

Eighteenth-Century Political Formation

Some Important Terms

1. **Ijaradars:** Revenue farmers.
2. **Dal Khalsa:** The Sikhs combined forces known as grand army often called Dal Khalsa.
3. **Jathas:** The Sikhs organised themselves into a number of bands called jathas.
4. **Deshmukhs:** Powerful warrior families.
5. **Kunbis:** They were peasant-pastoralists.
6. **Chauth:** 25 per cent of the land revenue claimed by zamindars. In the Deccan this was collected by the Marathas.
7. **Sardeshmukhi:** 9-10 per cent of the land revenue paid to the head revenue collector in the Deccan.
8. **Sardars:** They were Maratha chiefs.

Textbook Exercises

LET'S RECALL

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| (i) subedar | (a) a revenue farmer |
| (ii) faujdar | (b) a high noble |
| (iii) ijaradars | (c) provincial governor |
| (iv) misl | (d) Maratha peasant warriors |
| (v) chauth | (e) a Mughal military commander |
| (vi) kunbis | (f) a band of Sikh warriors |
| (vii) umara | (g) tax levied by the Marathas |

Ans. (i)-(c), (ii)-(e), (iii)-(a), (iv)-(f), (v)-(d), (vi)-(b).

2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Aurangzeb fought a protracted war in the
- (b) Umara and jagirdar constituted powerful sections of the Mughal
- (c) Asaf Jah was given charge of the Deccan subadari in
- (d) The founder of the Awadh nawabi was

Ans. (a) Deccan (b) nobility (c) 1724 (d) Sa'adat Khan.

3. State whether true or false:

- (a) Nadir Shah invaded Bengal.
- (b) Sawai Raja Jai Singh was the ruler of Indore.
- (c) Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.
- (d) Poona became the capital of the Marathas in the eighteenth century.

Ans. (a) false (b) false (c) true (d) true

4. What were the offices held by Sa'adat Khan?

Ans. Sa'adat Khan held the combined offices of subadari, diwani and faujdari. In other words, he was responsible for managing the political, financial and military affairs of the province of Awadh.

LET'S DISCUSS

5. Why did the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal try to do away with the jagirdari system?

Ans. The Mughal emperors appointed jagirdars to collect revenue under the jagirdari system. The Nawab of Awadh and Bengal abolished emperor-appointed jagirdars in order to establish their control over the revenue department. It was therefore they tried to do away with the jagirdari system.

6. How were Sikhs organised in the eighteenth century?

Ans. Guru Gobind Singh fought several battles against the Rajput and Mughal rulers both before and after the institution of the Khalsa in 1699. After his death the Khalsa rose in revolt against the Mughal authority under the leadership of Banda Bahadur. The Khalsa declared their sovereign rule and established their own administration between the Sutlej and the Jamuna. Banda Bahadur was captured in 1715 and executed in 1716. Under a number of able leaders in the eighteenth century the Sikhs organised themselves into a number of bands called jathas and later on misls.

7. Why did the Marathas want to expand beyond the Deccan?

Ans. By the 1730s, the Maratha king was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula. After this success the Marathas' will power was at its height. They now wanted to expand beyond the Deccan.

8. What were the policies adopted by Asaf Jah to strengthen his position?

Ans. In order to strengthen his position Asaf Jah brought skilled soldiers and administrators from northern India who welcomed the new opportunities in the south. He appointed mansabdar's and granted jagirs. Although he was still a servant of the Mughal emperor, he ruled quite independently without seeking any direction from Delhi or facing any interference.

9. Do you think merchants and bankers today have the kind of influence they had in the eighteenth century?

Ans. Yes, merchants and bankers today have the kind of influence they had in the eighteenth century. We can mention the example of Reliance India Company. The company has entered into the electricity distribution in Delhi. It has installed new electric meters. These electric meters run much faster than the previous meters enhancing the problems of the common man. The state government pays no attention towards it.

10. Did any of the kingdoms mentioned in this chapter develop in your state? If so, in what ways do you think life in the state would have been different in the 18th century from what it is in the twenty-first century?

Ans. Attempt yourself.

LET'S DO

11. Find out more about the architecture and culture associated with the new courts of any of the following; Awadh, Bengal or Hyderabad.

Ans. Architecture and culture reached at its height under the Awadh rule. Kathak, Khayal, Thumri, Dadra, Qawali, Ghazals were given great importance. The legacy of the exquisite embroidery can be seen even today. In the Awadh architecture we can see notice the fusion of the accidental and the oriental style. There are several attractions which attract tourist attentions.

(i) Sa'adat Ali's Tomb: The twin maqbaras of Sa'adat Ali Khan and Khurshid Zadi, near Begum Hazrat Mahal Park, are good examples of Awadh architecture. The proportionate domes with elegant kiosks and above all, well-balanced architectural design makes them very beautiful and attractive.

(ii) Lakshman Tila: It contains the famous Alamgiri. Mosque built by Sultan Alt, Governor of the province of Awadh during the rule of Aurangzeb. The mosque is known for its outstanding symmetry of form and sobriety of decoration.

(iii) Bara Imambara: It was built by Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula in 1784. It was built to provide food to the famine stricken subjects of the Nawab. The monument is simple in style.

(iv) Rumi Darwaza: It leads to the outer section of the Bara Imambara. It is believed that it resembles one of the gates of Constantinople. It is a good example of Awadh architecture.

12. Collect popular tales about rulers from any one of the following groups of people: the Rajputs, Jats, Sikhs or Marathas.

Ans. Do it yourself with the help of your teacher.