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LESSON 1

DISINTEGRATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE—I

In the words of Stanley Lane-Poole, "As some imperial corpse preserved for ages in its dead seclusion, crowned and armed and still majestic, yet falls to the dust at the mere breath of heaven, so fell the Empire of the Mughals when the great name that guarded it was no more." V. A. Smith writes, "The collapse of the Empire came with a suddenness which at first sight may seem surprising. But the student who has acquired even a moderately sound knowledge of history will be surprised that the Empire lasted so long rather than it collapsed suddenly."

The disintegration of the Mughal Empire occurred during the first half of the eighteenth century. Nadir Shah's invasion of Northern India, including Delhi, in 1739 gave a heavy blow to the already weakened Mughal Empire. This blow left the Mughal Empire "bleeding and prostrate" with no effective central authority.

After the third battle of Panipat in 1761, the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II (1759—1804) was fugitive for some time and then became a pensioner—first of the British and then of the Marathas. In the meantime, the British Indian Empire had expanded westwards and in 1803 the British occupied Delhi—the Imperial Capital. From that time till 1857, every Mughal ruler was a mere figurehead though he still continued to be hailed as the Emperor of India.

From the point of view of territory, the Mughal Empire was at its maximum when Aurangzeb died in 1707. However, the beginning of the decline of the Mughal Empire is often dated as far back as the accession of Aurangzeb in 1658 as some of the factors which led to the ultimate dissolution of the Empire had then made their appearance.

The decline and fall of the Mughal Empire may be studied under the following heads :—

1. Political factors,
2. Social and Economic factors,
3. Other factors.

A. POLITICAL FACTORS

To understand the political factors a study of the political events from 1658 to 1707 and from 1707 to 1761 and the Mughal administrative system is necessary. The following aspects should be kept in mind :—

1. Wars of Succession

There were no fixed rules of succession in medieval times among the Muslims. Each son had equal share in the property of his father. This meant that the sons of a king decided the question of succession by a trial of strength which generally meant war. The wars of succession became more bitter after the death of each king from the time of Akbar onwards. Consequently, it was natural for the princes to organise their parties among the nobles so as to win any war of

succession they might be involved in on the eve or after the death of king. Later the nobles organised their own parties and chose one prince or another as their nominee. There are, many examples of it in the struggle waged by Aurangzeb against his brothers, and the wars of succession after his death and the death of Bahadur Shah I in 1712.

These repreated wars of succession made the political and economic life of the Mughal Empire uncertain. Further the loss of property and life and particularly the death of many capable nobles and military commanders, put a severe strain upon the man-power and resources of the Mughal Empire. Later, civil wars brought to the throne persons who were men of no ability. Most of them were tools in the hands of nobles who wanted to keep all power in their hands, and chose princes who were weak and lacked administrative capacity.

2. Overexpansion of the Empire

Under Akbar the Great (1556—1605), the Mughal Empire extended over the entire northern India, from coast to coast and included Kabul and some areas in Deccan, south of the Narbada. It was difficult to govern effectively such a large Empire from one centre as roads and means of communication then were poor and the pull of regional factors was very strong.

The Mughal Empire expanded very slowly in the Deccan after the death of Akbar in 1605. Shah Jahan annexed Ahmadnagar in 1636, and converted Golkonda and Bijapur as the tributaries of the Mughal Empire and Aurangzeb annexed some more areas in the early part of his reign. But the growing power of the Marathas and the rapid internal decline of the Deccan kingdoms after 1672 led to the change of policy. Aurangzeb became apprehensive of the Marathas who were becoming dominant in the Deccan. Therefore he launched an expansionist policy. By 1687, the two Deccan kingdoms—Bijapur and Golkanda—had been wiped out. The Mughal Empire ere long extended almost up to the southern tip of India. But the sudden addition of this large area made the administrative and financial problems of the Empire more complex and tougher. A long period of peace was necessary for consolidation but this was made difficult by Aurangzeb's tussle with the Marathas, the incompetence of the nobles and their unwillingness to serve in the Deccan. The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 worsened the situation because it led to a rush of civil wars in the country. The Deccan was among the first areas to break away from the Empire in the 18th century. Thus, the victories in the Deccan were shortlived and overexpansion of the Mughal Empire proved disastrous.

3. Conflict with the Marathas

The Marathas formed a large part of the population in the kingdom of Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. In these kingdoms, as also in Golkonda, they were employed in the revenue department, and also fought as loose auxiliaries in the army. In the early 17th century, Malik Amber of Ahmadnagar made large-scale use of the Marathas to resist the Mughals. Shahjii Bhonsle gradually rose in importance and became the leading Maratha Sardar (chief). He fought hard against Shah Jahan to maintain the independence of Ahamadnagar. Ultimately, he was defeated by the combined forces of the Mughal Empire and Bijapur and was compelled to enter the service of latter. While Shahji carved out a semi-independent principality for himself in the south around Bangalore, his son Shivaji began to expand his father's jagir around Poona. But when Aurangzeb, then a prince, invaded Bijapur in 1657, Shivaji helped Bijapur.

After his succession to the imperial throne in 1658, Aurangzeb felt alarmed at the rise of Maratha power. Bijapur was also greatly concerned at the increase in the political authority of

Shivaji; its Sultan sent its most prominent general, Afzal Khan, against Shivaji. Afzal Khan instead of capturing or subduing Shivaji fell in his trap. He was murdered by Shivaji. When Afzal Khan was killed, the Mughals assumed direct responsibility of containing the political ambitions of Shivaji. Aurangzeb sent his able commander Shaista Khan who was put to flight by Shivaji directly. Aurangzeb then sent Raja Jai Singh, a leading Rajput noble and an experienced diplomat. Raja Jai Singh's policy was to put military pressure on Shivaji in order to make him cooperate with the Mughals against the Deccan States. He also sought to annex most of Shivaji's dominions on the Mughal frontier by offering him compensation at the expense of the Deccan States. By the Treaty of Purandar (1665), Shivaji agreed to surrender territory worth Rs. twenty lakhs on the Mughal frontier and in exchange was offered territory worth fortyfive lakhs in Bijapur. He also agreed to join an expedition against Bijapur but this expedition failed. Since Aurangzeb was not prepared to release the territory promised to Shivaji in 1665, or to make any other concession to Shivaji, his visit to Agra (1666) was unsuccessful.

By now, Shivaji had roused the spirit of the Marathas and had become their undisputed leader. In 1674, he formally crowned himself as an independent king. He also started the practice of levying *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* upon the Mughal territories to support his army. He followed the guerrilla method of warfare. The heavily armed but slow moving Mughal troops could not catch up with him, while he repeatedly ravaged the Mughal territories.

Stages of the Mughal-Maratha Struggle

(i) Upto 1666 : the escape of Shivaji from Agra.

(ii) 1666-1689 : from the escape of Shivaji up to the capture and execution of Sambhaji, son and successor of Shivaji.

(iii) 1689-1707 : General war. Maratha bands under their numerous leaders plundered the Deccan and levied *Chauth*. Maratha king, Raja Ram, was besieged in Jinji, Aurangzeb's efforts to capture all the Maratha forts failed. By 1706 the whole of the Deccan was lost by the Mughals : the Marathas has triumphed and Aurangzeb passed away in 1707.

Criticism

It was a mistake on the part of Aurangzeb not to have come to terms with Sambhaji or Shivaji. Although Aurangzeb gave high ranks (*mansabs)* to a large number of Maratha Sardars (chiefs), he had no following among the Marathas. The conflict with the Marathas had far-reaching consequences of which the following deserve special attention :

(a) Damage suffered by the military prestige of the Mughals.

(b) The Mughals were prevented from consolidating their position in the Deccan.

(c) Creation of a feeling of tension between the Hindus and the Muslims.

(d) Lastly, the harm done to trade and industry on the western coast and in the Deccan which was quite considerable.

4. Conflict with the Rajputs

Alliance with the Rajput princes has been a central feature of Emperor Akbar's policy. Jahangir (1605-1627) and Shah Jahan (1628-1658) had continued this policy. Aurangzeb had also

taken pains to cultivate the friendship of the Rajputs and during the early part of his reign, Raja Jai Singh of Amber and Raja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur (Marwar) — two distinguished Rajput chieftains—held the highest ranks to which a noble could rise. But Raja Jai Singh died in 1667 followed by the death of Raja Jaswant Singh in 1678. Their deaths coincided with the growing narrowness and orthodoxy in Aurangzeb's outlook. In the next ten years of his reign, he introduced a series of Puritanical meaures such as a ban on the celebration of *Nauroz* and Hindu festivals at the court, as also put a ban on the use of coloured clothes and music at the court etc. In 1679 he reintroduced *jiziah* (poll tax). He thus emphasised the Islamic character of the State. The clash with the Marathas and other Hindu communities and sects such as the Jats and the Satnami peasants also made him suspicuous of the loyalty of the Hindus.

Raja Jaswant Singh had no children. Aurangzeb wanted to confer the *gaddi* of Jodhpur on Inder Singh, a grandson of Amar Singh, the eldest brother of Jaswant Singh. He rejected the claims of two sons who were born to the Ranis of Jaswant Singh shortly after their husband's death. Most of the Rajputs, including the Rana of Mewar, supported the claims of the posthumous sons of Jaswant Singh. Since Aurangzeb did not accept this, the Rajputs rose in rebellion. The Rana of Mewar supported the Rathor rebels.

There is no proof that Aurangzeb wanted to annex Mewar. When the Rajputs refused to accept Inder Singh, the State was taken under the direct control of the Mughal administration. When peace was made with the Rathors in 1681, Aurangzeb promised that the *raj* would be granted to Ajit Singh when he came of age. In 1698, Ajit Singh ascended the *gaddi* but the Mughals kept control of Jodhpur city and a few Parganas till 1707.

It was a mistake on the part of Aurangzeb to have insisted on the accession of Inder Singh. At any rate, he should have recognized the claims of Ajit Singh to the *gaddi* soon after peace had been concluded in 1681. By this policy Aurangzeb created a fear among the Rajputs that he wanted to annex the Rajput states. Though the Kachchwaha and Hada Rajputs remained loyal to the Mughals there was a general and widespread feeling that Aurangzeb had abandoned Akbar's policy of cultivating the Rajputs. Even Aurangzeb's son, Prince Akbar, who rebelled against his father and joined the Rajputs, made this charge. Rajput war become a severe strain on the Mughal resources. Very few Rajputs fought in the Deccan against the Marathas.

5. Conflict with the Sikhs and the Jats

Aurangzeb's clash with the Sikhs and the Jats also increased the fears of the non-Muslims and increased tension among Muslims and non-Muslims.

Conflict with the Sikhs first took place in the reign of Jahangir. But open fighting began in the time of Aurangzeb. Guru Govind Singh, and later Banda Bahadur, kept large areas in the Punjab disturbed. But the Sikhs were crushed by 1716, and their power did not revive till after 1761.

The Jats rebelled in 1669 near Mathura. They also kept large areas near Agra disturbed. Though crushed by Aurangzeb with the help of the Rajputs, Jat power revived in the 18th century and proved a thorn in the flesh of the Mughals.

6. Weak Successors of Aurangzeb

Civil wars, growing power of the nobility, and the personal incompetence of Aurangzeb's successors led to a rapid decline in the authority of Mughal Empire.

Aurangzeb's death on 3 March, 1707 opened the floodgates of political intrigues, repeated fratricidal wars and innumerable civil eruptions. There were clear indications that the days of the once mighty and imposing. Mughal Empire were numbered. Aurangzeb's over-powering suspicion of his own sons had turned them into helpless intriguers with no administrative experience. The death of their father whetted their ambition. Each tried to wrest the imperial throne for himself. Aurangzeb's will dividing the vast Empire among his three surviving sons, Muazzam, Muhammad Azam and Muhammed Kam Bakhsh, had do meaning, because none of them had any respect for the deceased Emperor who had treated each one of them so shabbey. A civil war broke out immediately. Muazzam, the eldest son of Aurangzeb who was then the governor of Kabul, hastily marched towards Agra. Azam, the governor of Gujarat, followed suit. Kam Bakhsh, governor of Bijapur, had already assumed all the attributes of sovereignty. His pretensions were naturally resisted by his two elder brothers. Sword was the ultimate arbiter.

The first serious engagement took place at Jajau near Agra, on 16 June, 1707, between the forces of Muazzam and Azam. Azam not only lost the battle but also his life. Muazzam then proceeded towards the Deccan and defeated Kam Bakhah near Hyderabad. Kam Bakhsh died in 1708 of wounds received during fight. The way was now clear for Mauzzam who formally proclaimed himself as the Emperor and assumed the title of Bahadur Shah I, also known as Shah Alam I. Bahadur Shah I was not destined to rule long for he died on 27th February, 1712. Bahadur Shah however within this short period did try to improve the declining prestige of the Mughal Empire. He surrounded himself with efficient and able officers like Munim Khan, his chief minister, Ghaziuddin Khan Feroz Jang and others. His policy towards the Rajputs, the Marathas and the Sikhs was marked by statesmanship which has been considered by many critics as being superior in many respects to his father's. He possessed a temperament which was mild and equitable, but unfortunately he was indiscriminately generous, and thus unwittingly put a severe strain on the slender resources of the Empire. This further undermined its strength. This learned and dignified Emperor who had earned the nickname of *shah-i bekhabar*, the "Heedless King", really had no appreciation that by his policy of reckless extravagance, he was digging deeper the grave of the Timurid House.

The death of Bahadur Shah at the age of sixtynine was the signal for another civil war between his four sons, Jahandar Shah, Azim-ush-Shah, Rafi-ush Shah and Jahan Shah. The eldest Jahandar Shah, who was the worst among his brothers, however, ultimately emerged as the victor when his three brothers were killed in the course of the war. Jahandar Shah was a dissolute profligate who fell under the vicious influence of a court dancer, Lal Kanwar, a lady descended, of Tansen's family. Jahandar Shah neglected public affairs. His unpopularity was limitless. Power slipped away from his hands after a notorious rule of eleven months when he was ousted in 1713 by Farrukhsiyar, a son of Azim-ush-Shah and a younger brother of Jahandar Shah.

Farrukhsiyar was a lazy, self indulgent and weak prince who allowed all the power to pass into the hands of two ambitious and unscrupluous Sayyid brothers, Hussain Ali Khan, deputy governor of Patna, and Abdulla, Khan, deputy-governor of Allahabad. Farrukhsiyar who was "contemptible and cowardly" and a shameless debauchee was "strong neither for evil nor for good'. He was utterly helpless before the overbearing and overambitious Sayyid brothers who collected all the reins of administration into their hands. Abdulla Khan became the chief minister (i.e.,*Wazir*) and Hussain Ali the commander-in-chief of the army (*Mir Bakhshi*). The complete domination of the Sayyid brothers irked the Emperor. With a view to throwing them out

Farrukhsiyar associated himself with the anti-Sayyid faction headed by Mir Jumla. Before Farrukhsiyar could succeed in his plans the Sayyid brothers took the initiative and subsequently retaliated successfully. Farrukhsiyar was blinded and ultimately murdered in 1719.

The Sayyid brothers after cruelly disposing of Farrukhsiyar planted many "phantom Emperors" and this initiated the disgraceful rule through the "Imperial puppets". In quick succession Rafi-us-Shan Neksiyar, Rafi-ud-Darajat and Rafi-ud-daula (Shah Jahan II), occupied the imperial throne for short intervals between 18 February and 23 August, 1719. Muhammad Ibrahim's reign extended from 1 October to 8 November, 1720. In the meantime (1719) the Sayyid brothers choice fell on Muhammad Shah, son of Jahan Shah, the youngest brother of Jahandar Shah, the fourth son of Bahadur Shah 1. The Sayyid brothers had much to regret for this choice of theirs as Muhammad Shah refused to be their servile puppet. He deliberately encouraged opposition against them. He tried to play one faction against the other. The Emperor found in Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah (Chin-Kilich Khan) son of a Samarqand adventurer, who served in the Deccan, an able leader of the anti-Sayyid faction. First, Sayyid Hussain Ali was got rid of when he was assassinated. The other Sayyid brother Abdulla had no smooth sailing. His effort to plant another phantom Emperor, Muhammad Ibrahim, another son of Rafi-us-Shan, in 1720 back-fired. Sayyid Abdulla Khan was arrested in 1720 and he died of poisoning in 1722. The hateful ascendancy of the Sayyid brothers met its deserving retribution.

Muhammad Shah and Nizam-ul-mulk could not pull on together as both of them were by temperament so different. Their views on major policies differed widely. The Nizam found the political climate in the court suffocating. In 1723 his differences with the Emperor became so accuate that he went back to the Deccan where he set himself in 1724 as an independent ruler of a principality known as Hyderabad. The Mughal Emperor could not do much about it. Other ambitious Mughal officers took their cue from this action of the Nizam and, ere long, began to lay the foundations of many independent principalities. Of these, special mention needs to be made of the kingdoms of Oudh established in 1724 by Sadat Khan and of Bengal under Ali Vardi Khan. Muhammad Shah was utterly helpless against these ambitious provincial leaders. His attempt to secure Maratha help could not arrest the disintegration of the Mughal Empire which was now only a pale shadow of its former form. The Mughal Empire and the Mughal Emperors were mere names which had little historical relevance.

Muhammad Shah maintained his precarious hold till 1748, but in the meantime, a good portion of the mantle of the Mughal authority had slipped into the hands of the Marathas who under the able leadership of Peshwa Balaji Rao succeeded in establishing their political hegemony over Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand and extended their hold up to the Mughal authority. That Nadir Shah from the northwest could successfully penetrate into Punjab without any let or hindrance revealed the hollowness of the Mughal Empire. "The vast Empire of the Mughals ceased to exist as an all-India political unit." It was now divided into numberless independent or semi-independent States.

Ahamad Shah, son of Muhammad Shah, succeeded his father in 1748. The Mughal Empire had shrunk to a small area round Delhi. Another ambitious Mughal official Gaziuddin Imad-ul-mulk, and grandson of the late Nizam-ul-mulk, deposed and blinded the Emperor in 1754. This new 'kingmaker' placed Azizuddin, son of Jahandar Shah, on the imperial throne under title of Alamgir II. He willy-nilly managed to rule till 1759, when he was deposed and killed by the

power-hungry Wazir who did not relish Alamgir II's attempts to reduce his hold over the administration.

Another puppet, a grandson of Kam Baksh under the title of Shah Jahan III was the new Emperor. This choice of the Wazir, Imad-ul-mulk was not at all popular. Nobody would recognize the Wazir's puppet. Imad-ul-mulk's domination aroused strong resistance. He found power slipping from his grip. The renewed invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali (Durrani) of upper India in 1757 completely demoralised the Wazir, Imad-ul-mulk, and he fled away for his life.

Ali Gauhar, the son of the deceased Mughal Emperor Alamgir II (1754-1759), who was a fugitive ultimately assumed the throne as Shah Alam II but his position was quite precarious. He was blinded in 1788 and underwent many sufferings. As a fugitive, he got the protection of the English who gave him a pension which he continued to receive till his death in 1806. One thing was pretty clear. From 1759 onwards, for nearly a century, there were Mughal Emperors but there was hardly any Mughal Empire. The Marathas were the real power behind the throne. Their authority undoubtedly suffered a staggering blow at the hands of Ahamad Shah Abdali at the famous Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. (The story of Maratha resurgence after this massive setback is related in another lesson. In this lesson we are primarily concerned with the fortunes of the Later Mughals). Ali Gauhar, entitled Shah Alam II, had to undergo an extremely hard life; he was a fugitive, hounded and hunted from pillar to post. Fate played ducks and drakes with him. This ill-starred Emperor who had been blinded in 1788 had no alternative but to live on the generosity of the British until his death in 1806.

Shah Alam II was succeeded by his Son Akbar Shah II who survived till 1837. The last Mughal Emperor was Bahadur Shah II who was the son of Akbar Shah II. It is he who was the hope of the "mutineers". Deserted by fortune, he was ultimately captured by the British and was deported to Rangoon where he lingered on till his death (1862). Thus was brought to an end the great Timurid House. In the meantime the British had become "both in form and substance supreme as well as sovereign in India."

7. Foreign Invasions

Growing military and political weakness of the Mughals and the neglect of the frontier tribes who were previously paid handsome subsidies to keep peace in their region were now up in terms because these subsidies were either stopped or greatly reduced after 1725. This encouraged Nadir Shah to invade India. This invasion exposed the weakness of the Mughal Empire to everybody including the European adventurers. Kabul and parts of Punjab were lost. India thus lost its outer defences and the way was now open for any adventurer who willed to penetrate into India's heartland.

From 1748 till the end of the century, Ahamad Shah Abdali, the successor of Nadir Shah in Afghaniatan, raided northern India periodically. Though defeated by the Mughals in 1748 at Sirhind, his determination to occupy Delhi did not flag. He sacked Mathura in 1756, and in 1761 defeated the Marathas at the famous battlefield of Panipat. His invasions kept north-western India in a state of turmoil; the Mughal Emperor was denuded of Delhi, Multan and the Punjab—the only areas from which it could have derived the means to ward off the Jat, Afghan and Maratha threats. These invasions, besides undermining seriously the authority of the Mughals, also proved ruinous for trade and industry.

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8. Third Battle of Panipat (14 January, 1761)

Maratha involvement in the ambitions of Safdar Jang the Nawab of Oudh and the Wazir of the empire, lack of a clear and consistent policy of Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao, jealously among the Peshwa's chief lieutenants—Holkar and Scindhia—who often worked at cross purposes; and above all, the greed of the Marathas, which made them ever-willing to plunder and despise friends and foes alike, proved their undoing. Fear of Safdar Jung and the Marathas made the Afghans invite Abdali who resented Maratha incursions in the Punjab, The Marathas soon found they had no ally in northern India. The Rajputs stoods sullenly aloof and even the Jat Raja, Suraj Mal had to abandon them. The inexperience and haughtiness of the Maratha leader, Sadashiv Rao Bhau completed the rest.

The Third Battle of Panipat was fought on 14 January, 1761. The Marathas were completely routed by Ahmad Shah Abdali. The defeat at Panipat was a severe setback to the Marathas and they had to retreat from northern India. They could not return in force to northern India till 1772. This gave the British time to consolidate their position in Bengal and Bihar, and then to push forward the tentacles of their imperial authority over many other parts of India.

However, one has to take note of the fact that the Marathas could not exploit the situation in their favour. They alone were in a position to offer an alternative to the decaying Mughal Empire, inspite of their temporary success, miserably failed to perform a historic tesk. Commenting on their failure, Sir Jadunath Sarkar remarks :

> "Thus , by the character of his state, the Maratha hands were turned against everybody and everybody's hands were turned against him. It is the very nature of a *Krieg-staat* (a state that lives and grows only by wars of aggression.') to move in vicious circle. It must wage war periodically if it is to get its food; but war when waged as normal method of supply, destroys industry and wealth in the invading countries alike, and ultimately defeats the very end of such wars. Peace is death to a *krieg staat* : but peace is the very life-breath of wealth. A state founded on war, therefore, kills the goose that lays the golden eggs.... Thus from the economic point of view, the Maratha State had no *stable* basis, no normal means of growth *within itself*"

Another noted scholar offers the following explanation on the failure of the Marathas to establish an all-India Empire:—

"Thus , the Maratha dream of controlling the Mughal Empire and establishing their own Empire over large parts of the country could not be realised. This was basically because the Maratha Empire represented the same decadent social order as the Mughal Empire did and suffered from the same underlying weakness. The Maratha chiefs were very similar to the later Mughal nobles, just as the *saranjami* system was similar to the Mughal system of Jagirs. So long as there existed a strong central authority and the need for mutual cooperation against a common enemy, the Mughals, they remained united in a loose union. But at the first opportunity they tended to assert their autonomy. If any thing, they were even less disciplined than the Mughal nobees. Nor did the Maratha *sardars* try to develop a new economy. They failed to encourage science and technology or to take much interest in trade and industry. Their revenue system was similar to that of the Mughals as also was their administration. Like the Mughals, the Maratha rulers were also mainly interested in raising revenue from the helpless peasantry. For example,

they took collected nearly half of agricultural produce as tax. Unlike the Mughals, they failed even to give sound administration to the people outside Maharashtra. They could not inspire the Indian people with any higher degree of loyalty than the Mughals had succeeded in doing. Their dominion too depended on force and force alone. The only way the Marathas could have stood up to the raising British power was to have transformed their state into a modern state. This they failed to do.".

The Third Battle of Panipat, dealt a fatal blow to the Mughal Empire. The Marathas, of course, recovered with amazing speed from this stroke but not so the decadent Mughal Empire. The story of the Later Mughals after 1761 makes it abundantly clear that the Mughal Empire was beyond redemption.

LESSON 2

DISINTEGRATION OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE—II

B. SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

We have already studied he political factors responsible for the decline of the Mughal Empire, but the process of disintegration cannot be properly understood only by these factors alone. Therefore, one has to examine the social and economic factors. All factors taken together may help us to arrive at a correct understanding of the problem before us.

1. Character of the Mughal Ruling Class

It has often been said that a major cause of the decay of the Mughal Empire was the foreign character of the ruling class. The nobility consisted mainly of "foreigners" who were emigrants from Iran, Turan, Afghanistan, etc. It is argued that these people had no love for the country of their recent domicile or sympathy for its people; neither did they have any deep-seated loyalty to the throne; they were merely adventures who had come to India to carve out careers for themselves. Since the Mughals were themselves "foreigners" these "foreign" elements received preferential treatment from them. On the other hand, people of Indian origin were neglected and discriminated against. This resulted in the impoverishment of national life and character.

This line of argument is not quite correct. It is true that most of the nobles at the Mughal court did originally come from outside, but they had settled down in India with their families and hardly retained any foreign ties. They could not retire and leave the country with their wealth, etc. *They were thus very different from the English cadre in the ICS.*

The Mughal Emperors, too, identified themselves with India. They took keen interest to foster a new culture which is commonly called the Indo-Muslim culture. The upper classes in North India—Hindus as well as Muslims—shared this culture which they regarded as their common heritage. Thus, the Mughal court and the nobility became progressively more Indian though it cannot be denied that some of the members of this nobility at times assumed superiority on the basis of their conquest. By the end of Aurangzeb's rule, a large majority of the nobles had either been born in India or had lived in India for several generations. It is, therefore, not correct to look upon the Mughal rule as a "foreign" rule. The differences between the Mughals and the Indians were mainly religious.

2. Degeneration of the Nobility

It has often been contended that the Mughal nobility degenerated during the 18th century because the stream of foreign immigrants and dried up. All these newcomers degenerated in the hot climate of the country and lost their vigour and efficiency before long.

This argument is also not convincing. There is no reason to believe that the people belonging to the colder climate are better warriors. Amongst the well-known administrators and

distinguished warriors produced by the Mughal Empire, there were many Hindustanies and immigrants who had lived in India for a long time. Then, the 18th century also produced quite a large number of capable nobles and distinguished generals. True their personal ambitions were unlimited. They generally preferred to carve out independent principalities for themselves rather than to serve the Mughal Emperors loyally and devotedly.

The chief reason for the degeneration of the nobility was that gradually it had become a closed corporation, given no opportunity of promotion to capable men belonging to other classes as had been the case earlier. Ere long, the offices of the state became hereditary and the preserve of people belonging to a few families.

The other reason was their incorrigible habit of extravagant living and pompous display which weakened their morale and drained their limited financial resources. Most of the nobles spent huge sums on keeping large harems, maintaining a big staff of servants, and indulged in other forms of senseless show. (However, it must be conceded that some of the nobles also patronised arts, or erected works of public utility such as sarais, wells, etc). The result was that many of the nobles were bankrupt in spite of large jagirs. Dismissal from service or loss of jagirs spelt ruin for most of them. This prompted many to form groups and factions for securing large and profitable jagirs ; others turned themselves into grasping tyrants who mercilessly fleeced the peasants of their jagirs. Many nobles became ease-loving and soft. They dreaded war and had become so much accustomed to an extravagant way of life that they could not do without many of the luxuries even when they went on campaigns. On the contrary, the Marathas were more hardy and possessed greater mobility and hence could move faster than the Mughals. Later, many Maratha Sardars also copied the ways of the Mughal nobles and as expected lost their original vigour and agility.

Sir Jadunenth Sarkar write, "All the surplus produce of a fertile land under a most bounteous Providence was swept into the coffers of the Mughal nobility and pampered them in a degree of luxury not dreamt of even by kings in Persia or Central Asia. Hence, in the houses of the Delhi nobility, luxury was carried to an excess. The harems of many of them were filled with immense number of women of an infinite variety of races, intellect and character. Under Muslim Law the sons of concubines are entitled to their matrimony equally with sons born in wedlock, and they occupy no inferior position in society. Even the sons of lawfully married wives became, at a precocious age, familiar with vice from what they saw and heard in the harem, while their mothers were insulted by the higher splendour and influence enjoyed in the same household by younger and fairer rivals of servile origin or easier virtue. The proud spirit and majestic dignity of a Cornelia are impossible in the crowded harem of a polygamist ; and without Cornelies among the mothers there cannot be Grachhi among the sons."

Luxurious living was not any individual eccentricity but an old failing of the nobility. Aurangzeb tried to set an example of simple living but without much success. Emperor Muhammad Shah (XIIa) and his *wazir*, Qamaruddin Khan, created a very un-wholesome precedent for others by their outrageous habits of extravagance and neglect of public affairs.

3. Selfishness and Factionalism of the Nobility

The nobility of the Mughals was corrupt and faction-ridden. By accepting bribes, almost any government rule could be evaded or any favour secured. The interest of the Empire did not matter much with them. Thus, the British regularly bribed nobles for getting their work done and

their deeds of omission and commission forgiven. Even the highest nobles took bribes which were called *peshkash* or presents. This lowered the tone of administration. As time went on, corruption and bribery at the court increased. Later, even some of the emperors shared the money which their favourites charged as *peshkash* from people desirous of getting a post or seeking a transfer.

As the imperial control weakened, the nobles formed groups and factions among themselves for mutual advancement. sometimes, these factions raised the slogan of religion or of race (Irani vs Turani, or Mughals vs. Hindustanis etc.) though race and religion were hardly the basis on which these factions were formed. Personal factors were the most important.

Factionalism kept on growing till it extended to all branches of administration. The two major causes of factionalism were :

(*i*) Struggle for *jagirs* and personal advancement, and

(*ii*) Struggle for supremacy between the *Wazir* and the monarch. This struggle started with the death of Bahadur Shah I in 1712. First, Zulfiqur Khan, then the Sayyid brothers, and finally Nizam ul-mulk, tried to seize supreme power but failed. (A strong *Wazir* might have given the empire a new lease of life, but no *Wazir* could win and retain the support of the various important factions of the nobility). The struggle also touched political issues. These faction-fights weakened monarchy and gave a chance to the Marathas, Jats, etc., to augment their power and to interfere in the court politics and prevented the Emperors from following a consistent policy. *Factionalism became the most dangerous bane of the Mughal rule from 1713 onwards.* To save themselves from faction-fights, monarchs often turned to unworthy favourites which only worsened the situation.

It is said about the Mughal nobles, "In a mean spirit of jealousy, they insulted and thwarted new men drawn from the ranks and ennobled for the most brilliant public services, and yet they themselves had grown utterly worthless. We have a significant example of the moral degeneration of the Mughal peerage. The Prime Minister's grandson, Mirza Tafakhur used to sally forth from his mansion in Delhi with his ruffians, plunder the shops in the bazar, kidnap Hindu women passing through the public streets in litters or going to the river, and dishonour them; and yet there was no judge strong enough to punish him, no police to prevent such crimes. Every time such an occurrence was brought to the Emperor's notice by the newsletters or official reports, he referred it to the Prime Minister and did nothing more."

4. Wretched Condition of the Peasantry

India has been a land of small peasant-farmers since times immemorial. Famine and natural calamities have repeatedly taken a heavy toll of these farmers who did not have any large reserves to fall back on against any rainy day. Efforts were made by the Mughal government to devise a famine policy and to minimise the hardship resulting from natural calamities by concessions in the realisation of land revenue, granting of loans, etc.

During the 17th century, the pressure of the government upon the peasants tended to various factors, such as the increasing cost of administration, prolonged and costly wars, recurrent famines, high personal expenditure of the monarchs and nobles on large harems, and huge expenses incurred on the erection of magnificent buildings etc. It was the peasant who had

to pay for all these expenses. If agriculture had grown fast enough, and trade and industry expanded rapidly, the state would have been able to get the additional money it needed without putting additional burden on the peasantry.

The Mughal state did try to develop agriculture. The nobles were constantly urged to expand and improve cultivation in their jagirs. But most of the nobles were not interested in agriculture. They preferred to live in towns. Furthermore, most of them were generally posted far away from their *jagirs*. Hence the *jagirs* were neglected and left in the hands of subordinates who were notorious for filling their own pockets.

Later, when the number of the nobles increased and there were not enough jagirs for everyone, transfer of jagirs from one to another *jagirdar* became very frequent. In such cases, there was no certainty when a noble whose jagir was transferred might get another. Hence nobles tried to get as much out of the jagirs they had as possible and paid scant attention to their development.

The peasantry had to pay land revenue. Under Akbar the state demand was one-third of the average produce. By the time of Aurangzeb, it was generally one half. Aurangzeb had abolished a large number of cesses (about 80) which were levied previously on the peasantry. But all these continued to be collected by the nobles. Even before Aurangzeb came to throne, the nobility had earned a bad name as tyrants and oppressors of the peasanty. The contemporary historians have given a vivid account of the miserable life of the peasants. Particularly they are critical of the high handedness of the officials. Writing about the oppressive officers and officials Bhimsen remarks :

"There is no limit to the oppression of these men.....of their oppression and cruelty what may one write ? For no description can suffice".

Another noted contemporary historian Khafi Khan is also highly critical of these cruel officers and officials. He vehemently denounces them in the following words :

"...The cruelty, oppression and injustice of the officials, who have no thought no God, has reached such a degree that if one wishes to describe a hundredth part of it will still defy description."

Such being the condition of the peasants, they were forced either to abandon their workplace or raise banner of revolt. The reign of Aurangzeb witnessed the growth of resumed resistance by the peasants. The Jat peasants staged armed uprisings in 1669 and 1688-1691. Also the Satnamis revolted in 1672. The Sikhs and Marathas did not lag behind. According to Professor Irfan Habib, the revolts of Jats, Satnamis, Marathas and Sikhs were essentially peasant uprisings. These uprisings impaired the efficiency of the administrative system and proved disastrous for agriculture and made the financial situation worse. In fact, they contributed largely to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

To quote Professor Irfan Habib from his work, *The Agrarian system of Mughal India* :

"But the Mughal Empire had been its own grave-digger, and what Sadi[1] said of another great empire, might well serve as its epitaph:

"The Emperors of Persia,

Who oppressed the lower classes ;

Gone is their glory and empire;

Gone their tyranny over the peasant !"

5. Stagnation of Trade and Industry

Trade and industry did not expand rapidly enough in the 17th century due to the following reasons :

(*i*) Limited internal demand. The villages were largely self-sufficient. Trade was mainly between towns and was hampered by bad roads.

(*ii*) Indifference towards science and technology in the country. While these were advancing rapidly in the West, they remained stagnant in India.

(*iii*) Neglect of the mercantile marine. This enabled foreigners to dominate the Indian sea coasts and capture most of the foreign trade.

C. OTHER FACTORS

1. Religious Orthodoxy and Intolerance of Aurangzeb

Akbar had broad-based the Empire on the support of people belonging to all faiths by pursuing a large-hearted policy of religious toleration, absence of discrimination and throwing open the higher offices to all, irrespective of race or religion. On the whole, this policy had been maintained under Jahangir and Shah Jahan. But orthodox and revivalist movements were gaining ground both among the Hindus and the Muslims.

With the accession of Aurangzeb who was orthodox and even bigoted in his religious outlook, the Muslim orthodox elements at the court gradually became dominant. Aurangzeb deliberately sought to strike the posture of an orthodox Muslim king as he wanted the Muslim subjects to forget his rebellion against his father. Aurangzeb promulgated many orders in pursuance of his anxiety. Here is a list of some of the more important orders :-

(*i*) A series of orders banning practices regarded as un-Islamic (*e.g.*, stamping of *Kalma*[2] on the coins, celebration of *Novroz*, *jharoka darshan*, etc). These orders betray his Puritanical nature. These, however, did not imply any persecution of the non-Muslims.

(*ii*) A number of orders in 1668 primarily aimed at achieving economy were issued. These included the closing down of the official department of history, banishment of vocal music and dancing from the court. (Music and dance however continued to be patronised by the nobles and the inmates of the royal harem. Instrumental music still

1. Sadi is considered to be an outstanding figure of the medieval Persian literature. He was a contemporary of Balban and infact was invited by his son, Prince Muhammad to visit India. The invitation was declined by Sadi on account of his old age.
2. Kalma—the Muslim ritual affirmation : 'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger.'

retained much of its popularity at the court). Ban on the use of house-hold vessels made of gold and silver was also imposed.

(*iii*) An order banning the building of new Hindu temples in areas directly under Mughal control (i.e., those not under some autonomous rajas) was also promulgated early in his regin. Though old temples were not to be destroyed under this order, it was however decreed that temples built since the time of Akbar should be regarded as newly built temples and on that plea were desecrated in different parts of the Empire and these included the temples of Vishwanath at Kashi and the temple of Bir Singh Deo at Mathura. A number of schools attached to temples were shut down, for Aurangzeb felt they were becoming centres of the seditious ideas.

In 1679, when the state of Marwar was for some time taken under direct imperial administration and the Rajputs prepared themselves to resist the Mughal authority, old as well as new temples were destroyed in different parts of the Empire. This was something unusual because resort to this method was generally a practice adopted only in times of war. In many cases, temples were simply shut down. Aurangzeb did not issue any orders for the destruction of all the Hindu temples. Some of the famous Hindu temples of his reign have been described by some contemporary writers. *Sanads* and grants made by Aurangzeb to Hindu and Jain temples have also been found. But even then Aurangzeb partially reversed Akbar's policy of general toleration, and this was naturally resented by the non-Muslims.

(*iv*) A series of discriminatory measures against the Hindus, the most important being *Jiziyah* which Aurangzeb revived in 1679 were also issued.

It is however incorrect to assume that by these measures Aurangzeb sought to force people to accept Islam. As an orthodox Muslim king, he wanted to rule in accordance with the orthodox interpretation of the Holy law. Thus, while reimposing *jiziyah*, he formally abolished about eighty taxes not sanctioned by the Islamic law. He *thus wanted to emphasise the Islamic character of state and to rally the Muslims more closely round the throne*. He did not realise that his policies would lead to a strong reaction among the Hindus, and alienate such sections as the Rajputs who had been generally loyal to the Mughal throne. Aurangzeb's religious policy was thus harmful to the best interests of the Empire.

2. Absence of any Spirit of Nationalism

There was no sense of nationalism in India at the time. Nobles and individuals were prepared to join anyone if it served their personal interest. The loyalty of the common people hardly extended beyond their family, village or region. Moreover, loyalty was personal. People fought for individuals or dynasties, not for any higher ideals or principles. Hence, the death or desertion of a single individual often changed the whole course of campaign or engagement.

3. Weakness and Breakdown of the System of Administration

Medieval administration was personal and autocratic. The king was the source of all power—civil, executive and military. His powers were delegated in large measure to the governors of provinces, and the *faujdars*[1] who could can often did abuse their position. Although

1. Faujdars were incharge of the administrative units which were lesser in size in comparison to the provinces.

Aurangzeb was extremely hard-working, devoted and unsparing of pains and one who paid mintue attention to details yet in his time the vigour of the administrative machinery had begun to show definite signs of decline. After the death of Bahadur Shah I (1712) the decline became faster. Apart from the personal factors (already discussed) the major reasons for this were :

(*i*) *Crisis of the Jagirdar system* : Jagirs were in short supply. Transfers were frequent and the allotment of a new *jagir* took a long time. Even when a *jagir* was allotted, its real income was generally far below its paper income. Hence, many nobles could not keep their quota of troops. This weakened the army and also affected the administrative efficiency . (Thus in the Deccan, many nobles came to terms with the Marathas instead of fighting against them).

(*ii*) *The practice of farming lands to the highest bidder (ijara).* This led to rackrenting of the peasantry and the replacement of the old landed nobility (zamindars) by a new type of business-cum-oppressor class.

(*iii*) *Military weakness* : The Mughals were never very strong in artillery. Though technically superior to the Marathas in this sphere, they were far behind the Europeans. Then their armies were cumbersome and slow moving, and were no match for the more lightly equipped Maratha armies.

4. Intellectual Bankruptcy

The Mughals suffered from intellectual bankruptcy. That was partly due to the lack of an efficient system of education in the country which alone could produce leaders of thought. The result was that the Mughals failed to produce any political genius or leader who could "teach the country a new philosophy of life and to kindle aspirations after a new heaven on earth. They all drifted and dozed in admiration of the wisdom of their ancestors and shook their heads at the growing degeneration of the moderns". Sir Jadunath Sarkar points out that there was no good education and no practical training of the Mughal nobility. They were too much patted by eunuchs and maid servants and passed through a sheltered life from birth to manhood. Their domestic tutors were an unhappy class, powerless to do any good except by love of their pupils: brow-beaten by eunuchs, disobeyed by the lads themselves and forced to cultivate the arts of the courtier or to throw up their thankless office. Not much could be expected from such teachers and their wards.

Dr. Satish Chandra concludes, "Thus, the roots of the disintegration of the Mughal empire may be found in the Medieval Indian economy; the stagnation of trade, industry and scientific development within the limits of that economy; the growing financial crisis which took the form of a crisis of the jagirdari system and affected every branch of state activity ; the inability of the nobility to realise in the circumstances their ambitions in the service of the state and, consequently, the struggle of factions and the bid of ambitious nobles for independent dominion ; the inability of the Mughal emperors to accommodate the Marathas and to adjust their claims within the framework of the Mughal Empire, and the consequent breakdown of the attempt to create a composite ruling class in India ; and the impact of all these developments on politics at the court and in the country, and upon the security of the north-western passes. Individual failings and faults of character also played their due role but they have necessarily to be seen against the background of these deeper, more impersonal factors."(Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, p.268).

Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, "The Mughal Empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. The rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself; royalty was hopelessly depraved or imbecile ; the nobles were selfish and short-sighted; corruption, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches of the public service. In the midst of this decay and confusion, our literature, art and even true religion had perished". (Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. 4. pp.343-44)

LESSON 3

STATE OF SOCIETY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

—Dr.Y.B.Mathur

The fall of the Mughal Empire inaugurated an area of unlimited political chaos. There were prolonged struggles and conflicts among numerous small powers who were striving to make capital out of the decline of the Mughal Empire. For a considerable time, and over vast areas, there was no administration no law and no security. Society had to pass through a period of instability and insecurity. The strong prevailed over the weak; and anarchy became the order of the day. Accounts left by eighteenth century foreign travellers and Indian writers present the picture of such a sad state of affairs.

Indian society remained indifferent to the political developements. The innumerable village communities led their self contained and more or less secluded life as before, and continued to remain unconcerned with the political developments as far as possible. This led to unfortunate results, for the village communities became more and more isolated and their social life became more and more stagnant and static. Irrational social practices became conspicuous features of the eighteenth century India. We know, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, India had produced a number of seers and saints, preachers and religious reformers, who played a vital role in rationalising medieval religions. But the eighteenth century was a dark period in her religious history. There was no great religious, spiritual or moral preacher to preach enlightenment to the ignorant. The echo of the social philosophy which the great Bhakti reformers like Kabir, Nanak and Chaitanya had preached, was not heard again for two centuries.

In the eighteenth century, idolatory and fetishism were extended to the extremes. Believers in monotheism and pantheism were there but the mass of the people were believers in sacrificial rites, witchcraft and sorcery, various *pujas*, festivities and ceremonies. In certain areas like Bengal, *tantric* rites and practices were widely prevalent. There was no escape from superstition and surprisingly enough there was hardly any protest even against inhuman practices. Islam, too, had become an intolerant religion. In the hey-day of Islamic glory the *Sufi* preachers preached tolerance. But from the latter part of the seventeenth century the Muslim rulers assumed religious bigotry as a part of their state policy. The truth is that the fall of the Mughal Empire was due to the struggle of the Rajputs, Marathas, Sikhs and others against the oppressive laws which the orthodox Aurangzeb unwisely introduced. The bitterness between Hindus and Muslims became a legacy of the seventeenth century which continued into the eighteenth. The earlier understanding between the two communities had almost vanished. The days were gone when Muslim liberals like Akbar and Dara Shikoh had tried to appreciate the spiritual doctrines of the Hindu scriptures. Instead, religious animosity pervaded the mind of the Muslim ruling class. Instead of understanding between the two major communities in their socio-cultural life, there was more and more of separation. Muslim society withdrew inside its own orthodox shell, as islam in India detached itself from other spiritual streams.

With religious attaching more importance to external form than to inner reality, religious superstitions began to pervade all aspects of social life. The more numerous the superstitious practices, the greater became the dominance of the priestly class. The bulk of that class seldom understood the scriptures and cared little for spiritual values. But they practised the ceremonies in all earnestness and society obeyed them faithfully. Amid ignorance and blind belief, dangerous social customs appeared as religiously sound. Priests could explain any social evil as holy with the apparent sanction of the scriptures behind it. Infanticide, child-marriage, polygamy, the burning of widows, and other social evils were all interpreted as scripturally and religiously valid. Similarly, such social systems as caste, untouchability, seclusion of women and slavery were all considered as sanctified by the *shastras* and therefore absolutely valid. Thus the eighteenth century was an age of intolerant institutions and irrational customs.

Caste

It is difficult to determine the actual number of castes and sub-castes which existed in the society. There are different estimates, some of which even suggest the existence of two to three thousand castes and sub-castes. It remains therefore one of the most controversial social institutions of human history. Its greatest demerit was that it divided society into water-tight compartments. Without social unity, the country had to suffer many evil consequences including foreign domination. Much before the 18th century the French traveller, Tavernier, described the great disadvantage of caste in the following words : "The idolators of India are so numerous that for one Mahomedan there are five or six Gentiles. It is astonishing to see how this enormous multitude of men has allowed itself to be subjected by so small number of persons, and has bent readily under the yoke of the Mahomedan princes. But the astonishment ceases when one considers that these idolators have no union among themselves and that superstition has introduced so strange a diversity of opinions and customs that they never agree with one another."

The advantage of the caste-system has been ascribed to its economic implications. An occupational function was allotted to each caste or sub-caste, however small it might have been. There was means of livelihood for every one in the society and inside every group there was a place for every individual. It is this aspect of the caste system which has prompted even some modern thinkers to justify the system in that it preserved Hindu arts and craftsmanship besides religion and morals. In the words of Monier-Williams: "Caste has been useful in prompting self-sacrifice, in securing sub-ordination of the individual to an organised body, in restraining vice and in preventing pauperism".

Its merits or demerits notwithstanding, the caste system stood on certain social formalities. It was a ladder from the highest to the lowest. While the highest caste contained God's men and claimed the utmost reverence, the members of the lowest groups were so inferior as to remain secluded, while of course doing their duty by society. Between the highest and the lowest there existed numerous grades depending on the nature of caste and profession. In such a system the individual's life and occupation were determined at his birth irrespective of his inborn qualities. Talent lay buried beneath the caste. Inter-caste marriage was unthinkable. Eating with other castes was equally forbidden. Even to take water from the hands of many castes was a sin. Restrictions were so strictly enforced that any one who broke the rules faced social

excommunication. Caste system, sanctified by time and religion, was no problem to the society in the 18th century. But in the eyes of the Europeans of that time caste appeared degrading.

Untouchability

Untouchability was itself the supreme example of social inequality. But more than that there was the problem of injustice associated with it. The untouchables were denied certain basic privileges of living. They could not use tanks, wells, inns or schools meant for upper class people, not to speak of places of worship or public institutions. In the 18th century, society retained untouchability in its extreme form.

Slavery

Slavery prevailed in the country. Broadly speaking, slaves could be divided into two parts, domestic slaves and serfs tied to the land. The second category of the slaves were transferred with the sale of the land to the buyer. In some cases, economic distress; natural calamities, extreme poverty and famines compelled parents to sell their children. The Rajputs, the Kshatriya and Kayasthas usually kept slave women for domestic work. Slaves in India were treated better then the slaves in Europe and America. They were usually treated as hereditary servants of the family and were allowed to marry among themselves.

The practice of slavery increased with the coming of the Europeans in India, particularly the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. The European Companies purchased slaves in the open market. There were reports of Europeans at Surat, Madras and Calcutta purchasing Abyssinian slaves and employing them for domestic work.

Seclusion of Women

The position of women in the 18th century was not satisfactory. It was their total seclusion which brought about their physical and mental degeneration. In many parts of India, the *Purdah* had long become an established custom both among Hindus and Muslims. The general insecurity and lawlessness which prevailed at that time made the seclusion more tight. The freedom and status which the Indian women enjoyed in ancient times were beyond the range of imagination. For centuries under Mubammedan rule there had developed an apathy towards the lot of women. There was hardly any opportunity for girls to attend educational institutions. As a general rule, Indian women remained unlettered and ignorant.

It was the complete depedence of women on men which reduced their position to one of object surrender. "Their fathers protect them in childhood; their husbands protect them in youth; their sons protect them in old age." The female was thus dependent on her father, husband & son in childhood; youth and old age respectively. The Hindu women were denied any right in paternal property which made them economically completely dependent on men.

Other social customs

Much before the 18th century certain abominable socio-religious customs had entered Hindu society which affected Hindu women in the most horrible manner. The most iniquitous of these customs were female-infanticide, child-marriage, polygamy, forced celibacy of widows, and last but not the least, the burning of widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands. These customs survived through the eighteenth century.

