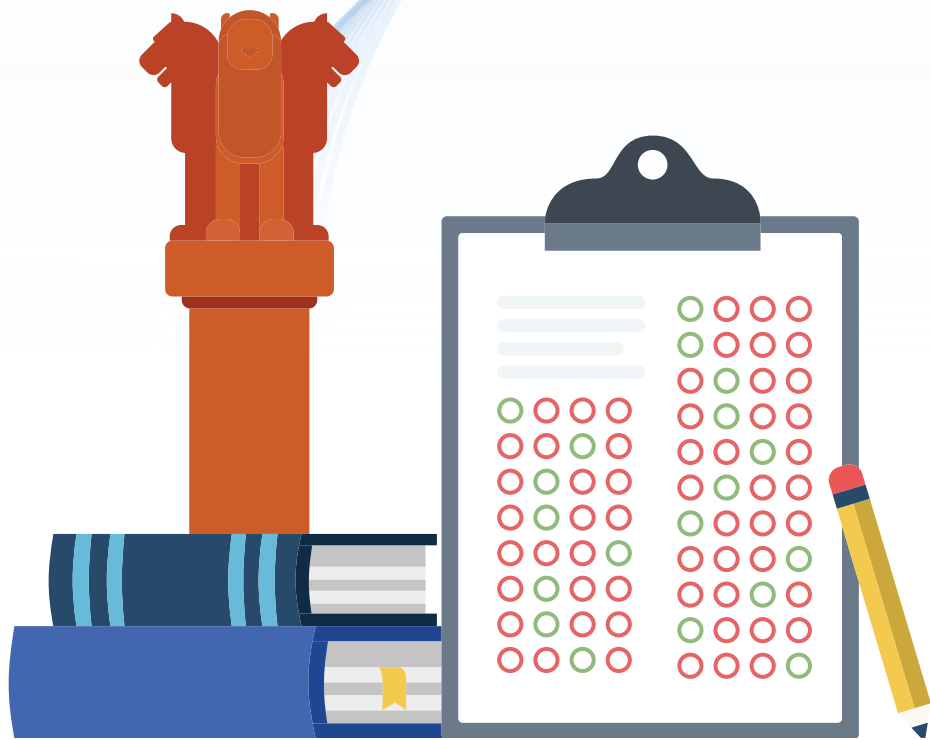


# MODERN INDIAN HISTORY



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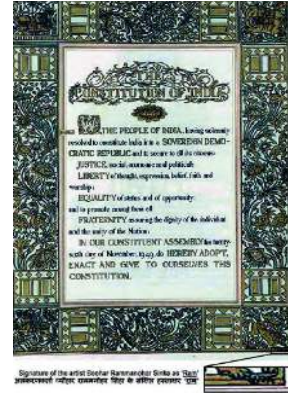
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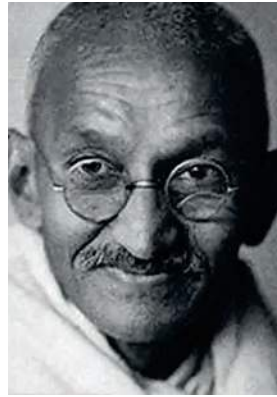
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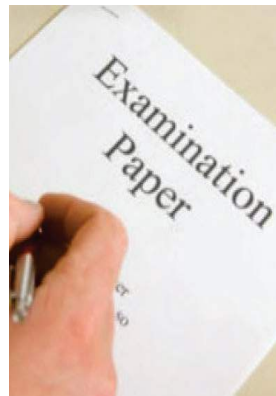
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# EUROPEAN ENTRY IN INDIAN POLITICS

*"In the land of Hind, the caravans of the people of the world, kept coming in, and India kept getting formed" – Firaq Gorakhpuri*

- The story of India is a story of frequent waves of immigration. In the ancient times, these were the Greeks, Scythians and Huns. In medieval times, there were Turks, Afghans, Mongols and Arabs. Towards the start of the Mughal empire, frequent waves of travellers and traders from the European countries started pouring in. Outsiders often saw India as a place of much wealth, and sought either to make wealth through trade, or rule and plunder through conquest. The Europeans were the last and the

most formidable force to hit the Indian civilisation. Before them, the social and cultural life of the subcontinent was not subdued to such extent. Moreover, this time the invaders were not ready to assimilate and treat India as their own empire. India was a source of wealth which was to be plundered and the booty was to be shared with the masters in the home countries.

- In 1453, Ottoman Turks occupied Constantinople. Arabs were intermediaries in the merchandise exported from India to the European markets. The Arab had huge control over both the Red Sea trade route and the land routes to India. In such a scenario,



IMAGE 1.1: EUROPE - INDIA SEA ROUTE

the Europeans were compelled to find a direct sea route to India.

