

chapter one

Transition of the Eighteenth Century

1.1. DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

Founded by Zahiruddin Babur in 1526 and expanded to its full glory by Emperor Akbar in the second half of the sixteenth century, the Mughal empire began to decline rapidly since the reign of its last great ruler Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Even in the first half of the seventeenth century its capital Delhi was considered to be the major power centre in the entire eastern hemisphere; but within fifty years the signs of decline of this mighty empire were unmistakably visible. Some historians ascribe Aurangzeb's divisive policies for this rapid decline—particularly blamed are his religious policies, which alienated the Hindus who constituted the majority of the subject population. His expansionist military campaigns in western India against the two autonomous states of Bijapur and Golconda and against the Marathas are also believed to have sapped the vitality of the empire. But some other historians believe that the roots of Mughal decline lay in institutions and systems intrinsic to Mughal administration, rather than in personalities or specific policies.

There is, however, less dispute about the fact that the process of decline had set in during the time of Aurangzeb and that it could not be arrested by his weak successors. The situation was further worsened by recurrent wars of succession. The Mughal army was weakened, allegedly because of a lamentable dearth of able commanders; there was no military reform and no new technology. This weakening of the Mughal military power encouraged internal rebellions and invited foreign invasions. The Marathas under Shivaji had time and again challenged Aurangzeb's imperial rule. After his death the Maratha plunders increased—in 1738 they plundered even the suburbs of Delhi. This was followed by the Persian invasion under Nadir Shah in 1738-39 and the sack of Delhi, which was a tremendous blow to the prestige of the empire. A brief recovery followed and the first Afghan invasion in 1748 was repelled. But the Afghans

under Ahmad Shah Abdali again struck back, took over Punjab and sacked Delhi in 1756-57. To repel the Afghans, the Mughals sought help from the Marathas; but the latter were also defeated by Abdali at the battle of Panipat in 1761. The Afghan menace did not last long, because a revolt in the army forced Abdali to retire to Afghanistan. But the political situation in north India certainly signified the passing of the glorious days of Mughal empire.

Earlier historians like Sir J.N. Sarkar (1932-50) believed that it was a crisis of personality-weak emperors and incompetent commanders were responsible for this downfall of the mighty Mughal empire. But then, other historians like T.G.P. Spear (1973) have pointed out that there was no dearth of able personalities in eighteenth-century India. It was indeed a period marked by the activities of such able politicians and generals as the Sayyid brothers, Nizarn-ul-Mulk, Abdus Samad Khan, Zakaria Khan, Saadat Khan, Safdar Jung, Murshid Quli Khan or Sawai jai Singh. But unfortunately, all these able statesmen were preoccupied more in self-aggrandisement and had little concern for the fate of the empire. So at times of crises, they could not provide leadership and even directly contributed to the process of decline. But this need not be considered as personal failures, as it was more due to the weaknesses inherent in the Mughal institutions, which had evolved gradually in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Mughal empire has been described as a "war-state" in its core.¹ It sought to develop a centralised administrative system, whose vitality depended ultimately on its military power. The emperor stood at the apex of this structure, his authority resting primarily on his military might. Below him the other most important element in this structure was the military aristocracy. In the late sixteenth century, Akbar had organised this aristocracy through his *mansabdari* system, which meant a military organisation of the aristocracy, its basis primarily being personal loyalty to the emperor. Every aristocrat was called a *mansabdar*, with a dual numerical *rank-jat* and *sawar-jat* signifying his personal rank and sawar the number of horsemen he was required to maintain. This dual numerical rank also indicated the position of a particular nobleman in the overall Mughal bureaucracy. Sometimes they were paid in cash (*naqdi mansabdar*); but most often they were paid in the form of a jagir or landed estate, the estimated revenue income (*jama*) of which would cover his personal salary and the maintenance allowance for his soldiers and horses. There were two types of jagir—transferable or *tankha* jagir and non-transferable or *uatan* jagir. Most of the jagirs

were transferable—the non-transferable jagirs were only a device to incorporate the locally powerful rajahs and zamindars into the Mughal system, by proclaiming their autonomous chiefdoms their vatan jagirs.

Appointment, promotion or dismissal of mansabdars and allocation or transfer of jagirs were done only by the emperor and so the members of the aristocracy only had personal loyalty to the emperor himself. Any form of impersonal loyalty—national, ethnic or religious—could not develop in Mughal India and so the entire imperial edifice stood on a "patron-client relationship" existing between the emperor and the ruling class.² The effectiveness and the permanence of this relationship depended on the personal qualities of the emperor and the constant expansion of resources, which explains the constant drive towards territorial conquests in Mughal India. But there were no more conquests since the late years of Aurangzeb, and this was supposedly followed by a period of constant shrinkage of the resources of the empire. This is what ruptured, as some historians argue, the functional relationship between the emperor and the aristocracy, on which depended the efficiency of the imperial administration.

To understand how this diminishing loyalty of the aristocrats could affect the Mughal empire, a close look at the composition of this ruling class is called for. Lineage or ethnic background was the single most important factor in matters of appointment as mansabdars. A great majority of the Mughal nobles were outsiders who had come from various parts of central Asia. But they were gradually Indianised, although this Indianisation took place without any coherent policy of the empire. The aristocracy was therefore divided into various ethno-religious groups, the most powerful among them being the Turani and the Irani groups. Those who came from the Turkish speaking regions of central Asia were called the Turanis, while those who came from the Persian speaking regions of present-day Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq were called the Iranis. The Turanis were Sunnis and the Iranis were Shias, which lent a religious colour to their mutual animosity and jealousy. Though the Mughals belonged to the Turani ethnic lineage, they did not show any personal favour to the Turanis. The other groups among the nobility were the Afghans, Sheikhzadas or the Indian Muslims and the Hindus. The latter group mainly consisted of the Rajputs and Marathas, whose incorporation was because of specific political needs of the empire. After Aurangzeb conquered the two Deccani kingdoms of Bijapur (1685) and Golconda (1689), the noble men who were in the

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employ of those two kingdoms were absorbed into the Mughal aristocracy and they came to form what is known as the Deccani group. It was primarily during the last years of Aurangzeb, due to the incorporation of the Maratha and Deccani nobles, that the composition of the Mughal aristocracy underwent a dramatic change, which brought to the surface the latent contradictions within its ranks.³

The mutual rivalry and competition among these groups of nobles, as it is argued by some historians, came to a head supposedly because of an eighteenth century economic crisis. About four-fifths of the land-revenue income of the Mughal empire was under the control of the mansabdars; but this income was very unevenly distributed. In the middle of the seventeenth century, out of about 8,000 mansabdars, only 445 controlled 61 per cent of the revenue income of the empire.⁴ This naturally created jealousy and tension within the aristocracy, particularly when the resources of the empire were stagnant or even diminishing. This economic situation-known as the "jagirdari crisis" of the eighteenth century-has been defined by Satish Chandra in the following words: "The available social surplus was insufficient to defray the cost of administration, pay for wars of one type or another and to give the ruling class a standard of life in keeping with its expectations" .⁵ This happened because of the unusual increase in the number of mansabdars at a time when the area to be distributed as jagir (or *paibaqi*) remained stagnant or even declined. Revenue collection, particularly in the south, fell far short of the estimated income, diminishing in turn the real income of the jagirdars in disturbed areas. To make matters worse, there was a continuous price rise since the late seventeenth century, as the supply of luxury goods flowed towards the European markets, putting the Mughal aristocracy in further distress.⁶ As too many mansabdars were now chasing too few jagirs, many of them had to remain jagirless for years; and even when a jagir was assigned, there was no guarantee that they would not be transferred within a short period. The entire aristocracy, therefore, suffered from a tremendous sense of personal insecurity.

This jagir crisis was not, however, a new phenomenon, as there had always been gaps between collection of revenue and the estimated revenue income of a particular jagir. The crisis increased during the last years of Aurangzeb, mainly because of the Deccan wars. There was now a rise in the number of mansabdars and the political turmoil made the collection of revenue a more difficult task. J.F. Richards (1975) has argued that the problem was to some extent artificial and due to wrong policies of Aurangzeb, who was

constantly expanding the *size* of the royal land or *khalisa*. There was a 23 per cent revenue increase after the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda. But instead of distributing this extra income among his mansabdars, Aurangzeb wanted to use these resources to finance his Deccan campaign. So the newly conquered lands were incorporated into the royal khali land, its revenue income going directly into the imperial treasury to meet the salary demands of the soldiers fighting in the south. An opportunity to solve the jagirdari crisis was thus lost and therefore Richards thinks that this crisis was artificial and not due to any real scarcity of resources. He has shown, however, that revenue collections in the Deccan were gradually falling, while Satish Chandra argues that Deccan always was a deficit area. So, it is difficult to say conclusively how the conquest of Bijapur and Golconda would have really solved the jagir problem.

But whether artificial or real, the jagir crisis is believed to have led to an unhealthy competition among the nobles in order to have control over good jagirs. Group politics at the Mughal court became an order of the day, each group wanting to have influence over the emperor to get access to good jagirs. After the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712, the problem reached crisis proportions, as now the low-ranking officials found it real hard to maintain their lifestyle with what they got from their jagirs, as revenue collection became increasingly difficult. The problem intensified further during the reigns of Jahandar Shah (1712-13) and Farruksiyar (1713-19). It did not improve at all during the reign of Muhammad Shah (1719-48), when mansabdari ranks were distributed indiscriminately for political reasons, leading to further inflation in the numbers of aristocrats. To meet their increasing demands, portions of khali land were converted into jagir. This measure could not fully solve the problems of the mansabdars, but impoverished the emperor. Nizarn-ul-Mulk, after becoming wazir (prime minister) tried to solve the problem through a redistribution of land. But he could not follow it through, because of strong opposition from within the court.⁷

Politicking at the imperial court was at its height during this time. More generally, the Mughal nobility was divided into three warring factions: the Irani group led by Asad Khan and his son Julfiqar Khan, the Turani group, led by Ghazi Uddin Khan, Feroz Jung and his son Chin Qulich Khan (Nizarn-ul-Mulk) and the Hindustani group led by the Sayyid brothers, Khan-i-Dauran, some Afghan leaders and some Hindus. These factions were not organised around ethnicity or religion, but more on family ties, personal friendship and above all selfish interests. This faction fighting never went beyond



MAP 1: The Mughal empire in 1707

the imperial court, nor lapsed into violent confrontations. No one questioned the divine right of the Timurids to rule; but every group tried to extend their influence over the emperors to control the distribution of patronage. Proximity of any particular group to the centre of power naturally alienated the others and this gradually affected the personal bonds of loyalty between the emperor and his noblemen, as disaffected groups found no reason to espouse the cause of the empire. And what was worse, this resulted in corruption in the army. No mansabdar maintained the required number of soldiers and horses and there was no effective supervision either. This weakening of the army was fatal for the empire, as ultimately the stability of the empire depended on its military might. That the Mughal army was no longer invincible was successfully shown by the Maratha leader Shivaji. This decline of the army became more palpable, as there was no fresh technological input or organisational innovation. The nobles now were more interested in carving out autonomous or semi-autonomous principalities for themselves, which resulted in a virtual fragmentation of the empire.

Recurring peasant revolts in the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries are also believed to have been a major cause of the decline of the Mughal empire and it is not unlikely that the crisis of the ruling elites had something to do with them. An empire imposed from above and its gradually increasing economic pressures were perhaps never fully accepted by the rural society; and the regional sentiments against a centralised power had also been there. Peasant unrest was therefore a recurrent theme in the history of the Mughal state ever since its inception. But fear of the Mughal army always acted as a deterrent and prevented the problem from blowing out of proportion. In the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, as the weaknesses of the central power became apparent and the Mughal army faced successive debacles, and at the same time the oppression of the Mughal ruling class increased, resistance to imperial authority also became widespread and more resolute. In most cases, these rebellions were led by the disaffected local zamindars and backed fully by the oppressed peasantry. Eventually the combined pressure of the zamindars and peasants often proved to be too much for the Mughal authority to withstand.

These revolts can be interpreted in various ways. They can be portrayed as political assertion of regional and communitarian identities against an intruding centralising power or as reactions against the bigoted religious policies of Aurangzeb. The latter interpretation seems to be more unlikely, as in the later part of his reign, Aurangzeb

was showing more liberalism towards the non-believers and in fact wooing many of the Hindu local chieftains in a cool calculating move to win their loyalty and solve the political problems of the empire by isolating his enemies.⁸ But the real reasons behind these revolts, as some historians argue on the other hand, could be found in the property-relations of the Mughal empire. Whether or not the emperor was the owner of all lands in his empire is a debatable issue; but he certainly had an unquestionable right over the income of the land which was collected in the form of land revenue, the amount of which was gradually increasing since the Sultani period. Irfan Habib (1963) has shown that the Mughal land-revenue system rested on a compromise: the peasant was left with sufficient provision for subsistence while the surplus, as far as possible, was extracted by the state in the form of land revenue. It is not true that the Mughal peasant was left with no surplus at all; for continuing production, he was certainly left with some, while differentiation within the peasantry also indicates that. But on the whole, although larger peasants could withstand the pressure, the smaller peasantry increasingly felt oppressed.⁹ Usually in the *zabt* areas (where a detailed land survey was undertaken) the revenue demand was one-third of the produce, but the actual amount varied from region to region. In some areas it was half of the produce and in fertile regions like Gujarat it was as high as three-fourths. Part of it, collected from the *khalisa* land, went to the imperial treasury, while the larger portion (80 per cent in Aurangzeb's time) went to the jagirdars.

Below the demand of the state and above that of the peasants, there was another kind of demand on the income of the land, and that was the demand of the local landlords or zamindars. There was differentiation among the zamindars.^P Some of them, like the Rajput chiefs of Rajasthan, were fairly big rajas with considerable local political power. They were incorporated into the Mughal bureaucracy, as in return for a fixed payment (*peshkash*) and loyalty to the emperor, their autonomous power over their own territory or *watan* was recognised. At the bottom were the *mulgujari* or primary zamindars, who had an independent right over the land and in many cases it was through them that revenue was collected from the peasants and in return they got *nankar* or revenue-free land. Between these two groups were the intermediary zamindars who collected revenue from their own zamindari as well from other primary zamindars. Below the zamindars were the peasants who were also differentiated: the *khudkashts* were peasants with occupancy rights, while the *pahikashts* were vagrant peasants. There were close community

relations based on caste, clan and religion between the primary zamindars and the peasants. This was an important source of power for the zamindars, many of whom controlled small armies and fort. The Mughal administration in the interior could not therefore function without their active cooperation. Akbar had tried to turn the zamindars into collaborators; but from the late years of Aurangzeb, particularly after the war of succession (1707-8) following his death, the loyalty of the zamindars definitely began to flounder.¹¹ In the Deccan, towards the last years of Bahadur Shah's reign, all the zamindars, both primary and intermediary, turned against the Mughal state with the active support of the hard pressed peasantry.¹²

One major reason for the open defiance of the local landlords might have been the increasing oppression of the jagirdars. The earlier emperors tried to keep them in check through a system of rotation. Irfan Habib (1963) has argued that because of this Mughal system, and by taking advantage of it, the jagirdars oppressed the peasantry. As they were frequently transferred, they did not develop any attachment or any long-term interest in the estate and tried to exact as much as possible during their short tenures, without any consideration for the peasants. Their natural oppressive propensities remained within certain limits only because of constant imperial supervision; but this supervisory system totally collapsed in the eighteenth century. The overnighry nobles who could resist or defy transfer, developed local power bases and by using that tried to extract as much as possible. This trend was quite visible in Golconda after its subjugation.¹³ Later, in the last years of Bahadur Shah's reign, a number of jagirdars in the Deccan made compromises with the Maratha *sardars* (chiefs) and that arrangement allowed them to collect as much as possible from the peasantry. Sometimes they collected advances from the *amils* (revenue officials), who in turn extorted as much as they could from the peasants.¹⁴ On the other hand, those who were more frequently transferred found the local conditions too turbulent for the collection of revenue. To solve this problem and to squeeze maximum benefit within a short period, they devised the *ijaradari* system, through which revenue-collecting right was farmed out to the highest bidder. The revenue farmer's demand was often much higher than the actual revenue demand and the pressures ultimately moved downward to the primary zamindars and the peasants. During the time of Farruksiyar's reign even khalisa lands were being given over to the *ijaradars*,

The Mughal compromise is believed to have completely broken down as a result, and the primary zamindars began to defy the Mughal state for their own share of the surplus. In the outlying and

more disturbed areas, such as Deccan, zamindari defiance became an order of the day. Even in the heart of Mughal north India in the eighteenth century, there was a widespread tendency among the zamindars to defy the central authority, withhold revenue payment and to resist the Mughal state when it forcibly tried to collect it.¹⁵ Because of their community ties with the peasants, they could easily mobilise them against the Mughal power. For the peasants also, this zamindari initiative solved the problem of leadership, as they often found it difficult to challenge on their own a centralised authority and continue their struggle for a very long time. The peasant grievances in late Mughal period were, therefore, often organised around religious and regional identities. The Maratha sardars took advantage of the peasant grievances; the jat peasants were mobilised in north India by their zamindars; the Sikhs rose in revolt in Punjab; and the Rajput chiefs withdrew their allegiance in Rajasthan. All these revolts led to the formation of autonomous kingdoms in different parts of the empire, further attenuating the authority of the Mughals. The eighteenth century thus witnessed the rise of a variety of regional states, some of which built on "older local or regional tradition(s) of state formation", others focused on ethnic identity and associated "notions of 'community'".¹⁶ By the end of the century, effective rule of the Mughal emperor was confined only to a narrow stretch around the capital city of Delhi. In 1858 when the English deposed the last emperor Bahadur Shah II, they only ended the fiction of his imperium.