In the 18th century India, quite a number of superstitious rites, of doubtful antiquity or origin, were practised in different parts of the country. Human sacrifice can be described as first in the series of superstitious practices. It was the upper class Hindus who on very rare occasions resorted to it. The goddess *Kali* required human blood or heads, and for the gratification of the *Devi* human victim was slaughtered. Self-immolation was yet another form of human sacrifice. In some cases in order to escape disease one could drown oneself in a river. In other cases, life could be taken by way of mortification and penance. Among other forms of human sacrifice, there was the sacrifice of one's own child. Parents, under peculiar conditions, used to take vow to offer their first born child to the river Ganges. Self-torture was yet another superstitious rite. Quite a number of devotees used to perform the painful practice of piercing their tongues and arms with pointed rods. Such a barbarous rite was practised in the belief that good results followed such self-torture. Irrational as all such practices were, fortunately for the society they could neither be universally adopted nor widely acclaimed. They were bad, nevertheless. In an era of mental stagnation, the prevailing abuses continued without affecting the conscience of thinking men.

Economic Condition

India of the eighteenth century was a land of contrasts. Extreme poverty existed side by side with extreme riches and luxury. While the nobles were rich and powerful and steeped in luxury and comfort, the peasants were oppressed and impoverished. The increasing revenue demands of the state, oppression of the officials, greed and rapacity of the nobles, revenue farmers and Zamindars, marches and counter-marches of the rival armies and the destruction brought about by foreign invaders, made the life of the people wretched. Many prosperous cities which were the centres of flourishing industry, were sacked and devastated. Delhi and Mathura were plundered by Ahmed Shah Abdali. Agra was plundered by the Jats. Surat and other cities of Gujarat and the Deccan were plundered by the Maratha chiefs. Sarhind was plundered by the Sikhs. On account of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century, there was practically no law and order and hence there could be no manufactures or trade in a prosperous condition.

Particular groups of artisans undertook distinct process of production and the specialists worked in coordination to produce finished goods. Specialisation promoted skill and Indian workmenship reached a perfection unrivalled in those times in the world. In industrial organisation and techniques, India was more advanced than the Western countries. The products of Indian industry fulfilled not only the needs of Asian and African countries but there was also a great demand for them in the markets of Europe. They reached the Western countries by sea and land routes.

The Indian merchants were well established all along the ports of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. They also met in considerable numbers in Qandhar, Kabul, Balkh, Bukhara, Kashghar etc.

The upper classes in India demanded luxury articles. Their demad was considerable. The producers of high quality luxury goods worked in their homes or worked in the state Karkhanas (workshops) in the towns. Some village artisans who had acquired special skill in their respective crafts also contributed to the supply of those articles. As most of the craftsmen were poor, they worked for merchants who advanced them money through brokers or dealt with them through agents. Money was paid to craftsmen for implements and raw materials. Wages were given in

advance in return for finished goods which were usually collected and placed in the market by middlemen. Sometimes, the nobles had direct dealings with artisans.

Merchant, ships in the port-towns and boats plying on the country's rivers were all manufactured in the country. There was a flourishing boat-building industry at Dacca, Allahabad, Lahore, Thatta, Massaulipatam, Pulicat, Calicut, Surat, Bassein and Goa. In the art of ship-building, India was ahead of European nations. The important ship-building centres were Goa, Bassein, Surat, Massulipatam, Satgaon, Dacca and Chittagong.

The important centres of textile industry were Dacca and Murshidabad in Bengal, Patna in Bihar, Surat, Ahmedabad and Broach in Gujarat, Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh, Burhanpur in Maharashtra, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Lucknow and Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Multan and Lahore in the Punjab, Masaulipatam, Aurangabad and Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Bangalore in Mysore (Karnataka) and Coimbatore and Madurai in Madras. Kashmir was a centre of woollen manufactures.

Indian industries not only met the home demand but also exported their goods. Indian industries catered to the needs of foreign markets also. India continued to be a sink of precious metals.

For centuries, India was known for the excellence of her cotten products. There was a great demand for Indian manufactures in Rome during the time of ancient India. The principal exports of India consisted chiefly of silk and cotton stuffs. Their great popularity was based upon the excellence of craftsmanship. Among other things of export, indigo was of great importance. Limited quantities of iron and steel were exported from Masaulipatam. Cotton yarn was exported from the Coromandel coast. Gujarat exported precious stones, marble, drugs, opium, *Hing* etc.

The trade and industry of India was organised and financed by Indian merchants. They were not confined to port towns but were spread in all cities all along the trade routes of the country. Multan in the Punjab and the three Sind towns of Bukkur, Sukkur and Rohri were important centres of inland trade. They had a flourishing community of merchants comprising mostly of Khatris, Lohana and Bhatias. Delhi, Lahore and Agra were great centres of commercial activity in Northern India. Malda, Rangpur and Kasimbazar were important trade centres. Ahmedabad, Poona and Nagpur rose in importance after 1750. Hyderabad, Bangalore and Tanjore were flourishing centres of trade and commerce.

In addition to merchants, there was a class of financiers, both big and small. The Jagat Seths of Bengal, the Nathjis of Gujarat and the Chettis of the South were famous financiers. The Jagat Seths had a capital of ten crores of rupees in the first half of the eighteenth century. The Nathjis in Surat also had vast resources.

The Indian village was a self-sufficient economic unit. The agricultural surplus went to the king in the form of land revenue. After meeting the government demand, the peasants had little surplus left with them for purchasing the goods of the urban industry.

India was self-contatined and generally self-sufficient in agricultural and industrial goods required for the consumption of her population. The imported materials included raw silk, ivory, coral, tortoise-shell and amber in addition to metals.

The most important items of agricultural produce was foodgrains. In the Deccan, wheat and gram, rice and millet were the crops grown. Jawar and Bajra were the main support of the

people of the Deccan and were extensively grown. In the North also, millets supplies the major part of the articles of food of people and formed the principal crops. Wheat was not an important crop in Uttar Pradesh at that time. Next to foodgrains, cotton and sugar were the most widely grown crops. Tobacco, opium and indigo were the other commercial crops'.

European travellers and other contemporary writers have mentioned the poverty of the Indians. Their view was based on the scantiness of clothing, miserable dwellings, poor utensils and lack of furniture and not the lack of adequate quantities of nourishing diet. The view of Dr. Tara Chand is that as far as the poor classes of the people were concerned, they had very few wants and those were met adequately from what the country produced. There was no general starvation or inadequate nourishment except in times of famine. They normal years to accumulate and build up economic reserves for meeting calamities like famine. Their clothing was scant and their dwellings were poor, but in respect of those commodities, they probably did not feel the want more than what they had. They hardly made any effort to improve their lot. Life was simple and contented and the simple wants were easily met so that the struggle for existence was not heard. The common people did not feel the urge for improvement and hence did not struggle for economic progress.

Dr. Tara Chand also refers to the pattern of consumption of the upper classes which retarded the progress of the country in the economic field. The princes, nobles and the provincial chiefs lived in grand style and in great luxury. Mughal nobility has been described as "nothing but voluptuousness and wealth confusedly intermingled". A lot of money was spent on jewellery costly dresses, horses and elephants. Each noble kept hundreds of servants for his stables and household. A large sum of money was spent on making presents to the king. The law of escheat required that all the accumulated wealth of a noble after his death would go to the royal treasury. The result was that there was no incentive to save and hence the nobles spent all that they had and something more. They were mostly under debt. The result was that there was no accumulation of capital.

A reference may be made to the situation in Bengal in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The servants of the English East India Company penetrated into the inner parts of the country and compelled the handicraftsmen to deal exclusively with them. The prices of the monopolised goods were arbitrarily fixed by the officials and the producers were fleeced mercilessly. The weavers were compelled to enter into engagements to work only for the English East India Company and for a breach of the contract, they were punished with fine, imprisonment, flogging etc. Even the highest officials of the Company were engaged in private trade which brought them huge sums of money. Even the Directors of the English East India Company admitted that "the vast fortunes acquired in the inland trade have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country. "Vansittart says that the Engligh compelled the natives to buy or sell at just what rates they pleased on pain of flogging or confinenment. It was estimated that between 1757 and 1765, the English East India Company and its employees received £ 6 millions from the Indians as gifts. Lord Clive was himself guilty of that offence. Trade monopoly, political corruption and exorbitant land taxes enabled the English Company to transfer large sums of money annually to Britain. There was a regular drain of wealth from India to Britain. Lord Cornwallis wrote in 1790, "The consequences of the heavy drain of wealth from the above causes, with the addition of that which has been

occasioned by the remittances of private fortunes, having been for many years past and are now severely felt, by the great diminution of the current specie and by the langour which has thereby been thrown upon the cultivation and general commerce of the country." Sir John Shore wrote in 1797, "The company are merchants as well as sovereigns of the country. In the former capacity, they engross its trade while in the latter they appropriate the revenues. The remittances to Europe of revenues are made in the commodities of the country which are purchased by them. Whatever allowance we may make for the increased industry of the subjects of the state, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it, there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counterbalanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote feign dominion."

Education and Culture

Caste prejudices denied the benefits of education to the majority of people but for the upper castes the doors of education were always open. The economic difficulties denied the poorer sections of the society the benefits of education but whenever opportunities or help were available poor parents sent their sons to schools. Besides the priestly class for whom some education was essential for reading or understanding of scriptures, various other sections of the society acquired at least some elementary knowledge of arithmetic for common accounting purposes. The traders, merchants, businessmen, shopkeepers, money-lenders, village-headmen, tax collectors, accountants, big cultivators considered education essential for their children. Those Hindus and Mohamedans who were themselves in a position of privilege or who were ambitious enough to place their sons in employment at the courts, realised the value of higher learning and took pains to have their sons as thoroughly educated as possible. Thus, in spite of many drawbacks, there was a general demand in India for education. Indigenous educational institutions therefore existed everywhere in the country. The systems of education were in no doubt different from the modern systems and might be termed medieval but however defective or unscientific, they served the needs of the time.

There were a few distinct categories of indigenous institutions. At the lowest level, but scattered all over the country in the numerous villages, there were the village *patshalas* or primary schools to impart elemenary education. All the villages did not possess *patshalas* ,but most of the big or thriving villages had their schools but, generally speaking, the number of schools was quite inadequate and their maintenance was miserable because Govt. did not concern themselves with education. There was no system no uniformity and no well conceived plan to regulate the schools. Most of the *patshalas* were held in temple premises in religious institutions, in the verandahs, in huts or even in cow-sheds or under tree. The teachers were far from qualified. All their teaching concentrated on arithmetic which they considered perhaps the only essential subject to be infused into minds of the young students. Modern subjects which widen the mental horizon of the learners were unknown to the teachers themselves. There were no printed books not even manuscripts. It was considered sufficient by parents if their sons acquired an elementary grounding in three Rs. The teachers had no regular salary as the term is understood in modern times. They managed to exist on the meagre gifts they received at irregular intervals from the village patrons. One of the worst features of the *patshala* education was the terror which the teacher caused to his young pupils with the inevitable cane or rod in his hand and with his absolute right to iflict any amount of physical punishment for any kind of lapse on the part of the pupil. The pain which the teacher inflicted remained in the memory of the pupil till his old age, Stories of punishments were narrated to children and grand-children to establish the value

of education as well as the merit of the teachers. The meritorious who could memorise the arithmetical-tables and showed proficiency in solving complicaterd problems were considered the really worthy disciples of their masters. The weaker minds, possibly with the superior brains for other kinds of knowledge, suffered the punishment inflicted with backs to the wall. They never had any opportunity to learn subjects in which they could have exhibited their talent. Besides arithmetic, religious and mythological stories, and tales from the Ramayana and Mahabharata were taught. On the whole, the village *patshalas* met the demands of the society, and the teacher, served a useful purpose. Like the Hindu *patshalas*, there-were *Maktabs* for the Muslim children in village. The *Maktabs* too imparted the same elementary education in the same medieval and miserable setting, with, of course, the Muslim religious learning in place of the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

For higher education, there were *tols* and *madrasas*, the former for the learning of Sanskrit and the latter for Arabic and Persian. Ruling chiefains, landlords, and wealthy and charitable persons generally patronised such institutions. But, in general, their condition was bad. The local powers were fighting among themselves and falling prey to the foreign invaders and the wealthier individuals were passing through vicissitudes of fortune during the second-half of the eighteenth century and, consequently, the higher institutions of learning suffered from a dearth of patrons. Nevertheless they lingered on. Sanskrit was the medium of higher education for the Hindu scholars. In South India, monasteries were famous centres of Sanskrit learning where scholars were taught the Vedas, the Upanishadas and Hindu philosophy by eminent teachers and *pandits*. Both in the South and North, there existed numerous private Ltd. though, of course, the number of scholars was not considerable in most of them. At the close of the eighteenth century, there were about 190 *tols* in the district of 24 paraganas of Bengal alone. In the city of Calcutta, in the early years of the 19th century there were 28 *tols*. In every part of India the *tols* functioned in the traditional manner with doors open to the Brahmins and the Vaisyas. Educational systems in the *tols* were age-old and stereotyped. Routine and regulations were rigid. From morning to mid-day, afternoon to evening, and evening to ten or eleven at night, the scholars had to study. Grammar, general literature, mythology, logic and law were the main subjects. The *Madarsas* were not so many in number but their conditions were rather better. From the days of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Persian was the court language and hence Hindus and Muslims alike were keen to learn it. Arabic was mostly studied by orthodox Muslims who wished to become well-versed in religious scriptutes. The Muslim rulers, nobles and courtiers and the wealthier members of society, patronised the *madarsas*. Most *madarsas* were attached to the mosques.

The character of education was medieval. Learning was confined to the scriptures, mythology and religious laws. The deeper philosophies of Hinduism and Islam were attainable by a few but for the vast majority of scholars, learning was embodied in dogma. Memory rather than understanding, revision of lessons rather than into the subject, remained the scholar's supreme task. Broader avenues of knowledge, even wider source of information did not form part of education. Enlightenment arising out of rationalism, curiosity, inventions and research, and its offshoots in the shape of different branches of science and humanities remained far from the scope of education. More lamentable was the fact that the best and real aspects of ancient wisdom and science were neglected whereas the superficial aspects of scriptural faith dominated the mind of the educated. As a result, higher education only served an outmoded purpose.

Literature

During the eighteenth century, Urdu spread to all corners of India. Urdu literary circles were established in every province of India. When the British dominion extended over Northern India, Urdu was employed by the polite society of the Muslims and the Hindus.

The literature produced during this period was not of high order. Its poetry was dilettantish, weighted with euphism and conceit. Its spirit was shackled by artificial limitations of rhyme. Its mood alternated between the sensuous and spiritual, neither deeply experienced. Clouds of pessimism and despair hung over it. It was away from reality.

Both Hindi and Urdu poets of this period were virtuous. They were so much absorbed in their pursuit that they almost lost the awareness of the meaning of life and higher purpose of literature. Behind the diversities of language, race and creed, a deep cultural unity pervaded the whole of India.

Heer Ranjha was written by Warris Shah in Punjabi. For Sindi literature, the eighteenth century was a period of great achievement. Shah Abdul Latif composed his famous collection of poems called Risalo. Sachal and Sami were the other great Sindi poets of that century. Daya Ram was a great lyricist of Gujarat and he wrote during the eighteenth century. Tayamanavar was one of the best exponents of Sittar poetry in Tamil.

During the eighteenth century, Christian missionaries set up printing presses in India and brought out vernacular editions of the Bible. Ziegenbelg, a Dutch missionary, composed a Tamil grammar and published a Tamil version of the Bible. The missionaries also compiled a Tamil dictionary. Missionaries like Carey, Ward and Marshman set up a printing press at Serampur and published a Bengali version of the Bible.

Art

As there was a lack of patronage at Delhi on account of the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, the artists migrated to the state capitals like Hyderabad, Lucknow, Murshidabad, Jaipur etc. In 1784, Asaf-ud-Daula built the great Imambara. It has no pillars or supports. The palace of Suraj Mal at Dig, the capital of Bharatpur, was planned to rival the imperial palaces at Agra. Work was started in 1725 but the same could not be completed.

Many painters of the Mughal school migrated to Hyderabad, Lucknow, Kashmir and Patna and flourished there. New schools of painting achieved distinction. The paintings of Kangra and Rajput schools revealed new vitality and taste. Music continued to develop and flourish in the eighteenth century, particularly in the reign of Muhammad Shah.

LESSON 4

RISE OF AUTONOMOUS STATES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE MARATHAS, MYSORE, THE PUNJAB, AVADH, BENGAL AND HYDERABAD

Within a quarter of a century after the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire started breaking up. Some of the provinces were occupied by the Marathas and in others the Mughal Subedars proclaimed their independence. The most important among them were the Subedars of Bengal, Avadh and Hyderabad

BENGAL

The Subah of Bengal included Bihar and Orissa. It was the first province of the Mughal Empire to become autonomous and the first to pass under British rule. It became autonomous under Murshid Quli Khan. He was appointed as Dewan of Bengal by Aurangzeb and was allowed to continue in that post on account of his efficient management of revenues. After the death of Aurangzeb, he started exercising the powers of the Subedar also because Prince Farrukhsiyar who was appointed to that post by Bahadur Shah was young and inexperienced. When Farrukhsiyar became Emperor in 1713, he appointed Murshid Quli Khan as Subedar of Bengal and Orissa. It gave a *de jure* basis to his *de facto* authority. He was allowed to rule Bengal and Orissa till his death in 1727 without interference by the Mughal Emperor. After his death, Shujauddin, his son-in-law, was appointed to this office. It was in this way that the office of Governor became hereditary and the foundations of the dynasty of Murshid Quli Khan were laid. Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, did not interfere with the authority of Shujauddin and also made him the Governor of Bihar in 1733. After the death of Shujauddin in 1739, his son Sarfaraz Khan succeeded to his office. In 1740, he was defeated and killed by an adventurer named Alivardi Khan who had become a favourite of Shujauddin and had risen to the office to Deputy Governor of Bihar. Alivardi Khan commanded the support of a powerful faction in the court of the Nawab. It was headed by Jagat Seth who wielded great influence in the Imperial Court also. After the invasion of India by Nadir Shah in 1739, Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor (1719-1748), found himself helpless and confirmed Alivardi Khan to the office of Subedar after the receipt of a present of Rs. 2 crores from him. For 12 years, Alivardi Khan was harassed by the Marathas. In 1752, he gave to the Marathas Cuttack and also promised to pay a sum of a Rs. 12 lakhs annually in lieu of *Chauth*. Alivardi Khan was a strong and capable ruler and during the remaining period of his administration, Bengal enjoyed peace. He died in 1756 and was succeeded by his grandson Siraj-ud-daulah.

Siraj-ud-daulah was a youngman of 24 at the time of his accession. His greatest weakness was his inability to take quick and firm decisions and his indecisiveness brought about his ruin. His accession was peaceful because Alivardi Khan had taken pledges from his principal officers that they would support Siraj-ud-daulah. With their powerful support Siraj-ud-daulah quickly

eliminated his rival, Ghasiti Begum, who wanted to put her adopted son Murad-ud daulah on the throne. She was the eldest daughter of Alivardi Khan and had a better title to the throne than Siraj-ud-daulah who was the son of his youngest daughter. The Begum was forced to surrender and was placed under confinement. Only Shaukat Jang, the son of the second daughter of Alivardi Khan, was left in the field. He held the office of the Governor of Purnea. Siraj-ud-daulah did not take action against him for the time being as the English East India Company demanded his immediate attention.

The English East India Company was the richest among the European Companies in Bengal and had great influence among the Indian traders and the official circles. The officials of the English East India Company were secretly inciting Ghasiti Begum and Shaukat Jang against Siraj-ud-daulah who got scent of their intrigues. For some time he ignored them and marched against Shaukat Jang. From Raj Mahal, he turned back and ordered the seizure of English factories. He personally marched against Calcutta, captured it and drove the English into the sea. The main reasons why Siraj-ud-daulah took action against the English Company was that it refused to stop strengthening the fortifications of its factories. The Nawab was not prepared to allow the English Company to fight against the French and add to his difficulties. He also did not approve to the trade privileges enjoyed by the English Company. The servants of the English Company used their *Dastaks* to evade the payment of transit duties. After capturing Calcutta and seizing the English goods, the Nawab wrote to the Governor of Madras that unless the Englishman gave him a pledge of obeying his authority in future, he would not allow them to return to Bengal. The war against Shaukat Jang was then renewed and he was defeated and killed in a battle.

As regards the attitude of the English authorities in Madras, they had a Royal Regiment and a Naval Squadron in the South which could be used against Siraj-ud-daulah. These forces had been sent from England to fight the French but as the war between England and France had not started as yet, the Royal Regiment under the command of Clive and the Naval Squadron under the command of Admiral Watson, were sent to Bengal. They quick recovered Calcutta and sacked Hugli. Siraj-ud-daulah marched against the English but made peace with them on 9 February 1757. He promised to restore the goods of the English Company and also allowed the English to strengthen their fortifications. The English were also given the permission to mint *Sicca* rupee. These concessions were given because Siraj-ud-daulah apprehended an attack from the Afghans who had sacked Delhi. The news of the Afghan invasion had reached him just when he had started his operations against Calcutta. In return for these concessions, the English Company promised to help Siraj-ud-daulah against the Afghans.

However, peace between the English and Siraj-ud-daulah did not last long. The Nawab was suspicious of the designs of the English Company and secretly tried to win over French. The English were aware of his designs against them and they decided to strike down the French before the Nawab Could extend his protection to them they knew that the Nawab would not interfere so long as the Afghan inavaders were present at Delhi. The result was that while the Nawab remained inactive on account of the fear of the Afghans, The English seized Chandernagar in defiance of the wishes of the Nawab. All that the Nawab could do was to take the French in Cossimbazar under his protection where fugitives from Chandernagar had also come. When the English put pressure on him for their surrender, he sent them to Patna. The English were

convinced that the Nawab would try to destroy them with French help as soon as he was free from the Afghan danger. The result was that the English decided to overthrow him with the help of his disaffected officials before he had time to attack them. The leaders of the disaffected officials were two Seths, Mahtab Rai and Sarup Chand, and Mir Jafar, the uncle of the Nawab, as he had insulted them. Mir Jafar was dissatisfied because he was distrusted by the Nawab. Rai Durlab was disappointed because the Nawab had given preference to Mohan Lal over Rai Durlab and appointed him as his principal adviser. Mir Jafar was chosen as their candidate for the *Gaddi* of Bengal and the English promised to support him. A secret treaty was concluded between Mir Jafar and the English Company by which Mir Jafar promised the Zamindari of 24 Parganas and numerous rewards to the English in addition to the concessions they already enjoyed. On 23 June 1757 was fought the battle of Plassey in which the English came out victorious. Mir Jafar did not take part in the fighting Demoralized by treachery, Siraj-ud-daulah ran away from the battle field. However, he was captured and put to death. Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal.

Mir Jafar was the Nawab of Bengal from 1757 to 1760. He was neither brilliant nor active. He had not not capacity to carry on the administration of Bengal. Throughout this period, he was merely a figure-head and the real power was in the hands of Clive. Moreover, he was surrounded on all sides by difficulties. He has no money in the treasury. When he ascended the throne, he had not enough even to meet his previous commitments. The English Company pressed for the payment of the instalments but Mir Jafar expressed his inability to do so.

Mir Jafar had to meet the danger from the Dutch. The real cause of Dutch trouble was their jealousy of the British influence in Bengal. Although they had remained neutral when the English and the Nawab fought, they were feeling worried about their own future in the province. In 1759, six or seven, Dutch vessels with 300 Europeans and 600 Malayan soldiers appeared in the Ganges but they were defeated by Colonel Forde at Bidderra. The Dutch fleet was defeated and captured. The Dutch made peace with the English.

Ali Gohour was the elder son of the Mughal Emperor, Alamgir. He revolted against his father and invaded Bihar. He was assisted by Muhammad Quli Khan, the first cousin of Shuja-ud-daulah of Avadh and the Subedar of Allahabad. Ali Gohour advanced upto Patna but he was defeated by Clive. In 1760, Ali Gohour who had become Emperor Shah Alam attacked again but he was defeated. As Mir Jafar was found to be unfit to deliver the goods, he was deposed and Mir Kasim was appointed as the Nawab and he occupied that position from 1760 to 1763.

Mir Kasim made a good beginning. He suppressed the rebellious Zamindars of Bengal and Bihar. He forced the old officers to give up the money they had misappropriated. He levied some *Abwabs* or additional cesses. He tried to organise his army on the lines of the Europeans. He made arrangements for the manufacture of fire-locks and guns at Monghyr. When he tried to put a check on the private inland trade of the servants of the English Company, he was removed from the throne and Mir Jafar was put on the throne again in July 1763. Mir Jafar had to make many concessions to the English Company. Mir Jafar remained the Nawab of Bengal for the second time from July 1763 to February 1765. When he died in 1765, the Culcutta Council put his second son named Najam-ud-daulah on the throne of Bengal. However, all power passed into the hands of the English Company. The condition of Bengal was chaotic. There was anarchy, confusion, briberv, corruption and extortion everywhere.

Such was the state of affairs when Clive came to India in 1765 as the Governor of Bengal for the second time and he occupied that position for two years from 1765 to 1767. Clive set up

what is known as Daul Government of Bengal. Instead of appointing British officers to conduct the Dewani Administration, he appointed the Deputy Nawabs, one for Bengal and the other for Bihar, to conduct both, the Dewani (i.e., revenue and civil justice) and Nizamat (*i.e.*, military power and criminal justice) administration in the name of the Nawab but under the effective control of the English. The Dual Government was abolished in 1772 by Warren Hastings. It was in this way that the Subah of Bengal passed under the British rule.

AVADH

Another province which became the seat of an independent Muslim kingdom was Avadh. It became independent under Saadat Ali Khan, the leader of the Irani faction in the court of Muhammad Shah. He was appointed Subedar of Avadh in 1723 and continued to rule this province without interference from the Central Government. He cooperated with the Mughal Emperor in his defence against the Marathas and Persians. During his long tenure, the people began to look upon him as their real master and thus the foundations of the Shia dynasty in Avadh were securely laid. Saadat Ali committed suicide in 1739 to avert the wrath of Nadir Shah when he failed to tell him he places where the Imperial treasury lay buried. He had no son and Safdar Jung, his son-in-law, was his only heir. The Mughal Emperor appointed him to the Subedari of Avadh. Thus the office of the Subedar of Avadh became hereditary in the family of Saadat Ali Khan. Safdar Jung was an able soldier like his father-in-law. He won the favour of Muhammad Shah and his son Ahmed Shah. When Ahmed Shah succeeded his father in 1748, he appointed Safdar Jung as his Wazir. However, the friendship did not last long. The mind of the Mughal Emperor was poisoned against Safdar Jung by his Turani rivals. The final break came in 1753 when the Mughal Emperor dismissed Safdar Jung and drove him out of the capital with the help of the Turanis. Safdar Jung did not survive his disgrace for long-and he died in 1754.

After his death, his son Shuja-ud-daulah, succeeded him to the throne of Avadh. Although the *Wazarat* was held by Turanis, Shuja-ud-daulah continued to claim that office as the successor of Safdar Jung. He was appointed to that office in 1760 by Ahmed Shah Abdali as a reward of his military help against the Marathas. Thus, the office of Wazir became hereditary in his family. Shuja-ud-daulah and his successors continued to bear the title of Nawab Wazir. Shuja-ud-daulah fought on the side of the Afghans in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761. The defeat of the Marathas ensured his security against their threatened raids.

Although the Maratha defeat at Panipat saved Avadh from them, it could not save in from the English who had become kingmakers in Bengal after their victory in the battle of Plassey in 1757. In 1763, the English deposed Mir Qasim and drove him out of Bengal. Shuja-ud-daulah took up the cause of Mir Qasim. He took with him Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor who was then residing in Avadh as a fugitive, to lend prestige to the expedition. However, the combined forces of Shuja-ud-daulah, Shah Alam and Mir Qasim were badly defeated by Major Hector Munro at Buxar on 22 October 1764. After this defeat, the Mughal Emperor went over to the English. Avadh was over-run by the English and Shuja-ud-daulah took refuge in Rohilkhand. By the terms of a treaty settled with the Mughal Emperor, Governor Vansittart of Bengal promised to allow him to rule over Avadh. However, the situation changed in favour of Shuja-ud-daulah. Lord Clive, the new Governor of Bengal (1765-67) decided to be friendly and made Avadh a buffer state. By the treaty of Allahabad signed with Shuja-ud-daulah in August 1765, Clive restored Avadh to him and promised British help for his defence. Shuja-ud-daulah was required

to pay a fine of Rs. 50 lakhs and hand over the districts of Kara and Allahabad to the English Company. Those two districts were given to the Mughal Emperor for his maintenance.

To begin with, Avadh gained immensely on account of its connection with the English Company because it was in their interest to keep the buffer state strong and the Nawab contented. In 1772, The Marathas returned to the North, restored the Mughal Emperor and threatened to raid Avadh. The English Company induced Shuja-ud-daulah to conclude a defensive alliance with the Rohillas who were suffering at the hands of the Marathas. The English stood behind their allies and their force under General Baker helped Shuja-ud-daulah in 1773 in preventing the Marathas from invading Rohilkhand. However, the Marathas returned to the South on hearing the news of death of Peshwa Madhav Rao. This enabled Warren Hastings to strengthen Avadh and also British connection with the state. He met Shuja-ud-daulah at Banaras in 1773 and concluded a new treaty with him. According to that treaty, Kara and Allahabad were restored to the Nawab but he was required to pay Rs. 50 lakh for their restoration. He was also required to pay the expense of British forces permanently stationed in Avadh for its defence. Warren Hastings promised to help the Nawab to realise Rs. 40 lakh from the Rohilas who had not paid that amount as the price of his support against the Marathas according to the treaty of 1772. Peshwa Narayan Rao was murdered at Poona in 1772 and a civil war began in Maharashtra. That removed the fear of Maratha intervention in Rohilkhand and the Nawab conquered it in 1774 with British help. Shuja-ud-daulah enlarged the boundaries of Avadh. In 1775, Shuja ud-daulah died and he was succeeded by his son Asaf-ud-daulah.

The accession of Asaf-ud-daulah marked the beginning of the degradation and exploitation of Avadh by the British. That was due the fact that Asaf-ud-daulah was weak and the British were growing in strength day by day. Warren Hastings obliged the Nawab to accept another brigade and pay for it. The British acquired the right of nominating his ministers and the British Resident in Avadh stated interfering in its administration. Private British merchants entered Avadh and started exploiting it in the name of private trade. The result was that there was a rapid decline in the prosperity of Avadh and steady deterioration in its administration. The treasury was exhausted on account of the extravagance of the Nawab and the drain of money for meeting the expenses of the subsidiary force. The revenues of the state dwindled on account of bad management and mis-appropriation by the officials of the Nawab. Asaf-ud-daulah pleaded and protested against the heavy expenses of the subsidiary force and British interference in his administration, but without any result. British hold over Avadh grew tighter day by day and the exploitation of Avadh went on increasing. Asaf-ud-daulah died in 1797 and his son. Wazir Ali was recognised by Sir John Shore (1793-1798) as his successor but later on he was deposed Saadat Ali, the younger brother of Asaf-ud-daulah, was put on the throne. Thus, the British assumed the role of king-makers in Avadh.

Lord, Wellesley, the new Governor General, put pressure on Saadat Ali to sign the annexation of Avadh by the British but the Nawab refuse however, Lord Welleseley forced a new treaty upon him in 1801. By that treaty, the British took away from Avadh Rohilkhand and the eastern districts to pay the expenses of the subsidiary force. There was absolutely no justification for this act of high-handedness.

The British attitude towards Avadh continued to be one of exploitation. While Saddat Ali managed to make any saving by his careful management of revenues and personal economies,

it was taken away from his successor Ghazi-ud-din in the form of loans which were never returned. In lieu of them, the Nawab got the title of the King of Avadh. During the administration of Lord William Bentinck (1828-1835), there was a danger to the very existence of the state of Avadh on account of its mis-government but that was not done on account of the fear of offending Muslim public opinion. He merely issued a warning to Nasir-ud-din, the ruler of Avadh, that he would be pensioned off if he persisted in neglecting the administration of the state.

Nasir-ud-din died in 1837 and he was succeeded by Muhammad Ali. A new treaty was imposed upon Muhammad Ali by Lord Auckland by which Muhammad Ali was required to pay for another British Brigade. It was agreed that if Muhammad Ali failed to reform the administration, he would hand it over to the English East India Company and allow its officials to introduce the necessary reforms. However, the new treaty was rejected by the Court of Directors. It is unfortunate that Lord Auckland did not inform Muhammad Ali that the treaty had not approved of by the Home Government and the result was that it remained in force. The Nawab was merely told that he would not be required to pay for additional troops.

In 1812, Muhammad Ali was succeeded by Amjad Ali. As the First Afghan War was still going on, Avadh escaped the attention of Lord Auckland. In 1847, Amjad Ali was succeeded by Wajid Ali Shah. Lord Hardinge (1844-1948), the now Governor-General, gave a warning to Wajid Ali Shah that if he failed to carry out the necessary reforms within two years, the administration of Avadh would be taken over by the English Company. In 1848, Lord Dalhousie became the Governor-General and he was determined to annex the Indian States on one excuse or another. In 1849, he appointed Col Sleeman as Resident in Avadh with instructions to report on its administration. The report was that law and order had broken down in Avadh and the Nawab wasted his time in frivolus amusements. Sleeman recommended that the administration of Avadh should be taken over by the British temporarily under the terms of the treaty of 1837. In 1854, Col. Outram was sent as Resident to Lucknow to report on the administration of the Nawab. His report was that irresponsible and unscrupulous favorites of the Nawab were misappropriating the revenues and oppressing the people. Lord Dalhousie asked the Nawab to hand over the administration permanently to the English Company. A new treaty embodying those terms was presented to Wajid Ali Shah, but he refused to sign it. The result was that Avadh was annexed on 13 February 1856 by a proclamation. The Nawab was pensioned off and sent of Calcutta. The annexation of Avadh was one of the important causes of the Revolt of 1857.

HYDERABAD

Hyderabad was formed by the six Deccan Subas of the Mughal Empire for which a Viceroy used to be appointed. The Deccan was a newly conquered region in which Imperial authority could not be consolidated on account of straggle with the Marathas. In imitation of the Marathas example, Zulfiqar Khan, the most powerful and reputed General of Aurangzeb, formed plans to seize the Deccan Subas after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. In order to achieve his aim, he entered into a secret understanding with the Marathas. He was Shia and his aim was to build up a Shia kingdom on the ruins of Bijapur and Golkunda. Another powerful Mansabdar who aspired to create an independent kingdom in the Deccan was Chin Qilich Khan belonged to two rivals factions in the Mughal Court, namely Irani and Turani. For some years after the death of Aurangzeb, Zulfiqar Khan and his father Asad Khan who had held the office of Wazir under Aurangzeb continued to exercise great influence at the Mughal court. In 1808, Zulfiqar Khan

managed to secure the viceroyalty of the Deccan from Bahadur Shah (1707-1712), the Mughal Emperor and he held that post till 1713 when he was murdered by Farrukhsiyar. In 1713 Chin Qilich Khan was appointed as the Viceroy of the Deccan.

Chin Qilich Khan combined in himself military administrative skill and diplomatic statureness of a high order. After his appointment as Viceroy of the Deccan, he restored order in the administration and started consolidating his position by diplomacy and war. He refused to pay Chauth to the Marathas and formed plans to destroy their power by extending his support to Sambhaji II, a rival of Sahu.' However, his plans were upset by the Sayyid Brothers who established their control over the Imperial Government. In 1715, Hussain Ali, the younger of the two Sayyid brothers was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan. The Nizam returned to the Deccan in 1719 when he became convinced that the Sayyid brothers were determined to destroy him. He seized the Viceroyalty of the Deccan after killing Alam Ali, the nephew of Hussain Ali, who was acting as his deputy. Shortly afterwards, Hussain Ali was killed by Muhmmad Shah the Mughal Emperor, with the help of Muhmmad Amin Khan, a cousin of the Nizam. Abdullah, the Sayyid brother, was imprisioned. After liberating himself from the yoke of the Sayyid brothers, the Mughal Emperor extended his favour to the Turanis, Muhmmad Amin Khan was appointed Wazir and the Nizam was confirmed in the viceroyalty of the Deccan. After the death of Muhmmad Amin Khan in 1722, the Nizam was recalled to Delhi and appointed Wazir. However, his mind was set on establishing an independent kingdom in the Deccan. When the Nizam found that the companions of the Emperor were poisoning the mind of the Emperor against him, he went back to the Deccan in 1724. The Emperor ordered, Mubariz Khan, the Deputy Viceroy to oppose and kill him, but the Nizam defeated and killed him which the help of the Marathas and sent his head to the Emperor. The Mughal Emperor was left with no choice except to confirm the Nizam in the Viceroyalty of the Deccan. The Nizam continued to rule the Deccan until his death in 1748. He successfully resisted the Maratha encroachments and maintained law and order in his territory. He laid the foundations of the Asafjahi dynasty.

After the death of the Nizam in 1748, a war of succession broke out between his son Nasir Jang and his daugther's son Muzaffar Jang. Muzaffar Jang sought French help but in the end he was defeated and obliged to surrender to his uncle. Shortly after that, Nasir Jang was murdered. This foul murder made the French masters of the situation. Muzaffar Jang who became the Nizam after the death of Nasir Jang, was too weak to run the Government. He borrowed the help of the French troops under General Bussy to capture Hyderabad. However, luck did not favour him and he too was murdered. In that emergency, Bussy released Salabat Jang who was a prisoner in his camp and proclaimed him the Nizam. Salabat Jang was a weak man and he soon realised that without French help, he could not remain on the throne. He requested Bussy to stay on and gave him the Jagir of Northern Circars for meeting the expenses of his troops. The French position in Carnatic became weak and in 1758 Bussy was recalled by General Lally to help him in the war against the British. It gave the British a chance to put an end to French ascendancy over Hyderabad. Clive sent Col. Forde from Bengal to seize the Northern Circars and the same was done. Salabat Jang could not expel the British from Northern Circars and hence allowed them to hold the same lieu of tribute.

Salabat Jang was overthrown by his brother Nizam Ali. He offended the Peshwa by refusing to pay him the arrears of Chauth. The Peshwa attacked him and inflicted upon him a

crushing defeat at Udgir in 1760. Nizam Ali was forced to cede almost half to his territory. After that, the state of Hyderabad would have been occupied by the Marathas sooner or later, but the Marathas themselves were defeated in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761, Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao passed away and there was confusion in the Maratha empire. The Nizam took advantage of the situation and repudiated the treaty of Udgir.

The rise of Hyder Ali in Mysore created a new situation. He seized the District of Balaghat from the Nizam. The result was that the Nizam entered into an alliance with Peshwa Madhav Rao in 1766. He also entered into an alliance with the British against Hyder Ali. This alliance excited the suspicions of the Peshwa who attacked Mysore alone and withdrew after forcing Hyder Ali to accept his terms. Hyder Ali offered help to the Nizam to recover the Northern Circars from the British who had not paid any tribute. The Nizam accepted the offer to Hyder Ali and turned against the British. The combined army of the Nizam and Hyder Ali was defeated at Changama and, Trincomali by General Smith. The result was that the Nizam deserted Hyder Ali and rejoined the British. The Nizam entered into a treaty with the British in 1768 by which the British promised to help the Nizam in recovering Balaghat from Hyder Ali and in return for this help, the Nizam promised to give them the fifth District of the Northern Circars called Guntoor after the death of his brother Basalat Jang of whose Jagir it formed a part.

For a few years after the treaty of 1768, the Nizam remained dissatisfied with the British who did not pay him tribute for the Northern Circars regularly. When the British occupied Guntoor by bribing Basalat Jang. The Nizam turned against them and joined the coalition formed by the Peshwa and Hyder Ali in 1780. Warren Hastings tried to appease the Nizam by resorting to him Guntoor and paying a part of the arrears of tribute. In 1782, when Basalt Jang died, Warren Hastings did not demand Guntoor because the war against Mysore was going on. Lord Cornwallis put pressure on the Nizam to surrender Guntoor and the Nizam demanded British help to recover Balaghat from Mysore. Cornwallis agreed but still hostilities did not start because the Nizam hesitated to attack Mysore. Cornwallis persuaded the Nizam and the Peshwa to join the British against Sultan and after the Third Mysore War. The Nizam got Balaghat as his share in the territory conquered from Mysore.

After the retirement of Cornwallis in 1793, the British under Sir John Shore followed a policy of non-intervention of Indian politics. The result was that the Marathas attacked the Nizam and defeated him in battle the Kharda in March 1795. The Nizam was forced to give to the Marathas a large part of the territory in lieu of the arrears of Chauth. Inspite of that, the Marathas continued to threaten the Nizam. The result was that when in 1798, Lord Wellesley offered the Nizam protection against the Marathas, he readily accepted the same and entered into a subsidiary treaty with the British. He acknowledged British paramountcy, agreed to disband his French trained force and accepted an English subsidiary force and pay its expenses. This treaty was revised after the fall of Tipu in 1799, and the Nizam ceded all the territory which he had acquired from Mysore. Hyderabad became a vassal state of the British. The Nizam was forced to accept what came to be called the Hyderabad Contingent. This force was to be used only for the defence of Hyderabad. As the Nizam did not play its expenses regularly, Lord Dalhousie took from the Nizam the province of Berar in 1853 to defray the expenses of the Hyderabad Contingent. During the revolt of 1857-58, the Nizam rendered valuable services to the British. As the policy of annexation of the Indian States was given up by the British after

the Revolt of 1857-58, the State of Hyderabad was not annexed and continued to exist even when the British left India in 1947.

MYSORE

Next to Hyderabad, the most important power that emerged in South Indian was Mysore under Hyder Ali. The kingdom of Mysore had preserved its precarious independence ever since the end of the Vijayanagar Empire. Early in the 11th century, two ministers Nanjaraj (the Sarvadhikari) and Devraj (the Dulwai) had seized power in Mysore and reduced the King Chikka Krishna Raj to a mere puppet.

Hyder Ali had a humble beginning, but he shot into prominence as a military leader. By dint of his military skill and qualities of leadership, he became the Faujdar of Dindigal in 1755. By misappropriating the revenues of Dindigal, he managed to raise an independent army for himself. In 1761, he overthrew Nanjaraj and established his authority over the Mysore state.

In 1763, he occupied Bednore. With the booty which feel into his hands, he strengthened his financial position. He also conquered Canara. He set up his capital at Seringapatam. He was able to build up a strong war-machine within a short time.

Form the very beginning, the relations of Hyder Ali with the English East India Company were strained. That was due to many causes. In the earlier phase of his career, he had secured valuable help from the French. In 1760, A Portuguese Bishop had promoted an alliance between Hyder Ali and the French. For his help against the British Count Lally had agreed to pay Hyder Ali Rs. 10,000/- per month and also the forts of Thaigur and Elvanasore. After the expulsion of the British, Hyder Ali was expected to get Trichinopoly, Madurai, Tinnevelly etc. The British force under Major More was routed. However, the capture of Villenore by Sir Eyre Coote exercised a demoralising influence on Hyder Ali and weekened his alliance with the French. When Hyder Ali was busy in crushing his opponents in Mysore, the British did much to discredit him. This was resented by Hyder Ali. When Pondicherry surrendered to the British in January 1761, Hyder Ali took about 300 French soldiers in his service. There was also hostility between Hyder Ali and Mohammad Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic. There were many districts in the Carnatic which were claimed both by Hyder Ali and Mohammad Ali. Mohammad Ali allowed British troops to be stationed at Vellore but this was resented by Hyder Ali who took into service Raja Sahib, son of Chanda Sahib and gave protection to Mahfuz Khan, brother and rival of Mohammad Ali.

It is true that after the collapse of French power in Southern India, Hyder Ali tried to patch up with the British but nothing came out of it. The Madras Government encouraged the Nizam to take up arms against Hyder Ali and offered to give necessary military help for that purpose. The Nizam enjoyed the support of the Marathas and thus a triple alliance was formed against Hyder Ali. In November 1767, the Madras Government concluded a treaty with the Nizam by which it agreed to pay him a tribute of Rs. 5 lakhs for the Northern Circars. The Madras Government promised not to acquire Circar of Guntoor so long as Balasat Jang lived. The British promised military help to the Nizam against his enemies. The Madras Government was keen to acquire Carnatic and Balaghat which were help by Hyder Ali and agreed to pay Rs. 7 lakhs to the Nizam for its Diwani. This engagement acknowledged the sovereignty of the Nizam over the

dominions of Hyder Ali. Both the Nizam and the Poona Government was keen to prey upon the territories of Hyder Ali and the British Government agreed to help him.

The British alliance with the Nizam provoked Hyder Ali. the Nizam advanced into Mysore in August 1767. Hyder Ali was able to win over the Marathas by promising them a sum of Rs. 23 lakhs. He also managed to win over the Nizam. The result was that the British were left alone. It is true that they fought well but the opposition of Hyder Ali and his son Tipu was formidable. Tipu was able to reach near Madras itself and plundered its suburbs. The Madras authorities entered into a peace treaty, in April 1769. Bath the parties agreed to give up the territories conquered by them but the fort and district of Kurur parties agreed to give up the territories conquered by them, but the fort and district of Kuru were to be retained by Hyder Ali. There was also a provision for an alliance for mutual aid in case either party was attached by a third power.

In 1770, Mysore was invaded by Peshwa Madhav Rao. The Madras Government was approached for help by Hyder Ali but the same was denied. This was treated by Hyder Ali as a violation of the treaty of 1769. The Bombay Government concluded a treaty with Hyder Ali which gave them trading privileges in Mysore in exchange for guns, salt-petre, lead etc. but the treaty was disapproved by the Court of Directors of English East India Company in 1772. By the treaty of Surat signed in March 1775, the Bombay Government committed itself to support the claims of Raghoba for Peshwaship. The British were to get Salsette and Bessein. Inspite of that, Hyder Ali tried to establish friendly relations with the British and he was bitter when there was no response. He took many Frenchman in service and secured arms and stores from the French. He entered into friendly relations with the Dutch. In August 1778, the British attacked Pondicherry and after is occupation, they sent an expedition against Mahe. Hyder Ali protested as he was getting his military supplies mostly through Mahe. He sent his troops to defend Mahe but inspite of that Mahe was captured by the British in March 1779. That embittered the relations between Hyder Ali and the British. The Nizam was also annoyed with the British who had not paid tribute for the Northern Circars. It was under these circumstances that the Grand Quadruple Alliance consisting of Hyder Ali, the Nizam, the Poona Government and Bhonsla of Nagpur was formed against the British.

Second Mysore War (1780-4)

The Second Mysore War started in 1780 and continued upto 1784. Bhonsla of Nagpur who was the enemy of the Poona Government, was won over by Warren Hastings and he left the alliance. The Nizam also deserted Hyder Ali. The Poona Government also left the alliance. The result was that Hyder Ali had to fight against the British without any help. During the early phase of the war, the war-machine of Hyder Ali was superior to the British army and it carried everything before it. The army of Hyder Ali was so near Madras that many of its residents ran away in panic. The towns of Porto Novo and Conjeevaram were plundered. The armies led by Baille and Fletcher were defeated. Munro, the Commander-in-Chief, retired to Madras and Hyder Ali occupied Arcot-capital of Carnatic. However, Sir Eyre Cootte was able to deal with Hyder Ali effectively at Porto Novo in July 1781. Hyder Ali was forced to recall Tipu who was besieging Wandiwash. The battle of Polldure in August 1781 was a drawn one. Sir Eyre Coote inflicted a crusing defeat on Hyder Ali at Solinger Nagapatnam and Trincomali were captured by the British. Inspite of these reverses, Hyder Ali continued to fight till his death in December 1782.

After the death of Hyder Ali, the war was continued by his son, Sultan Tipu. He successfully wasted Bendor but failed to capture Manglore. The British took the offensive and proceeded towards Seringapatam. As both sides were sick of war, it was ended by the treaty of Mangalore in May 1784. Both the parties agreed to restore the conquests made by them and also liberate the prisoners of war.

Third Mysore War (1790-92)

Very elaborate preparations were made by Lord Cornwallis to fight against Sultan Tipu. He offered very attractive terms to the Marathas. A treaty of alliance was signed in June 1790 with the Peshwa. A similar treaty was made with the Nizam in July 1790. Both of these treaties were defective alliances against Tipu and provided for an equal share of conquests. It is true that Tipu was aware of these happenings and he tried to secure French help but he failed on account of the Revolution in France. He also failed to win over the Nizam and the Peshwa to his side. He appealed to Cornwallis for peace but the same was rejected and the Third Mysore War started which continued from 1790 to 1792.

To begin with things did not go in favour of the British inspite of help from the Marathas and the Nizam. However, when Cornwallis himself took the command, he captured Bangalore and defeated Tipu. In 1792, Cornwallis captured the hill forts of Tipu and advanced upon Seringapatam. The Marathas completely destroyed the Mysore territory. Finding his position hopeless, Tipu asked for peace and the treaty of Seringapatam was signed in March 1792. Tipu had to give up half of his territory. He was to surrender two of his sons as hestages. The British, the Nizam and the Marathas divided the acquired territories.

Fourth Mysore War

Sultan Tipu did not forget his humiliation in 1792 and he made elaborate preparations to fight against the British. He sent his emissaries to Kabul, Constantinople, Arabia and Mauritius. He tried to correspond with Napolcon who was in Egypt at that time. French Generals were engaged to trains his forces. The situation was serious and Lord Wellesley was fully aware of it. He made full preparations to fight against Sultan Tipu. He entered into a subsidiary alliance with the Nizam in September 1798. The Marathas were approached but their reply was evasive.