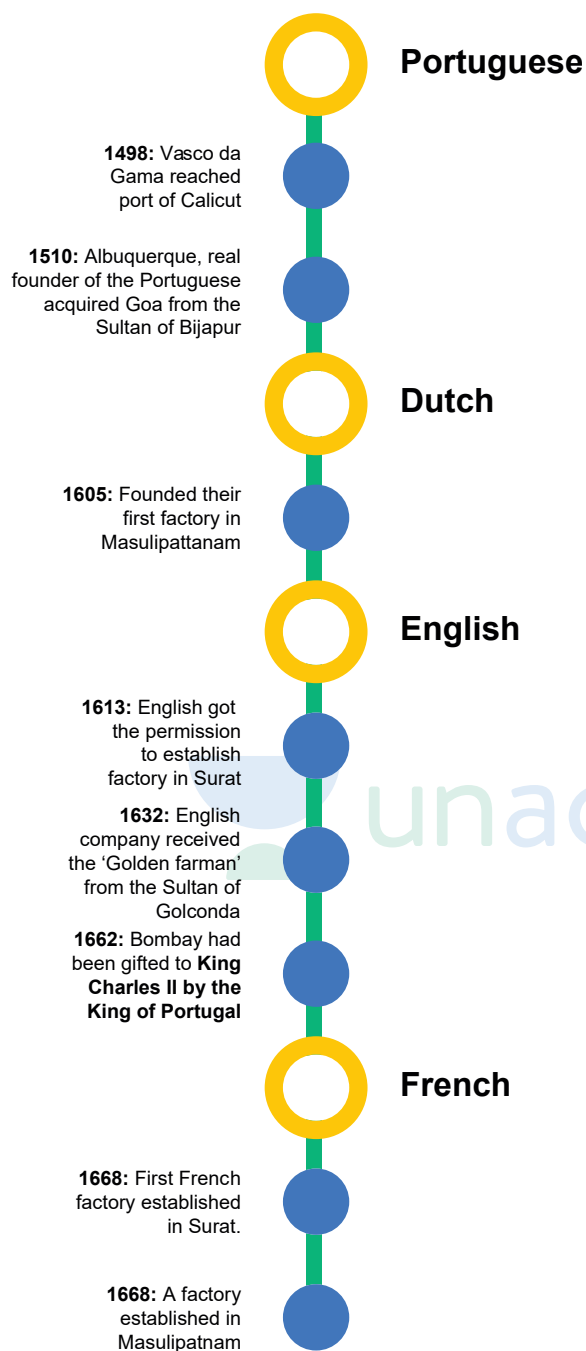


IMAGE 1.2: CHRONOLOGY OF ADVENT OF EUROPEANS IN INDIA

## The Portuguese

The Portuguese changed the 'rules of the game' by their efforts to monopolise trade routes through India. Since long ago, the trading system in the Indian Ocean had many participants like Indians, Arabs,

Africans from the east coast, Chinese, Javanese, etc. But these players were bound by some tacit rules of conduct and no one had sought overwhelming dominance though all were in it for profit.

- Adam Smith wrote that the discovery of Cape route to India and America were "the two greatest and most important events in the history of mankind."
- The Portuguese traveller **Vasco da Gama**, led by an Arab navigator **Abdul Majid** reached the port of **Calicut** in **1498** and he was warmly received by Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut.
- Vasco da Gama established a trading factory at **Cannanore**. **Cannanore**, **Cochin** and **Calicut** became the important trade centers of the Portuguese.
- The Europeans were enticed by the gains obtained by direct trading with India, by removing the Arab middlemen.
- Since the beginning, the Portuguese carried out their trade backed up by force and they were helped by their superior armed ships which enabled them to dominate the seas
- In 1505, **Francisco De Almeida** was appointed as the Governor in India by the King of Portugal for a three-year term and armed the incumbent with sufficient force to protect the Portuguese interests in India.
- Almeida had vision of making Portuguese the master of the Indian Ocean. His Policy was called by the name of **Blue Water Policy**.
- **Alfonso de Albuquerque** succeeded Almeida and is said to be the founder of Portuguese power in the east. Albuquerque easily acquired Goa from the Sultan of Bijapur in 1510. He also abolished 'Sati' in Goa and encouraged Portuguese to take Indian wives.
- Portuguese introduced crops like tobacco and cashew nut.



The **Cartaz** (plural **cartazes**, in Portuguese) was a naval trade license or pass issued by the Portuguese empire in the Indian ocean during the sixteenth century (circa 1502-1750). Its name was derived from the Portuguese term 'cartas', meaning letters. The "cartazes" licensing system was created in 1502 to control and enforce the Portuguese trade monopoly over a wide area in the Indian Ocean, taking advantage of local commerce: the cartaz was issued by the Portuguese at a low cost, granting merchant ships protection against pirates and rival states, which then abounded in these seas. However, its main purpose was to ensure that merchants paid the tax in Portuguese trading posts, directing them to the factories in Goa, Malacca and Ormuz, guaranteeing its monopoly on the spice trade and other products.

- Nino da Cunha assumed office of the governor in November 1529 and shifted the headquarters of the Portuguese from Cochin to Goa.
- While the Portuguese were the earliest Europeans to arrive, they were the last to leave India (In 1961, India recaptured Goa and Daman and Diu from Portuguese control).
- The Portuguese were intolerant towards Muslims as they were directly in conflict with the Moors of Africa and the Arabs. However, with introduction of Inquisition in Goa, the intolerant attitude was extended to Hindus as well.

