

**Dynamics of colonial expansion--2: Expansion and Consolidation of Colonial Rule in Bengal, Mysore, Western India, Sindh, Awadh and the Punjab**

**Subject: History**

**Unit: Expansion and Consolidation of Colonial Power**

**Lesson: Dynamics of colonial expansion--2: Expansion and Consolidation of Colonial Rule in Bengal, Mysore, Western India, Sindh, Awadh and the Punjab**

**Lesson Developer : Dr. Anirudh Deshpande  
College/Department : Associate Professor, Department  
of History, University of Delhi**

# Dynamics of colonial expansion--2: Expansion and Consolidation of Colonial Rule in Bengal, Mysore, Western India, Sindh, Awadh and the Punjab

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### 2.2.2: Dynamic of colonial expansion – II: expansion and consolidation of colonial rule in Bengal, Mysore, Western India, Awadh and the Punjab

#### Introduction

The British colonial expansion in India began in the middle of the 18th century and went on till the annexation of Awadh in 1856. During these hundred years both the *expansion* and *consolidation* of colonial rule took place in India together. The previous lesson of this unit examined the general features of colonial expansion in India. These features were common to most of the cases of British conquest in India with regional variations. The case of Awadh is perhaps different. By 1856 the revenue rich kingdom of Awadh was surrounded by British territory and its annexation was only a matter of time. Many other states like Hyderabad survived because they had completely surrendered their sovereignty to the British. Further, the Revolt of 1857 which followed the annexation of Awadh discredited the policy of outright annexation favoured by Lord Dalhousie. After 1857 the policy of treating and promoting the Indian princes as loyal friends of the British and as natural leaders of their people was followed by the British Raj. Hence the hundreds of small and large princely states, including Kashmir and Hyderabad, which survived till Indian independence and partition owed a lot to the rebels of 1857.

#### Bengal

The foundations of an independent Bengal were laid by Murshid Quli Khan, the last Mughal subedar of the province. Murshid Quli Khan, and his eventual successor Alivardi Khan, reorganized the administration of Bengal on the lines of independent dynastic rule. Their policies were mainly designed to augment state revenue and led to the growth of a strong group of large zamindars, merchants and financiers. The house of the Jagat Seths who were influential financiers rose to prominence and great influence during this period. Thus, from the 1730s onwards, these new rich and powerful men began to play an important role in the politics of Bengal at the expense of the declining feudal nobility. The death of Alivardi Khan in 1756 led to a conflict of succession within the Bengal court. Alivardi, who had no son, had nominated Siraj-ud-daulah, his grandson, as the successor. This was challenged by other claimants to the throne like Ghasiti Begum the aunt of Siraj, and Shaukat Jang who was his cousin and the **faujdar** of Purnea. These claimants were backed by powerful zamindars, merchant-financiers and ambitious court officials and commanders who began to conspire against Siraj-ud-daulah. They also received help from the Company which was unhappy with Siraj becoming the Nawab in 1756. Although the conflict between the Company and the Nawabs of Bengal had a history by then, matters were precipitated by the Company

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which raised fortifications around Calcutta without the Nawab's permission. The Company also had a well known history of misusing its trade privileges. This had led to its conflict with Alivardi Khan in the past as well. Company officials often used these privileges for their private trade which otherwise attracted duties. Moreover, the Company gave refuge to Krishna Das, son of Raj Ballabh, who retired to Calcutta with a large treasure without the Nawab's consent. The dominant group in the court comprising the Jagat Seth, Amichand, Raj Ballabh, Rai Durlabh and Mir Jafar opposed the young and inexperienced Nawab and, as the turn of events soon proved, meticulously planned his downfall.