Lord Wellesley went personally to Madras to direct the political and military arrangements. The Madras army of 20,000 men under General Harris was joined by 16,000 troops from Hyderabad under Arthur Wellesley. General Stuart commanded the Bombay force of more than 6,000 men and it assembled in Malabar. Another large army commanded by Reed and Brown marched from Trichinopoly. Lord Wellesley demanded absolute submission from Sultan Tipu and as he refused to do so, war was declared. The main army was under General Harries and he proceeded towards Mysore. Aruthur Wellesley was incharge of the Nizam's contingent. A force from Bombay marched towards Mysore. The armies carried everything before them and reached Seringapatam. Sultan Tipu refused to accept the humiliating terms offered to him and died fighting at Seringapatam in May 1799. After the war, Lord Wellesely annexed large and important territories which included Kanara, Coimbatore and Seringapatam. Mysore was surrounded on all sides by British territories. The Nizam was given some territories as a reward. Some territories were offered to the Marathas but they refused. A child of the Hindu family which had been turned out by Hyder Ali was placed on the throne of Mysore and Mysore continued to

flourish under the control of the Government of India during the 19th century. The state of Mysore was still there when India became independent in 1947.

THE MARATHAS

The rise of the Marathas started even during the reign of Aurangzeb under the leader-ship of Shivaji. Shivaji was coronated in 1674 and he became the sovereign ruler of Maharashtra. However, he died in 1680 and was succeeded by his son Sambhaji who ruled from 1680 to 1689. He was defeated and captured by Aurangzeb. He was tortured and put to death in March 1689. The leadership of the Marathas was taken over by Raja Ram who continued the crusade against the Mughals for 11 years from 1689 to 1700. After his death, the war against the Mughals was carried on by the Marathas from 1700 to 1707 under the leadership of Tara Bai, his widow.

After the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughals tried to divide the Marathas. In 1707, Zulfikar Khan, the Governor of the Deccan, set Sahu, son of Sambhaji, free and the latter claimed the Government of the Marathas from Tara Bai. When Sahu was released by the Mughals, there started a struggle between the followers of Shau and Tara Bai. Ultimately, Tara Bai was defeated and she retired to Kolhapur with her son Shivaji II. When Shivaji II died, his step-brother Sambhaji was put on the Gaddi of Kolhapur. Sahu was recognised as the ruler of the Marathas on the Gaddi of Satara and he ruled from 1707 to 1749.

Balaji Vishwanath (1713-20)

It was during the reign of Sahu that Balaji Vishwanath came to the forefront and all power in the state fell into his hands. Sahu had a very high opinion of his ability, loyalty and character. In 1713, Balaji Vishwanath was appointed Peshwa and he continued to occupy that position upto 1720 when he died. Balaji Vishwanath won over Kanhoji Angria, he head of the Navy and one of the most powerful barons. He persuaded him to come to Satara to offer his homage to Sahu. When diplomacy failed, Balaji Vishwanath used force and it was through this method that he put down such powerful and defiant barons as Damaji Thorat, Uydaji Chavan and Krishna Rao Khataokar. In this way, Balaji Vishwanath restored order in the Maratha Kingdom and stablised the position of Sahu. He could not uproot the rival house of Kolhapur because during his term of office no serious trouble was created by Sambhaji and the acquisition of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan demanded his serious attention.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, the Marathas had started exacting Chauth and Sardeshmukhi by force. Ultimately, Aurangzeb got tried of war and expressed his readiness to concede the Maratha demand in order to save the six Deccan Subahs from their raids but no settlement could be made because neither side trusted the other. After the death of Aurangzeb when Bahadur Shah, the new Mughal Emperor came to the South to fight against Kam Baksh, the agents of Sahu presented to him a petition from their master praying for the grant of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan Subahs. As a similar petition came from Tara Bai, the Mughal Emperor evaded the demand by saying that the rival claimants should first decided between themselves as to who was the lawful ruler of the Marathas. It left Sahu with no choice except allowing his captains to raid the Deccan Subahs and to collect whatever amount they could by force. These raids forced the Mughal Viceroy Daud Khan Pani to agree to pay Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in 1712, but before this agreement could be put into effect, he was replaced by Nizam-ul-Mulk as Viceroy

of the Deccan in 1713. The Nizam was too proud to submit to the Maratha demand and the same was the case with his successor, Syed Hussain Ali (1715-18). The struggle continued and the Mughals tried to defend the Deccan Subahs against the Maratha incursions. Ultimately, Syed Hussain Ali was forced to come to terms with the Marathas and enlist their support for the overthrow of the Mughal Emperor. A treaty was signed by Syed Hussain Ali whereby the right of Sahu of levy Chauth and Sardeshmuhki was recognised. It directly meant the recognition of Sahu as the lawful ruler of the Marathas by the Mughals. It considerably strengthened his position. In accordance with the terms of the treaty, Balaji Vishwanath accompanied Syed Hussain Ali to Delhi along with 15,000 troops under the command of Senapati Khand Rao Dabdhada. His son, Balaji Rao, also accompanied him, while at Delhi, the Marathas helped the Syed brothers in overthrowing Farruaksiyar. They also saw with their own eyes the rotten state of the Mughal Government. The treaty was ratified in February 1719 by Rafi-ud-Darajat who had succeeded Farrukhsiyar as the Mughal Emperor. The treaty was the crowning achievement of Balaji Vishwanath. Shortly after his return from Delhi, Balaji Vishwanath died and Sahu appointed his son Baji Rao as successor.

About the character and achievements of Balaji Vishwahath, Sir Richard Temple writes that he had a calm, comprehensive and commanding intellect, an imaginative and inspiring disposition, an aptitude for ruling rude nature by moral force, a genius for diplomatic combinations and a master of finance. His political destiny propelled him into affairs wherein his misery must have been acute. He wrung by power of menace and argument from the Mughals a recognition of Maratha sovereignty. He carried victoriously all his diplomatic points and when he died he could have the satisfaction that a Hindu Empire had been created over the ruins of Mohammadan power and of that empire the hereditary chiefship had been secured for his family. The view of Sardesai is that Balaji Vishwanath evinced rare foresight and statesmanship in utilizing all available resources towards completing the task of constructing a Hindu empire which Shivaji had set before himself and which had all but crumbled away during the troubles of the two proceeding reigns. Balaji had to look to the North as his path to the South was permanently closed by the independent kingdom of Tarabai.

Baji Rao I (1720-1740)

Baji Rao I was hardly 20 at the time of his appointment as Peshwa. He was an excellent rider, a bold fighter, a clever tactician and a born leader. Besides, he possessed diplomatic acumen of a high order. The Marathas were fortunate in having such a leader at a time when the Mughal empire was disintegrating. Under the leadership of Baji Rao I, the Marathas also joined in the scrabble for power and were able to extend their influence and control in various directions.

The view of Baji Rao I was that the Mughal empire was rotten to the core and it lacked the strength to resist the Marathas. Therefore, the Marathas should not lose time in launching Northward drive. They could seize power at the center at once and when what was one, the Deccan along with the other provinces would easily pass under their control, Baji Rao is stated to have remarked "Strike, Strike at the trunk of the withering tree; the branches will fall off themselves." Inspite of this, during the first 8 years of his office as Peshwa, the south claimed his first attention and during that period he devoted his whole energy to the conquest of the Carnatic. It was only after the realisation of the fact that the Nizam was ready to defend it at all costs that he concentrated his energies on the conquest of Malwa.

The Provinces of Malwa and Gujarat were situated to the North of the Vindhyas on the borders of the Maratha sphere of influence. The routes to Delhi lay through them. They were also rich and were counted among the most prosperous provinces of the Mughal Empire. After the acquisition of the Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the six Subahs of the Deccan, it was natural for the Marathas to claim the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from Malwa and Gujarat. The argument on the basis of which they got the right of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from the Deccan, also held good in the case of Malwa and Gujarat. When Balaji Vishwanath proceeded to Delhi in 1719, Sahu asked him to submit a petition to the Mughal Emperor for the grant of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of Malwa and Gujarat. However, the petition was rejected by the Mughal Emperor. The result was that Sahu decided to levy these imposts by force. He assigned the work of collecting Chauth and Sardeshmukhi from Gujarat to Senapti Khande Rao Dabhade and from Malwa to the Peshwa. The Senapati entrusted the work to his Lieutenants viz, Kanthaji Kadam Banda and Pilaji Gaekwad, Peshwa Baji Rao I personally invaded Malwa in 1723, defeated and killed Sayyid Bahadur, the Mughal Governor of Malwa, and appointed Ranoji Sindhia, Malhar Rao Holkar and Udaji Pawar in the different parts of Malwa to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. It was in this manner that the Maratha expansion North of the Vindhyas began. However, they had to struggle hard before they could secure a firm hold over these provinces.

Conquest of Gujarat

It is true that after 1723, the Peshwa could not pay much attention to Malwa due to his pre occupation in the South but the internal strife among the Mughals in Gujarat gave the Marathas a chance to fish in troubled waters and establish themselves firmly in that province. Civil war among the Mughals began in 1724 when the Nizam was replaced by Sarbuland Khan as the Subedar of Gujarat. At that time, Hamid Khan, the uncle of the Nizam, was acting as the Deputy of the Nizam in Gujarat. Sarbuland Khan himself stayed at Delhi and sent his deputy Shujat Khan to take charge from Hamid Khan. Hamid Khan also wanted to become the ruler of Gujarat and got the support of the Marathas by conceding them the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi. With the help of Kanthaji, Hamid Khan defeated and killed Shujat Khan and his brother Rustam Ali who came from Surat to avenge him. Sarbuland Khan himself marched to Gujarat and expelled Hamid Khan, but the could not expel the marathas who harried him by their guerilla tactics. In 1727, Sarbuland Khan agreed to pay the Marathas Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in Gujarat. The Mughal Emperor did not approve of this arrangement, recalled Sarbuland Khan and sent Raja Abhay Singh as Governor of Gujarat with orders to turn out the Marathas from Gujarat. Abhay Singh invited Pilaji, treacherously put him to death and occupied Baroda. Damaji, son of Pilaji, renewed the struggle, recovered Baroda and harassed Abhay Singh so much that the latter for Jodhpur without any success. Kanthaji occupied northern Gujarat and Damaji the southern half of the province. Ultimately, Kanthaji was expelled by Damaji who became the sole master of the province of Gujarat.

Malwa

For Malwa, the Peshwa had to fight a hard and prolonged struggle with the Mughals before the right to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi was conceded to him by the Mughal Emperor. In this struggle, he received valuable support from the local Hindu chief. The Hindustani party at the imperial Court headed by Mir bakshi, Khan-i-Dauran and Raja Jai Singh gave him political support against the faction of the foreign nobles who advised the Mughal Emperor to resist the Marathas by force. On account of the dispute with the Nizam over Carnatic,

the Peshwa was not able to give his full attention of Malwa till 1728. As regards Carnatic, the Peshwa wanted to occupy but the Nizam was equally determined to defend it because it formed a part of the Deccan Subah. To begin with, the Nizam tried to undermine the position of Sahu by granting Jagirs to those Maratha officers who turned hostile to their master. The Nizam also entered into a league with Sambhaji, rival to Sahu. In 1727 when the Peshwa was proceeding to Carnatic, the Nizam wrote of Sahu that until his dispute with Sambhaji was settled, he would not pay Chauth and he must accept his mediation in it. Without waiting for his reply, the Nizam invaded the Maratha kingdom and did a lot of destruction. The Peshwa hit back and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Nizam in 1728 at Palkhed. This defeat unnerved the Nizam. He sued for peace and by the treaty of Mungi Shivaon promised to pay Chauth as usual and withdraw his support to Sambhaji.

At this time, disquieting news came to the Peshwa from malwa and Bundelkhand. In Malwa, Girdhar Bahadur the new Mughal Governor, refused to pay Chauth and tried to expel the Lieutenants of the Peshwa from Malwa. In Bundelkhand, Muhammad Khan Bangash, Governor of Allahabad, had invaded the kingdom of Chhatrasal and besieged him. Its fall was imminent and Chhatrasal asked for help from the Peshwa. The Peshwa himself proceeded to Bundhelkhand and despatched a division of his army under the command of his brother Chinnaji Appa to Malwa to deal with Girdhar Bahadur. Both the expeditions were crowned with success. In Bundhelkhand, the Peshwa forced Muhammad Khan Bangash to raise the siege of Jaipur and give a solemn undertaking that he would not interfere in Bundhelkhand again. Chhatrasal treated the Peshwa as his own son gave him one third of his kingdom in the form of Jagir. In Malwa, Chinnaji defeated and killed both Girdhar Bahadur and his nephew Daya Bahadur in the battle of Amjhera in 1729. Bhawani Ram, the son of Girdhar Bahadur, took refuge behind walls of Ujjain which was the capital of Malwa. The Marathas could not capture it on account of want to artillery.

Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur was sent as Governor to Malwa by the Mughal Emperor in 1723. He was a friend of the Peshwa and his aim was to keep Malwa for himself and to induce the Mughal Emperor to accept Maratha protection. They were to be given Jagirs elsewhere for the expenses of their army. Shau agreed to accept his Jagir in lieu of the Chauth of Malwa but the arrangement was rejected by the Mughal Emperor under the influence of the foreign nobles at the Imperial Court. The war continued. Muhammad Khan Bangash was sent to replace Jai Singh in Malwa in 1731. At this time, there was some trouble in Gujarat where the Peshwa wanted to assert his authority as the Chief Executive of the Maratha Empire but it was resented by Senapati and he turned against the Peshwa. The Nizam, Muhammad Khan Bangash and the Senapati combined against the Peshwa, but before the Nizam could send help of Gujarat, Peshwa Baji Rao pounced upon Senapati Trimbak Rao Dabhade and defeated and killed him in the-battle of Dabhai in 1731. On hearing the news, the Nizam also opened negotiations with the Peshwa and gave a pledge not to attack the kingdom of Sahu when the latter invaded Malwa. Muhammad Khan Bangash was replaced by Jai Singh in Malwa.

Sawai Jai Singh was a friend of the Marathas and wanted to use them as counterpoise to the foreign faction in the Imperial Court. However, he could not expel the Marathas from Malwa even if he tried to do so. After making a show of resistance and suffering a defeat at Mandsore, he finally withdrew to Jaipur in 1733. It exposed Rajasthan and the Doab to the Maratha incursions. Between 1733 and 1735, the Imperial forces were sent to drive out the Marathas but

they failed miserably in their objective. Jai Singh was allowed to open negotiations with the Peshwa in 1736. The negotiations failed because the Peshwa demanded a war indemnity of Rs. 50 lakhs, control over Mathura, Prayag and Kashi and the office of Sardeshpandya in South in addition to Malwa.

The struggle was revived and a large army was sent to the Doab to defend it against the Marathas. Saadat Khan, the Subahdar of Avadh, was also invited to cooperate. To begin with, the Marathas were defeated. However, the Peshwa put himself at the head of the army and suddenly appeared before Delhi. He defeated a small army sent against him and withdrew to Jaipur. The raid to the Peshwa on Delhi in 1737 served only to stiffen the Imperial resistance. Muhammad Shah pardoned the Nizam and invited him to head the imperial army against the Peshwa. The Nizam accepted the invitation. With a large army and best artillery that could be secured, the Nizam marched towards the South to surrounded and destroy the Marathas by putting them between himself and his son Nasir Jang who was ordered to make a simultaneous movement towards the north. The Peshwa outmanouvred him. Leaving his brother Chinnaji to check the advance of Nasir Jang from the south, he himself marched northwards to deal with the Nizam. The Peshwa drove the Nizam into Bhopal and cut off his supply. The Nizam sued for peace in 1738 and by the convention of Dorcha Sarai promised to secure the cession of Malwa from the Mughal Emperor. However, the Nizam broke his promise as soon as he reached Delhi. Malwa was formally ceded to the Marathas in 1741.

Westward Expansion

Under Baji Rao, the Marathas strengthened their position on the west coast and humbled there enemies viz, the Sidis of Janjira and the Portuguese. War against the Sidis was started in 1733 to avenge the insult to the temple of Parashwarn built by Brahmendra Swame Sahu whom the Peshwa regarded as their spiritual guide. Sidi Sat who had desecrated was killed and Raigarh and a large part of the Maratha territory in Konkan recovered from the Sidis. The Marathas failed to capture Janjira, the capital of the Sidis, on account of their naval weakness. They were not able to attack Goa but they were able to get Salsette and a Bassein from the Portuguese. The capture of Salsette was the crowning achievement of Baji Rao as Peshwa. He died in 1740 and was succeeded by his son Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao.

Baji Rao was a great general and soldier. He possessed indomitable courage and extraordinary personal bravery. He was incomparable as a soldier. No amount of hardship or fatigue was too much for his iron constitution. In guerilla warfare, he had no equal. He was next only to Shivaji. The way he humbled the pride of Nizam-ul-Mulk shows his ability. He inspired his followers with confidence and commanded their loyalty. He led them from victory to victory. His mobility and brillant tratics were responsible for his success. His originality of plan, boldness of execution and an eye for strategy show that he was a great commander. He stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries in Maharashtra. He had the head to plan and the hand to execute. The view of Sardesai is that the 20 years of the active career of Baji Rao withnessed a complete revolution in the character of the Maratha state and an entire redistribution of political power throughout India. When he died in 1740, the political centre of gravity shifted from the Court of Delhi to that of Sahu. The map of India was dotted with numerous centres of Marathas power. Baji Rao became the creator of Maharashtra.

According to H.G. Rawilnson, "He was the most remarkable man next to Shivaji himself that his nation had produced. In the words of the historian of the Marathas, his was 'the head

to plan and the hand to execute.' Tall and Commanding in appearance he was like all his family, famous for his good looks. He was equally great as a soldier and as a statesman. He understood to perfection the peculiar tactics of the Marathas horse, and his campaigns against the Nizam were masterpieces of strategy. He was as chivalrous in the hour of victory as he was brave in the field. A politician he had the lofty and far-reaching ambitions of his father, and he lived to see the tiny maratha race once" a cloud no bigger than a man's hand', spread all over India, from Delhi to Tanjore. He was an eloquent and inspiring orator, and it in private life he had something of the haughty and imperious reserve of the Chitpavan ; he was a generous master to those who served him faithfully," (Cambridge History of India, Vol. IV, p. 407).

However, Dr. Sinha observe, "Despites his great talents as a soldier and a leader of men, Baji Rao lacked some of the sterling qualities of a statesman. He was domineering in his attitude towards others and overbearing in his manners. He was a soldier to the core, and could never bear opposition. Fortunately, he possessed resourcefulness in plenty, and, therefore he could bear down all opposition. It is said that he had the head to plan and the hand to execute. True, but too much masterfulness cuts at the root of statesmanship. A little elasticity of temper adds salt to statecraft. Hence Baji Rao made many enemies in his lifetime, and left as many behind. He did not know how to conciliate. He knew how to domineer. But domination even when dictated by absolutely selfless or disinterested motives antagnoises people more often than we suppose; and Baji Rao's domination was not disinterested. There is no gainsaying the fact that he was deeply imbued with a love of self-glory though he was also deeply loyal to his chief Sahu and to the cause of his country. He firmly believed that all he did, was for the good of Maharasthra and that his lead was not only desirable but indispensable. Naturally he gave offence to many by such an attitude as this. At the beginning of his regime he met with much opposition, and as he succeeded in overcoming it step by step, he gained greater and grater self-confidence. His brilliant victories made him a terror to his enemies and a trust-worthy friend to Sahu. His attitude towards the Maratha Confederacy was Stein and unrelenting. He wanted that its members should work in harmony, under the guidance of the peshwas. He would not let them go there own way, and would not brook any other's authority than his own. Thus actuated he incurred the jealousy and hostility of many of the prominent members of the Confederacy. The Pratinidhi, Dabhade, Raghoji Bhonsla, Fatteh Singh Bhonsla, and Angre all these nourished a jealousy against Baji Rao because he was both ambitious and domineering. He tried to suppress the same faults ir others, and therefore, incurred the implacable hostility of others. Had he been a little more conciliating and considerate, he would have won over many of those who became his avowed enemies" (Rise of Peshwas, pp. 202-3).

Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761)

During the regime of Balaji Baji Rao, the political situation in the country became more favourable to the Marathas than before. The prestige of the Mughal Empire was completely gone after the invasion of India by Nadir Shah in 1739. The Provincial Governors and the Princes were divided among themselves and were not able to put up joint resistance to the Marathas. In the Deccan, Nizam-ul-Mulk passed away in 1748. Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor, also died in the same year. Swai Ji Singh had died in 1743. Their successors were weak and that was an additional advantage to the Marathas. They could expand in all directions.

One of the leading Maratha chiefs during this period was Raghuji Bhonsle who ruled over a part of the Berar and Gondwana from his capital at Nagpur. He claimed equality with the

Peshwa on account of being related to Chhattrapati Sahu. Sahu had assigned to him the Chauth of Bengal in 1738. He could not start operations in that province till 1741. During 1740-41, he was sent on an expedition to the Carnatic. In 1740, the Nizam was away in Delhi. The Marathas took advantage of it to seize the Carnatic. Sahu ordered Raghuji Bhonsle to invade the Carnatic. he defeated Nawab Dost Ali, the Governor, occupied Trichinopoly and captured Dost Ali's son-in-law Chandar Sahib who was trying to seize the Maratha kingdom of Tanjore. Raghuji Bhonsle invaded Bengal in 1741. In the end, Ali Vardi Khan accepted defeat and purchased peace by the ceding the territory upto the river Subarna-Rekha and promised to pay Rs. 12 lakhs annually in lieu of Chauth of Bengal and Bihar.

While Rajhuji Bhonsle was plundering Bengal, the Peshwa was engaged in a struggle with the Nizam in the South. The quarrel had been renewed in 1741 when the Marathas invaded the Carnatic. In 1743, the Nizam drove them out of Trichinopoly and other places which they had occupied during that expedition. The Marathas could not retaliate immediately as the Peshwa was busy in the north. In the intervening period, Salabat Jang became the Nizam in Hyderabad under French protection. The Peshwa was alarmed. To begin with, he could not achieve much success on account of powerful artillery of Bussy. However, in the end guerrilla tactics of the Marathas succeded. In 1752, Bussy induced the Nizam conclude peace by ceding territory in West Berar between the Narbada and the Tapti rivers. That did not satisfy the Peshwa. In 1760, the Nizam was defeated at Udgir and by the treaty of peace, he ceded almost half the territory to the Marathas.

During the period, the Marathas were making progress in the North, Chauth was imposed on the Rajput states. Jahansi was occupied. In 1754, the Marathas helped Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk in deposing and killing Emperor Ahemd Shah (1748-1754) and setting up Alamgir II on the throne as a puppet. Imad-ul-Mulk accepted Maratha protection and gave them Jagirs in the Doab for the expenses of a small force which they agreed to post in the neighbourhood of Delhi for the defence of the Mughal Emperor. As the guardians of the Mughal Empire, the Marahathas came into conflict with the Afghans. In 1758, Raghundath Rao, the brother of the Peshwa, drove out Najib ud daulah from Delhi. He had been posted by Ahmed Shah Abdali as his agent to manage the affairs. Raghunath Rao drove out Tirmur Shah, son of Ahmed Shah Abdail, who had been appointed as the Governor of the Punjab. This happened in 1758. During this expedition, the Marathas proceeded as far as Attack.

By 1760, the Marathas power had reached its zenith. However, their control over Delhi and occupation of the Punjab brought them into conflict with Ahmed Shah Abdail and his Rohilla allies. Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded India in 1750, recovered the Punjab and Delhi and waited in the Doab to fight the maratha army which was under the nominal command of Vishwas Rao, the son of the Peshwa and the effective command of his cousin Sadashiv Rao Bhau. The Third Battle of Panipat was fought on 14 January 1761 between the Marathas and Ahmed Shah Abdali in which the Marathas were defeated. This defeat proved disastrous to the Marathas. The flower of their race perished in that battle and their enemies raised their heads in all directions. The Marathas managed to overcome the crisis caused by the defeat and after a decade recovered their control over Delhi. However, by that time a new power came on the scene and that power they could not defeat. That power was the English East India Company. The Marathas fought three wars against the English Company and lost all of them. The first maratha War lasted from 1778

to 1782 and was ended by the threaty of Salbai in 1782. The Second Maratha War was fought from 1802 to 1804. The third maratha War was fought from 1817 to 1818. The net result of these wars was that the Marathas as a power disappeared from the scene. However, some remnants of the former Maratha state continued their existence during the British rule. (For details see next Lesson)

THE PUNJAB

Guru Nanak was the founder of Skihism. He was merely a spiritual leader and had nothing to do with politics. He died in 1539 and was succeeded by Guru Angad (1539-155), Guru Amar Das (1552-1574), Guru Ram Dass (1564-1581), Guru Arjan Dev (1581-160), Guru Hargovind (1606-1645), Guru Har Rai (1645-1661). Guru Harkishan (1661-1664), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1664-1675) and Guru Gobind Singh (1675-1708). The third and fourth Gurus made important contributions to the organisation of the Sikh Church. Under Guru Arjan Dev, Sikhism spread readily in the rural areas of the Punjab and the number of Sikhs went up tremendously. His greatest contribution was the compilation of the Adi Granth, Guru Das Dev was arrested and executed under the orders of Emperor Jahangir in 1606. Guru Hargobind put on two swords, one standing for the *piri* (religious side) and the other for the *Miri* (temporal side). He inculcated among his followers the love of manly supports such as hunting and wrestling, weapons of war and military training. He also raised a small force of horsemen and other combatants. Hence-forward, militarism came to occupy an important place in the Sikh way of life. That led to many armed clashes between the Sikhs and Emperor Shahjahan. Guru Har Rai continued to maintain a body of troops but had no conflict with the Mughal Government. Aurangzeb began to interfere in Sikh religion. Its culmination was reached when Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in 1675. Guru Govind Singh came to the Gaddi at a very critical time. The Mughal Government was hostile towards the Sikhs and was determined to strike them down. Guru Govind Singh succeeded in imparting new vigour and strength in the Sikh community. He called the Khalsa *Singhs* meaning lions and brought them in line with the ancient heroic traditions of the Rajputs and the Kshatriyas. he inculcated in them the belief that they were the warriors of God, under his special protection fighting for his cause. Their fight was a *Dharmyudh*, a war of righteousness. He introduced regular military training among his followers. He built forts for the protection of his headquarters at Anandpur. He raised weapons of war to the position of deities, worthy of worship.

Guru Govind Singh died in the Deccan in 1708. By that time, the Sikhs had grown into a powerful and well-knit community. They had developed certain specific institutions., They had built up some rallying centres. They had evolved the order of the Khasla with a clear-cut code of discipline. They had got a highly inspiring ideology which shaped their impulses and channelized their newly released energies.

Before his death in 1708 in the Deccan, Guru Gobind Singh had sent Banda Bahadur with a few of his devoted Sikhs to the Punjab to take advantage of the vacuum created in the North by the withdrawal of the Mughal Emperor and his army from there to Deccan and to pensatise Wazir Khan to Sirhind and other oppressors of the Sikhs. Banda Bhadur and his companions achieved great success in their mission. They captured a vast area in East Punjab, including the towns of Samana, Sarhind and Sadhaura and set up first independent Khalsa state with its capital

at Mukhlispur (renamed as Lohgarh) in the neighborhood of Jagadhari. The seal of the new state bore a Persian inscription invoking the greatness of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nank. The English translation of the Persian inscription struck on the coins reads as follows :

"By the grace of the True Lord is struck the coin in the two words: The Sword of Nanak is the granter of all boons and the Victory is of Govind Singh, King of Kings."

The victory of the Khalsa alarmed the Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah (1707-1712) who personally led an expedition against the Sikhs. Banda Bahadur offered stiff resistance but finding his cause lost, he retired to the Shivalik hills to bid his time for a fresh bid for power. The death of Bahadur Shah in 1712 gave him the desired opportunity which he-exploited to the best of his ability. He re-emerged into the plains of East Punjab and succeeded in re-establishing a Khalsa state. However, when the Mughal Emperor took action against him he was driven out of his capital and later on at Gurdasangal (near Gurdasnpur), he was overtaken and besieged along with his whole army. The siege lasted for about 9 months and ultimately he was captured along with hundreds of his companions and marched to Delhi where they were all executed. Banda himself was hacked to pieces, limb by limb. About Banda, Dr. Ganda Singh writes, "It was through him that the path of conquest and freedom was discovered by the people of the Punjab. He was first man to deal a severe blow at the intolerant rule of the Mughals in the Punjab.

After the death of Banda, there was a division among the Sikhs who were divided into two parts knows as the Bandais and the Tat Khalsa. The former were the followers of Banda and the latter were the orthodox Sikhs. Through the efforts of Bhai Mani Singh and Mata Sundri, the widow of Guru Gobind Singh, the differences between the two were composed in 1721.

Zakariay Khan was the Mughal Governor of the Punjab from 1726 to 1745. He followed a policy of harassing and persecuting the Sikhs in every possible way. The Singh Van and his 21 followers were killed by the Mughal troops. The Mughal Governor appealed to Muslim fanaticism and the Haidri flag was hoisted. However, the Sikhs were able to defeat the Mughal forces at a place near Bhilowal. After that, Zakariya Khan tried to placate the Sikhs but the latter organised themselves into the Dal Khalsa. There were two main divisions of the Dal Khalsa known as the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal. The Budha Dal consisted of the army of the young. Both the Dals worked under the common leadership of Nawab Kapur Singh. The members of the Taruna Dal were a source of nuisance to the Mughal forces. They overran the whole of the Bari Doab and some of them crossed the Sutlaj and helped Ala Singh to set up a small state in Malwa.

In 1739, the Sikhs fell upon the rear of the army of Nadir Shah when he was retreating from Delhi along with his booty. They were able to snatch away a lot of booty from the Afghans. The result was that Zakariya Khan decided to destroy the Sikhs root and branch. Prizes were offered to those who helped him in his work. The Sikhs were hunted like wild beasts and they retired to the hills and jungles. In 1742, Haqiqat Rai was put on death. Mahtab Singh, Buta Singh and Bhai Taru Singh were executed. The Sikhs also hit back. They attacked Sialkot and murdered all those Qazis and Mullahs who had a hand in the execution of Haqiqut Rai. The plundered Gondlandwala and its Faujder was killed. However, they were defeated near Basoli hills and about 7000 of them were killed and 3000 were taken prisoners. This is know as the first Ghalughara (Great Holocaust). This happened in 1746.

There was a civil war in the Punjab in 1746-47 and ultimately Shah Nawab Khan became the Governor of the Punjab. He was succeeded soon after by Mir Mannu as Governor of the Punjab. He also followed a policy of persecuting the Sikhs. However, inspite of all these sufferings, the Sikhs remained unsubdued. The greater the persecution, the greater became their fanaticism. The common danger and their strong religious feelings kept them under discipline and made every Sikh obey his leader in order to work for the cause of the Panth". Since all of them were suffering, they all joined hands against the Muslim rulers. There were also prospects of getting money if the Muslims were turned out from the Punjab.

After the death of Mannu in 1753, Mughlani Begum, his widow, captured all power in the Punjab. There was complete chaos in the Punjab. She was imprisoned and Adina Beg was appointed the Governor of the Punjab. He made an alliance with the Sikhs and invited the Marathas, but he was killed in 1758.

Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked India many times. In 1761, he defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat. However, when he was going back, he was harassed by the Sikhs. The Sikhs also gave a lot of trouble to the Afghan Faujdar. They won a victory at Gujranwala and occupied Lahore. Ahmed Saha Abdali came back in 1762 and inflicted a curshing defeat on the Sikhs. He ordered wholesale massacre of the Sikhs and that is know as the second Ghalughara in the Sikh history. The Hari Mandir (Amritsar) was destroyed. However, the Sikhs regained their prestige by defeating Ahmed Shah Abdali in the battle of Amritsar and the latter was obliged to run away. Ahmed Shah Abdali attacked the Punjab 1764 to teach a lesson to Sikhs, but they ran away to the hills and jungles and hence no harm was done to them. Ahmed Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab again in 1766-67, but the Sikhs were not curshed.

It is worthy of notice that the frequent invasions of Ahmed, Shah Abdali added to the confusion and anarchy in the Punjab and thus paved the way for rise of the Sikhs in the Punjab. Another effect of the invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali was that the Punjabis became warlike. They learnt to take up arms to defend their hearths and homes.

At this time, 12 Misls came into existence. Their names were Faizalpuria on Singhpuria Misl. Ahluwalia Misl, Bhangi Misl. Ramgarhia Misl, Kanheyie Misl, Sukarchakya Misl, Phulkian Misl, Dallewalia Misl, Nishawalia Misl, Karosingha Misl, Shahids' Misl or Nihangs' Mils and the Nakai Misl, Cunningham, author of History of the Sikhs, described Misls as having the nature "of a theocratic confederacy which was democratic in composition and religious in its cohesive principles". The view of Ibbetson is that the organisation of the Sikhs Misl was "a curious mixture of theocracy, democracy and absolutism." It is difficult to calculate the exact fighting strength of the Sikh Misls. It is generally believed that their total strength was about one lakh. The background of the armies of the Misls was the cavalry. There was no regular training for the soldiers and the weapons commonly used by them were swords, spears, matchbloks, sabres etc. The soldiers of the Misls believed more in guerilla warfare than in pitched battles. Most of the Mists were annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and some of them accepted the protection of the English East India Company.

It was under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that the Sikhs were able to establish a strong state in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh was born in 1780. At the age of 19, he helped Zaman Shah, the Afghan ruler of Kabul, in invading the Punjab. Out of gratitude, Zaman Shah appointed Ranjit Singh as the Governor of Lahore in 1799. He was given the title of Raja. In 1802, he made

himself the master of Amritsar. By and by, he brought under his control the Sikh Misls west of the Sutlej.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh was forced to sign the treaty of Amritsar in 1809 by the English East India Company. This treaty fixed river Sutlej as the boundary line between the territories of Ranjit Singh and that of the English Company. It is true that as a result of this treaty, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not able to bring under his control the Sikh states beyond the Sutlej, but he got free hand to expand in the rest of the Punjab and also outside. He died in 1839. At the time of his death, his kingdom included besides the Punjab plains to the north to Sutlej. Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu, Kohat, Peshawar, Hazara, Kashmir, Ladakh, Jammu, Kohistan and some territories of the cis Sutlej region.

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, there was no stability in Punjab. After defeating the Sikhs in the first Sikh War (1845-46) and the second Sikhs War (1848-1849), the Punjab was annexed by Lord Dalhousie in March 1849.

LESSON 5

BRITISH EXPANSION IN INDIA UP TO 1818 AND FROM 1818 TO 1956

The English East India Company was established on 31 December 1600. Queen Elizabeth granted a charter to the governor and Company of Merchants of London for trading in the East Indies. In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe was sent to the court of Jahangir by James 1, King of England, to secure trading concessions for the English Company from the Mughal Emperor. In 1622, the English Company captured Ormuz from the Portuguese with the help of the King of Iran. The English also set up their trading stations at Aramgaon and Masulipatam. The site of Madras was bought by the English Company in 1640. Permission was obtained to set up a fortified factory called St. George. In 1633, factories were set up at Balasore and Hariharpore. In 1651, a factory was set up at Hugli. In 1661 the English Company got the Island of Bombay from Charles II at a nominal rent of £ 10 a year.

In 1714, the Presidencies of Culcutta, Madras and Bombay sent a combined mission to the Court of Emperor Farrukhsiyar under John Surman. With the help of William Hamilton who had cured the emperor of a disease, John Surman, was able to get three Firmans in July 1717. By those firmans, the right of the English Company to trade duty free in Bengal in lieu of an annual payment of Rs. 3,000 was confirmed. The English Company was also allowed to settle wherever it pleased and to rent additional territories round Calcutta. In the case of Hyderabad, the English Company was allowed freedom from all dues except the rent paid for Madras. In the Province of Gujarat, a yearly sum of Rs.10,000 was accepted in satisfaction of all customs dues at Surat. The rupee coined by the English Company at Bombay was made current throughout the Mughal Empire.

Anglo-French Conflict in the Deccan

The English East India Company had to fight against the French East India Company in the Deccan. Three Carnatic Wars were fought between the English Company and the French Company and as a result of those wars, the English Company came out victorious and the French power was completely eliminated in the Deccan.

The first Carnatic War (1746-48) was merely an echo of the War of Austrian Succession which broke out in Europe in connection with the succession of Maria Theresa to the throne of Austria-Hungary. Despite the wishes and instructions of the Home authorities, hostilities broke out in India in 1746. The English Navy under Barnett took the offensive when it captured some French ships. Dupleix, the French Governor of Pondicherry, sent an urgent appeal to La Bourdonnais, the French Governor of Mauritius, for help. La Bourdonnais fought his way towards the Coromandel Coast, defeating an English fleet on the way. Madras was besieged by the French, both by land and sea. On 21 September 1746, Madras capitulated to the French. Inspite of strong protests of Dupleix, La Bourdonnais who had been heavily bribed by the

English, restored Madras to the English. However, Dupleix did not despair and re-captured Madras. He also tried to capture Fort St. David, a small English factory north of Pondicherry but he was not successful. An English squadron under Boscawen was equally unsuccessful in the siege of Pondicherry during June-October 1748. The first Carnatic War came to an end with the termination of hostilities in Europe. Under the treaty of Aix-La Chapelle signed in 1748, Madras was restored to the English in exchange for Louisburg which the French got in North America. Thus the first round of struggle between the two Companies proved a drawn one.

The second Carnatic War lasted from 1749 to 1754. Dupleix tried to take advantage of disputed successions in Hyderabad and the Carnatic. He supported the candidature of Muzaffar Jang, a grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk, for the Subahadari of the Deccan and that of Chanda Sahib for the Nawabship of the Carnatic. The combined armies of Muzaffar Jang, Chanda Sahib and the French defeated and killed Anwar-ud-din in the battle of Aubur in August 1749 and Nasir Jang was over powered and killed in the encounter of December 1750. Eliminating the rivals, the french candidates were successful both in Carnatic and Hyderabad. Muzaffar Jang surrendered important territories to the French and appointed Dupleix Governor of all Mughal territories south of the river Krishna. The Subahadar was prevailed upon to accept a French force at Hyderabad ostensibly for the defence of the new Subahadar but really to defend French interests there.

These happenings compromised the English position in the Deccan who decided to support rival candidates both for Hyderabad and the Carnatic. They gave military aid to Mohammad Ali, the rival candidate for the Nawabship of Carnatic who was besieged at Trichinopoly by Chanda Sahib. In August 1751, Robert Clive captured Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic. The English commander, Stringer Lawrence, relieved Trichinopoly. In the same year, a French force under Law surrendered before the English. Chanda Sahib was killed by the Raja of Tanjore and the English candidate Mohammad Ali became the Nawab of Carnatic. However, the French remained established at Hyderabad. In 1754, Dupleix was called back by the French Government and in January 1755, a provisional peace treaty was signed between the two companies in India. Thus, the second round of the conflict proved inconclusive.

The third Carnatic War lasted from 1758 to 1763. It was also an echo of the struggle between the French and English in Europe. Count Lally reached India and captured Fort St. David. He also besieged Madras but the appearance of a strong English Naval force compelled Count Lally to give up the siege. The English fleet defeated the French fleet thrice and compelled it to retire from the Indian waters. The English control of the sea left the field open for them and their final victory was longer in doubt. The French were defeated in the battle of Wandiwash in 1760 and Pondicherry surrendered in 1761. Mahe and Jinji were lost by the French in quick succession. The third and final round of the conflict in the Deccan between the English and the French proved decisive. Pondicherry and some other French settlements were returned to the French by the treaty of Paris in 1763 but they were not to be fortified. The French ceased to be a political factor in India.

Establishment of British Power In Bengal (1756-1772)

Ali Vardi Khan who had become the Nawab of Bengal in 1740, died in 1756. He was succeeded by Siraj-ud-daulah as the Nawab of Bengal. He was a youngman of 24. Age was not only self-willed but also self-indulgent. Very soon, he came into conflict with the English in

Bengal. In anticipation of the out-break of the Seven Years War, the English in Bengal began to fortify their settlements. This they did without the permission of the Nawab and hence the Nawab ordered them to demolish the same. As the English refused to do so, that provided a ground of complaint. Moreover, the English took up the cause of Shaukat Jang who was a rival of Siraj-ud-daulah. The English also gave shelter to a rich merchant of Bengal and refused to hand him over to the Nawab even when the latter made a demand to that effect. It was also found that the English in Bengal were abusing the trade privileges given to them by the Mughal Emperor, Siraj-ud-daulah captured the English factory at Qasim Bazar and also took possession of the city of Calcutta. 146 persons including one woman, were captured and shut up in a very small room at night. The heat was so great and the space was so small that 123 of them died on account of suffocation ; Only 23 of them survived and one of them was Holwell. This incident is known as the Blackhole Tragedy.

The Englishmen were indignant. Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive were sent to Bengal to have revenge. They were able to capture Bengal without much difficulty. Siraj-ud-daulah attacked Calcutta and there was an indecisive battle. However, peace was restored and the English got back all their privileges. They were also allowed to fortify Calcutta. The Englishmen were not satisfied with this. A conspiracy was hatched against the Nawab. 'Rai Durlab, the Treasurer of the Nawab, Mir Jafar' the Commander-in chief of the force of the Nawab and Jagat Seth, the richest banker of Bengal, joined the conspiracy. Details were settled through Amin Chand. It was decided that Clive was to march to Plassey. Mir Jafar was to desert the Nawab and join Clive with all the forces under his command. The Nawab was to be deposed and Mir Jafar was to be put on the throne of Bengal. When the details were settled, Amin Chand threatened to give out the whole conspiracy unless he was given a sum of Rs 30 lakhs and he wanted that amount to be mentioned in the treaty itself. Clive decided to deal with Amin Chand in the way he deserved. He got two copies of the treaty prepared. One treaty was on white paper and the other on red paper. In the treaty on white paper, there was no mention of the payment of Rs. 30 lakhs to Amin Chand. There was a mention of that amount in the treaty on red paper. Admiral Watson refused to sign on the false treaty and Clive himself forged the signatures of Watson on it. It was in this way that Amin Chand was duped.

When everything was ready, Clive complained to the Nawab about the grievances of the Englishmen in Bengal and marched toward Plassey at the head of an army. Thy battle of Plassey took place on 23 June 1757. It is pointed out that the battle of Plassey was a battle only in name because the Englishmen lost 29 men in all and the Nawab about 500 in all. The major part of the army of Nawab did not take part in the fighting. Only a small group of the soldiers of Nawab led by Mir Madan and Mohan Lal fought bravely in the battle. The Nawab ran away from the battle-field but was captured and put to death.

Mir Jafar was put on the throne of Bengal and he occupied that throne upto 1760. The English Company got the right of free trade in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. It also got the Zamindari of 24 parganas near Calcutta. The Nawab was forced to pay Rs. 17,700,000 as compensation for the attack on Calcutta. He was also made to pay large sums of money as presents or bribes to the high officials of English Company. Clive himself got more than two million rupees and Watson one million rupees. It is estimated that both the English Company and its servants collected more that 20 million rupees from Mir Jafar. It was understood that the English merchants and officials would not be asked to pay taxes on their private trade.

Very great importance is given to the battle of Plassey in the history of Modern India. It is pointed out that this victory paved the way for the British mastery of Bengal and ultimately the whole of India. With their base in Bengal, the English were able to extend their conquests to the whole of Northern India. British prestige rose very high in India. The vast resources of Bengal helped the British to organise a strong army and with its help conquer the rest of the country. The victory of Plassey enabled the English Company and its servants to acquire a lot of wealth at the cost of the helpless people of Bengal. In the words of Watson, the battle of Plassey was of "extra-ordinary importance not only to the Company but to the British nation in general". This battle demonstrated the utterly corrupt political life in Bengal.

Mir Jafar (1757-1760)

Mir Jafar was the Nawab of Bengal from 1757 to 1760. He was neither brilliant nor active and had not the capacity to carry on the administration of Bengal. Throughout the period, he was merely a figure-head and the real power was in the hands of Clive. He was surrounded by difficulties on all sides. He had no money in the treasury. He had not enough money to meet even his previous commitments. The English Company agreed that one-half of the amount should be paid by 31 October 1757 and the "remainder to be paid within the compass of three years by equal payment every six months." The members of the Calcutta Council got huge amounts. Mir Jafar was so worried by the problem of finance that he had no money to pay even his own soldiers and some of them mutinied. He expressed his inability to pay the instalments to the English Company. Mir Jafar had to meet the danger from the Dutch who were jealous of British influence in Bengal. In 1759, six or seven dutch vessels with 300 European and 600 Malayan soldiers appeared in the Ganges. They were defeated at Bidderra by Colonel Forde, and their vessels were captured. After the battle of Bidderra, the Duch were not able to make any headway in India. Their existence in India was dependent on the goodwill of the English.

The treasury of Mir Jafar was empty and he had no money to pay either to the English Company or bribes to the servants of the Company. The result was that in October 1760, Mir Jafar was forced to abdicate in favour of his son-in-law, Mir Kasim.

Mir Kasim (1760-1763)

Mir Kasim made a good beginning. He suppressed the rebellious Zamindars of Bengal and Bihar, forced the old officers to give up the money they had mis-appropriated, levied some Abwabs or additional cesses, tried to organise his army on the European model made arrangements for the manufacture of fire -locks and guns at Monghyr and transferred his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr. After shifting his capital, he seriously took up the subject of private inland trade of the servants of the English Company. The servants of the English Company were doing havoc. They oppressed and ill-treated the officials of the Nawab and the poor people of Bengal. They forced the Indian officials and Zamindars to give them presents and bribes and compelled the Indian artisans, peasants, and merchants to sell their goods cheap and to buy dear from them. Those who refused to do so were flogged or imprisoned. These years have been described as "the period of open and unashamed plunder". The fact is that prosperity of Bengal was destroyed.

What Mir Kasim did was that he abolished all duties on internal trade and gave his own subjects the same concessions which the Englishmen were already enjoying through sheer force.

This was too much for the Englishmen to tolerate and they demanded the re-imposition of duties on Indian traders. Mir Kasim believed that he was an independent ruler but the Englishmen wanted him to act as a mere puppet in their hands as they alone had put him on the throne. This was bound to result in a clash between Mir. Kasim and the English Company. In June 1763, Major Adams was sent to fight against Mir Kasim. Many battles were fought with the troops of the Nawab and most important of them were those at Katwah, Giria, Suti and Udaynala. Mir Kasim fled to Avadh where he formed an alliance with Shuja-ud-daulah the Nawab of Avadh, and Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor. The combined armies of Mir Kasim, Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah were defeated at Buxar on 22 October 1764. It was one of the most decisive battles of Indian History and demonstrated the superiority of English arms over the Indian rulers. It established the control of the British over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and placed Avadh at their mercy. The view of Sir J.M. Stephen is that the battle of Buxar deserves far more credit than the battle of Plassey as the origin of the British power in India. It was a fiercely contested battle in which the English lost 847 men and they killed about 2000 men of the enemy. It was not merely the Nawab of Bengal but also the Mughal Emperor and his titular Prime Minister, Nawab Wazir of Avadh, who were defeated. If the battle of Plassey enabled the English Company to put a puppet on the throne of Bengal, the battle of Buxar did much more. It gave the English an opportunity to bring under their control the North-Western frontier of the Subah. Ramsay Muir writes, "Buxar finally riveted the shackles of Company's rule upon Bengal".

After the overthrow of Mir Kasim, Mir Jafar was made the Nawab of Bengal for the second time and he occupied that position from July 1763 to February 1765. When he died in 1765, the Calcutta Council put his second son named Nijam-ud-daulah on the throne of Bengal. All power passed into the hands of English Company. Clive set up the Dual Government in Bengal by which all real power came into the hands of the English Company although the authority was nominally exercised in the name of the Nawab. The Dual Government was abolished in 1772 and thus the British became the complete masters of Bengal.

The Marathas

The Marathas were the most formidable rivals of the English Company in India. On the ruins of the Mughal empire, the Marathas built up their Empire in India. For some time, the Marathas and the English operated in their spheres. Towards the last quarter of the 18th century, both the Marathas and the English clashed frequently and ultimately the English Company was able to crush the power of the Marathas.

The First Maratha War was fought between 1778 and 1782. The struggle for succession in the house of the Peshwa gave the English Company an opportunity to interfere in the affairs of the Marathas. Peshwa Madhav Rao died in 1772. Narayan Rao who succeeded him, was murdered in cold blood on 30 August 1773 at the instigation of Raghoba or Raghunath Rao who was another claimant to the office of the Peshwa. The birth of a posthumous son to Narayan Rao drove Raghunath Rao to the point of desperation and he signed with the Bombay government the Treaty of Surat on 7 March 1775, thereby hoping to become Peshwa with the help of British troops. Raghoba agreed to give to the Government of Bombay Salsette and Bassein as the price for British help. All this was done without the knowledge of Warren Hastings. The British attacked Salsette and defeated the Marathas. Warren hastings did not approve of the Treaty of Surat and entered into the Treaty of Purandar in 1776. By this treaty, all places including Bassein

were to be restored to the Peshwa. The Island of Salsette and the small ones near Bombay were to remain in the possession of the British. The city of Broach was also to remain with the British. The territory conquered in Gujarat by the British was to be restored to the Marathas. The British were not to give support to Raghoba who was to be paid Rs 25,000 for his maintenance. The Directors of the English Company approved of the Treaty of the Surat and war had to be continued. The British were defeated and they had to conclude the Convention of Wadgaon by which they promised to surrender Raghoba and restore all acquisitions made by them. Warren Hastings refused to ratify the Convention of Wadgaon and continued the war. Goddard marched from Bengal to Surat. He captured Ahmedabad and made an alliance with the Gaikwad of Baroda. He was defeated when he advanced towards Poona, and Major Podham captured Gwalior, capital of Sindhia. A confederacy was made against the British but Warren Hastings was able to bribe the Raja of Nagpur and make peace with Sindhia. Ultimately, the treaty of Salbai was signed on 17 May 1782. By this treaty, the fort of Thana with the Island of Salsette was to remain in British possession. Rs. 12 lakhs were to be paid to the British for the expenses incurred by them on account of Raghoba who was to receive an allowance of more than Rs. 3 lakhs for the maintenance. He was to withdraw himself completely from the affairs of the State. The British were to retain the territory conquered by them in Gujarat but they were not to interfere into the affairs of Gaikwad. The view of V.A. Smith is that the Treaty of Salbai was one of the great landmarks in the history of India. It was a stroke of diplomacy which was invaluable to Warren Hastings in Southern wars. The view of Keene is that it was by means of this treaty that without annexing a square mile of territory, the British power become virtually paramount in the greater part of the Indian Peninsula. Dr. Shanti Prasad Varma does not accept the view of Keene who according to him unduly exaggerated the effect of this treaty on the future of British Empire in India. The view of Dr. Sailendra Nath Sen, is that the Treaty of Salbai marked the ascendancy of the English as the controlling, although not yet the paramount government in India.

