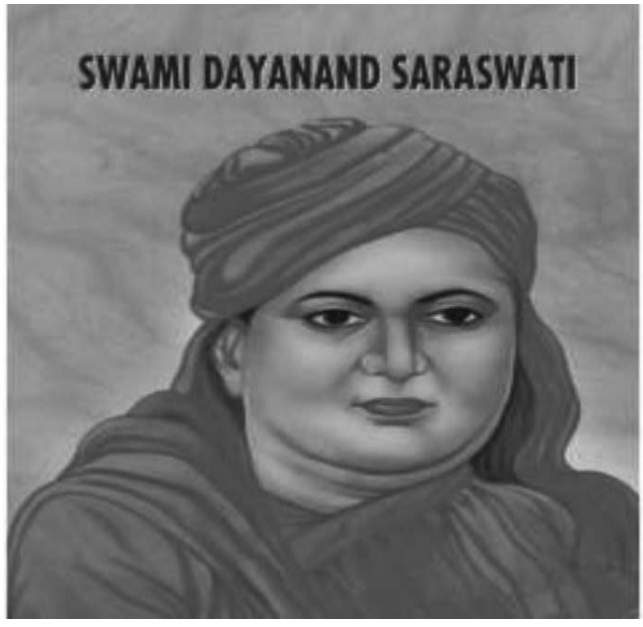


Fig. 7.3 *Swami Dayanand Saraswati*

7.5.3 Back to the Vedas

Dayanand Saraswati didn't like Western education or other religions like Christianity or Islam. He thought the Vedas were the only true source of knowledge. In his book "Satyartha Prakash" (Light of Truth), he explained what he thought the Vedas meant. He believed the Vedic religion was the best and that Vedic society didn't have bad things like the caste system or treating some people as untouchable. He also thought men and women were equal in Vedic society. He really believed in the Vedic religion and wanted people to go back to following it because he thought it would make people better. That's why he started the Arya Samaj, to teach individuals about the Vedas, change Hinduism for the better, and get rid of bad things in society.



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7.5.4 Establishment of the Arya Samaj

Dayanand Saraswati really believed in Vedic Hinduism and thought the Vedas were super important. He didn't like that only Brahmins could understand the Vedas, so he started the Arya Samaj in Mumbai on April 10, 1875. The Arya Samaj means "Society of the Nobles," and it was all about changing Hinduism for the better. Dayanand Saraswati spent his whole life working to spread the Arya Samaj to different places. He wanted to create a fairer society where everyone was treated equally through the Arya Samaj. They didn't like things like worshipping statues, killing animals for God, letting priests have all the power, the caste system, treating some people as untouchable, child marriage, believing in many gods, burning widows, or treating women badly. They said these things weren't in the Vedas, so they didn't make sense.

7.5.5 Principles of the Arya Samaj:

The Arya Samaj members adhered to "Ten Principles," which are outlined as follows:

1. God is the ultimate source of all genuine knowledge.
2. God embodies all truth, knowledge, omnipotence, and immortality, and is the sole entity worthy of worship.
3. The Vedas represent the true repository of knowledge.
4. Aryas should always embrace the truth and reject falsehood.
5. All actions should be undertaken after careful consideration of right and wrong.
6. The primary goal of this Samaj is to improve the world's material, spiritual, and social well-being.
7. Everyone should be treated with love and fairness.
8. Ignorance must be eradicated, and knowledge must be advanced.

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9. Each person should prioritise their own well-being along with the well-being of others.
10. The collective welfare of humanity should take precedence over individual welfare.

7.5.6 Religious Work

Swami Dayanand Saraswati recognised the disorderly state of Hinduism. To address this, he proposed a reintroduction of the Vedic religion as a means of reforming Hinduism. Here are some of his religious reforms:

- **Against Idolatry:** The Arya Samaj questioned the traditional Brahmin beliefs and said there was no proof in the Vedas that idols should be worshipped as gods. Swami Dayanand Saraswati explained that God is everywhere and can't be confined to temples, which he called just "religious shops" run by priests. So, he criticised Hindus who believed in many gods and worshipped idols. He also disliked the idea of sacrificing animals or humans or performing rituals and ceremonies. In 1886, he wrote a booklet in Sanskrit called "Bhagvad Khandanam" to free Hinduism from the control of priests.
- **Monotheism:** He strongly believed in one God, as the Vedas describe. He thought that Vishnu, Rudra, and Agni weren't separate gods, but different sides of the same divine being. He claimed that only the Vedic religion was real, and he told his followers to follow the Vedas' teachings.
- **Shuddhi Movement:** One of Arya Samaj's objectives was to confront the influences of Islam and Christianity, as many Hindus were converting to these faiths. Using purification ceremonies, Arya Samaj successfully reintegrated thousands of converted Hindus back into Hinduism.
- **Opposition to the Priestly Class:** The Arya Samaj rejected idol worship, rituals, and the hierarchical priesthood commonly associated with the caste system. It also opposed the traditional Hindu practices propagated by the



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orthodox Hindu priestly class, which often served their own interests. Swami Dayanand Saraswati firmly believed that there was no need for a priestly class to act as intermediaries between individuals and God, nor were they the guardians of Hinduism. He criticised the ignorance and self-serving behaviour of the priestly class, which exploited the common people for their personal gain.



Fig. 7.4

- **Opposition to Karmakand:** Swami Dayanand taught that the Vedic religion did not include idol worship, belief in divine incarnation, pilgrimage, or outward rituals. He dismissed any belief or tradition that could not withstand rational scrutiny. Thus, he encouraged people to abandon anything that was not supported by the Vedas.

7.5.7 Social Work

Swami Dayanand was a religious reformer as well as a social reformer. He identified issues like child marriage and idol worship are prevalent in society. The goal of Arya Samaj was to eliminate such harmful practices and advocate for social welfare. Here are some social initiatives by Swami Dayanand:

- **Opposition to the Caste System:** Swami Dayanand Saraswati disagreed with the idea that people were born into specific castes, and he didn't like the caste system. He showed that the Vedas didn't support treating some

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people as untouchable. He believed a person's worth should be based on what they did, not who their parents were. He started a movement against untouchability and encouraged marriages between people from different castes.

- **Preached Equality:** Swami Dayanand Saraswati believed that everyone starts out the same, and what job they choose decides if they're seen as a Brahmin, Vaishya, Kshatriya, or Sudra. He said each of these groups needs the others, and none is better or worse than the rest. In the Arya Samaj, he treated everyone the same, no matter their caste or religion.
- **Opposition to Child Marriage:** Before India gained independence, child marriage was common. Swami Dayanand Saraswati worked hard to stop this tradition in Hindu society, but unfortunately, it still happens in some places today. He wanted child marriage to end. In the Arya Samaj, they made rules that boys couldn't get married before they were 25, and girls couldn't get married before they were 16.
- **Orphanages:** Arya Samaj started its initial orphanage in Firozepore, Punjab, and then set up many more across the nation. They also established shelters for widows and women in need to live in, learn useful skills, and find suitable spouses.

7.5.8 Swadeshi Movement

Swami Dayanand strongly believed in Swadeshi and encouraged everyone to use only things made in India. He also called for boycotting goods made in other countries. He supported democracy and self-government strongly.

7.5.9 Encouragement for Widow Remarriage

Swami Dayanand supported widow remarriage. He requested that people should stop the cruel and old-fashioned practice of "Sati-Pratha." To help widows escape the difficulties of being forced to remain widows, Swami Dayanand promoted widow remarriage. He recommended the "niyoga" method for widows.

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7.5.10 National Awakening

Swami Dayanand spread the idea that British rule in India didn't help our country's progress. Instead, it mostly benefited the British. The Arya Samaj made people more aware of their country and its issues. It also helped create important leaders like Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shradhanand, Bipin Chandra Pal, Munshi Ramanand, and others who were part of the freedom movement. This awareness inspired people to come together and work for their independence.

7.5.11 Educational Work

Swami Dayanand Saraswati trusted that education was the best tool for improving society and religion. To promote education, especially Vedic knowledge, Arya Samaj set up different gurukulas. Here are some of the educational efforts by S. D. Saraswati and Arya Samaj:

- **Dayanad Anglo Vedic College:** In memory of Swami Dayanand, his followers set up many schools, colleges, and hostels across the country. Thanks to Lala Hansraj's efforts, the first Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College opened in Lahore on July 1st, 1886. The college offered a mix of Western and scientific education, but it also made sure to keep Indian culture alive. Its main aim was to encourage the study of Hindu literature, classical Sanskrit, and the Vedas.
- **Gurukula:** The Arya Samaj started Gurukulas to teach the traditional Aryan way of learning. One famous Gurukula, near Hardwar at Kangri, was set up by Lala Munshi Ram. Kids joined when they were eight years old and stayed for sixteen years to finish studying. They had to promise to live a simple life, not get married, and follow all the rules. During this extensive training period, students weren't permitted to visit their homes unless there were exceptional circumstances. The Kangri Gurukula became a well-known hub for Vedic studies.

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- **Encouraged Women's Education:** In his speeches, he supported educating women. He said that in ancient Vedic times, women were educated and treated equally. He thought women should have the same education as men and even suggested teaching them military skills. The Arya Samaj started many schools and colleges for girls in Punjab.

7.6 THE RAMAKRISHA MISSION

The Ramakrishna Mission brought together two important influences: Ancient Indian Teachings and Modern Western Ideas. It was inspired by Ramakrishna Paramhansa, but it was Swami Vivekananda who started the Ramakrishna Mission.

7.6.1 Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836 - 1886)

Ramakrishna was born into a traditional Brahmin family in a small village in Bengal. His upbringing immersed him in spiritual traditions from an early age. He later served as a priest in the Kali temple in Dakshineshwar, Calcutta, where his spiritual journey deepened. Despite not having formal education, he delved into profound spiritual practices, drawing from various Hindu sects, Islam, and Christianity. He explored the essence of different religions, seeking the underlying truths they shared. Ramakrishna's life was marked by a strong belief in the unity of all religions and the universal presence of God. He believed in serving God through serving humanity, seeing the divine in every person. His solitary spiritual pursuits led him to profound insights and experiences, shaping his teachings and philosophy. Ramakrishna's inclusive approach to spirituality and his emphasis on love, compassion, and service continue to inspire people worldwide. His life serves as a testament to the transformative power of spiritual practice and the unity of religious ideals. Through his example, he encouraged others to seek truth and pursue a life of devotion and service to humanity.

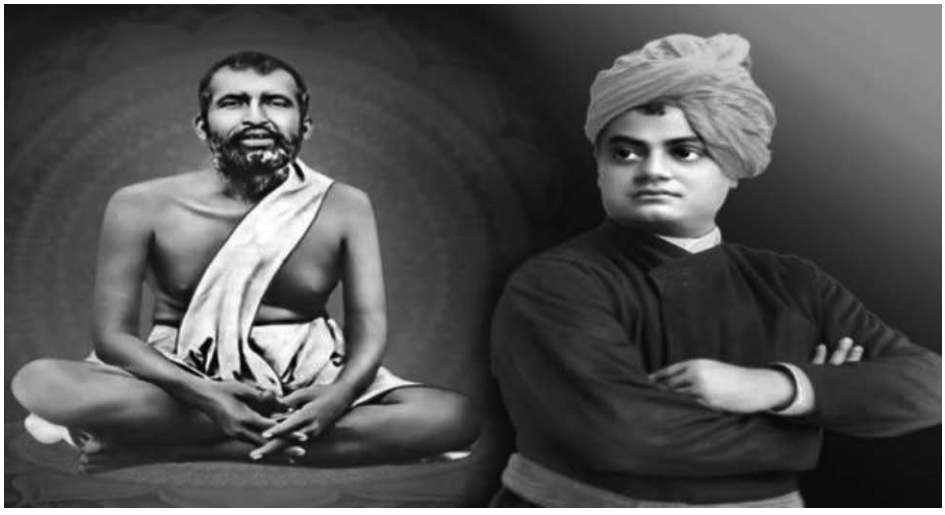


Fig. 7.5 *Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekanand*

7.6.2 Swami Vivekananda (1863 - 1902)

Swami Vivekananda was deeply influenced by Ramakrishna and emerged as his most prominent disciple. He was not only a philosopher and nationalist but also a reformer of great distinction. Vivekananda's intellectual curiosity led him to study the works of prominent European thinkers like Kant, Descartes, Hume, Hegel, Darwin, and Comte during his student years. He was also drawn to the progressive ideals of the Brahmo Samaj, although he felt something was missing. It was his encounter with Swami Ramakrishna in 1883 that changed his life. Ramakrishna became his spiritual guide, and after Ramakrishna's passing in 1886, Vivekananda pledged to spread his teacher's teachings. With his charisma and deep spirituality, Vivekananda attracted many followers. Together, they established a monastery in Beranagore in 1887, where they lived as ascetics. The Belur Math was later founded in 1898, along with several other monasteries across different locations. Vivekananda and his followers lived disciplined lives focused on service and devotion. They dedicated themselves to spreading Ramakrishna's ideals and values, shaping the foundation of the Ramakrishna Mission.

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7.6.3 Parliament of World Religions

In 1893, Swami Vivekananda attended the renowned 'Parliament of World Religions' in Chicago, USA. The event was held to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America. The parliament gathering was remarkable, with around 10,000 attendees, each an authority in their own religion and philosophy. Initially hesitant, Swami Vivekananda eventually rose to speak, beginning with the words, "Sisters and Brothers of America," which received applause and encouraged him to speak boldly. He referred to Hinduism as "the mother of World Religions" and delivered a clear explanation of it in a paper he presented. In another speech, he stated, "*I came here to seek aid for my impoverished people.*" The Swami greatly impressed the Americans. The press enthusiastically described him as "*The greatest figure in the Parliament of World Religions*." Mrs. Annie Besant, who listened to him, said that he "enchanted the large crowd."

Swami Vivekananda gained widespread recognition and demand for his teachings grew rapidly. He embarked on lecture tours, and in 1896, he founded the Vedanta Society of New York. His books on yoga garnered significant attention in America and Europe. Vivekananda's travels took him to Paris, London, and other cities, where he was offered teaching positions in philosophy and religion at some universities. He also formed friendships with several Christian church leaders during his journeys. It was during this time that he met Miss Margaret Noble, an Irish woman who later became his disciple and adopted the name Sister Nivedita, meaning dedicated. Sister Nivedita played a pivotal role in the Ramakrishna Mission and became deeply involved in its activities. Through their collaborations and teachings, Swami Vivekananda and Sister Nivedita left a lasting impact on the expansion of Vedanta philosophy and the ideals of the Ramakrishna Mission, both in India and abroad.

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7.6.4 Establishment of the Ramakrishna Mission

After coming back from overseas, Swami Vivekananda established the Ramakrishna Mission on May 5th, 1897. It wasn't just a religious group; it had broader goals:

- To spread the teachings of Ramakrishna Paramahansa.
- To promote the understanding of Vedantic spirituality.
- To work towards unity and peace among different religions.
- To consider serving humanity as serving God.

7.6.5 Teachings of the Mission

Vivekananda used his speeches and writings to shine a light on Hindu culture and religion. He did an amazing work by making Indian people proud of their heritage. He encouraged them to stay away from superstition and extreme religious beliefs. He believed it was important to bring Eastern and Western cultures closer together. Vivekananda didn't like the aggressive methods used by Christian missionaries. Through the Ramakrishna Mission, he worked hard to make Hinduism great again. The mission focused on helping the society, ending discrimination, empowering women, protecting Indian culture, promoting good behaviour, and supporting nationalism.

7.6.6 Achievements of the Mission

It includes:

- **Social Service on a Spiritual Basis:** Social service wasn't just seen as charity; it had a spiritual foundation. The Ramakrishna Mission efficiently set up facilities for the sick, needy, and elderly, ran schools, colleges, dispensaries, and hostels, distributed spiritual literature, and served society in various ways.

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- **Social Reforms:** Vivekananda fearlessly addressed the issues of untouchability and the dire situation of women. He passionately and tirelessly worked for the betterment of the Indians. He believed that serving the oppressed was the most significant service to humanity.
- **Revitalised Hinduism:** Vivekananda held Indian spirituality and philosophy in high regard, considering them the finest globally. He went so far as to suggest that Vedanta was meant to become the religion of all humanity. He believed that studying Vedanta could enhance the faith of both Christians and Hindus. However, he also criticised Hinduism, aiming to purify it by eliminating superstitions and excessive focus on rituals.
- **Stirred Patriotism:** Vivekananda fostered India's budding nationalism of India. He boosted the morale of his compatriots, seeing weakness as a fault and encouraging reverence for Shakti. He advocated for abandoning the worship of futile gods and goddesses and instead urged people to venerate Mother India for the nation's revival. His message to the youth of the country was, "*Arise, awake, and do not stop until the goal is achieved.*" He vehemently criticised the trend of blindly imitating the West.

So, we observe that the Ramakrishna Mission had goals and perspectives on both national and international levels. It blended the finest aspects of ancient Indian culture with Western ideas.

7.7 THE PRARTHANA SAMAJ

Keshab Chandra Sen's tour of Maharashtra catalysed the founding of the Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society) in Bombay in 1867. Under the guidance of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang, R.G. Bhandarkar, and M.G. Ranade, the Samaj gained momentum and direction. Emphasising theistic worship and social reform, the Prarthana Samaj became a beacon of progressive ideals. Its most significant contribution lay in spearheading a comprehensive social reform movement. Central to the Prarthana Samaj's agenda was the promotion of social equality and the eradication



of oppressive customs. The Samaj advocated for the abandonment of caste distinctions, advocated for widow remarriage, promoted female education, and campaigned against purdah and child marriage. M.G. Ranade emerged as a prominent leader, highlighting the deviation of contemporary Hindu society from its ancient principles. He condemned practices such as the subjugation of women, child marriage, widowhood stigma, and caste-based restrictions, which contradicted earlier traditions.