To enforce his authority Siraj-ud-daulah drove out the English from Calcutta in 1756 after they disobeyed his orders to dismantle their fortifications. Defeated by the Nawab's army, the English fled to Fulta, an island near the mouth of the Hooghly. Siraj-ud-daulah probably thought that his business with the Company was finished and hence did not pursue them. While the Nawab seemed to prematurely celebrate his success, the English regrouped under Robert Clive who soon arrived from Madras with reinforcements. Upon Clive's assumption of command events moved rapidly in the direction of Plassey where the Company defeated the army of Siraj-ud-daulah in June, 1757. The result of the Battle of Plassey (1757) had been decided well in advance and the battle itself was not a great triumph of English arms. After the battle Mir Jafar, according to plan, was proclaimed the Nawab and the Company became the effective king maker in Bengal. Almost immediately the loot of Bengal began. Clive and his followers extracted an enormous tribute from Mir Jafar who began by paying them an equivalent of Rs. 1, 750, 000 in presents and compensation. Jafar's unfortunate reign proved shortlived. He could not pay his army which rose in rebellion and this forced the Company to depose him. Jafar was soon replaced by his son in law Mir Qasim who also began his reign by paying hefty sums to the British. To secure his nawabship he also gave away the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong to the Company.

<b>Value addition: common misconceptions</b>
<b>Mir Jafar was the only traitor in Bengal</b>
In fact among those who conspired against the young assertive Nawab of Bengal in 1756-57 were many prominent Hindu merchants and bankers such as Amichand, Rai Durlabh, Mahtab Rai, Swarup Chand, Raja Janki Ram, Raja Ramnarain, Raja Manik Chand and the brothers Jagat Seths.
<b>Source: Bandyopadhyay, Sekhar. 2010. <i>From Plassey to Partition: A History of Modern India</i>. Orient Blackswan.</b>

But compared with Jafar, Mir Qasim was made of stronger material and he began to gradually distance himself from the Company. He shifted the capital from Murshidabad to Munger in Bihar in a bid to escape the influence of the Company's officials. He also began

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to staff the bureaucracy with his chosen men besides modernizing the army. Despite these measures and his stand in favour of the Indian merchants who complained against the Company's malpractices, Qasim's rule did not last long. While his enemies, like Ram Narayan, the Deputy Governor of Bihar, conspired with the British against him, Qasim forged an alliance with the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam and Shuja-ud-daulah the Nawab of Awadh. But his hope of driving out the Company from Bengal was dashed when this Indian coalition was defeated by a highly motivated and professional Company army at the famous Battle of Buxar in 1764. Following this battle the ailing Mir Jafar was made the Nawab once again but died soon thereafter to be replaced by his minor son, a British puppet.

In 1765 Clive came back to Bengal as the Governor and completed its formal conquest. He signed an agreement with the beleaguered and compliant Emperor Shah Alam who had been a virtual prisoner of Shuja-ud-daulah since 1761 – the year in which Shuja played a conspicuous role in the Maratha defeat at Panipat. Shah Alam received Allahabad in return for a Mughal **farman** which made the Company the **diwan** of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Thus the Company gained absolute control over the revenues of India's richest province. These revenues, after a period of intense plunder and financial instability, were later reorganized under the Permanent Settlement system introduced by Lord Cornwallis and played an important role in the conquest of other parts of India.

### Mysore

British expansion in Mysore must be understood in the context of three British imperatives. First, the Company wanted to protect its Malabar trade. Second, like Bombay, the Company was worried about the security of Madras and third, the Company was unhappy with the growing relations between Mysore and the French. The rulers of Mysore, Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, were brilliant generals who fought four wars against the Company before Mysore was finally defeated by the British in 1799. Throughout the Mysore Wars the Marathas, the nawab of Carnatic and the Nizam of Hyderabad sided with the British at various stages. During the First Mysore War (1767-1769) Haider skillfully managed to win over the Nizam and the Marathas. He followed up this diplomatic success by inflicting a series of defeats on the British. In 1769 he was dictating terms to them at the gates of Madras. Faced with the prospect of annihilation the Madras Council sued for peace and a treaty of mutual military assistance was signed with Haider Ali who wanted English support against the unreliable Marathas and the Nizam. On their part the English acceded to this treaty under pressure and to buy time. Hence, when the Marathas attacked Mysore in 1771 they did nothing to help Haider Ali.