The Second Maratha War was fought from 1802 to 1805. In March 1800, Nana Phadnavis died and with him departed "all the wisdom and moderation of the Maratha Government". Both Sindhia and Holkar tried to establish their control over the Peshwa. The Peshwa submitted to the control of Sindhia but Holkar would not tolerate that. He attached and defeated Sindhia and tried to establish his control over of the Peshwa. For a long time, the Peshwa had refused to accept the subsidiary alliance with the English Company but in his helpless condition, he asked for British protection from Lord Wellesley. He accepted the subsidiary alliance and signed the treaty of Bassein on 31 December 1802. By this treaty, a subsidiary force consisting 'of not less than 6000 regular infantry with the usual proportion of field artillery and European artillerymen " was to be stationed within the territory of the Peshwa. For the maintenance of the subsidiary force, the Peshwa surrendered territories yielding revenues worth Rs. 26 lakhs. The Peshwa agreed not to entertain any European hostile to the British and subjected his relations with other states to the control of English. The Peshwa was restored to his former position on 13 May 1803 with British help. The Maratha chiefs were indignant over the action of the Peshwa. Sindhia and Bhonsla at once combined and attacked but they met stiff resistance at the hands of the British troops. Arthur Wellesley captured Ahmednagar on 12 August 1803. On 23 September 1803, he won a complete victory over Sindhia and Bhonsla at Assaye. Burhampur was captured by the British on 15 October 1803 and Asirgarh on 21 October 1803. On 29 November 1803, Bhonsla was defeated at Aragaon. On 15 December 1803, the fortress of Gawilgarh was captured. General

Lake captured Delhi and Agra. In September 1803, the army of Sindhia was defeated in the battle of Delhi. He was again defeated in November 1803, at Laswari. Within a period of 5 months, both Sindhia and Bhonsla were defeated. Bhonsla made the treaty of 'Deogaon on 17 December 1803 by which he agreed to give to the British the province of Cuttack, including Balasore and the whole of his territory west of the river Warda. Bhonsla agreed to have a British Resident at Nagpur.

On 30 December 1803, Sindhia made the treaty of Surji Arjangaon by which he gave to the British all his territories between the Ganges and the Jamuna and his forts and territories to the north of the Rajput states of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Gohad. He gave to the British Ahmednagar, Broach and all his territories west of the Ajanta hills. He gave up all his claims on the Mughal Emperor, the Peshwa, the Nizam and the British. He agreed not to have in his state any European without the consent of the British Government. By another Treaty signed on 20 February 1804 he entered into a subsidiary alliance by which a subsidiary force of 6,000 infantry was to be stationed near his frontier.

Holkar had his differences with Sindhia and had not joined hands with him to fight against the British. However, when Sindhia and Bhonsla were defeated, Holkar decided to continue the fight. He attacked the territories of the Rajputs and demanded Chauth from the English Company. Lord Wellesley rejected these demands and war was declared. Holkar forced Colonel Monson to retreat and inflicted upon him a crushing defeat. Raja of Bharatpur defied British authority and joined Holkar in an attack on Delhi but their attempts failed. Later on, Holkar himself was defeated. The efforts of General Lake to conquer Bharatput failed and he suffered heavy losses. General Lake made peace with Raja of Bharatpur. When such was the situation, Lord Wellesley was called back by the Home Government which was tired of his aggressive wars.

His successor, Lord Cornwallis, tried to end the hostilities with Holkar and pacify Sindhia. He decided to restore Gwalior and Gohad to Sindhia and withdraw the protection of the English Company from the Rajput states. However, Cornwallis could not carry out his policy as he died in October 1805. Sir George Barlow, his successor, carried out the policy of his predecessor. Gwalior and Gohad were restored to Sindhia. The English Company pledged itself to enter into treaties with the chiefs of Rajputana. The treaty with Holkar was made on 7 January 1806 by which he gave up all his claims to Tonk, Rampur, Bundi, Koch, Bundelkhand and places north of the Chambal. Holkar got back a greater part of his lost territories.

Third Maratha War (1817-18)

Although the Peshwa had entered into the Treaty of Bassein in 1802, he has not satisfied with his present position and was intriguing to free himself from the British control. The English Company took prompt measures to check the designs of the Peshwa. Baji Rao Peshwa was persuaded to sign reluctantly the Treaty of Poona on 13 June 1817 by which he gave up the headship of the Maratha confederacy. He promised not to make demands on Gaikwad. He agreed to surrender to the English Company the Konkan and some important strongholds. On 5 November 1817, Sindhia was forced to sign the Treaty of Gwalior by which he agreed to cooperate with the English Company to suppress the Pindaris. The English Company was allowed to enter into treaties with the Rajput states. The Treaty of Nagpur was signed with Bhonsla on 27 May 1816.

Peshwa Baji Rao II was not satisfied with his position and he revolted and burnt the British Residency at Poona. However, he was completely defeated. Apa Sahib Bhonsla of Nagpur and Holkar declared war against the British. Apa Sahib was defeated at Sitabaldi on 27 November 1817. Holkar was defeated at Mahidpur on 21 December 1817 and was forced to sign the Treaty of Mandasor on 6 January 1818 by which he gave up all claims on the Rajput States. He surrendered to the English Company all districts south of the Narmada. he agreed to maintain a subsidiary force within his territory. He submitted his foreign relations to the arbitration of English Company. He agreed to have a permanent British Resident at Indore.

After his defeat at Khirki, the Peshwa fought two more battles: one at Koregaon on I January 1818 and the second at Asti on 20 February 1818. He was not only defeated but he surrendered himself to Sir John Malcolm on 3 June 1818. The office of the Peshwa was abolished but Baji Rao II was given a pension of Rs. 9 lakhs a year for his life. A representative of the line of Shivaji was put on the throne of Satara. Apa Sahib of Nagpur was deposed and a new Raja was put in his place. The Narmada territories of Bhonsla were annexed. The power of the Marathas was completely crushed and they were not in a position to raise their head again. They were at the mercy of the British power. The Rajput states had been dominated for several decades by Sindhia and Holkar. After the downfall of the Marathas, they lacked the energy to reassert their independence and accepted British supremacy.

The result was that by 1818, the entire Indian subcontinant excepting the Punjab and Sindh had been brought under British Control. A part of it was directly ruled by the British and the rest by a large number of Indian rulers over whom the British Government exercised paramount power. These states had virtually no forces of their own They paid heavily for the British forces stationed in their territories to control them. They practically enjoyed no freedom.

Conquest of Sindh (1843)

Sindh was ruled by a number of Amirs who had originally come from Baluchistan. The important Amirs or Chiefs were at Khairpur, Hyderabad and Mirpur. The Amir of Khairpur claimed suzerainty over the other Amirs. In 1809, the English Company entered into a treaty with the Amirs of Sindh by which the latter undertook not to allow any settlement of the French in Sindh. In 1831, Burnes went on a mission to Lahore and he passed through the river Indus. In the same year, Maharaja Ranjit Singh suggested to William Bentinck the partition of Sindh but the suggestion was not accepted. The English Coompany forced the Amir of Hyderabad to enter into a treaty in April 1832 by which certain privileges were granted to the English Company. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was anxious to conquer Sindh but the British Government refused to allow him to do so. As a matter of fact, the British government took the Amirs under its own protection. Lord Auckland forced the Amirs of Sindh in 1838 to have a British Resident at Hyderabad. During the First Afghan war, the British Government sent its troops through Sindh, The Amirs were asked to pay a large sum of money in commutation of the claim of Shan Shuja for tribute. They protested but paid. They were threatened and forced to enter into a new treaty in February 1839. Even that treaty was arbitrarily revised by Auckland in favour of the English Company and sent back to the Amirs for their signatures. The latter "objected, implored and finally gave way by affixing their seals to the revised documents". During the First Afgahn War, Sindh was made the base of operations. The Amirs could have done mischief at this critical movement but they were absolutely loyal to the English Company. Inspite of that, charges of disaffection were

leveled against them by the Government of India. Sir Charles Napier was made the new British Resident at Hyderabad and he was put in supreme control of military and political matters. He wanted to find an excuse to annex Sindu and the disputed succession at Khairpur provided the necessary opportunity. Without caring for the merits of the claims of the various parties, Napier decided in favour of Ali Murad. He also declared that charges against the Amirs were proved to be correct. He tried to impose fresh treaties on the Amirs and those treaties were sent to them for ratification in December 1842. The Amirs were asked to accept those treaties by 20 January 1843, but even before that Napier attacked and destroyed the fortress of Imangarh—a fortress lying half-way between Khairpur and Hyderabad. When the meeting at Khairpur took place, the Amirs of Lower Sindh were present and those of Upper Sindh were delayed by the machinations of Ali Murad. Two days later, the Amirs of Upper Sindh reached Khairpur with their seals to be affixed to the treaty. Napier refused them permission and ordered them to go back to Hyderabad. Napier himself started towards Hyderabad. It is contended that if Napier had stayed his march towards Hyderabad, the treaties would have been signed and war averted. The high-handedness of Napier excited the war-like Bluchis to attack the residence of Outram on 15 February 1843. Outram managed to escape and a regular war started. The important battles were fought at Miani and Doba in February and March 1843 respectively. On 27 March 1843, Napier occupied Mirpur. Sindh was annexed in August 1843. The Amirs were exiled. Napier got £ 70,000 as his share of the booty.

The conquest and annexation of Sindh has been universally condemned. The Directors of the English East India Company did not approve of it although they had not courage to restore Sindh to the Amirs of Sindh who had been absolutely loyal throughout. According to Innes, "If the Afghan episode is the most disastrous in our Indian annals, that of Sindh is morally even less excusable." Sir Charles Napier himself wrote thus in his diary : 'We have no right to seize Sindh, yet we shall do so and a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality it will be." The conquest of Sindh was in every respect the aftermath of the Afghan disaster. According to Elphinstone, "Coming after Afghanistan, it put one in mind of a bully who had been kicked in the streets and went home to beat his wife in revenge, it was the tale of the Afghan storm." The view of Ramsay Muir is that "Sindh is the only British acquisition in India of which it may fairly be said that it was not necessitated by circumstances and that it was, therefore, and act of aggression." According to P.E. Roberts, "The conquest of Sindh followed in the wake of the first Afghan War and it was morally and politically its sequel."

Annexation of Punjab

Maharaja Ranjit Singh continued to maintain friendly relations with the English Company so long as he ruled the Punjab. He entered into the treaty of Amritsar with the English Company in 1809 by which he accepted the river Satluj as the boundary line between his territory and that of the Company. Though there were numerous occasions when Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the English faced threats of armed clashes, Ranjit Singh always resisted the temptation of a war against the English Company. He had a feeling that after his death the Punjab would be annexed to the British Empire.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839 and there was complete political instability in the Punjab. Ranjit Singh was succeeded by his eldest son known as Kharak Singh and Dhian Singh became his Wazir. He was opposed to Sher Singh, another son of Ranjit Singh, and Nao Nihal

Singh, his own son. Chet Singh, a favorite of Kharak Singh, was murdered, Kharak Singh himself died in November 1840. His son Nao Nihal Singh was also killed by the fall of a gateway in the Lohore fort. In January 1841, Sher Singh usurped power and proclaimed himself as Maharaja. It was during his reign that English troops and convoys were allowed to pass through the Punjab on their way to Kabul to participate in the First Afgan War. In June 1842, Chand Kaur was murdered. In September 1843, Sher Singh was murdered. Dhian Singh was also disposed off. Hira Singh, son of Dhian Singh made up his mind to have revenge for the death of his father. He put Dalip Singh, a minor, on the throne and himself became the Wazir. Rani Jindan, mother of Dalip Singh and widow of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, became Regent. Throughout this period, it was suspected that the English had their hands in the anarchy prevailing in the Punjab. In December 1844, Hira Singh was murdered. Power fell into the hands of Jawahar Singh and Lal Singh. In September 1845, Jawahar Singh was shot dead and Lal Singh became the Wazir.

There were indications of British intentions. The strength of the English Company's army in the Punjab was increased to 32,000 with 68 guns and an additional reserve force of 10,000 men was being kept at Meerut. 57 boats were brought from Bombay for assembling a bridge of boats over Satluj and Commander was giving training to his soldiers in bridge throwing. The troops of the English Company in Sindh were well equipped and kept in readiness for a possible march on Multan. On the top of it, came the declaration of Major Broadfoot that the Cis-Satluj possessions of the Lahore Durbar were liable to escheat on the death or deposition of Maharaja Dalip Singh. The contention of the English Company that these preparations were of a defensive nature and calculated to meet possible eventualities of an attack from the Sikhs, was hypocritical, considering the state of affairs in the Punjab. The British moves and preparations seemed to denote to the Sikh arms "a campaign, not of defence but of aggression and it decided that if the English wanted war, they would have it on their own territory". The Sikhs troops crossed the river Satluj between Hariki and Kasur on 11 Dec. 1845 and took the offensive. Four battles fought at Mudki, Ferozshah, Budewal and Aliwal could not decide the issue. The final battle was fought at Sobraon on 10 February 1845 and due to the treachery of Lal Singh and Teja Singh, the Sikhs lost the war. The English dictated peace on 9 March 1846 whereby the Lahore durbar ceded the territory between the rivers Beas and Satluj apart form all the forts and territories in the hill countries between the rivers Beas and Indus including provinces of Kashmir and Hazara. The English obtained a huge war indemnity and limited the military strength of the Sikh Army. The English did not annex the Punjab though they financially crippled it, militarily enfeebled it and territorially reduced it in size. Punjab lost its independence, though in name it was allowed to exist.

On 16 December 1846, another treaty known as the Treaty of Bhairowal was made by the British Government with the Lahore Durbar. By this Treaty, a council of Regency consisting of 8 pro-British Sikh chiefs was appointed but it was to act under the advice and guidance of the British Resident. A British force was to be maintained at Lahore and the Sikhs were to pay Rs.22 lakhs every year. This arrangement was to continue upto 1854 when Maharaja Dalip Singh was expected to become major. By this treaty, the English became virtually the masters of the Punjab.

Second Sikh War (1848-1849)

There was no doubt that the discontentment prevailing in the Punjab would have resulted in a war sooner or later, but the revolt of Mulraj, Governor of Multan, precipitated matters Mulraj

was the Governor of Multan since 1844. Before that, his father Sawan Mal was the Governor of Multan. Mulraj was asked by the Lahore Durbar to pay the succession duty of Rs. 1 crore. He expressed his inability and was asked to pay Rs. 18 Lakhs. Money was not demanded and paid on account of the intervention of the First Sikh War. He was asked to pay Rs. 19 lakh. As the payment was not made by him, he was ordered to pay Rs. 20 lakh and give up one-third of his territory. His annual tribute of Rs. 12 lakhs was increased to Rs. 18 lakh. The Lahore Durbar tried to interfere in the internal affairs of Multan. Mulraj offered to resign on the condition that no action was taken against him but the offer was rejected. The British Resident sent Anderson and Agnew with Sardar Kahn Singh to take over the administration. Mulraj handed over the Multan fort to them on 19 April 1846. The people of Multan got infuriated at the sight of Englishmen. There was a revolt on 20 April 1848 and the two British officers were murdered.

In December 1848, the siege of Multan was started and it surrendered in January 1849. On 13 January 1849 was fought the battle of Chillianwala. It was a drawn battle. In February 1849 was fought the battle of Gujarat which had been called the "battle of guns". The Sikhs were defeated and the war ended on 13 March 1849. On 29 March 1849, the Punjab was annexed. Maharaja Dalip Singh was deposed and given a pension.

The annexation of the Punjab by Lord Dalhousie has been universally condemned by many writers. The view of Trotter is that the policy of Dalhousie was "unprincipled and unjustifiable." It was a dirty plan "deliberately adopted by the Resident and the Governer General contrary to the advice of the Council of Regency," Bell says that the annexation of the Punjab was "a violent breach of trust." Dalhousie" violated treaties, abused a sacred trust, threw away the grandest opportunity ever offered to the British Government of planting solid and vital reform upto the northern limits of India, and by an acquisition as unjust as it was imprudent, weakened our frontier, scattered our military strength and entailed a heavy financial burden upon the empire, That, I believe, will be the verdict of postirity and history upon the transaction which has just passed under our review". Bell further says that the annexation of the Punjab could have been avoided. To quote him, "I can perceive no advantage, material or moral, that has been gained by any person or class that could not have been more fully and effectually conferred and secured without annexation than with it." Dalhousie defended his action in these words, "However contrary it may be to our past views and to our present views, annexation of the Punjab is the most advantageous policy for us to pursue. I firmly believe we shall not succeed in establishing a friendly Sikh power."

Conquest of Lower Burma

It was during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Amherst (1823-28) that the First Burmese War was fought in 1824-26. A treaty was signed between the Government of India and Burma. This treaty is known as the Treaty of Yandaboo. By this treaty the king of Burma agreed to give to the English Company the provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim. Burmese forces were to be withdrawn from Assam and Cachar. They recognised the independence of Manipur and entered into a commercial treaty. They also agreed to take a British Resident at their capital and pay a war indemnity of one million pounds.

The second Burmese war was fought in 1852 in the time of Lord Dalhousie (1848-56).The real cause of the second Burmese war was the determination of Dalhousie to exclude all

European powers from Burma. The English merchants also had their grievances with regard to the trade concessions given by the treaty of Yandaboo. Lord Dalhousie declared war against Burma. Even before the declaration of war, a British force was sent under General Godwin. Martaban was taken. Rangoon and Bassein also fell into the hands of the English. Later on, Prome was occupied. Thus, the British were able to bring the whole of Lower Burma under their control. As no treaty was signed, Lord Dalhousie declared the annexation of Pegu by a proclamation issued in 1852.

Sikkim

In 1850 Lord Dalhousie charged the Raja of Sikkim with the offence of malterating and imprisoning two English doctors. Sikkim had to surrender some outlying districts of the state including Darjeeling to the English.

Dalhousie and Doctrine of Lapse

Dalhousie annexed a large number of Indian states by the application of the doctrine of lapse. His contention was that "the British Government in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful apportunities of acquiring territary or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of subordinate states by the failure of all heirs of every description whatsoever or from the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given to the ceremony of adoption, according to Hindu Law". In this way, Dalhousie annexed Satara in 1848, Jaitpur and Sambalpur in 1849, Baghat in 1850, Udaipur in 1852, Jhansi in 1853 and Nagpur in 1854. Although Avadh had always been loyal to the English Company, it was annexed in 1856.

It was in this way that by 1856, the territorial map of British India underwent drastic changes. Much of it had become red. The annexation of the Punjab pushed the dominion of the English Company to the hills in the North-West. The annexation of Sikkim territory brought Indian boundaries contiguous too Tibet and the Chinese Empire. The acquisition of Lower Burma extended British authority along the coast from Chittagong to Rangoon. By the application of the doctorine of lapse and annexation of a number of Indian states on one excuse or the other, Lord Dalhousie brought directly under the control of the English Company large territories. Thus, within a century of the battle of Plassey practically the whole of India passed under British control.

LESSON 6

ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANISATION, 1765-1857
PART I (1765-1793)

The battle of Buxar marks the culmination of British expansion in Bengal. Spear has rightly pointed out, "Plassey marked the beginning the British expansion in Bengal; Buxar determined the success of enterprise"[1]. The very existence of Mir Kasim caused consternation to the Court of Directors. "The very existence of the Company now seemed to be in question.[2] Under such circumstances, Clive was sent out as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bengal.

Reaching Calcutta on 3rd May, 1765, he was called upon to take a very difficult decision. He had to decide where to stop. The British could even go up to Delhi and restore the Mughal throne to Shah Alam. But this course did not seem practical and he wisely limited Company's influence to Bengal and Bihar. He was next confronted with the question whether to assume the entire administration of Bengal or to establish some sort of control on the system already existing. Clive did not think it advisable to encumber the Company with the responsibility of direct administration and established instead an indirect system of administration known as the "Double Government".

I. THE DOUBLE GOVERNMENT (1765-1772)

On the basis of agreement with the Nawab concluded on 20th February 1765 the English practically acquired control over the *Nizamat,* while in August, 1765 Shah Alam, the Mughal Emperor granted *Diwani* of Bengal to the Company. During the Mughal period, the *Nazim** was responsible for general administration including criminal justice. The *Diwani* looked after the finances and civil justice. On the decline of the Mughal authority in the 18th century, the *Nazim* became quite powerful and the Office of *Diwani* also passed under its control. But the two offices still retained their original distinction. By the acquisition both of the *Nizamat*, and the *Diwani* the English now had full control over the Bengal Government, but they did not assume the responsibility of its direct administration. The administration continued to be carried on in the name of the Nawab and by his officers. The Company appropriated to itself the surplus of the revenue left after meeting the expenses of administration. This government in which power was divorced from responsibility is called the "Double Government". It continued to plague Bengal from 1765 till 1772 when Warren Hastings put an end to it. According to Bolts, the Calcutta Council accepted the experiment as it afforded the English full opportunity to make fabulous fortunes from Bengal trade. Other considerations also weighed with the British. The Company did not possess the required staff for the administration and the Court of Directors were not in favour of the assumption of administrative responsibility in India.

The Calcutta Council appointed Mohammad Raza Khan to work as *Naib Diwan*. He also held the office of *Naib Nazim* on behalf of the Nawab. As *Naib* to the Nawab, he looked after the general administration, including the administration of criminal justice and was responsible to him. As *Naib*

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1. Percival Spear : *The Oxford History of Modern India*,1740-1947, p.28
2. *Ibid* ; p. 30.

*Not to be confused with the Nizam of Hyderabad. Nazim in Bengal was the designation of an administrative officer.

Diwan, he was responsible to the company for revenue collection and the administration of civil justice. During the period of the "Double Government", "the only duty that the Company performed was to see that the land-revenue was collected in a rigorous manner so that it could have large surplus for its use." After the departure of Clive to England in January, 1767, Verelst (1767-69) took charge as the President of Calcutta Council. He was an honest civil servant but he hardly had any force of character which could arrest the predatory instincts of his compatriots and their Indian agents. He accepted the arrangement of Clive as the most suitable one. He was also not convinced about the wisdom of introducing British laws and British judicial system in India. He made an effort to improve the system of revenue collection and even when the British Resident at Murshidabad was associated with Mohammad Raza Khan in this work there appeared no improvement. Actually later on, a Council of Revenue was also set up at Murshidabad. In 1769 English supervisors were appointed to supervise revenue collection. Even these supervisors could not resist the temptation of indulging in the private trade and this "made confusion more confounded and corruption more corrupt." (Kaye).

With the assumption of power by the English in Bengal the trade of other European nations in this province declined fast. The other European traders were practically thrown out of their business. The supply of gold and silver which England used to export Bengal for purchasing its goods was stopped. The English Company now bought their goods from the surplus of Bengal revenues and also sent money to other Presidencies for their investments and to meet their other financial needs. This adversely affected the prosperity of Bengal. The English indulged in the internal trade of Bengal freely and they virtually established a monopoly over it. All those *banias and gomasthas*, i.e. the agents, having connection with the British officers used the dread of British name to promote their interests. Administration undoubtedly became corrupt. Some contemporary accounts even state that at some places owing to the oppressions of the *gomasthas* the poor weavers cut their thumbs so that they might not be compelled to work for them against their wishes. The Indian *banias* working as the agents of the Englishmen were generally so harsh and inhuman in demands that a large number of weavers and artisans of Bengal gave up their ancestral callings. The quality of the Bengal handicrafts declined. Owing to the misconduct of the Company's servants and their Indian agents, officers of the Nawab also lost interest in their working and began to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor. Crime and lawlessness increased to an unprecedented extent. This was the condition of Bengal when Cartier succeeded Verelst in December, 1769.

Under the "Double Government ", Bengal suffered seriously from the high-handedness and oppression of the officials. Its economic life was completely paralysed by the corruption of the Company's rapacious servants and their more irresponsible and cruel Indian agents. Property was no longer secure; anarchy was widespread and administration had virtually collapsed. The famine of 1769-70 ruined more then two-thirds of the ancient aristocracy manufacturing and industrial classes, and destroyed nearly one-third of the population of Bengal. The Muslim historian, Ghulam Hussain, bitterly laments that under British influence the distress of the people and depopulation of the country went side by side and corruption and oppression had reached their climax. Consequently, he was justified in praying thus: "God! come to the assistance of your afflicted people and set open some door through which they may escape from oppression!"[1] A contemporary Bengali poet by the name of Ram-prassad Sen (1717-1775) vividly reflects in his poetry "the black shadow of ever-constant oppression and he draws his imagery "from a life pillaged and set to endless toil."[2] This type of a government could not last very long. The Dual Government was essentially a system of indirect administration whose inherent contradictions, basic weaknesses and congenital defects soon became so obvious that Warren Hasting

1. Seir Mutagherin ; Vol.III, PP. 171-172.
2. Thompson and Garratt : Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India ; Allahabad 1958, p. 104.

had to transmute the "indirect system" into a "direct system' when in 1772, under instructions, from the Court of Directors, the East India Company stood forth as the Diwan. Thenceonward the Company became directly responsible for the collection of the revenues of the three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. British imperialism in India was now placed on a firm foundation! The British were now directly involved in the administration of Bengal and as this was the most prosperous region in India, the British now had a convenient springboard from where they could extend their political activities in almost all the directions.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES UNDER WARREN HASTINGS (1772-1785)

The appointment of Warren Hastings[1] as Governor of Bengal in 1772 opens a new chapter in history. The East India Company had decided to recognise the *fait accompli* and to rule Bengal by the right of conquest. The task before Warren Hastings was really a Herculean one. He had to give Bengal an effective system of administration and to transform a Company of merchants, ignorant of the customs, and habits of of the Indian people, into an efficient organization well versed in administration. Above all, he had to rehabilitate the finances of the Company and develop its commerce. The reforms of Warren Hastings can be conveniently discussed under the following broad headings : (i) administrative, (ii) revenue, (iii) judicial, and (iv) commercial.

(i) Administrative Reforms.

The Court of Directors decided to end the Dual System of administration set up by Clive. Consequently, in 1772 they ordered the President and Council to 'stand forth as the Diwan' and to assume charge for the entire management of the revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[2] Warren Hastings dismissed the two Deputy Diwans, Mohammed Raza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai. The Governor and the Council formed the Broad Revenue and the Company appointed its own officers called 'collectors' to manage revenue affairs. The treasury was removed from Murshidabad to Calcutta. All this meant that the internal administration was tranferred to the Company and the Nawab was deprived even of any ostensible share in the administration. However, Nawab continued, at least nominally, to be recognized as the head of the province. Warren Hastings also reorganized the household of the Nawab of Bengal and appointed Munny Begum, the widow of Mir Jaffar, as the guardian of the minor Nawab, Mubark-ud-daula. The allowance of the Nawab was reduced from thirty-two lakhs to sixteen lakhs. Further, relations with the Mughal Emperor were redefined by Warren Hastings. He stopped the payment of twenty-six lakhs of rupees paid annually to the Emperor Shah Alam since 1765. The districts of Allahabad and Kora assigned to the Emperor by Clive in 1765 were also taken back and sold to the Nawab of Oudh for a sum of Rs. Fifty lakhs. Though the motivating force was economy, the plea put forward was that the Emperor had accepted the protection of the Marathas. Evidently, treatment meted out to the Emperor was harsh. The Emperor was never warned of the consequences of his dealing with the Marathas. Warren Hastings' action was breach of a solemn promise and remains morally and legally indefensible.

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1. Warren Hastings was the Governor of Bengal from 1772 to 1774. As a result of the Regulating Act, he became the first Governor-General of Company's territories in India and held that charge from 1774 to 1785.
2. The historic importance and effects of this decision are explained by James Mill in these words: "The change was enormous which it was the nature of this decree to produce. It was a revolution much greater, probably, than any previous conjuncture than even the change from Hindu to Mohammedan masters, had been able to create. The transition from Hindu to Mohammedan masters, had only changed the hands by which the sword was wielded, and favours were dispensed; the machine of the government, still more the texture of the society, underwent feeble alterations; and the civil part of the administration was, from conveniency, left almost wholly in the hands of the Hindus. A total change in the management of the revenues more deeply affected the condition, individually and collectively, of the people of India, than it is easy for the European reader to conceive. It was an innovation by which the whole property of the country, and along with it the administration of justice, were placed upon a new foundation" (The History of British India, Vol.III, p.365).

(ii) **Revenue Reforms**

The system of land revenue administration devised by the great Mughal Emperor Akbar had broken down in the early eighteenth century and what the Company had inherited was only confusion. The existing state of revenue administration in Northern India definitely needed a revision.

In order to work out a satisfactory system of land revenue administration, Warren Hastings tried various experiments based on the proverbial method of trial and error. Here are some of the more important experiments attempted by Warren Hastings.

In 1772 he instituted a five-year settlement, i.e. quinquennial settlement of land revenue by the crude method of farming out estates to the highest bidders. Acting on the presumption that the zamindars were mere tax-gatherer with no proprietary rights in the settlement, no preference was given to them. In fact, in certain cases they were actually discouraged from bidding.

In 1773 changes were made in the machinery of revenue collection. The collectors who had been found to be corrupt or were otherwise discovered indulging in private trade, were replaced by the Indian Diwans. Six Provincial Councils were set up to supervise the work of the Indian Diwans. The overall charge now rested with Committee of Revenue at Calcutta. It comprised the Governor and the Council. The trend of Warren Hasting's thinking was towards centralization. He sought to concentrate all the administrative functions into the hands of the Committee at Calcutta.

The Quinquennial Settlement was a miserable failure and the peasants suffered greatly. Most of the revenue farmers were mere speculators and had no permanent interest in the land. Their only anxiety was to extort as much as possible from the cultivators by way of land revenue. The officers of the East India Company themselves participated in the bidding through their servants or banias. Even Warren Hastings was not free from this temptation. There is the case of a grant registered in the name of a ten year old son of Kantu Baboo, an Indian servant of Warren Hastings. Another evil of this settlement was that the state demand was invariably very high. Extreme harshness was also used in the collection of revenue. This system led to many unavoidable sequels. Many revenue contractors fell in heavy arrears; many defaulters had to be arrested; even the ryots deserted.

After the expiry of the Quinquennial Settlement in 1777, Warren Hastings reverted to the system of Annual Settlement,[3] though the basis of open auction to the highest bider was retained. Preference was, however, given to the zamindars if their bids were high enough. Some changes were made in the machinery of revenue collection in 1781. The collectors were re-appointed in the districts* but were to have no power of assessment. The *Qanungos*, too, were re-appointed. The Provincial Councils were abolished and all work of supervision was concentrated in the hands of the Committee of Revenue at Calcutta.

One thing is quite clear. Warren Hastings failed to devise a satisfactory system of revenue settlement. His bias towards centralization in Calcutta stood in the way of providing an effective system of land revenue collection. This prevented British officers from acquiring any detailed knowledge about revenue matters. In 1782 Sir John Shore declared that "the real state of the districts is now less known and the revenue less understood than in 1774 ". Warren Hastings left behind him "a dark trail of misery, insurrection and famines". How unsatisfactory the land revenue policy was is amply clear from

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* Warren Hastings could not work out his original idea of employing only Indian officers in the districts and confining the Company's servants to Calcutta. Penderal Moon maintains that all the ex-members of the Provincial Council had to be provided with jobs and there were many fresh recommendations from London. Thus, Warren Hastings was compelled to re-employ Company's servants as "collectors" in the districts and some as judges of Diwani Adalats.

Cornwallis's remark made in 1789 that one "third of the Company's territory in Hindustan is now jungle, inhabited only by wild beasts". It was left to Cornwallis to evolve a system of land revenue collection and administration which even when riddled with many defects, possessed at least one superiority, namely, it provided stability and bore hallmark of permanence.

(iii) **Judicial Reforms**

Better success attended Warren Hasting's efforts in the sphere of judicial reorganization. Before his assumption of office, the judicial system in Bengal was summary and unsatisfactory. It was closely linked to the system of revenue administration. The zamindars decided civil and criminal cases and the system of arbitration was popular. Verelst has vividly described some of the failings of the system thus : "Every decision is a corrupt bargain with the highest bidder ....Trifling offenders are frequently loaded with heavy demands and capital offences are often absolved by the venal judge". The interference of Englishmen or their agents in the interior of the country had made matters worse; they very frequently meddled into the working of the native judicial courts and sometimes even acted as judges. Since the acquisition of Diwani in 1765 the civil jurisdiction had passed into the Company's control and was exercised by Deputy Diwan. But this was an *ad hoc* arrangement which could not be allowed to last indefinitely.

(a) **Administration of Civil Justice** : Warren Hastings turned his attention to the problem of judicial reorganization and reform with some genuine earnestness. He was keen that the framework of judicial administration should be patterned after the Mughal model. In 1772, Diwani and Faujdari Adalats were set up at the district level. The Diwani Adalat was presided over by the collector who was competent to decide all civil cases including those concerning personal property, inheritance, marriages, debts etc. In case of the Hindus the Hindu law was to apply; the Muslim law applied to the Muslims. The Diwani Adalat could decide cases involving sums up to Rs. 500. Appeals lay to the Sadar Diwani Adalat Calcutta which was presided over by the President and two members of the Supreme Council assisted by Indian officers. In view of the rapid changes effected in revenue administration, certain consequential modifications in the administration of justice, especially civil, had become necessary. Indian officers called Amins were appointed to take charge of the district civil courts. Later on judicial powers previously exercised by the Six Provincial Councils were transferred to Six Courts of Diwani Adalat, each presided over by a member of the Company's Covenanted Civil Service. To make justice easily available to the people, the number of these courts was raised to eighteen.

(b) **Administration of Criminal Justice** : District Faujdari Adalats were presided over by Indian officers who decided cases with the assistance of Qazis and Muftis. The collector, who was always a European, was however, authorized too exercise some control and supervision over the Faujdari Adalats; more particularly, he was required to see that evidence was duly submitted and weighed, that the verdict given was fair and impartial and announced in the open court. The law followed in the Faujdari Adalats was the Muslim Law. Appeals from the Faujdari Adalat lay to the Sadar Nizamat Adalat assisted by the Chief Qazi and the Chief Mufti and three Maulvis. The President and Council supervised the proceedings of this court.

As in case of civil administration, some corresponding changes were also made in the sphere of criminal administration by Warren Hastings. The Sadar Nizamat Adalat presided over by the Naib-Nazim was shifted to Murshidabad. To effectively bring criminals to book, every district was provided with a Faujdar. Even this new experiment was not much of a success. All the duties and powers exercised by the Faujdar were transferred to the judges of the district court. In the domain of criminal administration, we witness one healthy development viz., these criminal courts were generally manned by Indians.

The Regulating Act of 1773 provided for the setting up of a Supreme Court at Calcutta competent to try all "British subjects". However in Calcutta and its subordinate factories, this court exercised jurisdiction over all persons, Indians or Europeans. Outside Calcutta, complaints or suits against or between Indians could be heard by the said court only with the consent of the parties. In the Supreme Court, the English law was administered, while in the Sadar Diwani Adalat, Sadar Nizamat Adalat and other courts at the district level, cases were decided according to Muslim and Hindu laws. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and other courts often clashed. This was highlighted by the Kasijora case (1779-80). In fact, a dualism in the legal system was created which continued throughout the Company rule in India.

Warren Hastings attempted to codify Muslim and Hindu laws. A translation of the Hindu Code of Law in Sanskrit appeared in 1776 under the title of *code of Gentoo Laws*. William Jones and Colebrooke published Colebrooke's Digest of Hindu Law in 1791. Attempts were also made to translate Fatwa-i-Alamgiri into English.

These reforms of Warren Hastings even when slow, erratic and insufficient, were however significant as indicating a new shift. The traditional system of judicial administration notwithstanding many of its glaring merits, was something incompatible with the canons of British jurisprudence and, hence, could not be permitted to last indefinitely.

(iv) Commercial Reforms

Warren Hastings sought to clear the bottlenecks in the internal trade of Bengal. The various customs house in the zamindaries were suppressed. Henceforth, only five customs houses at Calcutta, Hughli, Murshidabad, Dacca and Patna were to be maintained. The duties were lowered to 2½ % payable by the merchants-Europeans and Indians. he checked the misuse of *dastak* or free passes signed by the Company's officers exempting from duties the goods of the servants of the Company indulging in private trade. Steps were also taken to check the exploitation of the weavers by the Company's agents. Warren Hastings also made unsuccessful attempts to develop trade relations with Bhutan and Tibet.

Summing up, the various measures adopted by Warren Hastings to reform administrative machinery even when not comprehensive or always well-conceived did undoubtedly give Bengal an administrative framework.

III. ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES UNDER LORD CORNWALLIS

During the administration of Lord Cornwallis (1786-1793) were effected many important administrative changes which may truly be regarded as having given a steel-frame to British administration in India. These changes were far-reaching and affected many aspects of administration. More outstanding reforms pertain to the following important spheres:

(i) Commerce.

(ii) Land revenue administration.

(iii) Judicial administration including police and jails.

(iv) Organization of the civil services.

In all these spheres, Lord Cornwallis has left behind a permanent mark. He, however, was very much indebted to his predecessors, especially to Warren Hastings. His reforms could not have provided a permanent administrative framework, if the reforms introduced by Warren Hastings were not simple enough to be easily modified in the light of new experience acquired as a result of their working. Many of his successors, notably Lord Wellesley (1798-1805), Lord Hastings (1813-23), Lord William Bentick (1828-35) and Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) contributed significantly by improving upon

some of the reforms of Lord Cornwallis. That accounts for the fact that the British had achieved a standard and strength in administrative efficiency that even the stormy winds of years 1857-58 could not seriously shake. The East India Company had built up a firm administrative structure which was capable of tiding over any crisis. That makes Lord Cornwallis' administrative reforms even more remarkable because it was he who gave the administrative machinery a definite form of which some features are found even today.

The acquisition of Diwani by the East India Company, brought about a transformation in the very nature and character of the activities of the Company. Its original commercial character was not suited to its ever-increasing political obligations. The predecessors of Cornwallis failed to face successfully the challenge posed by the new situation. Both Clive and Warren Hastings even when they at times displayed some enthusiasm and keenness for reforms failed, in view of their liking for political intrigues, and because of their own frequent lapses into venality and personal cupidity, to inspire confidence or a sense of duty among their subordinates. They set no noble example for those working under them. Cornwallis, was made of a different mettle. He, of course, lacked the brilliance of Warren Hastings, but possessed some other traits which eminently fitted him to complete an administrative superstructure on the foundations laid earlier by Clive and Warren Hastings. Cornwallin's main superiority lay in the fact that he was a man of unimpeachable integrity. His incorruptibility was beyond reproach. A soldier by upbringing, he knew how to explicitly obey his superiors. Directives from England were for him orders to be carried out fully and faithfully. "He was a public servant who upheld national and not private tradition" He sought no revolutionary changes in the administration though in practice some of his administrative measures were far-reaching. While assessing his contribution to administrative organization let us not foreget one fact viz., various administrative experiments which the Company had tried since 1765 in view of changing political complexion of the Company, had produced a wealth of valuable data which stood him in good stead and made it possible for him to see the administrative problems and its numerous issues more clearly and more comprehensively. Unlike his predecessors, he did not have to grope in the dark. Hence his reforms were not mere improvisations as was the case regarding some of the measures adopted by Clive and Warren Hastings.

Cornwallis sought to introduce not entirely new principles of administration because his powers were not unfettered. He had to follow the line of the Directors. Many of his reforms, however, stemmed from his earnest desire that the Company should be better equipped to carry out those responsibilities of direct administration which necessarily followed from the extinction of the Dual System. Warren Hastings attempts were not adequate or comprehensive enough, because they were not always well-thought-out. Experience had shown that many of these reforms were faulty. Many of these reforms created new problems. Cornwallis, however, had to work within the existing framework. Thus, as observed by Aspinall, "It is no disparagement of Cornwallis's work to point out that he completed what Hastings had begun.[1] Many of the reforms ultimately introduced, involved no new principles but certainly those principles "were now clearly stated and the strength of the Home Government was used to enforce them."

The administration of Lord Cornwallis, in many respects, constitutes a significant landmark in the history of British administration in India. It ushered a new era in one sense, because henceonward more attention and thought were expanded on the problems apertaining to administration. Territorial expansion which till recently was the guiding philosophy of the Company became somewhat muted not because the British had forsaken their imperial ambitions but more because of their growing appreciation of the basic fact that no durable empire could be possible unless it was provided with a

1. Aspinall, A., Cornwallis in Bengal (Manchester University Press, 1931)p. 166.

durable administrative foundation. Cornwallis' reforms covered many areas. Now let us deal with some of his more significant administrative reforms.

(i) **Commercial Reforms**

Because of the increasing political obligations of the Company, its commercial activity had lately come to occupy a subordinate position in the thinking of many of its officers. Cornwallis was fully conscious that the Company's shareholders were still primarily interested in adequate returns for their instruments. Moreover, he had been specifically instructed at the time of his appointment that he must curb extravagance and cut down the expenses of the administration. Economy appeared to the Directors an urgent necessity and a crying need. Then the Company's commercial system was plagued with corruption of the grossest type. The warehouses of Calcutta, as observed by Cornwallis, were "a sink of corruption and inequity." The Company was outrageously cheated by its own servants who had only one obsession, viz, to amass as much of wealth as possible and that too as quickly as possible. This intolerable state of affairs aroused Cornwallis's righteous indignation which at that time appears to have been somewhat shared by the Directors. Cornwallis applied his reforming broom with confidence and determination. He wasted no time in immediately attending to the problem of placing the commercial activities of the Company on a sound and efficient footing In this task, he was lucky to have secured the devoted and enlightened services of Charles Grant who had considerable experience in these matters.

In order to appreciate Cornwallis' reforms in this sphere in their proper perspective, it will not be out of place if you first become acquainted with some of the important features of the Company's commercial organization as it existed before his assumption of duties as the Governor-General of India. A branch of general administration looked after the Company's commerce. The "Company's investment" originally consisted of silk, wool, cotton goods and indigo, saltpeter and raw cotton were added later. Till 1756 specie imported from England partly paid for all these goods. Plassey brought about a major change. Thenceforth, a portion of the revenue of Bengal was diverted for the purpose of buying these goods which were exported to England as a part of the "Company's investments" were looked after by the Board of Trade at Calcutta. This Board had eleven members. The Supreme Council exercised some vague supervision over it. The investments though controlled by the Board were actually in the hands of the Company's servants designated as "Commercial Residents" who were stationed at different places in Bengal. 'The bulk of these "investments" were procured by a series of contracts with these 'Residents' who were responsible for such share of the investments as might be allotted to them. The 'Residents' fully exploited their erstwhile official position to their own advantage. They indulged in very conceivable from of fraud. They mercilessly oppressed the weavers and fraudulently cheated them of their wages. To aggravate the problem, even the members of the Board had taken up these contracts. They secured their goods from contractors making full use of their official position. Their purchases were generally secured at very low prices but were supplied to the Company at inflated prices. Profits thus made by the Company's servants were large. The Directors of the Company were alarmed at the mounting cost of their purchases, and what irritated them most was that the Company's goods when sold in England fetched lower prices whereas the merchandise exported by the servants of the Company were readily sold at higher prices. In a way, the Directors themselves were to blame for much of the corruption. They had themselves connived at this practice of illegal trade in which nearly all its servants were engaged. There was no stigma attached to this illegal trade. Because salaries paid to the Company's servant were low, the Directors themselves displayed no concern about this illicit trade. But when they found that their own interests were suffering, they had to do something in the matter.

In 1786, the strength of the Board of Trade was reduced from eleven to five and its working was definitely brought under the control of the Supreme Council. A member of the Council was also

nade its president. Cornwallis who had been specially instructed to end corruption in the commercial oranch of administration acted with firmness and resolution. He initiated a searching investigation into the conduct of the company's servants including the members of the Boards. His inquiry revealed a sordid state of affairs. He found that corruption had permeated in all the ranks of the Company's servants. Even the members of the Board were not immune from it. Legal proceedings were immediately started against all those suspected of corruption. Some senior members of the Company's commercial establishment as also some members of the Board were punished. This stern action had a wholesome impact. It served as a deterrent for others.

Cornwallis, left to himself, might have introduced some radical charge in the working of the Company's commercial system, but as one to whom obedience to the superiors appeared a religious duty, he was not unconscious of the unwillingness of the Directors to pay adequate salaries to their servants. It was a formidable hurdle in his way. Hence his reforms were clearly aimed at making the best of a very bad situation. Nevertheless, he adopted worthwhile charges. The first was to separate the commercial service of the Company from its political service. All the servants of the Company were given the option to choose one of the two branches of the administration. Another useful step was taken when he issued a new commercial code. By it, "investments" of the Company were adequately secured. This was accomplished by adopting the "agency system'. According to this system, the 'Commercial residents' of the Company's various factories were made responsible to the Board for such share of the investments as might be allocated to them. These Residents arranged prices and made advances to manufactures or weavers and were also required to receive manufactured goods. They were to be compensated adequately by means of commission calculated on the basis of their share of investment. Private trade, though not positively prohibited, was certainly discouraged. This system was far from being a perfect one, yet it showed satisfactory results before long. it arrested some of the more flagrant abuses. By defining the duties of the 'Residents', some protection was also provided to the weavers and manufacturers who previously were utterly helpless against the rapacity of the unscrupulous servants of the Company. Though Cornwallis left much that should have been done, yet he had provided a direction to the Company's commercial policy.

(ii) **Changes in Land Revenue Administration**

The reorganization of the Company's commercial activities constitutes only a small portion of Cornwallis's work. Though valuable and desirable it did not so markedly affect the fortunes of the inhabitants of Bengal. His other reforms with which this section is primarily concerned had a much wider impact. The ultimate welfare of millions of the people of Bengal depended upon them. Of these the most important is his Permanent Settlement of Bengal.

As regards the Land Revenue Administration, the period between 1765-1793 is characterized by many experiments. The Company adopted the method of trial and error and in this process it attempted many experiments, most of which proved faulty. It was left to Cornwallis to evolve a system which had the stamp of permanance. Even though it was not free from many serious defects, it had one great advantage. It ended uncertainty.

It need not be overstressed that the bulk of the revenue in India came from land. The happiness of the people of Bengal depended on how it was assessed and collected.

As already mentioned. Warren Hastings had pursued the policy of centralising the Land Revenue administration. This policy had many demerits. It deprived the European officers opportunity to acquire knowledge about revenue matters; it in no way lightened the burden of the Ryots. The institution of European Collectors which had been abolished in 1773 had to be resurrected but these "Collectors" were given hardly any powers. In 1786 another scheme was formulated. It marked

the beginning of decentralization. According to it, the province of Bengal was divided into thirty-five districts; in 1787 the number was brought down to twenty-three. Each district was deemed as a regular fiscal unit under a Collector who was henceforth to become fully responsible for the settlement and collection of land revenue. The Provincial Diwans were done away with. The Committee of Revenue constituted in 1781 was reorganised as a Board of Revenue. A member of the Governor-General's Council was to become its president. This Board controlled and advised the Collectors and had the final sanctioning authority with regard to the from of settlement. In July 1786, a new office of an officer designated as *Chief Saristadar* was instituted. This officer was required to bring the revenue records, hitherto the property of Qanungos, under the control of government, so that the officers of the Company should be able to acquire necessary knowledge about land tenure and settlement. The settlement of course continued to be based on an annual basis. This system was maintained till 1790. Thus the period 1765-85 of the administration of the land revenue in Bengal by the Company's servants witnessed a steady "progress from the employment of untested theories to the establishment of an administration based on much soild knowledge."[1] Nonetheless, no firm or final step was taken till 1793 when cornwallis brushing aside numerous objections and introduced what is known as the *Permanent Settlement of Bangal.*

Cornwallis, himself a member of the landed aristocracy of England, was naturally interested in the problem of land revenue administration and its collection. The intricacies of the Indian system were formidable. Though some of the officers of the Company had delved deep into the finest details of the Indian system of land revenue, yet there were certain marked divergences in their opinions about the status and position of the zamindars. These zamindars under the mughal rule were rent collectors who because of the weakness of the central authority had tended to become hereditary, John Shore held that the Zamindars were the proprietors of land and could be called upon to pay only land tax, whereas Grant maintained that the ownership of land vested with the government which was free to effect any settlement with any one, be they zamindars or tenants. This controversy at times became quite exciting. Shore's views were favoured by the Directors. Cornwallis though originally inclined towards Shore's interpretation ultimately veered round to the opinion of Grant and in 1793, he decided upon a permanent settlement with the Zamindars. He rejected Shore's contention that the settlement should be effected for a period of ten years. A ten year settlement, according to Shore, would do away with the evils of annual assessment, besides providing adequate assurances to the zamindars that the settlement would not be for a short duration and would not prevent them from making capital investment on land. Cornwallis, however, stood by his determination and decision unflinchingly and on March 22, 1793, the decennial settlement i.e., ten year settlement was declared permanent.