Ranade's vision extended beyond Maharashtra, evolving into a nationwide movement for social reform. He initiated a purity movement, advocating against dancing and promoting temperance. Additionally, Ranade encouraged the acceptance of converts from other faiths and advocated for the reduction of extravagant marriage expenses. His leadership galvanised support across India, propelling the social reform agenda to the forefront of national discourse.

Parallel to the efforts of the Prarthana Samaj, Jotiba Phule emerged as a pioneering social reformer in Maharashtra. In 1851, he established a girls' school in Poona with his wife, focusing on educating children from marginalised communities. Phule's advocacy extended to facilitating widow remarriage and combating untouchability, igniting an anti-Brahmin movement. His Satya Shodhak Samaj aimed to dismantle Brahminical hegemony and empower the oppressed.

Phule's activism centred on the plight of villagers, advocating for their social and economic upliftment. He challenged Brahminical orthodoxy and championed social justice through the Satya Shodhak Samaj. Phule's work resonated beyond Maharashtra, inspiring marginalised communities across India to assert their rights and demand equality.

In essence, the Prarthana Samaj and Jyotiba Phule's Satya Shodhak Samaj played pivotal roles in India's social reform movement. Their efforts transcended regional boundaries, sparking a nationwide awakening to the injustices perpetuated by caste-based discrimination and patriarchal norms. The legacy of these reformers endures in India's ongoing struggle for social equality and inclusive development.

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7.8 YOUNG BENGAL MOVEMENT AND HENRY VIVIAN DEROZIO

During the late 1820s and early 1830s, Bengal witnessed the emergence of the 'Young Bengal Movement,' a radical intellectual trend among the youth. Led by Henry Vivian Derozio, a young Anglo-Indian who taught at the Hindu College from 1826 to 1831, this movement was more modern than even Rammohun Roy's reformist efforts. Inspired by the French Revolution, Derozio encouraged his students to think freely, question authority, cherish liberty, equality, and freedom, and challenge decadent customs and traditions. The Derozians also advocated for women's rights and education. Derozio is considered the first nationalist poet of Modern India.

Despite their progressive ideals, the Derozians had limited long-term impact. Derozio's radicalism led to his removal from the Hindu College in 1831. The primary reason for their limited success was the prevailing social conditions, which were not conducive to the adoption of such radical ideas. They also lacked support from other social groups or classes and failed to connect with the masses, neglecting crucial issues like the peasants' plight. Their radicalism remained largely theoretical and disconnected from practical realities. Nevertheless, the Derozians continued Raja.

Rammohun Roy's tradition of public education on social, economic, and political issues, laying the groundwork for future reform movements in India. Despite their shortcomings, their efforts in promoting rational thinking and questioning traditional norms left a lasting imprint on Bengal's intellectual landscape.

The Young Bengal Movement was founded by Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831), a visionary teacher at the Hindu College in Calcutta. Arriving in Calcutta in 1826, Derozio brought with him a wave of intellectual fervour



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and radical thought that profoundly influenced the educated youth of Bengal. Although the movement never became a popular mass movement, it played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual landscape of Bengal during the late 1820s and early 1830s.

Ideals of the Young Bengal Movement:

It includes:

1. *Influence of the French Revolution*: The movement was deeply inspired by the ideals of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, which were the cornerstone principles of the French Revolution of 1789. Derozio encouraged his students to embrace these ideals and apply them to their own context, advocating for a society based on these progressive values.
2. *Belief in Human Reason*: Central to the movement was the belief in human reason and rationality. Derozio and his followers promoted the idea that individuals should use their reason and intellect to question existing norms and beliefs. This emphasis on rational thought was a significant departure from the traditional, unquestioning acceptance of established customs and practices.
3. *Freedom of Discussion*: The movement championed the freedom to discuss all subjects—moral, religious, and social—without fear or restriction. This open discourse was encouraged to foster a spirit of inquiry and intellectual growth among the youth. Derozio's classes often involved intense debates and discussions, challenging students to think critically and independently.
4. *Opposition to Social Customs*: The Young Bengal Movement opposed various outdated and useless social customs. Derozio and his followers criticized practices such as sati (the burning of widows), child marriage, and caste discrimination. They advocated for social reforms that would lead to a more equitable and humane society.
5. *Advocacy for Women's Rights*: The movement was ahead of its time in its support for the rights of women. Derozio and the Derozians called for

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better treatment of Indian women, both at home and abroad. They supported women's education and their right to participate in public life, challenging the deeply entrenched patriarchal norms of the time.

6. *Freedom of the Press*: The Young Bengal Movement supported the freedom of the press, recognizing its importance in shaping public opinion and promoting transparency and accountability. They believed that a free press was essential for the dissemination of new ideas and the promotion of social and political reforms.
7. *Moral Integrity and Truth*: Derozio urged his followers to live or die for the truth, to practice all virtues, and to shun all vices. This emphasis on moral integrity was a cornerstone of the movement, inspiring young Bengalis to lead ethical lives and stand up for what was right.
8. *Protection of Peasants*: One of the notable aspects of the movement was its agitation for the protection of peasants from the oppression of Zamindars (landlords). The Derozians advocated for the rights of the peasantry, highlighting the injustices and exploitation faced by them.

Legacy and Impact

Despite its progressive ideals, the Young Bengal Movement faced significant opposition. Henry Derozio was accused of misguiding the youth with his radical ideas. In 1831, he was removed from his position at the Hindu College, and he died shortly thereafter. However, his influence continued to resonate among his students and followers, collectively known as the Derozians. The movement's impact, though limited in immediate practical terms, was profound in the long run. S.N. Banerjee, a prominent Indian nationalist, later described the Derozians as "the pioneers of the modern civilization of Bengal." The movement laid the groundwork for future social and political reforms in Bengal and India at large. It carried forward the tradition of public education on important social, economic, and political questions, setting the stage for subsequent reformist and nationalist movements.



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In summary, the Young Bengal Movement, under the leadership of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, played a pivotal role in the intellectual awakening of Bengal. Its advocacy for rationality, social reform, and human rights left an indelible mark on the history of modern Indian thought, despite the challenges and limitations it faced during its time.

7.9 SATYASHODHAK SAMAJ AND JYOTIBA PHULE

Jyotiba Phule, a prominent social reformer from the Mali (gardener) community, spearheaded a powerful movement against upper caste domination and Brahminical supremacy in 19th century, India. In 1873, Phule founded the Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers' Society), which drew its leadership from various backward classes, including Malis, Telis, Kunbis, Saris, and Dhangars. The main aims of the movement were:

- Social service
- Spread of education among women and lower caste people

Phule's literary contributions, including Sarvajanik Satyadharma and Ghulamgiri served as profound sources of inspiration for the masses. These works articulated his vision of a just and egalitarian society, where education and rationality would overcome the entrenched caste-based discrimination perpetuated by the Brahminical order. Phule was a staunch advocate for the rights and education of women and the lower castes, believing that enlightenment and knowledge were the keys to social upliftment and equality.

An innovative aspect of Phule's movement was his use of Rajah Bali as a symbolic figure, contrasting it with the Brahminical symbol of Rama. Rajah Bali, in Phule's narrative, represented an era of equality and justice, while Rama symbolized the perpetuation of social hierarchy and oppression. This symbolic opposition highlighted Phule's challenge to the prevailing Brahminical narratives and underscored his commitment to an inclusive and fair society.

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Phule's ultimate goal was the complete abolition of the caste system and the eradication of socio-economic inequalities. His efforts provided a sense of identity and solidarity to the oppressed communities, encouraging them to recognize and resist their exploitation by the Brahmin elite. Through the Satyashodhak Samaj, Phule laid the foundation for future social justice movements in India, emphasizing the importance of education, equality, and self-empowerment in combating systemic oppression.

7.10 PARSI REFORM MOVEMENT

It includes:

- **Seva Sadan:** In 1885, Parsi social reformer Behramji M. Malabari founded the Sevasadan, an organization dedicated to caring for women who had been exploited and subsequently rejected by society.
- **Rahunmai Mazdayasnan Sabha or Religious Reform Association:** It was established by Naoroji Furdonji, Dadabhai Naoroji, S.S. Bengalis, and others to initiate religious reform among the Parsis. She played an important role in the spread of education, especially among girls. He also campaigned against orthodox practices in Parsi religion.

7.11 THE MUSLIM REFORMIST MOVEMENT

The 19th century marked a period of profound concern and uncertainty for Indian Muslims. Bereft of political power and facing economic hardships following the Revolt of 1857, many Muslims retreated into isolation. The challenge that loomed large was twofold: convincing Indian Muslims to adapt to changing circumstances while also earning the trust of British rulers who viewed them with suspicion. Among the early Muslim reformers was Maulvi Chirag Ali (1844-95), who endeavoured to modernise Muslim society and advocate for women's



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rights. He championed monogamy and advocated for better status for women through his literary works.

However, it was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who emerged as one of the most influential figures in Muslim India during this period. A man of remarkable vision and unwavering determination, Sir Syed embarked on the herculean task of reform, despite facing opposition from conservative religious leaders and even some of his own associates.

Sir Syed, who initially served in the British East India Company judicial service during the Rebellion of 1857, remained loyal to the government. Upon retirement, he transitioned into the role of a socio-religious reformer. His publication of Tahzib al Akhlaq in 1870 and other writings reflected his rationalistic and non-conformist ideas.

He took on the monumental challenges of religious reinterpretation, social reform, and education. Rejecting narrow-minded views that labelled Hindus as kafirs, Sir Syed emphasised Hindu-Muslim unity and advocated for political cooperation between the two communities. He worked tirelessly to reform Muslims individually and collectively, believing that modern education, with its rational and scientific approach, was the key to emancipating the Muslim mind.

Sir Syed centred his efforts in Aligarh, a predominantly Muslim area, where he founded the Aligarh School on May 24, 1875, coinciding with Queen Victoria's birth anniversary. This school, later upgraded to the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in 1877, served as the precursor to the Aligarh Muslim University. The Aligarh movement, as his range of activities came to be known, aimed to uplift Muslims through education and prevent their alignment with the Congress, which Sir Syed viewed as anti-British and anti-government. Backed by the bureaucracy, Sir Syed's efforts to promote modern education garnered widespread support. He believed that by embracing Western education, Muslims could overcome their backwardness and forge a harmonious relationship with their rulers. His endeavours laid the foundation for the intellectual and educational advancement of the Muslim community in India.

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Sir Syed's legacy endures through the Aligarh Muslim University, which continues to be a symbol of Muslim empowerment and educational excellence. His pioneering efforts in religious reform, social upliftment, and educational reform remain a testament to his enduring impact on Indian society.

In essence, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's Aligarh movement exemplified a transformative period in Indian Muslim history, characterised by efforts to reconcile tradition with modernity and navigate the complexities of colonial rule. His visionary leadership and commitment to education continue to inspire generations of Indians, underscoring the enduring relevance of his ideas in contemporary India.

Social Reform Movements: At a glance

Social Reform Act:

Act	Year	Governor/Governor General	Subject
Prohibition of Female Child Infanticide	1767-1769	John Shore	Female infanticide was declared an equal crime as murder
Child Infanticide Prohibition	1795-1804	Shore/Wellesley	Infanticide was prohibited by law
Abolition of Sati	1829	Bentinck	Sati was abolished
Abolition of Slavery	1843	Ellenborough	Slavery was declared illegal
Hindu Widow Remarriage Act	1856	Canning	Widow remarriage was recognised

Prominent Social Reformers and Activists:

Activist	Remarks
Raja Ram Mohan Roy	• He worked for the abolition of Sati and was a pioneer in this cause. • He wrote of women who were "forced upon the pyre" and "bound" with ropes so that they would perish with their husbands.

Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar	• He was another reformer in Bengal who championed female education. He was an impassioned supporter of widow remarriage and vehement opponent of polygamy. • He urged the British to pass legislation enabling Hindu widows to remarry and prohibiting polygamy. • He presented a petition to this effect before the Indian Legislative Council and the British Government. • It was due to the efforts of Vidyasagar that the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act was passed in 1856. • To promote female education, Vidyasagar opened several schools for girls in Bengal and was closely associated with the Hindu Kanya Vidyalaya, founded by J.D. Bethune.
Mahadev Govind Ranade	• In 1869, Ranade joined the Widow Remarriage Association. Since then, he encouraged widow remarriage and women's education and opposed child marriage. He also founded the National Social Conference.
Pandita Ramabai	• Pandita Ramabai (1858–1922) was notable as a pioneer in women's education and a rebellious leader of the Women's Rights Conference. She established the Mukti Mission in Pune. • She founded Sharada Sadan, a school for widows in Bombay and at Mukti, near Pune. His biggest legacy was his efforts to educate widows.
Swami Vivekananda	• He argued that women could become a powerful regenerative force.
Swami Dayanand Saraswati	• Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, encouraged women's education and widow remarriage. They also condemned practices they considered derogatory to women, such as child marriage, dowry, and polygamy.

In-Text Questions

1. Which of the following is not correctly matched?
   A) Braham Samaj – Raja Rammohan Rai
   B) Prarthana Samaj – Atmaram Pandurang
   C) Satyashodhak Samaj – Jyotiba Phule
   D) Arya Samaj – Swami Vivekanand

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2. Who among the following established the Tattvabodhini Sabha in 1839 at Calcutta (Now Kolkata)?
   A) Keshab Chandra Sen B) Debendra Nath Tagore
   C) Rammohan Roy D) Sivanatha Shastri
3. Which of the following is associated with the Young Bengal Movement?
   A) Henry Vivian Derozio B) Mitra Bandhu
   C) Native marriage Act D) Bethune School
4. Who among the following was popularly known as 'Lokahitawadi'?
   A) Jyotiba Phule
   B) Pt. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
   C) Gopal Hari Deshmukh
   D. Mahadev Govind Ranade
5. Who among the following establishes the Mukti Mission in Pune?
   A) Pandita Ramabai B) Swami Dayanand Saraswati
   C) Savitribai Phule D) Jyotiba Phule
6. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct with the reference of Singh Sabha Movement?
   A) It aimed for modern Western education for Sikhs.
   B) It was formed to counter proselytising activities in Sikhs by Hindu revivalists.
   C) The Akali Movements was an off shoot of this movement.
   D) All of the above
7. Which of the following is not correctly paired?
   A) Bengal Regulation banning Sati -1829
   B) Sarda Act- 1845
   C) Widow Remarriage Act -1856
   D) Hindu Succession Act- 1956



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8. The Parsi Reform Movement Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha (Religious Reform Association) was founded in which year?
   A) 1829 B) 1851
   C) 1879 D) 1861
9. Who among the following founded the Nirankari Movement?
   A) Baba Dyal Das B) Baba Ram Singh
   C) Mahmud Hasan D) Jagat Mithra
10. Who among the following founded the Namdhari Movement?
   A) Baba Dyal Singh B) Baba Ram Singh
   C) Mahmud Hasan D) Jagat Mithra

7.12 SUMMARY

- In the 19th century, India saw a lot of thinking and action aimed at improving society and religion.
- People were looking closely at old ideas and customs and trying to make them better considering Western ideas.
- Many groups worked on making Hinduism more modern and relevant.
- The Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, and the Ramakrishna Mission were particularly important in changing Hinduism's ideas and practices.
- In the 19th century, reformers in India had two main goals. They criticised aspects of Indian society like the caste system, Sati, widowhood, and child marriage. They also spoke out against superstitions and religious ignorance. These reformers wanted to modernise Indian society by promoting reason, rational thinking, and tolerance. They didn't just focus on religion; they wanted to improve society overall. Even though they used different methods and lived at different times, they shared similar perspectives and goals.

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- Overall, identifying and addressing social and cultural problems was a key starting point for the 19th century efforts to make positive changes in Indian society.
- Various harmful practices and beliefs, such as mistreatment of women, child marriage, Sati, having multiple spouses, forcing widows into isolation, the caste system, untouchability, idol worship, belief in many gods, rigid rituals, the influence of priests, and other superstitions, were strongly criticised by intellectuals to varying extents.
- Alongside recognising the various flaws, there was an effort to improve the social structure.
- Reforms aimed to empower women, end child marriage, promote monogamy, allow widows to remarry, break down caste barriers, promote belief in one God, encourage spiritual practices, and eliminate social prejudices and superstitions. While not every reformer endorsed all these goals, they shared a common desire for overall progress in Indian society through a reformed cultural and social system.

7.13 GLOSSARY

- **Revivalism:** It means seeking to rejuvenate and exalt past traditions or practices.
- **Sati**: It is the ritualistic burning of a widow alongside her deceased husband.
- **Idolatry:** It is the act of worshipping images or idols.
- **Polytheism:** It is the faith in multiple deities.
- **Infanticide:** It is the act of killing an infant.
- **Age of Consent Bill:** It is the legislation aimed at raising the minimum age for girls to marry to 12 years.



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- **Monotheism:** It is the belief in the existence of a single deity.
- **Rationalism:** It is the approach of evaluating religious beliefs and rituals through the lens of reason and logic.
- **Universalism:** It is the principle advocating for equality and inclusion regardless of caste, creed, or community.

7.14 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. D
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. B

7.15 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Explore Raja Rammohan Roy's involvement in the socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century.
2. Discuss Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the Arya Samaj's impact on the socio-religious reform movements of the 19th century.

