

Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

1. Match the following

subadar	– a revenue farmer
faujdar	– a high noble
ijaradar	– provincial governor
misl	– Maratha peasant warriors
chauth	– a Mughal military commander
kunbis	– A band of Sikh warriors
umara	– tax levied by the Marathas

Answer: subadar	– provincial governor
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2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Aurangzeb fought a protracted war in the
- (b) Umara and jagirdars constituted powerful sections of the Mughal
- (c) Asaf Jah founded the Hyderabad state in
- (d) The founder of the Awadh state was

Answer: (a) Deccan
(b) administration
(c) 1724
(d) Burhan-ul-Mulk Sa'adat Khan

3. State whether true or false:

- (a) Nadir Shah invaded Bengal.
- (b) Sawai Raja Jai Singh was the ruler of Indore.
- (c) Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.
- (d) Poona became the capital of the Marathas in the eighteenth century.

Answer: (a)–False, (b)–False, (c)–True, (d)–True

4. What were the offices held by Sa'adat Khan?

Answer: Sa'adat Khan held the combined offices of subadari, diwani and faujdar. In fact, he was responsible for managing the political, financial and military affairs of the province of Awadh.

5. Why did the Nawab of Awadh and Bengal try to do away with the jagirdari system?

Answer: The Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal tried to do away with the jagirdari system in order to reduce the influence of the Mughals in their states.

6. How were the Sikhs organised in the eighteenth century?

Answer: During the 17th century the Sikhs got organised into a political community. This led to the regional state-building in Punjab. Guru Gobind Singh fought many battles against the Rajputs as well as Mughal rulers, both before and after the institution of the Khalsa in 1699. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708, the Khalsa revolted against the Mughal authority under the leadership of Banda Bahadur and declared their sovereign rule. Banda Bahadur was captured in 1715 and executed in 1716. In the 18th century, the Sikhs organised themselves into a number of bands called jathas and later on rrdsls. Their well-knit organisation enabled them to put up successful resistance to the Mughal governors first and then to Ahamd Shah Abdali. Who had seized the rich province of the Punjab and the Sarkar of Sirhind from the Mughals.

7. Why did the Marathas want to expand beyond the Deccan?

Answer: The Marathas wanted to expand beyond the Deccan in order to decrease the Mughal influence. By the 1720s, they seized Malwa and Gujarat from the Mughals and by the 1730s, the Maratha king was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula.

8. What were the policies adopted by Asaf Jah to Strengthen his position?

Answer: After being the actual ruler of the Deccan, Asaf Jah began to adopt some policies in order to strengthen his position :

- He brought skilled soldiers and administrators from northern India who welcomed the new opportunities in the south.
- He appointed mansabdars and granted jagirs.
- He ruled independently without Mughal interference. The Mughal emperor merely confirmed the decisions already taken by Asaf Jah.

9. Do you think merchants and bankers today have the kind of influence they had in the eighteenth century?

Answer: During the 18th century merchants were more influential than the bankers. They used to provide more loan opportunities at higher interest rates. But now, with the spread of education people prefer banks which provide loans and other financial assistance at cheaper rates. Bankers also provide subsidy on the interest rate. They have different scopes of loans for different purposes. So they are more influential today than the merchants.

10. Did any of the Kingdoms mentioned in this chapter develop in your state? If so, in what ways do you think life in the state would have been different in the eighteenth century from what, it is in the twenty-first century?

Answer: I live in Delhi. None of the Kingdoms mentioned in the chapter developed in this region.

If any of the students live in any of the regions where the kingdoms mentioned in the chapter developed they should consult their history teacher and prepare their answer.

11. Find out more about the architecture and culture associated with the new courts of any of the following Awadh, Bengal or Hyderabad.

Answer: For self-attempt.

12. Collect popular tales about—rulers from any one of the following groups of people: the Rajputs, Jots, Sikhs or Marathas.