The Permanent Settlement created a limited proprietary right in the land in the zamindars. All rights of the state in the nature of Nazrana and permission to sell fees were given up. Magisterial powers were taken away from the zamindars. They were left with no police work. *The state demand was fixed at 89 per cent of the rental, leaving 11 per cent with the zamindars as their share for their trouble and responsibility.* So long as the zamindars made the payment to the Government in time, they were left free in their relation with their tenants. If they did not make the payment to the state in time, a part of their land was to be disposed of to recover the amount due to the state.

Upon this famous Permanent Settlement critics have expressed diametrically opposite views. According to Marshman, "It was a bold, brave and wise measure. Under the general influence of

1. Dodwell—The Cambridge History of India, Vol. V, P. 432.

this territorial charter which for the first time created indefeasible rights and interests in the soil, population has increased, cultivation has extended and a gradual improvement has been visible in the habits and comforts of the people."[1] On the other hand, Holmes has characterised the Permanent Settlement as "a sad blunder. The inferior tenants derived from it no benefit whatsoever. The zamindars, again, failed to pay their rent chargés and their estates were sold for the benefit of the government"[2] It is rather interesting that even a distinguished Indian scholar of wide administrative experience R.C. Dutt was almost rhapsodic in complimenting Cornwallis for the Permanent Settlement when he observed, "If the prosperity and happiness of a nation be the criterion of wisdom and success, Lord Cornwallis' Permanent Settlement of 1793 is the wisest and most successful measure which the British nation had ever adopted in India." To Dutt this settlement appeared to be "the one act of British nation within the century and a half of their rule in India which has most effectively safeguarded the economic welfare of the people" It seems that in the eyes of Mr. Dutt the people were the newly created zamindars and not the hard working and rack-rented ryots. The fact that his family was one of the beneficiaries of this act of Cornwallis explains why he was so uninhibited in offering this profuse tribute to Lord Cornwallis. For a more balance appreciation, let us now study its merits and demerits.

Its Merits : The Permanent Settlement in effect was not an unmixed blessing. It undoubtedly gave fixity of tenure to the zamindars so long as they paid their dues to the state. The evils of recurring assessments were also done away with. The temptation not to cultivate land on the eve of the assessment was removed. The exchequer made a substantial saving on the expenses previously incurred on repeated settlements. The zamindars were also encouraged to make capital investments on their zamindar is because they were now assured that all additional gains accruing from these investments were exclusively theirs. It no doubt boosted agriculture. It has to be conceded that much of the future prosperity of Bengal was greatly due to this settlement. The zamindars also stood to gain in many other ways. They had no longer to pay any fines on accession; neither were they now required to secure the prior permission of the government if they wanted to sell their holdings; in addition, they, were no longer encumbered with the responsibility of looking after law and order within their zamindaris. Then, the British Raj acquired greater stability because this new class of zamindars was entirely their creation and they now had a vested interest in the continuance of British rule. Above all, the Permanent Settlement ended uncertainty.

Dr. Tara Chand maintains that the Permanent Settlement conferred the greatest benefits on the Government. So far as the financial part was concerned, the land revenue demand was fixed at the highest pitch that had ever been reached. The share of the state was fixed at 89% of the estimated rent of the land which left only 11% to the landlord for his duties connected with the collection of revenue. The Government was saved from the fluctuation of its income and assured a certain steady and ample revenue for both its commercial and administrative needs. While the revenue demand on the lands already under cultivation was fixed, the Government could still look forward to the increase in its income with the extension of cultivation. There was the additional financial advantage arising from the abolition of the entire revenue-collecting machinery consisting of Tehsildars, Quanungoes, Patwaris and other revenue officers. As regards the political advantages, the zamindars possessed great powers during the Mughal rule. In addition to their duty of revenue collection, they exercised magisterial and executive authority. For all practical purposes, they enjoyed the opportunism of sovereignty in their respective spheres. They were ordinarily inclined to be intractable and became contumacious and rebellious under the governments. Cornwallis struck a bargain. The political powers were taken away from them and in

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1. Marshman - History of India, Vol. II, p. 35.
2. Holmes - History of Indian Mutiny, p.12.1

return they were endowed with unlimited powers of ownership of land which had not belonged to them in the past and of the enhancement of rent at their pleasure. Their political authority and power of creating trouble disappeared, but their economic powers over the peasantry were enormously increased. The two parties to the bargain settled down to a period of peaceful cooperation, one exercising political authority, the other economic powers and both preying upon and oppressing the tiller of the soil (History of the Freedom Movement in India, Vol.I, pp. 295-6) .

Its Demerits : Let us now look at the other side. The immediate impact of the Permanent Settlement on some of the older families was disastrous. Many of the old and distinguished—almost semi-royal families—like those of Nadiya, Vishnupur, Rajshahi and Dinajpur, suffered heavily, because these families were not able to pay government dues which were certainly very heavy, if not excessive. Their zamindar is were sold to others who possessed ready cash. This brought on the rural scene new families of moneylenders, merchants and other rich urbanites. With some honorable exceptions, like the families of the laws, and the Tagores, these new zamindars had no roots in the soil and behaved in an irresponsible manner. Their primary interest lay in exacting the maximum of rents out of their tenants. They were not interested in agriculture as such. Thus, unmitigated hardships on the tenants or ryots were inflicted. By one stroke of pen, those tenants who had cultivated lands for generations were thrown at the everchanging and unpredictable mercy of the new zamindars. The ryots were the greatest sufferers. Overnight their tenures had become precarious. Above all, they were constantly exposed to the ever increasing demands of rents, prequisites, etc. They had become rootless. There was much wealth in the country but it was inequitably distributed. It made the new zamindars richer and the ryots poorer. That accounts for the glaring disparity in the economic condition of the people in those areas where the Permanent Settlement was introduced. By this Settlement, the future interests of the state were also unwittingly sacrificed, because government had no share in the increased agricultural prosperity of the country. That explains why the Government of Bengal was perennially afflicted with recurring deficits even though the province itself was the richest in the whole of India. The development of that province with regard to public works was also severely handicapped. Even though it be a moot point yet there have been many distinguished and experienced British administrators of India who have held that it was this Settlement which was mainly responsible for the regular recurrence of famines in Bengal and its contiguous areas. Finally, this Settlement introduced a new element which had far-reaching sociological and economic consequences. It damaged the integrity of the traditional communal life of the village and the fact that land could now be sold by the government if the zamindars failed to discharge their financial liabilities to the state the rural economy suffered a very upsetting blow. Land had come to acquire a new meaning and a new value. The land hunger increased. It attracted the unscrupulous moneylenders to the villages who heartlessely exploited the royts. Absentee landlordism was at a premium. Thus, the Permanent Settlement created more problems than it sought to solve.

(iii) **Judicial Reorganization**

In this sphere again, you will find that Cornwallis was heavily indebted to Warren hastings. Luckily, Cornwallis could retain the services of Sir William Jones whose ripe and invaluable experience as a judicial officer, his deep knowledge about Indian laws and institutions and his consuming passion for oriental learning placed at the disposal of Cornwallis a fund of useful information and experience which stood him in good stead in the work of reorganizing the judicial system in India. His judicial reforms may be better studied if we separate the administration of civil justice from that of criminal justice. The latter will also include some discussion of the police and jail reconciliation.

(a) **Civil Justice :** You will recall that the Sadar Diwani Adalat had been reconstituted in April 1780 under the authority of the Governor General in Council. This did not improve matters because the

Governor-General-in Council had far too many preoccupations to be able to attend the work of administering civil justice which could be both monotonous and at times quite exacting because of its technical nature which required a special type of professional training. In June 1787, Lord Cornwallis re-organized the institution of the collectorship. The number of Collectors was to be reduced. The Collectors were once again made responsible both for revenue and judicial work, for it was argued that this system was more easily intelligible to the Indians because it followed the traditional Indian pattern according to which collection of land revenue, administration of civil justice and magisterial duties, were the responsibility of one officer. This excessive concentration of functions made the Collector almost a dictator in the districts. It was not conducive too expeditious administration of justice because the multifarious duties a collector was required to perform left no time to attend to this rather laborious and time-consuming work. Hence a reversal took place in 1793 when the Collector was denuded of all judicial obligations. As the collector now became responsible for revenue work only, this necessitated a wholesale reorganization of the machinery of administration of justice, both criminal and civil. For purposes of administering civil justice, Cornwallis established a hierarchy of courts. As the top was the Sadar Diwani Adalat or the Chief Civil Court in Calcutta, consisting of the Governor-General and the Council and assisted by Qaziul-Quzat. i.e., Chief Qazi, two Muftis and two Pandits. It was to hear appeals, it also exercised power of supervision over the courts subordinate thereto. No appeal would be entertained by this Court, unless the subject of dispute involved property or money worth Rs. 1,000 or more. Below this Court were the Provincial Courts established at the important cities of Patna, Dacca, Murshidabad and Calcutta. These Provincial Courts were generally given appellate powers, but in certain cases they could also exercise original jurisdiction. Each of these Courts had three European judges, all members of the Covenated Civil Service, three assessors and a Qazi, a Mufti and a Pandit. The Qazi and Mufti provided the necessary information about Muslim Law whereas the Pandit advised the Court on Hindu Law. Below the Provincial Courts were the Zila or District Courts, each under a European judge assisted by Indian assessors. These twenty odd district Courts and three City Courts in Patna, Dacca and Murshidabad exercised full jurisdiction over all civil cases of every description including revenue cases which were previously heard by the Mal Adalats which had been abolished by Regulation II of the Cornwallis Code 1793. These District Courts, however, could not hear cases in which Europeans were involved, as the Supreme Court which had been established by the Regulating Act alone had jurisdiction over them. Next in the hierarchy were the two subordinate courts called the Registrar's and the Munsiff's courts. The Registrars could try cases up to Rs. 200, whereas the Munsiffs could hear only those suits where the sum involved was Rs. 50. Appeals from both these lower courts lay with the District Court.

The reorganization of the administration of civil justice clearly brings out two important features. One was that the judicial work of a civil nature was considerably decentralized. Secondly, in this entire hierarchy there was no room for the Indians. This feature actually plagued all the administrative measures introduced by Cornwallis for he had a very low opinion about the integrity and ability of the Indians.

(b) **Criminal Justice:** Cornwallis was as much appealed by the corruption in the administration of criminal justice as he had found it in the commercial sphere. When he took over the duties of the Governor-General of India, he had some doubts as to the extent to which the Company was competent to interfere with the matters pertaining to the Nizamat. He, therefore, proceeded with his reforms in this sphere rather cautiously and only when he had studied the problem comprehensively enough that he finally introduced some sweeping reforms which will be discussed a little later. As an *ad hoc* measure in 1787, he endowed the Collectors with magisterial powers. By 1790, his ideas and plans about criminal reorganization had taken a final shape and were embodied in his famous Minute running into one hundred and five pages dated,

3rd December. His study had convinced him that the East India Company had full authority to interfere in the Nizamat administration. He, however, held the view that ancient practices, usages, and institutions should be disturbed as little as was compatible with efficiency. He was keen that the standard of criminal administration must be raised ; to him many of the Indian usages appeared contrary to canons of justice and equity and consequently must be swept aside as quickly as possible. All his ideas were ultimately embodied in what is known as the famous Cornwallis Code of May 1793. This is a comprehensive document which contains regulations numbering forty-eight.

Lord Cornwallis proceeded with his reorganization with zeal and sincerity of purpose. Though this Cornwallis Code in many ways was an attempt at redefining more clearly the existing system, it also contained some new features. As a matter of fact, it was an earnest endeavor to put the entire administrative structure in India on a sound base. As we are here concerned mainly with those aspects which had a bearing on the administration of criminal justice, we shall only deal with that aspect. Cornwallis as in case of civil administration, also established a hierarchy of courts for the administration of criminal justice. Muhammad Raza Khan, the Deputy Nawab or Naib Nazim, who still exercised criminal authority was divested of all his powers. The headquarters of the Sadar Nizamat Adalat were shifted from Murshidabad to Calcutta. This court was made the highest court in the hierarchy for the administration of criminal justice. It was to meet once a week and was the highest Court of Appeal for criminal matters. This Court was authorised to suggest all such propositions for consideration and sanction of the Governor-General-in-Council which it thought would improve the administration of criminal justice. As in case of civil justice, district was made the basic unit of criminal administration. In the reforms of Cornwallis we again come across his preference to make district as a unit of administration and in this manner he established a pattern of administration which we find in our country even to day. Each district was to have a sessions judge who was to be a member of the Convenanted Civil Service. As no Indian could become a member of this service, Cornwallis' strong perjudice to exclude Indians from all positions of trust and responsibility by this device was given a widened application.

Cornwallis brought about certain important chargés in the laws and procedures to be adopted in these courts. Though he refrained from introducing wholesale British laws, we find that some indigenous practices were substantially modified. He made certain changes in the Muslim Law which was still generally followed in the Faujdari, i.e., criminal courts. The practice of multilation was replaced by long terms of imprisonment. Law of evidence was also modified in many significant ways. According to the Muslim Law, any evidence tendered by an 'infidel' was considered invalid. This discriminatory practice was dropped. Restrictions were also placed upon the right of the relatives of a slain person to bargain for a pardon with the murderer of their relatives.

Criticism of his Judicial Reforms

Nobody can deny that Cornwallis provided India with courts, laws and procedures which is many respects were a great improvement on what was found in this country before. He, however, overlooked one very important aspect of the problem. He introduced far too many rules and regulations of procedure and an equally large number of laws based on the western concept of jurisprudence. With all these innovations the Indians were utterly unfamiliar. This made the administration of justice far too technical. Most of these new laws and procedures were beyond the comprehension of illiterate litigants. This created a paradise for lawyers. Furthermore, these new measures militated against speedy justice. Long delays were very common. This situation was further aggravated by the large number of suits that were filed before the innumerable courts. Many issues which could have been normally settled at the village level by the village panchayats etc. were now taken too these newly established courts. There was certainly rush of litigation. The existing courts –

could not cope with the pressure. During a period of nine years from 1793-1802, the district court while able to dispose of as many as 8,298 cases, still found that there was a backlog of nearly 12,000 cases. Similarly, the subordinate courts of Registrars and Munsiffs had 1,49,827 pending cases on file, when they had already cleared 342,184 cases. Thus even when we must compliment Cornwallis that his reforms checked the oppressions of the revenue collectors and other officials and prevented violence, we cannot at the same time close our eyes that these very reforms "encouraged the more subte oppression of the moneylender and the lawyer; and from their insistence upon formal evidence they increased the difficulty of suppressing organized dacoity."[1] Lastly, the greatest charge that can be legitimately made against Cornwallis' reforms is that in his system the sons of the soil found no accommodation. Such a systematic and wholesale exclusion of Indians had never happened before in this country. even when we had the misfortune to be repeatedly dominated by alien races, alien dynasties and alien rulers. In a way, it was "almost without parallel in the history of imperialism." Some discrimination by a foreign rule may be justified and even tolerated, but Cornwallis assigned absolutely no position of trust and responsibility to the Indians. They were totally excluded from all those offices in the government which called for any degree of responsibility. Cornwallis' prejudice against the Indians stemmed from his illogical conviction that Indians were absolutely untrustworthy. This systematic exclusion of Indian was indeed very degrading for the Indians as it was "calculated to debase rather than uplift the people fallen under the Company's dominion"[2]. Veritably, it created a gulf between the Indians and the British. It made inter-racial understanding difficult. It sowed the seeds of mutual distrust which bedevilled the future course of Indo-British relationship. One of the earlier demands of the Indian National Congress that there should be Indianisation of services seems quite reasonable because no nation can develop or advance unless its nationals have the freedom to learn by administrative experience by erring and that is not possible if people are not entrusted with responsibility. The exclusion of Indians from all the offices of responsibility also made administration far too expensive; it contributed to some administrative inefficiency also because Indians employed at lower levels knowing that they would never be promoted had no incentive to develop any great sense of responsibility. Lack of responsibility bred corruption and irresponsibility. Multiplication in the numbers of European officer was not the remedy. No imperial administration, however efficient, can last long if it does not trust the natives of the country.

(iv) Police and Jail Reorganization

Cornwallis in the field of police administration also introduced some improvements. The East India Company was primarily concerned with the security of its commercial and imperial interests in India; it showed scant interest in the problem of maintaining law and order in the general sense. The chief responsibility for maintaining law and order was mainly the concern of the zamindars. In April, 1781, Warren Hastings replaced the existing system and invested the British judges of the Diwani courts with the authority of arrest and commitment. Police regulations framed after 1782 enjoined upon the Magistrates to appoint *thanadars* whenever the need of maintaining law and order necessitated it. All these perfunctory attempt at police reorganization were of no great value. It was again left to Cornwallis to undertake certain reforms which instituted a new system which with some modifications from time to time, constituted the base on which the police organization in India rests even to the present time. According to the police Regulations published on 7th December, 1792, the zamindars were compelled to disband their armed constabulary. A new police force was created. This force was placed under the control of the English Magistrates. For purposes of maintaining law and order, a district was sub-divided into *thanas*, comprising an area of approximately four hundred square miles. Each *thana* was under the charge of a *daroga* appointed by the district magistrate. Each daroga had some constables under him. The daroga was paid a commission of 10% on the value of the stolen property recovered by him. These

1. Thompson and Garratt : Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India (Indian Edition); p.177.
2. Aspinall : Cornwallis in Bengal, p.174.

regulations of 1792 were confirmed in the Cornwallis Code with one important amendment. The police were made liable for any acts done in their official capacity. This police re-organization as undertaken by Cornwallis was certainly better than what existed before, yet it was not an efficient system and had to be changed subsequently in certain important details.

Cornwallis was also responsible for introducing certain wholesome changes in the administration of jails. By a Regulation of 3rd December, 1790, the management and control of the jails was taken over from the Indian officers and made the responsibility of the European magistrates. Some gross abuses with regard to the controlling of the prisoners were removed. Some new jails were built. More emphasis was placed on the government's responsibility to look after the health and morals of the prisoners.

(v) Organization of the Civil Service

That the servants of the Company were corrupt was something about which there were no two opinions. And this corruption permeated all ranks. As you will recall, even responsible officers of the Company like Clive and Warren Hastings were not immune from it. It was difficult to find to an officer who was honest. Almost every servant of the Company was interested in feathering his own nest. To accumulate as much of wealth as possible within the shortest possible time was a universal craving among the Company's servants. The Directors of the Company were fully conscious of all-pervading corruption, but they perhaps intentionally took no steps to check it. In a way they were responsible for it and even encouraged it. Their outlook was dominated by one overriding consideration, namely, to wrest maximum profits out of their investments. They, therefore, deliberately followed a policy of giving low salaries to their servants for they knew it quite well that India offered innumerable opportunities to their servants for making money by other means. Their approach was practical and dictated by enlightened self-interest. They knew it was difficult to prevent servants from carrying on private trade. That was too chronic an affliction to be cured. So where was the fun of paying their servants generously. The low salaries offered by the Company were, however, supplemented with handsome commission paid on the collection of revenue. The Directors connived at private trade. With income pouring in from three different sources (*i.e.*, salary, commission and private trade), many servants of the Company had made big fortunes. Let me cite the case of a British Resident at Banaras. He was paid a monthly salary of Rs. 1,000 but his total earning during one year alone amounted to more than four lakhs. However, the servants of the Company still grumbled. They complained that no pension awaited them on their retirement and thus, they justified their attempt to look around for supplementary sources of income. The Directors had no serious objection to private trade being carried on by their servants so long as this trade did not affect their interests. Being rather narrow in their outlook, the Directors believed the lower salaries to their servants would reduce the cost of running their Indian administration. This made corruption universally rampant. Cornwallis was greatly disturbed at it. He drew the attention of the Directors thus : "I am sorry to say that I have every reason to believe that at present almost all the collectors are under the name of some relation or friend deeply engaged in commerce and by their influence becoming the most dangerous enemies of the Company's interests" He took up the problem of cleansing the services seriously. He succeeded where Clive and Warren Hastings had failed. By his own integrity, honesty and sincerity of purpose, he set a noble example for his subordinates. He proved a stern enemy of all kinds of corruption, jobbery, patronage, favouritism etc. Many sinecure offices were swept off. For the prevailing practice of granting commission to the servants of the Company, he substituted liberal salaries. Salaries of Company's high servants were raised from Rs. 300 a month, to Rs. 15,000. They were also entitled to a nominal commission on collections on the basis of the amount collected rather than upon the length of their service. The total additional expenditure hardly amounted to 2 ½ lakhs per annum. Except for a house rent allowance of Rs. 150 per month, they were forbidden to receive any other perquisites and allowances. They were also disallowed

from carrying on any type of private trade. Cornwallis tried to engender a sense of responsibility among all the company's servants. He even expected the members of the Board of Revenue to observe the new decorum, the rules of service prescribed. He effectively curbed the ills of patronage. He firmly rejected all type of requests and solicitations from all quarters. No friend or relative or any one in any high position was to be employed under the company unless he possessed the requisite qualifications. Cornwallis displayed his strength of character when he refused to provide a job to one Mr. Ritso whose name had been recommended by this sovereign. His determination paid rich dividends. The morale of the Company's servants rose high; administrative purity and efficiency followed quickly. Thus, Cornwallis had an important contribution in making the future Indian Civil Service the real "steel frame" on which the British Empire in India rested solidly and securely for such a long time. "The covenanted services of the Company from that date assumed a new aspect"

The purification of the civil service unfortunately did not improve the prospects of the Indians who as stated earlier were not given any position of trust and responsibility in the administration. Racial discrimination was the dominant feature of Cornwallis' administration. It was grounded in Cornwallis' firm belief that Indians were inefficient and dishonest. So all responsible posts must go to the Europeans. He did not mince his words and expressed himself with brutal candidness when he wrote to the Court of Directors thus; "I think it must be universally admitted that without a large and well regulated body of Europeans, our hold of these valuable dominions must be very insecure." This discrimination against the sons of the country was confirmed in the Charter Act of 1793, which stated that "all vacancies happening in any of the offices, places of employment in the civil line of the company's service in India should, subject to certain specified restrictions, be filled from among the Company's civil servants." Hardly any greater injustice could have ben done to Indians! British rule remained a foreign rule in all respects. Never before were so completely ignored in their own country as far as their employment in high position in the government was concerned. It was an injustice of the harshest type. It rankled in the minds of the Indians. It was this incurable cancer which made any lasting understanding between India and Great Britain impossible. It was in one way a blessing in disguise. It sharpended national sentiment which ultimately enabled India to win her independence.

Dr. Tara Chand writes, " Cornwallis erected the edifice of a system of government under which India came to be ruled over by Britain for the next hundred and fifty years. The new administrative system was based on two principles, viz., perpetuation of the wealth of the subject for the benefit of the people of the ruling class". (*History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol I. p.309).

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LESSON 7

ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION (1765-1857)

Part II (1793-1857)

Introduction

In this lesson we shall discuss some of the changes introduced in the administrative set up of British India during the period between 1793 and 1857. A mere description of the various administrative changes would not be adequate unless we first understand the rationale and logic behind these changes. It is interesting to note that most of these changes were preceded by a shift in the British outlook on Indian problems. Between 1764-1856 one clearly sees three distinguishing ideas or tendencies, viz., "Conservative", "Liberal Tory" and "Radical". All these trends seem to have contributed significantly to the shaping of the attitudes of the British rulers to the administrative problems of India. The "Conservatives" were in favour of retaining the Mughal system of administration problems of India. The "Conservatives' were in favour of retaining the Mughal system of administration with minor modifications. The "Liberal Tories " wanted to strike a golden mean between the traditional and the occidental concept of administration. The "Radicals" wanted to remodel the administration entirely on western lines and to start from a clean slate. Though no sweeping generalization is possible, in can roughly be said that the "Conservative" point of view ruled supreme in the period between 1764-1818, the "Liberal Tory" approach between 1818-1828, and the "Radical" attitude in the years between 1828-1856. The Conservative attitude was shaped by two vital considerations : (i) the need to erect an administrative structure which would give stability to the country; (ii) the inherent strength of Indian institutions could provide such a stability. Thus protagonists of this school thought that both these objectives could be easily and satisfactorily achieved by restoring the administration. along traditional lines. However, it would not be entirely correct to say that they advocated the maintenance of *status quo* along with all its anomalies. Even Conservatives like Warren Hastings and Cornwallis could not accept the exising Muslim Criminal Law in its entirety and the methods of administering justice which appeared too uncivilized to them. Yet they would not dare to remodel the entire structure along western pattern. Apart from their faith in the intrinsic value and the inherent strength of the Indian institutions, they were "acutely conscious of the danger of provoking a violent reactions by unwise interference or hasty innovations". Thus in the period of conservative administration, the British were just "old Mughals writ large". The failure of this policy led to the rise of the "Liberal Tory" approach. The leaders of this school were mostly administrators like Metcalf, Munro, Malcolm and Elphinstone, who because of their long and varied experience of Indian administration were better qualified to discover the defects in the existing and traditional structure. They were inclined to favour the introduction of western reforms and innovations, but only if these led to the solidarity of the existing structure. Thus they sought a cautious blending of the old and the new. This hesitant approach was dismissed by the "Radicals" who advocated bold innovations. These "Radicals" honestly believed that the static Indian civilization must give way to the more virile western culture and there could be no real compromise between these two. Lord Dalhousie was the best representative of this school of thought.

The administrative system established by Lord Cornwallis served the purpose of consolidating the British hold upon India. However, there were a number of shortcomings in this system. It was unable

to give India a modern code of law. The eminent orientalist, Sir William Jones, was making serious researches into the laws of the country. Yet no definite code had emerged as yet. The judicial machinery of Cornwallis thus remained imperfect. Similarly, despite his most sincere efforts to improve the civil services he had done little for the low paid Indians in the lowest services. Moreover, exclusion of Indians from the higher services gave the administration a foreign colour. European officials remained far from the people, their needs and problems.

The Cornwallis system with all its merits and demerits remained intact for a long time. Any considerable departure from the established system was considered a sacrilege by the subsequent British rulers and administrators for many years to come. Even when some of the glaring defects of the system became apparent, utmost caution was exercised in adopting remedial measures. We shall now consider the changes effected in some of the important branches of the administration.

Judicial System

It was the judicial system which created a number of problems. The rulers were ignorant of the laws of the land. The litigants did not know the language used in the courts. Most of the judges, too, were ignorant of the languages of the people. Such a system could hardly bring justice to the common man. The complicated court procedures caused unusual delay in the speedy disposal of the cases. In such circumstances the ignorant and illiterate litigants were driven into the arms of professional lawyers, who began to thrive in the mess of legal complications.

As regards the absence of any code of law, the resolutions of 1793 and the regulations of 1790 had done something to amend what seemed to be the "greatest deficiencies of the existing system". Little change, however, was brought about in the existing law. Things were improved a little by defining the qualifications of the Indian interpreters of the law, who were attached to the various courts. But Cornwallis did not consider it was to effect any great innovation in the existing system.

The Permanent Settlement had led to many evil consequences. The efforts made to prevent the oppression of tenants and ryots led only to the complete blocking of the courts of justice. The attempts made to realise the revenue resulted in the frequent sales of estates. There was unprecedented increase in the business before the courts.

Sir John Shore adopted two measures. A regulation of 1795 modified the rules as to the actions of zamindars in collecting rents from their tenants and ryots. But as a result of this measure, their powers of coercion were increased. As a result of Shore's second measure, civil courts were established, and additional powers were granted to the Indians who were made responsible for deciding minor causes. Despite these measures, the delays in the settlement of suits continued, and so did the sales and the dismemberment of estates. The latter were due the numerous claims of exemption from the control of zamindars on the ground of taluqdari rights. Lord Wellesley in 1799 and Minto in 1807 made unsuccessful attempt to remove this defect. But by Lord Minto's time the difficulties were beginning to grow less but this was "due more to the greater goodwill of the zamindars than to the revised regulations. So long as the system was regarded with suspicion, the difficulties continued.

Cornwallis had advocated the cause of Permanent Settlement with the hope that the Company's servants would be freed from their absorption in the revenue work. But as a consequence of the working of the system, collector's task became more difficult. Moreover, the mass of revenue suits filled the Zilla courts beyond measure. It had now become imperative to solve this problem. Various measures to remove this evil were adopted during the years 1795-1802. Shore reimposed a fee on the registration of a suit. He also increased the number of courts and of the Indians qualified to settle the minor suits.

Under Wellesly the regulations as to the appeals were stiffened, and assistant judges were appointed to remove the pressure on Sadar Court. Wellesley thought it undesirable that the Governor-General and Council should continue to act as its judges. A reorganization therefore took place in 1805, three judges took over the responsibilities of the court. The reforms of Wellesley failed to stop the evil of delay. Further attempts at remedying the evil were made by Lord Minto. In 1807, the number of judges in the civil courts was increased to four, 'in 1811, it was enacted that the number of district judges should be increased as necessity occurred. Another step for remedying the congestion of business was the reorganization of the system of circuit. In 1793 the provincial court of appeal was closed. The judges now went on circuit in their capacity of circuit judges. A regulation of 1794 provided for the unbroken session of the court. A further change was made in 1797 when the trial of appeal cases during the absence of the judges on circuit was made possible. Similar congestion in the trial of criminal cases was met by the increase in the power of magistrates in petty cases, and by conferring on them the right of delegating power to their assistants. In 1807 were enacted special rules for the punishment of dacoits. These changes however, proved as mere palliatives.

In 1808 ended the unhesitating acquiescence in the Cornwallis system and the work of reform started a few years later. The Charter Act of 1813 made important changes in the position of the Company. It was the result of the careful examination of several years. In 1808 a Select Committee was appointed in England to enquire into the affairs of the Company. The Committee issued five reports and the fifth contained the detailed analysis of the Bengal system.

This period also saw the beginning of an enquiry in Bengal. It was started in 1809 by Lord Minto and it was continued by his successor Marquess of Hastings. One aspect of the reform movement embodied in the Charter Act of 1813 will be discussed a little later. The Court of Directors' Despatch of November 1814 emphasized the other aspect of the reform movement.

The Despatch of 1814 proposed a radical change. As there was pressure on the civil courts, a resumption by the collector of his power in civil justice had become absolutely necessary. Similarly, the difficulties experienced in the administering of criminal justice and in the regulation of the police demanded that the collectors should once more have magisterial powers and be responsible for the superintendence of the police. In order to improve the administration of justice, additional powers were given to the Indian agents. The pressure on the higher courts was to be relieved by increasing the criminal jurisdiction of the Zilla judges. It was hoped that the judicial interference of the Collector would ensure greater protection for the ryots.

The acceptance of the recommendations of this despatch would have meant a denial of the principles enunciated by Cornwallis. Such revolutionary changes were not acceptable to the Government of India which was still dominated by a Conservative spirit.

Even then much had been done to modify the existing system. During Lord Hastings' tenure of office, some measures were adopted which were a clear departure from the system established by Cornwallis.

Steps were taken to mitigate the evil of overburdening of the civil courts. The powers of Indian *munsiffs and Sadar Amins* in civil justice were defined in 1814 and extended in 1821. The Indian officers were, however, not vested with final powers and other measures were needed to remedy the position. The procedure in appeal was laid down by a Regulation of 1814. Steps were also taken to relieve the pressure in the higher courts. A separate court was established for the Western Provinces so as to diminish the burden of the Calcutta appeal court, but the most important steps were the appointment of a fifth judge and the systematic division of labour between the judges. Special commissions were established to administer justice in the new parts of the province. This was

done to meet the difficulties of the lesser courts. But the more effective measures for relief were the increase in the number of the Zilla judges, and the transfer of certain judicial functions to the revenue authorities. The collectors were enjoying considerable judicial powers in unsettled districts whereas in Bengal they were having slight powers. Even in Bengal, however, the collectors had some judicial business in connection with land revenue. In 1819 the collectors were authorized to deal with cases relating to claims to exemption from assessment, and in 1822 to rectify errors committed at the time of sales.

Least attention was paid to the Directors' instructions regarding the administration of criminal justice. Principles of Cornwallis still lingered on. That is why the separation of criminal justice from the work of revenue officers was maintained. The system established by Cornwallis had been in force for a long time. The Collectors of 1820 were practically all without experience in judicial affairs. Hence they could not be expected to administer criminal justice efficiently. Moreover, the collectors in the districts were assisted by the Indian tahsildars. Entrusting them with magisterial power would have amounted to violation of Cornwallis' principle of not vesting real powers in Indian hands. Only tentative steps could therefore be taken in this direction. In criminal justice, as in civil, more Zilla judges were appointed and a fifth member added in the appeal court. This was meant to face the challenge posed by the pressure of cases. But not much was done to meet the instructions to combine justice and revenue. In 1818, the first in this direction was taken when three collectors were specially empowered to act as magistrates. In 1821 was passed a permissive Regulation. By this Regulation such power might be granted to any collector at the direction of the Supreme Government. In the following years a few more collectors and sub-collectors were granted power under the Regulation.

Thus, when Lord Hastings left India, considerable changes had been effected. But "a good system of Law" which was the chief need, was not yet established. A vast body of new regulations had followed and the courts had piled up judicial precedents. No comprehensive code had been issued. Many improvements, however, had been made in criminal and civil justice. The position of collector had once more been changed. The collector was "climbing back to his position at the state's man of all work; and was well on his way to reach it in time to be the chief instrument of the next reform movement".

The arrival of Lord William Bentinck marked the beginning of a new era. The administrative system established by Cornwallis had been hastily adapted to the new conquered territories. Bentinck consolidated and reorganized this system. The provincial Courts of Appeal were showing signs of deterioration. Courts had become, in William Bentinck's own words, "resting places for those members of the service who were deemed unfit for high responsibilities". These courts were now abolished and their criminal jurisdiction transferred to the Commissioners of Revenue. This experiment, however, proved a failure. The sessions were then allotted to the civil judges who were " instructed to hold a monthly goal delivery and became the forerunners of the present District Judges". Their magisterial powers had of course to be transferred, and were given to the district collectors. The main feature of district administration was thus established. Power was concentrated in the hands of the European District Magistrate. He was now also the collector of revenue and head of the police. He was the Sessions Judge with criminal and civil jurisdiction.

The main weakness of Cornwallis Regulations was the exclusion of Indians from high judicial posts. It is true that the jurisdiction of the Indian officers had been slightly increased from time to time. But, the first important step was taken in 1827 when more subordinate judges were appointed. *Sadar Amins* were empowered to try suits involving double the former amount. In 1831, Lord William Bentinck established a superior type of Indian civil judges authorized to try cases involving property to any amount, and with salaries rising to £ 720 a year. The next ten years saw the appointment of Indian

Deputy Collectors in 1837 and Deputy Magistrates in 1843. As deputy collectors they were able to pass sentences of imprisonment up to three years. In this way some real recognisation was given to the principle contained in the charter Act of 1833. "Be it enacted that no native of the said territories. ..... shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or, any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment in the said country.' Upto the time of the revolt of 1857,"the employment of Indians was being extended at a moderate scale". Nearly every civil case was by this time being tried originally before an Indian judge.

Land Revenue Administration

An inevitable result of the foundation of the British administration was the dissolution of the existing land systems. There was a period of innovations between the process of destruction and reconstruction. It was Lord Cornwallis who gave the Permanent Settlement to Bengal which has already been discussed elaborately. With its advantages and disadvantages, the Permanent Settlement continued to exist where it was introduced. The extension of the British Empire, however, necessitated a new type of administrative organisation based on different systems of land revenue settlement. The wars in the south brought an accession of territories where the Zamindari tenure was not in general use. It was confined to isolated tracts and to local chiefs. Under these circumstances, the advisabilty of settling the lands on the model of Bengal was seriously questioned. A similar problem arose when after the defeat of the Marathas, the British became masters of the Deccan.

Moreover, the shortcomings of the Zamindari settlement of Bengal, i.e., Permanent Settlement were becoming more and more apparent. The expectations from the system had not been justified. The landlords, as was hoped, did not prove to be warm and zealous supporters of the government. Immediately after the Permanent Settlement, both in Bengal and the Northern Sarkars, "a struggle commenced between the local governments and the zamindars. Instead of co-operating in the matters of administration, the latter embarrassed the government in all possible ways. The zamindari areas were infested with robbers and decoits and the Zamindars promoted bribery and corruption and connived at crime." As a result of the working of the system, there was loosening of the bond between the government and the people. So long as the rents were paid regularly by the Zamindar, the Government left him free to do what he liked and the collector remained in the background. There was lack of knowledge of the interior and of real contact with the masses. This adversely affected government's capacity to control the country and its authority was weakened. Another disadvantage of the system was that it deprived the state of a share in the increase of rent which was the result of the improvement of the economic conditions. The entire unearned increment was handed over to the Zamindar and the settlement while it "favoured a handful of landholders, completely ignored the interest of vast mass of landholders, whose resentment and dissatisfaction seemed to evoke no sympathy."

Munro exposed the weaknesses of the Permanent Settlement. The home authorities were gradually convinced of the unwisdom of extending it to other parts of India. The Select Committee appointed to review the affairs of the East India Company, preceding the renewal of Charter of 1813, favoured the introduction of the ryotwari system.

The Ryotwari System

The ryotwari system was mainly effected in the territories of Madras, Bombay and Sind. Munro introduced this system in all the unsettled areas of Madras in 1820. Under this system, "there was no middle-men like the landlord, the *lamberdar or the taluqudar* who mediated between the ryot of cultivator and the Government. This system was a direct one. A thorough survey of each village was made and a descriptive register was prepared with an account of every ryot's holding. The holdings were all numbered and given an identity. The owner's name was entered and his rights of occupancy

acknowledged, his right to transfer his land and the right of inheritance for his progeny were maintained."

The lands were classified by the Government according to the fertility and nature of the soil and the crops produced. The average production for a number of years formed the basis for the ascertainment of the grain-value of the land. That,in its turn was converted into money-value. Deducting the average annual cultivation cost from the said value, a net income from the land was ascertained. Approximately one-half of the said value was fixed as the maximum revenue for the land.

The ryotwari system established the closest relation between the people and the government, for the system required the realization of rents by the officials directly from each holding. It was necessary that each field should be measured and surveyed and its boundaries determined and boundary marks set up. It involved the preparation of field maps and the taluq maps and a whole department of the Surveyor-General to carry out these duties.

The government had originally intended to make the assessment of revenue as permanent as under the Permanent Settlement. The idea was later on given up. It was felt desirable to make periodical settlements. But this gave sense of insecurity to the ryots. They were apprehensive of higher assessment and distrusted new settlements. There was yet another defect in the system. The ryot remained the master of his land so long as he paid the revenue. But when he failed to pay, the government could take over his land in its direct possession. The assessments were sometimes at a high rate. The government tax collectors often practised oppression on the individual ryots. Thus, "the direct relation between the state and the tiller was not always an unmixed blessing".

The ryotwari system was supposed to be a close approximation to the old Indian system prevalent in these regions. But actually, it created private property in land, destroyed the unity and cohesion of village life, and exposed the cultivator to the ruthless oppression of the revenue authorities who demanded and enforced payment of the land revenue even in years of drought."

The Mirasdari System

Lionel Place, Collector of the *Jagir* in South India, found the villages owned in inheritable shares by mirasdars who exercised the right of disposing of their shares by mortgage, gift or sale. The principal Mirasdars had been accustomed to act together on behalf of the village, and "It was found convenient and profitable to abandon the old practice of renting out the jagirs in parcels to speculators, and to settle instead with the mirasdars of each village for a lump sum calculated to be equivalent to the state's share of the crop." The system worked smoothly enough and gave an increasing revenue during the administration of Place as he made sincere efforts to restore the efficiency of the village accountants. He acquired close knowledge of the affairs of villages under his control. A similar system was successfully tried in the government village in the Northern Sarkars.[1]

The Mahalwari System or Village Settlement

Lord Hastings' victories in the last Maratha War brought the Gangetic valley under the British rule, and subsequently the annexation of the Punjab, Avadh and Nagpur completed the British dominions in India.

The settlement of these regions naturally followed. Here a new system was tried which borrowed some features from the Zamindari system of Bengal and some of the ryotwari system of the Deccan but also embodied some original elements of its own. This system is known as Mahalwari or Village Settlement.

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1. Cambridge History of India, Vol. V. pp. 468

Under the Mahalwari system, the state fixed revenue not for ever, but for a limited period of thirty years at some places and twenty years at other places. The settlement was not made with the individual landlords as under the Permanent Settlement, but with the village as such. The villagers as a whole became responsible for the payment of revenue for the whole village. An arrangement on behalf of the entire village to pay the stipulated amount of revenue was signed by the village headman known as *lambardar*. Whatever amount of revenue the whole village was required to pay was paid by the individual villagers according to their respective holdings. Thus "the villager himself was the owner of the land as long as he paid his revenue for the land".

The government settlement officers were made responsible for the assessment of land revenue. They, in consultation with *lambardar* and the village bodies, fixed the revenue. The tenants had with them their records of right and the village was in possession of land charts, maps and settlement of individual holdings. Since the Settlement rested on the periodical assessments, the government had the advantage of ascertaining the productivity of catagories of land from time to time." While fixing the land revenue, the yielding capacity of the soil, the nature of the crop it produced and the prices of such crops were taken into account. The assessment once made was continued for the full term of the settlement.

The Mahalwari system, however, had a great drawback. The *lambardar* and the other village headman enjoyed the privilege which they misused at times for their self-interest. They were directly in touch with the government since they had entered into an agreement with it. The *lambardar* and some headmen therefore acted as intermediaries between the government and the villagers. The small tenants thus reduced to an inferior position were often oppressed by the powerful headman. They were used as cultivators by the big possessors of village lands. These subordinate cultivators "actually got just a subsistence remuneration and the rest of the produce went into the hands of the big owners."

The introduction of the Mahalwari system, however, did not disrupt the community's organisation as the settlement was made with the village and not with the individual.

Taluqdari System

The Mahalwari system did not cover the whole of the Uttar Pradesh. In the district of Oudh, there existed another system known as *Taluqdari System*. Under it a number of villages were put under the taluqdari system. The government entered into an agreement with the taluqdar for a period of 30 years. The taluqdar collected the stipulated revenues from different villages put under his charge and deposited them with the government, after deducting the cost of collection of the revenues and his own remuneration for the arduous work. Unlike the Bengal Zamindars the Oudh taluqdars had no real rights over the lands under their charge. Moreover, they worked as revenue collectors for the fixed period of the settlement, and not in perpetuity.

The various land systems introduced by the British brought for the cultivators considerable hardship. The decline of small scale industries in the country created excessive pressure on land, and the growth of population increased that pressure considerably." The government adopted a passive attitude towards the condition of the peasantry which kept the latter in a state of helplessness and despair. Finally, there being no improvement or development in the manner of the agriculture, the same outmoded methods of cultivation continued and degenerated further and further. The main difficulty arising out of the various land systems was a sense of insecurity on the part of the peasant.[1].

Other Trends of Administrative Reorganisation

The successor's of Lords Cornwallis were more concerned with the preservation of order than

1. A Social, Cultural and Economic History of India: P.N. Chopra, B.N. Puri and M.N. Das, Vol. III, p 182.

with the adjudication of rights. The general trend was in the favour of exercising personal discretion, and a change from civilian to military rule. The result was "a concentration of authority which bordered on military discipline."

Under the Cornwallis system, the magisterial and police control of a district was vested in the district magistrate, and the collection of revenue in the collector, under the supervision of the Board of Revenue at Calcutta. The first breach in the system was made in 1829 when the post of commissioner was created and wide powers were entrusted to him. Each commissioner was placed in charge of a division. The work of the collectors in the division was supervised by him. He was also to superintend the administration of judges. He became a judicial officer too, for the duties of the session judge and the Provincial Courts of Appeal were transferred to him.

Later on, finding the charge of a Commissioner too heavy, the Commissioner's criminal jurisdiction was transferred to the district judge, and the magisterial duties of the judge were handed over to the collector. Thus, the collector came to combine in himself the function of magistracy, police and judiciary in rent and revenue cases. An hierarchy of subordinate staff was established to assist the collector."

The paternalistic principles of union of powers and of individual and personal responsibility replaced the ideas of the separation of powers and collective responsibility.

There were some changés in the police organization. The village chowkidars were responsible to Daroghas of the thanas for their duties. They being dependent upon the Zamindars for their maintenance did not prove equal to the task. They failed to suppress crime and the countryside continued to be infested with gang robbery. The Zamindars had been deprived of their authority and were unwilling to again shoulder the responsibility of maintaining law and order. The office of the Provincial Superintendent of Police was created in 1803 but terminated in 1829. The work was next entrusted to the commissioners. Later on, the collector-magistrates were made responsible for the supervision of police arrangements. The actual duties of crime-pervention, however, remained in the charge of the district superintendents of police who were assisted by the Daroghas.

Modernising Trends Under Dalhousie

It now remains to discuss, some of the steps by which Lord Dalhousie "converted the stationary India of Lord Wellesely into the progressive India of our days."[1]

Dalhousie came to India as a convinced Westernizer. His measures would be western measures carried out by western agency. For him the promotion of civilization and the promotion of western reform were the one and the same thing. He believed that the western administration and western institutions were superior to the Indian. "The consciousness of conquest competed with the sense of moral mission and increasingly combined with the latter to produce a sense of ingrained superiority." Dalhousie not only conquered provinces and annexed large tracts, he also engaged in "incessant reforming and constructive activity. He has been called the founder of modern India," for he was the first to envisage a modernized and westernized India as a practical proposition rather than a far off dream."[2]

The expansion of British demonions under Dalhousie created new problems: territorial, racial and political. The inclusion of the Panjab, Oudh and Nagpur in the empire changed the strategic basis of British power. The problem was how to consolidate the dominions situated at unprecedented distances

1. *Marqis of Dalhousie* : William Hunter, p. 124.
2. *The Oxford History of Modern India* by Percival Spear, p.216

from the British military base on the sea-board. The racial problem was how to adapt the system of government to warlike tribes and nations. There was also a political problem. The British dominions now included the distant territories of the Panjab, Burma and Berar. The supervision of the Governor-General was hitherto confined to Bengal only. Now the problem was how to extend this supervision to the distant territories just mentioned—so as to enable him to maintain watch and ward over them. The Governor-General of India was also the governor of Bengal. As such he was the head of the local government of Bengal. The problem was solved by the Act of Parliament of 1853. The Governor-General was relieved of the functions as the Governor of Bengal. A lieutenant-governor was appointed for the administration of the lower Provinces.

Under then system thenprevailing, the great bodies of troops had been massed round Calcutta and the headquarters of the Bengal artillery were located at Dumdum about 7 miles away from Calcutta. The conquest of the Punjab transferred the main military interests to the distant north. Dalhousie, therefore, removed the headquarters of the Bengal army to Meerut about a thousand miles inland. With the alteration in the political and military centre of gravity, there was a general movement of troops towards the Punjab. Gradually, Simla in the Punjab grew into the seat of government for most part of the year. From here Dalhousie began to watch the newly annexed territories. In 1865, the permanent headquarters of the army were transferred to Simla.

While organising the administration of the four great new provinces (the Punjab, Burma, the Nagpur territories and Oudh) Dalhousie combined civilian and military officers in the personnel of the local administration. He devised a system of judicial and revenue administration from two sources. First, local usages and customs, so far as they did not contravene the fundamental principles of humanity. Second, the simpler class of British laws, enactments and regulations for the revenue and judicial management of the country and for its police. These were derived from the system at work in the Presidencies. The indigenous system formed the groundwork of the whole. The superstructure was shaped upon the models at work within British India.

The system described above was meant for the NON-REGULATION PROVINCES. The system was not entirely new. Examples were there, (although on a small scale), before Dahousie. The system was fully developed after Dalhousie's time. Non-Regulation system "was the child of Dalhousie, devised by his swift and comprehensive mind for his conquests and annexations."[1] Under this system a man hardly experienced any change in his daily life except when he had to deal with the Company's revenue officials or went to their courts.

The essential feature of Dalhousie's system was the concentration of all powers-judicial, executive, revenue and police in the hands of the district officer—the Deputy Commissioner, as the head of the district, aided by assistants. At a later stage, some changes had to be introduced in the Non-Regulation system. As the country settled down, the need of a more detailed administration was keenly felt. The Chief Commissioner developed into a Lieutenant Governor. Thus local governments with large powers of independence were created for the Punjab and Oudh. With the growth of trade and industry and the consequent prosperity of the people, there started the process of gradual separation between the judicial and executive functions of the Deputy Commissioner in Dalhousie's Non-Regulation provinces. This separation of powers would have weakened the hands of executive had it been carried out in the provinces shortly after their annexation.

Lord Dalhousie's work in India was not merely a work of conquest; it was also a work of consolidation. He created a new mechanism for amalgamating the augmented British dominions and literally bound together the old and the new territories by bonds of iron. He was the father alike of the railway and telegraph in India.

1. The Marquies of Dalhousie : Sir William Hunter, p.129.

Dalhousie wrote his famous railway minute in 1853. The scheme "one of the most comprehensive and far-seeing which ever issued from a human brain", remained the basis of the whole railway system of India for a long time to come. It convinced the home authorities of the need and feasibility of railways and laid down the main lines of their development. He envisaged a network connecting the main internal cetres with the ports and providing both for strategical needs and commercial developments. Before he left India, 200 miles were in operation and had proved a success.

