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QUESTION PAPER

(June – 2019)

(Solved)

INDIA FROM MID-18TH CENTURY TO MID-19TH CENTURY

Time: 3 Hours] *[Maximum Marks: 100*

Note: *This question paper has* ***three sections.*** *The students have to attempt* ***any two*** *questions in* ***Section-I, any four*** *questions from* ***Section-II*** *and two short notes from* ***Section-III.***

SECTION - I

Q. 1. How did the nature of state formation differ in Mysore and Hyderabad? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-4, Page No. 23, 'Introduction', 'Mysore', 'War and Militarization', Page No. 24, 'Hyderabad', Page No. 25, 'Patrons and Client' and Page No. 26, 'Let us Sum Up'.

Q. 2. Was the 18th century a 'dark age'? Discuss.

Ans. Till recently the 18th century was described as a Dark Age when chaos and anarchy ruled. India in the 18th century had to endure one of the most chaotic periods in its entire history. The Mughal Empire, which had dominated the Indian subcontinent for two centuries, began to decline with internal and external pressures. Following the decline of the empire, numerous local powers strived for independence, and foreign powers began to invade the area, further deteriorating the situation of India and promoting additional disorder. According to some British writers, stability returned only with the spread of British supremacy in the late 18th Century. It suited the British writers of the Cambridge History of India, and their Indian followers, to paint the 18th Century as black so that British rule would be presented as a blessing in comparison.

Since the circumstances of the Indian subcontinent in the period were indeed tumultuous and complex, this classifies events in the Indian subcontinent into main three categories, in order to provide convenience to the readers: those in the Mughal Empire, those concerning local powers of the Indian subcontinent, and those related to foreign powers. Throughout the end of the 17th century, Aurangzeb brought the empire to its greatest extent, but his political and religious intolerance laid the seeds of its decline. He excluded Hindus from public office and destructed their schools and temples, while his persecution of the Sikhs of the Punjab turned the sect against Muslim rule and roused rebellions among the Rajputs, Sikhs and Marathas.

After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the empire fell into decline. The Mughal Emperors progressively declined in power and became figureheads, being initially controlled by various courtiers and later by rising warlords. Several Mughal Emperors were killed, often after only briefly occupying the throne. The Marathas, as well as powerful officials ruling 'Mughal provinces', in theory, recognized Mughal sovereignty. In actuality, the Maratha rulers, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Nawab of Bengal, the Kingdom of Awadh (Oudh) were independent. Especially, Marathas overran almost all of northern India after 1748. The empire also had to suffer from the depredations of invaders like Nadir Shah of Persia and Ahmed Shah Abdali of Afghanistan, who repeatedly sacked Delhi, the Mughal capital. Mughal rule was reduced to only a small area around Delhi, which passed under Maratha (1785) and then British (1803) control.

Hence, we can say that 18th century was indeed a dark age in India as Mughal rulars had tried to abolish our cultural values but even in the colonial period also, Indians are badly treated and exploited by Britishers also.

Q. 3. Comment on the contours of the Hindi–Urdu controversy.

Ans. The Hindi-Urdu controversy is an ongoing dispute-dating back to the 19th century-regarding the

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status of Hindi and Urdu as a single language and the establishment of a single standard language in certain areas of north and north-western India. Although this debate was officially settled by a government order in 1950, declaring Hindi as the official language, some resistance remains. The present notion among Muslims about this dispute is that Hindus abandoned Urdu Language, whereas Hindus believe that Urdu was artificially created during Muslim rule.

Hindi and Urdu are literary registers of the Khariboli dialect of the Hindi languages, spoken natively by about 45% of India's population, mostly in modern North and Central India. A Persianized variant of Khariboli, known variously as Hindi, Hindustani, and Urdu, began to take shape during the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 AD) and Mughal Empire (1526-1858 AD) in South Asia. The British East India Company replaced Persian with Urdu written in Urdu script as the official standard of Hindi-speaking Northern provinces of modern day India in addition to English.