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3. Provide a summary of Swami Vivekananda's life and accomplishments.
4. Review the establishment and principles of Brahmo Samaj.
5. What were the principles of the Arya Samaj?
6. Write a note on Swami Vivekananda & Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

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LESSON 8

SOCIAL AND REGIONAL REFORM MOVEMENT: INDIGENOUS AND MODERN EDUCATION (1700-1857)

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives
8.2 Introduction
8.3 Indigenous Education
- 8.3.1 Education in the Ancient India
- 8.3.2 Education in the Medieval India

8.4 Colonial Education
- 8.4.1 Orientalist Policy
- 8.4.2 Anglicist Policy
- 8.4.3 Education System under British Rule

8.5 Development of Modern Education
- 8.5.1 The Charter Act of 1813
- 8.5.2 The Charter Act of 1833
- 8.5.3 The Wood's Despatch of 1854

8.6 Effect of English Education
- 8.6.1 Rise of Indian Intellectuals
- 8.6.2 Growth of the National Movement
- 8.6.3 Start of Social Reforms
- 8.6.4 Raising Awareness Among the People
- 8.6.5 Focus on Education and Science
- 8.6.6 Upholding Indian Cultural Heritage
- 8.6.7 Accessible Education for Everyone
- 8.6.8 Separated People from Traditional Learning
- 8.6.9 Expensive Nature of Modern Education

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8.7 Summary
8.8 Glossary
8.9 Answers to In-Text Questions
8.10 Self-Assessment Questions
8.11 References/Suggested Readings

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Study about the British government made in the field of education in India during 1757-1857.
- Understand the changing relationship between colonialism and education.
- Discuss the characteristics of Indigenous and Colonial education.
- Describe the dissemination of Western education.
- Learn the progression of modern education within contemporary India.

8.2 INTRODUCTION

Sociology education explores the roles and functions of educational systems within society, examining how they evolve and sometimes undergo drastic changes. To understand these transformations, it is essential to analyse educational policies and the social structures that govern education. Educational policies create a standard framework for educational activities. These policies shape the quality and scope of education in any society. By studying these policies in conjunction with social structures, we can better understand how education systems develop and adapt over time, reflecting and influencing broader societal trends and needs.



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During the British colonial period in India, the development of the modern education system was driven by the needs and objectives of the colonial powers. As the British gradually established their presence, they introduced a modern system of education that supplanted the traditional indigenous systems. Prior to British intervention, both Hindus and Muslims had their own educational systems, which gradually declined due to political instability, a lack of centralised authority, and inadequate patronage.

Western missionaries, already active in India, played a significant role in the emergence of the modern education system. Initially, Roman Catholic missionaries initiated educational activities in Portuguese-controlled territories, but it was the British East India Company that became the dominant power in Bengal by 1765. Despite the growing need for modern education in Bengal, the East India Company's Court of Directors declined to take responsibility for the education of the Indian populace, opting instead to leave education to private initiatives. However, Indian officers within the Company urged attention to Oriental learning. Some limited efforts were made by the company's government to promote oriental education. Notably, Warren Hastings, the Governor General of Bengal and a scholarly figure, established the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 to facilitate the study of Persian and Arabic. Similarly, Jonathan Duncan, the British people at Benares, inaugurated a Sanskrit college in 1791 to promote the study of Hindu laws, literature, and religion. Despite these early endeavours, the initiatives for oriental language education encountered minimal success. The colonial authorities struggled to garner significant interest and participation in these educational ventures among the indigenous population.

8.3 INDIGENOUS EDUCATION

It can be understood through the following points:

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8.3.1 Education in the Ancient Period

In Indian society, who gets an education has been a major issue since ancient times. During this period, educational policy was mainly influenced by religious systems. There were three main educational traditions: Vedic, Buddhist, and Jain.

The Vedic tradition, based on Smritis, which outlined Hindu social norms, was the first major strand. Buddhism and Jainism also had their own educational approaches guided by their scriptures. In early India, the Vedic tradition was highly influential. Society was organised around the Varna system, which identified four main social roles: Brahmins (intellectuals), Kshatriyas (rulers), Vysyas (merchants), and Sudras (labourers). While this system was supposed to match roles with aptitudes, in practice, it often assigned occupations based on birth rather than individual ability.

Under the Varna system, jobs were supposed to be based on aptitude but became hereditary over time, leading to the caste system, where roles were assigned by birth. This meant that occupational training was passed down within families. Only children from higher castes—Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vysyas—received formal education, a privilege that applied to a small minority. Most people learned job skills from their families.

Formal education typically lasted 8-10 years, with some Brahmin students continuing further. Local communities, parents, and philanthropic rulers primarily organised elementary education, sometimes with support from rulers. The curriculum was similar across regions, but it differed locally and religiously. Unlike today's centralised system, ancient Indian schools were locally supported, sometimes with grants for teachers. Education was mainly for the wealthy, with parents bearing most costs, supported by the belief that learning was a moral duty. Typically, only Brahmins could be teachers due to their status and intellect, though this might have differed in the Buddhist and Jainism systems. Monks were highly respected, and families often paid for education with Guru Dakshina, in cash or in kind.



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At higher education levels, learning centres resembling residential universities operated under royal patronage and were typically attached to temples, mathas, or monasteries. Institutions like Nalanda and Bhavnagar were renowned for attracting students from distant regions, with records of foreign tourists praising their greatness. Throughout ancient history, the legitimacy of education was derived from religion, which also legitimised others such as politics and the economy. Consequently, political transformation had a minimal impact on educational policy for much of this period, with only minor structural elaborations occurring under Muslim rulers.

In summary, education in ancient India was deeply intertwined with religious beliefs and social structures, with access limited to certain privileged groups and education primarily transmitted through familial and community channels. Despite its localised nature, education held significant societal importance and was revered as a moral and religious duty.

8.3.2 Education in the Medieval Period

During the early centuries of Muslim rule in India, Hindus' education remained largely unaffected, with minimal interference from the rulers. Education was primarily led by Muslim religious leaders who established schools within places of worship, and certain towns became known for higher learning. The rulers initially did not prioritise education, resulting in a decentralised and self-directed education system. Emperor Akbar was the first to recognise the importance of organising education systematically. Despite his efforts, until the end of the eighteenth century, there was no formal state machinery for educational administration. Each educational institution operated independently, whether it was a village school, or a pathashala run by wealthy patrons.

Two significant developments under Muslim rule shaped Indian education. First, Persian became the court language in regions controlled by Muslim rulers. Second, Islamic education became dominant. Emperors like Akbar encouraged the establishment of elementary schools called Maktabs within mosques and

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madrassahs as centres of higher learning that focused on Persian history, literature, and Islamic theology. These developments occurred alongside the existing Hindu education system. The separation of Hinduism from the state weakened the caste system's influence on education, but the program and teaching methods remained largely unchanged. Education continued to be supervised by local religious authorities, and it primarily served individuals pursuing traditional occupations.

It wasn't until British rule in the early 19th century that systematic surveys assessed India's educational status. These surveys revealed that children typically start school between the ages of five to seven, with education lasting from 2 to 10 years. The curriculum included reading, writing, and arithmetic, with religious texts like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata at the core. Schools were often supported by village governments and tuition fees from wealthy families.

Thus, under Muslim rule, the education system in India remained decentralised and largely traditional. Although Persian and Islamic education gained prominence, the structure and supervision of education did not change significantly until the British conducted surveys to inform educational policies. The education system in India during Muslim rule remained decentralised and largely unaffected by external influences. While Persian language and Islamic education gained prominence, traditional practices and religious supervision continued to govern education until the advent of British rule, when systematic surveys shed light on the position of indigenous education and paved the way for policy decisions.

8.4 COLONIAL EDUCATION

The development of education during colonial rule in India can be analysed through two different policies. The first rule was followed by the Company until 1813 and the second rule, with significant changes, was implemented from 1813, to the Second World War. Initially, the East India Company, established as a mercantile entity, had limited political control and played no significant role



in education. However, the Company's charter obligated them to transport and protect Christian missionaries. These missionaries soon initiated proselytising efforts and established schools primarily for converted individuals among the lower castes. These schools provided basic skills education and Bible instruction. During this early period, elementary education was decentralised, with educational institutions operating independently of state control. Missionary education activities, therefore, represented an extension of the existing indigenous education system rather than a complete overhaul. The missionaries' focus on lower caste communities was not only aimed at religious conversion, but also sought to uplift these communities through basic literacy and vocational training. The second phase of educational policy, starting in 1813, marked a significant shift. The Company's Charter Act of 1813 acknowledged the state's responsibility towards education in India, leading to the allocation of funds for promoting education. This policy change laid the foundation for a more structured approach to education, moving away from the decentralised model. It also marked the opening of state intervention in education, paving the way for the formation of a formal education system under colonial rule.

8.4.1 Orientalist Policy

When the company expanded its territorial control in India, significant changes took place in the educational landscape in the region. Initially, the company was hesitant to intervene in educational matters due to resistance from the upper castes, whose support was critical for consolidating its power. The company's hesitancy was compounded by pressure from British statesmen advocating for missionary activities. However, the complex political-economic context eventually compelled the company to accept a policy that was supportive of native education. To address the needs and gain the favour of influential local communities, the company established the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781, primarily to appease prominent Muslims. This was followed by the founding of the Banaras Sanskrit College in 1791, which aimed to cater to the educational needs of elite Hindus. These institutions were instrumental in providing education to students

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from elite Muslim and Hindu backgrounds, who often secured high-ranking positions within the company administration. This strategic move helped the company garner support from influential sections of Indian society. Despite these initiatives, the East India Company's investment in education, particularly at the school level, remained minimal. Their primary goal was to establish a few higher education centers dedicated to the study of Sanskrit and Persian. The company also took measures to restrict missionary activities to safeguard its political interests, recognising that direct interference in religious and educational matters could destabilise its rule. The company rulers adhered to native religious jurisprudence when administering the population, further indicating their cautious approach to governance.

A significant shift occurred with the enactment of the Charter Act of 1813, which marked a turning point in the company's educational policy. This Act allocated a modest sum of one lakh rupees for educational expenditures, reflecting a formal acknowledgement of the need to invest in education. Subsequently, in 1823, a General Committee of Public Instruction was established to oversee the implementation of the educational mandate outlined in the Act. This phase of educational policy, known as the oriental policy, was characterized by support for existing centres of higher learning such as the Calcutta Madrasa and the Banaras Sanskrit College. The General Committee directed its efforts towards enhancing these institutions, ensuring they continued to function effectively within the framework of the Orientalist policy. The Orientalist approach emphasised the significance of traditional Indian learning, particularly in classical languages and literature, and sought to integrate these aspects into the broader educational strategy of the company. The Calcutta Madrasa and the Banaras Sanskrit College received funding to continue their educational endeavours, focusing on the preservation and promotion of Sanskrit and Persian studies. This support was crucial in maintaining the relevance of these institutions and in aligning the company's educational objectives with the cultural and intellectual traditions of India.



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8.4.2 Anglicist Policy

By the late 18th century, the British had solidified their dominance in India, with a shift from mercantile to industrial interests driving their agenda. Charles Grant, an influential politician, and chairman of the company's board of directors, led a campaign as early as 1797 advocating the introduction of English education in India. This movement, known as Anglicism, stood in opposition to the Orientalist approach. Lord Macaulay, serving as the Law Member of India, deliberated between these contrasting viewpoints, and ultimately sided with the Anglicists. His seminal "Minutes" forcefully championed the cause of English education in Indian territories. Macaulay's rationale was clear: education served the immediate purpose of grooming individuals capable of occupying subordinate roles within the colonial government, aiding in the administration of native populations. Furthermore, in the long run, education aimed to Westernise the Indian elite, thereby facilitating India's transformation into a lucrative market for European industrial products and a supplier of raw materials for British industries. This concept, termed the downward filtration theory, underscored the strategic role of education in perpetuating colonial interests.

As a result, the company dedicated resources to promoting English education. In 1837, English was officially designated as the language of administration, setting the stage for increased demand for English education. By 1844, access to subordinate government positions was opened to native Indians, further fuelling the demand for English-language education. This policy not only attracted the native ruling classes to English educational institutions but also sparked widespread public discourse in both India and Britain regarding the company's approach. However, despite the rhetoric and policy changes, the company's investment in education remained largely focused on higher levels of instruction, with little attention paid to primary education. The physical infrastructure for education saw little development, reflecting a prioritization of colonial administrative needs over broader educational initiatives.

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Thus, while the promotion of English education represented a pivotal aspect of British colonial policy, its implementation primarily served strategic colonial interests rather than genuine educational development.

8.4.3 Education System under British Rule

In 1857, direct rule of the Indian territories was assumed by the British Crown. Meanwhile, the Government of India initiated the establishment of universities in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay. However, these institutions primarily served as examining bodies, lacking formal teaching faculties. Students prepared for examinations either through self-study under tutors or by attending affiliated private educational institutions. Unfortunately, primary education faced neglect until 1882 when the Indian Education Commission was convened to assess the condition of state-sponsored education across provinces. The Commission recommended a substantial allocation of public funds to rectify the situation. In 1884, its recommendations were accepted, and the supervision of primary education was decentralized to local bodies established under the Local Self-Government Acts. Additionally, the government introduced grant-in-aid codes to incentivize private involvement in education. Consequently, a proliferation of private colleges and secondary schools emerged, predominantly managed by private entities and charging fees for enrolment. Another important development took place during this period, when the Indian Educational Service was established in 1896. Functioning as an All-India Service, recruitment was conducted through competitive examinations held in England. While theoretically open to Indians, the practicality of sitting for these exams required candidates to travel to England. As a result, many positions in the Education Service were held by Englishmen. This arrangement persisted until 1919. Despite the colonial government's professed concern for primary education, the era witnessed a rapid expansion of private educational institutions. Concurrently, indigenous schools in rural areas faced decline and eventual disappearance.



8.5 DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN EDUCATION

The development of the education during the colonial period in India was profoundly influenced by the needs and interests of the colonial powers. It's important to recognise that indigenous educational systems existed prior to the arrival of the East India Company. However, the British gradually established their presence in Bengal and introduced a modern education system that superseded traditional indigenous methods. However, these systems experienced a decline due to political instability, the absence of a strong centralised authority, and a lack of patronage. Concurrently, Western missionaries, particularly Roman Catholic missionaries, began educational activities in territories under Portuguese control with subsequent expansion under the auspices of the East India Company. When the East India Company assumed control of Bengal in 1765, the need for modern education became apparent. Despite initial reluctance, the company's Indian officers advocated for educational initiatives. While the Court of Directors initially left education to private endeavours, some efforts were made to promote oriental learning. Notably, Warren Hastings established the Calcutta madrasa in 1781 to facilitate the study of Persian and Arabic. Similarly, British Resident Jonathan Duncan opened a Sanskrit college in Benares in 1791 to promote Hindu laws, literature, and religion. However, these early attempts at Oriental education yielded limited success. Overall, the introduction of modern education in India during the British time marked a significant shift from traditional indigenous systems, with the colonial administration playing a pivotal role in shaping educational policies to serve colonial interests.

8.5.1 The Charter Act of 1813

The genesis of India's modern education system dates back to the Charter Act of 1813, particularly Section 43, which allocated funds for the advancement of literature, support for learned natives, and the promotion of scientific knowledge within British territories. However, it wasn't until July 17, 1823, that concrete

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steps were taken to implement these provisions. The creation of the Central Committee of Public Instruction marked a pivotal moment in utilizing these allocated funds. This committee was tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of educational initiatives across British-controlled territories in India. The Charter Act of 1813 laid the groundwork for the state's involvement in education, recognising the importance of fostering intellectual growth and knowledge dissemination among the populace. By earmarking funds for educational purposes, the British administration acknowledged the necessity of investing in human capital and intellectual development to further their interests in India.

The establishment of the Central Committee of Public Instruction in 1823 signalled a tangible commitment to achieving these goals. It represented a significant step towards the organisation and centralisation of educational efforts, setting the stage for the subsequent expansion and evolution of the modern education system in India under colonial rule. The composition of the committee reflected a divergence of opinions regarding educational priorities. While many members favoured oriental education, there was opposition from the Anglicists who advocated for Western education. They argued against allocating funds for oriental education, deeming it impractical. Despite these disagreements, the establishment of the Central Committee marked a significant milestone in India's education development, laying the groundwork for subsequent reforms and initiatives in modern education.

8.5.2 The Charter Act of 1833

The Charter of 1813 saw renewal in 1833 for an additional 20-year term, albeit without direct educational clauses. However, it did introduce the appointment of a law member to the Executive Council of the Governor General of Bengal, with Thomas Macaulay being the first appointee. The ongoing dispute between the Anglicists and Orientalists regarding educational priorities persisted. In reaction to this impasse, the Secretary of the General Committee of Public Instruction referred the matter to the Governor-General of India in Council in January 1835.



This led to Lord Macaulay's famous Minute, which proposed the concept of the Downward Filtration Process. Macaulay argued for the promotion of English education, envisioning the creation of an Indian class imbued with English tastes, opinions, morals, and intellect. He criticised the traditional oriental institutions, deeming Sanskrit and Persian inadequate mediums of instruction. Lord William Bentinck, serving from 1828 to 1838, endorsed Macaulay's Minute, signalling his full agreement with its sentiments. The Resolution of March 1835, passed under Bentinck's administration, marked the British government's first definitive statement on education in India. This resolution set the course for the aim, content, and medium of instruction, prioritising the promotion of Western science and arts as the declared objective of British governance in India. This pivotal moment ushered in a new era of change, igniting India's national awakening, and paving the way for her comprehensive revitalisation across social, political, economic, and cultural spheres. Bentinck's proclamation gave birth to the following results in Indian education:

1. British authorities dictated the educational goals in India.
2. Prioritizing the advancement of Western arts and sciences became an official objective.
3. Printing of oriental literature was deemed unnecessary expenditure and ceased.
4. Future grants or stipends for students in oriental institutions were discontinued.
5. English was established as the primary medium of instruction.
6. This declaration aimed to provide the government with cost-effective, yet proficient Indian clerks educated in English.