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The Second Mysore War (1776-1784) began when the Company captured Mahe, a French commercial settlement under Mysore's jurisdiction. During this war the British won over the Nizam and the Marathas and pushed Haider on the defensive. After suffering a defeat at Porto Novo in 1781, Haider Ali died in 1782 but his son Tipu Sultan continued the war which ended with the Treaty of Mangalore in 1784. The Third Mysore War broke out when Tipu attacked Travancore, a British ally in 1790. This time the British were led by Lord Cornwallis, a veteran of the American Wars, who came to India as the Governor-General in 1786. Cornwallis successfully isolated Tipu Sultan and the English defeated him at various places before the war came to an end with the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792. By this treaty half of Tipu's kingdom passed into British hands and his sons were taken to Calcutta as hostages. Now it was only a matter of time before he was finally defeated. That task was completed by Lord Richard Wellesley who came to India in 1798 as a Governor General committed to extinguishing the Indian states wiping out what remained of the French influence in India. Hence Wellesley offered Tipu a choice between the Subsidiary Alliance and annihilation.

A large British force backed by the Nizam and Maratha mercenaries invaded Mysore in 1798 under the leadership of Richard Wellesley's younger brother Arthur Wellesley. Against these overwhelming odds Tipu adroitly retreated to the fortified capital Seringapatam on the banks of the river Kaveri. Ultimately the river island town of Seringapatam fell in 1799 after a long and bitterly contested siege which demonstrated the military capabilities of Tipu Sultan. Tipu died fighting at the place where the fortress wall had been breached. Today the place is marked by a memorial and attracts hundreds of tourists and history students every day. Tipu's death was followed by a savage plunder of Seringapatam and Wellesley could restore discipline with great difficulty. The Nizam was given a portion of Mysore as payment for his services and the Wodeyar Raja was restored to the throne as a subsidiary. The greater part of Karnataka was annexed by the British and became part of the Madras Presidency. Its land revenue was later organized according to the Ryotwari Settlement designed by Governor Thomas Munro.

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Figure 2.2.2.1: Tipu Sultan

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tipu\\_Sultan\\_BL.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tipu_Sultan_BL.jpg)

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Figure 2.2.2.2: Vellore fort

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vellorefort.jpg>

### The Marathas

Since the cause and consequence of the First Anglo-Maratha War (1775-1782) have been mentioned in the previous lesson we will focus attention on the Second and Third Maratha Wars here. While the British were busy subjugating Tipu Sultan, the internal differences among the Marathas reached a flashpoint with the occupation of Pune by Jaswant Rao Holkar (see the previous lesson for details) following the death of Nana Fadnavis. Despite all his faults Fadnavis had been successful during his career in maintaining a delicate balance between the powerful Maratha sardars like the Shinde and Holkar and the Brahmin Peshwa who was the symbolic head of the Maratha dominions. Following Holkar's capture of Poona, Peshwa Baji Rao II fled to Basein and, to the great joy of the Wellesley brothers, signed the Subsidiary Alliance treaty in 1802. Following this, the English reinstated the Peshwa in Pune and issued an ultimatum to the Maratha sardars opposing him. The Company's campaign

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(1803-05) was well planned and its main aim was to defeat and subjugate Shinde whose power extended from Delhi to the Deccan and his junior ally the Bhonsale of Nagpur. The Deccan campaign was led by Arthur Wellesley who gradually captured all the important Shinde strongholds like Ahmadnagar and Gawilgarh and defeated the Marathas in the decisive battle of Assaye near Ajanta (1803). In the north a large army was fielded under General Lake. This army moved up from Aligarh and defeated the Shinde army first at the battle of Delhi which was fought on the grassland of Patparganj and later at Laswari near Agra (1803). The Maratha defeat in this war eliminated the influence which Gwalior had exercised till then on Delhi and opened the way for English expansion into north and north-west India.