Answer: For self-attempt.

Very Short Type Questions

1. What was the effect of Aurangzeb's long war in the Deccan? [V. Imp.]

Answer: The military and financial resources of his empire got depleted,

2. Which parts of India were associated with peasant and zamindari rebellions?

Answer: Northern and western parts of India.

3. Name the three states that were carved out of the old Mughal provinces in the 18th century. [Imp.]

Answer: Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

4. What was the ambition of the Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah?

Answer: He wished to control the rich textile producing areas of the Coromandal coast in the east.

5. Why was his ambition not fulfilled?

Answer: Because the British began to gain power in his region.

6. What was the geographical and economic importance of Awadh? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Awadh was a prosperous region, controlling the rich alluvial Ganga plain and the main trade route between north India and Bengal.

7. Name the new social groups that developed in Awadh to influence the management of the state's revenue system ?

Answer: Moneylenders and bankers.

8. Why did zamindars of Bengal borrow money from bankers and moneylenders?

Answer: They borrowed money to pay the revenue in cash.

9. Where did Sawai Raja Jai Singh found his new capital?

Answer: He founded his new capital at Jaipur

10. Why was a system called rakhi introduced?

Answer: This system was introduced to give protection to cultivators on the payment of a tax of 20% of the produce.

11. Who was Shivaji?

Answer: Shivaji was the founder of the Maratha Kingdom

12. How were peasant-pastoralists important for Shivaji? [V- Imp.]

Answer: Peasant-pastoralists provided the backbone of the Maratha army. Shivaji used these forces to challenge the Mughals in the peninsula.

13. What was chauth? [V. Imp.]

Answer: 25% of the land revenue claimed by zamindars was known as chauth.

14. What was sardeshmukhi? [V. Imp.]

Answer: 9-10% of the land revenue paid to the head revenue collector in the Deccan was known as sardeshmukhi.

15. Under whose leadership the Jats became powerful?

Answer: The Jats became powerful under the leadership of churaman.

Short Answer Type Questions

1. How did the later Mughal emperors lose their control over their nobles? [V. Imp.]

Answer: The efficiency of the imperial administration broke down under the later Mughal emperors. It became increasingly difficult for them to keep a check on their powerful Nobles appointed as governors often controlled the offices of revenue and military administration as well. This gave them extraordinary political, economic and military powers over vast regions of the Mughal empire. As the governors consolidated their control over the provinces, the periodic remission of revenue to the capital declined.

2. Describe the impact of Nadir Shah's invasion upon Delhi. [V. Imp.]

Answer: Nadir Shah, the ruler of Iran, sacked and plundered the city of Delhi in 1739 and took away immense amounts of wealth. As a result, the Mughal treasury became vacant. Delhi turned into a deserted place. The wealthy now became beggars. There spread chaos everywhere. Those who once set the style in clothes now went naked and those owned property were now homeless. The New City, Le. Shahjahanabad turned into rubble. Delhi, once so rich, became poor after Nadir Shah looted it.

3. Divide the states of the eighteenth century into three overlapping groups.

Answer: (a) States that were old Mughal provinces like Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

- States that had enjoyed considerable independence under the Mughals as watan jagirs. These included several Rajput principalities.
- The group included states under the control of Marathas, Sikhs and others like the Jats.

4. How did Burhan-ul-Mulk reduce Mughal influence in the Awadh region? [V. Imp.]

Answer: Burhan-ul-Mulk tried to reduce Mughal influence in the Awadh region by taking following steps:

- He first of all reduced the number of office holders (jagirdars) appointed by the Mughals.
- He also reduced the size of jagirs, and appointed his own loyal servants to vacant positions.
- The accounts of jagirdars were checked to prevent cheating and the revenues of all districts were re-assessed by officials appointed by the Nawab's court.

5. How did moneylenders and bankers achieve influential position in the state of Awadh? [V. Imp.]

Or

Describe the close connection between the state of Awadh and bankers.