8.5.3 The Wood's Despatch of 1854

Lord Dalhousie's era marked a significant phase in India's education expansion. The Charter Act of 1853 provided for the formation of a committee, chaired by Sir Charles Wood, to assess the state of education in the country. Wood's

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comprehensive plan, called the 'Magnacarta of Indian Education,' laid out key recommendations for the advancement of education:

1. The government was tasked with promoting Western education, arts, philosophy, science, and literature.
2. English was proposed as the primary section of higher education, while native languages were also to be encouraged.
3. Primary schools, Anglo-Vernacular high schools, and colleges were to be established to foster the growth of native languages in villages.
4. Teacher training institutions were to be set up to train educators.
5. Vocational and technical education received emphasis.
6. Efforts to promote women's education.
7. To provide government grants to private educational institutions without any discrimination.
8. To establish universities in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras on the lines of London University mainly to conduct examinations.
9. Proposal for a separate department for education administration.

Subsequently, the government implemented Wood's plan, reinstating directors of education in various provinces and appointing inspectors to assist them. These officers were affiliated with the Department of Public Instruction. Universities were established in Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, while the number of primary educational institutions, high schools, and colleges expanded. Additionally, efforts were made to open women's schools, and grants were extended to private institutions.

8.6 EFFECT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION IN INDIA

The introduction of English education in India, initiated during the British colonial period, had profound socio-cultural and political implications. It served as a tool



for both administrative convenience and cultural dominance, fostering a class of English-educated Indians who played pivotal roles in the nationalist movement. The spread of English also contributed to the creation of a new public sphere, influencing literature, law, and the medium of instruction, which has continued to impact India's educational and societal structures to this day. You can see it in detail in the sub-sections given below.

8.6.1 Rise of Indian Intellectuals

Indian intellectuals played an important role in advocating for modern Indian education to meet the social, political, and economic challenges facing the nation. This intellectual awakening was particularly prominent in regions such as West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu. Intellectuals and other organisations directed their efforts towards addressing socio-economic issues, recognising the real obstacles to India's progress. He also expressed concern over the degradation of Indian culture and the divisive policies implemented by the British colonial administration.

8.6.2 Growth of the National Movement

The pernicious impacts of British imperialism fuelled India's national movement. Economic exploitation, political subjugation, racial superiority claims, and exclusion from authority incited Indian unity against British rule. Persistent disrespect and arrogance towards Indians galvanised efforts to cultivate social consciousness and raise awareness of their rights among the masses, catalysing the fight for independence.

8.6.3 Start of Social Reforms

Modern Indian education illuminates the shortcomings, rigidity, and oppression prevalent in society, especially towards its marginalised segments. This raised awareness among intellectuals and reformers about the social injustices embedded within the system. Consequently, various social-religious reform movements

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surfaced, such as the Satyashodhak Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, and Ramakrishna Mission.

8.6.4 Raising Awareness Among the People

Social reformers tirelessly fought against a multitude of social injustices rooted in ignorance, superstition, and irrationality. These included practices such as Sati, polygamy, child marriage, women's mistreatment, and untouchability, as well as numerous prevalent superstitions of the era. They vehemently denounced the futile rituals and superstitions perpetuated by opportunistic individuals to exploit the ignorant and impoverished masses. Their primary objective was to advocate for education and science as catalysts for social progress.

8.6.5 Focus on Education and Science

Reformers mobilised communities and educated them about social injustices. For example, the Brahmo Samaj, established by Ram Mohan Roy in 1828, influenced people in regions like Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Madras, and other provinces to establish similar organisations that interpreted religion in a rational manner.

8.6.6 Upholding Indian Cultural Heritage

Educated Indian leaders encouraged people to embrace their rich cultural heritage and resist the allure of Western materialism. They sought to revive India's ancient traditions and shield the masses from Western influences. They extolled the greatness of Hindu Vedic culture, viewing the Vedas as the fountainhead of all knowledge and truth. Swami Vivekananda, through the Ramakrishna Mission, aimed to showcase Indian philosophy and culture to the world.

8.6.7 Accessible Education for Everyone

The updated education system made education accessible to all members of Indian society, regardless of their caste or religion. Previously, Muslims relied more



on military prowess, and only a select few had the chance to study in Madrasas. However, with the introduction of English education in India, both Muslims and lower-caste Hindus were given a good opportunity to pursue education.

8.6.8 Separated People from Traditional Learning

While the new education system was embraced by various segments of society, it also had negative consequences. It disconnected Indian people from their traditional methods of learning and living, as well as their classical heritage and native knowledge. As a result, Indian values, philosophies, and traditions began to fade away.

8.6.9 Expensive Nature of Modern Education

Although the British laws made education accessible, they did not prioritise widespread education. The high cost meant that it was mainly available to the wealthier classes and urban residents. Initially, it was primarily impoverished Brahmins and caste Hindus, seeking better opportunities, who pursued modern education to maintain their dignity and respect. Despite missionaries' efforts to convert the poor to Christianity, majority of the masses could not benefit from the new education system. The increasing importance of English as the language of the elite further distanced the masses. English became the medium for higher education and administration, creating a gap between the educated elite and the general population. This divide meant that many Indians remained disconnected from the modern education system and the opportunities it provided. While the British system aimed to create a class of educated Indians who could assist in administration, it inadvertently reinforced social and economic inequalities. In summary, the new education system, while accessible, was not widespread, benefiting mainly the wealthier and urban populations. Impoverished Brahmins and caste Hindus initially embraced it for better opportunities, but the overall impact was a greater division between the educated elite and the masses, who remained largely excluded from the benefits of modern education.

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In-Text Questions

1. Who among the following set the Calcutta Madrasa in 1781 AD?
   A) Warren Hasting B) Jonathan Duncan
   C) Sir Charles Wood D) None
2. Who among the following was the founder of Sanskrit College at Banaras?
   A) Warren Hasting B) Jonathan Duncan
   C) Lord Curzon D) Sir Charles Wood
3. Which of the college in India was set up by Lord Wellesley for the training of the civil servants of the company in vernacular languages and custom of India?
   A) East Indian College B) Punjab National College
   C) Fort William College D) Sanskrit College
4. Who were the primary educators in the indigenous Indian education system before the British era?
   A) Gurus in gurukuls and maulvis in madrasas
   B) British missionaries
   C) Government-appointed teachers
   D) Merchants and traders
5. Which of the following British Act provided for an annual expenditure for the revival and promotion of literature and the encouragement of then learned natives of India and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the science among the inhabitants of the British territories?
   A) Indian Universities Act, 1904 AD
   B) Saddler University Commission, 1917-1919
   C) Hunter Education Commission, 1882-83
   D) Charter Act, 1813



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6. Consider the following:

   I. It is considered as the Magna Carta of English Education in India.

   II. It declared that the aim of the Government's educational policy was the teaching of Western Education.

   Which of the above statement (s) is/are correct about Sir Charles Wood's Despatch on Education, 1854?

   A) I B) II

   C) I and II D) Neither I nor II

7. Which educational system was prevalent in India before the introduction of modern education by the British?

   A) Islamic madrasas

   B) Indigenous gurukuls

   C) Both A and B

   D) Only Christian missionary schools

8. What was the primary purpose of Lord Macaulay's Minute on Indian Education (1835)?

   A) To promote Persian and Sanskrit literature

   B) To introduce Western education and English language

   C) To expand Islamic education

   D. To develop technical and vocational training

9. Which of the following act/plan/scheme/commission of British recommended that primary school must adopt vernacular languages.

   A) Hunter Education Commission, 1882-83

   B) Indian Universities Act, 1904

   C) Wood's Despatch Act, 1854

   D) Sadler University Commission, 1917-19

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10. Which institution, founded by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan in 1857, played a significant role in modern education among Muslims in India?
    A) Aligarh Muslim University
    B) Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College
    C) Darul Uloom Deoband
    D) Jamia Millia Islamia
11. The introduction of English education in India led to the formation of which prominent socio-religious reform movement in Bengal?
    A) Arya Samaj
    B) Brahmo Samaj
    C) Prarthana Samaj
    D) Aligarh Movement
12. Sadler Commission was related to:
    A) Judiciary
    B) Revenue Administration
    C) Education
    D) Police Administration
13. Which educational institution was established in 1817 and is considered the first modern college in India?
    A) Presidency College, Calcutta
    B) Hindu College, Calcutta
    C) Elphinstone College, Bombay
    D) St. Stephen's College, Delhi
14. Lord Macaulay was related to:
    A) Military reforms
    B) Abolishment of Sati
    C) English education
    D) Permanent settlement
15. During India's colonial period, the theory of downward filtration was related to:
    A) Railways
    B) Education
    C) Irrigation
    D) Poverty alleviation
16. The propounder of 'Filtration Theory' in India's education policy was:
    A) Charles Wood
    B) Lord Macaulay
    C) J.S. Mill
    D) Cornwallis



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17. The foundation of modern educational system in Indian was laid by:
    A) The Charter Act of 1813
    B) Macaulay's Minutes of 1835
    C) The Hunter Commission of 1882
    D) Woods Dispatch of 1854
18. In whose reign was English Education introduced in India?
    A) Lord William Cavendish Bentinck
    B) Lord Hardinge
    C) Lord Minto
    D) Lord Dalhousie

8.7 SUMMARY

- In this lesson, we examined the shifting landscape of education in India, tracing the evolution and transformation of one system while witnessing the emergence and ongoing evolution of another.
- For the layperson, education holds a revered and benevolent status.
- While education is highly valued in India, many individuals perceive it as inaccessible, believing it to be beyond their destiny.
- It's essential to recognise that education operates as a social sub-system, with its own unique definitions and cultural nuances. It is shaped by various agencies and interactions to cater to broad social categories.
- The educational system established during the colonial era persisted even after independence.
- Leaders, who themselves benefited from this system, believed that education would play a critical role in actualizing the principles enshrined in the Constitution.

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- Further, we will study whether the assumption holds true, examining the developments in education during the early years of Constitutional rule to assess its efficacy in translating constitutional ideals into reality.

8.8 GLOSSARY

- **Orientalist:** A scholar specializing in language and culture, focusing on the study of the language, culture, history, or customs of East Asian countries is known as orientalist.
- **Anglicist:** They were the advocates of teaching modern Western education to the Indian people in the English language.
- **Charter Act:** It is a document that details the service commitment of organizations or providers to deliver high-quality, standard services, including mechanisms for grievance redressal.
- **Indigenous:** It is a group of people native to a specific area.

8.9 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. A
5. D
6. C
7. C
8. B
9. C



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10. B
11. B
12. C
13. B
14. C
15. B
16. B
17. B
18. A

8.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Describe the Development of the Education System in the British Period in India.
2. Describe the Indigenous Education System in India.
3. What was the effect of Modern Education in India?
4. Discuss the different views such as Orientalist Policy and Angalist Policy on Education.
5. Describe the effect of Modern Education System in Development of Science and Technology.

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Unit V: The Revolt of 1857: Causes, Nature, and Consequences

Lesson 9: The Revolt of 1857: Causes, Nature, and Consequences



LESSON 9
THE REVOLT OF 1857: CAUSES, NATURE, AND CONSEQUENCES

Dr. Vijay Kumar Tiwary
Assistant Professor
School of Open Learning
University of Delhi

STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives
9.2 Introduction
9.3 Historical Context
9.4 Characteristics and Essence of Rebellion
9.5 Reasons Behind the 1857 Uprising
- 9.5.1 Political Causes
- 9.5.2 Administrative Causes
- 9.5.3 Economic Causes
- 9.5.4 Socio-Religious Causes
- 9.5.5 Military Causes

9.6 Beginning of the 1857 Uprising
9.7 Reasons for the Unsuccessful Revolt
- 9.7.1 The Revolt was Localised
- 9.7.2 The Revolt Began Prematurely
- 9.7.3 Superiority of the English in Many Fields
- 9.7.4 Lack of Unity of Purpose and Organization
- 9.7.5 Lack of Leadership
- 9.7.6 Personal Jealousies Amongst the Mutineers
- 9.7.7 Bahadur Shah a Broken Reed
- 9.7.8 Noble Efforts of Lord Canning for the Pacification of the Mutiny

9.8 Outcomes of the 1857 Rebellion
- 9.8.1 Positive Effects
- 9.8.2 Negative Effects

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9.9 Significance
9.10 Summary
9.11 Glossary
9.12 Answers to In-Text Questions
9.13 Self-Assessment Questions
9.14 References/Suggested Readings

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, students should be able to:

- Identify the causes behind the 1857 uprising.
- Understand the various events, conflicts, and the roles played by different groups and leaders during the uprising.
- Analyse the reasons for the revolt's failure.
- Evaluate the impact of the revolt and form an opinion about its nature.
- Follow the progression of the revolt from May to June 1857 and beyond.
- Recognize the continued intensity of the revolt even after Delhi fell in September 1857.
- Examine the institutions established by the rebels.
- Understand the efforts made to suppress the revolt.
- Explore the restructuring of agrarian relations after 1857.
- Understand colonial policies towards princes and Muslims following the uprising.
- Understanding the Background of the 1857 Revolt.
- Explaining the nature of the 1857 Revolt.
- Analysing the origins of the 1857 Uprising.
- Examining the initiation and expansion of the 1857 Uprising.



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- Exploring the reasons behind the 1857 Uprising's failure.
- Investigating the impact and aftermath of the 1857 Uprising.

9.2 INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the 19th century, the East India Company had successfully taken over extensive areas in India, motivated primarily by two goals: to consolidate its territorial dominance and to capitalize on trade prospects. In pursuit of these goals, the company sought profit with relentless determination, often resorting to deceit and exploitation without restraint. Before 1857, many indigenous powers were forcibly incorporated into the British Empire, with the British Government extracting resources from both rulers and subjects indiscriminately. During this era, discontent and opposition to the East India Company were widespread, leading to uprisings in various regions. While increasing territorial control was relatively simple, the British East India Company found it difficult to effectively manage these regions. From 1757 to 1857, the company's administration led to widespread dissatisfaction among various Indian communities towards England. The decline of Mughal authority was particularly hard for Muslims, who often relied on Mughal rulers for employment and support. The company's business practices adversely impacted skilled labourers, such as artisans and craftsmen. Furthermore, their different tax collection strategies, like the permanent settlement in the north and the Ryotwari settlement in the south, worsened the farmers' conditions, pushing many into poverty.

9.3 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Rebellion of 1857 represented a notable uprising against British dominion, involving discontented princes, disenchanted sepoys, and disillusioned elements. Yet, it is vital to acknowledge that opposition to the East India Company arose early on from diverse quarters across the subcontinent. These included tribal

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factions, agrarian communities, and religious sects, though their resistance remained localized and lacked coordination. Throughout the colonial period, India witnessed numerous instances of civil unrest and regional revolts, often characterized by violence. These movements stemmed from widespread dissatisfaction with British governance, compounded by individual grievances. Over the span of a century, India endured substantial economic exploitation and looting by Britain. Discontented rulers and feudal elites sought to reclaim their influence by devising revenue policies that primarily served their interests, resulting in the emergence of exploitative intermediaries. Moreover, tribal communities revolted against the upheaval and displacement triggered by external exploitation. These rebellions reflected the profound resentment and discontent within different segments of Indian society towards the oppressive colonial administration and its detrimental impacts on their livelihoods and communities.



Rani of Jhansi | Mangal Pandey | Tatya Tope | Nana Sahib

Fig. 9.1 *Leaders of the 1857 Uprising*

Prior to the major uprising of 1857, India experienced numerous religious and political disturbances and revolts against British rule under the East India Company. Notable examples include the Sanyasi and Faquir rebellions in Bengal, the Wahabi movement, and the Kuka movement in Punjab. These events showed a growing discontent among various parts of Indian society. While some of these uprisings were resolved peacefully, others led to long conflicts and many casualties. Although they did not succeed in removing British rule from India, they set the stage for the larger uprising of 1857.



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The 1857 uprising did not occur abruptly; it was the culmination of growing discontent. The revolt began as a mutiny among soldiers of the East India Company's army on May 10, 1857, in the Meerut cantonment. From there, it rapidly spread across the upper Gangetic Plain and central India through a combination of military mutinies and civilian rebellions. Key areas of conflict included present-day Uttar Pradesh, northern Madhya Pradesh, and the Delhi region. Although the uprising ultimately failed to overthrow British rule, it marked a significant lesson in India's struggle for independence and set the stage for future movements against colonial domination.

9.4 CHARACTERISTICS AND ESSENCE OF REBELLION

The 1857 uprising did not happen suddenly; it was the culmination of increasing dissatisfaction over time. It began as a mutiny among soldiers of the East India Company's army on May 10, 1857, in the Meerut cantonment. This mutiny rapidly escalated and spread across the upper Gangetic Plain and central India, igniting further military and civilian rebellions.

- **Initial Spark:** The revolt started with a military mutiny in Meerut, where soldiers rebelled against their British officers.
- **Spread of the Rebellion:** The uprising quickly extended to key regions, including present-day Uttar Pradesh, northern Madhya Pradesh, and the Delhi region. Both soldiers and civilians participated in the revolt, with military mutinies being complemented by widespread civilian rebellions.
- **Preceding Disturbances:** Prior to the major uprising, India experienced various religious and political disturbances.
- **Sanyasi and Faquir Rebellions in Bengal:** These early revolts were against British economic policies that disrupted local livelihoods.