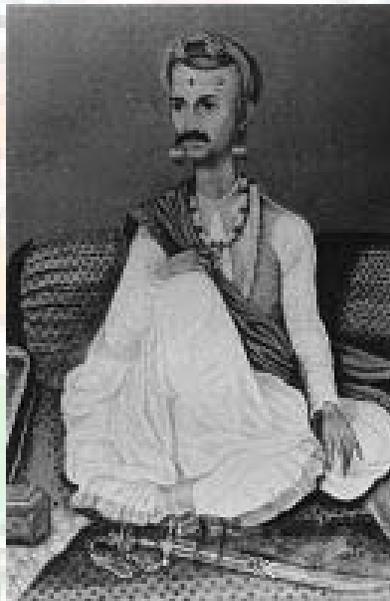


Figure 2.2.2.3: Nana Phadnavis

Source: <http://www.kamat.com/database/pictures/5923.htm>

Compared with the Second Anglo-Maratha War the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-19) was a minor affair. The war began when the Peshwa, who grew resentful of British influence, violated the Subsidiary Alliance treaty and rallied some sardars to the cause of Maratha autonomy. This war ended in a complete rout of the so-called Maratha Confederacy. The Peshwa was pensioned off to Bithur near Kanpur while most of the Maratha territories became part of the Bombay Presidency. The Bhonsale dominions north of the Narmada were also annexed by the British. These events brought down the curtains on the once formidable Marathas whose rise can be dated to the period of Shivaji in the 17th century.

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Figure 2.2.2.4: Battle of Assaye

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Battle\\_of\\_Assaye2.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_Assaye2.jpg)

### Sindh

Sindh was made part of the British Empire both for commercial and geo-strategic reasons. Compared with the cases of annexation observed above, the conquest of Sindh must be seen in the context of the disastrous First Afghan War (1838-42) caused by the Russophobic 'forward' policies of Lord Auckland. These policies emerged as a response to the imperialist expansion of Tsarist Russia towards central Asia which gave rise to fears of a Russian, or a Russian supported, invasion of the north western part of India. The fear of Russia remained strong among an influential section of British statesmen, scholars and rulers in India

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throughout the 19th century. The annexation of Sindh should also be examined in relation to the perspectives on conquest present among men like General Sir Charles Napier. During the 1830s the fear of a Russian invasion of India from the North-West with Iranian assistance was peaking and the British were trying their best to secure the approaches to Afghanistan. To make matters worse, the Iranians, with Russian aid, were in fact laying siege to the western Afghan city of Herat close to the Iran-Afghan border. Such events fired the imagination of the British during a period when the 'great game' between them and the Russians was played out.

By 1838 officers of the Bombay Marine had surveyed the coast of Sindh and the Indus river for commercial and strategic reasons and the Company had established a Residency in Sindh to encourage and tap the trade on the river. In 1839 the English annexed Karachi, the principal port of Sindh, and thus acquired the bridgehead for the subjugation and conquest of the entire region which was widely perceived as the frontline of defense against invasions from the north. The capture of Karachi was accomplished with remarkable ease and paved the way for the eventual annexation of the entire province. Treaties were imposed on the several Talpur Ameer of Sindh and all sorts of concessions were extracted from them in the name of 'free trade', 'relaxation of duties and tolls' and 'abolition of oppressive laws'. In 1838 the ill fated Army of the Indus had marched through Sindh on its way to the Bolan Pass and Kabul and its expenses were forced upon the Ameer on the pretext of imaginary arrears they owed to Shah Shuja of Afghanistan. The Ameer protested with reference to documents signed by Shuja in 1835 giving them control of Sindh, Shikarpur and their dependencies. These protests were brushed aside by the English who were determined to make Sindh pay for their Afghan adventure. Indeed the cooperative Ameer were often accused of treachery by the British who remained ever dissatisfied with their exactions in Sindh. The British not only dealt separately with different Ameer but could easily 'mediate' between them. Hence, a few years before its conquest, Sindh was reduced to a subsidiary client state by British policy.

In 1842 the Afghans rose against the British and drove them out of Kabul towards the snow bound passes. The British disaster which followed can be gauged from the fact that only one man from an army of 16,000 survived the Afghan counter attack and reached Jalalabad! In February 1842 Lord Ellenborough replaced Auckland as the Governor General of India. Under his leadership the winter defeat was avenged by an army of retribution which marched upon Kabul, burnt its bazaar and looted the city before marching back to India. The events of 1842 seemed to have strengthened the British resolve to annex Sindh and secure their northern frontier once and for all. In September 1842 Sir Charles Napier, a sixty year old veteran of the Peninsular War (wars fought against Napoleon in Spain and Portugal), was appointed commander of all British troops in Sindh. Napier was a tough soldier respected by his troops and "with his fantasies and his misconceptions, a sublime conviction that he was always in the right, and determination to make a name for himself, he found himself in Sindh." (W. F. F. Napier, *The History of General Sir Charles Napier's Conquest of Scinde*, (with an introduction by Hamida Khuhro, OUP, 2001 [first published 1857], p. xiii.) Napier believed in his own civilizing mission in the East and had contempt for

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the Ameers and local customs in general. Soon after landing in Sindh from Bombay he began to make impossible demands upon the Ameers and tested their patience beyond reasonable limits. His objectives become clear from the entries in his diary: "How is all this to end? We have no right to seize Scinde, yet we shall do so, and a very advantageous and human piece of rascality it will be." (*The History of General Sir Charles Napier's Conquest of Scinde*).