#### **Rise and Fall of Portuguese:**

- Portuguese were the first Europeans that came to India for trade and commerce.
- For Prince Henry of Portugal, finding an ocean route to India had become an obsession.
- In 1497, under the Treaty of Tordesillas Portugal could claim or occupy everything to the east of the line (1,300 miles west of the Cape Verde Islands which divided the non-Christian world) while Spain could claim everything to the west.
- In 1498, Vasco da Gama reached Calicut, India.
- In 1500, Pedro Alvarez Cabral (Portuguese Naval Commander) discovered Brazil came to India and also got the friendship support from the Rajas of Cochin and Cannanore.
- In 1505, King of Portugal appointed Francisco De Almeida as a governor to consolidate the position of the Portuguese in India. Blue Water Policy was the vision of Almeida by which he want to make the Portuguese the master of the Indian Ocean.
- In 1509, Almeida becomes the first Portuguese to set sail in Bombay. He defeated the combined fleet of Gujarat, Egypt and Zamorin.
- In 1510, Alfonso de Albuquerque succeeded Almeida. He secured for Portugal the strategic control of the Indian Ocean. He captures Goa from Bijapur.
- In 1530, Nino da Cunha shifted the headquarters of the Portuguese government in India from Cochin to Goa.
- In 1535, Portuguese took control over Diu.
- In 1559, Portuguese took control over Daman.
- In 1579, the Portuguese had settled down on a Hooghly river bank and established

a Portuguese trading center.

- In 1596, Portuguese were defeated by the Dutch and had to give up their positions in Southeast Asia.
- In 1612, British defeated the Portuguese in Surat and established their factory.
- In 1632, the Mughal siege of Hooghly.
- In 1739, the Marathas captured Salsette and Bassein from the Portuguese.
- In 1641, Dutch took the Malacca fort from the Portuguese.
- In 1663, Dutch devoured the Portuguese decisively after capturing all the fort of Malabar.

## Reasons for the decline of the Portuguese

- There are a few reasons attributed to the decline of the Portuguese in India. Historians point out that their proselytizing activities had earned the wrath of the people and even that of the Mughal emperor, whom they had tried to convert to Christianity.
- As the British power increased, Portuguese power declined. Captain William Hawkins who represented the English East India Company at the court of Jahangir from 1615 brought tremendous benefits to his company.
- Finally, after looting India, the economic and colonial prospects of the Latin American region lured the Portuguese away from India.
- They focused on the Western Hemisphere, thenceforth.
- They continued to retain their possessions in India including Goa, Daman and Diu amongst others.
- They lost the rest of their possessions to the other European powers in India.

## The Dutch

- The Dutch East Indies Company was established in 1602 and is considered

to the first Multi-National Corporation (MNC) in the world. It became the first company to issue stocks to its share holders and engage in trade in the colonies.

- It focused on India, Indonesia and other colonies in the Malacca Strait, mainly.
- In India, they established their factories at Surat, Nagapattinam, Pulicat and Chinsurah (Bengal), with their first factory in **Masulipatanam** (in Andhra Pradesh) in **1605**.
- They captured **Nagapattanam** from the Portuguese and made it their main stronghold in South India.
- In 1693, they became the first European power to occupy Pondicherry. They reached an agreement with France and handed over the territory to them after a few years.
- The Dutch were not much interested in empire building in India; **their main concern was trade**. In tune with this, a compromise was made in 1667 with British by which the British withdrawn all their claims on Indonesia, and the Dutch withdrew from India to concentrate on their more profitable trade in Indonesia. Dutch monopolized the trade in black pepper and spices in Indonesia.



## The English

- 1600: The British East India Company was established by a Royal Charter signed by Elizabeth I. The charter gave them a monopoly on trade with any country east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan.
- 1609: Arrival of William Hawkins at Jahangir's court to secure royal patronage. He succeeded in getting royal permit for the Company to establish its factories at various places on the Western coast of India.
- 1611: The Mughal governor of Surat gave permission to Captain Middleton to trade there.
- 1612: Captain Thomas Best defeated the Portuguese in the sea off Surat.
- 1613: Jahangir granted permission to the English in early 1613 to establish a factory at Surat under Thomas Aldworth.
- 1615: Sir Thomas Roe secure a number of privileges, including permission to set up factories at Agra, Ahmedabad and Broach.
- 1616: The EIC establishes its first factory in the south in Masulipatnam.
- 1632: The Golden Farman was given to EIC by the Sultan of Golconda. It helps in ensuring safety and prosperity of EIC trade.
- 1633: EIC established a factory near Hariharpur, Balasore in Odisha.
- 1639: EIC obtained the lease of the city of Madras from the local king and built Fort St George there to protect its factory.
- 1651: The governor of Bengal Sujauddaula allowed the English Company to carry out its trade activities in Bengal.
- 1661: Charles II of England married a Portuguese princess Katherine, and received the island of Bombay as dowry.
- 1668: Charles II of England gave Bombay to the East India Company in for 10 pounds per year. EIC shifted its business headquarters from Surat to Bombay.
- 1698: EIC purchased 3 villages (Sutanati, Govindapur and Kolkata) to build a factory over there and Fort William was raised in order to provide protection.
- 1717: The Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar issues a farman, called Magna Carta of the Company, giving the Company a large number of trade concessions.

### The English in Bengal

- In 1651, they were allowed to trade in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs 3,000, in lieu of all duties. Factories in Bengal were started at Hooghly (1651) and other places like Kasimbazar, Patna and Rajmahal. Aurangzeb gave the farman for trade to English in Bengal.
- In 1717, the Mughal emperor Farrukhsiyar issued a farman, called Magna Carta of the Company, giving the Company a large number of trade concessions. Under the Farman, in 1717, Farrukhsiyar gave the British East India Company the right to reside and trade in the Mughal Empire. They were allowed to trade freely, except for a yearly payment of 3,000 rupees.
- This was because William Hamilton, a surgeon associated with the company cured Farrukhsiyar of a disease. The company was given the right to issue dastak (passes) for the movement of goods, which was misused by company officials for personal gain.