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- **Wahabi Movement:** A significant religious and political movement that opposed British influence and sought to restore Islamic governance.
- **Kuka Movement in Punjab:** This was characterized by resistance from local groups against the encroaching colonial rule.

The main areas of conflict during the 1857 uprising were concentrated in the northern and central parts of India. Despite the widespread and fierce resistance, the uprising ultimately failed to end British rule. However, it was a pivotal moment in India's struggle for independence. The rebellion highlighted the deep-seated discontent with colonial rule and laid the foundation for future movements against British domination, significantly influencing India's path towards eventual independence.

Arguments in Favour

- The uprising remained localized to specific regions in Northern India and did not spread to Southern India or many areas in the North, particularly Punjab.
- Its origins can be traced back to military cantonments and primarily impacted military installations.
- Peasants and other civilians played a marginal role in the uprising.
- The rebellion did not reach rural villages and was largely contained within urban centres.
- Figures such as Nana Sahib, Bahadur Shah, and Rani Laxmibai harboured grievances against the British, but they only took active measures once military personnel revolted.
- If the 1857 uprising truly represented a National War of Independence, it would have posed significant challenges for a relatively small contingent of British forces to quell it.



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The First War of Independence

Many Indian historians and scholars refer to the Revolt of 1857 as the First War of Independence. This perspective emphasizes its significance as a pivotal struggle against British colonial rule.

Perspectives on the Revolt

- **Dr. K.M. Panikkar:** Described the uprising as a National Revolution, highlighting its widespread impact and significance.
- **V.D. Savarkar and Ashok Mehta:** Both referred to it as the 1st War of Independence, underscoring its importance as a foundational struggle for freedom.
- **Jai Chand Vidyalankar and Pandit Nehru:** Recognized the Revolt of 1857 as the First War of Independence, emphasizing its role in India's quest for liberation from colonial rule.
- **Dr. S.N. Sen:** Views the events of 1857 as a war of independence, noting that while revolutions often start with a minority, they gain broad support from the masses. He draws parallels with the American Revolution of 1775-83 and the French Revolution of 1789.

Contrasting View

Benjamin Disraeli: The Conservative Party leader in England at the time, referred to it as a National Mutiny, reflecting the British perspective of the uprising as a rebellion against legitimate authority.

Significance in Historical Narrative

Despite these differing perspectives, the term "First War of Independence" holds significant weight in India's historical narrative. It reflects the widespread belief among Indian historians and scholars that the Revolt of 1857 was a crucial struggle against British colonial rule, driven by aspirations for national liberation and sovereignty.

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This terminology captures the essence of the uprising as more than just a series of mutinies; it was a collective movement involving various segments of Indian society, including soldiers, civilians, and regional leaders, all united by a common goal of ending British domination. The Revolt of 1857 is thus seen as a defining moment in India's long and arduous journey towards independence, laying the groundwork for future resistance movements and ultimately shaping the nation's identity and aspirations.

Argument in Favour

The 1857 uprising is considered a national mutiny, supported by several arguments:

1. Its extensive reach throughout the country suggests the involvement of people from various classes and castes coming together to drive out the British.
2. Instances such as labourers in Kanpur and fishermen in Allahabad actively joining the revolt, alongside regional soldiers, and rulers, illustrate broad participation from all segments of society, encompassing both commoners and landlords.
3. The swift commencement and prolonged duration of the uprising indicate substantial backing from the common populace, which is crucial for the endurance of any rebellion.
4. The united opposition of Hindus and Muslims against the British, as demonstrated by proclamations in Delhi, highlights a sense of unity across religious divides. This collective involvement reinforces the portrayal of the revolt as a national struggle for independence.
5. The majority of those punished by the British were civilians rather than soldiers, indicating civilian engagement in the uprising.
6. While some rulers may not have initially joined the revolt, many were biding their time for the opportune moment to rebel against British rule.

7. The resistance to British annexations by the Indian masses signifies a burgeoning sense of independence and nationalism.
8. The active participation of women, in addition to men, in the revolt emphasizes its nationwide significance, implying that it was a strategic and coordinated movement rather than a sudden military mutiny.



Fig. 9.2 *British India, 1860*

From the detailed discussion above, we can conclude that:

1. Indian common men and rulers were united against the British and sought liberation from their rule.
2. Despite their smaller numbers, common people also participated in the uprising.

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3. Although initiated by soldiers, their goal was not personal concessions but the expulsion of the foreign rule from India.
4. While the uprising did not reach all parts of India, this doesn't mean that people in those areas lacked the desire for independence; they were awaiting the right opportunity to join the fight against the East India Company of British.
5. United Hindus and Muslims sacrificed together during the uprising, demonstrating unity in their actions and thoughts to free India from British oppression.

The Revolt of 1857, often dismissed as merely a sepoy mutiny, is interpreted differently by historians such as Dr. R.C. Mujumdar and Dr. S.N. Sen, who offer a more nuanced perspective. They argue that what initially began as a military uprising evolved into a broader rebellion with significant political implications.

This transformation occurred when the mutineers from Meerut marched to Delhi and declared their support for the reinstatement of the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II. This pivotal action galvanized not only the military but also the landed aristocracy and the civilian populace.

- **Movement to Delhi:** The mutineers' strategic decision to head towards Delhi was significant. Because of its historical status as the seat of the Mughal Empire, Delhi was not only a symbolic centre of power due to its historical status as the seat of the Mughal Empire but also a tactical location that could inspire broader support.
- **Proclamation of Support:** By proclaiming Bahadur Shah II as their leader, the mutineers aimed to legitimize their cause. The Mughal Emperor, though a figurehead with limited power under British rule, still held immense symbolic value for many Indians.
- **Aristocracy's involvement:** The landed aristocracy, which had suffered under British economic policies and lost of traditional privileges, saw an opportunity in supporting the mutineers. Their involvement lent the movement an air of legitimacy and strengthened its political dimension.



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- **Civilian Populace:** The general population, already discontent with British exploitation and economic hardship, rallied behind the call for the emperor's reinstatement. This support transformed the mutiny from a military insurrection into a broader rebellion with widespread popular backing.
- **Shift to Political Change:** This unification under Bahadur Shah II marked a significant shift. The revolt was no longer a series of isolated mutinies but a coordinated effort aiming for a larger political change. It signified a collective aspiration to restore indigenous rule and to challenge British dominance.
- **Symbolic Significance:** The decision to use Bahadur Shah II as the figurehead symbolized a return to traditional authority and cultural pride. It resonated deeply with various sections of Indian society, who viewed the Mughal Emperor as a symbol of pre-colonial sovereignty and cultural identity.

Thus, the move to Delhi and the support for Bahadur Shah II transformed the revolt from a localized mutiny into a comprehensive movement for political change, reflecting the widespread desire for liberation from British rule and the restoration of indigenous governance. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that the revolt surpassed its origins as a mere military mutiny. It quickly expanded and changed into a popular uprising and a passionate struggle for Indian independence. Additionally, Professor Bipan Chandra observed that alongside the sepoy revolt, a civilian uprising emerged, especially in the Northwestern Provinces and Oudh, home to many Bengal army sepoys. This civilian rebellion garnered widespread social support across various segments of society, culminating in a mass uprising.

Debate on the Nature of the 1857 Revolt

The 1857 revolt, often referred to as the Sepoy Mutiny or the First War of Indian Independence, has been the subject of extensive scholarly debate. This debate has explored various aspects of the revolt, including its nature, causes,

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and consequences. Scholars such as S.B. Chaudhury, C.A. Bayly, Eric Stokes, Gautam Bhadra, and Rudrangshu Mukherjee have contributed significantly to this discussion, and regional and local studies have highlighted different facets of the revolt. Here's an overview of the key arguments and perspectives:

1. **S.B. Chaudhury:** S.B. Chaudhury is known for his Marxist interpretation of the 1857 revolt. He viewed the revolt as a class struggle against the economic exploitation and socio-political oppression imposed by British colonial rule. According to Chaudhury, the revolt represented a reaction to the growing economic hardships faced by both the peasantry and the military, which were exacerbated by British policies. He emphasized the economic and social grievances of the Indian soldiers and peasants as central to the revolt.
2. **C.A. Bayly:** C.A. Bayly offered a more nuanced view of the revolt, focusing on the role of regional identities and local grievances. He argued that the 1857 revolt was not a unified national movement but rather a series of localized uprisings with varying motives and goals. Bayly emphasized the importance of understanding the revolt within the context of regional and local dynamics, rather than viewing it solely through a nationalistic lens.
3. **Eric Stokes:** Eric Stokes approached the revolt from a political and administrative perspective. He argued that the 1857 revolt was a result of the breakdown of the British administrative system in India. According to Stokes, the revolt exposed the weaknesses in British control and the alienation of various groups from the colonial administration. He also highlighted the role of military discontent and the impact of British policies on the Indian army.
4. **Gautam Bhadra:** Gautam Bhadra's work focused on the socio-cultural aspects of the revolt. He explored how cultural and religious factors influenced the revolt and how different communities experienced and interpreted the uprising. Bhadra's research emphasized the role of religious symbols and cultural identities in mobilizing support for the revolt and shaping its course.



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5. **Rudrangshu Mukherjee:** Rudrangshu Mukherjee provided a detailed analysis of the political and social dimensions of the revolt. He examined the revolt as a complex phenomenon involving various social and political groups, including zamindars, peasants, and soldiers. Mukherjee's work highlighted the diversity of motivations and the fragmented nature of the revolt, challenging the notion of a unified national struggle.
6. **Regional and Local Studies:** Regional and local studies have further enriched the understanding of the 1857 revolt by bringing out its myriad facets:
7. **Local Grievances:** Studies have shown that the revolt was driven by a range of local grievances, including economic exploitation, oppressive land revenue policies, and cultural and religious conflicts. These grievances were often specific to different regions and communities.
8. **Regional Variations:** Regional studies have highlighted the variations in the nature and intensity of the revolt across different parts of India. For example, the revolt in Awadh had distinct features compared to the uprising in Bengal or Punjab.
9. **Community Perspectives:** Local studies have provided insights into how different communities, including Hindus, Muslims, and various ethnic groups, participated in and experienced the revolt. These studies have revealed the complexities and diversity of the uprising beyond a singular national narrative.

The Uprising of 1857, as highlighted by these historians, was not just a mutiny of sepoy but a complex movement involving multiple layers of Indian society striving for political change and independence from British rule.

The debate on the nature of the 1857 revolt encompasses a range of perspectives and interpretations. Regional and local studies have further illuminated the varied experiences and motivations behind the revolt, challenging simplistic or monolithic interpretations and highlighting the complexity of this pivotal moment in Indian history.

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Various views about the uprising of 1857

Disraeli	"It was a national revolt."
S. N. Sen	The causes of the revolt were inherent in the constitution of British Rule It was an effort by the conservative elements to turn back the clock
J. Outram & W. Taylor	A Hindu-Muslim conspiracy
T.R. Holmes	The conflict between civilization and Barbarism
J.G. Medley	A war between blacks and blacks supported whites.
R.C. Majumdar	Neither first nor national nor a war of independence.
Marxist Historian	A soldier peasant struggle against foreign and feudal bondage.
Anglo-American Historians	A sepoy mutinies.
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad	Indian national character. He had referred to the two communities standing shoulder to shoulder to liberate themselves from the British.
Valentine Chirol	The revolt came like a storm and went away destroying everything.
Ashok Mehta	Indian National Revolt.
Jawaharlal Nehru	Not only sepoy mutiny, formed the shape of Civil Rebellion. The real form was feudalistic though some nationalistic elements were also present.
Christian Missionaries	It was a crisis sent by God
P.C. Joshi	The revolt was national in character & spread crisis among common people.
Dr. Tarachand	The revolt was specifically Medieval in character and represented the efforts of powerless class to get back their lost power

9.5 REASONS BEHIND THE 1857 UPRISING

The revolt initially emerged as a military uprising but was actually fuelled by various underlying factors stemming from the shifting societal landscape. Its



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origins lay in a multitude of grievances against British rule, spanning political, administrative, socio-cultural, economic, religious, and immediate concerns.

9.5.1 Political Causes

It includes:

1. **Wars and Conquests:** The British East India Company's conquests resulted in widespread dissatisfaction and alienation among displaced ruling families and their supporters. Many individuals, whose livelihoods depended on these families, felt disillusioned and resentful towards foreign rule. Lord Dalhousie's annexation of Punjab further inflamed tensions, particularly with the humiliation inflicted upon the ruling family. Dalip Singh, the young son of Ranjit Singh, the former ruler of Punjab, was deposed and sent into exile in England, while the assets of the Lahore Darbar were auctioned off.
2. **Subsidiary Alliance:** The British policy of annexation had significant repercussions for India's ruling classes, sparking widespread resentment. Measures such as the Subsidiary Alliance and the Lapse Doctrine exacerbated this discontent. Lord Wellesley's Subsidiary Alliance was a pivotal tool in expanding British influence, mandating that Indian rulers relinquish their own military forces and rely on the British for protection while paying for the "subsidiary forces" provided. As a result, many rulers surrendered control over their foreign affairs to the British and disbanded their native armies, depending on British troops for Défense. The Subsidiary Alliance had severe ramifications, particularly for regions that lost their independence. Countless soldiers and officers lost their livelihoods, leading to widespread suffering and economic decline. This loss of autonomy and livelihood fuelled intense dissatisfaction among the affected populations. Under Lord Wellesley's administration, the East India Company's strategy of consolidating control and diminishing native states became more pronounced. The refined Subsidiary Alliance

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System aimed to establish "effective control" by further integrating Indian territories into British governance structures. The repercussions of these policies were profound, exacerbating tensions between British rulers and Indian subjects. The loss of autonomy, economic hardships, and erosion of traditional power structures fuelled discontent and laid the groundwork for future resistance movements against British rule. Thus, the implementation of the Subsidiary Alliance marked a significant turning point in British colonial rule in India, setting the stage for further political upheaval and challenges to British authority.



Fig. 9.3 *The scene from one of the battles*

3. **Doctrine of Lapse:** Lord Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse triggered widespread discontent in directly affected states. This policy deprived many rulers of the right to adopt heirs for religious rituals upon their demise, perceived by the British as an encroachment on religious autonomy. Using this doctrine, the British Empire annexed several territories, including Punjab (1849), Pegu, and Sikkim. Moreover, Dalhousie annexed numerous princely states such as Satara, Jaitpur, Sambhalpur,

Bhagat, Udaipur, Jhansi, and Nagpur. The annexation of Oudh in 1856, ostensibly due to mismanagement, further stoked anger, particularly with the removal of Wajid Ali Shah from the throne. Economic exploitation and the curtailment of Nawabs' powers were cited as justifications for annexation, deemed necessary for efficient administration by Dalhousie. Actions such as confiscating dignities and titles from rulers like those in Carnatic and Tanjore, and terminating Nana Sahib's pension, added to the discontent. The British administration's indifference towards Indian rulers drew widespread criticism. Rulers felt constantly threatened, fearing the eventual annexation of all states by the British. This disregard for Indian sentiments and traditions deepened resentment against British rule.



Fig. 9.4 *Lord Dalhousie*

4. **Humiliating and Rush Policy towards the Successors of the Mughals:** The British adopted a demeaning and hurried approach towards the successors of the Mughals, consistently breaking their promises, which sparked widespread discontent and uprisings. Starting from 1803, the Mughal emperors were placed under British protection, with their claims to respect and precedence initially acknowledged. Initially, Governors General showed respect towards the emperor, referring to him as their

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servant. However, this dynamic changed significantly over time. By the mid-19th century, the British attitude towards the Mughal emperor had shifted dramatically. Lord Amherst bluntly informed the emperor that his kingship held only symbolic significance, addressing him as king out of politeness rather than genuine acknowledgment. This shift became more pronounced when Lord Dalhousie issued a decree in 1849, ordering the Mughal successor to vacate the Red Fort and reside near Qutub Minar. Although Emperor Bahadur Shah's accepted Fakiruddin as his successor under strict conditions, (like succession outside the Red Fort, reduced status, limited recognition, etc.). Fakiruddin's death in 1856 brought about significant changes. After Fakiruddin's demise, Lord Canning announced that any future successor would be stripped of even nominal dignities and barred from accessing the royal palaces in Delhi, effectively signalling the end of Mughal suzerainty. This declaration deeply unsettled Indian Muslims, who viewed it as a deliberate British attempt to belittle the Timurid princes. Both Muslims and Hindus, aggrieved by Dalhousie, Canning, and the East India Company's mistreatment of the nominal Mughal emperors, joining forces with the rebels in opposition to British rule.



Fig. 9.5 *The attack on the Red Fort of Delhi*



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5. **India was governed from Foreign Land:** India's governance from a distant land was a significant source of discontent among its people, as highlighted by Anderson. Unlike previous rulers such as the Turks and Mughals, who governed from within the country, the British administered India from thousands of miles away in England. While the Turkish and Mughal rulers utilised the funds, they collected within India to sustain the country, allocating resources to government operations, military expenses, infrastructure development, and architectural projects, which in turn generated employment opportunities, the British adopted a different approach. Upon assuming control, the British began redirecting India's wealth to England, causing resentment among Indians, who perceived it as their resources being exploited to enrich England at the expense of India's well-being. The resultant sense of injustice fuelled support for the rebels during the 1857 Mutiny, as many Indians grew weary of British rule.