The last few decades of the 19th century witnessed the eruption of the Hindi-Urdu controversy in North-Western provinces and Oudh with "Hindi" and "Urdu" protagonists advocating the official use of Hindustani with the Devanagari script or with the Persian script, respectively. Hindi movements advocating the growth of and official status for Devanagari were established in Northern India. Babu Shiva Prasad and Madan Mohan Malaviya were notable early proponents of this movement. This, consequently, led to the development of Urdu movements defending Urdu's official status; Syed Ahmed Khan was one of its noted advocates.

In 1900, the Government issued a decree granting symbolic equal status to both Hindi and Urdu, which was opposed by Muslims and received with jubilation by Hindus. Hindi and Urdu started to diverge linguistically, with Hindi drawing on Sanskrit as the primary source for formal and academic vocabulary, often with a conscious attempt to purge the language of Persian-derived equivalents. Deploring this Hindu-Muslim divide, Gandhi proposed re-merging the standards, using either Devanagari or Urdu script, under the traditional generic term Hindustani. Bolstered by the support received by Congress and various leaders involved in the Indian Independence Movement, Hindi in Devanagari script along with English replaced Urdu as the official language of India during the institution of the Indian Constitution in 1950.

Q. 4. Did the Permanent Settlement succeed with its objectives ? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-15, Page No. 76, 'The Permanent Settlement in Bengal', Page No. 77, 'Disillusionment with Permanent Settlement' and Page No. 80, Q. No. 7.

SECTION - II

Q. 5. Why did the Revolt of 1857 fail ? Discuss.

Ans. Ref.: See Chapter-30, Page No. 147, 'The Nature of the Revolt: Debate'.

Also Add: Causes of Failure of Revolt of 1857: The Revolt or uprising of 1857 was a valiant effort by disgruntled Indian sepoys to overthrow the colonial power from Indian shores, however, it ended in failure. The reasons for the failure of the 1857 Revolt are many and can be grouped into administrative, military and political causes.

1. **Lack of Planning and Co-ordination**: There was no planning among the rebels. Different groups pulled in different directions. The principal rebel leaders – Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope, Kunwar Singh, Rani Laxmibai were no match to their British opponents in generalship.
2. **Weak Leadership of the 1857 Mutiny**: The rebel sepoys declared the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah II as the Emperor of India and the symbol of the revolt. However, Bahadur Shah II was already into semi-retirement and hesitant to lead the revolt. Apart from this there were multiple leaders at different storm centres of the revolt and all were fighting the British for their own reasons and not one single cause.
3. **Superior British Army**: The Indian rebels possessed great courage and will to fight the British enemy, however, they lacked the sophisticated arms and ammunition of the British army. The European soldiers were equipped with the latest weapons like the Enfield rifle. While the Indian rebels fought the 1857 mutiny mostly with swords and spears and very few guns and muskets.

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Sample Preview of The Chapter

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HISTORY
INDIA: FROM MID-18th TO MID-19th CENTURY

Indian Polity in the mid-18th Century

1

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INTRODUCTION

With the decline of Mughal empire, a number of regional powers emerged. They can be distinguished among three groups–the successor states like Hyderabad, Awadh and Bengal; the new states–creation of Marathas, Sikhs, Jats and Afghans, and the third being independent kingdom of Mysore; the Rajputs and Kerala. Besides an important happening was the transition of the East India Company from a trading enterprise to a political power.

18TH CENTURY: A DARK AGE

Till recently, the 18th century was described as '*Dark Age*''–an age when chaos and anarchy ruled. The Mughal empire collapsed, regional powers failed to establish empires and stability returned only with the spread of British supremacy in the late 18th century. But there are obvious problems with this view. The Mughal empire's influence was not as widespread or deep as was believed, hence Mughal decline cannot serve as an adequate theme for discussing changes taking place all over India. Moreover, scholars have recently agreed that the establishment of regional politics was perhaps the dominant feature of the 18th century. Satish Chandra, a leading historian of medieval India, has presented 18th century as a distinct chronological whole, rather than split into two halves–pre-British and British.

Thus, it suited the British writers and their Indian counterparts like Jadunath Sarkar to paint the 18th century as black, so that British rule would appear as a blessing in comparison.

DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

The first half of the 18th century witnessed the decline of the Mughal empire on account of several reasons, which are as follows:

Internal Weaknesses: Struggle for Power

Aurangzeb's misguided policies had weakened the stable Mughal polity. Wars of succession and weak rulers plagued Delhi from 1707 to 1719. It was due to Mohammed Shah's incompetence that in his reign Nizam-ul-Mulk set up independent state of Hyderabad in 1724, followed by Awadh and Punjab, splitting the empire into successor states.

External Challenge

The Persian monarch, Nadir Shah attacked in 1738-39, conquered Lahore, defeated Mughal army at Karnal, and captured Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah. He took to crores from official treasury and safes or rich nobles along with Peacock throne and Kohinoor

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diamond. (Mir and Sauda, famous poet, have lamented the devastation of Delhi.) Thus, Nadir Shah gained strategically crucial Mughal territory to the west of river Indus including Kabul making India at once more vulnerable to attacks from the north-west.

Ahmad Shah Abdali, Nadir Shah's commander and ruler of Afghanistan, after the death of Nadir Shah invaded north India many times between 1748 and 1767. Abdali's famous victory was over Marathas in 1781 which is also known as third battle of Panipat.

Decline: Some interpretations

The traditional view regarding decline of Mughal rule has been presented by Irving, Sarkar etc. who have highlighted personal failures of emperors and nobles, their immorality and overindulgence in luxury. They portrayed Mughal rule as Muslim rule, and Maratha, Sikh and Bundela uprisings as Hindu reaction to Islamic onslaught.

As opposed to this view, Satish Chandra has pointed to the Jagirdari crisis. The shortage of *jagirs* and abundance of *Jagirdars*, as the basic reason for downfall. Irfan Habib has shown agrarian system becoming more exploitative as pressure on limited resources grew, sparking off peasant revolts which ruined imperial stability.

The new Cambridge History of India sees the Mughal decline as the result of success of Mughal system, rather than its failure. It is argued, for example, that the zamindars who rebelled were rich and not poor farmers backed by wealthy merchants. This now however needs to be established.

Continuity of Mughal Traditions

Even after the decline of Mughal empire, the prestige of emperor remained so considerate that even rebel chiefs like Sikhs (who made offerings to Delhi Court in 1773 despite their *guru* having been killed by them) and Maratha leader Sahu visited Aurangzeb's tomb in 1714. The British and Maratha fought over possession of the person of emperor hoping to gain legitimacy for their claims to inherit the imperial mantle. Shah Alam II is a case in point. Besides, Mughal administrative practice were adopted by regional powers, successor states and even states like Maratha (which began as popular reaction against imperial rule), who copied Mughal methods of administration. Many officers schooled in Mughal practice found employment in numerous local kingdoms.

CONTINUITY OF INSTITUTIONS *VERSUS* CHANGE IN STRUCTURE

However, it does not mean that Mughal political system survived. The new politics were regional which reintegrated some of the old institutions. But the old Mughal institutions served very different function under colonialism. The wealth gathered from land revenue was drained from India under colonialism. Thus distinction between form and function is blurred by imperial historians with the intention of emphasising continuity of institution to show that British were no different from their predecessors.

THE EMERGENCE OF REGIONAL POLITICS

After the decline of the Mughal empire, broadly three kinds of states came into prominence:

- the states which broke away from the Mughal empire;
- the new states set up by the rebels against the Mughals;
- the independent states.

Successor States

The provincial Governors of Hyderabad, Bengal and Awadh broke away against the imperial demands and set up independent states, strong enough to control the centre, through their links with factions of nobles. Thus, the change in polity in this period may more appropriately be characterised as transformation rather than collapse. However, this collapse did not lead to a generalised decline. Punjab's economy was disrupted by foreign invasions but Awadh experienced economic growth.

Hyderabad: Nizam-ul-Mulk founded the state of Hyderabad in 1724 (though continued to ally with Mughal) and reorganised the administration and streamlined the revenue system. But his death exposed Hyderabad to the machinations of the Marathas and later the foreign companies. Marathas invaded the state and imposed *Chauth* upon the helpless inhabitants. Nizam-ul-Mulk's son, Nasir Jang and grandson Muzaffar Jang entered into a bloody war of succession which was best utilized by the French under Dupleix.