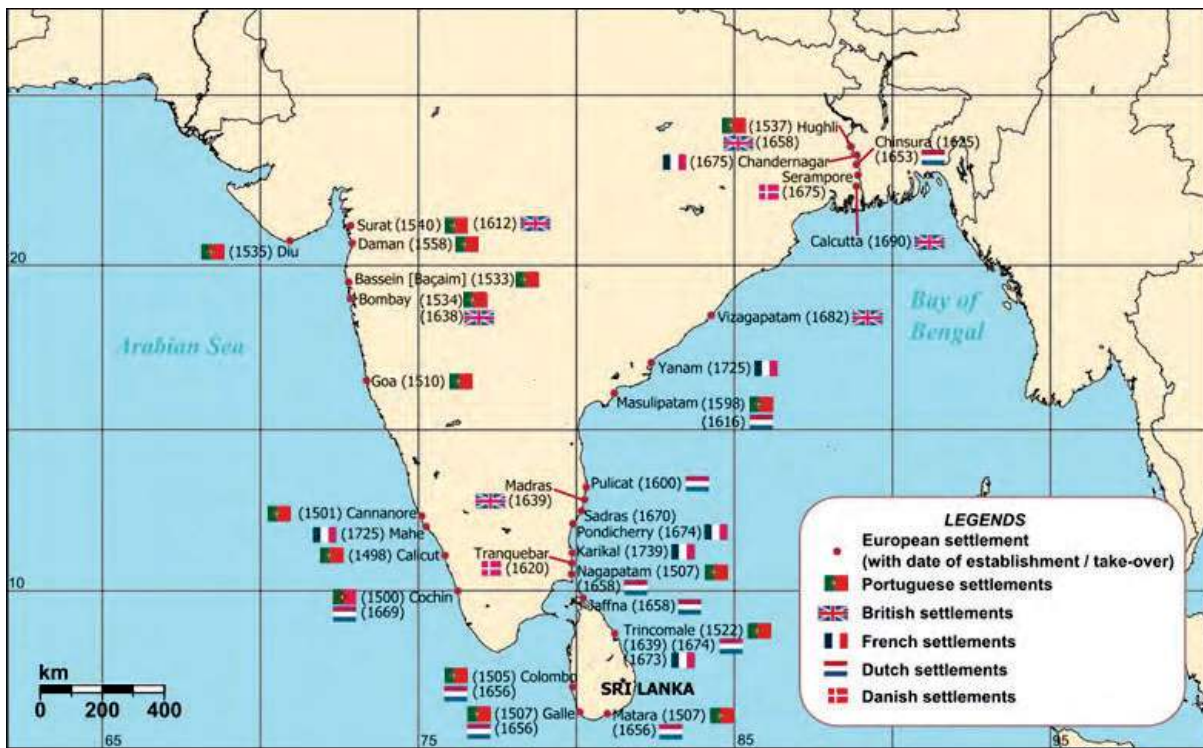


IMAGE 1. 3: EUROPEAN COLONIES IN INDIA

## The French

- The French East India Company was established in 1664. However, it was under the control of the Government, unlike the English East India Company, which was a private trading entity.
- It was the last European power to enter India.
- In 1668, first French factory established in Surat.
- In 1669, a factory established in Masulipatnam.
- Pondicherry developed as headquarters by 1673.
- The French also established a township at Chandernagore in Bengal.

## The Anglo-French Struggle for Supremacy:

War	Causes	Effect
First Carnatic War (1740-48)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The war was an extension of the Anglo-French War in Europe which was caused by the Austrian War of Succession.</li> <li>English navy seized French ships, to which French retaliated. Thus, started the first Carnatic War.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The war concluded with Treaty of Aix-La Chapelle and with this Austrian war was also concluded.</li> <li>Madras was given back to the English, and the French, in turn, got their territories in North America.</li> </ul>

<b>Second Carnatic War (1749-54)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dupleix, the French governor sought to increase his power and French political influence in Southern India by interfering in local dynastic politics to defeat the English.</li> <li>• Dupleix got the opportunity when Nizam-ul-Mulk, the founder of the independent kingdom of Hyderabad, died in 1748, and the release of Chanda Sahib by the Marathas in the same year.</li> <li>• The French extended their support to Muzaffar Jang, the grandson of the Nawab for the throne of Hyderabad and Chanda Sahib, the son-in-law of Dost Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic for the throne of Carnatic, respectively.</li> <li>• The English sided with Nasir Jang (the son of the Nizam) and Anwar-ud-din for the throne of Hyderabad and Carnatic respectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the French gained the Northern Sircars, Dupleix was criticised by the French authorities because of heavy losses to the French company.</li> <li>• Dupleix was called back to France. He was replaced by Charles-Robert Godeheu who signed the Treaty of Pondicherry.</li> <li>• As per the treaty, the English and the French were to indulge only in commercial activities in India and not interfere in sub-continental political affairs.</li> </ul>
<b>Third Carnatic War (1758-63)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1756, when Austria wanted to recover Silesia, the Seven Years War (1756-63) began. Britain and France fought once again.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battle of Wandiwash, proved decisive battle of the Third Carnatic War was won by the English in 1760 at Wandiwash (or Vandavasi) in Tamil Nadu.</li> <li>• Treaty of Peace of Paris (1763) restored the French to their factories in India; the French political influence disappeared after the war.</li> </ul>

### British Victory: The Success Factors

- **Private enterprise:** With limited government intervention, English company was in position to make swift decisions.
- » The French company, was a State monopoly. It was regulated and controlled by the French government and was controlled by government policies and delays in decision-making.
- **Superior navy** of English to French.
- **Greater resources:** The English held three important places, namely, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras regions whereas the French had only Pondicherry. Bengal was a vast territory with huge tracts of fertile land.
- **Better finances** of English company

than French company.