Napier's bullying ultimately provoked the Hyderabad Ameers into a sort of united action against the British. Realizing that the moment of reckoning had come, and that Napier was unwilling to listen to the advice given by James Outram the Resident, the Ameers gathered their troops in Hyderabad, the administrative capital of Sindh. On 14 February 1843, the Ameers' troops "maddened by the continued provocation of the British" attacked the British Residency in Hyderabad (not to be confused with Hyderabad, the capital of the Nizam State in the Deccan). This was excuse enough for Napier who defeated the Hyderabad forces on 17 February at Miani and those of Mir Sher Mohammad of Mirpur at Dubbo on 26 March. The news of the conquest made Lord Ellenborough happy despite the fact that he had sent Napier to Sindh with the purpose of keeping the Ameers in a position of subordination to the British. Napier was made the Governor of Sindh and administered it with a free hand and full support from Calcutta till 1847. A hundred years later Sindh became a province of Pakistan.



Figure 2.2.2.5: Sir Charles Napier

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Charles\\_James\\_Napier.jpg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Charles_James_Napier.jpg)

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### **Awadh**

The region of north India between Rohilkhand and Bihar with its centre at Lucknow is called Awadh. The rivers Ganga, Jamuna, Son and Ghagra irrigate its fertile plains which yielded a substantial revenue in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Banaras, Allahbad, Ghazipur, Jaunpur and Faizabad were the other important towns of the region. An autonomous Awadh was founded by enterprising Shia nobles like Saadat Khan and his son in law and successor Safdar Jang in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Till the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Awadh was seen by the British as a buffer state between the Bengal Presidency and the rest of north India dominated by the Marathas and Sikhs. The undermining of Awadh began with the Treaty of Allahabad signed by Shuja-ud-daulah and the British after the former's defeat at the Battle of Buxar (1764). According to this treaty Kora and Allahbad were ceded to the Mughal Emperor for his upkeep and a war indemnity of Rs. 50,00,000 was imposed on Shuja. After signing this treaty Shuja, who was aware of the history of the Company's conquests in India, began to seriously modernize his army in an effort to check further English advance into his territory and assert his authority. However, the Company had its eyes on the revenues of Awadh and had other plans. Another treaty was signed between Awadh and the Company, led by Warren Hastings at the time, in 1773 according to which the Nawab agreed to pay a monthly tribute of Rs. 2,10,000 for each brigade of Company troops present in Allahabad or Awadh proper. The Company's strategy during this period was to fleece the isolated Nawab and drive Awadh into chronic indebtedness. This was a prelude to the full fledged Subsidiary Alliance treaty system alluded to in the previous lesson.

A serious erosion of Awadh's independence started during the reign of Asaf-ud-daulah (1775-97) who displaced many older nobles and promoted his supporters like Murtaza Khan who facilitated a deeper penetration of Awadh by the Company. During this period Awadh lost control over its external affairs to the Company Resident at the court. A larger subsidy was also fixed for maintaining the English forces stationed in Awadh. Due to these developments, and the fact that the Nawab's army had been kept in arrears of pay for a long time, Awadh was seething in discontent by the time Asaf-ud-daulah died in 1797. The English were quick to seize the moment and deposed his chosen successor Wazir Ali in favour of Saadat Ali. A formal treaty followed in 1798 which increased the annual subsidy to Rs. 76 lakhs. During Lord Wellesley's Governor Generalship Rohilkhand, Gorakhpur and the Doab, with a gross revenue of 1 crore and 35 lakhs, were annexed by the Company. These annexations made the Company the supreme power in the region and reduced Awadh to the status of a nominally independent state. From the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Company Resident became the indirect ruler of Awadh. The tribute paid by the Nawabs continued to flow into the coffers of the Company till Wajid Ali Shah was deposed and exiled by Lord Dalhousie in 1856 and Awadh was formally annexed. The annexation of Awadh was deeply resented by its people and the high caste Awadhi sepoys of the Bengal Army. The result of all this was the Revolt of 1857 which, among other things, led to the abolition of the Company's rule in India in 1858.