Fig. 9.6

6. **Suspension of Pension:** Driven by a relentless pursuit of profit, the company's directors sought to bolster their revenues by implementing cost-cutting measures in India. This included reducing or altogether halting pensions for certain Indian dignitaries who were receiving stipends from

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the company. An illustrative case is that of Rani Jindan, the esteemed consort of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, whose annual pension plummeted from £15,000 to a mere £1,200. Similarly, pensions for figures like Nana Sahib was abruptly terminated. Even venerable rulers, such as the Nawab of Carnatic and Tanjore saw their esteemed positions stripped away.

These actions not only incurred the wrath of the affected leaders and their followers but also exacerbated the growing resentment towards British authority. Such instances of financial retrenchment further galvanized opposition to British rule, as those impacted felt a deep sense of betrayal and injustice at the hands of their colonial overlords.

9.5.2 Administrative Causes

It includes:

1. **Emergence of a Faceless Administrative System:** British rule ushered in a bureaucratic regime characterized by impersonality and a lack of empathy. English officials, shrouded in bureaucracy, became inaccessible and exhibited an attitude of superiority and indifference towards Indians. This starkly contrasted with the personal and relational approach of the traditional Mughal administration, making it difficult for Indians to adapt to the new British-imposed system in annexed territories.
2. **Erosion of Economic and Social Privileges:** The annexation policies of the British East India Company dismantled the economic and social privileges enjoyed by Indian aristocrats. Previously, many devout and educated individuals, along with educational and religious institutions, were granted tax-exempt lands by Indian rulers. However, the Inam Commission, acting on behalf of the East India Company, seized these lands on a massive scale, leading to the ruin of countless individuals and institutions. For instance, in Bombay alone, approximately 20,000 estates were confiscated. Landlords also saw their traditional rights eroded under



British rule, resulting in a loss of hope for reclaiming their former influence and privileges, generating significant inconvenience and frustration among Indians.

3. **Systematic Exclusion from Higher Administrative Positions:** The new administrative structure systematically marginalized Indians from civil and military roles, reserving all senior positions exclusively for English individuals. The highest attainable rank for an Indian in the military was that of a Subedar, with a modest monthly salary, while in the civil department, the ceiling was an Amin, with limited pay. This limited upward mobility left Indians feeling relegated to subordinate roles, fostering a perception of deliberate British policy to keep them in menial positions. British officials justified this exclusion with racist rhetoric, exacerbating discontent and feelings of humiliation among the Indian populace.
4. **Flaws in the Application of Law:** Despite the East India Company's claims of promoting judicial equality, this principle did not extend to Europeans. Many Indians faced obstacles in navigating the convoluted British legal system, which was costly and often resulted in delayed justice. The marginalized sections of society were further disadvantaged by the system's complexity, turning the British judicial apparatus into a tool of oppression wielded by the wealthy and conniving. Corruption permeated the police force, lower bureaucracy, and courts, resulting in unjust imprisonment and even deaths in custody. The oppressive conduct of law enforcement highlighted a flawed understanding of the rule of law, with the government prioritizing the interests of the elite over the welfare of ordinary citizens. Criticism from judges, such as those from the Agra Sadar Court, reflected widespread discontent with aspects of the judicial system, contributing to the grievances that ultimately fuelled the Great Mutiny against British rule.

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9.5.3 Economic Causes

It includes:

1. **Comprehensive Economic Exploitation:** The East India Company prioritized profit maximization at the expense of Indian industries, trade, commerce, and agriculture, leading to widespread economic exploitation, deindustrialization, poverty, and extensive debt across India. William Bentinck acknowledged the dire plight of Indians, particularly the suffering endured by cotton weavers. The annexation of Indian states exacerbated the situation, resulting in the loss of positions, power, and privileges for aristocrats. British colonial policies disrupted India's traditional economic fabric, a point underscored by Karl Marx, who emphasized the dual forms of physical and economic oppression experienced by Indians. Peasants, landlords, artisans, traders, and ordinary citizens all bore the brunt of British policies.
2. **Decimation of the Mercantile Class:** The British deliberately hindered the growth of Indian trade and commerce by imposing exorbitant taxes on Indian goods while incentivizing the import of British products into India. Consequently, by the mid-nineteenth century, India's exports of cotton and silk goods had nearly ceased altogether.
3. **Land Revenue Reforms and Zamindar Discontent:** The British instituted a new land revenue collection system in newly acquired regions, bypassing intermediaries like Talukdars and Zamindars and directly engaging with peasants. This disenfranchised large landowners, who lost their revenue and influence as the government took control of revenue collection. Many noble families faced financial hardship, with thousands of estates confiscated in western India and 21,000 Taluqdars losing their income in Awadh, the epicentre of rebellion. Jackson's decision to discharge Indian soldiers from the army, coupled with stringent demands for proof of land ownership, ignited rebellion in Oudh.



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4. **Decimation of Indian Manufacturing:** The influx of cheap British cotton goods devastated Indian textile manufacturers, threatening the existence of local industries that previously supplied villages with clothing. The British government's inaction exacerbated the decline of Indian manufacturers and the village economy, as affordable English goods replaced Indian handicrafts.
5. **Land Pressures:** The collapse of Indian industry and commerce forced a significant portion of the urban population to rely on agriculture, leading to millions of displaced artisans, craftsmen, spinners, weavers, smelters, and smiths seeking livelihoods in rural areas. This influx placed immense pressure on the land, transforming India from an agrarian society in to a British colonial agricultural outpost.
6. **Exploitation on European Plantations:** The Industrial Revolution's demand for raw materials led British settlers in India to dominate plantation industries such as indigo, jute, tea, and coffee. Their implementation of profit-maximizing land revenue policies exacerbated the plight of plantation workers, particularly indigo planters, who struggled under inhumane treatment and persecution by European owners.
7. **Economic Drainage:** British colonial policies systematically drained India's wealth to England through various channels:
   - British personnel in India amassed wealth through both legitimate and illicit means.
   - High salaries and remittances of British soldiers and civil servants were sent back to England, draining Indian wealth.
   - Indian riches were siphoned off to England through tax payments, auctions, and trade, depleting the country's resources.
   - The relentless economic exploitation by the British plunged ordinary Indians into poverty, unemployment, famine, disease, and economic despair, exacerbating India's economic woes.

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Fig. 9.7 *The fierce Battle in Delhi*

9.5.4 Socio-Religious Causes

It includes:

1. **Social Exclusivity:** The British policy of social segregation and their condescending attitude towards Indians fostered deep-seated discontent. British superiority and dismissive behaviour damaged the dignity of Indians. A strict social protocol required locals to salute Englishmen in public, with expectations like dismounting from horses or carriages to show respect. This unwritten rule was enforced throughout British India, allowing British citizens to humiliate, harm, or even kill Indians with little consequence. Consequently, the British often treated Indians with contempt, viewing them as culturally inferior and uncivilized.
2. **Missionary Interference:** Political and physical oppression aside, interference in religious matters was provocative and this was done by the



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government in particular. In 1813, the Charter Act allowed missionaries to enter British India, promoting Christianity and Western education. Seizing every opportunity, these missionaries harshly criticized Hindu and Islamic traditions, established presses, and educational institutions for spreading their beliefs. They ridiculed idolatry, mocked Hindu gods, and disparaged Hindu and Islamic philosophies. The imposition of Christian teachings in missionary and government schools heightened tensions, with Western education often seen as a means of Christian indoctrination. Many Englishmen conflated Christianity with Western education, and missionaries were often accused of targeting vulnerable populations like orphans to increase Christian conversions.

3. **Social Reform Legislation:** British social reforms in 19th-century India, such as Raja Ram Mohan Roy abolition of sati in 1829 and Lord Canning's Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, aimed to eliminate practices like sati, infanticide, and child marriage while promoting widow remarriage. Despite their positive impacts, these reforms faced opposition from orthodox groups who saw them as intrusions into their social and religious customs. Laws granting inheritance rights to Christian converts and promoting female education were particularly contentious, perceived as foreign interventions disrupting the traditional social order.

4. **Perceived Threats to Indian Civilization:** The Religious Disabilities Act of 1856, which allowed Hindus converting to Christianity to inherit property, fuelled rumours that Lord Canning's appointment as Governor-General aimed at mass conversions to Christianity, increasing tensions. Modernization initiatives like the introduction of railways, telegraphs, and postal systems were seen as attempts to Westernize Indians. Policies promoting mixed-caste and mixed-religion schooling, and the Bible teachings were perceived as encroachments on religious freedom, viewed as covert efforts to Christianize Indians. Such actions sparked resistance against what was seen as threats to cultural integrity with respect to Indian civilization.

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5. **Reduced Authority of Pandits and Maulanas:** Pandits, highly respected by Hindus, and Maulanas, revered by Muslims, traditionally held significant privileges in religious affairs. However, British indifference to these privileges, as well as their equal treatment of Pandits and Maulanas as ordinary individuals, eroded their prestige and influence. With the spread of Western education, these religious leaders' influence declined, leading them to perceive the British as adversaries and a threat to their cultural and religious traditions.

9.5.5 Military Causes

It includes:

1. **Erosion of Military Loyalty:** In the First Afghan War, where the British were defeated, a significant decline in military discipline was noted. This was highlighted in a letter by Lord Dalhousie to Great Britain. The Bengal Army, primarily composed of recruits from Oudh along with the Northwestern province, was a close-knit group, largely made up of high-caste Brahmin and Rajput soldiers. These high-caste soldiers felt unfairly treated compared to lower-caste recruits, leading to growing resentment. The setbacks in Afghanistan intensified their defiance towards European commanders, indicating a significant erosion of loyalty. This decline in allegiance was fuelled by a widespread sense of injustice, aggravated by the annexation of Oudh. Small-scale mutinies, such as those led by Mangal Pandey, preceded the larger uprising. Lord Dalhousie criticized the slack discipline within the army, noting that the soldiers were increasingly aware of being used to extend English influence at the expense of their own people. The recruitment of Gurkhas and Sikhs, along with the formation of irregular troops in Punjab and frontier areas, heightened the Indian soldiers' concerns about their future, hinting at the inevitability of a widespread mutiny. Before Lord Dalhousie's term, minor uprisings had



already occurred within the army, including those in the 22nd regiment (1849), the 60th regiment (1850), and the 36th regiment (1852), laying the groundwork for a large rebellion.

2. **Effects of the General Service Enlistment Act (1856):** Indian soldiers had enduring grievances about being obligated to take part in expeditions to Burma and Afghanistan, as these missions clashed with their religious beliefs. Their traditions prohibited them from associating with Muslims and consuming their food and water, while crossing the seas posed a risk to their caste status. To counter potential resistance to overseas deployment, in 1856, the government under Lord Canning enacted the General Service Enlistment Act, which required that all newly enlisted sepoys could not refuse Foreign Service. Though it did not apply to existing soldiers, the act fuelled discontent, particularly within the Bengal Army, where military service was often passed down through families. Indian soldiers saw this law as an attack on their religious and caste integrity.

3. **Disparity in Troop Composition:** Compared to their British counterparts, Indian soldiers faced significant economic inequality. Despite Lord Dalhousie's recommendations to correct this imbalance, the Home Government did not take decisive action. The Bengal army alone had 151,361 troops, while about 40,000 were stationed in Punjab. This imbalance was stark, with British forces significantly understaffed in regions like Bengal and Bihar, except in urban centers like Calcutta and Dinapur. The scarcity of British officers, many of whom were deployed on the borders of newly acquired territories, further highlighted this disparity. The participation of a significant number of Indian soldiers in the War of Crimea, where the British forces faced challenges, increased the Indian soldiers' awareness of British vulnerability in India, reinforcing their thoughts of challenging British authority.

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Fig. 9.8 The Indian Soldiers

4. **Disparity in Soldier Salaries:** Indian soldiers faced significant economic inequality compared to their British counterparts. British soldiers received substantially higher wages, ranging from sixty to seventy rupees per month, while Indian soldiers received a paltry nine rupees per month, barely enough to meet their basic needs. Furthermore, opportunities for advancement were scarce for Indian soldiers, unlike their British peers who had ample prospects for career progression. Efforts by Indian soldiers to enhance their financial situation frequently led to punishment instead of rewards. The highest position an Indian sepoy could achieve was Subedar, yet even this salary was lower than what a newly recruited European soldier earned. Additionally, chances for promotion were often slim, with some soldiers starting and ending their careers at the same rank, as was the case with Risaldar.

5. **Impatience for the Restoration of Old Privileges:** As British control solidified in India, new, strict regulations burdened army recruits, prompting resistance to harsh treatment from British officers. Benefits



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once enjoyed, like "Foreign Service Allowances" during warfare, were abruptly discontinued— apparent when soldiers returned from the conquest of Sindh in 1843 without being granted such allowances. Indian soldiers yearned for previous privileges, such as recognition from Indian princes and free postal services within India, which were abolished in 1854 by Lord Dalhousie. The loss of these benefits profoundly demoralized the soldiers, leading to widespread discontent and resentment, ultimately fuelling the Great Mutiny.

6. **Mysterious Chapatis and Lotus Flowers:** Unrest in Indian society was reflected in mysterious events like the distribution of chapatis and lotus flowers starting in 1850. These activities, of unknown origin, added a layer of mystery to the socio-political landscape. As the centennial of the Battle of Plassey neared in 1857, anticipation increased regarding the potential end of British rule in India. Indian soldiers secretly met to plan reprisals against their European superiors, plotting coordinated actions across India on June 22, 1857. Their plans included eliminating European officers, liberating prisoners, seizing government assets, disrupting communication networks, and capturing strategic locations, aiming to challenge the entrenched foreign authority.

7. **British Defeat in the Afghan War:** The catastrophic British invasion of Afghanistan during Lord Auckland's tenure ended disastrously. The retreat from Afghanistan saw tremendous losses, with only a small fraction of the estimated sixteen thousand soldiers surviving the ordeal. Some historians even suggest that only one soldier might have survived. This defeat underscored the vulnerability of British power for Indians.

8. **The Immediate Trigger:** *The Greased Cartridges Controversy:* The greased cartridge issue was the immediate catalyst for widespread discontent among various segments of the Indian population. In 1856, regulations required sepoys to bite the ends of cartridges before use. Rumours spread that these cartridges, meant for the new Enfield rifles were lubricated with cow and pig fat —materials offensive to Hindu and Muslim

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religious practices. Despite initial dismissals by British authorities, a covert investigation later confirmed the use of these objectionable materials. The resulting outrage among sepoys, driven by religious indignation, led to punitive actions against soldiers who declined to use the cartridges, setting the stage for the outbreak of the Great Rebellion of 1857.

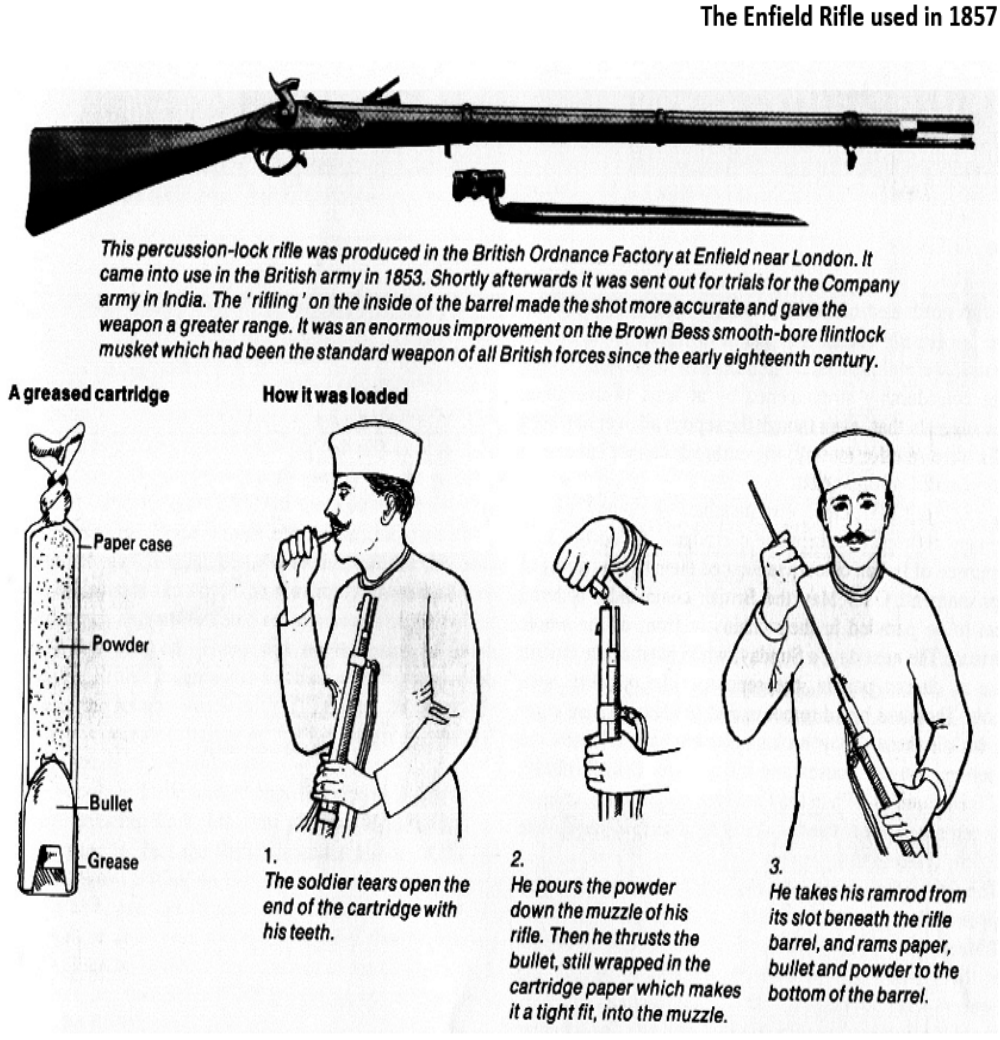


Fig. 9.9 *The Enfield Rifle used in 1857*

The incident with the lubricated cartridges was just the final straw, revealing deeper issues and long-standing unhappiness with British rule. The uprising of 1857 was a complex result of various social, religious, political, and economic complaints, showing a broad resistance to colonial rule and a strong desire for independence and respect.