- **Capable commanders** in the British camp: English side had Sir Eyre Coote, Robert Clive, Major Stringer Lawrence and many others—there was only Duplex on the French side.

View

We seem. . . to have conquered and peopled half the world in a fit of absence of mind.

—Sir John Seeley, "The Expansion of England" (1883)

## The Danes

- Danish East India Company got set up in **1616**. In **1620**, they established a factory at **Tranquebar near Tanjore**, on the east coast of India.
- Their principal settlement was at Serampore near Calcutta.
- The Danish factories, which were not important at any time, were sold to the British government in 1845.

## Other Reasons for English Success Over Other European Powers

- **Industrial Revolution:** It began with Britain, which provided them with a head start over other European rivals.
- **Stable Government:** Britain endured a strong government with efficient monarchs, with the exception of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. In 1789, other European nations, including France, experienced a violent revolution. In the 17th century, the Dutch and Spain were also involved in the 80-years war.
- **Lesser Zeal for Religion:** Britain was less zealous about religion and less interested in spreading Christianity, as compared to Spain, Portugal or the Dutch.

# BRITISH SURMOUNT A FRAGMENTED INDIA

"The British conquest of India was the invasion and destruction of a high civilization by a trading company utterly without scruple or principle, careless of art and greedy of gain, over-running with fire and sword a country temporarily disordered and helpless, bribing and murdering, annexing and stealing, and beginning that career of illegal and 'legal' plunder which has now [1930] gone on ruthlessly for one hundred and seventy-three years."

— Shashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India*

## Decline of the Mughals

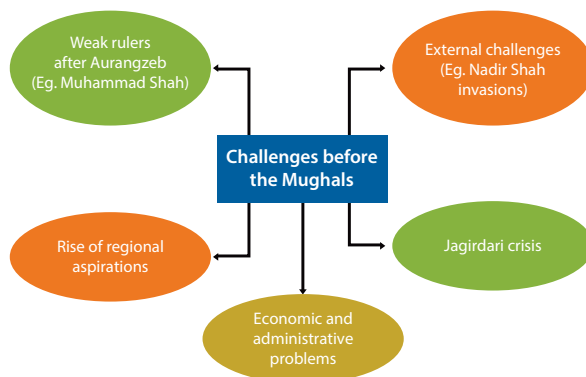
- The 1st half of the 18th century was marked by the decline and disintegration of the great Mughals. Their empire shrank to a few miles around Delhi. This decline was also an indicator of the flaws and weaknesses inherent in the medieval society and Mughal polity.

## Causes of Decline of Mughal Empire:

- Aurangzeb's faulty Policies:** This resulted in the revolts of the Jats, the Satnamis and the Sikhs. His Deccan coverage resulted in a long-drawn war towards the Marathas which introduced misfortune to the Mughal Empire. His policies sapped the economic and army resources of the Empire which led to breakdown of the entire administration.
- Lack of Strong Successor:** After the death of Aurangzeb a war of succession between the brothers for the throne started. The nobles, by siding with one

contender or the other, increased their own power.

- Degeneration of Rulers and Nobles:** There was once total absence of successful nobles throughout the rule of the Later Mughals. This led to the break-up and degeneration of the Empire.
- Deterioration of Army:** Failure of the Emperors to improve armaments and struggle strategies weakened and demoralized the Mughal army. It no longer remained a positive battle force.
- Economic Decline and bankruptcy:** Decline in trade and industry, Shah Jahan's zeal for construction had depleted the royal treasury. Aurangzeb's long wars in the south had further drained the exchequer.
- Rise of Regional Powers:** The regional groups like the Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats started undermining the authority of the Mughal state in order to create kingdoms of their own.
- Poor Administration:** The empire had become too vast and unwieldy to be efficiently governed from a central authority under the weak rulers.



### Mughal Emperors after Aurangzeb:

- The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 dealt a severe blow to the fortunes of the Mughal Empire in India. There was an immediate succession battle, out of which Bahadur Shah-1 emerged successful.
- His old age was a disadvantage to the empire. He placated the Rajputs, Marathas and other communities. Introduced policies that resulted in the growth of the empire.
- However, he continued to display intolerance as far as the Sikhs and the Jats were concerned.
- Bahadur Shah-1 died in 1712. It was after his death that the era of nobles began in Indian polity.
- Successive Mughal emperors had subdued the nobles.
- After Bahadur Shah-1, Jahandar Shah (1712-13), Farrukh Siyar (1713-19) and Muhammad Shah (1719-48) were the main rulers.
- The Saiyyid brothers (Abdullah Khan and Hussain Ali Khan) emerged as the leading nobles during this period.