Bengal: Independence in practice and allegiance in name to the power at Delhi marked the rule of the Nawabs of Bengal. Murshid-Kuli Khan, Shuja-ud-din, Alivardi Khan and Sirajuddin were some of the Bengal rulers. These rulers did not discriminate on religious grounds in making public appointments. The *nawabs*

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were fiercely independent and maintained strict control over the foreign companies trading in their realm. Fortifications were not allowed in French and English factories at Chandernagar and Calcutta. Sovereignty of the ruler was upheld even in the face of threats of British East India Company to use force to obtain its end.

However, the *nawabs* were defeated by the British because of their weak meagre army and their under-estimation of the danger posed by the Company. The British victory at PLASSEY in 1757 heralded a new phase in British-India relations.

Awadh: Saadat Khan Burhan-ul-Mulk secured independence of Awadh after his appointment as Governor in 1722. He not only subdued the erring zamindars, but introduced a new land revenue settlement which provided protection to the peasants from zamindars. The *Jagirdari* system was reformed and granted to local gentry, along with positions in administration and army.

The New States

The new regional states to come into existence were the states setup by the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats and Afghans in which the leadership was not with nobility, but with '*new men*' often from lower orders.

Marathas: The basic contours of the Maratha state system, dominated by the Peshwas or chief ministers were evolved during the time of Balaji Vishwanath, who was a loyal official of Sahu. The powers of the office of Peshwa rapidly increased till it became the fountain head of authority of the entire Maratha empire. By the time, Balaji Vishwanath and his son Baji Rao died, the Marathas attained the status of an expansionist empire by controlling far flung areas of Mughal Empire. Their main weakness, however, was that these conquests were made at the initiative of Maratha chiefs who were unwilling to accept regulation of the Peshwa.

Hearing this, Baji Rao acquired Malwa and Gujarat by leading military campaign but got embroiled with Nizani-ul-Mulk and defeated him twice. However struggle for mastery between the two continued.

Balaji Rao, better known as Nana Saheb was Peshwa from 1740 to 1761 under whom, the Maratha power reached its climax to the extent that no part of India was spared–be it Hyderabad, Mysore, Orissa, Malwa, Gujarat, and Bundelkhand.

Struggle between Mughals, Marathas and Afghans

Mastery over north India proved more difficult to maintain. The Mughals at Delhi came under Maratha influence, but Afghans under Abdali threw back the Marathas.

The Third Battle of Panipat, 1761

With the establishment of Maratha influence at Delhi, Imad-ul-Mulk was proclaimed *wazir*, but practically Marathas continued to rule. Marathas eyed Punjab which was ruled by a tributary of Abdali thereby forcing him to return to challenge the ambitious Maratha power. The involvement of many major and minor powers made this conflict multifaceted. On the other, in the process of conquering and administering, the Marathas had acquired many enemies, putting Afghans in a more advantageous position. The Rohilkhand chief and the Awadh *nawabs*, whose areas had been overrun by Marathas also joined hands with Abdali. Therefore, the Maratha armies marched alone to the battlefield of Panipat to confront Abdali.

The Maratha army was no match for the Afghans, though it boasted of having troops trained along western lines. As a result 28,000 Marathas died on the battlefield, along with the commanders of the army–Vishwas Rao and his cousin, Sadashiv Rao Bhau. The Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao too did not survive for long after hearing the tragic news of defeat.

Aftermath of the Third Battle of Panipat

The third battle of Panipat proved significant as it checked the Maratha's ambition of replacing the Mughals as the imperial power. It benefited the British by giving them tremendous opportunity to expand their influence in Bengal and India. Though for a brief period after 1716, the fortunes of Marathas also seemed to revive, but the early demise of the Peshwa in 1772 at the age of 28, finally ended the dream.

Nature of the Maratha State and Movement

The rise of Marathas was both a regional reaction against Mughal centralisation as well as manifestation of the upward mobility of certain classes and castes. The rural gentry and hereditary cultivators formed the social base.