Fig. 9.1*0 Major Centres of Revolt of 1857*

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9.6 BEGINNING OF THE 1857 UPRISING

On March 29, 1857, at Barrackpur, soldiers from the Native Infantry (34th) declined to use greased cartridges due to religious concerns. A sepoy named Mangal Pandey attacked Lieutenant Baugh, which led to his arrest and later execution. Similar rebellions took place in Behrampur, resulting in the soldier's disbandment of the soldiers involved. The revolt gained significant momentum at Meerut on May 10, 1857, when 85 sepoys were court-martialled for rejecting the cartridges. These sepoys then openly rebelled, attacking their officers, freeing imprisoned soldiers, and advancing towards Delhi. By May 12, they had taken control of Delhi and announced Bahadur Shah (II) the emperor, signalling the start of an extensive rebellion that spread to regions such as Orissa, Kanpur, Jhansi, Central India, Bihar, Lucknow and Agra.

Despite all this, some Indian rulers stayed loyal to the British and helped suppress the revolt, but it posed a considerable challenge. Initially on the defensive, the British mounted a strong counteroffensive to retake Delhi, achieving success in September 1857. Bahadur Shah (II) was exiled to Mandalay, Burma, marking his death there and the effective end of the Mughal dynasty with the execution of his successors. In Lucknow, the British forces, supported by the Gurkha Regiment, eventually recaptured the city, despite the earlier loss of the Residency and Sir Henry Lawrence. Nana Sahib led the revolt in Kanpur, with support from Tantia Tope, although General Campbell recaptured the city in December 1857. Tantia Tope later joined forces with Rani Lakshmi Bai in Jhansi, who fought valiantly until the city fell to Sir Hugh Rose. Both Rani Lakshmi Bai and Tantia Tope were eventually defeated; she died in battle, and he was captured and executed, while Nana Sahib escaped to Nepal.

The revolt also erupted in Bareilly in May 1857, led by Muhammad Hasan Khan, with Rana Beni Madho Singh of Saharanpur and Gajadar Singh of Gorakhpur garnering support from Begum Hazrat Mahal. Smaller uprisings ignited in Jehlum, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ropar, Firozepur, and Agra. However, by early 1858, the British had subdued most of these rebellions. Certain Indian rulers, including the ministers of Gwalior, Hyderabad, and Nepal, collaborated with the British to suppress the revolt.

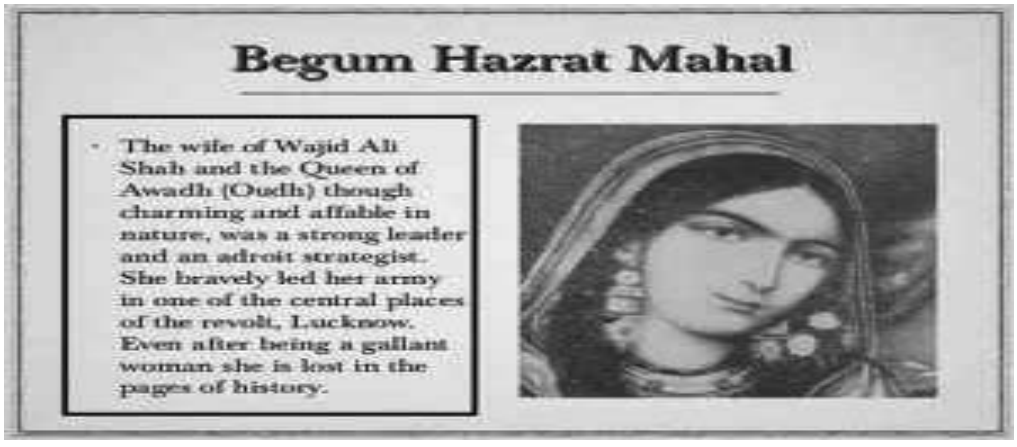


Fig. 9.11 *Begum Hazrat Mahal*

Ultimately, the 1857 Revolt was a pivotal attempt by Indians to overthrow British rule. Originating from the grievances of sepoys, it quickly escalated into a broad rebellion across various regions. Although it ultimately failed because of the British military's strength, divisions among Indian leaders, and coordination among them, it left a lasting impact on India's independence movement, igniting nationalist sentiments and setting the stage for future resistance and movements against colonial rule.

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Important Canters of Revolt:

Lucknow	• Revolts in Lucknow began on 4th June 1857. • British resident Henry Lawrence, who took shelter in the residency along with several Europeans were killed. • The attempts to take over Lucknow made by Havelock and Outram were unsuccessful. • But in November new attempts under Campbel were successful in reconquering Lucknow.
Kanpur	• The revolt began in Kanpur on 5th June 1857. • Here it was led by Nana Saheb, (He was adopted son of Peshwa Baji Rao II) and he was also aided by Tatya Tope. • In December 1857, Collin Campbell took over Kanpur. • Nana Sahib ultimately fled to Nepal while Tatya Tope continued to struggle. • He was betrayed by his friend Man Singh in April 1859 and was later hanged by the British after a brief trial.
Jhansi	• Rani Lakshmi of Jhansi (widow of Gangadhar Rao) got estranged with the British after the latter's refusal to recognize her adopted son as the legal heir to the throne. • She joined the revolt on 5th June 1857 and died fighting on 17th June1858.
Faizabad	• In Faizabad, the rebels fought under the leadership of Maulvi Ahmadullah. • He was shot to death on the borders of Rohilkhand by a British loyalist on 5th June 1858.
Bareilly	• Khan Bahadur Khan led the rebels in Bareilly and proclaimed himself the Nawab. • He was defeated by Campbell and was sentenced to death by hanging.
Bihar	• In Bihar, the Zamindar of Jagdishpur, Kunwar Singh took up arms against the British. • He successfully kept up the struggle till he died on 26th April, 1858
Assam	• In Assam, Maniram Dutt attempted to revolt and proclaimed the grandson of the last Ahom king as the ruler. • He was later arrested and hanged.



Odisha	• In Odisha, the prince of Sambhalpur Surendra Shahi and Ujjwal Shahi emerged as the leaders of the revolt. • In 1862, Surendra Shahi was forced to surrender.
Rajasthan	• In Rajasthan, Kota emerged as the centre of rebel activities, which was led by Jai Dayal and his brother Har Dayal. • Jai Dayal was subsequently caught and blown to pieces by a canon.

9.7 REASONS FOR THE UNSUCCESSFUL REVOLT

It includes:

9.7.1 The Revolt was Localised

Despite its significance, the 1857 rebellion was not a nationwide uprising, as explained by Dr. R.C. Mazumdar. Instead, it was confined to specific regions, including Punjab, the United Provinces, Rohilkhand, Oudh, areas between the Narbada and Chambal rivers, and parts of Bengal and Bihar. Afghanistan, under Dost Mohammad, remained friendly, while Sindh and Rajputana stayed relatively calm and loyal. Southern India, below the Narbada River, experienced limited movements, with mutinies in Kolhapur and unrest in Hyderabad. Central and Eastern Bengal remained peaceful, and Nepal aided the British in quelling the revolt. Despite its localized nature, the rebellion had far-reaching implications and left a lasting impact on India's struggle for independence.

9.7.2 The Revolt Began Prematurely

The carefully orchestrated rebellion of 1857 encountered a significant setback when it erupted earlier than expected. Originally scheduled to unfold nationwide on May 31st, 1857, only a select few leaders and a handful of officers were aware of this planned date. However, unforeseen events, such as the trial and execution of Mangal Pandey, the disbandment of soldiers from the 19th and 34th Indian regiments, and the hanging of the Subedar of the 34th regiment, created a sense of urgency among Indian soldiers, hastening the onset of the uprising.

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Meerut emerged as the focal point of the rebellion when it erupted on May 10th, a notable departure from the prearranged plan. Dr. Eswari Prasad suggests that the Meerut incident inadvertently disrupted the rebels' grand scheme, sparing the British Raj from the envisioned destruction by Nana Sahib and his allies. Historians Wilson, White, and Mailson agree that the outbreak in Meerut proved advantageous for the British East India Company but disastrous for the rebellion. The premature uprising disrupted the rebels' coordinated strategy, leaving local leaders disoriented and uncertain about their next course of action.

As a result, the rebellion degenerated into a series of spontaneous and uncoordinated actions by disparate rebel groups. The lack of synchronization and cohesion weakened the rebels' collective strength and strategic effectiveness, providing the British authorities with the opportunity to contain and suppress the uprising swiftly and decisively. Despite the rebels' initial surge of momentum, the premature commencement of the revolt ultimately dashed their hopes for widespread and coordinated resistance against British rule.

Revolt of 1857: At a Glance

Centre	Leader	Day of Revolt	Crushed by	Day of Surrender
Delhi	Bahadur Sah Zafar, Bakht Khan	11 May 1857	Nicolson, Hudson	20 Sept.1857
Lucknow	Begam Hazarat Mahal, Birjis Qadr	4 June 1857	Colin Campbell	31 March 1858
Kanpur	Nana Saheb, Tatya Tope	5 June 1857	Colin Campbell	December 1857
Jhansi, Gwalior	Rani Laxmi Bai, Tatya Tope	June 1857	General Hugh Rose	17 June 1858
Jagadispur	Kunwar Singh, Amar Singh	12 June 1857	Major William Taylor	December 1858
Faizabad	Maulvi Ahmadullah	June 1857	General Reyanard	5 June 1858
Allahabad	Liyakat Ali	June 1857	Col. Neill	1858
Bareilly	Khan Bahadur Khan	June 1857	Vincent Ayer	1858



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9.7.3 Superiority of the English in Many Fields

1. British Imperialism had vast resources at their disposal. Luckily for them, the Crimean War and other conflicts involving the British had ended by 1856.
2. The British army was significantly larger, with troops brought in from various parts of the world and many more recruited within India itself to quell the Mutiny.
3. The British possessed superior weaponry compared to the rebels. They had modern guns and rifles, while the Indians mostly had old cannons, which were scarce in number. The rebels mainly fought with swords and spears.
4. The British had a dominant navy, giving them a significant advantage in naval power.
5. The Electric System played a role in the British success. It provided the British Commander-in-chief with information about rebel plans, allowing him to make appropriate arrangements. Because of these advantages, the Indians were unable to succeed.

9.7.4 Lack of Unity of Purpose and Organization

The Indian rebellion of 1857 stands out for its glaring lack of organization and coherent leadership structure. While some semblance of organization existed among the rebels, their central leadership proved feeble and ineffective. Although individual leaders showed courage and audacity, they lacked the requisite experience and strategic insight to orchestrate a unified resistance movement. Relying on sporadic attacks reminiscent of guerrilla warfare, the rebels struggled to achieve their overarching goal of reclaiming independence from British rule. Despite extensive investigations conducted by commissions and boards established by the British government, no evidence emerged of an organized conspiracy behind the mutiny. Even Bahadur Shah II, the nominal

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Mughal emperor, expressed surprise at the outbreak of the mutiny, highlighting the absence of coordinated planning among rebel leaders.

The mutineers' lack of unity of purpose exacerbated their disarray. The uprising erupted abruptly, catching many rebels off guard, with a conspicuous absence of consensus regarding its objectives. The division between Hindus and Muslims in their goals mirrored the broader disunity within rebel ranks, with no common political agenda guiding their actions. This lack of unity and effective collaboration hindered their ability to achieve a collective goal. Instead, a closer examination of mutiny records reveals a narrative of self-interest prevailing over the greater cause of national liberation.

Throughout the mutiny, various leaders, including the Mughal emperor, queens, and princesses, pursued their individual interests, exacerbating discord and confusion within rebel ranks. Sepoys from Avadh fought to restore their own king, while figures like Nana Sahib and the queen of Jhansi asserted personal claims to power. Opportunistic individuals, motivated by personal gain rather than patriotism, exploited the chaos for their own benefit. Khan Bahadur Khan declared himself the viceroy of Rohilkhand, while the Banjaras of Saharanpur installed their own monarch. Gujjars rallied under different leaders in disparate regions, with figures like Fatuna proclaiming themselves as kings. Devi Singh asserted dominion over 14 villages in the Mathura district. Additionally, individuals such as Mahima ji Wadi, a bandit, and Belsare, a Maratha Brahmin, joined the rebellion to advance their own fortunes.

Ultimately, the rebellion unfolded as a reckless and aimless endeavour, lacking strategic coherence, and marred by internal discord. The absence of unified leadership and a cohesive agenda contributed to its eventual failure to achieve the rebels' aspirations for independence from British rule.

9.7.5 Lack of Leadership

A pivotal factor that contributed significantly to the failure of the 1857 mutiny was the glaring absence of effective leadership within the rebel ranks. While

notable figures like the Rani of Jhansi, Tatya Tope, and Nana Sahib showcased commendable leadership abilities, they remained exceptions amidst a sea of inadequate leadership. Most rebel leaders, save for a select few like Ahmed Ullah and Tatya Tope, were primarily driven by personal grievances against British policies rather than a cohesive vision for independence. Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad aptly noted the absence of meticulous planning and strategic architects to steer the uprising towards success.

Adding to the rebellion's woes was the treachery of native informants such as Molvi Raza Ali, who collaborated with the British, dealing a severe blow to the rebel cause. In stark contrast, the British possessed capable leaders and skilled generals who adeptly countered the rebellion. Figures like Henry Lawrence, Outram, Havelock, Nicholson, Neil, and Edwards showcased remarkable military and political prowess, enabling them to decisively suppress the uprising.

Unlike their Indian counterparts, British leaders were united in their unwavering commitment to maintaining British rule in India, a factor that significantly bolstered their success in quelling the mutiny. Their cohesive purpose stood in stark contrast to the fragmented goals and lack of strategic planning among Indian rebel leaders, ultimately spelling doom for the mutiny.

In essence, the superiority of British leaders in both military strategy and political cohesion played a pivotal role in their ability to swiftly suppress the rebellion and retain control over the tumultuous situation.



Fig. 9.12 *Tatya Tope*

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9.7.6 Personal Jealousies Amongst the Mutineers

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad points out that when he looks back at the events of 1857, he sees a significant decline in the Indian national character. He notes that the leaders of the revolt couldn't work together. Instead, they were often jealous of each other and schemed against one another. These personal conflicts were a big reason why the Indian side lost. The leaders' rivalries made it difficult for them to unite under a single leader. On the other hand, the British had the advantage of having a unified leadership. Their leaders were just as brave and determined as the rebel leaders, but they worked together better. So, the internal conflicts among the Indian leaders weakened their unity and ultimately led to their defeat.

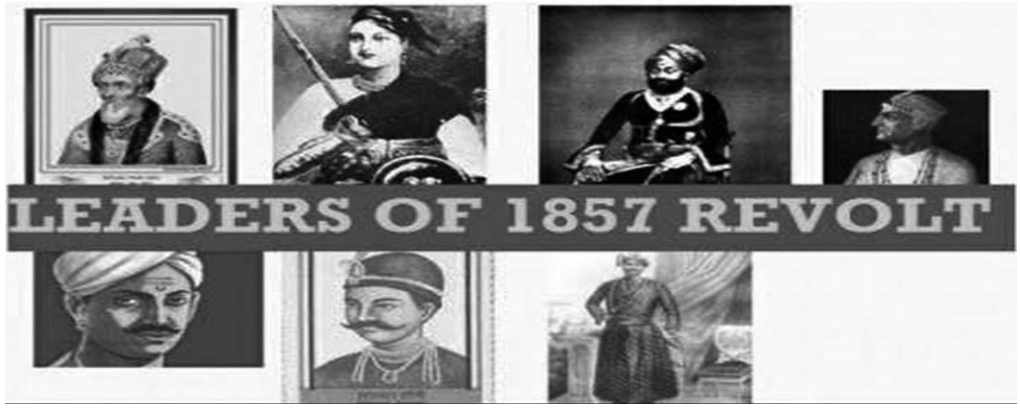


Fig. 9.13 *Leaders of 1857 Revolt*

9.7.7 Bahadur Shah a Broken Reed

Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal emperor, found himself ill-equipped to confront the monumental revolution that swept through the country. Despite having been bestowed with the title of emperor of India, he proved ineffectual in his leadership. His authority, it turned out, was fragile, and he struggled to maintain control as the rebellion ebbed and flowed, neither side consistently gaining the upper hand. Contrary to the biased assertions of British historians, the rebellion

cannot be simplistically categorized as solely Hindu or Muslim in nature; its failure stemmed from a combination of disorganization and self-serving actions. Only a handful of individuals, such as Tatya Tope, Laxmi Bai, and Ahmedullah, demonstrated genuine selflessness in their resistance efforts. The British, adept at exploiting personal rivalries and selfish motives among Indian rulers, ultimately prevailed. Bahadur Shah's incapacity to provide effective leadership, owing to his lack of readiness for such a momentous revolution, stands out as a crucial factor contributing to the mutiny's ultimate failure.