To some historians, however, poverty and economic pressure do not seem to be a wholly adequate explanation for these rebellions and the eventual decline of the Mughal state, since there had been significant regional variations in local economies. The recent 'revisionist' literature, therefore, wants us to move away from this centrist view and to look at the situation from a different perspective—the perspective of the periphery. The Mughal decline, according to this new history, is the result of the rise of new groups into economic and political power and the inability of a distant and weakened centre to control them any longer. In the entire history of Mughal empire there is more evidence of prosperity and growth than of decline and crisis. There is no denying that even in the eighteenth century there had been regions with surplus resources, like for example, Moradabad-Bareilly, Awadh and Banaras; but the Mughal state could not appropriate this surplus and the resources accumulated in the hands of local zamindars.¹⁷ Bengal was another surplus area. In eastern Bengal, vast stretches of forest land was being reclaimed

around this time and the settlers of these new areas gave distinct religious and political orientation to their newly established agrarian communities, while the provincial officials could easily carve out for themselves new revenue units around these agrarian settlements." The rising agricultural production in some areas and monetisation of the economy, in other words, made available more resources at the disposal of the zamindars and peasants, and powerful local lineages, who gained distinctively greater advantage and confidence vis-a-vis the imperial centre." Taking advantage of a weakening central control, they now found it more convenient to repudiate their allegiance to a centralised imperial power and assert their autonomy, while still maintaining the cultural and ideological framework of the Mughal state.

Possibilities for such diffusion of power had always been there in Mughal India, it has been argued. There were corporate groups and social classes who enjoyed, despite a supposedly obtrusive central authority, various kinds of rights that constituted, in C.A. Bayly's terminology, their "portfolio capital", which they could invest to reap huge profits.²⁰ According to this school of history, throughout the Mughal period there had been a constant process of reconciliation and adjustment between the central power and the regional elite. Mughal sovereignty, as Andre Wink has argued, rested on a "balancing system of continually shifting rivalries and alliances." The Mughal system was prepared to accommodate "*fitna*" or sedition, and always tried to incorporate the ascendant localised powers, either indigenous or foreign, into its concept of universal dominion and on the effective functioning of this mechanism of conciliation and coercion depended its continued existence." The Mughal process of centralisation, in other words, left enough space for the continued existence of rival principles of organisation. Frank Perlin, in this context, has talked about the existence of a "'library' of categories and techniques", implying a multiplicity of systems of governance, methods of measurement and techniques of collecting revenue, varying widely in space and time. There was multiplicity of rights, like the concept of *vatan* in the Deccan, which meant heritable rights that could not be taken away even by kings. Attempts at centralisation could not eliminate those rights in the eighteenth century.²² So, as Muzaffar Alam sums up the situation, around this time, because of decentralisation and commercialisation, a group of "upstarts" had come to monopolise the resources of the empire at the exclusion of the hereditary Mughal nobility or the *khanazads*.²³ These upstarts were the new regional power elite who rose to prominence in the

provinces and successfully contested the centralising tendency of the Mughal state. This group included the jagirdars who defied transfer and thus became local rulers, and the revenue farmers-or the new "entrepreneurs in revenue"-who "combined military power with expertise in managing cash and local trade".²⁴ "Consistent economic growth and prosperity", rather than poverty and crisis, thus provided "the context of the local political turmoil". The Mughal system, in other words, had always left a space for the rise of powerful regional groups and significant economic and social changes in the eighteenth century brought that possibility into sharper focus. But then these new developments were not properly recognised or accommodated within the system, and hence its eventual demise.

It is difficult to arrive at a convenient middle ground between the 'conventional' and 'revisionist' histories; nor is it easy to dismiss either of them. The revisionist history has been taken to task for underestimating the cohesiveness of the Mughal empire and for ignoring the contemporary Muslim concepts of centralised sovereignty. These critics, on the other hand, have been assailed for clinging on to a mindset that is accustomed to look at the Mughal empire only as a centralised structure.²⁶ If there is any shared ground at all, as Athar Ali admits in his critique of the revisionist historiography, it is in the common recognition of the fact that the zarnindars or the intermediary classes "constituted a centrifugal force" in the Mughal structure.²⁷ We may, however, conclude by saying that the idea of 'decline' is perhaps an inadequate theme for understanding the eighteenth century in Indian history. The Mughal system continued even long after the de facto demise of the empire, which was followed by the emergence of a number of regional powers. The eighteenth century in Indian history is not a dark age, nor an age of overall decline. The decline of one pan-Indian empire was followed by the rise of another, the intervening period being dominated by a variety of powerful regional states. This century should, therefore, be considered, as Satish Chandra (1991) has argued, as a distinct chronological whole.

1.2. EMERGENCE OF THE REGIONAL POWERS

By 1761 the Mughal empire was empire only in name, as its weaknesses had enabled the local powers to assert their independence. Yet the symbolic authority of the Mughal emperor continued, as he was still considered to be a source of political legitimacy. The new states did not directly challenge his authority and constantly sought his sanction to legitimise their rule. In many areas of governance these

states continued the Mughal institutions and the administrative system; where changes occurred—and they did occur, of course—they came rather slowly, to accommodate the altered power relations in the regions. The emergence of these states in the eighteenth century, therefore, represented a transformation rather than collapse of the polity. It signified a decentralisation of power and not a power vacuum or political chaos. These new states were of various kinds with diverse histories: some of them were founded by Mughal provincial governors, some were set up by the rebels against the Mughal state; and a few states which asserted their independence were previously functioning as autonomous but dependent polities.

Bengal, Hyderabad and Awadh were the three successor states of the Mughal empire, in the sense that they were founded by Mughal provincial governors who never formally severed their links with the centre, but virtually exercised autonomy in matters of execution of power at the local level. The province or the *subah* of Bengal gradually became independent of Mughal control after Murshid Quli Khan became the governor in 1717.²⁸ Initially, Aurangzeb had appointed him the *diwan* (collector of revenue) of Bengal to streamline the revenue administration of the province. Then in 1710 Bahadur Shah reappointed him in this position after a short break of two years. When Farruksiyar became the emperor, he confirmed Murshid Quli in his position and also appointed him the deputy governor of Bengal and governor of Orissa. Later in 1717 when he was appointed the governor or *Nazim* of Bengal, he was given the unprecedented privilege of holding the two offices of nazim and diwan simultaneously. The division of power, which was maintained throughout the Mughal period to keep both the imperial officers under control through a system of checks and balances, was thus done away with. This helped Murshid Quli, who was already known for his efficient revenue administration, to consolidate his position further. He did not of course formally defy Mughal authority and regularly sent revenue to the imperial treasury. Indeed, the Bengal revenue was often the only regular income for the beleaguered Mughal emperors during periods of financial stringency and uncertainty. But behind the veneer of formal allegiance to the Timurid rulers, Murshid Quli began to enjoy a considerable amount of autonomy within his own domain and initiated almost a dynastic rule. He was indeed the last governor of Bengal appointed by the Mughal emperor.

The foundation of Murshid Quli's power was of course his very successful revenue administration, which even in the days of political chaos elsewhere in the empire, made Bengal a constant revenue

paying surplus area. It is difficult to determine whether or not he was oppressive or that revenue demand during his period increased significantly; but revenue collection had shot up by 20 per cent between 1700 and 1722. This efficient collection system was operated through powerful intermediary zamindars. Murshid Quli sent his investigators to every revenue-paying area to make a detailed survey and compelled the zamindars to pay in full and on time. For this purpose, he encouraged the development of a few powerful zamindaris at the expense of smaller inefficiently managed zamindaris, while refractory zamindars were punished and some of the jagirdars were transferred to the outlying province of Orissa, their estates being converted into khalisa or royal land.²⁹

The period between 1717 and 1726 therefore witnessed the emergence of a few landed magnates. These magnates assisted the nazim in the timely collection of revenue and with *his* patronage they also expanded their own estates.³⁰ Indeed, by the time of Murshid Quli's death in 1727, fifteen largest zamindaris were responsible for about half of the revenue of the province. But along with the rise of the zamindars as a new powerful elite in the province, there was also the growing importance of merchants and bankers during this period. Bengal always had a lucrative trade, and the political stability and increase in agricultural productivity during Murshid Quli's period provided further impetus to such trading activities. In the seventeenth century, silk and cotton textile, sugar, oil and clarified butter from Bengal went through overland route to Persia and Afghanistan via a number of north and west Indian distributing centres and on the oceanic route through the port of Hughli to the Southeast Asian, Persian Gulf and Red Sea ports. During the political turmoil of the eighteenth century, traffic through the overland route partially declined, but oceanic trade thrived with increasing investment from the European Companies—the Dutch, the French and the English. During the first half of the century, Europe certainly became the major destination for goods from Bengal, and this had a significant impact on the textile industry in the region. Bengal always enjoyed a favourable balance of trade, with surplus bullion brought in by the European Companies to buy Bengal goods and this was absorbed smoothly into the cash economy and revenue remittance structure. On the Indian side this trade was dominated by a variety of merchants—Hindus, Muslims and Armenians. Some of them were magnates, like the Hindu merchant Umi Chand or the Armenian tycoon Khoja Wajid who controlled a fleet of ships. And they enjoyed a very cordial relation with the state

and bureaucracy, as the Mughal state traditionally never tried to squeeze the merchants." On the other hand, the constant pressure on the zamindars to pay revenue in time and its regular remittance to the imperial treasury in Delhi brought powerful financiers and bankers into great demand. They provided securities at every stage of the transaction and enjoyed unprecedented patronage of the governor, thus providing the main supportive pillar of his power. The most significant story of such collaboration was the rise of the banking house of Jagat Seth, who eventually became the treasurer of the provincial government in 1730, with strategic control over the mint. Apart from zamindars, merchants and bankers, Murshid Quli also ensured the loyalty of the officials, by appointing his friends, relatives and loyalists in important positions and driving his potential enemies out of the province—a situation which could not be dreamt of in the heyday of the Mughal empire."

Murshid Quli, however, never did sever his formal connections with the Mughals and continued to send the annual Bengal revenue to Delhi regularly. But within his own domain he acted as an autonomous ruler and in a true dynastic fashion named his daughter's son Sarfaraz Khan his successor. But Sarfaraz was ousted by his father Shujauddin Muhammad Khan (Murshid Quli's son-in-law), who took control of the two provinces of Bengal and Orissa in 1727 and had his position endorsed by the Mughal emperor Muhammad Shah. He too maintained the relationship with the Mughal court, but enjoyed autonomy in matters of local administration, which was supported by the new forces of Bengal politics, the zamindars, merchants and the bankers. By the 1730s, as Philip Calkins argues, "the government of Bengal began to look more like government by co-operation of the dominant forces in Bengal, rather than the imposition of the rule from outside." However, it is also true that this gradual rise in the power of the merchants, bankers and zamindars also meant a relative diminution of the authority of the nazim. This became quite evident in a coup in 1739-40, in which Shujauddin's son Sarfaraz Khan, who had become the new nazim, was ousted by his army commander Alivardi Khan, with the help of the banking family of Jagat Seths and a few powerful zamindars. Sarfaraz had to go not just because he was an inefficient administrator, but because he had alienated the house of Jagat Seth, and had lost the support of a few powerful officials. With his deposition the office of the nazim went to an able military general, Alivardi Khan, who later obtained imperial sanctions for his appointment.

It was Alivardi's reign, which marked a virtual break with the Mughals. All major appointments were now made without any

reference to the emperor and finally, the regular flow of revenue to Delhi was stopped. Although there was never any formal defiance of the Mughal authority, for all practical purposes an autonomous administration, free of all sorts of imperial control, had now emerged in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The major problems for Alivardi came from outside: he had to face Maratha depredations and Afghan rebellion. The Marathas from the west in their search for a pan-Indian empire invaded Bengal a number of times, causing immense damage to life and property. Ultimately in 1751, Alivardi came to terms with the Marathas by agreeing to pay *chauth* (one-fourth of the revenue) and handing over Orissa. But in the meanwhile some rebel Afghan troops under the leadership of Mustafa Khan had taken over Patna in 1748 and thus had posed another great challenge to his authority. Alivardi eventually succeeded in putting down the Afghans and recovered Parna. However, one major fallout of the Maratha raids was the disruption of Bengal trade, particularly of the overland trade with north and west India. But it was short-lived and the recovery was aided by a massive increase in European trade, both corporate trade of the Companies and private trade of their officials. They could not immediately dislodge the Indian merchants from the market, but it certainly signified the beginning of European dominance in the trading world of Bengal, preparing the ground for an eventual English takeover of the province³⁴—a development we shall discuss in detail later. Alivardi died in 1756, nominating his grandson Siraj-ud-daula his successor. But his succession was challenged by two other contenders for the throne, Shaukat Jung (Faujdar of Purnea) and Ghaseti Begum (Alivardi's daughter). This resulted in intense court factionalism, as the overmighty zamindars and commercial people felt threatened by an extremely ambitious and assertive young nawab." This destabilised the administration of Bengal, and the advantage was taken by the English East India Company, which acquired a foothold in Bengal politics through what is popularly known as the Plassey conspiracy of 1757 that ended the rule of Siraj-ud-daula. This story of yet another transition in Bengal politics we shall see in a short while.

The autonomous kingdom of Hyderabad was founded in 1724 by a powerful noble at the imperial court, Chin Qulich Khan, who eventually took the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf³⁵ Jah I. Known as the leader of the Turani party, he felt frustrated in court politics due to the haughty assertion of power by the Indian Muslim faction led by the Sayyid brothers, who had emperor Farrukhsiyar killed and Muhammad Shah installed on the throne as a puppet ruler in 1719.

To save the Timurid rule from being subverted in this way, Nizam-ul-Mulk organised the Turani and Irani noblemen against the Sayyids and ultimately defeated and killed them in 1720. Muhammad Shah was restored to the throne and Nizam-ul-Mulk acted as his wazir from 1722 to 1724. But eventually he found that carving out an autonomous principality in the Deccan for himself was more attractive.