### **Punjab**

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The Sikhs began to gain political independence from Mughal rule from the days of Guru Gobind Singh, the founder of the Khalsa during the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the increasing political and military disorder in Punjab, following the weakening of Mughal control, gave the various Sikh misls the opportunity to expand and consolidate their power further. The word misl has Arabic roots and means being alike. Misls were the egalitarian military-administrative Sikh units, based on the jathas led by jathedars, which arose as a consequence of the guerilla war waged against the Mughals and Afghans by the Sikhs in the Punjab during the 18th century. The Sikh brotherhood was divided into a total of twelve misls, led and dominated by certain powerful Sikh families, which congregated at Harmandir Saheb in Amritsar twice a year for a Sarbat Khalsa on Deepavali and Holi. Taken together they comprised the Dal Khalsa, i.e., the Sikh Army which contained several thousands of committed and well trained Sikh soldiers. Records of each misl were carefully maintained at the Akal Takht and individual troopers had the freedom to leave and join misls of their choice. This was an important reason why the misls retained their social cohesion and egalitarian character because excessive domination by a leader could easily lead to legally sanctioned desertion.

While the Sikh military organization gained valuable operational mobility due to the misl system, in course of time these misls came to dominate designated areas of the Punjab where they built forts and collected taxes, at least theoretically, upon the authority granted to them by the Sarbat Khalsa – the general assembly of the Sikhs. During periods of invasions from the north-west mounted by the Afghans the misls often undertook joint military actions in defence of the Sikh faith but most of the time they represented a decentralized form of Sikh power in the Punjab. Please note, the Sikh misls should not be confused with the clan system of the Marathas which was neither as egalitarian nor governed by a general assembly like the Sarbat Khalsa as the misls were.

After Ahmad Shah Abdali's death the power of the Durrani kingdom he had founded dwindled rapidly under inferior successors. It soon became clear that the Afghans could periodically raid but never establish a lasting rule over the Punjab. Hence the post-Abdali interventions, like the invasions led by Zaman Shah in 1795, 1796 and 1798, were regional affairs which actually helped Ranjit Singh consolidate his power. It is well known that the Maratha advance into north-west India had been checked by the Afghans earlier at Panipat in 1761. After 1761 the Marathas in the north were led by Mahdave Rao Shinde (also called Mahadji) who concentrated his attention on Delhi, Agra and the Ganga-Jamuna doab. These momentous events created the conditions in which a powerful, though short lived, Sikh state based in Punjab arose.

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Figure 2.2.2.6: Maharaja Ranjit Singh

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Ranjitsingh.gif>

The architect of this state, with its capital in Lahore, was Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839), the extraordinarily gifted son of the Sukerchakia misl chief Mahan Singh. During Ranjit Singh's reign the Sikhs were temporarily united into a state which ruled and influenced a large part of the sub-continent stretching from Kashmir in the north to Sindh in the south and Afghanistan in the north-west to present day Haryana in the east. Though Ranjit Singh was twelve when his father died, by 1820 he was widely recognized and accepted as the ruler of a vast Sikh kingdom which included the whole of Punjab from the Sutlej to Indus, Kashmir and Multan. Further, he was a farsighted diplomat who fully understood the implications of the growing power of the Company in north India. He also knew that the European mercenaries could not be trusted during crises involving the Company. Therefore the mercenaries employed in his army never achieved the prominence which the mercenaries employed by the Marathas did. During his lifetime the English had defeated the Marathas, who had regrouped under the Shindes of Gwalior to control Delhi and Agra, and extended their empire to the frontiers of the Punjab after the debacle of 1761.

