

# 10

## Political Situation in the 18th Century

### Lesson Plan

#### Contents

- ▶ An overview of India in the time of the later Mughals – rise of kingdoms
- ▶ Understanding the rise of other powers and the disintegration of the Mughal Empire

#### Objectives

- ▶ To understand the weakness of the later Mughals and the rise of other powers
- ▶ To learn about the situation across India at the time of the later Mughals
- ▶ To know about the various regional power groups that sprouted across the country
- ▶ To appreciate the developments and situation that led to changes at the end of the Mughal period

#### ■ Teacher's Aids

- ▶ Globe
- ▶ Pictures, charts, atlas and wall maps
- ▶ Blackboard
- ▶ Internet

#### ■ Tips for Teacher

- ▶ Explain the growing influences in the country with the arrival of European traders, the weakness of the Mughal rulers and the rise of smaller powers around the country.
- ▶ Students should be encouraged to know places, locations and their placement on the maps.

#### ■ Background and Reading

- ▶ Read the lesson aloud and explain, sharing the aids, etc., pausing to examine and explain the data in the boxes.
- ▶ Particularly focus on the simultaneous developments that impacted on each other during the last years of Mughal rule.

## **The Later Mughals**

- ▶ Collapse of Mughal empire began during Aurangzeb's reign in the 18th century.
- ▶ Later Mughals – weak and dependent on nobles who were not united and fought among themselves.
- ▶ Bahadur Shah I – 1707 – war of succession with brothers – tolerant, tried to undo reactionary policies of Aurangzeb – good relations with Rajputs – released Shahuji [grandson of Shivaji] – abolished Jazia [tax on non-Muslims] – fought the Sikhs.
- ▶ Jahandar Shah – 1712 – not efficient – Sayyid Hussain Ali and Sayyid Abdullah became king-makers – made Farrukhsiyar the king and killed Jahandar Shah.
- ▶ Mohammad Shah – many provinces declared their independence.
- ▶ During this period – attack of Nadir Shah – looted Delhi – stability shaken.
- ▶ Bahadur Shah Zafar – last ruler ascended the throne [1837-1857].

## **Rise of Regional Powers**

- ▶ Independent powers – many seized power and set up new kingdoms.

### **Bengal**

- ▶ Farrukhsiyar appointed Murshid Quli Khan as Governor in 1717 – shifted capital from Dacca to Mushidabad.
- ▶ Shujauddin Khan succeeded him and then Alivardi Khan.
- ▶ Reforms: Agriculture, trade, commerce given importance; removed corruption; helped poor farmers; established peace with Marathas.

### **Awadh**

- ▶ Mohammad Shah made Saadat Khan the Governor in 1722 – very efficient, but betrayed Mohammad Shah when he called for protection against Nadir Shah.
- ▶ Safdarjang – extended rule to Rohilkhand and Lucknow – brought peace; controlled lawlessness; improved financial position; organised army; tolerant towards Hindus.

### **Nizam of Hyderabad**

- ▶ Nizam-ul-Mulk appointed in 1722 as Governor of Deccan – founded Asif Jahi dynasty – successors called Nizams of Hyderabad.

### **Mysore**

- ▶ Hyder Ali – a powerful ruler took control of Mysore from Wodeyar rulers – fought Marathas, Nizams, British – died in Second Anglo-Mysore War.
- ▶ Tipu Sultan, his son – Tiger of Mysore – known for bravery – good general – encouraged trade; introduced weights and measures; calendars and a coinage system.

## Sikhs

- ▶ No separate kingdom, despite Khalsa being formed.
- ▶ Banda Bahadur—leader who resisted the British.
- ▶ Invasion of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali—conflict between Afghans and followers of Nadir Shah—enabled Sikhs to form groups called Misls—but these were not united.
- ▶ Maharaja Ranjit Singh—united them and formed a kingdom as their ruler.

## Rajputs

- ▶ Powerful—support of Mughals—relations with Mughals deteriorated during Aurangzeb's reign because no attention to Jaipur, Mewar and Marwar.
- ▶ With rise of Jats and Marathas—the position of Rajputs declined.
- ▶ Sawai Raja Jai Singh—built Jaipur—Jantar Mantar built at Jaipur, Delhi, Ujjain, Mathura and Banaras—fought for women's upliftment.

## Jats

- ▶ Group of agriculturists living around Delhi, Agra and Mathura—revolted against the Mughals and rose to power 17th century.
- ▶ Rose to power under leadership of Suraj Mal—captured Agra and other places in North India—after his death, Jats declined.