In Hyderabad, Mubariz Khan, the Mughal governor of Deccan, was ruling almost as an independent king. In 1723 the nizām defeated Mubariz and the following year he took over as the Subahdar of Deccan and consolidated his power around Hyderabad. The actual independence of the Hyderabad kingdom may be dated from 1740 when finally the nizām left north India to settle there permanently. He subdued the refractory zamindars and showed tolerance towards the Hindus who had economic power in their hands and as a result, Hyderabad witnessed the emergence of a new regional elite who supported the nizām. By the time of his death in 1748, the state of Hyderabad was a recognisable power in Deccan politics, acknowledging Mughal suzerainty only in a symbolic sense. Coins were still minted in the name of the Mughal emperor; his name also figured in the *khutba* or the Friday prayers. But for all practical purposes, the nizām acted independently, conducting wars, signing treaties, conferring mansabs and making important appointments without any reference to the emperor.

Soon, however, after the death of the first nizām, Asaf Jah I, Hyderabad began to experience a series of crises. While Maratha depredations continued to be a major source of anxiety, a war of succession ensued between his son Nasir Jung and grandson Muzaffar Jung, the advantage of that disunion being taken by the French under Dupleix. Muzaffar emerged victorious from this contest with French support and gave handsome monetary rewards and territorial concessions to the French. But that did not end his problems, as during the subsequent years, the Marathas, Mysore and the Carnatic-all settled their territorial scores against Hyderabad. The situation improved again after 1762 during the period of Nizam Ali Khan, who seized control of the administration and during his long reign lasting up to 1803, he settled border disputes with his neighbours, giving Hyderabad the much desired political stability.

The Hyderabadī administrative system did not try to destroy the indigenous power structures within the territory, but sought to incorporate them into a "patron-client relationship" with the central power. The locally entrenched semi-autonomous rulers were allowed to govern their inherited territories in return for an annual

tribute or peshkash paid *to* the nizam, The locally powerful traders, moneylenders and the military aristocracy also played a crucial role in the Hyderabad polity, by providing valuable financial and military support to the nizam, who emerged as the chief patron within the polity. Under this new administration, the old Mughal institutions were not totally thrown out, but they underwent substantial changes in content. Land revenue was collected through powerful intermediary revenue farmers; but unlike the Mughal practice, there was very little attempt to keep them under control. The jagirs under this new system became hereditary and the mansabdari system only retained a few of its Mughal features. There was also a remarkable change in the composition of the nobility: while the older military aristocracy retained some of its power, some new men with expertise in revenue and financial management rose from lower ranks. On the whole, "power remained widely diffused" in the Hyderabad administrative structure.³⁶ By the end of the eighteenth century, Hyderabad represented a relatively new political system with a whole range of new participants, who had diverse origins and social background.

Another Mughal province that became autonomous in the course of the eighteenth century was Awadh. Saadat Khan was appointed the Mughal governor of Awadh in 1722 with the difficult charge of subduing rebellions by the local rajas and chiefs. He accomplished this task within a year and in appreciation, the emperor Muhammad Shah conferred on him the title of Burhan-ul-Mulk. Soon after this, Saadat Khan returned to the capital to consolidate his position in the imperial court, but ended up in a quarrel with one of Muhammad Shah's favourites and was again forced *to* return to Awadh. Frustrated in court politics, Saadat then decided *to* build up a power base in Awadh and as a first step had his son-in-law Safdar Jung recognised by the emperor as his deputy governor. The other step towards the establishment of his dynastic rule was to make the office of diwan virtually independent of all imperial control. The revenues of Awadh from then on were handled by a Punjabi Khatri official who functioned under Saadat Khan and never reported anything to the imperial office.

The problem of refractory zamindars in Awadh was solved in time and a new land revenue settlement was introduced with the revenue demand increasing by more than half. The jagirdari system was reformed, with jagirs being granted to the local gentry, while a rich flow of trade kept the province affluent. This resulted in the creation of a new regional ruling elite, consisting mainly of Indian Muslims, Afghans and Hindus who became Saadat's main support base. But

the latter kept the communication channels open with the imperial court. Indeed, during this whole period he constantly expanded the frontiers of the Awadh subah, but never without the formal approval of the emperor. He also nurtured his old ambitions in imperial court politics, but only to be frustrated again in 1739-40 when the position of *mir bakshi* (imperial treasurer) went to the nizam, despite the services he had rendered during the invasion of the Persian king Nadir Shah. He considered this a betrayal and in vengeance changed sides to join the Persian invader. But he could not suffer the arrogance and haughty behaviour of Nadir Shah and the day after the occupation of Delhi, in sheer frustration and despondency, he poisoned himself to death. However, by the time he died in 1740, Saadat had certainly developed in Awadh a semi-autonomous regional political system, with vastly reduced financial commitment to, but no formal disjunction with, the Mughal state.

Nadir Shah remained the emperor of India for just two months and he settled the succession question in Awadh by accepting twenty million rupees as peshkash from Safdar Jung. Muhammad Shah later confirmed this appointment and conferred on him an imperial title. But Safdar Jung's opportunities really came when both Muhammad Shah and the Nizam-ul-Mulk died in 1748 and he was appointed wazir by the new emperor Ahmad Shah. Safdar Jung extended his sphere of influence by using the new imperial position, the most important of these gains being the seizure of Farukhabad from the Pathans. But on the other hand, this self-aggrandisement of the wazir soon alienated both the imperial family as well as the court nobles who ultimately contrived his ouster in 1753. The year marked an important turning point in the political history of north India, as Richard Barnett points out, by signifying "the visible secession of Awadh and Allahabad from the remainder of the dwindling empire."³⁷ The formal connection was yet to be severed fully. After Safdar Jung's death in late 1754, his only son Shuja-ud-daula was again appointed the governor of Awadh by the puppet emperor Alamgir II. And Shuja too successfully maintained the autonomy of the Awadh subah without ever formally defying the symbolic authority of the Mughal emperor. When in December 1759 on the death of Alamgir II, the fugitive crown prince staged his own coronation as Shah Alam II, he named Shuja his wazir. Although this position was merely fictional, Shuja maintained his power within his own domain and was a much sought after ally for both the parties when Afghan leader Ahmad Shah Abdali arrived again in India to engage the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761). Shuja

joined the Afghan invader to see his local opponents, the Marathas, humbled and weakened; but throughout this confrontation he behaved like an independent partner in an alliance of equals. Within his own domain of Awadh and Allahabad his autonomy and power remained unchallenged till his encounter with the English East India Company in 1764.^{JS}

Apart from these successor states formed by Mughal governors, the other states that emerged in eighteenth-century India were those founded by rebels against the Mughal state, such as the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jars and the Afghan kingdoms of Farukhabad and Rohilkhand. Among them it was perhaps only the Maratha state that had the potential to develop into a new pan-Indian empire replacing the Mughals; but that potential was never fully realised because of the nature of the Maratha polity itself. In the seventeenth century it began as a small kingdom in western India, founded by the legendary Maratha chief Shivaji, against stiff opposition from the local Muslim kingdom of Bijapur and the pressure of the mighty Mughal army. Soon after his death in 1680, it was troubled by dynastic factionalism and the constant pressure of the Mughal policy of conquest in the Deccan. Local *deshmukhs* (revenue officers) and *zarnindars* took advantage of the situation by sometimes aligning with the Mughals and sometimes joining hands with the Marathas. Two of Shivaji's sons, first Shambhaji and then Rajaram, ruled briefly and battled incessantly with the Mughal army. When Rajaram died in 1699, one of his queens, Tarabai, began to rule in the name of her infant son Shivaji II; but Aurangzeb's army during this period conquered Maratha forts one after another, keeping Tarabai constantly on the move. From late 1705, however, the tide began to turn against Aurangzeb and when he died in 1707 after forty years of futile warfare in the Deccan, the Marathas still remained to be subjugated.

The Maratha kingdom was, however, certainly weakened and the process was further exacerbated after the release of Shahu, Shivaji's grandson, from the Mughal prison in 1707. There were now two rival contenders for the throne and during the next eight years, Maharashtra was immersed in a full-scale civil war between the forces of Shahu and those of Tarabai, who intended to rule in the name of Shivaji II. The loyalty of the Maratha sardars and *deshmukhs* shifted constantly between the two Maratha factions and the Mughals, the situation of anarchy becoming all-pervasive by 1712-13. But, helped by a group of new independent sardars, as well as a number of Brahman banking families, and an able Chitpavan Brahman *peshu/a* (prime minister), Balaji Vishwanarh, Shahu ultimately



- Approximate frontiers of the regions in 18th C.
 - - - Internal boundary within the region
 - - - Present external boundary of India
- 0 263 526km
Scale

MAP 2: The regional powers of the eighteenth century

emerged victorious from this contest and by 1718-19 he consolidated his position firmly. In 1719, by helping the Sayyid brothers establish a puppet emperor in Delhi, Balaji Viswanath secured for his master a Mughal *sanad* (imperial order) recognising Shahu's right to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* (one-fourth and one-tenth respectively of the government revenue) in the six Mughal provinces of Deccan, *chauth* of Malwa and Gujarat and an independent status in Maharashtra. The contest with the Tarabai faction was settled later in the Treaty of Warna in 1731, which gave the state of Kolapur to Shivaji II.

Although Maratha civil war was brought to an end, the control of the state gradually passed on from the line of Shivaji to that of the peshwas. Since the time of Balaji Viswanath, the office of the peshwa became rapidly powerful and the fountainhead of authority and the source of all patronage in the entire Maratha kingdom. He died in 1720 and was succeeded by his son Baji Rao, who was in power till 1740. By then the Maratha state had acquired control over large territories of the Mughal empire, and their only major adversary was the Nizam of Hyderabad, as both vied for control over Karnataka, Khandesh and Gujarat. In the first round of battle, the Marathas were defeated; but this was soon avenged in a resounding Maratha victory at Palkhed (March 1728), forcing the Nizam to recognise Shahu as the sole Maratha monarch with rights to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccan. After that Baji Rao led military campaigns and acquired the fertile lands of Malwa, reaching Rajasthan by 1729.³⁹ Meanwhile in Gujarat, Maratha bands collected taxes in the countryside, while the Mughals controlled only the cities' and the once lucrative trade in the port of Surat now declined rapidly under this political pressure."

When Baji Rao sent a large Maratha army to Gujarat under his brother, the Mughal governor concluded two treaties in 1727 and 1728, in effect ceding 60 per cent of the revenues of Gujarat to Shahu and his peshwa. The Nizam made another attempt to humble the peshwa by allying with some rival Maratha factions in Gujarat (Gaikwad, Dabhade and Kadam Bande); but their combined forces were finally defeated by the peshwa's army in 1731. Some time later Baji Rao's attention was directed towards the coastal plains of Konkan, where by 1736 he gained control over the territories of the Sidis (Abyssinian Muslims) and drove the Portuguese out of Salsette, Bassein and Chaul. Then again he returned to the north and in 1737 attacked Delhi and held the emperor captive for some time. The following year, he defeated a huge Mughal army under the generalship

of nizam and the treaty of Bhopal that followed in January 1739 ceded to the peshwa the subah of Malwa and sovereignty over all lands between the rivers Narmada and Chambal. In these territories, however, the Marathas did not try to overturn the local power structure and quickly entered into negotiations with the local zamindars for the payment of yearly tributes. A civilian system of revenue administration took time to emerge in this newly conquered region and this was a feature typical of all Maratha conquests.

After the death of Baji Rao in 1740, Shahu appointed his son Balaji Bajirao, better known as Nana Saheb (1740-61), in his place. More experienced in administration than in military campaigns,⁴² he was, however, the most successful among the peshwas. Nana Saheb became the supreme authority in the Maratha polity after the death of Shahu in 1749. This was indeed the peak period of Maratha glory when all parts of India had to face Maratha depredations. In the east, from 1745 onwards Maratha bands under Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur regularly raided Orissa, Bengal and Bihar, then ruled autonomously by Alivardi Khan. A treaty in 1751 stopped these raids, as Alivardi surrendered Orissa and agreed to pay Rs. 120,000 as annual chauth payment for the three provinces. Near at home, the Maratha forces regularly raided the nizarn's territories in Konkan, exacted tributes, but never succeeded in completely subduing them. In the north, by the treaty of Bhalke in 1751, Salabutjung, the new nizarn, practically ceded the entire control of Khandesh. Further north, the Maratha bands regularly raided the Rajput kingdoms of Jaipur, Bundi, Kotah and Udaipur and the Gond kingdom of Deogarh. They intervened in their wars of succession, exacted annual tributes from their rulers, but never tried to have any permanent conquest in the region. In the face of an Afghan invasion overrunning Lahore and Multan, a treaty in 1752 brought the Mughal emperor under the protection of the Marathas; and a succession dispute in 1753 gave them the opportunity to install their own chosen candidate on the Mughal throne. The Maratha expedition to Punjab was, however, short-lived and soon a Sikh rebellion put an end to Maratha authority in this region. In any case, the Marathas by then had gained mastery over large parts of north India; but there was never any attempt to establish an empire. It was only in Khandesh, Malwa and Gujarat that they tried to put in place some kind of an administration; their conquest elsewhere would seldom go beyond plunder and levying of chauth and sardeshmukhi. As a result, it was difficult to maintain this mastery and soon an Afghan invasion under Ahmad Shah Abdali dealt a deadly blow to Maratha glory.

Abdali, though troubled by lack of discipline in his army, was supported in this contest by a number of other indigenous forces, like the Rohillas and Shuja-ud-daula of Awadh. In the crucial Third Battle of Panipat fought on 14 January 1761, the Maratha forces under Sadasiv Rao Bhao were routed by Abdali, causing about fifty thousand casualties. This marked the beginning of the decline of Maratha power. The peshwa died within weeks and as the young peshwa Madhav Rao tried to gain control of the polity, factionalism among the Maratha sardars raised its ugly head. This faction fighting increased further after Madhav Rao's death in 1772. His uncle Raghunath Rao seized power, but was opposed by a number of important Maratha chiefs. To consolidate his position, he found a new ally in the English, then stationed in Bombay; but this took Maratha history into an entirely different trajectory, as the English had by then emerged as a new contender for power in the turbulent politics of eighteenth-century India?

The Maratha state could not become an alternative to Mughal empire because of its own structure. Its nature was that of a confederacy where power was shared among the chiefs or sardars, like the Bhonsles of Nagpur, Gaikwad of Baroda, Holkar of Indore or Sindhia of Gwalior, all of whom had made their fortunes as military leaders since the days of Shahu. Parts of the Maratha state had been alienated to these military commanders and it was difficult to control the chiefs, who did not like the peshwa regulating their activities. What resulted soon was increasing factional rivalry among the Maratha sardars and although there was always a strong centre, the composition of the inner circle of power changed from generation to generation. At the lower level, as mentioned earlier, there was the existence of heritable vatan rights, like those of the village headmen, *mirasidars* and *deshrnukhs*, which could not be taken away by kings. The regional assemblies of vatandars exercised political power and resolved disputes at a local level, thus representing local loyalties as opposed to any centralised concept of kingship. The Maratha state, in order to establish its control over the territory and consolidate the powerbase of its new ruling class, sought to peripheralise the regional assemblies in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. It tried to replace the horizontal ethos of "brotherhood" of the vatandars with the vertical relationship of service by generously distributing among its clients temporary and transferable land rights or *saranjam* that resembled Mughal jagir. But the old system could not be displaced, as the new system of prebended lordship, as Frank Perlin has argued, often cut across the traditional hierarchies of

status. So the same locally powerful Brahman or Maratha individuals now enjoyed a "bundle" of different kinds of rights. Local loyalties and centralised kingship thus continued to exist in Deccan through a continuous process of adjustment and balancing."