### Impact of Decline of Mughal

- Unity and stability of Mughal Empire was shaken up during the long and strong reign of Aurangzeb. However, at the time of his death in 1707, the Mughal empire was still quite powerful and the Mughal army was still large. While Muhammad Shah ruled for a long spell of 29 years (1719-48), as he was an inept emperor, a restoration of imperial fortunes did not take place. By the year 1761 the Mughal Empire was an empire just in name, because their weaknesses enabled the local powers to declare their independence. None of the Indian powers rose to assert the Great Mughals' heritage because they were powerful enough to overthrow the empire, but not strong enough to unite it or build in its place something new. These new states that emerged were of various kinds:

### Successor States

These were states founded by Mughal provincial governors who never formally severed their relations with the center, but basically exercised autonomy on the local

level in matters of execution of power. These were:

- **Bengal- Murshid Kuli Khan** was the founder of the independent state of Bengal.
- **Hyderabad-** The founder of the **Asaf-Jah** house of Hyderabad was **Kilich Khan**, popularly known as **Nizam-ul-Mulk**.
- **Awadh-** The founder of the independent principality of Awadh was **Saadat Khan**, popularly known as **Burhan-ul-Mulk**.

### Rebel States

They were set up by the rebels against the Mughal state. These include:

#### The Marathas

- Under the able leadership of the Peshwas, the Marathas overthrew the Mughal authority from Gujarat and Malwa and established their rule.
- They offered the most formidable challenge to the English East India Company in the struggle for political supremacy in India.



## The Sikhs

- Sikhs organised themselves into **12 misls or confederacies** which exercised control over different parts of the kingdom.
- **Ranjit Singh** belonged to the **Sukarchakiya misl**.
- **Treaty of Amritsar (1809)** was signed between the British and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. By this treaty Ranjit Singh acknowledged the British claims over the territories east of Sutlej.
- After Ranjit Singh's death in 1839 his successors proved weak, and ultimately the British annexed Ranjit Singh's territories.

## The Jats

- **Badan Singhand Churaman** succeeded in setting up the **Jat state of Bharatpur**. But under Suraj Mal, the influence of Jat reached its zenith. The Jat kingdom, however, experienced a decline after Suraj Mal's death in 1763.

## Afghan Kingdoms of Farukhabad and Rohilkhand

- Ali Muhammad Khan founded Rohilkhand, a petty kingdom. This was the region between Kumaon in the north and the Ganga in the south of the Himalayan foothills.
- In the region around Farrukhabad, Mohammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan, set up an independent kingdom to the east of Delhi.

## Independent States

- In the 18th century, many states began to assert their independence from the Mughal Empire. Their method was to slowly loosen their ties with Delhi

and function as independent states in practice. These were:

## The Rajput Kingdoms

- Sawai Jai Singh of Amber, who ruled from 1699 to 1743 in Jaipur and also played a significant role in Mughal politics, was the most powerful of the Rajput chiefs during this period.
- The Rajput policies had to face constant depredation by the Marathas and Afghans in the second half of the 18th century, despite none of them succeeded in permanently subjugating the region.

## Mysore

- The emergence of Mysore as a influential power in South India, in the **mid eighteenth century** was most spectacular. Originally a vice-royalty under the Vijaynagara Empire in the sixteenth century, Mysore was gradually transformed into an autonomous principality by the Wadiyar dynasty.

### Haidar Ali:

- A man of humble origin, Haidar began his career in the Mysore army as a junior officer and gradually rose to prominence.
- He took political power in Mysore in 1761 by overthrowing the corrupt Dalwai (Prime Minister) Nangraj.
- Haidar modernised his army with the help of French.
- Haidar and later his son Tipu Sultan, introduced the practice of directly imposing land taxes on peasants and collecting them in cash and through salaried officials.
- Died in 1782 (During 2nd Anglo-Mysore War), fighting the British.

### Tipu Sultan:

- He aimed to establish centralized military.
- Repaired old irrigation systems and constructed new ones, by promoting agricultural manufacturing and introducing sericulture in Mysore.
- A new year, a new coinage scheme and new weight scales and measures have been introduced.
- He sent ambassadors to France to introduce European technology, to create a navy, with the ambition of engaging in oceanic trade.
- He showed a keen interest in French revolution. He planted the **tree of Liberty at Srirangapattanam** and became a **member of Jacobin Club**.
- In 1793, he established what can be described as a "state commercial corporation" with plans to set up factories outside of Mysore.
- He gave money for the construction of **Goddess Sharda in the Shringeri temple** and gave grants to temples regularly.
- His rule came to an end when he was defeated by English in 1799. He died defending his capital Srirangapattanam during 4th Anglo-Mysore War.

### Travancore

- Travancore has always retained its independence from the Mughal empire.
- After 1729, when its king Martanda Varma began to expand his dominions with the assistance of a powerful and modern army trained along Western lines and armed with modern weapons, it gained in significance.
- Its capital became a center of scholarship and art under the successor of Martanda Varma, Rama Varma. The area lost its former glory after his death at the end of the eighteenth century and soon succumbed to British pressure, accepting a resident in 1800.