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<b>Value addition: did you know?</b>
<b>Maharaja Ranjit Singh</b>
Ranjit Singh founded the Sikh Kingdom and became the Maharaja despite monarchy not being sanctioned by the Sikh religion. The Sikh Misls were guided by the Sarbat Khalsa – the general assembly of the Sikhs. That monarchy remained an aberration to the Sikhs was proved by the swift collapse of the kingdom set up by Ranjit Singh soon after his death in 1739. Ten years after his death his son and descendant Dalip Singh formally handed over the Sikh kingdom to the British with his throne and the Kohinoor diamond which had once been worn by his illustrious father.
<b>Source: Singh, K. 1999. A History of the Sikhs. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.</b>
<b>Also see <a href="http://thesikhencyclopedia.com/">http://thesikhencyclopedia.com/</a></b>

Upon the defeat of the Marathas the Company and the Sikh state became immediate neighbors. Their relations at the time were defined by the Treaty of Amritsar (1809) according to which Ranjit Singh gave up his claim over the cis-Sutlej Sikh states like Ludhiana, Ambala and Patiala. By cis-Sutlej is meant the territories on the left bank of the Sutlej river i.e the British side. In contrast trans-Sutlej would mean on the other side of the Sutlej i.e. the Sikh side. The treaty thus made the river Sutlej the boundary between the Sikhs and the English. The Treaty of Amritsar was honoured by both parties till Ranjit Singh died in 1839. The Maharaja's demise was followed by a conflict of succession at the Lahore durbar and, as a consequence, very soon the stability of Punjab was seriously compromised. In any case monarchy had never been sanctioned by the Sikh faith and thus could not strike deep roots among the Sikhs. Fearing that a collapse of the Sikh state would endanger their Indian possessions in north India, the English began to intervene in the internal affairs of the Sikhs along lines described earlier in this lesson. The consequence was the First Anglo-Sikh War (1845-46) which ended with the humiliating Treaty of Lahore in March, 1846.

According to this treaty the Jalandhar doab was annexed by the British and Jammu and Kashmir was sold to Raja Gulab Singh for five million rupees. Gulab Singh and his Dogra successors would rule that Muslim majority province, uninterrupted, with British support till the arrival of Indian independence and partition in 1947. The Sikh army was reduced to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. By another treaty signed in December, 1846 the English Resident in Lahore acquired greater powers and the English troops stationed in the Punjab were paid for by the Lahore government. The English victory and capture of Lahore not only dealt the Sikh monarchy a mortal blow but reduced Punjab to the status of a British dependency. From 1846 the Lahore Darbar came under the 'protection' of the English. The opportunity to annex the whole of Punjab was given to Lord Dalhousie by the Diwan of Multan who rose in revolt against Lahore in 1848. This revolt spread rapidly throughout Punjab with the tacit approval of the Lahore Durbar which saw in it an opportunity to get rid of British influence. Several sections, including groups of soldiers retrenched after the defeat

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of the Sikhs in 1846, joined the rising popular movement against the British. The British, for their part, campaigned vigorously against the revolt in 1849 and decisively defeated the Sikhs in the Second Anglo-Sikh War. To avoid such rebellions in future the whole of Punjab was annexed by the British and finally became a province of British India. The annexation of Sindh and Punjab should also be viewed in the context of general British expansion in other parts of Asia like China during the 1840s. By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain had emerged as the first modern industrial capitalist country and its steam powered industries needed markets.

### **2.2.2 Summary**

- The expansion and consolidation of British colonial power in the Indian sub-continent began in the mid 18th century and went on till 1856 when Awadh was annexed by Lord Dalhousie.
- The first part of India which fell to the British was Bengal. Bengal gave the Company crucial advantages in its wars against the Indian powers were concerned. One, it was probably the richest province of India. Two, it gave the Company access to the vast military labour market of north India which bordered on Bengal. Three, the revenues of Bengal played an important role in addressing the payments problem of the Company.
- After Bengal the Indian states of the period were defeated one by one. From the late 18th century Mysore, the Deccan and Western India and finally Punjab and Sindh came into the Company's hands.
- Although Mysore, the Marathas and the Sikhs fought hard against the British to retain their independence the Company triumphed over them with the aid of superior diplomacy and the resources of Bengal.
- The Marathas and Sikhs also proved hopelessly divided against themselves. At no stage did the Indian powers combine effectively against the Company.
- On the whole Company successes can be attributed to a combination of the following: (a) superior leadership (b) superior finance (c) unity in command (d) a well paid and disciplined army (e) lack of unity among and within the Indian powers (f) friendly collaborating sections of the Indian elite and finally (g) the weaknesses of the military modernization programmes initiated by the feudal Indian states.