There is a significant debate about the relationship between the Maratha state and the Mughal system, as some historians emphasise its rebel nature. Irfan Habib (1963) thinks that it was the outcome of a zamindar revolt against an oppressive Mughal bureaucracy. Satish Chandra (1993) has argued about its regional nature; although Baji Rao made a move towards north India, his major aim was only to establish supremacy in the Deccan. In other words, the Maratha state is often seen as a departure from the Mughal tradition. But some other historians like Andre Wink have argued that the Marathas were also very much within the Mughal tradition, as they had built their power on the notion of sedition or *[itua]* (the Deccani corruption of the word *fitna*), which the Mughal state always provided a space for. There was no "rebellion" as such, as "concurrent rights ... constituted sovereignty". Even in the 1770s the Marathas acknowledged the symbolic authority of the Mughal emperor and in Malwa, Khandesh and parts of Gujarat, where they established some sort of administration, it looked very much like the Mughal system. The old terminology was retained and even the differential urban tax rates continued to favour the Muslims. The only difference was that in the Maratha territories there were many civilian revenue collectors, mainly Brahmans, who did not move on to military command, as was the custom in the Mughal system where there was only one unified civilian/military bureaucracy.⁴⁶ Other than this, the Mughal tradition remained central to social and political life of the Maratha state system, although, as we have noted earlier, it had to contend continually with local loyalties. Existing political conflicts between warrior families were resolved through a combination of coercion and conciliation, the *deshmukhs* remaining the co-sharers in the polity and rights being granted for building kingdoms. The Maratha state ultimately declined not so much because of factionalism, but because of the increasing power of the English in the Deccan. It was difficult for the Marathas to resist this efficient army.

Turning to north India in the eighteenth century, we find that the history of the Sikh *Panth* in Punjab was as old as that of the Mughal empire. When Guru Nanak, born in 1469, began to preach his message of inner devotion and equality among all human beings, Babur was founding the Mughal empire. Within the *bhakti cir sant* tradition of medieval India, this was the beginning of Sikhism, which gradually began to attract millions of devotees and started acquiring

its shape and definition under the leadership of the subsequent gurus ...⁷ Aurangzeb was initially not very hostile to the Sikhs; but as the community grew in size and challenged the central authority of the Mughals, the emperor turned against them and Guru Tegbahadur, the ninth in line, was executed in Delhi in 1675.

The tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh, took an important step in 1699; he transformed the Sikhs into a military organisation by establishing the brotherhood of *Khalsa*. It was a ceremony in which the guru himself (and not his deputies or *masands*) initiated the disciples, who were obliged to maintain five distinctive insignia—including unkempt hair and carrying of weapons—that would publicly proclaim their identity. Why he did it is a matter of conjecture. One reason possibly was the continuing conflict with the Mughals, which had convinced the gurus, first Guru Hargobind and then Guru Gobind Singh, about the necessity of armed resistance for the defence of the Panth ...⁸ It was also probably because of the rise of the jat peasantry among the Sikhs, as carrying arms and resolving disputes through the use of arms were already part of jat cultural tradition and to which the other components of the Sikh community, the Khatri traders, were not perhaps very averse to...⁹ The founding of the Khalsa projected the Sikh community as a militant outfit, although all Sikhs were not necessarily its members. The Jat peasants continued to dominate the Khalsa at the expense of the older Khatri leadership. Their aspiration for equality was further fulfilled when Guru Gobind Singh decided to terminate the position of guru after his death; the power of the guru henceforth was to be vested in the Panrh and the *Granth* (sacred texts). Thus, by invoking cultural resources, such as the sacred texts, and prescribing initiation and other life-cycle rituals the Khalsa sought to provide order in the life of the Sikhs in otherwise uncertain days of the eighteenth century, and in this way tried to construct a distinctive Sikh social and political identity.^{so}

Guru Gobind's open quarrel with the Mughals followed a complex trajectory. From about 1696 he tried to carve out an autonomous domain in and around Anandpur, which brought the hostility of the hill chiefs of Himachal Pradesh, who approached the Mughal faujdar for protection. The siege of Anandpur by a combined force in 1704 compelled Guru Gobind to leave; but Aurangzeb, then busy in Deccan, soon reversed the stand and sought to conciliate the guru. After Aurangzeb's death, Guru Gobind met Bahadur Shah at Agra in 1707 and he promised to return Anandpur. However, the new emperor had to appease the hill chiefs as well, and therefore continued to postpone his final decision. In the meanwhile, on

7 October 1708, Guru Gobind was murdered in a conspiracy," and his mantle then fell on one of his followers, Banda Bahadur, who continued the Sikh revolt. The stage of the contest now shifted to Majha (between the rivers Beas and Ravi) and Doab (between rivers Beas and Sudej) regions, where lived mainly the Jat peasants. Mughal oppression around this time put tremendous pressure on the small zamindars and peasants. Not all of them, it is true, supported Banda Bahadur, whose main supporters were the small mulguzari zamindars of the jar community. Within a year a large area between the rivers Jamuna and Ravi came under his influence and here he promptly established his own administration, appointed his own faujdars, diwan and kardars, minted a new coin and used his own seal for issuing orders.^{s2}

In 1710, Bahadur Shah proceeded to Punjab, but failed to crush the Sikh revolt. When Farruksiyar ascended the throne in 1713, he appointed Abdus Samad Khan the faujdar of Lahore and gave him special orders to put an end to the Sikh upsurge. The position of Banda Bahadur had also weakened by then to some extent, because of internal dissension within the Sikh community. Although in general the Jat peasants supported him, some of the Jat zamindars went to the Mughal side, Churaman Jat of Agra being a major example. The Khatri business class from around 1710 also went against the Sikh movement, as political stability and security of trade routes were essential to the smooth running of their business. At the same time, when the Mughals introduced the ijaradari system in Punjab for collecting land revenue, many of the Khatri traders became revenue farmers and this naturally linked their interests to those of the Mughal state. The emperors also tried to take advantage of this internal dissension within the Punjab society, as during the time of Jahandar Shah and Farruksiyar, many Khatri were given high positions within the Mughal nobility. Farruksiyar tried to use Guru Gobind's widow to drive a wedge between Banda and his Sikh followers. This did not necessarily weaken Banda's movement, as oppressive Khatri ijaradars often drove desperate Jat peasants into the rebel's camp. But ultimately in 1715 Banda had to surrender to Abdus Samad Khan. He was taken to Delhi along with some of his close followers; in March 1716 all of them were executed.

The execution of Banda did not mean the end of Sikh power in Punjab, although there was no one immediately available to take up the leadership. But even in spite of the absence of a centralised leadership, roving bands of Sikh rebels took advantage of the breakdown of imperial control in north India to assert their independence,

despite the best efforts of Zakaria Khan who had succeeded his father Abdus Samad Khan as the Mughal governor of Lahore. Even the Afghan invader Ahmad Shah Abdali failed to bring Punjab under his command; his governors were soon thrown out and by September 1761 the Sikhs came to control wide regions of Punjab from rivers Surlej to Indus. Abdali himself came to Punjab in 1765, but retired soon to Kabul without fighting a single battle. The Sikhs once again established their political power in Punjab once Abdali retired from the Indian scene. But at this stage, power in the Sikh polity became more horizontally structured, as *misl*s, or combinations based on kinship ties, now held territories as units. Whenever a *misl* conquered new territory, it was distributed among its members according to the nature of contribution made by each member towards the conquest. The highest share obviously went to the chief, but even the lowest soldier got his own *patti* or a portion of land, which he could enjoy as a co-sharer with absolute freedom." The number of *misl*s thus holding territories in 1770 was more than sixty. Above them was the *Dal Khalsa* with a chosen leader. The *misl*s did unite on occasions, as they did in 1765 against the Afghans." But on the whole, political authority in Punjab remained decentralised and more horizontally dispersed during this whole period until Ranjir Singh, the chief of the Sukerchakia *misl*, tried to raise a more centralised Sikh state at the end of the eighteenth century.

After repelling the third Afghan invasion under Abdali's successor Zaman Shah in 1798-99, Ranjit Singh emerged as one of the outstanding Sikh chiefs and conquered Lahore. Leading an army with improved artillery and infantry trained by European officers, by 1809 he had brought under his control large areas in the five doabs of Punjab. By the Treaty of Amritsar in that year the English recognised him as the sole sovereign ruler of Punjab. This gave him the opportunity to round his conquests off by ousting the Afghans from Multan and Kashmir and subduing most of the other Sikh chiefs, many of whom were reduced to the status of tribute-paying vassals. By the time of his death, his authority was recognised in territories between the river Surlej and the mountain ranges of Ladakh, Karakoram, Hindukush and Sulaiman.

Although Mughal and Afghan rules were displaced from Punjab, the new administration which Ranjit Singh or the other Sikh rulers before him had introduced remained, like the Maratha polity, a careful mix between the Mughal system and local traditions. Continuity of Mughal institutions was remarkable in the organisation of administrative divisions, in the nomenclature of officials, as well as in the

tax collection system. Trade and commerce flourished in Punjab because a powerful state under Ranjit Singh provided safe passage to traders and their caravans; but still land revenue remained the main source of income for the state. And although the amount of land revenue collection increased, about 40 per cent of it was alienated as jagir.⁵⁵ While in the rest of the territories land revenue was directly collected through kardars, this penetration of the state stopped at the village level and did not infringe upon the power of the clans and their chiefs. Local traditional hierarchies and the concept of a centralised monarchical state thus existed in a delicately balanced relationship, or in other words, in the dualism between 'national' and 'local' systems of governance. This process of incorporation and adjustment as a part of the construction of a monarchical state could be seen at the cultural level as well, where the Khalsa attempt to construct an exclusive Sikh identity gradually incorporated the non-Khalsa Sikhs or the *sahajdharis* as well.⁵⁶ At the central level of *darbar* politics also Ranjit Singh maintained a careful balance between the powerful Sikh chiefs on the one hand and on the other freshly recruited military commanders from among the peasants of central Punjab and the non-Punjabi nobles, such as the Dogra Rajputs from Jammu." This delicate balancing game functioned well until Ranjit Singh's death in 1839. Within a decade of his death independent Sikh rule disappeared from Punjab, as struggle for power among the mighty Sikh chiefs and the royal family feuds helped the English to take over without much difficulty—a story we will return to in a short while.

In the eighteenth century, a few smaller states, apart from the larger powers described earlier, had also emerged in north India by taking advantage of the weakness of the Mughal empire. The Jat kingdom of Bharatpur is an important example of this. The Jats were an agriculturist and pastoral caste inhabiting the Delhi-Mathura region. Caste affinity with their zamindars brought solidarity within the community and they began to revolt against the Mughal state from the time of Jahangir. The first revolt of the Jat peasants took place in 1669 and the emperor himself had to proceed to suppress this rebellion. In 1686 the Jats revolted again; this time the Mughal imperial commander Bishen Singh Kachhwa achieved some success against them, but failed to curb their power completely. In this way, first the local zamindar Gokla and then Rajaram and Churaman Jat used the discontent of their peasants against the Mughal state and founded the Jat kingdom at Bharatpur. It was Suraj Mal who consolidated Jat power during his reign (1756--63), compelling the

Mughal authorities to recognise him. He successfully withstood a siege by Abdali's army and supported the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat. However, as for the organisation of this rebel polity, the Jat state, although founded with the active support of the peasants, continued to retain its feudal character. The state had to depend on the zamindars who held both administrative and revenue powers and their revenue demands sometimes were even higher than those under the Mughal system. Suraj Mal in the 1750s tried to reduce this dependence on the overmighty kinsmen and members of his caste, began to drive them off from positions of power, tried to raise an army with foreigners and introduced the Mughal system of revenue collection." But this effort at centralisation of power ended with his death in 1763, which was followed by a virtual collapse of the Jat state that stretched at one stage from the Ganga in the east to Agra in the west and from Delhi in the north to Chambal in the south.

A couple of small Afghan kingdoms were also established in north India following the weakening of the Mughal empire. The Afghans, who started migrating to India from the fifteenth century, were bands of roving warlords, who continually moved from camp to camp. During the early phase of Afghan state formation in India in the fifteenth-sixteenth century, the Lodi Sultanate remained only "a pastoral confederation of tribal lords". In the mid-sixteenth century, Sher Shah Suri during his rule in Delhi (1540-45), transformed this horizontal structure of Afghan polity into a vertical relationship based on military service and direct loyalty to the king. Thus tribal principles of equality and inherited rights were replaced with the concept of centralised power, subordination and royal prerogatives. But Sher Shah's rule did not last long and the Afghans continued to operate as a fluid ethnic group of mercenary soldiers in the military labour market of north India.⁵⁹ In the eighteenth century, Afghan migration to India increased because of political instability and economic dislocations in Afghanistan. The breakdown of authority in north India that followed Nadir Shah's invasion gave opportunity to another Afghan leader, Ali Muhammad Khan, to establish a petty kingdom of Rohilkhand at the foothills of the Himalayas. But the new kingdom acquired hardly any influence at all, as it suffered heavily at the hands of the neighbouring powers, like the Marathas, Jats, Awadh and later the English. Another independent Afghan kingdom to the east of Delhi in the area around Farukhabad was established by Ahmad Khan Bangash. Both the Rohillas and Bangash helped Ahmad Shah Abdali during the Third Battle of Panipat; but

their power declined quickly as Abdali retired from the Indian stage leaving Najib-ud-daula in charge of affairs at Delhi.

Apart from the successor states and the rebel states, which came into existence following the weakening of the Mughal empire, there were also a few principalities, like the Rajput kingdoms, Mysore or Travancore, which already enjoyed considerable amount of autonomy in the past and now in the eighteenth century became completely independent. In the medieval period a number of roving warrior groups thrived in the north Indian military labour market, from where the Mughal army recruited its soldiers. Gradually professional specialisation was offering these people ethnic identities, Rajput being one of them, as social mobility from peasant to Rajput became a frequent occurrence during this period.⁵⁷ It was by sixteenth-seventeenth century that the Rajputs came to be organised into about twenty major clans, with their chiefs gradually establishing their centralised control over territory, with the patronage of the Mughal emperors following a policy of indirect rule. Since the time of Akbar, different Rajput chiefs were being incorporated into the Mughal structure as peshkashi zamindars. They paid an annual tribute (peshkash) to the Mughal emperor as a mark of subordination, and enjoyed autonomy in matters of internal administration. Many of them were also given high military ranks within the Mughal army and contributed to the strength of the empire, and in return were given help in their effort to consolidate their own control over their kingdoms. Thus as many of the Rajput chiefs sought to claim centralised authority in their territories, this significantly affected the power relations within the Rajput states based on land ownership. Previously, entitlement to land depended on inherited rights given by the brotherhood of the clan or marriage relations. But now gradually this relationship of "corporate egalitarianism", as Norman Ziegler calls it, was replaced by the hierarchical principles of service and loyalty that entitled clients to pattas on land.⁶¹ However, the displacement was never complete, as the chiefs and their centralising policies were continually challenged by local groups or junior lineages from within the clans. When someone rebelled, he was helped by his own immediate kinsmen and their marriage alliances; but rebels when unsuccessful were usually accommodated within the polity and therefore rebellion happened to be an accepted norm of political behaviour. Even in the early nineteenth century, in a Rajput polity like Sirohi, the darbar remained "a synthesis of the powers of the sovereign and the nobles", and "there was not a single noble ... whose lineage had not rebelled" in the recent or distant past against the incumbent ruler.⁶²

To put it in another way, Rajput politics, to quote Norbad Peabody, "were built on webs of criss-crossing, non-exclusive political relationships that produced state formations that were neither founded on the basis of territorial integrity nor absolute and exclusive political loyalties."⁶³ And it was within this complex matrix of local loyalties, centralising kingship and clan rivalries that the Rajputs placed their relationship with the Mughals. In the seventeenth century during the time of Aurangzeb the harmonious relationship between the two seemed to break down, though, contrary to popular historical myths, this was not because of religious reactions or Rajput nationalism. Aurangzeb did not discriminate against the Rajput sardars in matters of recruitment; but he could hardly tolerate the continuous territorial expansion of Mewar under Raj Singh at the expense of other Rajput chieftains, as this would contravene the traditional Mughal policy of balance of power. So to contain him; he began to patronise other neighbouring Rajput sardars. The situation actually began to take an ugly turn when he interfered in the succession question of Marwar. After the death of Rana Jaswant Singh, a son was born to Rani Hari, but Aurangzeb refused to recognise him as the new Rana and instead put up Inder Singh as his own candidate for the position. Such interference was not unprecedented, as in the past the Mughal emperors had used clan rivalries and exerted their right to appoint successors to Rajput states. And now, particularly as Marwar was situated in the strategic route between Agra and Ahmedabad, it could not be left in charge of a child ruler. The question of religious difference did not arise, as the Maharani was prepared to accept Sharia and pay a higher peshkash if her son Ajit Singh's claim was recognised. But when this did not happen, the other sardars, ably helped by Mewar, rose in revolt against the Mughal empire."