Answer: The state of Awadh depended on local bankers and mahcyans for loans. It sold the right to collect tax to the highest bidders. These revenue farmers known as jaradars agreed to pay the state a fixed sum of money. Local bankers guaranteed the payment of this contracted amount to the state. In turn the revenue farmers were given considerable freedom in the assessment and collection of taxes. These developments made the positions of moneylenders and bankers influential. They began to influence the management of the state's revenue system.

6. How did Murshid Quli Khan become powerful in Bengal?

Answer: Under Murshid Quli Khan, Bengal gradually broke away from Mughal control. He was appointed as the naib, deputy to the governor of the province. Although never a formal subadar, Murshid Quli Khan very quickly seized all the power that went with that office. Soon, he began to command the revenue administration of the state. In order to reduce Mughal influence in Bengal he transferred all Mughal jagirdars to Orissa and ordered a major re-assessment of the revenues of Bengal. Revenue was collected in cash with great strictness from all zamindars.

Q. 7. Who were the Jats? How did they consolidate their power during the late 17th and 18th centuries?

Ans. The Jats were prosperous agriculturists. Like other states they also consolidated their power during the late 17th and 18th centuries. Under the leadership of Churaman they acquired control over territories situated to the west of the city of Delhi. By the 1680s they had begun dominating the region between the two imperial cities of Delhi and Agra. Towns like Panipat and Ballabgarh became major trading centres in the areas dominated by them. Under Suraj Mai the kingdom of Bharatpur emerged as a strong state.

Long Answer Type Questions

1. The Mughal Empire had to face a variety of crises towards the closing years of the 17th century. What were the causes behind it?

Or

What were the causes of the fall of the Mughal Empire? [V. Imp.]

Answer: There were a number of factors that led to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

- Emperor Aurangzeb fought a long war in the Deccan. As a result, the military and financial resources of his empire got depleted.
- The successors of Aurangzeb were not at all efficient. The efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. It became increasingly difficult for later Mughal emperors to keep a check on their powerful Nobles appointed as governors often controlled the offices of revenue and military administration as well. This gave them extraordinary political, economic and military powers over vast regions of the Mughal Empire.
- Under the later Mughals, peasant and zamindar rebellions increased in many parts of northern and western India. These revolts were sometimes caused by the pressures of mounting taxes. The local chieftains were also becoming powerful by seizing the economic resources of the region.
- In the midst of economic and political crisis, the ruler of Iran, Nadir Shah, sacked and plundered the city of Delhi in 1739 and took away immense amounts of wealth. Again, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded north India five times between 1748 and 1761. These invasions further weakened the Mughal Empire.
- The competitions amongst different groups of nobles also proved unfortunate for the Mughal Empire. The later Mughals were puppets in the hands of either Iranis or Turanis, the two major groups of nobles.

2. Describe the three common features of the states like Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad.

Or

What common features were shared by these three states—Awadh, Bengal and Hyderabad?

[V. Imp.]

Answer: The common features shared by these states were:

- Though many of the larger states were established by erstwhile Mughal nobles they were highly suspicious of some of the administrative systems that they had inherited, in particular, the jagirdari system.
- Rather than relying upon the officers of the state, all the three regimes contracted with revenue-farmers for the collection of revenue.
- The third common feature in these three states was their emerging relationship with rich bankers and merchants. These people lent money to revenue farmers, received land as security and collected taxes from these lands through their own agents.

3. Give an account of the Maratha expansion occurred between 1720 and 1761.

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

After raiding Delhi in 1737 the frontiers of Maratha domination expanded rapidly – into Rajasthan and the Punjab in the north, into Bengal and Orissa in the east, and into Karnataka and the Tamil and Telugu countries in the south. These were not formally included in the Maratha empire, but were made to pay tribute as a way of accepting Maratha sovereignty.

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