The introduction of railways provided Dalhousie with an opportunity "to throw the country open to private enterprise and to English capital, in a degree before unknown." This inaugurated a new industrial era in India. The railways were not allowed to be made a purely government undertaking. He offered them to public companies under a system of state guarantee.

This was Lord Dalhousie's masterly idea. He would consolidate the newly annexed territories of India by this railways and "immensely increase the striking power of his military force at every point of the Empire." as well as "he would use the railway construction as a bait to bring British capital and private enterprise to India..."

Dalhousie, from the beginning, was very particular about the mercantile aspect of his railway routes. He believed that immense commercial and social advantages would follow the introduction of railways. There were areas teeming with surplus produce. This produce could be conveyed to places where it was needed most. India could supply cotton to the British textile industries. Given fitting means of conveyance it could be transported from distant plains to the ports adapted for its shipment.

Dalhousie's commercial reforms were no less important. He threw the coast of India open to the world and also facilitated the approach to them by light houses, marine surveys and improved harbour accommodation. Merchant Service Acts were passed to improve and regulate the condition of sailors. Some steps were taken to check adulteration practised in the cotton trade. Lord Dalhousie's measures gave unprecedented impetus to the Indian trade. During his tenure of office, the export of gains multiplied by more than threefold and the "new articles of the commerce poured into the markets, under the influence of improved internal communication and open ports."

As a result of the vast increase of productive industry, the Indians were enabled to purchase the manufactures of England on an unprecedented scale. The impart of cotton goods into India rose from 3 million sterling in 1848 to 6-1/3 millions in 1856. The total imports of merchandise and treasure increased during the eight years from 10½ to 25¼ millions.

Dalhousie, however, was not content to bind together the empire of India by the iron chains, two other powerful instruments of consolidation introduced into India were the telegraph and a half-anna post. The railways and the telegraph proved immensely helpful to the British during the Revolt of 1857. The telegraph "flashed back the details of the day's battle or assault to the Governor-General in Calcutta before he set down to dinner.'

The electric telegraph was not to remain merely the basis of British military policy in India ; it soon became the basis of the modern mercantile system of India ; it has facilitated the modern commercial activity. Calcutta and Bombay, situated on the opposite coasts of India and separated by a great distance "are within a few minutes speaking distance by wire, and discuss their hourly transactions with each other throughout the day."[1]

1. Ibid p. 139.'

Another major changé effected by Lord Dalhousie was the abolition of old incompetent Military Board and the creation of a great Department of Public Works. The Public works expenditure was increased to 2½ millions sterling in 1856. He not only gave "roads, canals, court-houses, jails, treasuries and the whole fabric of civilised administration to the Punjab ; no other province escaped his attention, and the routes throughout all India, with their strongly constructed bridges and permanent metalled ways, date their improvement from him. "His public works comprised the extension of irrigation projects, such as the Ganga Canal, which had already been begun. He had a great road programme to his credit ; of which the most striking monument was the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar.

Lord Dalhousie was also the father of cheap and civilized postage. In 1853-54, "he swept away the whole antiquated fabric of obstruction and replaced it by the modern postal system of India." He levied a uniform system of half-anna for all letters not exceeding half a *tola* in weight and for all India. Instead of Indian letters being charged at different rates according to distance, they were now carried throughout India, at a uniform rate of half an anna, for half the *tola*. The system made the Post office self-supporting and instead of "being a chronic drain on the finances, Dalhousie's reform made it self-supporting, and has of late years converted it into a source of actual revenue, so far as its operations in British India are concerned." The social results of the new system were however more important. It has done perhaps more than the railways or telegraphs "in revolutionizing the old stagnant and self-isolated life of India." In fact, it created the habit of letter writing on a great scale among the people of India.

The India of railways, the telegraph and the state-inspected schools," that is to say, the India created by Lord Dalhousie, is the India of today."

Besides his great measures aimed at conquest and consolidation, Lord Dalhousie "kept a firm although liberal hand upon the public expenditure of India. From 1842 to 1862, these were seventeen years of deficit, and only four years of surplus, in the Indian exchequer. These four years (1850-53) were the central years of Lord Dalhousie's rule. Yet he spent liberally upon the Public Works. He did not shrink from an increase of expenditure when the increase as absolutely requried. There was an increased expenditure on army and civil administration. This increase of expenditure was more than met by the increase in revenue.

During the period 1848-1856 the total revenue of India rose from 24½ millions to over 30¼. Lord Dalhousie "swept away the cumbrous lumber of the antiquated Boards, alike in the commissariat and Public Works, and replaced them by vigilant departments under individually responsible Heads."

A review of Dalhousie's administration as a whole betrays the impress of a "masterly as well as a masterful mind." Percival Spear admirably sums up Dalhousie and his role as a moderniser of modern India, "he lacked imaginative sympathy with tradition and the Indian point of view. But for all that he was filled with a vision of the modern India that was to be ; he exhausted his strength in the service of that India and did more, perhaps, than any single man to bring it about. Wellesley had acquired much territory and displayed singular drive and purpose but Dalhousie spent more energy in organising than in acquiring. Bentinck had the vision of a westernized India, but while he could do little more than put up a few sign-posts, Dalhousie laid down the roads of progress. Curzon was a great systematiser but Dalhousie created what Curzon sought to perfect ..... His weakness was that of going too fast. He was a sick man in hurry. He was the apostle of a westernized India with an apostle's zeal and faith. He lacked the sympathetic understanding, the intuitive, knowledge of how his measures would appear to those they affected. For this he paid the penalty of the Mutiny disaster..."[1]

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3. *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V. Ed. by H.H. Dodwell : Chapter XXVI. pp. 456-461.
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1. P.N. Chopra
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2. Sir William Wilson Hunter : *The Marquess of Dalhousie*
Chapters IX, X and XI

LESSON 8

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF BRITISH RULE IN INDIA BEFORE AND AFTER 1857

Pre-British Village Economy

British rule had a far-reaching impact on Indian economy. The centuries old economic structure was shattered and transformed. The underlying purpose of British economic policies in India was to subordinate Indian economy to the needs of British economy. This led to the gradual transformation of Indian economy into a colonial economy. In this respect, the British conquest of India differed from all previous conquests. The previous conquerors had established their political authority in order to control state revenues, but they had left the economic structure of the country relatively undisturbed. Moreover, they had, in course of time, become a part of the Indian social, cultural and political life. In particular, the basic economic pattern of the self-sufficient village economy had continued almost unchanged. The village artisans, viz., the black-smiths, the carpenters, the cobblers, the potters and village servants such as the watchmen and some other economic groups like the barbers, the priests and he washermen were integrated into the village economy along with the cultivators and were mutually dependent as well as integrated. The chief contact of the village with the outside world was in the form of the payment of land revenue or the export of economic surplus either inside the state or outside. Consequently, the village life and economy continued more or less unchanged even when the political rulers changed. The change of rulers only meant, so far as the peasant was concerned, a change in the personnel of those who appropriated or took possession of the economic surplus of the peasants. The British conquerors differed fundamentally in this respect. They disrupted the traditional village economy. They failed to become an integral part of Indian like even after a period of nearly 200 years. Up to the end, their rule was rooted in Britain and British interests. The interests of British economy remained dominant. The Englishmen remained perpetually foreigners in India. The result of this subordination of India economy to the British needs was that Indian economic backwardness was perpetuated and intensified. When the British left the country, they left India in a highly undeveloped condition economically.

Zaminidari System

After the English East India Company had established its hold over Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, they made many experiments with regards to the realization of land revenue from the cultivators. Lord Cornwallis made the Permanent Settlement in 1793. The Zamindar was declared the absolute owner and proprietor of his estate. He was permitted to appropriate the whole of the rents of himself after paying the dues of the Government. To begin with his share was small. He was given only 11% of the rents. He was obliged to part with the major portion of his income to the Government. While the land revenue demand by the Government was fixed, the rent realised by the landlord from the cultivator was left unsettled and unspecified. This provided the Zamindars an opportunity to squeeze the cultivator to the maximum of his capacity. Eventually, the Permanent Settlement benefited the Zamindar more than the Government. With the growth of population, the extension of cultivation, the rise of prices, and the growing scarcity of land, the position of the Zamindar improved. His title to the succession of an estate did not require any payment. He could transfer or alienate his landed property by sale, mortgage or gift without requiring

the permission of any superior authority. He was relieved of the vexatious regulations of the Mughal administration which very much limited his authority and obliged him to collect cesses over and above the land revenue demand and to furnish accounts of receipts and disbursements. The British-created Zamindar was divested of all political and public duties. He ceased to be the feudal aristocrat of the Mughals and was transformed into a petty capitalist. The change in the status and function of the Zanindar also affected the socio-political organisation of the Indian village, destroying eventually its isolation and self-sufficiency. Two principal results of the change were the creation of absolute property in land and its transfer into the hands of the new moneyed class which had no interest in land other than that of getting the maximum return on the investment and the sub-infeudation of estates and holdings so that there emerged a chain of middlemen and intermediary rent-receiving interests between the original landlord and the cultivator.

In 1793, the share of the English Company out of the total rents collected by the Zamindars came to 89 per cent while in England at the same time, the Government demand amounted to between 5 per cent to 10 per cent of the net rental. The share of the Indian Zamindars was the barest minimum to compensate him for the troubles of collection, for discharging obligations towards the Government and for defraying his personal expense. The worst feature of the system of realisation was that the Government revenue had to be deposited absolutely punctually. If the payment was not made at the stroke of the hour, the Zamindar was dispossessed and a part of the whole of the estate was seized and sold by public auction. No excuse was entertained and no allowance was made for his difficulties. While the Government realised its dues at the point of bayonet, the Zamindar had no power to compel the cultivator to pay the rent in time. The result was that a large number of Zamindars were deprived of their estates during the first few years of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal. In 1796, lands carrying a rental of Rs. 28,70,061 on the roll and representing one-tenth of three provinces were sold in one year. In the two years between 1796-7 and 1797-8, the sale of estate yielding Rs. 14 lakhs and 22.7 lakhs respectively was effected and "by the end of century the greater portion of the estates of the Nadiya, Rajshahi, Vishnupur and Dinajpur Rajas had been alienated. The Burdwan estate was seriously crippled and the Zamindars of Birbhum were completely ruined. A large number of smaller Zamindars also met with the same fate. To help the Zamindars, the Government issued the Regulations of 1799. The new law invested the Zamindar with arbitrary powers to eject the cultivator, attach his agricultural stocks and implements for non-payments for non-payment of arrears and start other proceedings against him with a view to press him to his utmost capacity.

Another effect of the Permanent Settlement was the sub-infeudtion of Zamindari rights. This happened very quickly. In 39 districts of Bengal and Bihar, the number of estates multiplied in 20 years to the figure of 1,10,456. In 20, years, the number of estates doubled in the Patna division and trebled in the Tirhut Division. The tendency to sub-division was increased by the Regulations of 1799. Not only the units of cultivation but the rent-collecting rights were also subdivided. The new Zamindari rights proved valuable property and only 20 years after the Permanent Settlement, the interest of the Zamindars which amounted to not more than 11 per cent of the revenue assessment were being sold for nearly 28 years purchase. The rent-receiving rights came to have a value which they did not possess before and were freely bought and sold in the market. Instead of the land being a source of production and livelihood for the cultivators it became an object of speculative investment and a source of profit to the moneyed classes. The Zamindar farmed out his revenue to a middle man who, in turn contracted with a sub-farmer and the latter also entered into dealings with a number of underlings and so on. It was in this way that a chain of rent-receiving was created. The evil became so great that some holdings in Bengal are said to have got at the time of abolition of Zamindari as many as 150 intermediary interests between the original landlord and the actual cultivator. Each sub-agent tried to squeeze the next man to the utmost and the

burden of all exactions ultimately fell on the cultivator. The new landlords, in most cases, were businessmen who purchased land in search for profitable investment of surplus funds. They were unfamiliar with the affairs of cultivation and were uninterested in the work of agricultural improvement which was left to the cultivator who had neither the means, nor the knowledge, nor the will to carry it out. The landlords were mere rent-receiving absentee businessmen who cared more for their rents than for the improvement of the agriculture. Instead of being natural leaders of the rural population, the landlords in India during the days of the English Company played the role of agents to the foreign political power. Against a guarantee of regular payment of a fixed amount of land revenue to the Government, they purchased the right of exacting whatever they could from the politically defenceless and economically weak peasantry.

Ryotwari System

The same was the case with Madras and Bombay where the ryotwari system was introduced. Instead of the Zamindar, the peasant became the proprietor. The recognition of private property in land gave him the rights of lease, mortgage and sale. However, the lot of cultivator did not improve as the Government took away most of the produce in the form of land revenue and very little was left with the peasant. Later on, the Government realised the folly of high assessments and lowered its demand. In Bombay and Madras, it was inexpedient to oust the cultivator and hence the money-lender brought the lands and crops under his control by means of giving loans to the peasant. This happened because the cultivator had to pay the Government demand exactly by a particular date even if the crops failed and he had noting with him. The peasant was forced to borrow from the money-lender. Interest rates were fixed so high that the cultivator was at best able to pay only the interest on the loan and the re-payment of the principal became practically impossible. The cultivator found himself helpless as he failed to get protection from anywhere. The courts established by the British Government accepted the documents and account books of the money-lenders as valid proof of the debt and awarded decrees on such false evidence as the creditor produced in the court. There was perpetual struggle between the money-lenders and the cultivators, the former trying to get the large proportion of the annual produce of the labour of the latter. The money-lender helped by British rules and British laws easily succeeded in achieving his object. The land was introduced by the British were responsible for disruption of the old agrarian structure and the creation of a new social order. The new rent-receiving landlords, money-lenders and businessmen formed the nucleus of the new middle class which emerged in country in the 19th century. The disposed cultivators, the village artisans and the village menials who had lost their customary ties with the agricultural population on the decay of the village communities and the introduction of competition instead of custom in the determination of the relation between the classes, became the proletariat of the country.

Mahalwari System—break-up of village communities

The land-revenue system established by the British in India and the assumption of all judicial and administrative functions by government officials destroyed the powers of the old intermediaries-zamindars, farmers and the village panchayats. This led to the break-up of that ancient social framework within which the agricultural population had lived for centuries. An attempt was made to stop the process of break-up of village communities but without success. Although the assessment was fixed on the village as a whole, individual rights in the land were recognised and guaranteed by the state. The growing pressure of population on agriculturel made land a valuable property and its price increased steadily. The opening of the market for agricultural produce and the growth of cash crops by the farmer also produced similar effects. The developments imposed a heavy strain on the rural organisation and the village communities faced out of existence in the Mahalwari areas of the north in the same way as they did under the Zamindari system in Bengal and

the Ryotwari system in the south. With the disintegration of the old village organisation, the old social bonds were broken. The joint family system and the panchayats became very weak. Cooperation was replaced by competition. Prices, rents and wages all came to be determined by contract between the buyers and the sellers and the collective life of the village was replaced by individualism. The modes of production and the structure of rural economy were changed. Instead of catering to the needs of the village population, agricultural production came to be adapted to the requirments of the external market. The need of the farmer for money increased and he began to produce case crops to get the same. Formerly, changes in his income were due to climatic causes only but now he was affected by the fluctuations in the market. A fall in the price of agricultural produce in any part of the world became as much a matter of concern to him as a failure of his crops caused by drought. The necessity of paying the revenue demand at the exact time forced him to part with his produce immediately after the harvest. Partly because of small holdings, partly because of heavy assessments and partly due to the rack-renting by the landlords and the high rates of interest charged by the money-lenders, the agriculturists failed to get any benefit from the change. The advantage was mainly gained by the village grain-dealer and the commission agent in the produce market. The opening of the village to outside imports gave a deadly blow to the village-crafts and industries. The village artisan lost his customers and the market for his wares. From an industrial worker, he was transformed into a landless labourer seeking work in agricultural, sometimes as a tenant and at other times as a wage labourer. Next to the peasantry, the weavers and the other village artisans came to constitute the most important part of the rural proletariat in the first half of the 19th century.

Heavy assessments

The heavy assessments made by the Government held up agricultural progress and reduced the cultivating classes to a state of abject poverty and resourcelessness. The theory of the early British rules was that agricultural land in India belonged to the ruler and the English Company by right of conquest, had become the owner of all land in the country. As the overlord, the Government was entitled to the whole of the economic rent which was found by deducting the cost of production from the value of crops raised. At the time of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal, the demand of the Government was fixed at 89 per cent of the estimated economic rent. The remaining 11 per cent was left to the landlords as compensation for the labour of collecting land revenue. In Northern India, under the provisions of Regulation VII of 1822, the revenue demand was fixed at 80 per cent of the net assets of land. In Bombay Presidency, prior to the first regular settlement of 1824-28, the demand of the state was fixed very high. Later on, the principle of limiting the Government share to 55 per cent of the net produce was accepted but that was only in name. In actual practice, the demand was much more.

In Madras, in the earlier settlement, the Government demand was fixed at 45 to 55 per cent of the gross produce of the land. Even if the cost of production was half of the gross produce, the assessment in the Presidency took away the whole of the economic rent. This was found to be oppressive and the Madras Government recommended to the Court of Directors to limit the assessment to one-third of the gross produce. Ultimately this principle was accepted for Madras Presidency. With such high rates of taxation, it was impossible for capital to accumulate in agriculture or any incentive to be left for the land-owner to make improvements in land. In the permanently settled areas, the Zamindar considered his function to be limited to the collection of his rent. The rent in these areas depended on the bargain that could be struck with the tenants rather than on the increase in the produce of the land. The result was that the landlords took away the whole of the economic surplus and left practically nothing with cultivator. In the Ryotwari areas, the Government played the role of the rack-renting landlord. The land revenue demand in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies was so high that it took away the whole of the surplus production of the land. The reason why the English Company adopted an oppressive land revenue policy was to meet the cost of their conquests and also to support the expensive system

of their administration. The expenditure of the Company was increasing year after year. India was required to bear the heavy cost of administration with her declining resources. With her trade and industry ruined by the foreign conqueror, the burden of taxation had to be borne by the agriculturists. Land revenue was the backbone of Indian finance in the days of the English Company and its rate was determined more by the requirements of the Government than what the cultivator could pay reasonably. The result was that the peasantry was ruined and agricultural declined to a state of extreme backwardness. The Indian cultivator struck to the soil and sweated for his subsistence as he had no alternative opening for employment. A growing population was condemned to subject on a declining agriculture. The misery of the masses, the increase in the incidence of famine and disease and the unemployment in the country were the inevitable results of the system.

Restrictions on Indian Trade

Towards the end of the 17th century, India was famous in the industrial field as a result of a high demand for Indian cotton goods in England, induced by a remarkable change in English fashions and modes of dress. The English East India Company took advantage of this opportunity and began to import large quantities of cotton cloth from India. About 1670, there was a sudden increase in the demand for textiles and this was immediately reflected in the orders placed by the Directors for purchase in India. In view of their popularity import duties on them were abolished in England in 1684 and that gave further impetus to the demand. With the prohibition of imports from France in 1688, the Indian calicoes emerged as the biggest item of imports of the English Company from India. Before this, the things bought by the Company were mainly saltpetre, indigo, pepper and other commodities, but after 1688, textile goods of various kinds were mostly imported in England.

This new development led to opposition to the English Company in England. The attack came, from the mercantilists and the woollen and silk manufacturers. The former attacked the Indian trade on the ground that it led to the export of treasure from England. What the country obtained in exchange for gold and silver was Indian muslins. It was also contended that the import of cotton goods destroyed the ancient woolen and the nascent silk industries and that resulted in unemployment and suffering among the weavers. The opponents of the Company painted a grim picture of the country as a result of the Indian imports. The result of this agitation was that the English Company had to withdraw from India the weavers, pattern makers and artists which had been sent from England to advise Indian weavers about European tastes and fashion and to persuade them to produce the patterns of cloth in great demand in Europe. The agitators were not satisfied with this concession and they demanded strict legislation to meet the situation.

The result was that an Act was passed in 1700 which provided that from 29 September 1701, all manufactured silks, Bengal's stuffs mixed with silk or herba, of the manufacture of Persia, China, or East Indies and all calicoes painted, dyed, printed or stained which may be imported in England, were not to be worn or otherwise used by the people of England. However, the Act of 1700 failed to stop completely the import of Indian calicoes into England. The result was that in 1702, an import duty of 15 per cent was imposed on plain cottons. That shifted the demand from coarse and cheap calicoes to superior muslins. As a result of further agitation, an Act was passed in 1720 which prohibited the wear and use of Indian silk and calicoes, printed stained or dyed in England under the penalty of £.5 for each offence on the wearer and of £.20 on the seller.

By this time, the cotton industry in England was developing rapidly. By the middle of the 18th century, it was well-established. The British printers were able to print goods, which were better in workmanship than Indian goods. As a result of the influence of restrictions on imports to Europe and

the growth of European industry, the Indian cotton trade with Europe began to suffer a decline from the middle of the 18th century.

Destruction of Indigenous Industries

After the British rule was established firmly in India, the political power was used by the British Government to destroy completely the arts and crafts of the people of India. They held their own till about the decade of 19th century. It was after 1820 that they suffered a heavy blow in the form of the fall in the foreign demand for their products.

During the early decades of the 19th century, neither the existing import duties nor the fall in the cost of production of cotton piece-goods resultings from the use of steam power and machinery enabled England to compete with goods from India in the markets of Europe. Indian price continued to be from 50 per cent to 60 per cent lower than English price. In order to create favourable conditions for its own goods. Britain used her political power to defeat the Indian goods. The duties on Indian imports were made prohibitive and Indian producers were saddled with crippling burdens. For example, the rates of duties on Indian calicoes were more than 68

goods on their accounts on the same favourable terms on which they purchased goods for the Company.

The English Company also manipulated the prices of raw material to the detriment of Indian producers. Bengal obtained its supplies of finer varieties of cotton from Bombay and Surat. The servants of the Company formed a private company consisting of the members of the Council at Calcutta in order to corner the supplies and to raise the prices in Bengal. They purchased cotton worth Rs. 25 lakhs from Surat, causing the shooting up of prices immediately from the prevailing range of Rs. 16 to 18 per maund to Rs. 28 to 30 per as those were arbitrarily fixed for him by the purchase agents of the Company, while he was forced to pay high prices for raw materials.

The result of these practices was that the craftsmen in India were ruined. The few adventures in the service of the Company made fortunes and retired to England but they did not care for the lot of the Indian craftsmen. The prices of Indian manufactures were inflated without any corresponding increase in the wages of labour. The quality of Indian products was debased. The history of early period of British rule in India is a tale of vandalism, plunder, oppression and destruction of Indian handicrafts and manufactures. The flourishing towns in India became desolate and the Indian artisans became mere wage labourers. It is pointed out that by 1789, the prosperous industrial province of Bengal was so ruined that it had been converted into "a jungle inhabited only by wild beats."

Trade and Commerce ruined

There was also the disruption of Indian trade. This was brought about by the institution of monopolies by the servants of the Company and its diversion from nature channels. The English Company had obtained exemption from the payment of transit and customs duties since the time of Furrukhsiyar, bit it had abused this concession. On the assumption of political power in Bengal, the English Company came to control the commercial activity of the country. Indian the foreign merchants were ousted from their business by discriminatory taxation and the establishment of trade monopoly in important commodities, under Lord Clive, almost the whole of the inland trade was the monopoly of the English Company and its servants. The system of transit duties was used to maintain those monopolies and save the monopolies from losses on their transactions. The internal trade was in the hands of the servants of the Company and big fortunes were made by the higher servants of the Company. It is pointed out that even the Governor-General took part in his traffic. These activities not only pushed out the Indians from internal trade but also defrauded the producer and the consumer by forcing the former to sell cheap and the latter to buy dear. The Bengal famine of 1770 was the direct result of the monopolies in trade. "The English manufactured a famine by buying up all the rise and refusing to sell it again except at fabulous prices."

It is true that transit and customs duties were levied on the inland trade even during the Mughal rule in India but when the British came to have power in Bengal, they increased the rate of transit and customs duties and also imposed customs duties on commodities that hitherto been exempt and raised new tariff and toll barriers. An elaborate machinery of transit and customs duties was built up in the country. The result was that all the rivals of the English Company, wether they were the Dutch, the French or merchants, were ousted from the inland trade of the country. They also added to the revenues of the Company which were used partly for meeting the military and civil expenses of the country and partly in making purchases of Indian goods for export to England.

In 1769, the Directors of the English Company issued instructions to the English authorities in India that the manufacture or raw silk should be encouraged in Bengal and manufactured silk fabrics should be discouraged. It was also recommended that the silk winders should be forced to work in the factories of the English Company and they should be prohibited from working in their own homes. The Dutch and the French were prevented by the English Company from making purchases of Indian goods from the territories of the English Company. The producers and artisans were prohibited from selling

their products to the agents of the non-British Companies. The Gomashtas or agents of the Dutch and French Companies were often beaten up and molested by the agents of the English Company.

The British industrialists were able to influence the Parliament to follow such a policy as would extend the market for British goods in India. The English Company lost its monopoly of trade with India in 1813 and the result was that Indian trade was thrown open to all Britons. After some time, the restrictions on the settlement of British nationals in the interior of India were withdrawn and permission was given to the British capitalists to settle and invest their capital in the cultivation of land in the plantation industries. The British exports to India during the period of 15 years after 1813 increased four times. A policy of free trade was imposed on India at a time when her industries were on the decline and required protection from outside competition. British goods were imported into India either free or at nominal rates of duties although Indian manufactures continued to be subjected to high import duties in England. There was an increase in India's foreign trade but that was not beneficial to the people of India who actually became poorer and poorer. While formerly India was the principal producer and exporter of cotton fabrics in the world, she now became one of the largest consumers of foreign manufactures. Cotton textiles were the major items of imports. That shows how political power was used by the Britishers to increase their trade and profits therefrom at the cost of the people of India. Instead of being the exporter of manufactured goods, Indian became the exporter of raw cotton, raw silk, food-grains, opium, indigo and tea. That resulted in agricultural shortages and famines in India. Foreign trade in India was an instrument of exploitation of the resources of country and her economic enslavement.

It was recognised by the British that they could not continue to flood the Indian market with their manufactured goods, unless India was able to pay for them in some shape or form. The remedy suggested was the colonization of India and stimulation of production by the settlement of British nationals in the interior of the country and the investment of British capital. Land was offered to the British nationals in India either as freehold or on long leases of 60 years for purposes of cultivation and establishment of plantation industries. Transit duties on the inland trade were withdrawn and the whole of the trade and industry of India was thrown open to foreign enterprises. However, India could not be colonised in the same sense as was the case in America, Australia and Newzealand as India was already a thickly populated and highly developed country. There were no waste lands for development. There was too much of fragmentation of land in India and the cultivation of small strips of land by Englishmen was neither possible nor profitable. The only crops they found suitable for their enterprise was coffee and tea. They were given hugh tracts of land for their development. The climate of India also did not suit the Englishmen and many of them died in India. This discouraged colonisation of India. Moreover, the Englishmen could not succeed in competition with the Indians in business enterprises located in the interior of the country. That was due to the fact that the people of India were frugal, industrious and intelligent. As the cost of living of the Indians was very low, they could under-sell the goods produced by the Europeans. The result was that the British failed to convert India into an English settlement. Their capital was invested only in those industries and commercial activities from which Indians were excluded on account of the special privileges given to the Englishmen Foreign capital was invested in tea and coffee plantations, indigo manufacture shipping foreign exchange banks and insurance.

The English Company constructed railways to provide cheap and easy means of transport in the country. With this help, goods manufactured in England could be sold in the interior of the country and the Indian manufacturers could be thrown out of the market. The rate of freight on foreign goods was kept very low and discriminatory duties were levied on the Indian goods. The result that goods manufactured in England were sold at cheaper rates in interior of India than the goods produced in India itself. Moreover, large sums of money were borrowed from England from the construction of railways and the people of India had to pay for them.

Drain of Indian Wealth

There was drain of wealth from India even during the period of the English East India Company. The English Company purchased Indian goods out of the revenues collected from Bengal and exported them to England. The purchase were known as investment but they were a drain of wealth from India. It has been estimated that during the first six years of the Company's administration in Bengal, the net revenue was £ 13,066,761 and total expenses were £ 9,027,609. This clearly left a balance of £ 4,039,152 which was remitted to England in the form of goods. In addition of this drain of wealth from India to England, the Englishmen made fortunes in India and they remitted all those amounts to England. The volume of economic drain of India continued to increase with the passage of time. The estimate of Willian Digby was that "probably between Plassey and Waterloo a sum of £ 1,000 million was transferred from Indian hoards to English banks".

It is worthy of notice that the drain of wealth from India to England helped the industrial development of England. There was a close relation between the industrial Revolution in England and the establishment of British rule in India. In the initial stage of the Industrial Revolution in England, the flow of wealth from India provided the funds necessary for Industrial production in England. This is clear from the fact that the battle of Plassey was fought in 1757. The flying shuttle appeared in 1760. In 1764, Hargreaves invented the Spinning Jenny. In 1779, Crompton invented the mule. In 1785, Cartwright patented the powerloom. In 1768 Watts invented the steam engine. It is contended that England would not have been bale to make much use of the introduction of implements of processes involves a large outlay. It is not worthwhile for any man, however energetic, to make the attempt, unless he has a considerable command of capital and has access to a large market. All these conditions were present in the second-half of the 18th century.

About the economic impact of the English Company on India, Dr. Tara Chand writes that it destroyed the trade and industry of the country. It started by excluding the Indian products from the European markets. It then broke up the India handloom and destroyed the spinning wheel. If flooded India with cotton manufactures. It oppressed the weavers and other artisans and perpetrated inhuman crimes to crush the rival producers. The British exacted a cruel and unjust annual tribute from India which prevented any accumulation of capital or improvements in agriculture or industry." The productive organisation of India was destroyed. The country which was once known for its riches all over the world was reduced to a state of poverty, disease, misery and starvation. By 1857, the work of economic revolution had been completed.

The view of Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad is that by the middle of the 19th century, the traditional industry in India was decaying. It did not possess the infrastructure to survive the shocks of competition and iniquitous state policy. The drain of wealth was continuous and its result was growing impoverishment of the people, greater strain on agriculture, increasing unemployment or under-employment and diminishing margin of security against famines. In the agricultural sector, heavy government imports had resulted in the extreme exploitation of the cultivator, sucking of his life-blood. In the industrial filed, there was decay and impoverishment. The wealth of the country was drained year after year to England. The Englishmen in India were getting richer and the national wealth of England was fast increasing. The Industrial Revolution in England was helped by the capital derived from India. English industries were developing so fast that England became the foremost industrial nation. The prosperity of England betokened poverty of India. India had become the victim of colonialism and all the evils of imperialism had become evident before the English East India Company was ended in 1858 after the Revolt of 1857.

The Post-Mutiny Period

Even when the Government of India was taken over from the English East India Company in 1858, things did not improve and the condition of the people of India became all the more worse. The

public debt of India continued to increase. It was £ 70 million in 1858 and during the next 18 years it rose to £ 140 million. By the end of the 19th century, it was near about £ 224 million. The expenses which increased the public debt of India were the cost of the Revolt of 1857, the price of he transfer of the right of the English Company to the Crown, the expenses of miscellaneous wars in China and Abyssinia, and every item of Government expenditure in London which remotely related to India. On his debt, India had to pay increasing amounts as interest. The total interest on public debt for 10 years ending 1887 amounted to more than Rs. 119 crores.

Wasteful Expenditure

There was a lot of wasteful expenditure which adversely affected Indian economy. Thousands of India troops were sent outside India and they were all paid out of Indian revenues. A large number of Europeans were employed in the army in India and they were paid fabulous amounts. A lot of money was wasted in aggressive wars and the Government of India had to pay for it. A reference in this connection may be made to the wars in Afghanistan and Burma. The people of India protested and contended that as England was going to benefit from these wars, she must also pay for the same but that was not acceptable to the British Government. A lot of money was spent in building barracks, military roads, railways, telegraphs and defence outposts after 1858. Mr. Maclean observed thus in the British Parliament; "We have formed a vast camp at Quetta : We have made roads and railways through various passes along the frontier and every year the expenditure goes on. Naturally the appetite for that sort of expenditure grows with what it feeds upon. The military engineers no sooner make one pass secure than they find another by which they can be taken in flank, and then an immense outcry is raised about the necessity of further defence...And the Amir of Afghanistan looked at all these fortifications, telegraphs and extension of railways with the utmost discomfort and jealousy."

The people resented the enormous waste of the money in the construction of the railways in India. Most of the railways were constructed for strategic purpose with no regard for economy. As a matter of fact, money was recklessly wasted. Huge amounts were borrowed from England and squandered in India, William Massey, a Finance Member of the Government of India observed : "The East India Railway cost far more if not twice as much, as it ought to have cost; enormous sums were lavished, and the contractors had no motive whatsoever for economy. All the money came from the English capitalist, and so long as he was guaranteed 5 per cent on the revenues of India, it was immaterial to brick." A similar observation was made by Lord Lawrence in these words : "I think it is notorious in India among almost every class...that the railways have been extravagantly made; that they have cost a great deal more than they are worth, ought to have cost, ' Critics maintain that railways "resulted in the exploitation of our resources by the indigo, tea coffee and other planter." The construction of military railways on a large scale brought no gain to the people. As almost all the capital was subscribed by the English capitalists, the entire profits were also carried away by them. About £ 5,750,000 were taken away in 1894-95 alone. Railways constituted a drain on India in the form of interest on capital, purchase of stock in England and excessive salaries paid to Europeans. It was pointed out than the 1897, 4,692 Europeans employed on the railways drew salaries amounting to more than Rs. 80 lakhs, whereas 206,047 Indian employees drew not even one-fifth of the above amount.

A lot of money was wasted on palatial buildings, costly Durbars and state ceremonies. The Governor of Madras had three official residences at Madras, Ootacamund and Guindy. These places were very expensive. A lot of money was wasted not only on the places of the Governors and Lieutenant-Governors, but also on their country houses, their residence in the hills, their banquets and entertainments, their retinue of servants, their carriages and horses, their special trains, their tents, their armies of retainers and camp followers. Blunt writes, "There is surely no country in the world where in the midst of such starvation, there is so much of waste; certainly none where the expense of it all is borne

so wholly and directly by the poor. In wonder whether anyone has calculated the number of miles of macadamised roads in the various Anglo-Indian cantonments not a yard of which has ever served any purpose beyond that of enabling the officers' wives to pay each other visits in their carriages ? I wonder whether anyone has calculated the number of absolutely useless clock-towers and Gothic memorials erected by Sir Richard Temple to Sir Bartle Freres, and Sir Bartle Frers to Sir Richard Temple in various Presidencies ? I wonder whether anyone has calculated how many hogheads of champagne the water-drinking ryot has paid for the last half century as an unaccounted item of his yearly budget ?"

Critics point out that while the Colonial Office was built at a cost of £ 1,00,000 and the same was paid out of British revenues, the Indian Offices was built at a cost of £ 5,00,000 and the same was paid our of the Indian revenues. The Indian Office establishment cost the Indian exchequer £ 6,00,000 every year. The India Office Library cost £ 70,000. The Engineering College was constructed at a cost of £ 1,00,000 and the same was paid out of the Indian revenues. There were many other institutions which were built in England at the cost of the Indian revenues and also maintained at the cost of India. All the highest paid jobs in India in all the departments were the monopoly of the Englishmen or Europeans. It is estimated that in 1885 there were 2,388 officers drawing Rs. 10,000 a year and upwards and out of them 60 were Indians and the rest were all Europeans of Englishmen.

The people resented the heavy cost of civil services in the country. The salaries and expenses of the civil departments of the Governments of India exceeded Rs. 112 crores in the ten years ending 1887 and Rs. 151½ in the ten years ending 1900-1. The salaries of the British officials of India were excessive and exorbitant. In India the Viceroy was paid Rs. 2,40,000 a year in addition to other allowance. The annual salary of the Prime Minister of England was Rs. 50,000 but the Leutinant-Governors in India got Rs. 1,00,000 and the Governors Rs. 1,28,000. There was also the drain of India's wealth to England. Every year, India had to pay about £ 16 million on account of Home Charges which were due from India to England on account of interest on debt, charges for civil administration, army, stores, guaranteed railways and Madras Irrigation Works. It is calculated that India remitted more than Rs. 50 crores in the ten years ending 1895-6. In addition to this amount, there were other charges of the army such as rewards, pensions and gratuities which had to be paid every year and those were Rs. 26 crores in the ten years ending 1887 and more than Rs. 35 crores in the ten years ending 1900-1. The pensions payable to the retired military officers in England consumed almost half the salt tax gathered from the whole of India. A Colonel of the Indian army retired on a pension of £ 1100 to £ 1200. India lost a lot of money on account of the exchange ratio fixed by the British Government of India. A part of the salaries received by the British and European officers in India was also sent by them out of India. There were European and English traders, capitalists planters, shipowners, gold miners etc,. who remitted every year huge amounts.

Dadabhai's Drain Theory

Dadabhai Naroji was the high priest of the drain theory and for years he carried on propaganda in its favour. His best exposition of the drain theory is to be found in his book entitled "Poverty and Un-British Rule in India". The view of Dadabhai was that the economic drain was the real, the principal and even the sole cause of the suffering and poverty of India all other reasons and causes being "only red herrings drawn across the path". Dadabhai maintained that the drain facilitated penetration and exploitation of India by foreign capital. By preventing the accumulation of capital within India and by this prostrating internal capital, the drain permitted foreign capitalists to come to the country without having to face any indigenous competition and thereby to monopolise and to reap all the advantages of India's material resources. The drain acted as the chief source of the accumulation of foreign capital invested in India because a large part of the drain was brought back to India as foreign capital. Dadabhai went to the extent of declaring that

the entire evil of the drain was due to the excessive employment of Englishmen in Indian administration.

Dadabhai made a comparison between the British rule in India and the previous rulers of this country. He pointed out that although the Mughals and the Marathas plundered the people of India, their wealth remained within the country and was spent inside it. Individual citizens might suffer or be oppressed and deprived of their wealth, but the country as a whole did not lose, the loss of one citizen being the gain of the other. As regards the British rule, Englishmen took wealth out of the country and spent if abroad. Under the old rulers, even if the burden of taxation was very heavy, the economic effect were not as disastrous for the people as the effects of taxation under the British because then all the money realised from taxes was spent in India. In the case of the British Government, the same was sent out of India. Even when invaders like Nadir Shah came, they looted the country and went back immediately and the loss of wealth was temporary. In the case of British rule, the drain was a part of the existing system of Government and was therefore ceaseless and continuous, increasing from year to year. The wounds were kept perpetually open and the drain was like a running sore. The former rulers of India was likes butchers 'chopping irregularly here and there but the mechanised efficiency of England was cutting the very heart of the country almost with sharp surgical knives. To quote Dadabhai, "The loot of India is a very sad one. Her conditions is that of a master and slave; but it is that of a plundered nation in the hands of constant plunderers with the plunder carried away clean out of the land. In the case of the plundering raid occassionaly made on India before the English came, the invaders went away and were long intervals of security during which the land could recuperate and become again rich and prosperous. But nothing of kind is true now. The British invasion is continuous and the plunder goes right on with no intermission and actually increases and the impoverished Indian nation has no opportunity whatever to recuperate."

The laisez-faire and free trade policies—their evil consequences

The Indians protested against the favours shown to British industry in India unmindful of the adverse effect on Indian industries. The English capitalist were the favoured children of the state. All the coalfields, gold mines, jute and hemp mills, breweries, coffee, and tea plantations and indigo factories were exclusively in the hands of the Europeans. Three-fourth of the woolen and paper mills, jute presses, oil mills, timber mills, cotton ginning and pressing factories etc., were owned by Europeans. All the shipping trade, railways and banks were in their hands. Mr Macleon rightly stated in the House of Commons in 1900, "All the renouncers of India may be said to be mortgaged to this country." Customs duties on the import of British cotton goods were abolished although that meant an annual-loss of crores or rupees to the Indian exchequer. Later on, when 5 per cent import duty was levied on cotton manufacturer from England, a similar duty was imposed on the cotton manufactures in India. India was held and governed in the interest of the British merchants. She was defenceless in matters where the English and Indian interests clashed. The people of India condemned the free trade policy followed by the Government of India with regard to the import of British goods. The view of Dadabhai Naroji was that free trade between India and England was something like a race between a starving, exhausting invalid and a strong man with a horse to ride on. There was a cry and clamour for economic justice.

The economic policy of the British proved disastrous for the people of India. The Indian shipping industry was aversely affected by the decision of the Court of Directors of the English Company to use only British ships and prohibit India ships for the purpose of trade. Indian paper industry was adversely affected by the British policy to purchase only British-made paper for use in India. The industry dealing with the damascening and inlaying of arms, weapons and shields which were very common in Kutch and Sind, suffered by removing the necessity for it and the prohibition of the use and possession of arms by Indians. Iron smelting industries in India also suffered. The village industries in India collapsed and

India became an "economic appendage of another country." Most of the handicraftsmen lost there means of livelihood and were reduced to the level of starvation.

Referring to the process of exploitation of India, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya wrote that the Indian cloth that was exported in shiploads by the English East India Company and brought plenty of money to village spinner and weaver, printer and dyer, Dhobi and trader, began to disappear with the import of Lankashire cloth, the value of which was only 3 lakhs in 1803 but shot up to 22 lakhs in 1829 and 72 crores in 1929. The two million weavers of India numbering a crore with their family member began to starve and with them 20 million spinners who fed the 2 million looms. The result was that four crores of people lost their occupation. The same was the condition of other craftsmen.

Industrial development in India was low and stunted and did not represent at all an industrial revolution or even the initiation of one. Even the limited development was not independent, but was under the control of foreign capital. The structure of industry was such as to make its further development on Britain. There was almost a complete absence of heavy capital goods and chemical industries without which rapid and autonomous industrial development could not take place. Machine tools, engineering and metallurgical industries were virtually non-existent. India was entirely dependent on England for technology. No technological research was carried on in the country.

H.B. Lamb writes about the economic development of India : "While the Government of India played an active, dynamic role in bringing about the revolution in transport and communications, it played a completely passive role in relation to the development of modern industry in India..India's rulers viewed with distress the prospect of India's becoming an industrial nation". Again, "It is partly this fact—that a wide variety of miscellaneous institutions were planted somewhat helter skelter without reference either to the needs of economic development or the peculiarities of the Indian scene—which accounts for the impression one receives in studying India of a lack of organic relationship between the whole and the part. India had the outer forms of many British institutions but not the inner core, the shadow but not the substance". "British industry was still pressing as best as it could right up to the end of British rule of prevent Indian industrial development in order to retain markets for British enterprise." Regarding the causes of the slow growth of industries in India, Wilfred Malenbaum wrote, :"They lie partly in problems of management and control and in finance; mostly however, they are rooted in the fact that the India was the colony of the important industrial and trading nation."

The *laissez faire* and free trade policies of the Government of India stood in the way of industrialization of India. The policy of *laissez faire* was foisted upon India although it was against her interest. The English did not do in India what they had done in their own country. It was by following a policy of protection that England was able to build up a large textile industry although she had no raw materials for the industry and the finished products had to be sold in distant markets entailing considerable transport charges. If the Englishmen honestly wanted the industrialization of India, they would have given protection to her infant industries at the beginning in order to allow them to stand on their own feet but that was not done. The new industries in India could not stand in competition against British manufactured goods which were freely imported into India.

India underwent a commercial transformation and not an industrial revolution. The trend was not towards an Indian industrial capitals economy but towards a dependant and underdeveloped colonial economy. The distribution of industry was extremely lop-sided and concentrated in a few regions and cities of the country. Even irrigation and electrical power facilities were very unevenly distributed.

The British Government controlled trade and industry purely with a view to foster British

interest. The growth of foreign trade did not contribute to the welfare of the Indian people because the balance of trade was merely to pay off the Home Charges etc. The growth of foreign trade was neither natural nor normal. The country was flooded with manufactured goods from Britain and forced to produce any export the raw materials which Britain and other foreign countries needed.

As a result of the British rule, India was transformed into a colony. It was a major market for British manufactures, a big source of raw materials and foods-stuffs and an important field for the investment of the British capitalists. Its agriculture was highly taxed for the benefit or imperial interests. The bulk of the transport system, modern mines and industries, foreign trade, coastal international shipping and banks and insurance companies were all under foreign control. India provided employment to thousands of Englishmen and nearly one-third of its revenue was spent in paying their salaries. The Indian army acted as the chief instrument for maintaining the far-flung Empire and protecting and promoting British imperial interests in various parts of the world. Indian economic and social development was completely subordinated to British economy and social development. During the very years when Britain was developing into the leading developed capitalist country of the world, India was becoming a backward colonial country. Dr. Tara Chand writes, "Imperialist Britain treated dependent India as a satellite whose main function was to sweat and labour for the master to subserve its economy and to enhance the glory and prestige of the empire."!

Era of Famines

It is true that there used to be famines in India even before the establishment of the British rule in this country but their frequency increased during the British regime. While previously there were on the average only three famines in a century or one famine in 33 years, now there was one famine in every three years and each famine affected vast regions of British India. While the people were suffering from famines, the Government of India refused to stop the export of food-grains from India to England. There was a terrible loss of life as a result of famines. During the famine of 1860, as many as 5 lakhs of people died. The number of deaths in the famine of 1866 was 13 lakhs. The famine of 1868-69 killed practically one-third of the whole of the population of Marwar and Bikaner and one-fourth of Ajmer and about 8 ¼ lakhs of people in areas between the Aravali range and the Chambal. There were 5 lakhs of deaths in Punjab and two and a half lakhs in the Central Provinces. In the Bombay famine of 1876-77, as many as one lakh of people died and 50 thousands out of them died in relief camps. British rule gave security from death by violence but chances of death by starvation went unnoticed.

De-industrialisation

With the spread of British rule in India, there was the disappearance of a large number of Indian rulers, chiefs, nobles, their countries and their armies which were the main customers of urban handicrafts. The Indian states and their armies were the chief purchasers of military weapons. The British army in India purchased all its military stores from Great Britain and that hit the Indian economy.

The British conquest led to de-industrialisation of the country and to an increased dependence of the people on agricultural and a decreased percentage of population earning their livelihood through industry. According to the Census Reports between 1901 and 1941, the percentage of population dependent on agricultural increased from 63.7 to 70 per cent. This overwhelming dependence on agriculture was an important cause of the growing poverty of the people under British Rule. As early as 1880, the Indian Famine Commission had observed, "At the root of much of the poverty of the people of India and of the risks to which they are exposed in seasons of scarcity, lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass

of the population and that no remedy for present evils can be complete which does not include the introduction of the diversity of occupations through which the surplus population may be drawn from agricultural pursuits and led to find the means of subsistence in manufactures of some such employments".

The Indian peasant did not get any return from the heavy taxation. The Government spent hardly any significant amount on agriculture. Expenditure on rural help, sanitation, water-supply or education was nominal. As a matter of fact, the Government spent almost its entire income on the administration, army and police, or in serving the interests of British trade and industry.

Growing influence of the money-lender

During the British rule, the money-lender began to occupy a dominating position in the rural economy. More and more land began to pass under his control. By the end of the 19th century, the money-lenders had become a major cause of the rural poverty and a major appropriators of the economic surplus extracted from the peasantry. Even in pre-British days in India, lending in cash or grain was common, but the money-lender played a subordinate role. He could not take possession of land. The pressure of the village community kept him within certain limits. There was no judicial or police machinery of the state which could enable him to acquire the property of a debtor. As a matter of fact, social pressure of the village prevented such an eventuality. Moreover, there was no shortage of land which was valueless without the cultivators. The result was that the amount of loans that could be offered was often limited by the value of his standing crops. British rule created favourable economic and political opportunities for the money-lender to operate and grow in the countryside. The high land revenue demand and rigidity of its collection drove the peasant to borrow at high rates of interest from the money-lender. Increased commercialisation of agriculture also increased his dependence on the money-lender. To grow cash crops, capital was needed. To buy food grains during the period when the cash crops were being grown, cash was needed. The cultivator needed cash both for implements and consumption and he had to borrow money from money-lender. As rural money-lender was also often the rural merchant to whom the crop was sold, the cultivator found himself in a poor bargaining position and had to sell his product at below market prices. Growing poverty or his incapacity to make both ends meet forced the peasant to go to money-lender. There were years of scarcity or famine and the peasant had to borrow money from the money-lender to save himself and his cattle from starvation. Once in debt, the peasant found it difficult to get out of it. High rates of interest, cunning deceit of the money-lender and his own illiteracy kept him under the tight grip of the money-lender. He got deeper and deeper into debt till he parted with his land. The new legal system with its courts and lawyers helped the money-lender to realise his debts. Gradually, the cultivators both in the zamindari and ryotwari areas sank deeper and deeper into debt. By 1947, nearly 70 per cent of the peasants were in debt. More and more land passed into the hands of money-lenders, merchants, government servants, lawyers rich peasants and landlords. The new owners often kept the old cultivator on the transferred land but they became merely tenants-at-will. In the zamindari areas, the occupancy tenants transferred or sold their occupancy rights and themselves became sub-tenants. The actual cultivators-owner and the occupancy-ryot increasingly sank to the status of a tenant-at-will, share-cropper or agricultural labourer. The peasantry was crushed under the tipple burden of Government, the Zamindar and the money-lender. Surendra J. Patel, an Indian economist, has calculated that in 1950-51 rent and interest demand on Indian agricultural amounted to Rs. 1,400 cores which was roughly equal to one-third of the total agricultural produce for the year.

Most of the people of India were exploited by the princes, zamindars, landlords, money-lenders, merchants and the foreign Government and they lived perpetually on the verge of starvation. The second-half of the 19th century became an era of famines. During those years, 24 famines occurred in which over 28 million people died. The famine of 1943 in Bengal carried away nearly 3 million people.