Mewar's assistance to the warring chiefs of Marwar was to establish its pre-eminence in Rajput politics and not so much to further Rajput nationalism, as Satish Chandra has shown. The other Rajput clans, like the Kachhwahas, Haras, Bhartis and the Rathors of Bikanir, did not participate in this revolt of 1680-81; some of them even supported the Mughals. Indeed, the movement soon dissipated due to internal rivalries among the Rajput sardars, each crying to consolidate or expand territorial control at the expense of other clans.⁶⁵ In the eighteenth century many of them began to assert their independence vis-a-vis the Mughal empire—their method was to slowly loosen their ties with Delhi and function as independent states in practice. The most powerful of the Rajput chiefs during this period was Sawai Jai Singh of Amber who ruled in Jaipur from 1699 to

1743 and also played a significant role in Mughal politics. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Rajput polities had to face constant depredations of the Marathas and Afghans, although none of them succeeded in permanently subjugating the region.

In south India the emergence of Mysore as a significant power 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 Wodeyar dynasty. Its centralised military power began to increase from the late seventeenth century under Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672-1704),⁶⁶ but it reached its real period of glory under Haidar Ali. A man of humble origin, Haidar had started his career as a junior officer in the Mysore army and gradually rose to prominence. By 1761 he took over political power in Mysore by ousting the corrupt *dalai* (prime minister) Nanjraj, who had in the meanwhile usurped real power in the kingdom by reducing the Wodeyar king into a mere titular head.

Haidar modernised his army with French experts, who trained an efficient infantry and artillery and infused European discipline into the Mysore army. It was organised on a European model through the system of *risalas*, with a clear chain of command going up to the ruler. Each *risala* had a fixed number of soldiers, with provision for weaponry and modes of transport and a commander appointed directly by Haidar himself. His power was further consolidated by the subjugation of the local warrior chiefs or hereditary overlords like *deshmukhs* and *palegars* (poligars), who had until then complete mastery over the countryside through their control over agricultural surpluses and local temples. Haidar, and later his son Tipu Sultan, introduced the system of imposing land taxes directly on the peasants and collecting them through salaried officials and in cash, thus enhancing enormously the resource base of the state. This land revenue system was based on detailed survey and classification of land; sometimes fixed rents and sometimes a share of the produce were collected from different categories of land, such as wet or dry lands, the rate of rent varying according to the productivity of soil. It did not completely dispense with the Mughal institution of *jagir*, but restricted it to a very small proportion of the available land.⁶⁷ Burton Stein has called Tipu's revenue system a form of "military fiscalism", where taxes were collected from a wide base directly by state officials in order to mobilise resources to build up and maintain a large army. This was therefore part of a political project to establish centralised military hegemony by eliminating the intermediaries who

were co-sharers of power in a previous segmentary state under the Vijaynagara empire.⁶⁸

Tipu's state in order to expand its resource base provided encouragement for the development of agriculture, such as tax remission for reclamation of wasteland, and tried to protect the peasants from the rapacity of tax collectors. Even his arch enemies had to concede that "his country was the best cultivated and its population the most flourishing in India".⁶⁹ Tipu was also interested in modernising the agricultural economy, by repairing old irrigation systems and constructing new ones, by promoting agricultural manufacturing and introducing sericulture in Mysore. He sent ambassadors to France to bring in European technology, went on to build a navy, with ambition to participate in oceanic trade. He launched in 1793 what can be described as a "state commercial corporation", with plans to set up factories outside Mysore. In course of time Mysore state began to participate in a lucrative trade in valuable goods like sandalwood, rice, silk, coconut, sulphur etc. and established thirty trading centres in and outside Mysore in other parts of western India and overseas like Muscat. But his plans of modernisation went far beyond his resources and therefore, Mysore remained, as Irfan Habib argues, "far away from a real opening to modern civilization".

The state of Mysore under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan was involved in establishing a centralised military hegemony. Its territorial ambitions and trading interests got it engaged in a state of constant warfare, which overshadowed all other aspects of its history during this period. Haidar Ali had invaded and annexed Malabar and Calicut in 1766, thus expanding the frontiers of Mysore significantly. On the other hand, the boundaries of the Maratha kingdom extended over the coastal areas of Konkan and Malabar, which made conflict with Mysore inevitable. There was also conflict with the other powers in the region, like Hyderabad and then the English, on whom Haidar Ali inflicted a heavy defeat near Madras in 1769. After his death in 1782, his son Tipu Sultan followed his father's policies. His rule came to an end with a defeat at the hands of the English in 1799—he died defending his capital Srirangapatnam. We shall return to that story shortly, but before that it is important to remember that in a significant way Tipu's reign represented a discontinuity in eighteenth century Indian politics, as his kingship, argues Kate Brittlebank (1997), was rooted firmly in a strong regional tradition. Unlike other eighteenth century states which did not challenge the political legitimacy of the Mughal emperor, in a symbolic gesture to proclaim his independence, Tipu issued coins

without any reference to the Mughal emperor; and instead of Emperor Shah Alam's name he inserted his own name in the khurba (Friday sermons at the mosques); finally, he sought a sanad from the Ottoman Khalif to legitimise his rule. But he too "did not completely sever links" with the Mughal monarch, who still commanded respect in the subcontinent. Being a "realist" as he was, Tipu recognised Mughal authority when it suited him and defied it when it did not.⁷²

Further south, the southernmost state of Travancore had always maintained its independence from Mughal rule. It gained in importance after 1729 when its king Marranda Varma started expanding his dominions with the help of a strong and modern army trained along Western lines and equipped with modern weapons. The Dutch were ousted from the region; the English were made to accept his terms of trade; local feudal chiefs were suppressed; and smaller principalities governed by collateral branches of the royal family were taken over. By the beginning of the 1740s, Varma had constructed a powerful bureaucratic state, which required control over larger resources. He resolved this problem by proclaiming a royal monopoly, first on pepper trade and then on all trade in the prosperous Malabar coast. Some of the profit that the state earned in this way was ploughed back into the community through development of irrigation, transport and communication systems and various other charities." In view of recent researches, this measure in itself does not seem to be a major departure from existing political convention. Although Travancore was not formally within the Mughal system, "royal and noble trade" was becoming an established Mughal tradition since the seventeenth century.⁷³ Travancore withstood the shock of a Mysorean invasion in 1766 and under Martanda Varma's successor Rama Varma its capital became a centre of scholarship and art. In his death towards the closing years of the eighteenth century the region lost its former glory and soon succumbed to British pressure, accepting a Resident in 1800. However, the internal social organisation of the state, marked by the dominance of the Nair community in administration, landholding and social spheres continued for another fifty years, yielding to the forces of change in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁷⁴

The major characteristic of eighteenth-century India was therefore the weakening of the centralised Mughal empire and a dispersal of political power across the regions. There was in other words, a transformation of the polity, rather than complete collapse.⁷⁵ The symbols of Mughal authority were still recognised, the Mughal

system also continued, although in some areas its content was substantially changed. Talking about Mughal Bengal, Richard Eaton concludes that "even while central power in Delhi declined, rendering Bengal effectively independent from the second decade of the eighteenth century on, the ideological and bureaucratic structure of Mughal imperialism continued to expand in the Bengal delta".⁷⁶ But although the successor states continued Mughal institutions-and perhaps also inherited some of their weaknesses-there were also indications of significant innovation and improvement-both in terms of political rituals and insignia, as also in perfecting mechanisms of resource extraction from agriculture and trade. At a political level all these states continually made adjustments between concepts of centralised kingship and local loyalties, between prebended lordship and hereditary rights, or in more general terms, between centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. This political heterogeneity also favoured the flourishing of a diverse cultural life, where religious strife was not a part of ordinary social life-despite some tension between the Shia and Sunni Muslims in Awadh-and where side by side with orthodoxy, there were also plebeian, syncretistic and rationalist schools of thought, which were patronised by the regional rulers. Thus the devotional religion of Vaishnavism flourished in Bengal," the Firangi Mahal blossomed in Lucknow as a rationalist school of Islamic thought⁷⁸ and even after the decline of its main centre at Bijapur the Deccani Sufi tradition and its literary culture survived in Hyderabad and Arcot.⁷⁹ If Tipu Sultan found in Islam an enduring ideology of power, he was equally patronising towards the Hindu religious institutions like the Sringeri Math and other Hindu shrines."

On the economic side the eighteenth century was not a period of total stagnation either, as there had been considerable regional variations. Sarish Chandra (1991) has talked about the resilience of the economy, as trade, both internal and external, continued without disruption and even prospered. There was now an expanding commercial economy and the revenue farmers and merchants with money power increased their political influence. Indigenous bankers handled considerable amounts of cash and operated extensive financial networks across the country to transfer credit through *hundis*. And as one theory would have it, they were now supposedly favouring the regional elite, rather than the central Mughal authority.⁸¹ There was, in other words, "creation of new wealth and social power in the provinces", which, as C.A. Bayly has argued, resulted in the decline of the centralised Mughal power.⁸² There is one

significant point that emerges from the recent historiography of eighteenth-century India—that there were regions with considerable amounts of resources, which actually attracted the English and other European traders and triggered off a competition among them for mastery over the subcontinent.

1.3. FOUNDATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

The English East India Company was founded by a royal charter on 31 December 1600, as a joint stock company of London merchants uniting to combat Dutch competition in Eastern trade. It was given monopoly of all trade from England to the East and was permitted, even in an age dominated by mercantilist ideas, to carry bullion out of the country to finance its trade. It was not, however, given any overt mandate at that time to carry on conquest or colonisation. The Company formally started trading in India from 1613 after settling scores with the Portuguese, who had arrived at the scene earlier. A *[arman* from Mughal emperor Jahangir gave them permission to establish their factories or warehouses in India, the first factory being set up in Surat in the western coast. In 1617 Jahangir received Sir Thomas Roe as a resident English envoy in his court. This was the modest beginning from where the Company gradually extended its trading activities to other parts of India, with Bombay, Calcutta and Madras emerging by the end of the seventeenth century as three major centres of its activities. Political expansion started from the middle of the eighteenth century, and within hundred years almost the whole of India was under its control.

P.J. Marshall (1968) has argued that until 1784 (i.e., the passage of Pitt's India Act), there was no conscious or consistent British policy for political conquest in India. Authority at home remained divided between the Court of Directors of the East India Company and the tenuous regulatory power of the government, with no one seemingly interested in acquiring territories in India until 1784, although by then a large empire had already been acquired. "Thus the growth of territorial empire in India", argues Marshall, "was neither planned nor directed from Britain"; "it was the initiative of the Company officials operating in India which decided the course of action, despite the absence of any policy directives from London in favour of conquest and colonisation. Marshall acknowledged in an earlier essay that there was considerable commercial expansion during the early eighteenth century and the obvious connection between trade and empire was also hard to ignore.¹⁴ But then, it was the political fragmentation and instability following the decline of

the Mughal power that actually facilitated the territorial expansion of the Company. Its history, therefore, needs to be traced in the developments of eighteenth-century Indian politics, where the English were only "responding to these developments and exploiting the opportunities that came their way".¹⁵ In other words, it was developments in the periphery, rather than impetus from the metropole, which thrust upon the Company a career of territorial expansion in India. And even after the 1780s, argues C.A. Bayly, the imperial expansion was primarily motivated by the fiscal and military needs of the Company, rather than interests of trade-the "free traders [being] nothing more than the fly on the wheel".⁸⁶

While it is difficult to deny the importance of "sub-imperialism"⁸⁷ of the men on the spot or pressures generated at the periphery as driving forces behind territorial conquests, we may also posit here some telling evidence of engagement of the metropole in the project of empire building in India. There is, first of all, considerable evidence to suggest that from the very beginning use of force to promote trade was an axiom in the practices of the East India Company; its trade was always armed trade." And despite the apparent separation between the Company and the state, the two were intimately inter-linked in promoting England's diplomatic goals, as the Company itself owed its privileges, and indeed very existence, to royal prerogative.⁸⁹ In English politics, the Company's fortunes suffered reverses during the time of the Stuart monarchs James I and Charles I and also during the Civil War, when its privileges came under severe attack. But the situation began to improve with the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England. To secure wealth and independence for the crown, both he and his brother James II followed an aggressive commercial policy abroad. In real terms, this involved the use of naval power in the Indian Ocean and in the Indian coastal areas, where fortified bases and enclaves in the factory ports were constructed as a part of regular policy, which, in Philip Lawson's words, may be described as "the moral economy of English gunnery in these local markets".⁹⁰ The English naval guns during this period could not alter the entire trading pattern of the East; but they prevented the Indian rulers from obstructing or undermining English trade in the local markets.

The relationship between the Crown and the Company was mutually beneficial. In 1660 the Company celebrated the restoration of the Stuart monarchy by offering £3,000 worth of silver plates to His Majesty. In 1661 Cromwell's charter was replaced by one signed by the king and in gratitude the Company directors voted in 1662 a

loan of £10,000 for the King. In the subsequent years more loans totaling £150,000 were offered and more charters with additional privileges followed. "King and Company", as John Keay writes, "understood one another well."⁹¹ The initial history of the Presidency system in India is also indicative of Crown's involvement in the colonisation of the country. The island settlement of Bombay, which Charles II received from the Portuguese crown in 1661 as dowry for his bride, was handed over to the East India Company in 1668 for a token annual rental of £10 and it was here that in 1687 the Presidency headquarters of the west coast was shifted from Surat. What is important to note here is that Bombay had been given to Charles through the Treaty of Whitehall, which included a secret provision that it would be used to protect the Portuguese settlements in India. It involved a mutual defence pact against the aggressive and expanding Dutch East India Company, and now even after the handover, that obligation to defend Portuguese positions was happily owned up by the King, and that made the English Company directors immensely grateful, offering a further Joan.⁹² The growth of the Madras Presidency was also to a large extent because of Cromwell's charter, which provided encouragement for the development of this area. The Calcutta Presidency developed later in the eighteenth century and the London authorities were involved in a major way in its development and defence." But even prior to that, in the 1680s when Aurangzeb became busy in imperial wars, seriously threatening the stability and security of English trade, the East India Company under the leadership of Sir Josiah Child decided to take an aggressive stance in defence of Company's trading interests. Its military weakness at this stage proved disastrous, although, fortunately for the Company, Aurangzeb did not take any retributive action and restored its privileges in return for an apology and a payment of compensation. But defeat *does* not hide the aggressive intent of the Company, which "became identified with a Stuart monarchy pursuing an equally bold and authoritarian imperial policy around the globe." In the middle of the eighteenth century the Europeans gained "a decided technological edge" over the Indians and this paved the way for victory of what has been described by Philip Lawson as a "policy of aggression and state imperialism by proxy."

