

Eighteenth-Century Political Formations

Q1. Match the following:

Subadar	a revenue farmer
faujdar	a high noble
ijaradar	provincial governor
misl	Maratha peasant warriors
Chauth	a Mughal military commander
kunbis	a band of Sikh warriors
umara	tax levied by the Marathas

Answer:

Subadar	provincial governor
faujdar	a Mughal military commander
ijaradar	a revenue farmer
misl	a band of Sikh warriors
Chauth	tax levied by the Marathas
kunbis	Maratha peasant warriors
umara	a high noble

Q2. Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Aurangzeb fought a protracted war in the _____.
- (b) Umara and jagirdars constituted powerful sections of the Mughal _____.
- (c) Asaf Jah founded the Hyderabad state in _____.
- (d) The founder of the Awadh state was _____.

Answer:

- (a) Aurangzeb fought a protracted war in the **Deccan**.
- (b) Umara and jagirdars constituted powerful sections of the Mughal **administration**.
- (c) Asaf Jah founded the Hyderabad state in **1724**.
- (d) The founder of the Awadh state was **Burhan-ul-mulk-Sa'adat Khan**.

Q3. 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.

Answer:

- (a) False
- (b) False
- (c) True
- (d) True

Q4. What were the offices held by Sa'adat Khan?

Answer: Sa'adat Khan held the combined offices of subadari, diwani and faujdar. In fact, he was responsible for managing the political, financial and military affairs of the province of Awadh.

Q5. Why did the Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal try to do away with the jagirdari system?

Answer:

- The Nawabs of Awadh and Bengal tried to remove the Jagirdari system to reduce Mughals exert influence in the regions by reducing the number of officeholders (jagirdars) appointed by the Mughals.
- He also reduced the size of the manor, and appointed his own loyal servants to vacant positions. The accounts of the Jagirdars were checked to prevent cheating and the revenue of all the districts was reassessed by the officers appointed by the Nawab's court.
- In an effort to reduce Mughal influence in Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan transferred all the Mughal Jagirdars to Orissa and gave a great assurance of Bengal's revenue. The revenue in cash was collected from all the zamindars with great vigor. As a result, many landlords had to borrow money from bankers and moneylenders.

Q6. How were the Sikhs organised in the eighteenth century?

Answer: The organisation of the Sikhs into a political community during the seventeenth century helped in regional state-building in Punjab.

- Several battles were fought by Guru Gobind Singh against the Rajput and Mughal rulers, both before and after the institution of the Khalsa in 1699.
- Under a number of able leaders in the eighteenth century, the Sikhs organized themselves into a number of bands called jathas, and later on misls. Their combined forces were known as the grand army (dal khalsa).
- Guru Gobind Singh had inspired the Khalsa with the belief that his fate was to be ruled (Raj Khalsa). His well-knit organization enabled him to make a successful resistance first to the Mughal governors and then to Ahmad Shah Abdali, who seized the prosperous province of Punjab and the government of Sirhind from the Mughals.
- In the second half of the eighteenth century Sikh territories extended from the Indus to the Jamuna, but they were divided under various rulers. One of them, Maharaja Ranjit Singh, reunited these groups and established his capital at Lahore in 1799.

Q7. Why did the Marathas want to expand beyond the Deccan?

Answer: The Marathas wanted to expand beyond the Deccan in order to decrease the Mughal influence. Between 1720 and 1761, the Maratha Empire expanded. By the 1720s, they seized Malwa and Gujarat from the Mughals and by the 1730s, the Maratha king was recognised as the overlord of the entire Deccan peninsula.

Q8. What were the policies adopted by Asaf Jah to strengthen his position?

Answer: Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah founded the state of Hyderabad and gained control of financial and political administration:

- He brought skilled soldiers and administrators from the north and gave them opportunities in the south.
- He combined the offices of Subadari, faujdari and diwani.
- He appointed mansabdars and gave them Jagirs. Collected taxes through bankers and mahajans.
- He ruled independently without seeking directions or interference from Delhi.
- His decisions were merely confirmed by the Mughal Emperor.