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### 2.2.2: Exercises

#### Essay questions

- 1) Critically examine the British conquest of Bengal with reference to the role played in it by the native Bengali elites.
- 2) Do you agree that Mysore was conquered by the British primarily because of the role played by the Nizam and Marathas during the Second and Third Anglo-Mysore wars?
- 3) Can it be said that the decentralization of Maratha power between the various Maratha Sardars and the Brahman Peshwa was both a source of Maratha strength and weakness.
- 4) In Lord Wellesley, General Arthur Wellesley, Sir Charles Napier and Lord Dalhousie the Company had exemplary leaders of men. Discuss with reference to the overall British conquest of India.
- 5) Why did the Sikhs of Punjab fail to arrest the advance of the Company despite their formidable military prowess?
- 6) To what extent was 'Russophobia' responsible for British expansion into Sindh and north-western India during the 19th century?

#### Objective questions

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
1	True or False	1

#### Question

Only the Muslim elites of Bengal helped the British in 1757.

#### Correct Answer / Option(s)

False

#### Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer

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Among those who helped the English against the forces of Siraj-ud-Daulah in 1757 were many prominent Hindu merchants and bankers like Amichand.

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
2	True or False	1

### Question

Haider Ali was defeated by the Company in 1769.

**Correct Answer / Option(s)**

False

### *Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer*

In fact, Haider Ali inflicted a series of defeats on the English prior to 1769 and dictated terms to them at the gates of Madras.

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
3	True or False	1

### Question

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The Nizam helped Tipu Sultan in 1798-99.

**Correct Answer / Option(s)**

False

### *Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer*

The Nizam perceived Tipu Sultan as a great threat to his dominion based in Hyderabad and hence helped the British against him.

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
4	True or False	1

### **Question**

Lord Cornwallis ordered the annexation of Sindh.

**Correct Answer / Option(s)**

False

### *Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer*

Lord Cornwallis was the Governor General of India between 1786 and 1793 and then briefly again in 1805 whereas Sindh was annexed during the Governor Generalship of Lord Ellenborough (1842-44).

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

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Question Number	Type of question	LOD
5	True or False	1

### Question

Nana Phadnavis failed to unite the Marathas during the First Anglo-Maratha War.

### Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer

Nana Phadnavis was the most astute statesman produced by the Marathas in the second half of the 18th century. Leading a regency of elders he frustrated the ambitious Raghunath Rao who wanted to usurp the throne of the Peshwas. Nana was successful in uniting the Maratha sardars during the First Anglo Maratha War.

### Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
6	True or False	1

### Question

The whole of Punjab was annexed during the times of Lord Bentinck.

Correct Answer / Option(s)

False

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### *Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer*

Lord William Bentinck was Governor General of India between 1828 and 1835 whereas the whole of Punjab was annexed after the Second Anglo Sikh War of 1848-49. At that time Lord Dalhousie was the Governor General of India (1848-1856).

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

Question Number	Type of question	LOD
7	True or False	1

### **Question**

The Sikh misls and the Maratha clans were similar.

**Correct Answer / Option(s)**

False

### *Justification/ Feedback for the correct answer*

This is a common misconception. The Sikh misls were military-administrative units of the Sikhs based on more or less egalitarian Sikh jathas under the overall command of the Dal Khalsa (The Sikh Army) which in turn was commanded by the Sarbat Khalsa (General Assembly of all Sikhs). In contrast the Maratha clans were powerful family based units like the Bhonsales, Sindhias, Holkars, Nimbalkars, Jadhavs, Gaikwars, Ghatges and Ghorpades etc.

### *Resource/Hints/Feedback for the wrong answer*

Reviewer's Comment:

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## 2.2.2 Glossary

**Faujdar:** Area commandant

**Diwan:** Finance/revenue minister or head of finance/revenue department

**Farman:** Royal decree, order, permission

## 2.2.2 Further readings

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