After James II was replaced by William and Mary in 1689, the Company once again came under increasing attack in England. The political ascendancy of the Whigs brought the Company's monopoly rights and corrupt practices into question and a rival Company

was set up. However, the bill authorising the foundation of the new company was passed by the House of Commons in 1698 only when the promoters of the new company offered a £2 million loan to the state, as against the offer of £700,000 by the old Company wanting a renewal of its exclusive charter. It became clear by this time that the right to trade in the East was "a marketable commodity", and if Parliament granted that right, it was the state which would benefit, instead of King and the Court.⁹⁵ By 1709 the anomalies were sorted out, as the two companies merged again and it was widely accepted in London how crucial the financial role of the Company was in strengthening the state and in improving its diplomatic profile in European politics. The eighteenth century thus marked the beginning of self-confident territorial expansion in India, as imperial expansion and the financial strength of the Company came to be integrally connected.⁹⁶ It was discussed in the early eighteenth century not only among the Company officials, but also widely among the London public and in the political circles; the foundation of the Company's empire in India was therefore not entirely without direction from London. The relationship between the state and the Company was further streamlined in the 1770s, when the latter agreed to pay £400,000 annually to the state exchequer for its Indian territorial possessions and revenues earned since 1765, and thus gained an official endorsement of its position in India. By this time the Company was being looked at as "a powerful engine in the hands of the Government for the purposes of drawing from a distant country the largest revenue it is capable of yielding." The charters of the Company were seen to be providing for "delegated sovereignty", while the monopoly of trade and territorial possessions were considered to be returns for the public funds and trust invested in the joint stock company "for the benefit of the British nation". The Regulating Act of 1773 resolved the ambiguities involved in the sovereignty issue, by establishing the rights of the state on all territorial acquisitions overseas.⁹⁷ If later the London authorities became at all averse to territorial expansion, it was only because of the expenses of wars. They wanted very much to share the resources of an Indian empire, but not the cost of acquiring it or the burden of administering it.⁹⁸

The expansion of the empire in India in the second half of the eighteenth century marked, according to P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, an extension of the "gentlemanly capitalism", upheld by an alliance between landed interests and financial power that was in ascendancy in London after 1688; and that was the reason why "revenue became

and remained the central preoccupation" of imperial policy." Cain and Hopkins brought the merropole back into the discussion of imperialism, and it is difficult to deny the importance of Indian revenue resources for financing England's growing internal and overseas trade, and this undoubtedly created the impulse for conquest. But in eighteenth-century India there were a few other significant interests—other than revenue and the Company's trade—which were also involved in determining the specific course of territorial expansion. From the very beginning, the Company's monopoly rights were breached in various ways and in the eighteenth century it rose to crisis proportions. The "interlopers" in the seventeenth century directly defied the Company's monopoly rights by conducting and financing illegal trade between England and the Indian Ocean countries. Efforts to curb their power often led to constitutional crises as in the *Skinner v. The East India Company* in 1668-69, when the House of Lords actually upheld the rights of an interloper.¹⁰⁰ But the problem of illegal trade was actually compounded by the Company's own organisation. Its employees began to involve themselves in the country trade in India in order to supplement their meagre salaries. There were also free merchants, who were not in the employment of the Company, but were allowed to settle in its establishments. The Company used to ignore this trade and even encouraged such private traders, operating in conjunction with the Indian merchants, as long as they did not directly participate in the oceanic trade to and from Europe.

These two types of parallel trading activities, however, soon came into conflict in the second half of the eighteenth century. Whenever the interests of the private merchants clashed with those of the Company, there was cheating, deceit and a whole circle of illicit credit and trading networks, eroding the profits of the Company.¹⁰¹ Often there was collusion between the private traders and the interlopers and the profit earned through this illicit trade was remitted through bills of exchange drawn on the London office of the Company or the Amsterdam office of the Dutch Company. In the 1750s such remittances through only the English Company amounted to an average of £100,000 annually, which was more than sixty times of the annual salary which these officials earned in Company's service. More critical, however, was the misuse by these private traders of the trading privileges granted by the Mughal authorities to the East India Company. The *dastak* or the permits issued by the local councils of the Company certifying their goods, which were to be charged no duty by the Mughal authorities, were frequently issued

by the Company officials to their own Indian agents, thus defrauding the Mughal treasury of enormous amounts of revenue. The Court of Directors tried to stop this malpractice, but with no effect; and soon in the 1750s this became a major cause of friction between the Company and the local Mughal ruler in Bengal, creating the context for the emergence of the Company as the imperial power in India.¹⁰² However, as its empire in India was acquired over a long period of time-nearly one hundred years-a myriad of factors motivated this territorial expansion. As we examine this protracted process in detail, it becomes clear that both pressures from the periphery and impetus from the metropole constantly interacted with each other, and search for revenue, quest for trading privileges and the imperatives of military exigencies all took the driving seat in turn to accelerate the process of territorial conquest and erect in India the most magnificent empire that Britain ever had.

It all started in Bengal, which in the early eighteenth century had become very important in the structure of the Company's trade at the expense of the west coast, particularly Bombay, Surat and Malabar, as Bengal goods came to comprise nearly 60 per cent of English imports from Asia.¹⁰³ The Company was moving towards this position gradually. In 1690 Aurangzeb's farman had granted them right to duty-free trade in Bengal in return for an annual payment of Rs. 3,000. The foundation of Calcutta in 1690 and its fortification in 1696 were followed by the grant of zamindari rights in three villages of Kolikata, Suranuri and Gobindapur two years later. The situation became unstable again at the death of Aurangzeb, but was formalised again by a farman from emperor Farruksiyar in 1717, which granted the Company the right to carry on duty free trade, to rent thirty-eight villages around Calcutta and to use the royal mint. But this farman also became a new source of conflict between the Company and Murshid Quli Khan, the new autonomous ruler of Bengal, who refused to extend its duty free provision to cover also the private trade of the Company officials. The latter therefore took to rampant misuse of dastaks, and the nawab resented the loss of revenue. Apart from this, Murshid Quli also denied permission to the Company to buy the thirty-eight villages and refused to offer the minting privileges. The conflict between the Bengal nawab and the English Company had thus started developing right from 1717.

The outbreak of the Austrian Succession War in Europe in 1740 brought in hostilities between the English and the French Companies to India. In Bengal the new nawab Alivardi Khan kept both of them under control and forbade them from getting involved in any

open hostilities. But French victories in south India made the English apprehensive in Bengal as they had very little trust in the power of the nawab to protect them against any French onslaught. Moreover, as it has been shown recently,^P the English private trade suffered heavily in the 1750s as a result of French competition in collusion with Asian merchants. In 1755, therefore, the English began renovating the fortifications in Calcutta without the nawab's permission and in utter defiance of his authority began to offer protection to fugitives from his court. The conflict assumed critical dimensions when Siraj-ud-daula became nawab in 1756 and threatened the lucrative English private trade by stopping all misuse of dastaks. The more immediate issues of discord were the grant of asylum to Krishna Ballabh who was charged with fraud by the nawab and the new fortifications at Calcutta—both of which posed a challenge to the authority of the nawab and were critical to the issue of sovereignty. When the Company failed to listen to warnings, Siraj showed his strength by taking over the factory at Kasimbazar. Governor Drake believed that he could avenge this defeat by force and ignored the nawab's overtures for a diplomatic reconciliation. This was followed by Siraj's attack on Calcutta and its capture on 20 June.

This precipitated a crisis, as Robert Clive now arrived with a strong force from Madras. The English fear about Siraj's friendship with the French and apprehension that their trading privileges would be cut down led to the destruction of Hughli and a French defeat at Chandernagore. Apprehensive of an Afghan attack under Abdali, Siraj now preferred a negotiated settlement; but a confident Clive decided on a coup d'etat. The confident servants of the Company in Calcutta were not prepared to tolerate a young tyrannical nawab threatening to destroy their trading privileges and trying to squeeze out a source of fabulous fortunes.[?] There was already a disaffected faction at the nawab's court, consisting of merchants, bankers, financiers and powerful zamindars, like the Jagat Seth brothers, Mahtab Rai and Swarup Chand, Raja Janki Ram, Rai Durlabh, Raja Ramnarain and Raja Manik Chand, who felt threatened by the assertion of independence by a young nawab enthusiastically trying to reorder the balance of power in his court. There was also a natural communion of interests between the Indian mercantile community and the European traders, as many of the Indian merchants were operating in collaboration with the English Company and private traders, acting as their *dadani* merchants supplying them textiles from the interior in exchange for advances or *dadan*. Many of the Indian

merchant princes had been preferring English ships for carrying their cargo, and this in fact resulted in the gradual decline of the port of Hughli, giving its place of pride to Calcutta.^P So a collusion of the two groups was not unlikely and what followed as a result was a conspiracy to replace Siraj with Mir Jafar, his commander-in-chief, who was the choice of the jagat Seths, without whose support any coup d'etat was virtually impossible. The question whether there was already a conspiracy in existence at the Murshidabad court and the English took advantage of that or it was the English who hatched up the conspiracy—a question over which historians have fought their futile polemical battles—is less important. What is important is the fact that there was a collusion, which resulted in the Battle of Plassey (June 1757), in which Siraj was finally defeated by Clive. It was hardly more than a skirmish, as the largest contingent of the nawabi army remained inactive under Mir Jafar's command. But it had profound political impact, as fugitive Siraj was soon captured and put to death and the new nawab Mir Jafar became a puppet in the hands of the English. The Battle of Plassey (1757) thus marked the beginning of political supremacy of the English East India Company in India.

What followed hereafter is often referred to as the "Plassey plunder". Immediately after the war the English army and navy each received the hefty sums of £275,000 for distribution among their members.¹ Apart from that, between 1757 and 1760, the Company received Rs 22.5 million from Mir Jafar; Clive himself got in 1759 a personal jagir worth £34,567. So far as the Company was concerned, it brought in a major change in the structure of its trade. Prior to 1757 the English trade in Bengal was largely financed through import of bullion from England; but after that year not only bullion import stopped, but bullion was exported from Bengal to China and other parts of India, which gave a competitive advantage to the English Company over its European rivals.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, for the Company officials Plassey opened the gates to make personal fortunes, not only through direct extortion, but also through rampant abuse of dastaks for their private trade. So after some time Mir Jafar found it difficult to meet the financial demands of the Company and was removed from the throne to be replaced by his son-in-law Mir Kasim in October 1760. But conflict arose again over the misuse of trade privileges by the Company's servants. Unable to stop the misuse of dastaks, the new nawab abolished internal duties altogether, so that the Indian merchants could also enjoy the same privilege. The English, however, did not like this display of

independence and as a retaliatory measure, again replaced him with Mir Jafar.

In December 1763 Mir Kasim fled from Bengal and tried to form a grand alliance with the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II and Shuja-ud-daula of Awadh. The emperor was in the region since 1758, when as a crown prince he had fled from the nasty politics of the Delhi court and tried to carve out for himself an independent kingdom in the eastern provinces. In December 1759, hearing about his father's assassination, he proclaimed himself the emperor and appointed Shuja his wazir. When Mir Kasim fled to him for refuge, it was only after long and tortuous negotiations that the two agreed to proceed against the English; Shuja's support was secured after he was promised Bihar and its treasury, along with a payment of Rs 30 million at the successful completion of the mission. But their combined army was routed at the Battle of Buxar (1764), as an eighteenth-century Indian army with its segmentary social organisation was in serious disadvantage against a technically efficient English army with a unitary command. What followed the English victory at Buxar is however more important. The Company treated the defeated Mughal emperor with respect, because of his continuing symbolic significance in eighteenth-century Indian politics. Indeed, not before 1857 the British ever formally repudiated the sovereignty of the Mughal emperor. In return, by the Treaty of Allahabad of 1765, Shah Alam granted the Company the *diwani* (revenue collecting rights) of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa—in other words, absolute control over the lucrative resources of the prosperous Bengal subah. The British Resident posted at the court of Murshidabad hereafter gradually by 1772 became the locus of real administrative power in the province and thus it was in Bengal that the system of indirect rule as a policy of the Company's imperial governance was first initiated.¹⁰⁹ Awadh had to stand the pressure of the Calcutta Council's lack of resources. According to the treaty, Shuja-ud-daula had to pay Rs. 5 million; the nawab and the Company would henceforth defend each other's territories; a British Resident would be posted in his court and the Company would enjoy duty free trading rights in Awadh—a clause which in later years created fresh tensions and prepared the grounds for the annexation of Awadh itself.¹¹⁰

As eastern India thus came under control of the Company by 1765, the context for expansion in the south was provided by the Anglo-French rivalry. The French were the last among the European powers to arrive in India; but they were the first to conceive the ambitious project of building a territorial empire in this subcontinent.

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Their main centre at Pondicherry was founded in 1674 and was raised to great political prominence by Dupleix, the most illustrious French governor general in India. He first became the governor of the French settlement of Chandernagore in Bengal in 1731 and within ten years French trade from this centre increased appreciably. Dupleix was a workaholic, who detested India, but made a personal fortune through involvement in a profitable private trade. In 1742 he got charge of Pondicherry and started working immediately to improve its trade and more significantly, to embark on a political career.' It was he who had first showed the way of intervening in disputes of the Indian rulers and thereby acquiring political control over vast territories'Pe-e technique which was later perfected by the English Company, their main European trading rival in the Indian scene. The outbreak of the Austrian Succession War in Europe in 1740 provided the immediate context for the political conflict between the two European rivals in India. Their hostility in Bengal had been contained by the effective intervention of Alivardi Khan. But in the south, the French position was strengthened by the arrival of a fleet from Mauritius and this resulted in an attack on the English position in Madras. With the surrender of Madras the first Carnatic war began, as the English appealed to the Nawab of Carnatic for protection. The nawab sent a force against the French, but it suffered an ignominious defeat. At this stage the French position was also weakened by the differences between Dupleix and Admiral La Bourdaunais, who returned to Mauritius after surrendering Madras. In September 1746 Dupleix led a second attack on Madras, which capitulated and this was followed by a siege of Fort St. David, a minor English possession to the south of Pondicherry. But before this could drag on any further, the end of hostilities in Europe by the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle brought an end to the first round of Anglo-French conflicts in India as well. The English possessions in India were returned, while the French got back their North American possessions.

Political complexities arising from dynastic feuds in India provided the context for the second round of Anglo-French conflict in the south. The succession disputes at both Carnatic and Hyderabad provided the French Governor General Dupleix an opportunity to intervene in Indian politics and secure thereby important territorial and financial concessions. The French supported Chanda Sahib for the throne of Carnatic and Muzaffar Jung for that of Hyderabad, while the English supported their rival candidates. Both the French candidates emerged victorious and Muzaffar Jung, the new Nizam

of Hyderabad, granted substantial territorial concessions to the French in the form of a jagir in the Northern Sarkars, Masulipatam and some villages around Pondicherry and significant control in his court through the appointment of a French agent. This alarmed the English; a strong force arrived from Calcutta under Robert Clive and the Second Carnatic War began in 1752. The English this time emerged victorious: Clive's occupation of Arcot was followed by the release of Muhammad Ali, who was now placed on the throne of Carnatic,

Dupleix tried to retrieve French position; but the French government became displeased with him, particularly because of the financial losses, and he was recalled in 1754. His failure against the English can be explained in terms of various factors, such as his own wrong moves and miscalculations, the lack of support from the French government and the Company, the French anxiety to retain their possessions in North America and also the fundamental weakness of France *in* colonial struggles, as demonstrated also in later warfare. But the policies of Dupleix and the advantages he had gained in India were not jettisoned immediately. He was replaced by Godeheu, who signed a treaty with the English in 1754. The treaty left the French in possession of territories around Pondicherry and Karikal, important posts in Carnatic, the four Northern Sarkars and controlling influence at the Hyderabad court.!! The French power in the south was thus far from over yet.

The outbreak of the Seven Years' War in Europe between England and France in 1756 provided the context for the third and decisive round of Anglo-French conflict in south India. The French position by now had been significantly weakened by financial difficulties, as even the soldiers remained unpaid for months. The apathy of the French government was shaken at the outbreak of European hostilities and a strong force was dispatched under Count de Lally. Yet the French lost their positions in India one after another: first fell Chandernagore in Bengal; then when Bussy was recalled to help Lally in the Carnatic, the Northern Sarkars were exposed to an attack from Bengal; the fall of the Sarkars together with that of two other old settlements of Masulipatam and Yanam ended French influence in the Deccan. The English fleet returned from Bengal and inflicted heavy losses on the French in August 1758; and all the French strongholds in the Carnatic were lost. Lally's siege of Madras had to be withdrawn and the Nawab of Carnatic paid for the campaign. The most decisive battle of the Third Carnatic War was the battle of Wandiwash in January 1760. In May Pondicherry was

seized and it capitulated in January 1761, once again the Carnatic nawab paying for the campaign. Mahe in Malabar coast and the last two forts in Camatic-Jinji and Thiagar-fell in the same year. The French were now without a toehold in India.