Millions also died in epidemics which the ill-nourished bodies could not resist. The insanitary conditions added to the mischief. The frequency of the famines indicated the extent to which poverty had taken root in India. Charles Elliot, a member of the Governor-General's Council observed, "I do not hesitate to say that half the agricultural population do not know from one year's end to another what is to have a full meal." For the majority of the people, conditions deteriorated in the 20th century. When the British rule ended in 1947, India was economically the least developed and the most backward country of the world. She had the lowest per capital income in the world.

However, it may be conceded that the introduction of banking, business exchange, insurance and other economic organisations in the country was a contribution of the British rule in India. It is true that these institutions were introduced in the country by the British to exploit the economic resources of the country, but they acquainted the Indians with the advanced techniques of the West. Another important contribution of British rule in India was the introduction of railways and better means of communication. Whatever the reasons, the British also encouraged industrial production in the country after the outbreak of the War in 1914. Although industrialisation was on a very limited scale, it gave a rude shock to the system of division of labour on the basis of caste and helped the consolidation of the country.

LESSON 9

BRITISH RELATIONS WITH THE INDIAN STATES (1756-1857)

Introduction

The British relations with the "Native Indian States" is a topic of abiding interest for the students of Modern Indian Histroy. Many of these states rose into prominence during the middle of the eighteenth century when the Mughal Empire was fast distintegrating. The Battle of Plassey (1757) ushered an era of British imperial expansion. The political map of India was being rapidly changed. By the middle of the next century, the stranglehold of British paramountcy had virtually encompassed all the Indian States. The change in the status of the Indian States "was partly by force of circumstances and partly by the pressure of irresistible currents of history, and the policy towards them was evolved partly by the official character of the East India Company, partly by the views of the Governors-General, but mainly by the conviction which developed with Wellesely and continued upto our own time, that the Government of the whole of India directly or indirectly by the British is a part of a preordained system."[1]

Lee Warner, in his scholarly study of the phase of British rule in India, has noticed three well-marked periods, viz, the "ring-fence" from 1756 to 1813, "subordinate isolation" from 1813 to 1857, and "subrodiante union" after 1858. In this lesson, we will be mainly concerned with the first two-periods. Though each period is characterised by some peculiar traits, it will be wrong to assume that there were no exceptions to the borad pattern indicated above. Lee Warner's classification only provides us with a convenient framework which will enable you to have a better understanding of the problem of the relations of the British Government with the Indian States. The British policy towards the Indian States, as neatly pointed out by Panikkar, was not necessarily the result of any preconceived notions except that the British rule must, ere long, extend its sway over the whole of India.

POLICY OF "RING-FENCE" (1756-1813)

In broad terms, the keynote of the policy of the English East India Company during the "ring-fence" period (1756-1813) was non-intervention and limited liability. Thus, while the frontiers of the negighbouing Indian States were guarded by way of precaution, the Company generally tried to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of these States. The adoption of such a policy lay in the logic of history. Faced with a strong Maratha revival and a militant Mysore, the Company had possibly no other choice. Thus the kingdom of Carnatic was maintained as a buffer to Mysore whereas Oudh was preserved to serve the same objective against the Marathas out of sheer political necessity. It should be noted, however, that the policy of non-intervention was not strictly followed since it was not based on any firm conviction about its efficacy or morality. It was essentially a stop-gap arrangement which could be modified, or even reversed, according to whims of the Governor-General. Thus even Warren Hastings (1772-85), who may virtually be regarded as the originator of the "ring-fence" policy did not strictly pursue a policy of non-intervention. His demands on Chait Singh of Banaras and the Begums of Oudh and his conduct towards the Rohillas and Faizullah Khan of Rampur were cases of blatant interference in the affairs of these independent States. Similarly, a seemingly pacifist like

1. Panikkar : Evolution of British Policy Towards Indian States, Introduction, p. xi.

Cornwallis (1786-93) felt no scruples in attacking Tipu Sultan and annexing half of his kingdom.

It is no doubt true that all the treaties of this period excepting those with Mysore, were negotiated on a basis of equality and the Company did not explicitly claim any paramountcy or imperial authourity. Thus when the Triple Alliance (1790) against Tipu took shape, the contracting parties agreed to give due attention of "the wishes and the convenience of the parties" as regards the distribution of acquisitions and agreed to take all the decisions by mutual consent. In addition, each of the treaties guaranteed in a most absolute manner the authority of the ruler over his subjects and repudiated any intention to intervence in the internal affairs of the State. The Company, however, managed to intervene in many ways. Sometimes these means were dubious, sometimes subtle and in certain cases this intervention was outrageously high-handed. Some of the states like Oudh, the Carnatic and Tanjore, being dependent on the company for self-protection, were not in a position to oppose when the Company dictated terms to them. Thus the "Subsidiary Treaties" of Wellesley (1798-1805), which established British predominance over some of the states—merely formalised and systematised a practice that had been growing for the last two decades. The apologists of Wellesely have sought to justify his expansionist policy. Here is one typical justification. Ramsay Muir feels that "the British power in India in the midst of States which were in a perpetual unrest, must fight in self-defence if not in aggression, and found that it was faced with the alternative of expansion or destruction." Another justification often trotted out is that the policy of non-intervention followed by Sir John Shore (1793-98) went a long way in tilting the balance of power against the Company. Wellesely himself, however, needed no justification for his actions. He was convinced that if the Company was to rule India, it must rule as the sole paramount power. He did his job in such a methodical fashion that within four years of his landing, Tipu had been defeated and killed, half of his territory was under British administration and the remainder restored to the old Hindu dynasty. The shrunken Mysore thus was brought under the effective protectorate of the Comapny. The Nizam was made to accept a treaty which made him a British vassal, the whole of Carnatic had been brought under direct British rule and the company had become the paramount power in South India. The formidable Maratha Confederacy had also been badly shaken up and English protectorate was imposed on some of its principal members. Thus before the close of the first period of their intercourse with the Indian States, the Company had advanced from the position of "*primus inter pares*" to that of the paramount authority.

Various methods used by Wellesely to extend British hegemony over Indian States

For the sake of conscience, we can classify three methods by which Wellesely made his acquisitions. Firstly, he took advantage of his military victories over Tipu Sultan, Sindhia and the Raja of Berar to acquire some of the districts from their kingdoms. Secondly, through a process popularly known as "mediatization", Wellesley often took over the whole administration of a state, leaving to the ruler only his titles and royal status with a fixed revenue. Wellesley seized every opportunity presented by a change in the line of succession to carry through this policy of "mediatization" in Tanjore, Surat and the Carnatic.

The last and the most effective method used by him was the *Subsidiary Alliance System* by which the Indian States on certain conditions subsidized British force for their own defence. Roberts, in his mastery analysis of Wellesley's career, has noted four distinct stages in the development of Subsidiary Alliance System which are detailed thus : (1) The first and the most rudimentary form of Subsidiary Alliance made it obligatory for the British to provide their ally with certain forces, but only when specifically asked to do so and not otherwise (e.g., the treaty with the Nizam in 1768). (2) Under the second form, the subsidiary forces were permanently maintained close to the frontiers of the ally and maintained at the ally's expense. This was, however, must uncommon. (3) In the third form, the subsidised army was not only permanently maintained, but was stationed within the ally's territory

4) In the last form (this can be regarded as the distinctive contribution of (Wellesley), the protected rulers had to cede a part of their territory for the unkeep of the subsidiary forces, instead of paying a certain yearly sum from the general revenue. This was the final and most developed kind of subsidiary alliance and was exemplified in the treaty with Oudh of 1801. There were other important provisions in the Subsidiary Alliance Treaties. The allies were not permitted to negotiate with other Indian and foreign powers and could not enlist the service of any European without the sanction of the Company. Though the Company disclaimed any intention to interfere in the internal affairs of these protected States, it is nevertheless a fact that all these states had to put up with a British Resident who seized every possible opportunity to further undermine the status of these states. As Roberts has frankly admitted, the Subsidiary Alliance was "a political snare to entrap the Indian princes and rob them of their independence".

Now let us deal with the merits and demerits of the fully developed form of the Subsidiary Alliance System.

Its Merits : This system was immensely advantageous to the British. The supposed French menace was successfully offset, since the native rulers were no longer in a position to negotiate with them. It also enabled the Company to extend its military frontier far beyond its political frontier. Since the allies of the Company had to maintain considerable British armies on a war footing and ready for instant action, "the evils of war", as Sir Arthur Wellesley pointed out, were "kept at a distance from the sources of our wealth and our power". These forces, for the maintenance of which the Company did not have to pay anything, could be "directed against the principal states of India, without the hazard of disturbing the tranquility of the Company's possessions, and without requiring any considerable increase to the permanent military expenses of the Government of India". Thus, to sum up, the Company's military frontier was shifted to the political frontier of its allies, and the costs of the British army were largely borne by the Native States. Wellesley's much-vaunted claim that the system enabled the British Government "to preserve the general control over the restless spirit of ambition and violence which is characteristic of every Asiatic Government" can be dismissed as the arrogance of an imperialist who was conscious of the superiority of its military might.

Its Demerits : A further analysis would, however, show that the demerits of the system far outweighed its merits. The subsidy demanded from the Indian States was so much disproportionate to their revenues that even Arthur Wellesley had to admit that the subsidy claimed from the Nawab of Carnatic "bore so large a proportion to the revenues which the country could afford that it was scarcely possible to realise". Thus the system tended to bring about the internal decay of the Protected State. By making the administration, defence, and foreign policy of these Indian States subservient to the British interest, the Subsidiary Alliance System extinguished those qualities of leadership and administrative efficiency which are generally associated with the ruling classes. The protected rulers, no longer worried about external danger, tended to become irresponsible to the real interests of their people. This encouraged habits of ease and luxury. Along with the heavy demands of the Company, the financial resources of many of these states were considerably strained. As the salaries and other pre-requisites paid to the subsidiary forces were much higher, there was hardly any ruler, who as a consequence of this additional financial load, do not fall into arrears with regard to the payment of the subsidy. The Shylockean attitude of the Company compelled the rulers to tax the peasantry heavily. As Munro has succinctly observed : "Wherever the Subsidiary System is introduced, unless the reigning monarch be a man of great abilities, the country will soon bear the marks of it in decaying villages and decreasing population". The Company did nothing to alleviate the situation which was largely their creation. Misgovernment in the Protected States was the order of the day and this provided a convenient excuse to Wellesley to demand territorial cession in lieu of cash subsidy and he thereby

gave the Subsidiary Alliance its final shape. A very unwholesome development resulted from this system which by creating a system of divided responsibility within the Protected States paved the way for mal-administration which was seized as a legitimate pretext by the Company to ultimately annex these territories, as was done by Lord Dalhousie on a very extensive scale. Thus the Subsidiary Alliance System was a shrewd but sinister design to extinguish the autonomy of the Indian States.

SUBORDINATE ISOLATION (1813-1857)

The policy of the "ring-fence", which necessitated the refusal of protection to Indian States lying beyond a certain limit met its demise at the hands of Lord Hastings (1813-1823). He deliberately abandoned the policy of the "ring-fence" and littered the political map of India with many Protected States which were subordinate to the Company. This change came in 1818 with the crushing of the Pindaris and the Marathas. In the same year, Central India was pacified and the Rajput States were admitted to the British system. The states as a whole covered more than a third of the area of British India. The balance of power had, by this time definitely tilted in favour of the British. The latter had overcome their European opponents, and the Company's forces were prepared to crush any Indian power. The Company hardly needed help from any Indian power. Taking advantage of this political situation Lord Hastings reduced a number of Indian states to subordinate status. This change in the status of states lately admitted to the British system is clearly reflected in the treaties concluded by Lord Hastings. These treaties brought about one more important change. The states were completely isolated from one another. They could not have mutual political relations. If there were mutual disputes, those were to be submitted to the Paramount Power for "arbitration and award". The motive behind the treaties concluded by Lord Hastings was the establishment of British supremacy rather than providing security to the Company

Though the states were subordinate in their foreign relations, internally they were recognised as sovereign, and there was as little interference as possible. In general the grounds of interference were financial rather than administrative. Lord Hastings was not for annexing Indian States to the British Empire.

Dalhousie (1848-1856) carried this policy many steps further. He strongly believed that the extension of the British protectorate over the remaining states would enable them to enjoy the blessings of the British Raj. In addition to this, he was convinced that the Indian States had no justification whatsoever to exist. Consequently he seized every available method and opportunity to absorb the Indian States in British Indian Empire.

Lord Dalhousie (1848-1856)

Dalhousie achieved this end by adopting three methods, viz., (a) skilful and systematic application of the "Doctrine of Lapse"; (b) deposition of the rulers—the erstwhile allies of the Company on the charge of misgovernment, and (c) by outright conquests. Under the "Doctrine of Lapse", Dalhousie claimed that on the failure of natural heirs, the sovereignty of the dependent States, or of States created by the British, lapsed to the paramount power. This meant that the traditional custom of adoption of a son on the failure of a natural heir by a ruler which had the sanction of the scriptures and was sanctified by practice for centuries in India was thrown into the dust-bin. Lord Dalhousie haughtily declared that the British Government "in the exercise of a wise and sound policy is bound not to put aside or neglect such rightful opportunities of acquiring territories or revenue as may from time to time present themselves, whether they arise from the lapse of the Subordinate States by the failure of heirs natural where the succession can be sustained only by the sanction of the Government being given to the ceremony of adoption according to Hindu Law." The distinction between "Independent" and "Dependent" States was, as stated before, not very clear and this situation was very shrewdly exploited

by Dalhousie. For the sake of convenience, Dalhousie divided the Indian States into three categories viz., (a) those "which are not tributary and which have never been subordinate to a paramount power", (b) those "which are tributary and which owe subordination to the British Government as their paramount power in place of the Emperor of Delhi, the Peshwa, etc.," and (c) those "sovereignties and chieftainships created or revived by the *Sanad* (grant) of the British Government". It was Dalhousie's considered opinion that "adoption made properly in the first category ought as a matter of course be recognised, in the second, we may or may not recognise, while in the third heirs failing according to the terms of our grant, we annex."

A shrewd and calculating man like Dalhousie must have realised that all these divisions were ambiguous and ill-defined. No state in India of his time could be said to be independent in the real sense of the term and the Doctrine of Lapse could be applied equally to all of them. It is not very clear whether Dalhousie deliberately refrained from clarifying the situation to the Court of Directors. It is nevertheless a fact that very often the Home Authorities differed with the Governor-General on points of interpretation regarding the status of many of Indian States. Thus Dalhousie's proposal for annexing the Karauli State was disapproved by the Home Government on the ground that it was not a Dependent State but a Protected ally. This however, did not deter the energetic Governor-General from applying ruthlessly his pet Doctrine of Lapse to other States.

It would not be correct to assume that the policy of annexation by lapse was an innovation of Dalhousie. As far back as 1834, the Court of Directors itself had suggested to Lord Bentinck that, "wherever it is optional with you to give or withhold your consent to adoptions, the indulgence should be that exception and not the rule and should never be granted but as a special mark of approbation." Dalhousie also went on to record that "on all occasions where natural heirs shall fail the territory should be made to lapse and adoption should not be permitted excepting in those cases in which some strong political reasons may render it expedient to depart from this general rule". Lee Warner's plea, that this observation was subsequently retraced by Dalhousie himself when the Governor-General clearly stated that he did not intend to extinguish all those Hindu States whose rulers died without any natural heir, does not hold water, judging from the ruthless manner in which Dalhousie applied the Doctrine of Lapse. This policy of annexation by lapse was only one of the implements in Dalhousie's rich and varied armory of annexation. He availed of every opportunity of annexing Indian States on this or that excuse. The annexationist record of his predecessors served as a convenient excuse that the he was not trying to do anything unusual. You will recall that almost all the preceding Governors-General had added something to the expansion of the British Indian Empire. Here let us mention the names of the Governors-General who succeeded Lord Hastings and the territorial annexations made by them. Lord Amherst (1823-28) had intervened Bharatpur, deported its ruler who was alleged to be plotting against the British. The administration of Mysore was taken over by Lord William Bentuck (1828-36) on flimsy pretext. The Kingdoms of Jaintia and Cachar in Assam, and Coorg near Mysore, were annexed-outright. The Governor-General, Lord Auckland (1836-42) though mostly preoccupied with First Afghan war, took advantage of the death of the ruler of Oudh in 1837 to conclude a new treaty which made Oudh virtually an appendage of the British Empire in India. He also annexed the territory of the Nawab of Karnool in Madras Presidency on the facile pretext that the Nawab was contumacious. His successor, Lord Ellenbrough (1842-44), high-handedly attacked Gwalior and replaced the ruling faction on the plea that it was anti-British. Thus it can be easily seen that Dalhousie inherited an imperialistic and annexationist tradition which he was happy to extend to the farthest limit because of his strong imperial predilections.

In fact, as Innes suggests, "There was fully adequate precedent for everyone of Dalhousie's annexations. But his predecessors had acted on the general principle of avoiding an annexation if it could be avoided; Dalhousie acted on the general principle of annexing, if he could do so

legitimately". Historians have speculated upon the source of his energy and the cause of his vigorous policy. One school of thought represents him as a reformer who, in principle, believed that the old system of ruling India by means of intermediate Native princes was archaic and outmoded. By another school he is regarded to be the "passive instrument of destiny" in bringing about "a revolution necessary and inevitable in itself". There is yet another school of thought which maintains that Dalhousie carried out changes in the Government of India which could no longer be avoided and which would have been carried out notwithstanding who occupied the office of the Governor-General. Dalhousie carried out those changes because he suffered from the annexationist fever. He was deeply convinced of their justice and necessity.

Whatsoever may have been justification of his vigorous annexationist policy, the actual result of his policy was catastrophic for the British Empire. It created justifiable suspicion in the minds of the Indian rulers that their States were in danger of complete absorption by the British and the feeling was certainly an important contributory cause for the great explosion of 1857. In the fact Lord Dalhousie in his minute of 30th August, 1848 candidly admitted that "the extinction of nearly all the Indian States of India is just a question of time", confirmed and strengthened this suspicion.

States Annexed by the Doctrine of Lapse

The states annexed on the basis of the Doctrine of Lapse were Satara (1848), Jaipur, Sambhalpur and Baghat—a small Simla Hills State hardly 36 square miles in area, in (1850), Udaipur on the western frontier of lower Bengal (1852), Jhansi (1853) and Nagpur (1854). Of these the cases of Satara, Jhansi and Nagpur deserve special attention as illustrations of Dalhousie's heartless approach towards the Indian States.

(*i*) *Satara* (1848) : Satara, according to Dalhousie's thinking, was a creation of the British, as it was bestowed on a non-descript descendant of the House of Shivaji after the fall of the Peshwa in 1819. This was done obviously to conciliate the Maratha sentiment which was considerably agitated because of the abolition of the title and the authority of the Peshwa.

The annexation of Satara aroused much "virtuous indignation". The State of Satara had existed for a long time before the rise of the Peshwa to power and they themselves had resolved in 1818 to rescue the Raja of Satara from the stranglehold of the Peshwa and place him at the head of an independent sovereignty. As it turned out, this proved to be a mere stratagem. In 1839 the Raja of Satara was deposed on a charge of misgovernment and was replaced by his brother. The new king was childless, and immediately after his elevation to the throne, applied for permission to adopt a son. The British Government deliberately withheld the permission; and it was from his death-bed that the Raja hastily adopted a son without the consent of the British Government. This was the situation which Dalhousie faced after his arrival in India. Lord Dalhousie and all those British officials who counted, held that the adoption by the late Raja and Satara in he absence of any sanction of the British Government could not be deemed valid. The State therefore lapsed to the paramount power. The Court of Directors sustained his action on the ground that "by the general law and custom of India a dependent principality like that of Satara cannot pass to an adopted heir without the consent of the paramount power and that were are under no pledge to give such consent and that general interests committed to our charge are best consulted by withholding it."

(*ii*) *Jhansi* (1853) : Another important annexation by lapse was that of Jhansi. It was a district of Bundelkhand ceded to the English by the Peshwa in 1817. It was handed over to one named Ramchandra by Lord Hastings. Ramchandra, being childless, was succeeded by his uncle Raghunath Rao in 1838. Raghunath Rao was succeeded by his brother Gangadhar Rao who died in 1853 with an

unrecognised adopted son. This gave Dalhousie the necessary pretax to annex the state of Jhansi.

By his ruthless application of the Doctrine of Lapse, Dalhousie had made substantial territorial additions of great strategic and economic importance to the ever-expanding British Indian Empire.

Nagpur (1854) : The British acquisition of Berar in 1853 in its turn made the annexation of Nagpur only a matter of time. Berar had been given to the Nizam of Hyderabad by Wellesley after the latter's victory over the Marathas. But the Nizam was in huge arrears of payment to the British for the upkeep of a force. By 1853 the Nizam was in such a helpless position that he had to agree to the cession of Berar and a few other districts, yielding a gross revenue of fifty lacks to the Company. It is not very difficult to guess the motive behind this action. Dalhousie himself very candidly made this admission : "In the possession of Berar and the neighbouring districts, the British Government has secured the finest cotton tracts which are known".

From Berar the road led straight to Nagpur which had fallen into the hands of the British in 1818, but Lord Hastings reinstated Raghoji, a member of the royal house, over a short principality. The Raja died in 1853 without adopting any heir and so the state was annexed by Dalhousie. The willy Governor-General was not disturbed by the fact that the late Raja had made repeated requests to the Resident for permission to adopt a son to which no attention at all was paid by him. There were strong political and economic reasons which weighed having with Dalhousie. Even a strong apologist of Dalhousie like Lee Warner has admitted that in the case of Satara and Nagpur imperial considerations determined his policy. "They (Nagpur and Satara) were placed right across the main lines of communication between Bombay and Madras and Bombay and Calcutta. Consideration was therefore to be secured by their annexation." Dalhousie himself noted that "the possession of Nagpur would combine our military strength, would enlarge our commercial resources and would materially tend to consolidate our power".

Annexation on the Charge of Misgovernment

Oudh (1856) : The Doctrine of Lapse, as stated earlier, was not the only weapon in the armoury of Dalhousie to expand the British imperial authority in India. In addition to the wars of aggression that he waged against Burma and the Sikhs, he heartlessly extinguished the authority of an erstwhile loyal state of Oudh. The annexation of Oudh in 1856 was made not on the ground of lapse or escheat but of misgovernment. Since Lord Wellesley's treaty of 1801, Oudh had been kept as a "protected feudatory state" with control over internal administration. It was indeed an unwise arrangement. Under the agreement the ruler Oudh was invested with responsibility without powers. Its natural consequence was that the administration of the state degenerated terribly, to the great suffering of its people. The British Government fully realised the evils of Oudh administration. Many Governors-General, especially Lord Bentinck and Lord Hardinge, had warned its rulers; but none did anything to remedy the fundamental defect of the Subsidiary Alliance System, which by guaranteeing British protection to the ruler of Oudh, made him unmindful of the real interests of the state and saved him from "justifiable revolt on the part of his subjects". The attention of the British Government was drawn more clearly than before to the growing deplorable situation in Oudh, by Colonel Sleeman, Resident in Oudh from 1848-1854. His successor, Colonel Outram convinced the Governor-General of the necessity of the adoption of a bolder policy. Lord Dalhousie was inclined to solve the problem by taking over the administration of Oudh and by allowing its ruler to retain only his palace, rank and titles. But the Court of Directors ordered the complete annexation of Oudh which was formally proclaimed in 1856. Wajid Ali Shah, the last ruler of Oudh, was pensioned off to Calcutta. In order to justify this high-handed action, the Company piously declared that "That British Government would be guilty in the sight of God and man if it were any longer to aid in sustaining by its continence and administration fraught with suffering to millions."

The annexation of Oudh was a clear case of territorial aggrandisement which, as Dalhousie himself confessed, was "not warranted by international law." Moreover, by thrusting upon the Oudh the impolitic arrangement of subsidiary alliance system and by unceasingly interfering in its affairs, the Company itself was responsible for the misgovernment in Oudh. As Sir Henry Lawrence has pointed out, "The facts furnished by every writer on Oudh affairs, all testify to the same point that British interference with that province has been as prejudicial to its court and people as it has been disgraceful to the British name." The annexation of Oudh marked the end of the traditional British policy of sustaining Oudh as a useful buffer against the Marathas. Now that the Maratha power had been liquidated and the British authority had no rival in India, Oudh was thought by Dalhousie to be an anomaly whose existence as an independent state was no longer necessary for British interests.

Annexations by Conquest

(*i*) *Panjab* :- The administration of the Panjab installed after the first Sikh War, though efficient, economic and honest, was not liked by the Sikh aristocracy "whose love of independence and stern pride could not tolerate the existence of an alie power." The Sikhs preferred a national government, in spite of its extravagance, and incompetence and "were intent on a determined struggle with the British." Soon the Sikhs revolted against the British authority. The Sikhs fought bravely at Chilianwala, but were completely defeated by Lord Gough at Gujarat. The Panjab was ultimately annexed by Dalhousie in 1849

(*ii*) *Burma* :- The alleged maltreatment of some British merchants by the Burmese authorities provided an opportunity to Dalhousie to wage war against Burma. The military expedition proved brilliantly successful. By a proclamation dated December 20, 1852 the province of Pegu together with the rich and flourishing port of Rangoon was annexed to the British Empire.

Extinction of Titular Sovereignties

To complete the story, one must add that the principle of lapse was also applied to liquidate some of the "titular sovereignties" on the ground that "appearances without the reality of authority were sure to shake native confidence" in the good faith of the Company. Thus on the death of the Nawab of Carnatic in 1853, Dalhousie refused to recognise anyone as his successor. Similarly, the Rajaship of the Tanjore State was abolished for good when the Raja died in 1855. On the death of the ex-Peshwa Baji Rao II in 1853, Lord Dalhousie refused to pay the pension of eight hundred thousand rupees to Baji Rao's adopted son, Dundu Pant who was later known as Nana Sahib, on the ground that personal allowance could not pass on to the successor.

Conclusion

The net result of all these annexations of Dalhousie was to bring the whole of India under Pax Britannica. When Dalhousie left India, he could justly claim that the country was at peace without and within. He was, however, not quite certain about the duration of the peace. As subsequent events showed, it did not last long. Apart from natural resentment against his policy of lapse and the extension of British paramountcy, there were two other significant factors which he overlooked viz., the birth of Indian intelligentsia which was critical of the British rule and the growing tendency among the English ruling class to isolate themselves from the Indians. These were bound to have serious repercussions. Thus the upsurge of 1857 had it in something of the inevitability of a Greek tragedy.

LESSON 10

THE GREAT REBELLION : ITS CAUSES AND NATURE

Introduction

In this lesson we shall discuss and the nature of the mighty upsurge of 1857 which swept over many parts of Northern and Central India like an avalanche. Even when so much has been written on the subject since that time, the latest barring the two exhaustive studies by two distinguished and outstanding Indian historians, one by Dr. R.C. Majumdar[1] and the other by Dr. S.N. Sen[2], it is yet not possible to gave a categorical answer as to the precise nature and character to this great conflagration. One school of thought still persists in holding that what happened in 1857 was nothing but the mutinous act of a few discontented and disgruntled Indian Sepoys who tried to capitalise on the introduction of the greased cartridges. Those who subscribe to this theory have therefore dismissed this upheaval as being essentially local in character, sporadic in nature and basically inspired by a disaffection which afflicted some sections of the sepoys. Some Indian scholars like Savarkar[3] and Ashoka Mehta[4] have tried to invest this revolt with the dignity of a war of national independence. But as succinctly pointed out by the late Maulana Azad, their works are not history but mere political propaganda[5]. The recent researches have at last clearly established one thing, namely, that it was not a planned or well-organised conspiracy aimed at the overthrow of the British Government. But at the same time it cannot be denied that even when there were no master minds behind his insurrection, "what happened was that in the course of a hundred years the Indian people developed a distaste for the Company's rule. Since the Company had at first acted in the name of the nawabs or the Emperor, Indians did not for a long time realise that power had been captured by a foreign race, and they had been reduced to the position of slaves in their own country. Once this realization became widespread, the conditions were created for an outburst. This when it took place was due not to the conspiracy of a few individuals or groups but to the growing discontent of large numbers of people."[5] (Maulana A.K. Azad). The very nature and character of the British Government and the western ideas differed fundamentally from the basic political religious ideas and outlook of the Indians. Thus if violent clash occurred it was not something unusual or unpredictable. The British rule had given many rough jolts to the Indians who reacted "sharply and convulsively to these external impulses." This violent uprising which was undoubtedly the manifestation of a "deep-seated disorder" erupted primarily out of the manifold grievancies political, economic, social, religious, and military of the Indians against the increasingly hateful British domination, more because it was becoming daily more firmly entrenched on the Indian soil. The introduction of the greased cartridges which undeniably contained the facts of cow sacred to the Hindus and of pigs forbidden to the Mohammedans, served as a spark which lighted this faggot of Indian disaffection against the British rule.

The revolt of 1857 was the inevitable consequence of the innumerable grievances of the Indian people accumulated over the years against the British, Princes, sepoys, zamindars peasants, artisans and

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1. R.C. Majumdar—The Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857.
2. S.N. Sen—Eighteen Fifty-Seven (The Publication Division, Delhi, 1957).
3. V.D. Savarka—Indian War of Independence.
4. Asoka Mehta—The Great Rebellion.
5. Quoted in S.N. Sen—Eighteen Fifty-Seven, p.a.

traders—in short, all excepting the few persons who had received western education or who owed their position due to the favours of the British Government, had strong reasons to be dissatisfied. They were only waiting for an opportunity to their pent-up fury against their foreign oppressors. The proclamations issued by the leaders of the uprising both at Delhi and Lucknow provide us with a good peep into the grievances of the people. The Lucknow Proclamation, for example, stated, *inter alia*, "All Hindus and Mohammedans are aware that for things are dear to all men : first religion; second honour; third life; fourth property. These four things are safe under a native government. The English have become enemies of the four things above named."

After this brief introductory discussions we shall now deal separately with the various causes mentioned above.

Causes

The causes of this deep disaffection of our people may be studied under the following five heads: political, economic, social, religious and military.

(*a*) **Political** : Among the political factors the foremost place must necessarily be given to the definite and unequivocal policy of the British Government to extinguish the Indian States. This policy took a clear shape under Lord Wellesley when he perfected the Subsidiary Alliance System. Lord Dalhousie twisted all codes of morality and conduct to make the political geography of India simpler by absorbing the Indian States within the bigger and ever expanding British Empire in India. The Indian princes were told that they would ever be secure under British protection. But the system worked to their disadvantage. Protected against all danger, internal as well as external, the princes were inclined to ignore the well-being of their subjects, maladministration in the Indian States consequently became the order of the day. This held out a temptation for the British Government to intervene and to annex them on one pretext or the other. A definite introduction to this effect was given by the Directors of the East Company in the year 1841; thereafter, the fate of the Indian States was almost sealed. Lord Ellenborough (1842-44) annexed Caithal and Sindh, and made a powerful intervention in the Gwalior. His successor, Lord Hardinge, was busy fighting with the Sikhs. Lord Dalhousie who took charge of the Government of India early in 1848 left no stone unturned in implementing the policy of his superiors with his characteristic thoroughness. A spate of annexations followed. Satara was annexed in 1848, Punjab, Jaitpur and Sambalpur in 1849, Bhagat in 1850, Lower Burma and Udaipur in 1852, Jhansi in 1853, Nagpur in 1854 and Oudh in 1856. Not all the annexations were made on the basis of the doctrine of lapse. This principle was only one of the many convenient tools for the extinction of the Indian States. The distinction between a dependent and a non-dependent state on which it was based was so subtle and tenuous that it could be and was construed any way to suit the fancy of the supreme power. Punjab and Lower Burma were annexed as a result of aggressive wars. The case of Oudh was unique. It was annexed on the ground of misgovernment. The titular sovereignties of Carnatic and Tanjore were abolished on the plea that they were not only useless but their existence was an embarrassment for the British. Even the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II, escaped indignity with difficulty. The shabby and callous treatment meted out to him clearly indicated the direction in which the political wind was blowing. He was told that the would be the lost holder of the Imperial title. The adopted heir of the ex-Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was actually disowned by the British Government. The inevitable result of all these measures was the spread of panic among the princes of India. The danger that the entire princely order was threatened with ruin and extinction was something which was real and imminent. The annexation of Oudh further shook the princely order of their placidity. Its annexation was undoubtedly a high-handed act which was morally unjustifiable. It badly shook the confidence of the people in the British profession that they had to no ulterior political designs. What bewildered the people was that the unflinching and determined loyalty of the rulers of Oudh was no protection against the increasing territorial cupidity

of the British. If Oudh could not fend off the fast moving steam roller of British Imperialism, it could be safely assumed that the days of other Indian States too were numbered. Thus, Princely India stood on a dangerously slippery precipice.

The Company's rule had been marked by repeated provocative acts which at times assumed an outrageous dimension and was quite often characterised by racial arrogance. According to Shore, Indians were considered no better than "nasty heathen wretches". The author of *Seir Mutakherin* recorded with bitterness that "the English seldom visit or see any of us". The English translator of the *Seir* writes : "The general tone of the English individuals in India seems to be of thorough contempt for the Indians (as a national body). It is taken to be no better than a dead stock, that may be worked upon without much consideration and at pleasure." Our countrymen suffered all types of indignities and humiliations at the hands of many of the British racists. One direct consequences of the presumed British racial superiority was the exclusion of the people of India all higher appointments which involved trust and responsibility. This bred feelings of disaffection among the upper classes of the country, particularly the Muslims. This is corroborated by Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan who wrote in his famous book, "The Causes of the Indian Revolt" thus "Another reason for the dissatisfaction of the natives of India, and more especially of the Mohammedans, was the exclusion of natives from high appointments; a few short years ago Mohammedans filled the most honourable posts under their own government and the desire and hope for such is still in them. Under the English Government they longed for the advancement of their honour in the eyes of the world but there was no way open to them." The Muslims who had so long enjoyed the fruit of their political dominance of this country were sorely bitter at their systematic exclusion from higher government jobs and positions.

(*b*) **Economic** : The East India Company had disrupted the whole economic fabric of India. They turned the tradition land system topsyturvy by creating the right of private property in land by impoverishing the cultivator by excessive demands of revenue and a host of other cases for diverse purposes and by not taking any effective steps to curb the nefarious frauds of the unscrupulas money-lenders. The operations of the sale laws and the Imam Commission were carried on in such a heartless and inhuman manner that a large class of old and loyal-holders was dispossessed. They naturally became disgruntled and bitterly hostile to the British. The British economic policy was also detrimental to our traditional rural arts and handicrafts and disrupted the balance between the two major sectors of the Indian economy—agriculture and industry. This resulted in an increase in the pressure of population upon land, which led to the pauperisation of all concerned. Moreover, the British systematically drained the wealth of our country and thereby destroyed the very springs of production of our economy. Every class of Indian society, with one or two exceptions like the money-lenders, suffered at the hands of their new political rulers. The impact of the British policy on the economy was sweeping; it brought about a spate of drastic changes. The landed aristocracy which in the past had provided the political leadership was dispossessed; the peasants hard passed and heavily taxed became paupers; the interest of the traders and merchants were sacrificed at the alter of British manufacturer; the artisans and craftsmen whose products enjoyed World-wide repute could not withstand the competition from the British machine-made goods. Such an unprecedented destruction of the whole established economic order could not but lead to a great unheaval.

(*c*) **Social** : The degration of the upper classes of India brought about by British rule deprived the people of India of their traditional and natural leaders. The British had started their rule with a strong bias against zamindars. For a time this bias was abandoned and the permanent Land Revenue System concluded with zamindars, to some extent boosted up the latter. But these new zamindars were not the traditional zamindars of old but a new class which owned its existence to the varying British policy. Soon after the British Government established direct relations for collection of land revenue with the peasants. The result was that there was a great social revolution. The erstwhile zamindars were disfranchised, and

were turned into distressed brooders. When the zero hour was struck by sepoys in 1857, they rose in their thousands against the British. Most notably was the part played by the Taulkdars of Oudh who were dispossessed in their summary settlements made immediately after the annexation of Oudh. Besides the land revenue policy of the government, their policy towards the State and their preference in employment of English-knowing Indians went a long way in degrading the status and influence of the upper classes of our society of those days.

(*d*) **Religious** : The above-mentioned political, economic and social grievances reinforced the widely current suspicion that the British were out to convert Indians to Christianity. Rightly or wrongly, it was believed that Lord Canning had been specifically sent to India for converting Indians into Christians. The activities of the missionaries were in full swing. They not only propagated the gospel of the Bible but also made irresponsible attackes on Hinduism and Islam. The government could not be dissociated from the work of the missionaries, because they carried on their work under the protection of the police provided by the government. The people of India felt that their religions were in danger, and their fears were not entirely unfounded. The chairman of the Directors of the East India Company, Mr. Mangles, made the following observations in the House of Commons : "Providence has entrusted the extensive empire of Hindustan to England, in order that the banner of Christ should wave triumphant from one end of the India to the other. Everyone must exert all his strength in continuing in the country the grand work of making India Christian." The open letter of Edmund circulated to the principal officers of the Government was quite significant. It said, "The time had clearly come when there should be but one faith". Such comments left absolutely no doubt in the minds of our people about the real intentions of the rulers. Terrified as they were, Indians could not give any credit to the British for their abolition of Sati or their validation of widow remarriage or such innovations as the laying of railways or the errection of telegraph lines. All appeared to our countrymen to be a part of the grand design to proselytise them. In the same light was viewed the introduction of common messing in jails, as also the Act 21 of 1850 which enabled converts to inherit their ancestral property. As Sir Syad Ahmed Khan explained, this Act was necessarily intended to facilitate conversions to Christianity. Indians have been dubbed as conservative and orthodox for their opposition to the social and religious reforms introduced by the government. But this is not the whole truth. They wanted to live according to their own way, and they could not and would not tolerate any interference with this. Above all, they wished to preserve their religions and their way of living and there was noting conservative about it.

(e) **Military** : Last but not the least important (some consider it the most important) were the military causes. The sepoys of the British Indian army were most unhappy with their employers. They were contemptuously treated and were called "niggers" and "Sooers" (pigs) by their officers. They were lowly paid, much less than the British soldiers of the corresponding ranks. The highest position that a sepoy could attain was the rank of a Subedar at 60-70 rupees per month; for on equivalent rank, an Englishman drew ten times more. The sepoys had lost all faith in the promises of their British officers, as many a time in the past promises had been made only to be broken regarding the payment of "bhatta" to them while serving in the border provinces of Sindh and Punjab. They also nourished grievances on religious and caste grounds. They had been forbidden to gear caste marks, beards or turbans. In 1856, an Act known as the General Enlistment Act was passed under which every fresh recruit had to furnish an undertaking that he would be prepared to go for garrison duty wherever required. This applied only to the new recruits, but the sepoys already in service could not forget how on several occasions even they had been sent to foreign countries in spite of their earnest protests. They were afraid that the chances of so doing would be very much enchanced under the new Act. Moreover, the Act was a direct attack upon the Hindu caste system, as the popular belief among the Hindus was that crossing the seas meant loss of caste. The culmination came when the

greased cartidge was put into use. Besides, the sepoys, could not be detached from the society to which they belonged, and they shared all those fears and suspicions which were at the time assailing the mind of their kiths and kins unconnected with the army. Like the general mass of people, they were also seriously concerned about the activities of the missionaries and the innovations introduced by the government. Similarly, the degradation of the princes, particularly the ruler of Oudh, the home state of a large number of sepoys of Bengal Army—caused serious offence to them. Rightly did they complain thus : "We have ungrudigngly shed our blood in the service of our foreign masters, we have conquered for them Kingdom after kingdom until nothing remained to be annexed within the four corners of the country, but what has been the return ? Spolaition on our peoples, degradation of our princes and worst of all inconceivable insults of our religion." The lowered prestige of the British due to the reverses suffered by their armies in Afghanistan and the Punjab, the withdrawal of large number of Europeans from India for the Crimean War (1854-56), the stationing of the majority of the remainder of the European troops on or near the north-western frontier, the low calibre of the British military officers and the faulty constitution of the Bengal Army created favourable conditions for the sepoys to make a bid not so much to secure redress of their grievances as a vindication of their religion and national self-respect by throwing off the foreign yoke. The sepoy task was greatly facilitated by low state of discipline rampant in the Bengal Army which was due to a number of factors—(1) all promotions were given on the basis of seniority, so that officers at the top were generally dull and decrepit; (2) the best army officers were given civilian assignments, (3) officers who remained with the units had no power to reward on punish the troops placed under their charge; (4) acts of indiscipline, whenever they occurred, were not firmly dealt with.

The increased ratio of Indian troops to British troops in india gave a sense of self-confidence to the Indian troops. There were small mutinies or near-mutinies at different places. These were signs of hatred between white and coloured people. Almost all of them were caused by the fear that the British were trying to break caste and convert the sepoys to Christianity. Ramours started circulating among the native soldiers. It was rumoured that all the armies of the Company had been killed in Burma and all the British troops killed in the Crimean War. It was said that English women were to be brought to India to marry Indian princes whose children would then become Christians and all sepoys would be baptised. There was to be a mass murder of sepoys by a mine under the parade ground. The British had polluted sugar and mixed ground bullock's bones with flour and the sepoys were to be forced to eat cow's flesh. Although the Government heard all these rumours, it did nothing to discount them. Ignoring the fact that the Indian soldiers regarded service as a trade guild in which son followed father in the handling of weapons, the Government officers continued to disregard their customs and religions. Though outwardly all seemed to be calm, below the surface, there was a highly inflammable situation and some common cause was required to unite the different religions against the British and that was provided by the introduction of the greased cartridge.

The Government decided to equip the army with Enfield rifles. To load the new rifle entailed extracting from a pouch a cartridge with a greased patch at the top which was torn off with the teeth and then used to assist in ramming the bullet down the barrel. It was believed that the grease used was made from the fact of cows or pigs. To both the Hindus and the Muslims, the use of the greased cartridges was against their religion. The sepoys saw in it an attempt to break their caste and force them to become Christians. At first slowly and then with increasing anger as the stories were spread by agitators, the Indian regiments refused to accept the greased cartridges. General Hearsey and others warned the Government against the use of the greased cartridges which seemed to be causing so much anger and distress among the sepoys and suggested that the sepoys be allowed to make their own grease, but they were over-ruled by the Adjutant-General who felt that it might make the sepoys think that the old cartridges which they had been using were contaminated.

On his advice, Lord Canning decided that the concession would be weakness and ordered that the cartridges must be used. The British officers who understood their men, were astonished. Loyal servants began to drop hints of sepoys meeting to plot mutiny. Although the information was passed on to the Commander-in-Chief of India, nothing was done to redress the grievance of the sepoys. Bahadur Shah, the Mughal Emperor, rightly pointed out that the mighty Englishmen who boasted of having defeated Russia and Iran, wee overthrown in India by a simple cartridge. It was the refusal of the sepoys at Meerut to use the greased cartridges that led to the beginning of the revolt which later on spread to Delhi and other parts of India.

Nature and Character of the Uprising

In the introductory remarks only a passing reference to the nature and character of the uprising of 1857 had been made. Now we shall examine these two allied and connected aspects in some detail. Undoubted there are still many conflicting interpretations. Here we shall make an attempt to see how far these diverse points of view are tenable.

There has been and still is a lot of controversy about the true character of the rising of 1857. Kaye and Malleson who have written several volumes on it are of the view that it was nothing more than a mutiny. John Lawrence who investigated the matter on behalf of the Government of India expressed the same view. According to Savarkar, it was a war of national independence. P.C. Joshi and Asoka Mehta subscribe to the same view. Outram holds that it was the result of a Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievance, and the cartridge incident merely precipitated it and it broke out before this military uprising had been thoroughly planned and adequate arrangements for its simultaneous outbreak at important political centres of the country had been finalised. Dr. R.C. Majumdar terms this uprising of 1857 as the Sepoy Mutiny, whereas Dr. Sen prefers to call it an army upsurge which possessed some characteristics of a war of national independence.

It is difficult to say with certainty which of the above views is correct. Nevertheless a few things do stand out prominently about the nature of this uprising. There was no prior preparation, planning or conspiracy. The circulation of *chappaties* prior to the revolt does not prove anything because it meant different things for different people. The Rani of Jhansi's Hindi letter to her priest at Puri, which is often quoted as a proof of pre-planning, has been proved to be a piece of forgery. Wilson who believed that a date and a time had been fixed for a simultaneous rising at all the military stations of India has given to evidence in support of his contention. There are no two opinions that this rising originated with the army. But that does not necessarily mean that it was a mutiny caused merely by the military grievances. The very fact that the Meerut rebels immediately after they had broken out of heir barracks marched upon Delhi and proclaimed Bahadur Shah II the Emperor of India indicates that the rising was not devoid of a political bias. It is not very difficult to see why the British writers sought to dismiss this uprising as mere mutiny. Their racial arrogance and their presumptuous behaviour coupled with many of their administrative lapses and other misdeeds helped to generate a strong anti-British feeling in the country. True that the revolt began with the army but the civilian participation played a big and positive role in its furtherance.

Besides having their specific grievances, the sepoys fully shared with the people the general grievance that the British Government was out to destroy the faith and to disrupt their caste or social fabric. When the sepoys rebelled, they did so as much as sepoys as the representatives of their people. Their example was followed by the civilians (at some places even preceded). This was but natural. The sepoys were the best organised group of Indians; moreover they had learnt a good deal of discipline and leadership from the British rulers whom they had served faithfully in the past. Hence

a popular rebellion could take place only after and not before, a rising of the sepoys.

The revolt of 1857 was from every aspect "localised, restricted and unorganised". Thus is suffered from several limitations. It has to be cenceded that a vast majority of the people did not participate in it; only one-sixth of the total area of the country was affected by it. But that is no reason to dismiss this uprising as a mere mutiny. It is well-known that in many revolutions, the initiative has been taken first by a coterie of individuals—a determined minority who gave the lead while the overwhelming majority remained passive. For example, there was a strong loyalist party in America during the War of American Independence and yet the Revolution soon acquired a national dimension though it originated over an issue which was not a major one and its leadership, though determined, was yet restricted. During the stormy days of the French Revolution too, there was no lack of royalists in France. In fact, as pointed out by Dr. Sen, "so long as a substantial majority sympathises with the main object of the movement, it can claim a national status though universal support may be wanting".

The revolt of 1857 may be called national though in a limited sense. Though the leaders of the revolt were often selfish and none-too competent, they succeeded in securing the support of the people which made the revolt, somewhat broad-based. The uprising was national in yet another sense. The leaders of the revolt were unanimous in their primary aim, namely, to throw out the British from the Indian soil. It was also national in so far as it was a joint Hindu-Muslim effort. Outram's view that it was the result of a Mohammedan conspiracy making capital of Hindu grievances in a way lends strength to the view that both the major communities of India had at least on this occasion displayed a sense of national unity. In fact, Hindus and Muslims were so strongly united at this time that all the efforts of the British to drive a wedge between them ended in smoke. When at one time some misguided Muslims tried to start a 'jehad' against the Hindus, the Mughal Emperor immediately put his foot down and firmly warned his co-religionist to that there was only one "jehad" and that was against the British !

But it would be wrong to call the revolt a national war in the modern sense of the term. Indian nationalism as understood today was something unknown then. Our people did not think then of India as a distinct political unit. Neither were they fully conscious about the democratic process by which power must be wielded by the people themselves and exercised through their duly elected representatives. Such ideas took birth after the revolt during the second half of the nineteenth century.

In a way, the uprising of 1857 was a feudal revolt led by the princes and zamindars, for the recovery of their old positions of power privilege and for the reinstatement of the old political order. But had they succeeded, perhaps, the result would not have been exactly to their liking because the circumstances had in the meanwhile radically changed. There were already signs that the army leadership both at Delhi and Lucknow would not tolerate the re-establishment of the *ancient regime* as it existed before the establishment of the British rule.

The revolt was also characterised by an outburst of peasant activity. The peasants took advantage of the new situation and tried to take revenge against their oppressors, namely the money-lenders, new landlords, and the petty government officers. At several places, account books of the *banias* and revenue records of the government officers were set on fire. These facts, however, do not warrant the conclusion drawn by a group of historians that the revolt was a "people's war". The peasants had no organisation of their own. They merely followed the leadership of the feudal chief, and when the latter failed, they withdrew from active participation in the insurrection.

Some British writers have called the revolt the last passionate protest of the conservative forces in India against the penetration of the western ideas. The view is based on the presumption that the rebels were opposed to the social reforms introduced by the British. While this is true in a limited sense, it is not the whole truth, for besides social reforms, there were several other factors which had actuated the

insurgents to revolt. It would be unfair to call them conservatives if they sought to defend their religion from the corrosive influences of Christianity. In fact, certain actions of the British Government, like allowing the Christian converts of inherit property, the legislations of widow-remarriage and the extension of benevolent patronage to the Christian missions engendered a genuine fear in the minds of the Indian people that the government was out to make India a Christian country. It was certainly not a "reactionary" or "conservative" approach which led the people to protest against an administrative outlook which was alien to the Indians and the policy of racial segregation so outrageously practicised by some of the Britishers. The indecent haste with which western reforms and innovations were forced down the unwilling throats of the Indians was bound to leave bitterness among the Indians. Possibly, this was the reason why the insurgents betrayed some reactionary tendencies for which Dr. Majumdar roundly chides them.