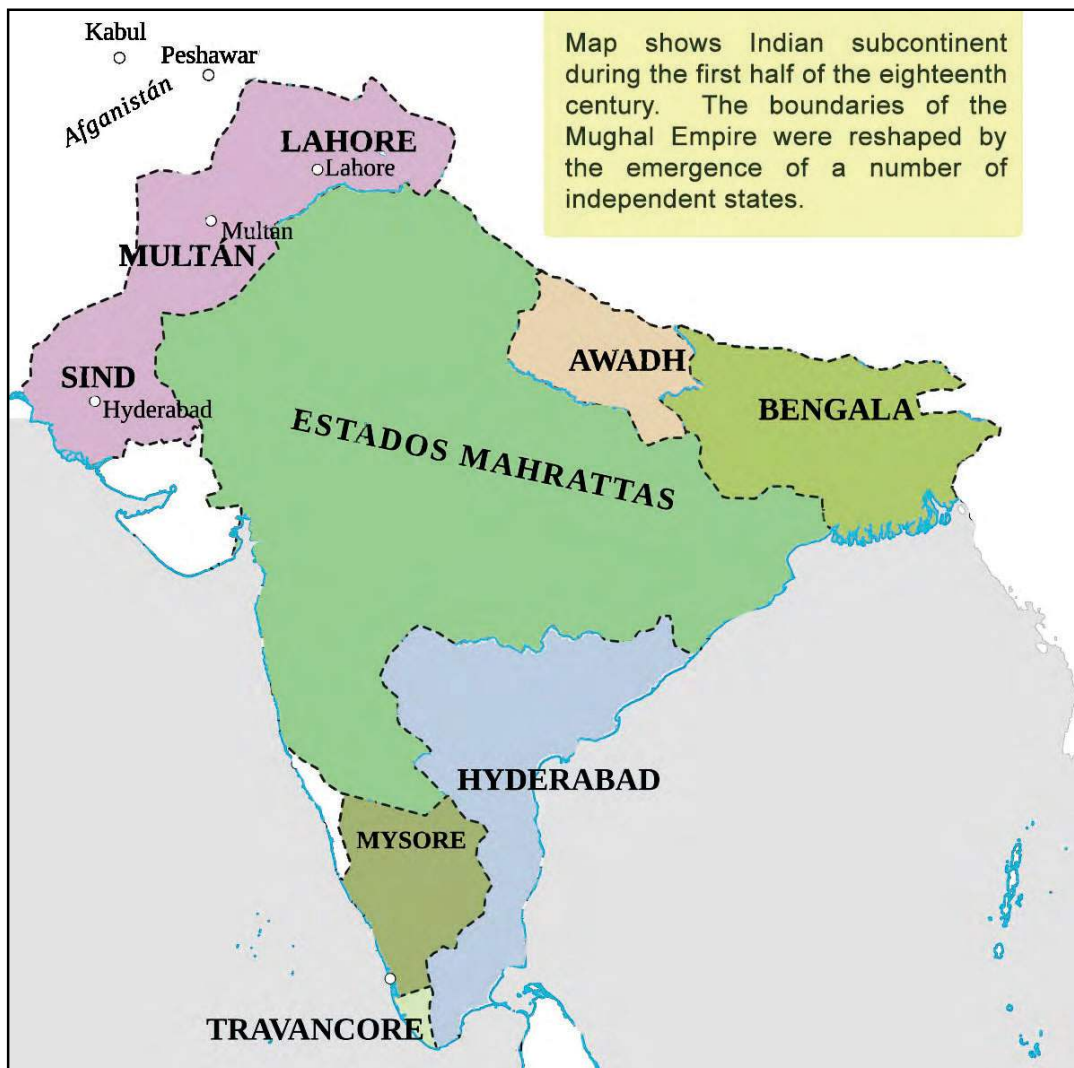


IMAGE 2.1: INDIA IN 1760

## External Challenges

- **Invasion of Nadir Shah:** The Persian emperor attacked India in 1738-39, conquered Lahore and defeated the Mughal army at Karnal in 1739.
- **Attack of Ahmad Shah Abdali:** After the latter's death in 1747, Ahmed Shah Abdali was elected Nadir Shah's successor and invaded India several times between 1748 and 1767. In 1761, in the Third Battle of Panipat, Abdali defeated the Marathas.

## Socio Economic Conditions

- Around the first half of the 18th century, a foreign traveller would have found during his travels in India the steady erosion of political authority in the center and the articulation of regional aspirations by ex-subedars and new members of the landed gentry. At the same time there was rise in intermediary class in farming and trading as well. In the 18th century, the gradual accumulation of wealth by these intermediaries formed the basis of emerging kingdoms. The weakening of the Mughal rule that had dwarfed them benefited most of these intermediaries,

and they have now emerged into the limelight. These included Hindu and Muslim revenue farmers, among others. A further significant component of this intermediary community was established by Hindu and Jain merchants and bankers. Their presence testified to a continuous trading tradition in India, as Saraf's [money dealers], bazazas [cloth dealers], jouhuris [jewellers] etc. indicate the existence of merchant castes.

- Economic pointers for the 18th century show that the economy fared well before the advent of colonial rule. Little record of prolonged famines exists. After the inauguration of the company's rule, the devastating famine of 1770 occurred in Bengal. The population, prices, trade and development all showed an upward swing that showed a positive trend in general.
- **Agriculture:** As their fruits of labour were shared by many, peasants suffered as they were forced to pay exorbitant sums to the state, the Zamindars, the Jagirdars, and the revenue farmers. But it deteriorated under British rule.
- **Trade:** India did not import foreign goods on a large scale due to self-sufficiency. At the same time, it exported many products. India was famously known as a sink of precious metals.
- Significant port cities such as Surat and Masulipatnam deteriorated as European companies wrested foreign trade away from Indian merchants. Colonial cities such as Madras, Bombay and Calcutta and the inland towns and capitals of regional kingdoms took their place: Fyzabad, Lucknow, Benaras, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Srirangapatam. Trading cities like Baroda, Mirzapur and Kanpur also came into being to service trade.
- **Education:** Traditional education was limited to literature, law, religion, philosophy, and logic, and the study of physical and natural sciences, technology, and geography was excluded.
- **Society:** Caste system was present in its most glaring form. Hindus were divided into various sub-castes, apart from the four varnas. While caste factors mainly dictated the choice of occupation, exceptions occurred on a large scale, making caste status in some parts of the country very fluid. Caste councils and panchayats also implemented the laws and regulations of caste. In a way close to the way the higher-caste Hindus treated the lower-caste Hindus, the Sharif Muslims consisting of nobles, scholars, priests and military affairs always looked down upon the Ajlaf Muslims or the lower-class Muslims.
- **Women:** Women possessed little individuality of their own, with few exceptions. Certain outdated and exploitative social customs and traditions such as the sati, purdah, polygamy, child marriage hindered the progress of women.