A number of factors can be cited to explain this ultimate and decisive French defeat—e.g., the rashness and arrogance of Lally, who had managed to alienate nearly all the French officers at Pondicherry, the acute shortage of money which hindered military operations, the recall of Bussy from the Deccan and above all, the superiority of the English navy, their ready supply of money and their new self-confidence. By the Peace of Paris in 1763 France got back all the factories and settlements that it possessed in India prior to 1749, with the only proviso that it could not any more fortify Chandernagore.¹¹⁴ But the balance of power in India had by now decisively changed with the steady expansion of power of the English Company. The French East India Company was finally wound up in 1769 and thus was eliminated its main European rival in India. It was now also the *de facto* master of Carnatic, although the Treaty of Paris had assured the nawab his entire possessions. His nominal sovereignty was respected till 1801; then, after the death of the incumbent nawab, his territories were annexed and his heir was pensioned off. Hyderabad too virtually became dependent on the English and the nizam in 1766 gave them the Northern Sarkars in return for military support against his overmighty neighbours. The Anglo-French rivalry by bringing in Crown troops to India in significant numbers considerably enhanced the military power of the English East India Company vis-a-vis the other Indian states. The balance of power in India had now begun to tilt decisively in its favour.

This brings us to the question of the Company's relationship with the other Indian rulers. The Indian states in the eighteenth century were perpetually involved in mutual conflicts. Their urge for territorial expansion was for gaining control over new resources, because internally in many areas a limit had been reached for extraction of fresh revenue. Politically each one was trying to establish supremacy over others and the English were looked upon as a new force in this power game. Combining as a nation against an alien power was beyond the imagination of the Indian princes in the eighteenth century political context. It was no wonder, therefore, that often they entered into diplomatic alliances with the Company in order to turn the balance of power in their favour in their contests against neighbours. This rivalry between the Indian states offered an opportunity, while commercial interests provided a sufficient motivation for

English intervention in local politics. However, as the following story would suggest, the Company was not just responding to opportunities, as suggested by some historians; it was also showing great deal of initiative in creating those opportunities to intervene and conquer, as insecure frontiers or unstable states were often construed as threats to free flow of trade. It is true that for a short period after the passage of the Pitt's India Act in 1784 there was parliamentary prohibition on imperial expansion, and the major thrust of the policy of the Board of Control and the East India Company during this time was to protect British possessions and promote trading interests through a careful balance of power between the Indian states, thus reducing imperial military liabilities. But that cautious policy was jettisoned when Lord Wellesley arrived as governor general in 1798, with a dream of conquest and a lust for personal glory. The policy of balance of power no longer worked in India, he decided even before arriving in the country, and so what was needed was empire. Napoleonic invasion of Egypt in the summer of 1798 offered him a useful tool to soften London's resistance to expansion, although he never believed for a moment that there was any danger of a French invasion of British India either over land from Egypt or a naval attack round the Cape of Good Hope. However, to assuage London's concerns he evolved the policy of 'Subsidiary Alliance', which would only establish control over the internal affairs of an Indian state, without incurring any direct imperial liability. Wellesley's personal agenda for expansion was also buttressed by a change of personnel in the Anglo-Indian diplomatic service favouring such a forward policy. As Edward Ingram has argued, Wellesley was "not formulating a policy in response to local conditions but trying to create the conditions necessary for the attainment of his objectives.... If Indian politics were turbulent, he described them as threatening, if they were tranquil, he ruffled them." However, authorities in London were not gullible or innocent observers in this imperial drama either. They sanctioned all the aggressive moves in pursuance of the most important objective of British foreign policy since 1784, i.e. protecting British India against all threats from its European rivals. Wellesley was recalled in 1805 only when his wars of conquest landed the Company's administration in India in a serious financial crisis.^{11.5}

Within this context, it does not become difficult to understand why the political power of Mysore under Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan appeared to be a security threat to the English position in Madras and in the Carnatic. In course of a few years, Mysore's boundaries

had stretched from the Krishna in the north to the Malabar coast in the west, which inevitably brought it into conflict with its Indian neighbours, notably Hyderabad and the Marathas. And the two were often in collusion with the English, who suspected Mysore's friendship with the French. But this threat perception was more an "illusion" than real, as there was now very little chance of a possible French revival in India or a French attack from outside.¹¹⁶ Mysore's control over the rich trade of the Malabar coast was also seen as a threat to English trade in pepper and cardamom. In 1785 Tipu declared an embargo on export of pepper, sandalwood and cardamom through the ports within his kingdom; in 1788 he explicitly forbade dealings with English traders. The interests of the private Company merchants now inevitably dictated a policy of direct political intervention to protect their commercial interests.¹¹⁷ But most significantly, Tipu Sultan was trying to build in Mysore a strong centralised and militarised state, with ambitious territorial designs and a political aspiration to control south Indian politics. This made him the most potent danger to the as yet vulnerable Company state in the south. Young army officers like Thomas Munro and Alexander Read could see that the "mercantilist state" of Mysore represented the same kind of hegemonic ambition as those of the Company state in the south and therefore could never be relied upon in any arrangement of indirect rule based on the principle of balance of power among the Indian states. Hence, although the civilian administration in Madras vacillated, they concurred with Governor Generals Lord Cornwallis and later Lord Wellesley that Mysore needed to be eliminated.¹¹⁸

There were four rounds of battle (1767-69, 1780-84, 1790-92, and 1799) between the Company and Mysore, before the latter could be finally taken over in 1799. In the first Anglo-Mysore War, the Marathas and the nizam were with the British against Haidar Ali; in the second, they joined hands with Haidar against the British. But again the two powers sided with the British in 1790 when the latter under Lord Cornwallis declared war on Tipu Sultan who had lately attacked their ally, the Raja of Travancore. At the end of this war the Company annexed Dindigul, Baramahal and Malabar. A few years later, the spectre of a French resurgence and Tipu's secret negotiations with them gave a pretext to Lord Wellesley to move decisively for the final round of colonial aggression. In 1799 Srirangapatnam, the capital of Mysore, fell to the Company, while Tipu died defending it. Mysore, then once again placed under the former Wodeyar dynasty, was brought under the 'Subsidiary Alliance' system of Lord Wellesley. This meant an end to the independent state of

Mysore. Under this system, it would not henceforth enter into any relationship with other European powers; a contingent of Company army would be stationed in Mysore and the provision for its maintenance would come from its treasury. Part of Mysore territory was given to the nizarn who had already accepted a 'Subsidiary Alliance'; and parts of it, such as Wynad, Coimbatore, Canara and Sunda, were directly annexed by the Company.

Meanwhile, the sudden growth of the Company's cotton trade with China through Bombay from Gujarat made them concerned about the security of Deccan, then under the control of the Maratha confederacy. A succession dispute provided the first opportunity for intervention, as Raghunath Rao, who had his nephew Peshwa Narayan Rao killed in a conspiracy, now faced combined opposition of the Maratha sardars and began to look at the British in Bombay as a possible new ally. In March 1775 Raghunath Rao's forces were defeated in Gujarat, and a combined British army from Madras and Bombay arrived in his rescue. An inconclusive treaty of Purandar in 1776 offered a number of concessions to the Company in return for its withdrawal of support for Raghunath Rao. But the treaty was not ratified by the authorities at Bengal and war was resumed again in 1777. By now the Maratha forces had regrouped under Nana Fadnis, Sindhia and Holkar and inflicted a crushing defeat on the British at Wadgaon (1779). The latter however got the revenue of southern Gujarat, as a strong contingent arriving from Bengal forced the Gaikwad to surrender it. This was the period that witnessed the rise of Nana Fadnis to the political centre-stage of the Maratha polity. By 1781 he and the Bhonsle family had formed a grand alliance with the nizarn and Haidar Ali against the British. But the inconclusive First Anglo-Maratha War came to an end in 1782 through the Treaty of Salbai, which committed the Marathas once again to friendship with the Company and also to a confrontation with Mysore.

The Maratha state was, however, in a deplorable condition by now, due to the bitter internal rivalry between the sardars. Nana Fadnis had made the peshwa virtually powerless. In 1795 the frustrated peshwa committed suicide and the succession dispute that followed put the entire Maratha polity into utter confusion. The new peshwa Baji Rao II wanted to get rid of Fadnis and sought allies in different quarters. With the latter's death in 1800 the confusion deepened even further. While Daulat Rao Sindhia supported the peshwa, the Holkar's army started plundering his territories in Malwa. A desperate peshwa once again looked at the Company for help. In the meanwhile, with the arrival of Wellesley, there had also

been a remarkable change in British attitudes towards the Indian states: Hyderabad, as we have already seen, had accepted a 'Subsidiary Alliance' and Mysore was crushed in 1799. So, this brought the Company face to face with the Marathas, the only remaining significant indigenous power in the subcontinent. After Holkar's army defeated the peshwa's forces and plundered Poona in October 1802, the peshwa fled to the British in Basscin and in 1803 was obliged to sign a 'Subsidiary Alliance'. Surat was handed over to the Company, while the peshwa agreed to pay for a British army and consult a British Resident stationed in his court. Hereafter, Bajji Rao was escorted to Poona and installed in office; but this did not mean an immediate end to independent Maratha power.

This in fact marked the beginning of the Second Anglo-Maratha War (1803-5), as Holkar soon put up a rival candidate for peshwaship and looked for allies. Lord Wellesley and Lord Lake on the other hand fielded a large army and for the next two years battle continued at different fronts across the Maratha territories. In the end, treaties of subordination were imposed on a number of tributaries of the Marathas, like the Rajput states, the jars, the Rohillas and the Bundellas in northern Malwa. Orissa was taken control of, while the treaty with the Sindhia secured the British all his territories north of Jamuna including Delhi and Agra, all his possessions in Gujarat and claims over the other Maratha houses. The treaty also forbade other Europeans from accepting service in any Maratha army and made the British arbiters in any dispute between the Maratha houses. But even this did not mean the final demise of the Maratha power!

The wars, on the other hand, meant huge expenses for the Company, and the Court of Directors, already dissatisfied with the forward policy of Lord Wellesley, recalled him in 1805. Lord Cornwallis was reappointed as the governor general in India with specific instructions to follow a policy of non-intervention. This allowed the Maratha sardars, like Holkar and Sindhia, to regain some of their power, while their irregular soldiers, known as the Pindaris, plundered the countryside in Malwa and Rajasthan. The situation continued for some time till the arrival of Lord Hastings as the governor general in 1813. He initiated the new policy of "paramountcy", which privileged the interests of the Company as a paramount power over those of other powers in India and to protect such interests the Company could legitimately annex or threaten to annex the territories of any Indian state.¹¹⁹ Peshwa Bajji Rao II around this time made a desperate last attempt to regain his independence from the

English by rallying the Maratha chiefs. This led to the Third Anglo-Maratha War (1817-19) in which Holkar's army and the Pindaris were thoroughly crushed; the British took complete control over the peshwa's dominions and peshwaship itself was abolished. Significant parts of the territories of Bhonsle and Holkar were also ceded to the Company, while they entered into alliance of subordination. The English East India Company had now complete mastery over all the territories south of the Vindhya.

In north India too there had been by now significant acquisition of territories. Ever since the victory at Buxar and the Treaty of Allahabad, Awadh was serving as a buffer state between the Company's position in Bengal and the turbulent politics in north India, particularly imperilled by Maratha depredations. British strategic interests in Awadh were secured by the stationing of a Resident at the court of Lucknow in 1773 and the positioning of a permanent British garrison in Awadh, to be paid for by Nawab Shuja-ud-daula through the payment of a subsidy. Soon, however, this became a contentious issue, as the amount of subsidy demanded by the Company increased gradually. To meet this increasing demand, the nawab had to impose more taxes, which soured his relationship with the taluqdars. This was the prime reason for more political instability in the state, which eventually became a pretext for direct annexation. Warren Hastings, who became the governor general in 1774, had first argued that the best way to ensure regular payment of the subsidy was to annex those territories of Awadh whose revenues were equal to the amount of subsidy. Distraught by the French and Mysore wars, the Company's desperate need for money at this stage was amply revealed in the demands imposed on Chait Singh of Banaras, his inability to pay and his subsequent deposition in August 1781. The crisis was also manifested in the bizarre saga of extortion, under direct instruction from Warren Hastings, from the Begums of Awadh, who still controlled the treasures of Shuja, ostensibly to pay the mounting debt of the nawab to the Company.

So annexation of Awadh was clearly on the cards for quite some time and Wellesley gave it a concrete shape in 1801, when the nawab expressed his apprehension that he might not be able to pay the subsidy. There were other reasons too. Ever since the Treaty of Allahabad, Nawab Shuja-ud-daula had been complaining about the rampant abuse of the Company's duty free trading rights by the European private traders and their Indian *gomustahs*. The Company's authorities only half-heartedly tried to control it, as it was beyond their power to retrain these merchants. Moreover, Awadh

had become crucially important for expanding British seaborne trade from Bengal. In the last decade of the eighteenth century, there was an expanding demand for indigo in London, and about three-fifths of its total export from India came from Awadh. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Awadh raw cotton became another chief item of supply to China market to keep the imperial balance of trade in favour of Britain.¹²¹ In this context, the high rate of taxes imposed by the nawab on exports from Awadh even after the treaty of 1788, signed during the time of Lord Cornwallis to ensure "free trade", was certainly an irritant.¹²² Annexation seemed imminent when with the arrival of Lord Wellesley there was a clear tilt in Company's policies in favour of vigorous expansion.

The first opportunity for intervention was provided in 1797 by the death of Nawab Asaf-ud-daula, who had succeeded Shuja in 1775. The English refused to recognise the claim of his son to succeed and put the late nawab's brother Saadat Ali Khan on the throne. As a price, the latter agreed to transfer a few territories and pay a staggering annual subsidy of Rs. 7.6 million. Yet, this did not solve the problem, as the new nawab, though willing to pay subsidy, was not prepared to accept British interference in his administration. In 1801, Wellesley, therefore, sent his brother Henry to impose on him a treaty, which resulted in the annexation of half of Awadh as a permanent payment of the subsidy. In real terms, this amounted to the cession of Rohilkhand, Gorakhpur and the Doab, which yielded a gross revenue of Rs. 13,523,475—almost double the amount of the subsidy!" Wellesley justified his action in terms of high moral argument, i.e., to save Awadh from incurably bad native administration;¹²⁴ but it is difficult to separate this issue from the revenue and commercial demands of imperialism.¹²⁵ What is more significant, the problem did not end there. The arrangement of 1801 did not end British extortion, though it was meant to be a final payment of subsidy. The office of the Residency in Lucknow gradually developed into an alternative centre of power within Awadh, fabricating its own constituency of courtiers, administrators and landlords, bought off with various kinds of favours and extra-territorial protection. The Resident thus systematically isolated the nawab undermined his political and moral authority and reduced his military capabilities.¹²⁶ When Lord Dalhousie finally annexed the remainder of Awadh in 1856 on grounds of misgovernment, it was only a logical culmination of a long-drawn out process.

The only other major power now left in north India were the Sikhs of Punjab. The consolidation of Sikh power had taken place

under Ranjit Singh in the late eighteenth century (1795-98). During his lifetime there was no major tension with the British; but after his death Punjab became politically unstable. A number of people ascended the throne in quick succession and the whole region was plunged into prolonged and bloody succession battles. But what contributed to these family feuds and court conspiracies was the breakdown of the delicate balance of power that Ranjit Singh had carefully maintained between the hereditary Sikh chieftains and the upstarts, and between the Punjabi and Dogra nobles from Jammu in the royal court. Corruption in the bureaucracy and the internecine strife among the sardars put the Punjab economy into shambles. In the countryside, revenue demands increased after 1839 due to the rise in the cost of the army, resulting in zarnindar resistance to revenue collection. On the other hand, the kardars increased their extortion of the landed zarnindars and continued to defraud the central treasury. The developments only encouraged centrifugal tendencies within the Punjabi society.¹²⁷ The commercial classes were disenchanted by political disruptions and the whole situation offered opportunities to the British to intervene.