The view of Dr. Tara Chand is that while it is inappropriate to give the designation of Mutiny to see events of 1857, it is also not proper to call them. The National War of Independence". It has to be admitted that the war against the British was not inspired by any sentiment of nationalism because in 1857 India was not yet politically a nation. It is true that the Hindus and Muslims cooperated but their leaders and followers were moved by personal loyalties and not loyalty to a common motherland. Nevertheless, the unpheaval of 1857 was a war for the liberation of India from the yoke of the foreigner because he had given moral offence to the dignity and self-respect of the ruling class which exercised social influence and carried the burden of administration. He had also antagonised the masses by his oppressive land revenue policy and economic measures which ruined their arts and crafts. On the whole the rising of 1857 was a general movement of the traditional elite of the Hindus and Muslims. The Emperor of Delhi, the King of Avadh, some Nawabs and Rajas, the Taluqdars and Zamindars and the soldiers comprised the main body of the rebels. There is no doubt that practically all those who belonged to that order were disaffected although some of them had abstained from active participation on account of their peculiar circumstances. The chiefs and landlords constituted the leadership of this rebellious host. The regular and irregular troops of the English company and of the princes became their followers. They had common traditions and grievances and they sympathised with one another in their misfortunes. The loss of territories and political power affected all of them.

Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad writes that the movement of 1857 was universal in its nature comprehending every region of India within its purview. It is this comprehensiveness which gives the impression of its being a national Revolt against foreign rule, primarily motivated by a desire for freedom. The end of alien rule was the essential object, the chief purpose and in this sense the Revolt of 1857 may be termed a national war for freedom, though the sentiments of nationalism in the modern sense had not taken deep roots in the soil of India at the time. The urge was political though religion was invoked to rouse the people to a pitch of frenzy, compatiable with the needs of the situation (Bondage and Freedom, pp. 576-77).

Thus, the uprising of 1857, starting from the cantonment of Meerut, soon infected Delhi and other important political centres in Northern India, because the British rule had certainly made many Indians resentful of the British rule for its arbitrariness and the airs of superiority assumed by the British administrators. The British rule was based on concepts foreign to the Indians. Some of the Britishers displayed racial arrogance of a type which Indians had probably never suffered from any of those innumerable foreign hordes which had so repeatedly poured into India during her long and chequered course of history. Indians were slighted, insulted and discriminated against. This generated a strong and widespread sentiment of bitterness which found a convenient outlet when the sepoys of Meerut unleashed their violence.

Let us close this study by reproducing the profound comments of the late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad regarding the nature and character of the uprising of 1857 : "After reading the various accounts of 1857, certain conclusions appears to be inescapable. The question naturally arises if the uprising was the result of a nationalist uprising alone ? The answer cannot be an unqualified affirmative if nationalism is understood in the modern sense. There is no doubt that the participants were moved by patriotic considerations, but these were not strong enough to provoke a revolt. Patriotism had to be reinforced by an appeal to religious passions before the people rose. The propaganda about the greased cartridges is only one instance of this. In other ways also the religious feelings of the soldiers had to be wounded before they were roused against their foreign master."

LESSON 11

THE FAILURE AND IMPACT OF THE GREAT REBELLION

Causes of the Failure of the "Mutiny"

The revolt which began in Meerut on May 10, 1857, spread like wild fire. Within a short time of its outbreak, the English Empire in Upper India had been shaken to its very foundations. Between the frontiers of Bengal and Punjab, English authority was acknowledged only for a few miles around Agra and other areas where British regiments were stationed. The swift and staggering blow of the upsurge undoubtedly made the position of the British precarious in upper India, but unfortunately the rebels failed to press home their advantages. What had started with a bang ended as a whimper. There were numerous factors which led to this turn of fortune.

The revolt suffered from many handicaps. It has been estimated that not more than one-fourth of the total area and not more than one-tenth of the total population was affected by this unpheaval. The Indian intelligentsia, impressed with western civilisation was, generally speaking, strongly in favour of the British and lent no support to the rebels whose ideas seemed to be too reactionary to them. Similarly, the commercial and the landed classes gave their overwhelming support to the British. Again, it would not be correct to assume that the Indian troops revolted everywhere in India. At this time the three Presidencies of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras had their separate military set-ups and only the Calcutta troops mutinied. The Indian sepoys of the Bombay and Madras Presidencies remained loyal to the Company. Another Potent factor for the failureof the revolt was the apathy of a vast number of Indian princes who preferred to follow a cautious policy of "watch and see" at a time when their support would have titled the balance decidedly against the British. Some of them like the Nizam, Sindhia and Holkar, rendered active assistance to the Company against their own countrymen. Possibly this revolt could not have been suppressed by the British without the active support of the Indians themselves.

It has also been suggested that the rebels suffered from lack of able leadership. With the honourable exception of the brave Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, most of the leaders of the revolt were self-seeking opportunists. Sir John Lawrence hit the nail on the head when he exclaimed, "Had a single leader of ability arisen among them (rebels)....we must have been lost beyond redemption." As pointed out by Roberts, "After they had revolted they seemed to become demented in their manner of conducting the rebellion, and often took the one course that was foredoomed to failure." The victories of the Indians, whenever and wherever they were won, were due more to their superior numbers than to their superior strategy or tactics. Dr. R.C. Majumdar in his able treatise on the uprising of 1857 feels that none of the Indian leaders was moved by pure patriotism. This is only partly true. There is no denying that this uprising produced many outstanding leaders whose patriotism was of the purest form. Even British historians who were naturally prejudiced have singled out the Rani of Jhansi for her continuing patriotic and distinguished and able leadership. Then there were other dedicated leaders like Ahmed Ullah Shah, the Maulavi of Faizabad, and Tantya Tope about whose single-minded sincerity and true patriotic favour there are hardly any two opinions. A British historian has painted the character of the Maulavi thus "If a patriot is a man who plots and fights for the independence, wrongfully destroyed of his native country,

then most certainly the Maulavi was a true patriot. He had not stained his sword by assassination, he had connived at no murders; he had fought honourably and stubbornly in the field against the strangers, and his memory is entitled to the respect of the brave and the true-hearted of all nations."

It cannot, however, be denied, that many leaders of he revolt had a petty mind inside their brave exterior. Selfish can mutually jealous, they frequently intrigued against one another. These personal jealousies, and mutual dissensions weakened the common cause and also divided the ranks. It is sad to note that a respected leader of the revolt like Nana Saheb offered to come to terms with the British if the Government reversed its decision regarding him and met his demands. It is significant that the rebel leaders could not chalk out a common plan of resistance against the British and consequently what the British forces often faced were fitfull raids. In striking contrast, the British fought with determination and courage.

It was also a great tragedy for India that the Mughal Emperor, Bhadur Shah, in whom the rebels had pinned their faith, "was not fit to serve even as a symbol". He was not made to be a leader. "He was so weak he could not control either the soldiers or the nobility". The rebels did not select any other overall leader of theirs for still the awe and *izzat* of the Mughal dynasty was deeply embedded in their ranks. On the other hand all the British leaders felt that they were fighting against a national calamity—existence of British rule in India. British military leaders like Campbell, Havelock, Roberts, Rose, Outram, Nicholson, Neill, Edwardes and the Lawrences were all men of ability and possessed high qualities of leadership and sincerity of purpose.

Lack of co-ordination between the different centres of revolt was an inevitable consequence of the faulty Indian leadership. Besides, the rebels were seriously handicapped by the shortage of fire-arms. Swords could be no match to the English rifles. There is much truth in the assertion of Charles Bell that if the sepoys of Bengal had held the Enfield rifles in their hand, then "Delhi might still have belonged to the Mughals; and in the place of a wretched charpoy in a prison chamber, the descendant of Timur might even now be sitting upon the crystal throne in the palace of his ancestors."

Luck also came to the help of the British in their fight against the Indian insurgents. When the revolt broke out, the Crimean War (1854-56) and the war with Persia were over. And the British army was in fine mettle. A new treaty of friendship had been signed with Dost Mohammed Khan, the Amir of Afghanistan, who kept himself aloof from the Indian affairs. As a result of this treaty, the Russian threat to the Indian frontier had considerably receded. The British were free now to deal with the Indian revolt. There was another factor which the rebels had not reckoned with that the England would declare war against China. Considerable European forces for development in that country sailed through the Indian Ocean, within hailing distance of Calcutta. Metcalfe has remarked that "to this fortuitous circumstances under God's providence was due the early re-establishment of British authority in North-Western India.

Most important of all the causes contributing the failure of the great uprising of 1857-58 was the sad fact "that Indian character had sunk very low". Here again let me use the words or Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad : "The leaders of the revolt could never agree. They were mutually jealous and continually intrigued against one another. They seemed to have little regard for the effects of such disagreement on the common cause." In fact, these personal jealousies and intrigues were largely responsible for the Indian defeat.

The view of Dr. A.R. Deasi is that while England was a capitalist country, India was essentially feudal and there victory of the former was a foregone conclusion. To quote him, "A capitalist nation is

socially, politically economically and culturally stronger than a feudal people. A capitalist nation has a high sense of patriotism and nationalism since, unlike the feudal people who are physically separated, socially disunited and politically unamalgamated, it is socially, economically and political highly integrated, living under one political regime and single economic system. This is why throughout the whole history of British conquest, we hardly come across Britons who betrayed the interests of Britain in India, in contrast to hundreds of Indian Princes, Generals and merchants who went over to the British and assisted them to dominate India." R.P. Dutt says, "The rising of 1857 was in its essential character and dominant leadership the revolt of the old conservative and feudal forces and dethroned potentates for their rights and privileges which they saw in process for destruction. The reactionary character of the rising prevented any wide measure of popular support and doomed it to failure." (India Today, p. 274).

Results of the "MUTINY"

"The Mutiny cannot be dismissed as an unhappy incident which ended with its suppression." It was realised that this revolt was only a symptom of a deep-seated disorder—the chronic maladjustment between the introduction of western ideas and the limited scope given to the Indian intelligentsia. With this realisation the policy of the Government of India underwent a drastic modification. In fact, it is impossible to understand the post-rebellion India without a proper appreciation of the impact made by the uprising of 1857.

Political : The first and immediate result of the revolt was that the fate of the English East India Company was sealed. An Act known as "Act for Better Government of India" was rushed through the British Parliament which transferred power from the Company to the Crown. The Court of Directors and Proprietors as well as the single member Board of Control were abolished. A new administrative machinery consisting of a Secretary of State with a Council of 15 members (to be called the India Council) was created to supervise the administration of India on behalf of the Crown. On the face of it, a big change seems to have been effected. But actually it was not so. H.S. Cunningham has pointed out that the change made was rather formal than substantial. The East India Company had already been divested of all its power. The entire trend of constitutional development since the Pitt's India Act of 1748 lay in the direction of the curtailment of the authority of the Company. The Charter Act of 1853 coming at the end of a long series of such Acts deprived the Directors of the Company of the last vestiges of their power and privileges and throwing open the civil services of India to competition. Henceforward, there was no doubt about the early end of the company's rule. The revolt of 1857 only provided the most suitable occasion for the final liquidation of the Company. The formal nature of the change is also proved by the fact that all the treaty obligations, financial commitments and administrative liabilities of the East India Company were taken over by the Crown. Whether it was a change really for the better Government of India, as the name of the Act of 1858 shows, is rather doubtful. Under the rule of the Company, the entire gamut of its Indian administration was subject to the scrutiny by the British Parliament which often carried out a minute and critical examination of the Indian affairs of the Company at least once in every twenty years. This was a very healthy practice and much good resulted from this. These periodical checks, which were quite through-going, kept the Company officials constantly on their toes. They could not afford to be too arbitrary and unreasonable in the administration of the country, for they knew that there was the British Parliament which kept a close watch over its activities. There was no such periodical examinations after 1858. Parliamentary interest in the Indian affairs flagged so much that quite often after 1858 the two Houses of Parliament were found to be empty when Indian affairs were under discussion.

The revolt of 1857, however, forced the British Government to make a new declaration of their policy. This was done in the form of the Queen's Proclamation issued in 1858. The Proclamation breathed feelings of benevolence and religious toleration. It disclaimed all desire for extension of territory, promised to respect the rights, dignity and honour of the (native) princes of India and pledged to follow a policy of religious toleration. It declared it to be the policy of Her Majesty's Government that "so far as may be, Our subjects of whether race or creed, be freely and impartially admitted to offices on Our services, the duties of which they be qualified by their education, ability and integrity, duty to discharge" pardon and amnesty were granted to all those still in arms against the British Government provided they had not been found guilty of the murder of British subjects. The Proclamation was an exhortation to the Government of India to take adequate measures for the material and moral improvement of the Indian people. It marked a great shift in the policy of the British towards India. The spirit underlying the Proclamation, its dignified language, its promises and expections promised were all keyed in a very high moral pitch, but it is a sad fact that it remained an unattainable ideal because the people who were entrusted with the implementation of these high-sounding ideals, honoured it more in breach than in observance.

Compatible with one of the assurance of this Proclamation, a new policy was definitely initiated towards the Indian States. '*Sanads*' were issued to the Indian princes guaranteeing them freedom of adopting heir and the contiued existence of their states. Thus was remedied the one major grievance of the Indian Princes. Henceforward if there was any dereliction of duty on the part of a ruler he alone was to be held responsible; misgovernment was no longer an excuse for the extinction of the Indian States. For this concession, the rulers had to pay a very heavy price. From now onwards their status underwent a great change. Their political authority was no longer unlimited. Realising that it was no longer necessary or politically expedient to annex any state, the British Government assumed the "moral responsibility for the good government of the states and extended its interference to cover internal affairs.[1].

The Queen's Proclamation was not an unmixed blessing. The new policy of perpetuating the existing Indian States under all circumstances was a kind of setback to the healthy process of political unification which had been going on before the year 1857. This was the time when the anomalous existence of some six hundred odd States could have been wiped off and India could have become a single and compact political unit. This continued balkanization of India continued till very recently, when Sardar Patel took the bold step of abolishing these artificial barrier towards the integration and unification of our motherland.

After the revolt of 1857, "there came", the words of Sir John Strachey, "a flood of reactionary opinions over the British Government and its officers" on the political plan, the British Government encouraged an `alliance' between the Indian Princes, landlords, money-lenders and the British, who thought that it would be very difficult for them to rule permanently if they adopted policies, "by which the better classes of the natives of Hindustan would remain alienated from us (i.e. British)". It was in pursuance of this policy that two-thirds of the talukdars of Oudh were rehabilitated "as a necessary element in the social constitution of the province". These classes came to have a vested interest in the British rule. The British rule was, so to speak, underwritten by these classes. It was for the same purpose that in 1862 a proposal was even approved for the extension of the permanent Land Revenue System of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, to the rest of India. If ultimately the proposal was dropped in 1883, this

1. The relations of the Government of India with the Indian States from 1857 onwards will be discussed separately in another lesson.

...and their victory of the former was a foregone conclusion. To quote him, "A capitalist nation is

was because the financial implications of this proposal would have entailed a very heavy burden and strain upon the Government.

Social and Cultural : On the social and cultural planes, the old policy of promoting reforms was abandoned because it was contended that it was this policy which had been one of the important causes of the rising of 1857. The British Government was determined not to sponsor any social reform for fear of antagonising Indian sentiment. "A nervous fear of altering native customs has, ever-since the terrible events of 1857, taken possession of Indian administrators." (Sir Henry Maine). The British in India began jealously to guard and preserve the social and religious survivals against the demands of the progressive elements in the Indian Society. The cause of reform was now wholly left to the intiative of the Indians themselves. And this continued to be the basic policy of the Government of India for over half a century.

Another effect of the Revolt of 1857 was that the Muslim Renaissance which had been growing in Delhi before 1857 got an irreparable shock. The cultural blossoms were blighted. C.F. Andrews writes, "It is not difficult to trace the fatal havoc to budding spiritual life which one year of Mutiny wrought. Decay immediately overtook the revival of learning in Delhi from which it never recovered." Calcutta, the centre of Hindu renaissance, escaped the horrors of the Mutiny and was saved.

Army : The army and the Muslims were regarded by the British as the chief instigators of the revolt. They, therefore, received special attention. The army was reorganised after 1858. The proportion of British troops in the Indian army was increased, and they were primarily used as an "army of occupation" to maintain internal security, while the Indian troops were organised and trained for services aboard to subjugate Asian and African territories for British imperialism. The artillery was taken away from the Indian hands. All higher appointments were reserved for the British; an Indian could not get employment in the Army Headquarters except as a clerk in a non-military capacity. The Indian armies were recognised on the basis of "division and counterpoise". To take an example, battalions were drawn from such diverse elements as the Sikhs, the Punjab Muslims, the Pathans, the Rajputs, the Gurkhas, etc. and it was quite easy for the British to exploit communal, caste and regional difference of the sepoyed. This was done with a view to making united action on the part of the various units of the army impossible.

A subtle distinction was also drawn between "martial" and non-material" raises and the Indian troops were mostly recruited from the Panjab and Garhwal. The Sikhs and Gurkahs were termed as the "martial races". It is interesting to not that before the Great Uprising the bulk of the troops, of the Bengal army were drawn from Bihar and Oudhic. One cannot escape the conclusion that the distinction between the "martial" and "non-martial" was deliberately drawn up so as to discredit and punish the people of those areas where the uprising had been active and to reward the Gurk has and the Sikhs who had generally remained loyal to the British in those critical days.

As a result of the Revolt, changes were made in the judicial field. New Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes were passed. The judiciary was reorganised under the Indian High Courts Act, 1861. High Courts were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras in place of the Sadar Courts and Supreme Courts which had existed before the Revolt. The exclusive jurisdiction of Courts over British subjects was done away with. However, a special procedure was provided for them in the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Communal Difference Fomented

The policy of *divide at impera* was also applied to the major communities of the country. During

the crucial days of 1857 Hindus and Muslim had displayed a wonderful unity which even the utmost efforts of the British had failed to destroy. Therefore, the British realised that the continuance of their rule depended on the breach of this unity. With this end in view, discrimination of a sinister type was introduced between the communities. Muslims were penalised much more harshly and severely than the Hindus. "To teach these rascally Mussalmans a lesson", the Nawabs of Jhajjar, Ballabgarh, Farrukhnagar and twenty-four other Shahzadas were hanged. Muslim property was either confiscated or destroyed. While Muslims were made to pay 35 per cent of their immovable property as punitive fine, Hindus were left off with only 10 per cent. After Delhi was reconquered by the British, the Hindus were allowed to return to the Indian metropolis within a few months, but the Muslims could not come back till 1859. As a result of this policy, the Muslims suffered heavily. After some years when the Hindus developed national consciousness and began to play an active role in the formation of the All India National Congress which soon began to agitate for reforms, the attitude of the British towards the Muslims underwent a change. From thenceonwards they became the favourites of the Government. British policy thence onwards followed a set pattern, viz., of playing one community against the other. Herein lay the origin of the acute communal problem which later bedevilled the relations of the two major communities inhabiting this country. That paved the way for the partition of India.

New Political Trends

The British Government learnt another lesson. One of the causes of the revolt of 1857 greatly emphasised by Sir Syad Ahmed Khan, had been the lack of contract between the rulers and the ruled. It was realised that had the rulers known anything about the effects their policies produced on the minds of the ruled, remedial measures could have been taken in time, and thus what happened in 1857-58 could be prevented. Therefore, as a safeguard for the future, a provision was included in the Indian Canals Act of 1861 for the nomination of some Indians in the various legislative bodies set up under that Act. The idea, however was not to train Indians in the Parliamentary methods of government, but only to associate a few people with the administration of the country in the interest of the British Empire. Even with this limited objective, the step would have proved a real boon, if while nominating members to the various legislative bodies preference had not been given to princes and their Dewans or other hangers-on like big zamindars, sycophants, etc.

But if the purpose of the British Government in providing for the nomination of Indians in the various legislatures was to minimise the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. It was simply not achieved. The gulf instead of narrowing down grew wider and wider. Both Indians and Europeans could not forget the events of 1857, and the manifold deeds of atrocity committed during the upheaval continued to stand in the way of any genuine understanding between the two races. Englishmen who came to India after 1857 regarded Indians contemptuously and would never agree to mix with them or even to live near them. This social segregation was carried to the ridiculous extreme of having separate places of residence for the Englishmen quite far away from the areas where the Indians lived. There was yet another attempt to build up an artificial halo around the Englishmen as if they belonged to a superior race of mankind. Little wonder, therefore, the racial discord which had manifested itself so violently in the days of the "Great Rebellion" developed into a mighty evil force for the future. Frequent outbursts of racial antagonism which followed the Vernacular Press Act (1878) and the Ilbert Bill (1883) clearly demonstrated how far this unfortunate policy of racial estrangement had disrupted the harmony between the Indians and the Europeans which was clearly visible in the pre-Mutiny era. This racial bitterness had at least one redeeming quality. It engendered amongst Indians a greater national awareness. Its culmination was the foundation of the Indian National Congress, an organization which spearheaded the demand for Swaraj.

In another way also, our freedom movement was indebted to the revolt of 1857-58. The earlier national leaders of India like Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, B.C. Pal, V.D. Savarkar, Lala Haradyal and others looked back into the past for inspiration and found in this great upsurge of 1857-58 the first national war of independence which their countrymen had waged against the foreign domination of Great Britain. Savarkar in his book " India's War of Independence"—a book was proscribed by the Indian Government—put forward the thesis that the rebels had chalked out an elaborate and well-thought out plan to oust the foreigners from this sacred soil of ours. This interpretation of the "Great Rebellion" readily caught the imagination of the Indian intelligentsia and served as an effective goal to whip up national sentiment. Almost overnight, as it were, the leaders of this revolt were canonised as great national heroes whose brave deeds and noble aspirations were a perennial source of national inspiration to the later nationalists of our country. Perhaps, the later day "terrorists" of Bengal, Maharashtra and the Punjab had derived many of their ideas regarding the use of "the bomb and pistol" against the British officers and their toadies from the leaders of this Great Upsurge. These `terrorists' were emboldened in their spirits by a sense of moral obligation to overthrow the British from the soil of India and to achieve what the rebels of 1857-58 had failed to accomplish.

Another significant impact of this uprising can be clearly seen in the field of religion. The inaptitude displayed by Indian leadership during these critical days of the rebellion compelled many Indians to discover the reasons why the Indian attempt to oust the British rule had proved infructuous. This resulted in the emergence of two divergent religious tends in India. One of these was religious nationalism which sought to glorify the past. The Arya Samaj movement amongst the Hindus with its slogan "Back to the Vedas" and the Wahabis amongst the Muslims, provided a new rallying ground for some type of religious militancy. The other trend can be seen in the Brahmo Samaj which aimed at a synthesis of all religions. It stimulated interest in comparative study of religions.

There was also some genuine anxiety after 1858 to root out some of the social ills which, because of long usage, had acquired some type of religions sanctity. Hence onwards religious reforms movements acquired many new dimensions and a new momentum. And the leadership for reform now came from the Indians themselves.

It is clear from the above account that the rebellion of 1857-58 has left a permanent mark on the political, economic, social and cultural life of the country. The administrative policy of the British Government underwent a marked change. It was no longer its aim to purge the Indian society of its many traditional evil practices. On the contrary, it was now directed solely towards one main objective, viz., how best the continuance of the British rule in India could be ensured. The chief aims of the British Government were to preserve law and order and collect taxes. The uplift of the people was no longer deemed an obligation of the British.

This great upsurge also profoundly affected the attitude of the Indians. The terrible revenge taken by the British continued to hunt our countrymen for many years. It made some sullen; a few became pessimistic; others turned introspective; there were still others who lost faith in themselves. Luckily, poise and sanity seemed to have returned by the close of the nineteenth century. The crest-fallen spirits rallied. The Indians acquired a new sense of self-confidence and self-respect. The struggle for independence was soon set on a new course. The failure of the leadership to fully exploit and guide the pervasive anti-British sentiment served as an eye-opener for the future generations. No doubt, the uprising proved an effective spur to sustain and strengthen our will and determination to win swaraj!

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. P.E. Roberts : *History of British India*; Chapter XXXI, pp. 378-386.
2. Majumdar, Raychaudhury & Datta : *An Advanced History of India* : Part III; Chapter VII, pp. 780-783.
3. Thompson & Garrat : *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* : (Indian Edition): Book V : Chapter V, pp. 397-409. Book VI; Chapter I, pp. 410-420.
4. Sarkar & Datta : *Modern Indian History* : Vol. II. Chapter V, Section X, pp. 209-228
5. Spear, Percival : *The Oxford History of Modern India (Indian Edition)* IX, pp. 219-228

LESSON 12

RELATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WITH THE INDIAN STATES (1858-1947)

Subordinate Union

According to Lee Warner's classification of the main phases of the relations of the Government of India with the Indian States, the period from 1858 onwards has been designated as one of "subordinate union". This designation speaks for itself. Two features, however are obvious. One is that during this period the subordinate character of the Indian States is no longer a matter of any doubt. The British authority having survived the storm of the 'mutiny' was now firmly entrenched on the India soil. The Indian States fully conscious of the superior strength of the British Indian Government, could not now claim a status of equality with the British and were prepared to resign themselves to the acceptance of the suzerainty of the British Government. This subordination of the Indian States was, however, different from the subordination which characterised their position *vis-a-vis* during the Company's administration. Before 1857, the Indian States were not permitted to have any relations between themselves except purely social contacts. However, the experience of those earth-shaking events of 1857-58 had convinced the British "Government that but for the Indian States serving as "break-waters", the British political ascendancy might have been swept away completely from the Indian sub-continent by the political, upsurge of those days. Hence the British attitude towards the Indian States underwent a major change. After 1858 the Indian States were to be cultivated and prepetuated as they could serve as useful props to the British authority. They must not be estranged. They must be drawn into the orbit of the British empire. Hence the Indian States should not be isolated; rather they must be given a definite place in the Indian administrative set-up. They should not be isolated from British India. Indian India and British India, if not yet perfectly welded into an overall Indian administration, could not any longer remain isolated. There were far too many common bonds to be ignored. In addition to political expediency there were far too many other factors such as economic, geographical, social, cultural, etc., which were now impelling the two Indias to come closer together. Thus the Indian States, though definitely subordinate to the British Indian Company, no longer suffered from isolation. They were supposed to play not an insignificant role in the future administrative set-up of India. India might have been divided politically, but geographical cultural and economic factors made her a single and compact unit. Thus during this period of our study, 'isolation' gives way to 'union' as the almost undefined status of Indian States with their presumption of independence, underwent a major transformation. They now became practically feudatories of the British Crown who were expected to become "partners with the Government of India, not only in the defence of Empire and its international activity, but also in the material and moral progress of the united country".

Queen's Proclamation

An analysis of the causes of the uprising of 1857 must have convinced the British that it was largely caused by their policy of indiscriminate annexation of the Indian States. The British Government did not any longer want to pursue such a short-sighted policy of annexation which had nearly brought their India Empire to the verge of extinction. Moreover, they were conscious of the heavy debt of obligation which they owned to so many of those loyal Indian States, which had stood by them solidly during the conflagration of 1857-58. It was their moral responsibility that they should allay the natural

apprehensions of the Indian States, many of whom, had actually suffered from the imperial design of the Company before 1857. Consequently a new policy was announced in 1858 by the Proclamation of Queen Victoria which said, "We hereby announce to the native princes of India that all treaties and engagements made with them by or under the authority of the Hon'ble East India Company are by us accepted and will be scrupulously maintained and we look for the like observance on their part. We desire *no extension of our present territorial positions* and while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity, we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others. We shall respect the rights, the dignity and honour of the native princes as our own..."

Emergence of New Trends

In 1860 at the wish of the Queen, Lord Canning issued "Sanads" to the rulers of the states, recognising their right to adopt heirs and promising them the security of their states. However, this promise was conditional on the rulers being loyal to the British Crown and loyal to their treaty obligations. This, however, tended to become a unilateral obligation binding only the Indian rulers. The British claiming the rights of paramountcy considered themselves exempt from carrying out their corresponding obligations as contained in those treaties. The basis of equality between the British Government and the Indian States on which these treaties were signed had now gone. A new re-orientation had developed. The paramount supremacy of the British Government on the one hand and the subordination of the Indian States on the other were the two new trends which were emerging rapidly. This development had at least one welcome feature inasmuch as it assured the Indian States the continuity of their existence which till then was precarious. For this assurance of their continued existence, the Indian Princes did not mind accepting the paramountcy of the British Crown. The Democlean sword of annexation which in the past was flourished so repeatedly by the British was at last sheathed. Likewise, the assurance of security against annexation was not offered by the British gratuitously. The India Princes had to buy it at some considerable cost. The British Government maintained that as a Paramount Power it had every right to interfere even in the internal affairs of the Indian States "to set right such serious abuses in a native government as may threaten *any* part of the country with anarchy or disturbance or form assuming temporary charge of a native state when there shall be sufficient reason to do so". No doubt by the Proclamation, the treaties concluded earlier, were confirmed *en bloc*, it did not mean that the British Government would treat the latter as foreign or independent units.

The British Government from 1858 onwards, of its own accord, imposed on itself a sort of a self-denying restriction. The policy of annexation was voluntarily forsaken. Experience had shown that annexation was not a satisfactory solution of the problem of misgovernment in an Indian State. Similarly, annexation created disaffection and disloyalty among the Indian ruling class. If the Queen's Proclamation categorically stressed the abandonment of the policy of annexation, it did not mean that the British Government was disinterested as to how the administration in the Indian States was carried on. On the contrary, the British Government now assumed a heavier moral obligation for a minimum of good government, security, law and order with the territories of the Indian States. Speaking to an assemblage of Rajpur Princes, Lord Mayo, the Governor-General from 1869 to 1872, cogently enunciated the general principles of the new policy thus : "If we support you in your power we expect in return good government. We demand that everywhere through the length and breadth of Rajputana justice and order shall prevail, that every man's property shall be secure."

The new policy, therefore, naturally led to the practice or intervention in the internal affairs of the states. Before 1858 this type of intervention was fitfull and spasmodic and much depended on the whim of the Governor-General or the President of the Board of Control. After 1858, in view of the

repudiation of the policy of annexation, the British were confronted with a dilemma as to how to deal with many of those Indian States which were prey to repeated and chronic maladministration. The British Government had now no doubts about its superior status. It strongly felt that being the paramount power in India; it was duty bound to intervene directly in cases of gross misrule of disputed succession of rebellions of people against their rulers, and in suppressing those inhuman practices such as *Sati* and infanticids against which the British conscience revolted. Gradually, there grew up the practice of indirect intervention by the loaned officers. The Dewans of the states were now nominated by the British Indian Government. The strict control exercised by the British Residents often led to considerable interference in the internal affairs of the Indian States. Thus instead of annexing the territories of the Indian States—a policy so frequently followed before 1858—the British now sought to spread the tentacles of their administrative control farther and wider in the affairs of the Indian States. This inevitably resulted in making the Indian States as integral parts of the whole intricate system of Indian political waterways i.e., of the British Indian administrative fabric.

The changing economic, social and political conditions of the time also tended to increase and intensify the Government of India's control over the Indian States. Of the many factors which contributed significantly to the rise of the new trends mentioned above were the development of means of communication and transport such as roads, railways and telegraphs. The construction of irrigation works, the need for a uniform policy in currency, customs and excise, the growth of an articulate press and public opinion, and the rising standards of public administration in British India, all tended to reduce the autonomy proviously enjoyed by the Indian States. A legal basis was provided for the increased control of the British Government over the Indian States by the claim that the rights of the Mughal Emperor had accrued to the British as a result of the displacement of the Mughal Badshah at Delhi following the upsurge of 1857-58. The British Crown, in addition to its claim of having assumed direct responsibility from the East India Company, also stressed that the mantle of the Mughal Empire had fallen on it. It thus necessarily had all those rights, prerogatives, and responsibilities which the Mughals claimed and exercised during the heyday of their ascendancy.

A striking feature of this new policy towards the Indian States was the emergence of a set of political principles, precedents and usages. Many of them had no basis in treaties. What happend was something like this: a particular principle embodied in a treaty was picked by the suzerain power because it suited its ulterior designs and was made applicable to all the Indian States notwithstanding anything contrary contained in this or that treaty. This profoundely affected the interpretation of the treaties and modified their application. These new political practices relegated the treaties into the background and reduced all the states, major or minor, to a uniform pattern of the relationship. This new pattern of relationship now emphasished that conditions had materially changed since 1858 and the old treaty obligations could not be binding on the paramount authority. This necessarily implied that the privileges, status, ranks, dignities, etc., of the Indian rulers were dependent on the goodwill of the British Crown and should not be claimed as being based on the treaties concluded by the Company with Indian States in circumstances which now had no relevance in view of the changed and unchallenged political authority of the British. Thus there was a definite shifts in their status from "an International to an Imperial basis". The sanctity of the treaties to which the Indian rulers attached so much importance was substantially croded, for the paramount power began to view all States—big or small, advanced or backward, populous, or otherwise from the same spectacles. The culmination of this policy was reached during the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon. And there is hardly any doubt, this trend made the rulers the bigger states quite nervous and even panikcy.

It is interesting to note that these momentous changes in the relationship between the Government of India and the Indian States were brought about under the guise of "constructive interpretation" of the old treaties. Even this cloak was not maintained for long. Lord Curzon, in the course of a speech at

Bahawalpur in 1903, declared with somewhat brutal frankness that the new relations were "neither federal nor feudal but tended to a type not based on treaty". With his characterisitc bluntness Curzon went on to assert that even when "it represents a series of relationships that have grown up between the Crown and the Indian Princes under widely differing historical conditions, but which in process of time have gradually conformed to single type.....The sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogative." This unambiguous enunciation of the new policy meant one and only one thin—the states could enjoy only such powers as were to be allowed to them by the new paramount authority viz., the British Crown, which alone in India processed absolute and indivisible attributes of sovereignty. It is interesting to note that this was only a projection of the Australian theory of sovereignty, which so popular with the jurists of England at that time.

The consequences were obvious. The Indian Princes were reduced to the position of feudatories of the British Crown. Weak as they were they had to submit to the new controls imposed on them. Undeniably this new political relationship grew as much due to the overwhelming authority which the British had acquired in India as to weakness of the Indian Princes who were left with no other alternative but to readily acquiesce to that authority. The subordinate status of the Indian States was further emphasised by the British claims that the British Crown, being the successor of the Mughals in India, must be recognised as the country's paramount power. The Link between the Government (i.e., British) and the princes was henceforth direct, personal and intimate. There developed "a reality in the suzerainty of England which never existed before, and which is not only felt but is eagerly acknowledged by the chiefs" (Canning). This link could not be forged between the Indian states and the impersonal East India Company. Henceonwards, many Viceroys attempted to strengthen these personal bonds by many different methods, such as the holding of Darbars, visits of the members of the royal family to India, etc. It was in keeping with this approach that in 1876 Lord Lytton held a darbar wherein Queen Victoria was proclaimed as Empress of India. These ceremonial and festive occasions afforded welcome opportunities to the Indian Princes to display their enthusiastic loyalty to the Crown. It also generated another trend. The Indian rulers vied with one another to secure titles and decoration from the Crown. This degeneracy was probably the outcome of the natural urge to survive. The enthusiastic loyalty displayed by all those princes present there was probably the outcome of the essential urge to survive and nothing else.

Some Important Illustrations of the New Trends

The various aspects of the new policy towards the Indian States after 1858 can be clearly illustrated by the four cases which occurred during the period 1858-1900. These were the deposition of the Malhar Rao, the Gackward of Baroda (1857), the rendition of Mysore (1881), the suppression of the rebellion in Manipur (1891), the Patiala case (1899) and Hyderabad case (1926). (For the details of these cases, please look up your text-book).

The Baroda Case (1873-75)

Thus the deposition fo the ruler of Baroda for maladministration and the nomination of a young member of his family as his successor was a clear assertion of paramountcy by the British Government which had also assumed the additional moral obligation to ensure good government everywhere in India. However, the fact that only the ruler and not the State was penalised (before 1858 the State most probably would have been annexed), implied a clear repudiation of the old annexation policy of the British.

Rendition of Mysore (1881)

The rendition of Mysore to its rightful ruler in 1881 after 46 years of direct British administration of that State was a further reassurance of the good faith of the British. The new ruler was, however,

placed under a number of restrictions—all emphassing the paramount authority of the British Crown and the feudatory nature of the State of Mysore. For example, the ruler of Mysore was expressly asked to "remain ever faithful in allegiance and subordination to the British Crown and to perform all the duties which would be demanded of him by the Paramount Power". He was politely reminded that non-fulfilment of his obligations would result in the forfeiture of his throne. Thus the Government of India claimed the undoubted right to interfere even in the internal affairs of the Indian States as also claiming authority to determine succession.

The Manipur Case (1891-92)

The Manipur rebellion provided the British Government with the long-awaited opportunity to spell out unequivocally some of the new principles which now govern the relations the paramount authority, *i.e.*, England with the Indian States and those were :

1. The assertion of the Government of the India's right to settle successions and to intervene in case of rebellion against a chief;
2. The doctrine that resistance (in a native state) to Imperial orders constitutes rebellion;
3. The right of the Paramount Power to inflict punishment on those who had put to death its agents while discharging the lawful duty imposed upon them; and
4. The reputation by the Government of India of the application of International Law to the protected states.

Patiala Case (1899)

The Patiala case emphasized the fact that from economic point of view India is a single and compact unit—an integral whole—which could not exclude the Indian States. Thus all the objections of the Patiala Darbar to enter into an agreement with the British Governments for the extension of railway within the State's territory were swept aside.

The Hyderabad Case (1926)

The Nizams of Hyderabad had all along claimed a special status for themselves. This myth was finally blasted by Lord Reading in 1926 when in a definitive note to the Nizam the Victory without mincing words, authoritatively asserted that the internal, no less than the external security which the Ruling Princes enjoy is due ultimately to the protecting power of the British Government, and where imperial interests are concerned or the general welfare of the people of state is seriously and grievously affected by the action of its Government, it is with the Paramount Power that the ultimate responsibility of taking remedial action, if necessary, must lie. *The verying degrees of internal sovereignty which the Rulers enjoy are all subject to the due exercise by the Paramount Power of this responsibility.*

It cannot be denied that in all these five cases, the Indian rulers were treated in a cavalier fashion by the British Government. The climax came under Lord Curzon who took strong exception to the long sojourns of the Indian Princes in London and Paris. In a harshly-worded circular, Curzon warned the rulers that : "Repeated absence from India of native chiefs should be regarded as a dereliction and not as a discharge of public duty." Many Princes felt irked at this curtailment of their freedom and to many of them the new restriction was too derogatory to their status. Fortunately for the Indian Princes, the successor of Lord Curzon were not half as impetuous as he was and the over-all sympathetic treatment meted out to the Indian Princes by Curzon's successors prevented the possibility of fanning the smouldering discontent of the Indian States to a mighty conflagration, like the uprising of 1857-58.

Indian Nationalism and its impact on the relations between the Indian States and the British Government

The general improvement in the mutual relations between the Government of India and the Indian States was mainly due to the growth of nationalism in India and also to a better appreciation by

the British Government of the usefulness of armed forces maintained by the states. Nationalist force started to gather momentum from 1905 onwards. Certain unpopular measures of Lord Curzon, like the partition of Bengal and Universities Act, had even led to the growth of militant nationalism and terrorism. The now developments alarmed the Government of India and made them look around for support against this rising storm of nationalism. They soon realized that the princes could be their most useful allies in their struggle against the nationalist forces as they had proved during the upsurge of 1857-58. The Government of India also realised that the armies of the Indian States could be profitably utilised by them to deal with national as well as international exigencies.

This logic of "milking the cow rather than having it" appealed strongly to the Government of India. Changes were visible as soon as Lord Curzon departed from the Indian scene. His successor Lord Minto tried to allay the misapprehensions of the Indian rulers by relaxing the tight control exercised by the British Government over them. He also tried to tickle their vanity by a mock-serious request for their aid and advice in suppressing "anarchist" conspiracies in India. In a remarkable conciliatory speech at Udaipur Lord Minto asserted the determination of the Government of India "to avoid as far as possible the issuing of general instructions and have endeavoured to deal with questions as they rose with reference to existing treaties, merits of each case, local conditions, antecedent circumstances, and the particular stage of development, feudal and constitutional, or individual principalities." This shrewd move initiated by Minto paid rich dividends. Besides helping the Government of India to stamp out "anarchism", the Indian Princes generously supported the British cause in the Great World War which raged from 1914 to 1918, Lord Hardinge's compliment to the Indian Princes "as helpers and colleagues in the great task of Imperial Rule" was thus not an empty boast.

With the outbreak of the first World Warin 1914, the paths of the British India and Indian India began to diverge. The British, with the declaration of 1917, commited themselves to the development of representative institutions and the eventual of self-government of British India. The princes, however still 'retained their deal of enlightened despotism and never as a body or with any enthusiasm accepted the new ideas of constitutional development.' They were afraid of the democratic National Congress as a threat of their positions as autocrats : they discouraged Congress activity within their dominions.' The Congress on its part was critical of their regime. The princes, consequently, 'tended to lean on the British authority and to states their treaty rights.'[1]

New Developments between 1918-1934

The question of the relations with the Indian States came in for review when the issue of introduction of constitutional reforms was on the anvil in 1918. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report gave a sympathetic consideration to the complaints of the princes and recommended measures to remedy them as far as possible. The equal footing on which big and small states were treated was a common complaint about which some rulers were extremely better and loud. The Montagu-Chelmsford Report recommended a proper classification of the states and a definite line of demarcation separating the rulers who enjoyed full powers of internal administration from others whose treaties did not allow them his privilege. Secondly, the Princes wanted that the Paramount Power should observe strictly the latter of the treaties. The demand was, however, not accepted. Another complaint of the Princes was that there was no provision for an impartial judicial inquiry into facts in cases of disputes between states or between the states and the Indian Government. For this 'machinery' was provided. It was suggested that each party to a dispute should name one representative whereas the president should be a High Court Judge. If the Viceroy refused to accept the findings of the Commission, the matter was to be referred to the Secretary of State for India. This Report also recommended the establishment of a Chamber of Princes. The recommendation of the Report was a strong indication that the contacts between Indian Princes should not be viewed with suspicion : rather a forum should be provided where the prices could discuss their common problems. This recommendation was incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1919

Accordingly, in 1921, the Chamber of Princes was formally inaugurated. It consisted of 121 members, 109 seats being even to 109 major states and 12 seats in it were allotted to a smaller group of 127 states. The remaining 320 states were not given any representation. The executive of the Chamber consisted of the President who must always be the Viceroy, a Chancellar and Pro-Chancellar and a standing committee of 7 members. The Chamber of Princes was merely a deliberative and consultative body. However, its membership was not compulsory with result that some big States like Mysore and Hyderabad chose to stand aloof. In spite of the defects, the Chamber served an extremely useful purpose in enabling the Princes to come together and discuss matters of common interest.

In 1927, a committee presided over by Mr. Butler was appointed by the Government of India to review the relationship of the states and the paramount power in the light of certain complaints made by the Chamber of Princes and also because of the imminence of the next dose of constitutional reform proposed to be granted to India The Butler Report rejected the main demand of the Princes that their relations should be governed on the basis of treaties concluded with them but not on the political practices which had grown outside those treaties. However, the Butler Commission made a number of suggestions to satisfy the Indian rulers. A new classification of Indian States was proposed which differed from the earlier one. In order to foster better relations with the Indian States a distinction was, for the first time, introduced between the Governor-General who was to deal with British India only and the Viceroy. It was the latter who was to deal with the states as the Crown's representative. This was a sinister move to exclude the Indian States from the ambit of any constitutional change which might be effected in the near future. A promise was held out to the Princes that the paramountcy would not be transferred to any Indian Government without their previous consent. The appointment of a Committee was also recommended to enquire into the financial relations of the states and British India.

The report of the Butler Committee (1929) did not give full satisfaction to the Princes, though it went a long way in removing their fears. But from the point of view of the future of India, it was open to serious criticism. C.Y. Chintamani's criticism that "The Butler Committee was bad in origin, bad in the time chosen for its appointment, bad in its terms of reference, bad in its personnel, bad in its line of enquiry while its Report is bad in its reasoning and bad in its conclusions" truly reflected the reaction of the Indian intelligentsia. The pace of political events both in India and the world was so staggeringly rapid that before long the recommendations of the Butler Commission were found inadequate and wanting. The British statesmen soon came to realise the importance of the Indian States could not they again serve as "break-waters" against the stormy waves of rising nationalism ? Hence the conclusion that the Indian States should be roped in a feudal set up which was now visualised as necessary direction of the constitutional development of India. The suggestion of an All-India federation was significantly hinted in the Simon Commission Report which was published in 1930. In view of its very limited range of recommendations for the transfer of power into the hands of the Indians, it did not find favour with nationalist India.

One thing was, however, clear namely, that if in future, India was to become a united state, it was necessary that she should have a federal constitution in which the states should be partners. It was for this reasons that the princes were persuaded to participated in the Round Table Conference of 1930-33 and to become members of the proposed All-India Federation which was provided for in the Government of India Act, 1935.

Indian States between 1935 and 1947

The Act of 1935 offered considerable weightage and concessions to the states by way of inducement for them to join the Federation. They were given representation much more than was warranted by their population. They were permitted to nominate their representatives to the Federal Legislature. Membership of the Federation was made optional for them and what is more the very existence of the Federation was made contingent upon a certain number of the states joining it by exercise

of a free choice. The British anxiety to include the Indian States into the All-India Federation did not stem from any *altruism*. It was dictated primarily by enlightened self-interest because the participation of the Indian rulers would easily tilt the balance of power in the proposed federation in favour of the British for it was quite evident that the British would have no difficulty in managing the Indian rulers according to their wishes. It was taken for granted by the British that the nominees of the Indian rulers to the Federal Legislature would be like spikes in the wheel, thus hindering India's constitutional development.

Free India and the States

This Federation, however, was not destined to see the light of day. The Second World War which broke out in 1939 completely altered the situation. This factor and the stiff opposition by all the political parties in the country virtually killed this scheme. Majority of the Princes too were opposed to the Federation as visualised in the Act. They thus forfeited the sympathy of the Indian nationalist. But nationalism was too strong to be stemed by these means and the movement proceeded without them. In the final Constitution discussions, they were virtually ignored. In the new situation events moved so fast that the British Government was compelled to transfer power to the two Dominions of India and Pakistan. But while transferring power, the British played the usual mischievous game. They did not allow their paramount authority to be transferred to the successor government in India. On the contrary, they declared the paramountcy would lapse with their quitting India. Thus when the British left India in 1947 there where in the sub-continent of India besides India and Pakistan some six hundred of independent states. This was indeed a deplorable condition particularly for the new Dominion of the Indian because most of the Indian States were to be found therein. It was a challenge of unusual complexity and gravity for the incipient Free India. Thanks to the masterly handing of the problem by that 'man of iron' Sardar Patel and the good sense and high degree of patriotic favour displayed by many forward-looking Indian rulers and the awakened public consciousness of our countrymen, the threatened fragmentation of India was averted. The overpowering ambition of the Nizam to set up for himself and his family an independent principality in Hyderabad was stoutly foiled by the 'police action' of the Government of India. Likewise the territorial ambitions of Pakistan to swallow Kashmir which has opted for India, were as stoutly resisted in 1947as in 1965. India had acquired a unity seldom witnessed before. The Balkanization of India as predicted by some false prophets never came about. In place of a distracted India, we had a plan-conscious-developing, democratic and secular India which was firmly united and effectively integrated as much by its long tradition of cultural unity as by its new Constitution based on justice, equality and fraternity.

SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Sarkar & Datta : *Modern Indian History*: Vol, II, Chapter VII, pp. 348-58.
2. Percival Spear : *The Oxford History of Modern India*: Chapter 7, pp. 296-305.
3. Majumdar, Raychoudhuri & Datta : *An Advanced History of India*: Part III, Book II, Chapter I, pp 840-46, Chapter VI; pp 925-27.
4. P.E. Roberts : *History of British India*: (There is hardly anything really useful on this topic in this book on this lesson except some useful details regarding Baroda, Manipur and Hyderabad incidents.)
5. Thompson & Garrat : *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* : (The same as said about Roberts)

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ACADEMIC SESSION 2015-16

1. "Double government made confusion more confounded and corruption more corrupt" (Kaye). Comment.

   or

   Discuss the administrative reforms of Warren Hastings.

2. How for is it correct to say that Cornwallis provided the administrative superstructure of which foundations had been laid by Warren Hastings?

   or

   Briefly describe the Administrative Reforms of Lord Cornwallis.

   or

   Describe the Permanent Settlement of Bengal (1793) and point out its merits and demerits.

   (D.U. 1967).

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ACADEMIC SESSION 2015-16

Note : All questions carry equal marks.

1. Describe the changes in Judicial Administration from 1793 to 1857.
2. Describe the various systems of land revenue settlement from 1793 to 1857.
3. Can Lord Dalhousie be considered the maker of Modern India ? Give reasons for your answer.

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1. How was peasantry exploited during the Company's rule ?

   or

   How did the British ruin Indian Trade and Industry during the Company's rule ?

2. How did the laissez faire and free trade policies harm India ?

   or

   Write a note on the lot of peasantry during the post-mutiny period.

   or

   Write a note on Dadabhai Naroji's Drain Theory.

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ACADEMIC SESSION 2015-16

1. Discuss the nature and character of the Great Rebellion of 1857-58.

OR

'The Mutiny may be considered either as a military revolt, or as a bid for recovery of their property and privileges by disposed princes and landlords or as an attempt to restore the Mughal Empire or as a peasants' war". (Thompson and Garratt). Comments.

OR

What were the chief causes of the Revolts of 1857? (D.U. 1965)

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ACADEMIC SESSION 2015-16

1. Discuss the main features of the Subsidiary Alliance System. What were its merits and demerits?
2. Discuss in detail Lord Dalhousie's policy towards the Indian States and indicate its results.

(D.U. 1968)