## Marathas

- ▶ Rose to prominence under Shivaji—warrior tribes in the Western Ghats—impressed by bhakti saints—Father Shahji Bhonsle, jagirdar of Bijapur—Mother Jijabai was a strong influence on him by stories from epics—trained by Dadaji Konda Dev.
- ▶ Wanted to make the Maratha kingdom powerful—known for guerrilla warfare—surprise attacks on enemy—attacked Bijapur territories—Sultan sent Afzal Khan to kill him—were to meet unarmed, but Shivaji wore armour and tiger claws—when attacked, he killed Afzal Khan—soon attacked Aurangzeb's territories—Shaista Khan, Governor of Bengal, sent—Shivaji killed him.
- ▶ 1664—Shivaji attacked Surat [part of Mughal empire]—Raja Jai Singh sent—Shivaji defeated and signed the Treaty of Purandhar 1665—many forts surrendered and agreed to meet Aurangzeb—taken captive with son Sambhaji—escaped in a basket of sweets.
- ▶ Took title of Chhatrapati—resumed attacks against Mughals—laid foundation of Maratha power at Raigarh, occupied Gingi Fort, Vellore and some parts of Mysore—died in 1680.

## Shivaji's Administration

- ▶ Kingdom divided into provinces called Prants—divided into districts and sub-districts—village lowest administrative unit under a Patel.
- ▶ King's council of eight ministers called Ashta Pradhans—Peshwa [Mukhya mantra]; Senapati [Commander-in-Chief]; Panditrao [Minister for Religion]; Sachiva [Minister for

Royal Correspondence]; Nyayadhish [Chief Justice]; Mazumdar [Minister of Finance and Revenue]; Dabir [Minister of Foreign Affairs]; Mantri [Home Minister] under whom were prants, tarafs, mawas and villages.

- ▶ Revenue collected by assessment of land–loans to farmers–cultivators had direct access to officers, no middlemen.
- ▶ Taxes: Chauth [one-fourth of revenue to be paid for protection] and Sardeshmukhi [one-tenth of revenue as contribution to king]–Taxes made Marathas unpopular.

### **The Army**

- ▶ Well-organised–men well trained and disciplined with sound moral values–well-paid–280 forts built–each controlled by a Havaladar–also had cavalry, artillery, navy and infantry.

### **Successors of Shivaji**

- ▶ Sambhaji–continued struggle with Mughals.
- ▶ Shahu–imprisoned.
- ▶ Raja Ram for a few years and then his minor son Shivaji II–assisted by mother Tarabai–after Aurangzeb’s death, Shahu released–led to conflict and two branches of Marathas arose–one led by Shahu and the other by the Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath who supported Shivaji II–Shahu captured the throne, leaving it later to Balaji Vishwanath who finally became the ruler and established the rule of the Peshwas.
- ▶ Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath 1717-1720–efficient ruler and good administrator–made Peshwaship hereditary–brought peace to territory; improved kingdom’s financial position–recovered Maratha territory from Mughals.
- ▶ Baji Rao I–equally good ruler–clever statesman–Maratha rule reached peak of glory–expanded into southern Gujarat, up to Bihar, Odisha, Punjab–formed Maratha confederacy–with Peshwa at its head: Gaekwads of Baroda, Bhonsles of Nagpur, Holkars of Indore and Scindhias of Gwalior.
- ▶ Balaji Baji Rao–third Peshwa–conquered Hyderabad, Delhi and Bengal–successful ruler.

### **The Third Battle of Panipat -1761**

- ▶ Marathas expanding, clashed with Ahmad Shah Abdali–at Panipat in 1761–Marathas defeated–dream of empire ended–British able to establish their power–Peshwa legacy ended in 1772 after the death of Madhav Rao.

### **Reasons for Maratha success:**

- ▶ Personality of Shivaji–united them into a state.
- ▶ Fight between Bijapur and Golconda helped them to establish themselves.
- ▶ Strong foundation with civil administration and army.
- ▶ Resources available through taxation.

### Reasons for decline:

- ▶ Fought for personal gain–failed to unite.
- ▶ Vast kingdom without proper control.
- ▶ Chauth and Sardeshmukhi caused dissatisfaction.
- ▶ Guerilla warfare suitable only for hilly regions.
- ▶ Rajputs, Jats and Sikhs did not like surprise attacks and looting.
- ▶ Marathas did not concentrate on agriculture and trade.

## Assessment Corner

### Oral Assignment

- A. Ask for answers at random from the students. Confirm the right answers. Let them write down the correct answers if they like in their books.

### Written Assignment

- B–E. The teacher has two options–(i) Either do these exercises orally first and then ask the students to write them down. OR (ii) Ask the students to write the answers on their own. Then the teacher can announce the correct answers for the students and they can ask their partners to cross-check them.

In either case, the answers can be written as homework and the teacher can check them in the class.

### Think Tank

- F. **HOTS questions:** Discuss the questions in the class and let the students write the answers to F and G as homework. Teacher should assess individual work.