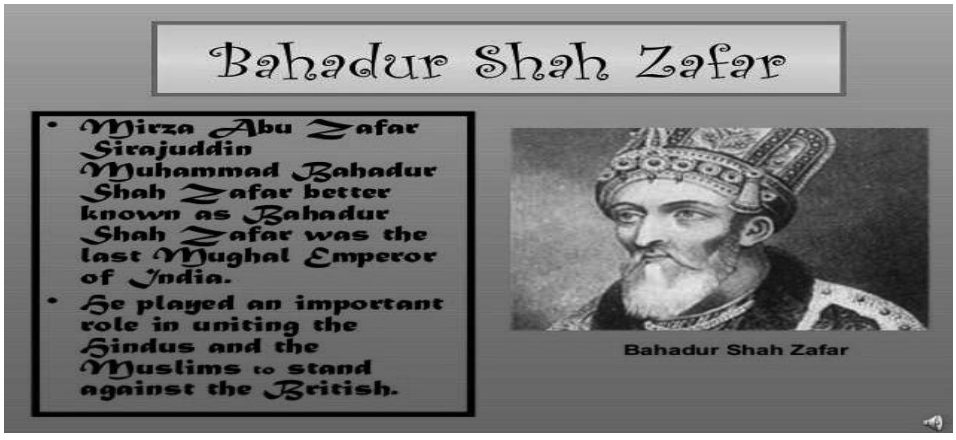


Fig. 9.14 *Bahadur Shah Zafar*

9.7.8 Noble Efforts of Lord Canning for the Pacification of the Mutiny

Another pivotal factor contributing to the British success during the mutiny lay in the actions of Lord Canning and Sir John Lawrence in the initial stages of the conflict. Rather than succumbing to calls for harsh retribution emanating from both England and India, they advocated for a more tempered response. While many advocated for a stern approach, Canning opted for a gentler stance. Instead of seeking vengeance, he pursued a path of kindness and reconciliation toward the mutineers. Canning's decision to exercise restraint during and after the conflict played a significant role in the British triumph. Despite facing criticism for his perceived leniency, it became evident that his compassionate approach

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was not only morally sound but also politically astute. It portrayed the British in a positive light to the Indian populace, fostering trust and goodwill between the two sides. Throughout the tumultuous period, Canning remained composed, and his policy of mercy and moderation ultimately helped quell the violence and restore tranquillity.

Causes for Failure of the Revolt

Localized Character	• The revolt remained localized around few centers (mainly the Rohilkhand region) of Northern India. • Most of the regions of the Southern part, Western part and Eastern part of India were left untouched by it. • The revolt remained limited in potential and strength and was not able to present a united front. • Since it began without any well devised plan or blueprint for action, it could not involve all of India and remained constricted to a few sections and classes of the society.
Feudal Nature	• The revolt was primarily a reaction of the local feudal class against the loss of their privileges. • While a few zamindars and royals fought against British to get their privileges restored, most of the zamindars and states likes Jind, Patiala, Hyderabad and Nabha helped British to suppress it. • The rebels lacked any fixed aim or goal. They were bound together by a reactionary anti-British sentiment, but they had no other forward looking political goal or ideology.
Lack of Intelligentsia Support	• Most of the upper and middle educated class did not support the rebels because they did not believe in the regressive beliefs of the rebels. • The educated Indians were afraid of the feudal character of the revolt and their leaders too were ready to believe in the promise of modernization of the British rule. • Further, rebels did not have a progressive vision of a modern society united by nationalism.
Lack of Finances	• Mahajans and bankers sided with the British, as they were primarily targeted during the revolt. • Traders also backed the British, aiming to maximize profits by aligning with the influential trading company.



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Inferior Military Technology	• The British employed the most developed arms and artillery available while majority of Indians were dependent on traditional armaments like swords, spears etc.
Absence of Robust Technology	• Modern innovations like the telegraph significantly enhanced British power by improving their communication capabilities.

9.8 OUTCOMES OF THE 1857 REBELLION

The British suppressed the 1857 revolt largely because of their superior resources and the rebel forces' vulnerabilities. Despite the rebellion being subdued, its impact was significant. Dr. K. M. Panikkar described it as a turning point in modern Indian history, greatly affecting the direction of British rule in the region. It marked a clear shift in India's historical trajectory, setting the stage for the later development of the Indian empire in the late 1800s. Although the British were victorious, the revolt cast doubt on their control, making their hold on India less secure. Lord Cromer emphasized learning from the 1857 events to avoid similar future challenges. Following the revolt, the British government took steps to strengthen their control over India.

9.8.1 Positive Effects

It includes:

- **Transfer of Governance from the East India Company to the British Crown:** The governance of India was transferred from the East India Company to the British Crown through the 1858 Act for the Better Government of India. This act established direct British rule over India, led by a Secretary of State who was accountable to the British Parliament. The Secretary of State was supported by an India Council, which consisted of fifteen members, at least nine of whom were required to have significant experience in Indian affairs. The governor-general in India retained administrative power, now with the title of viceroy, representing the British

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monarch. Although the 1858 Act didn't initially confer the title of viceroy, it was later granted through a royal proclamation on November 1, 1858. This change highlighted the direct involvement of the British crown in Indian governance, facilitating more centralized decision-making.

- **The Queen's Proclamation, 1858:** Queen Victoria's proclamation, read by Lord Canning in Allahabad on November 1, 1858, marked a crucial moment in Indian history. It signified the end of the East India Company's rule and the start of direct governance by the British crown. The proclamation reassured Indians of the British commitment to fairness and religious tolerance. It emphasized the protection of Indian rights and dignity, promoting a message of benevolence. This announcement also solidified the transition, with the Governor General of India being elevated to the status of Viceroy, reinforcing the British crown's direct involvement in Indian affairs.
- **Establishment of Home Government for India:** The 1858 Act introduced a significant shift in India's governance from the East India Company to direct oversight by the British Crown. The act created a home government in England, led by the Secretary of State for India, who was supported by the Council of India. This new structure meant that the governance of British territories in India was now directly accountable to the British Parliament, with increased transparency and a more structured administration.
- **Overhauling of the Indian Army:** Dr. Ishwari Prasad points out that the 1857 Revolt led to a thorough revaluation of the Indian army's structure, which resulted in crucial changes in the ratio of English to Indian soldiers and the overall organization of the forces. In response to the revolt, the British increased the number of European soldiers and decreased the number of Indian soldiers to ensure loyalty and efficiency. They also implemented policies to prevent a unified sense of nationalism among the troops, promote loyalty to the British and maintain discipline within the army.



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- **Ending the Annexation Policy:** Queen Victoria's proclamation marked a major shift in how the British dealt with the princely states of India. She clearly stated that all previous treaties and agreements made by the East India Company or by her would be respected and maintained. This move ended the policy known as the doctrine of lapse, ensuring that the lands of Indian states would remain intact. Additionally, the right for native princes to adopt heirs was formally acknowledged. Queen Victoria also reassured us that there were no plans to expand British territory further. Recognizing the importance of the princely states, the British sought their support to maintain British rule in India. The Queen committed to protecting the rights of these rulers and offered forgiveness to those who had not engaged in violence against the British. After the Crimean War, with worries about Russian threats, it was crucial to keep strong alliances with these states. As a result, the policy of forcibly taking over states was stopped, and many loyal rulers were given more freedom. The British also awarded titles and privileges to Indians who supported them, strengthening the relationship between the British authorities and the rulers of the native states.
- **Guarantee of Religious Freedom and Equality:** Queen Victoria's proclamation also strongly affirmed a commitment to religious freedom. It stated that the British government would not interfere with the religious practices of its subjects and that no one would be discriminated based on their religion. Everyone was guaranteed equal protection under the law, and officials were strictly warned not to meddle in religious matters, with serious consequences for those who did. This proclamation assured all Indians that their religious rights and sentiments would be respected.
- **Additional Reforms Implemented**
  - o *Educational Advances*: Universities were set up in Kolkata and Madras in 1857, enhancing higher education in India.
  - o *Agrarian Reforms*: The Bengal Rent Act of 1859 was introduced, giving farmers who had farmed the same land for over 12 years the right to keep their land, with clear rules on how rents could be increased.

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- o *Legal Reforms*: A comprehensive penal code was put into effect, establishing a uniform legal system across India.
- o *Judicial Reorganization*: The East India Company's courts and the Crown's Supreme Court were merged into new high courts in each presidency, centralizing the judicial system.

Sir Lepel Griffin described the 1857 mutiny as a hidden blessing for India because it removed many barriers and ended the East India Company's outdated and self-interested administration. This change was crucial for India's future. Dr. R.C. Majumdar notes that the mutiny stopped further annexation of states, supported the practice of adoption, increased tension between Indians and the English, and importantly, set the stage for the eventual fight for independence.

9.8.2 Negative Effects

It includes:

- **Escalation of Racial Hostility between the British and Indians:** The aftermath of the mutiny worsened the racial tensions between the British and Indians. The British viewed Indians as unreliable, which led to discrimination and verbal abuse, deepening the divide and causing social alienation. The strict suppression of the revolt, especially in Punjab and North India, increased resentment towards the British, who felt like they were occupiers in a hostile land. This led to them taking even more oppressive measures. As a reaction, Indians strengthened their cultural identity. The revolt, which came as a shock to the British, resulted in severe reprisals against Indian soldiers and civilians, intensifying the animosity between the two groups.
- **Setback to Social Reform Initiatives:** The Revolt of 1857 made the British reconsider their approach to social reforms in India. Facing strong



resistance, especially from orthodox Hindu and Muslim groups, the British scaled back their plans for rapid westernization and focused instead on creating a stable administrative framework that was more attuned to the complex social fabric of traditional Indian societies.

- **Adoption of Divisive Tactics:** After the mutiny, the British used a strategy of division, exploiting caste and class differences among Indians to maintain control. They deliberately stirred up conflicts between Muslims and Hindus as well as between high-caste and low-caste Hindus, planting seeds of disunity and discord throughout the country.
- **Deepening Misunderstandings between Hindus and Muslims:** The mutiny also worsened the already tense relations between Hindus and Muslims. Muslims, who showed greater sympathy towards the rebellion, became more involved in anti-British activities and faced harsher measures from the British, including executions and exiles of prominent Muslim leaders. This aggravated the divide between the two communities.
- **Setback for the Muslim Renaissance:** The mutiny severely damaged the emerging Muslim renaissance in Delhi, stunting the cultural and intellectual progress that had been taking place. The once-vibrant spiritual and educational movement in Delhi declined sharply after the mutiny, whereas Calcutta, a center of Hindu cultural revival, remained relatively unaffected and continued its cultural and intellectual growth.
- **Transition from Territorial Conquest to Economic Exploitation:** After the revolt, the British shifted from expanding their territories to focusing on economically exploiting India's vast resources. This marked the beginning of a new phase where the British aimed to maximize economic benefits from India, presenting new challenges to progressive forces within Indian society inspired by thinkers like John Stuart Mill and other progressive European intellectuals.

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9.9 SIGNIFICANCE

It includes:

- **Unveiling of Deficiencies:** According to Sir Lepel Griffin, the 1857 Mutiny acted as a critical turning point that exposed the deep-seated flaws and shortcomings in the administrative structure and policies of the British East India Company. This revolt brought these issues to the forefront, forcing the British Government in London to take immediate and serious notice. As a result, various administrative and military weaknesses within the East India Company were quickly identified and corrected. Therefore, the Revolt of 1857 was of significant importance to the British, leading to crucial reforms and enhancements in how India was governed.
- **Endeavours to Foster Trust among Indians:** With the dissolution of the British East India Company, the direct governance of India shifted to the Crown-in-Parliament. The Indian populace was assured of fundamental rights, including freedom of religion, equal treatment under the law, equitable access to government positions, and respect for their cultural traditions. Simultaneously, pledges were made to Indian rulers regarding the preservation of treaties, territorial integrity, and the safeguarding of their rights and dignity. These measures were designed to cultivate trust and confidence among the Indian populace for the foreseeable future.
- **Dawn of a New Era:** The Revolt of 1857 not only reverberated through India's struggle for independence but also acknowledged the legitimate grievances of the participating sepoys. Their quest for rights was acknowledged, although they faced a glaring disparity in weaponry compared to the more advanced British arms. The documented atrocities during the rebellion led Indian intellectuals to question the efficacy of violence in the pursuit of freedom. Emerging from the intellectual ferment of the early nineteenth century, a new educated class began to advocate for peaceful progress over armed resistance. Even during the revolt itself, it



became apparent that educated Indians harboured doubts about the viability of armed uprisings, a sentiment reinforced by the mutiny's failure. As the leadership of India's freedom movement shifted to this burgeoning middle class, the lessons drawn from the Revolt of 1857 significantly shaped their approach and strategic outlook.

In-Text Questions

1. Who led the 1857 Revolt in Kanpur?
   A) Mangal Pandey
   B) Bahadur Shah II
   C) Nana Sahib
   D) Rani Lakshmibai
2. What were the main ambitions of the East India Company at the start of the 19th century?
   A) Establishing educational institutions and promoting Christianity
   B) Solidifying territorial holdings and exploiting commercial opportunities
   C) Building railways and telegraph lines
   D) Developing local governance structures and public health
3. How do Indian nationalists view the Revolt of 1857?
   A) As merely a military revolt
   B) As a National War of Independence
   C) As a minor skirmish with no significant impact
   D) As a British victory with little resistance
4. Which British policy contributed to the discontent leading to the Revolt of 1857?
   A) The establishment of schools
   B) The Doctrine of Lapse
   C) The introduction of railways
   D) The abolition of slavery

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5. Which Act allowed missionaries to enter British India and promote Christianity?
   A) The Charter Act of 1813
   B) The Government of India Act 1858
   C) The Regulating Act of 1773
   D) The Indian Councils Act 1861
6. What was the immediate trigger for the Revolt of 1857?
   A) The annexation of Punjab
   B) The introduction of the Doctrine of Lapse
   C) The use of greased cartridges in the Enfield rifles
   D) The introduction of Western education
7. Where did the Revolt of 1857 begin?
   A) Delhi
   B) Lucknow
   C) Jhansi
   D) Meerut
8. Which factor was NOT a cause of the failure of the Revolt of 1857?
   A) Lack of unity among the rebels
   B) Superior British military technology
   C) Strong leadership among the rebels
   D) Premature outbreak of the rebellion
9. What was a significant consequence of the Revolt of 1857?
   A) The reinstatement of the Mughal Empire
   B) The transfer of governance from the East India Company to the British Crown
   C) The immediate independence of India
   D) The establishment of a democratic government in India
10. How did the Revolt of 1857 affect British policies towards Indian rulers?
   A) It led to the annexation of more Indian states
   B) It resulted in a commitment to protect the rights of Indian rulers
   C) It ended the practice of adoption among Indian princes
   D) It led to the abolishment of all Indian states



9.10 SUMMARY

- The Revolt of 1857 has been interpreted in various ways by historians, reflecting a spectrum of perspectives divided mainly between European and Indian viewpoints.
- European historians typically describe the event as a sepoy mutiny fuelled by specific grievances, while some Indian nationalist historians consider it the first War of Indian Independence. Other English historians have suggested it was a Hindu-Muslim conspiracy against British rule.
- Jawaharlal Nehru, in his book "Discovery of India," argues that the Revolt of 1857 was more than just a sepoy mutiny. He posits that although it began as a military rebellion, it rapidly expanded into a mass uprising that involved diverse sections of society. Nehru indicates that the roots of the revolt lay in feudal grievances but were also intertwined with emerging nationalist sentiments.
- Moderate historians such as Dr. R.C. Mujumdar and Dr. S.N. Sen view the revolt as a partially national war of independence, acknowledging a blend of various underlying factors.
- Despite its eventual suppression, the revolt had a profound impact, sending shockwaves through both the Indian populace and the British Crown. It compelled the British government to undertake substantial administrative reforms, such as transferring authority from the East India Company to the British Crown, abolishing the Mughal dynasty in Delhi, and restructuring the Indian army.
- Reforms also included ensuring religious freedom and equal treatment for all Indians, and significantly, incorporating Indians into the administration of their own country. These changes were broadly encapsulated in the Queen's Proclamation of 1858.

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- Although the revolt resulted in negative outcomes, such as heightened racial tensions and the implementation of divisive 'divide and rule' policies by the British, it also ushered in a new era in India's history under British imperialism. This period was marked by a shift in governance and a reconfiguration of administrative strategies aimed at maintaining control while addressing some of the systemic issues that had led to the uprising.
- The events of 1857 are significant not only because they represented a widespread rejection of foreign rule but also because they triggered a multitude of changes within the country. These changes affected government policies, the political landscape, and even the popular perceptions, ideas, and attitudes towards British rule.
- The notion of British invincibility was irrevocably damaged, paving the way for a structured and prolonged struggle for freedom. This ultimately led to the beginning of the National Movement, which achieved India's independence in 1947.
- Following the revolt, the British saw themselves as enduring rulers who had effectively quelled a major rebellion, and this perception influenced their governance approach until the end of their rule in India.

9.11 GLOSSARY

- **Sahukar:** It is someone who lends money.
- **Ilaqa:** It is a piece of land or area.
- **Lineage:** It is an ancestral descent or family line.
- **Pattidar:** Ownership shared jointly in a village is knowns as pattidar.
- **Talukdar:** Talukdar is a person who holds an estate responsible for collecting revenue from several dependent villages.
- **Telinga Raj:** It is a term originating from referring to sepoys as "Telingas" when Clive brought Telugu-speaking sepoys from Madras in 1756-57.

9.12 ANSWERS TO IN-TEXT QUESTIONS

1. C
2. B
3. B
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. D
8. C
9. B
10. B

9.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Give few characteristics of 1857 uprising.
2. What were the various reasons behind the 1857 uprising?
3. What were the outcomes of the 1857 uprising?
4. What were the noble efforts of Lord Canning for the pacification of the Mutiny?
5. What lead to the beginning of the 1857 uprising?

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