Levy was institutionalised as *chauth* and made a legitimate part of the state system, that was used to supplement the income of the state. The Marathas adopted some parts of Mughal administrative system, but concentrated more on techniques of extracting

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surplus. The absence of a proper administrative hierarchy or a well-defined provincial authority however prevented them from consolidating their influence at a rapid pace. These weaknesses were compounded by their technological backwardness, especially in military sphere.

Sikhs: The strategically located province of Punjab had witnessed the spread of '*Sikhism*' at the end of the 15th century. This was confined to the personal sphere for two centuries, but by the time of Guru Govind Singh, the tenth *Guru*, it got transformed into a well-knit community. Guru Govind Singh's conflict with Aurangzeb is well known as is Banda Bahadur's rebellion against Aurangzeb's successors. They were hence suppressed ruthlessly by Mughals on their unwillingness to compromise and insisting on being fully independent rulers. The position of the leaders of the movement Khatris, declined as trade and urban centres withered under the combined impact of foreign invasions and the Marathas. The joining of lower castes with the prospect of upward mobility was opposed by the upper castes and classes.

However, taking advantage of external invasions of Nadir Shahs and Abdali, the Sikhs looted, whatever was left by foreign invaders and thus rapidly established their control, once Abdali and his followers returned home. It was followed by a period when 12 *misls* or confederacies constituted the province. Recent works have refused to concede to the view that the Sikh political system was theocratic and placed it alongside secular polities elsewhere in the country. Punjab rose into prominence under Ranjit Singh.

Jats: Rising as a peasant revolt after the Mughal decline, it transformed into an uprising that proved destructive for all other groups in the region. Despite its peasant character, this state remained feudal, with zamindars holding both administrative and revenue powers and the revenue was raised to its highest, as in Suraj Mal's reign.

Though, the *Jat state* of Bharatpur was founded by Churaman and Badan Singh, but it got consolidated under Suraj Mal during his rule from 1756 to 1763. He expanded the state boundaries to the Ganga in the east, the Chambal in the south, Delhi in the north, and Agra in the west. He also possessed great administrative skills especially in the fields of revenue and civil affairs. However, his death in 1763 marked the demise of the *Jat* state.

Farukhabad and Rohilkhand

Taking advantage of the collapse of authority in North India following Nadir Shah's invasion, Ali Mohammad Khan, an Afghani who had migrated into India in mid-18th century due to political and economic disruption, set up a petty kingdom, Rohilkhand in the area of Himalayan foothills, between Kumaon in north and Ganga in the south. Mohammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan set up an independent kingdom to the east of Delhi in the area around Farrukhabad. The use of Afghani artillery, especially the flint gun, ended the domination of cavalry.

Politically, the Afghans not only accentuated the Mughal decline, but also helped Abdali to subdue Awadh, that could have checked British expansion.

Independent Kingdoms

A another type of group of states that were neither the result of breakaway nor rebellion against Delhi were as follows:

Mysore: The independent state of Mysore was founded by Haider Ali, who though was a junior officer in Mysore army but gradually rose to become a commander. Most remarkably he inducted French experts to set up arsenals, trained the troops along western lines and overthrew the minister Nunjraj in 1769, who was the real power behind the Mysore throne. Under his reign, the boundaries of the state extended to include the rich coastal areas of Canara and Malabar, clashing with Marathas, Hyderabad and British in the course. In 1769 he defeated British forces near Madras, but died in 1782, leaving his policies to be furthered by his son Tipu Sultan.

Rajputs: Owing to their small size Rajput rulers followed the policy of gradual loosening of ties with Delhi and started functioning as independent in practice. They participated in the struggle for power at the court of Delhi and gained lucrative and influential governorship from the Mughal emperors. Rajput policy continued to remain fractured, in which one faction ousted the other in a continuously played game of one-upmanship in the court of Mughals.

Kerala: The three states of Cochin, Travancore and Calicut comprised the modern states of Kerala, out of which Travancore was the most of prominent, as its king, Martanda Verma expanded his boundaries with a modern and well equipped army, trained along western lines and ousted the Dutch and suppressed the feudal

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