To tell the story briefly, when Ranjit Singh died in 1839, he had nominated his son Kharak Singh to be his successor. He was not known to be a very able administrator and became dependent on his Dogra wazir Raja Dhian Singh. The relationship was initially cordial, but soon the maharaja tried to clip his wazir's wings by patronising the anti-Dogra faction in his court. But the wazir fought back, allied himself with the maharaja's son Nao Nihal Singh, but before this could go much further, Kharak Singh died in 1840, followed immediately by the death of his son in an accident. Now the throne was contested by Sher Singh, one of the six living princes, and Maharani Chand Kaur, the widow of Kharak Singh, who laid a claim on behalf of her unborn grandchild to be born to Nihal Singh's widowed wife. In this contest Sher Singh was supported by the Dogra faction, while the Maharani's claim was upheld by the Sindhanwalia chieftains, who were collaterals of the royal family. Both the candidates appealed to the Company for support, but the latter decided not to interfere. Sher Singh ultimately became the maharaja through a bizarre conspiracy hatched by the Dogras, and once again became dependent on the overnighry Dogra wazir, Raja Dhian Singh. However, as it had happened earlier, after a short while the maharaja sought to reduce the power of his wazir and began to align with his adversaries in the court, like the Sindhanwalias and other hereditary chiefs. But the strategy backfired, as the Sindhanwalias now had

their revenge by getting him murdered in 1843 along with his son, and also wazir Dhian Singh. But soon the table was turned again by the latter's son Raja Hira Singh Dogra, who won over a section of the army, destroyed the Sindhanwalias and put up Ranjit Singh's youngest son five year old Dalip Singh on the throne, with himself taking on the wazir's office.

Palace intrigues and rivalries among the sardars did not end there. But now the Khalsa army became a power unto itself and began to control Punjabi politics. During Sher Singh's reign the army had established regimental committees or *panchayats*, which had direct access to the maharaja. These panchayats now began to demand more and more concessions from the darbar, and Hira Singh could survive only by making larger grants to the army. But this could not go on for long as anti-Dogra sentiments began to rise among the army and the hereditary chieftains. Hira Singh was assassinated in December 1844, whereupon Dalip Singh's mother Maharani Jindan became the Regent and her brother Sardar Jawahir Singh became the wazir; but he remained for all practical purposes a puppet in the hands of the army. It was this political rise of the Khalsa army, its new experiments with democratic republicanism, and the prospect of there being no stable government in Lahore that made the British concerned about Punjab. In the early nineteenth century the Company wanted to maintain the Sikh state as a buffer between its north Indian possessions on the one end and the Muslim powers in Persia and Afghanistan on the other. But continuous political instability made that scheme unworkable and so many in the early 1840s began to think of the inevitability of an Anglo-Sikh confrontation. Preparations for this on the British side began in 1843, and as the situation did not stabilise, and when Jawahir Singh was executed by the army in September 1845, Lord Hardinge decided that the time for a showdown had arrived. He declared war on the state of Lahore on 13 December 1845 and the first Anglo-Sikh war began.!"

Failure of leadership and treachery of some of the sardars led to the defeat of the formidable Sikh army. The humiliating treaty of Lahore in March 1846 resulted in the English annexation of Jalandhar Doab; Kashmir was given to Raja Ghulab Singh Dogra of Jammu, as a reward for his allegiance to the Company. The size of the Lahore army was reduced, and an English army was stationed there. Dalip Singh was to retain his throne, but was to be advised and guided by an English Resident. Another treaty in December removed Maharani Jindan from the position of Regent, formed a Regency Council and gave the English Resident at Lahore extensive

authority to direct and control the activities of every department of state. But the ultimate British aim was full annexation of Punjab, which was achieved by Governor General Lord Dalhousie after the victory in the Second Anglo-Sikh War in 1849. The immediate pretext for aggression was the rebellion of two Sikh governors, Diwan Mui Raj of Multan and Sardar Chartar Singh Atariwala and his son Raja Sher Singh of Haripur. In the first two rounds of battle at Ramnagar in November 1848 and at Chillianwala in January 1849, the British suffered heavy losses. But this was soon reversed in February-March, as the rebel sardars surrendered one after another. On 29 March 1849 Maharaja Dalip Singh signed the document of annexation; Punjab hereafter became a province of the East India Company's empire in India.^{P?}

Other parts of India were also gradually coming under direct or indirect control of the Company during the nineteenth century, as empire itself-or more precisely, the security of the empire-became an argument justifying further imperial expansion. The authorities in India, particularly the military establishment, continually anticipated dangers from outside as well as from within to the security of the Indian empire, and the best guarantee of security they believed was a vigorous display of the power of the sword. This argument swept aside all the cautionary attitudes that the Company directors in London might have had against further territorial aggression. Lord Amherst came to India as governor general with a clear mandate to ensure peace and eschew expensive imperial wars, but came to face a growing crisis with Burma in the northeastern borders of Bengal. The Burmese monarchy had been showing expansionary tendencies since the second half of the eighteenth century, when it subjugated Pegu, Tenasserim and Arakan and then in the early years of the nineteenth century extended its influence in Manipur, Cachar and finally Assam. These moves in the past did not always lead to annexation and so the earlier governors general chose to ignore them. But in 1822-23 the Anglo-Indian military elite began to argue, after a lull in imperial warfare for about six years, that the internal enemies of the empire were drawing encouragement from the audacious incursions of the Burmese. So the Burmese needed to be treated a lesson, preferably through a vigorous display of power.^{P?} Hence in 1824-28 began the Company's First Burma War, which brought the annexation of Assam and Nagaland in northeastern India as well as Arakan and Tenasserim in Lower Burma. In 1830 Cachar was added to Company's territory; Coorg was later annexed in 1834 by Lord Bentinck.

If Burma was a threat in the northeast, Russo-phobia before and after the Crimean War (1854-56) provided a prime motive for British expansion towards the northwest. Lord Auckland fought the first Afghan War in 1838-42 to install indirect rule by restoring a deposed king on the Afghan throne; and Lord Ellenborough took over Sind in 1843. However, it was during the time of Lord Dalhousie (1848-56) that expansionist tendencies became most manifest during Company's regime. By using his "Doctrine of Lapse", i.e., the policy of annexing the territories of Indian rulers who died without a male heir, he took over Satara (1848), Sambalpur and Baghat (1850), Udaipur (1852), Nagpur (1853) and Jhansi (1854). The Second Burma War (1852-53) resulted in the annexation of Pegu, while in 1853 he took over Berar from Hyderabad to secure the payment of subsidy for the Company's army. Thus by 1857 the Company had annexed about 63 per cent of the territories of the Indian subcontinent and had subordinated over 78 per cent of its population.¹ The remaining territories were left in charge of Indian princes, who were relied upon after 1858 for ensuring the loyalty of their people to the British Raj. Its policies by now had shifted from those of annexation to that of indirect rule.² Quite often, however, the princely states had to experience intensive British intervention, although formally no more annexation occurred (see chapter 2.4 for more details on princely states and indirect rule).

To sum up our discussion, whether intended by the government at home or crafted by the East India Company's servants on the spot—supposedly sucked into a career of conquest by the political crisis of eighteenth century India—the link between commercial and political expansion is not difficult to discern in the story of imperialism in India in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By way of identifying the continuities in British imperial history, Gallagher and Robinson (1953) argued that the British policy should be summed up as "trade with informal control if possible; trade with rule when necessary". It may be pointed out, however, that differences between such analytical categories are rather dubious; it was from attempts to secure trade benefits through informal control that the necessity to secure direct rule arose more often. The considerable growth of private trade and the expansion of the activities of free merchants had been dependent on the growth of British power and this created possibilities of conflict. Indian rulers were constantly pressurised to grant immunities and concessions and in the end, such successive demands corroded the authority of the Indian states. It was possible for the Company to effectively exert pressure because of the rivalry among the Indian rulers and factionalism within their courts, which

prevented the formation of a joint front. The dream of Nana Fadnis to forge a confederacy of Indian princes pitted against British power never really actualised.¹³³

Thus for the Company, commerce provided the will to conquer and the political disunity provided the opportunity; now there was the question of capacity to conquer an empire. In spite of the Mughal decline, the successor states were not weak, though in terms of military organisation and technology, their armies were backward in comparison with the European forces. The Anglo-French rivalry brought in Crown troops to India at an unprecedented scale and this increased British military power, indicating a greater positive input of the metropolis in the affairs of the Indian empire. But what was more significant, the Company at this stage decided to raise its own army in India, to be disciplined and commanded by European officers. The size of this Company army steadily increased, giving it a decisive military edge over its political adversaries. On the other hand, the new army itself became a reason for fresh demands on the Indian rulers and hence the perpetual tension about the amount and payment of subsidies. The Company's obsession with stable frontiers, as a necessary precondition for smooth operation of trade, was another motivation behind conquest, as one annexation brought them to more unstable frontiers, which necessitated more conquests. However, it was also the army establishment—that devoured the largest share of the Indian revenues—which deliberately created and reinforced such an environment of scare that continually anticipated threats to the security of the empire either from an allegedly militarised Indian society or from outside. Conquest therefore became a self-perpetuating and self-legitimising process, justifying the maintenance of a vast military establishment (for more on the army, see chapter 2.4).

The success of the East India Company also depended on its capacity to mobilise greater resources than its rivals. The soldiers fighting at the frontline for the Company's army were better fed and regularly paid in contrast to those servicing the Mughal successor states. The Indian bankers who controlled and transferred large sums of money through hundis, seemed to have been preferring the Company as a more trustworthy creditor than the unstable Indian princes.^P The Company gradually reduced this dependence and turned it upside down by establishing control over the revenue resources, which became vital for financing trade as well as further conquests. Revenue considerations got the Company involved in administration and thus there was the progression from military

ascendancy to dominion of territory-from indirect rule to direct annexation. This approximates closely to the point made by Cain and Hopkins about the primacy of revenue in the functioning of British imperialism in India. The politically emerging alliance at home between land and money, they argue, created the notion of power being centred in land and hence the preoccupation of the Company-state with "the need to raise revenue as well as to keep order", which determined the course of much of the later annexations and consolidation of British rule in India.^{P!} The consanguinity between revenue, commerce and military exigencies in the process of British imperial expansion in India is a point too obvious to miss; it is futile to debate over their relative importance. It is also difficult to deny that from the late eighteenth century the colonial state was being fashioned by the ideologies and values of Georgian England, using state power to garner the fruits of capitalism, to protect the liberal benefits of freedom of trade or right to property and to secure markets for commodities at home and abroad.^{Ps} Both at ideational and functional levels, the pressures from the periphery and the interests of the metropole worked in conjunction in conquering and administering the empire in India. It is in the next chapter that we will discuss in more detail how these political debates in England actually informed the modes of imperial governance in India.

NOTES

1. Richards 1993: 282.
2. Pearson 1976.
3. Athar AH 1966.
4. Qaisar 1965.
5. Chandra 1973: xiv.
6. Athar Ali 1975.
7. Malik 1977.
8. Chandra 1993.
9. Raychaudhuri 1982.
10. Hasan 1969.
11. Richards 1976.
12. Alam 1974.
13. Richards 1975.
14. Alam 1974.
15. Siddiqi 1973.
16. Alam and Subrahmanyam 1998: 59, 68.
17. Alam 1986.

18. Eaton 1993.
19. Richards 1993: 295-96.
20. Bayly 1983.
21. Wink 1986: 27, 34 and passim.
22. Perlin 1985: 435, 452 and passim.
23. Alam 1986.
24. Bayly 1987: 9.
25. Alam 1991: 68.
26. See Wink-Habib debate in *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 1989, 26 (1): 363-72.
27. Athar Ali 1993: 703-6.
28. See Karim 1963 for details.
29. Calkins 1970.
30. Sinha 1962.
31. For more on trade see Prakash 1976, 1988; Chaudhury 1995 and Subramanian 2001.
32. Calkins 1970; Marshall 1987.
33. Calkins 1970: 805.
34. See Subramanian 2001; for an opposing view Chaudhury 1995.
35. Marshall 1987: 75 and passim.
36. Leonard 1971: 575 and passim.
37. Barnett 1980: 40.
38. See Barnett 1980 for details.
39. See Gordon 1993 for details.
40. Wink 1986: 115-29.
41. Das Gupta 1979.
42. Jagadish N. Sarkar 1976.
43. For more details on the Marathas see Gordon 1993.
44. See Perlin 1985: 450-64.
45. Wink 1986: 31-33, 154.
46. Gordon 1993: 145.
47. McLeod 1968.
48. Singh 1963: 1.
49. McLeod 1976.
50. Oberoi 1994: 66-69.
51. Grewal 1990.
52. Alam 1986: 134-55.
53. Oberoi 1994: 73.
54. See Grewal 1990 for details.
55. See Banga 1978 for details.
56. Oberoi 1994: 86, 90.
57. Major 1996: 30-31.
58. Bayly 1987: 22, 152.
59. Kolff 1990: 32-37, 58.
60. Ibid: 58, 71 and passim.
61. Zicglar 1998: 257-64
62. Vidal 1997: 46-47.

63. Peabody 1996: 206.
64. Arhar Ali 1961.
65. Chandra 1993.
66. Stein 1985.
67. Habib 2000: xxi-xxiii.
68. Stein 1985: 392-93, 402-5.
69. Quoted in Sheik Ali 2000: 64.
70. Habib 2000: xxxv and *passim*; also see Stein 1985: 403.
71. Brittlebank 1997: 73.
72. Das Gupta 1967.
73. Alam and Subrahmanyam 1998: 26.
74. Jeffrey 1994: xviii-xix.
75. Alam 1986.
76. Eaton 1993: 312.
77. See Chakrabarry 1985 for details.
78. Robinson 2001: 14 and *passim*.
79. Eaton 1978: 290-91.
80. See Habib 1999.
81. Leonard 1979.
82. Bayly 1987: 11.
83. Marshall 1998: 498.
84. Marshall 1975a.
85. Marshall 1998: 506.
86. Bayly 1989: 10.
87. For more on this concept, see Gallagher and Robinson 1961.
88. Chaudhuri 1978.
89. Hunter 1899-1900, 1: 256.
90. Lawson 1993: 49.
91. Keay 1991: 131.
92. *Ibid.*
93. Lawson 1993: 47-48.
94. *Ibid.*: 50-51.
95. Keay 1991: 182.
96. Cain and Hopkins 1993: 323-24.
97. Sen 1998: 80, 126-27.
98. Fisher 1993: 13.
99. Cain and Hopkins 1993: 321.
100. Lawson 1993: 45.
101. Watson 1980.
102. See Marshall 1976: 109-12; Sen 1998: 79-81.
103. Lawson 1993: 66-70 and *passim*.
104. Chaudhury 2000: 80 and *passim*.
105. *Ibid.*; Marshall 1987: 91.
106. See Subramanian 2001.
107. Marshall 1976: 165.
108. Gupta 1962.
109. Fisher 1991: 50.

110. Barnett 1980; Fisher 1991: 378.
111. Gardner 1971: 54-55.
112. Sen 1971: 27.
113. See Sen 1971 for details.
114. See *ibid* for details.
115. For a detailed discussion on Wellesley, see Ingram 1981: 115-91; quotation from 117-18.
116. Sen 1971: 23.
117. See Nightingale 1970.
118. Stein 1989: 19, 24, 349.
119. Fisher 1993: 19.
120. See Gordon 1993 for details.
121. Mukherjee 1982.
122. Marshall 1975b.
123. Barnett 1980.
124. Marshall 1975b.
125. Mukherjee 1982.
126. Fisher 1991: 384-86.
127. For details see Major 1996: 53-57.
128. For more details, see *ibid*: 40-74.
129. For details, see Singh 1966: 2; Grewal 1990.
130. For this argument see Peers 1995: 149-53.
131. Details in Fisher 1993: 21-24 and *passim*.
132. Metcalf 1965.
133. Ray 1998: 519-20.
134. Subramanian 1995.
135. Cain and Hopkins 1993: 321-28.
136. Sen 1998: 130.