## Conclusion

- So, the major characteristic of eighteenth-century India's polity was the weakening of the centralized Mughal Empire and a dispersal of political power across the regions.
- On the economic front, India in the eighteenth century shows that there were regions with substantial amounts of resources that actually attracted English and other European traders and fuelled competition for establishing hegemony over the Indian sub-continent.

# BRITISH EXPANSION IN INDIA

*"I know it is said in missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we shall hold it."*

— William Joynton-Hicks

- Involvement of British in India during the 18th century can be divided into two phases.
- At some points along the coast, the British were restricted to trade activity in the first half of the century.
- They began to wage war on land in eastern and south-eastern India from the 1750s. Later on, they started to reap the reward of successful warfare, especially over the rich province of Bengal. British rule was consolidated by the end of the century and the area between Ganges Valley and Delhi and much of southern India's peninsula came under British control. By then, the British had developed a military supremacy that would allow them to subdue all the remaining Indian states of any significance in the next fifty years, either conquering them or compelling their rulers to subordinate themselves.
- **Two-fold method** of imperial expansion and consolidation of British paramountcy during 1757-1857:
  - (a) Policy of annexation by war or conquest
  - (b) Policy of annexation by administrative mechanisms and diplomacy .

## Policy of annexation by conquest or war

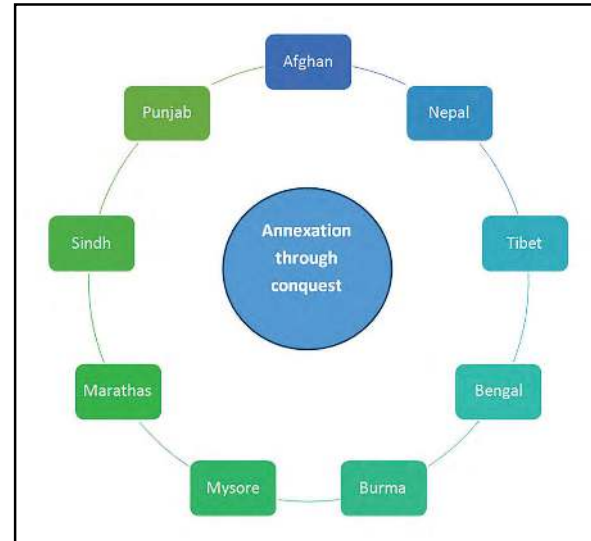


IMAGE 3.1: TERRITORIAL ANNEXATION BY BRITISH

## Bengal

### Pre-1757 (Battle of Plassey)

- The East India Company had vital commercial interests in trading in Bengal. By the end of 17th Century, the Company's exports from Bengal were worth **more than £ 50,000 per annum**.
- They established factories in **Kasimbazar, Balasore, Hooghly, Dacca and Patna**.
- **Black hole tragedy:** Siraj attacked and seized the English fort at Calcutta. Following the surrender the Europeans were kept in the local lockup meant for petty criminals of the company for the whole night. The room was 18 feet (5.5 meters) long and 14 feet (4 meters) wide, and there were only two small windows. Many died in the process and is thus popularly known as the Black Hole Tragedy.



- Robert Clive now arrived with naval reinforcement from Madras. He strengthened the English position in Bengal.
- At the Nawab court, there was already a disaffected faction consisting of merchants, bankers, financiers and influential Zamindars, such as Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand, the Jagat Seth brothers, Raja Janki Ram, Rai Durlabh, Raja Manik Chand and Raja Ramnarain, who felt threatened by the declaration of independence by a young Nawab trying to reorder his court's balance of power.
- **Common interests:** As many Indian merchants worked in partnership with the English company and private traders, the Indian mercantile group and the European traders shared interests, working as their dadani merchants, providing them with textiles from the interior in return for advances or dadan.
- The misuse of Dastaks or trading privileges along with the continuous interference in the affairs of the Nawab led to the battle.
- A conspiracy was thatched to replace Siraj with Mir Jafar, his commander-in-chief. He was the choice of the Jagat Seth, without whose support any coup was virtually impossible.
- The divisions between Indian faction ensured that the English victory in the Battle of Plassey (1757) was certain even before the battle was fought.
- Thus, the Battle of Plassey (1757) marked the beginning of political supremacy of the English East India Company in India.

### Impact

- Mir Jafar became the Nawab of Bengal as a result of this victory. He gave the British large amounts of money plus a Zamindari of 24 parganas.
- The English trade in Bengal was mainly funded by the import of bullion from England before 1757. After that year not only the import of bullion stopped, but bullion was exported from Bengal to China and other parts of India, giving the English company a strategic edge over its European rivals.



IMAGE 3.2: AN OIL-ON-CANVAS PAINTING DEPICTING MEETING OF MIR JAFAR AND ROBERT CLIVE AFTER THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY BY FRANCIS HAYMAN