

### PART B

**Tipu Sultan - The “Tiger of Mysore”:** The Company resorted to direct military confrontation when it saw a threat to its political or economic interests. This can be illustrated with the case of the southern Indian state of Mysore.

Mysore had grown in strength under the leadership of powerful rulers like **Haidar Ali** (ruled from 1761 to 1782) and his famous son **Tipu Sultan** (ruled from 1782 to 1799). Mysore controlled the profitable trade of the Malabar Coast where the company purchased pepper and cardamom. In 1785 Tipu Sultan stopped the export of sandalwood, pepper and cardamom through the ports of his kingdom, and disallowed local merchants from trading with the Company. He also established a close relationship with the French in India, and modernized his army with their help. The British were furious. They saw Haidar and Tipu as ambitious, arrogant and dangerous - rulers who had to be controlled and crushed. Four wars were fought with Mysore (1767-69, 1780-84, 1790-92 and 1799). Only in the last - the **Battle of Seringapatam** - Mysore was placed under the former ruling dynasty of the Wodeyars and a subsidiary alliance was imposed on the state.

**War with the Marathas:** From the late eighteenth century the Company also sought to curb and eventually destroy Maratha power. With their defeat in the **Third Battle of Panipat in 1761**, the Marathas’ dream of ruling from Delhi was shattered. They were divided into many states under different chiefs (Sardars) belonging to dynasties such as Sindhia, Holkar, Gaikwad and Bhonsle. These chiefs were held together in a **confederacy** under a Peshwa (Principal Minister) who became its effective military and administrative head based in Pune. **Mahadji Sindhia** and **Nana Phadnis** were two famous Maratha soldiers and statesmen of the late eighteenth century.

The Marathas were subdued in a series of wars. In the first war that ended in 1782 with the **Treaty of Salbai**, there was no clear victor. The second Anglo-Maratha war (1803 - 05) was fought on different fronts, resulting in the British gaining Orissa and the territories north of the Yamuna River including Agra and Delhi. Finally, the **Third Anglo-Maratha War of 1817-19** crushed Maratha power. The Peshwa was removed and sent away to Bithur near Kanpur with a pension. The company now had complete control over the territories south of the Vindhyas.

**The Claim to Paramountcy Subsidiary Alliances:** Lord Wellesley the governor-general of the India from 1798 to 1805, was an ambitious man. He wanted to make Britain the most important power in India. He waged wars and captured several territories. Another strategy he used to increase Britain’s power was to enter into subsidiary with the rulers of various states.

In the **subsidiary alliance system**, an Indian ruler had to maintain British troop in his state, either by giving some of his territory or by paying for the maintenance of the troops. This system allowed the British to maintain a large army at the expense of local rulers. The Indian ruler could not fight or sign treaties with any other power. The rulers who joined this system, **like the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Nizam of Awadh**, got security but loss their independence. Other who joined system included the Marathas after the Third Maratha war and most of Rajput States.

Under **Lord Hastings** (Governor-General from 1813 to 1823) a new policy of “paramountcy” was initiated. Now the company claimed that its authority was





paramount or supreme, hence its power was greater than that of Indian states. In order to protect its interests it was justified in annexing or threatening to annex any Indian Kingdom. Annexation means to take control of a neighbouring territory, usually with the use of force.

This view continued to guide later British politics as well. This process, however, did not go unchallenged. For example, when the British tried to annex the small state of Kitor (in Karnataka today), **Rani Channamma** took to arms and led an anti-British resistance movement. She was arrested in 1824 and died in prison in 1829. But Rayanna, a poor chowkidar of Sangoli in Kitor, carried on the resistance. With popular support he destroyed many British camps and records. He was caught and hanged by the British in 1830.

In the late 1830s the East India Company became worried about Russia. It imagined that Russia might expand across Asia and enter India from the north-west. Driven by this fear, the British now wanted to secure their control over the north-west. They fought a prolonged war with Afghanistan between 1838 and 1842 and established indirect company rule there. Sind was taken over in 1843. Next in line was Punjab. But the presence of **Maharaja Ranjit** Singh held back in 1839, two prolonged wars were fought with the Sikh kingdom. Ultimately, in 1849, Punjab was annexed.

**The doctrine of Lapse:** The final wave of annexations occurred under Lord Dalhousie who was the governor-general from 1848 to 1856. He devised a policy that came to be known as the doctrine of lapse. The doctrine declared that if an Indian ruler died without a male heir or did not have child, then his kingdom would 'lapse', that is, become part of company territory but it was an accepted practice to adopt one. The British refused to recognise such adoption. One kingdom after another was annexed simply by applying this doctrine. Finally, in 1856, the company also took over Awadh. This time the British had an added argument-they said they were 'obliged by duty' to take over Awadh in order to free the people from the misgovernment of the Nawab. Enraged by the humiliating way in which the Nawab was deposed, the people of Awadh joined the great revolt that broke out in 1857.

**Setting up a New Administration:** Warren Hastings was one of the many important figures who played a significant role in the many expansion of company power. By his time the company had acquired power not only in Bengal, but also in Bombay and Madras. British territories were broadly divided into administrative units called presidencies. They were three presidencies: Bengal, Madras and Bombay. Each was ruled by a governor-general. Warren Hastings, the first governor-general, introduced several administration reforms, notably in the sphere of justice.

From 1772 a new system of justice was established. Each district was to have two courts- a criminal court and a civil court. **Maulvis and Hindu pundits** interpreted Indian laws for the European district collectors who presided over civil courts. The criminal courts were still under a Qazi and a mufti but under the supervision of the collectors.

A major problem was that the Brahman Pandita gave different interpretations of local laws based on different schools of the dharamshastra. To bring about uniformity, in 1775 eleven pundits were asked to compile a digest of Hindu laws. N.B Halhed translated this digest into English. By 1773 a code of Muslim laws was



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also complied for the benefit of European judges. Under the regulating act of 1773, a new supreme court was established, while a court of appeal - the Sadar Nizamat Adalat - was also set up at Calcutta,

The principal figure in an Indian district was the collector. As the title suggests, his main job was to collect revenue and taxes and maintain law and order in his district with the help of judges, police officers and darogas. His office- the collector-ate became the new centre of power and patronage that steadily replaced previous holders of authority.

**The Company Army:** Colonial rule in India brought in some new ideas of administration power rested on its military strength the Mughal army was mainly composed of cavalry. They were given training in archery and the use of the sword. A change occurred in the eighteenth century when Mughal successor states like Awadh and Benaras started recruiting peasants into their armies and training them as professional soldiers. The East India Company adopted the same method when it began recruitment for its own army, which came to be known as the Sepoy army (from the Indian word sipahi meaning soldier).

As warfare technology changed from the 1820s the cavalry requirements of the company's army declined this is because the British Empire was fighting in Burma, Afghanistan and Egypt where soldiers were armed with muskets and matchlocks. The soldiers of the company's army had to keep pace with changing military requirements and its infantry regiments now became more important.

### **Reasons for the Success of the British**

- **Absence of a strong central leadership:** with the decline of the Mughals, there was no strong center leadership in India to check the activities of the British.
- **Lack of unity among the Indian state:** Indian states were unable to form a united group against British. The British took advantage of their rivalries to play one ruler against them. So mean while they were strengthening their own base in India.
- **The weakness of the Indian rulers:** many rulers chose to have subsidiary alliance with British rather than fight them. They wanted to protect their comfortable lifestyles. They showed little regards for the poor and carried out few reforms for the benefit of the people.
- **Britain's superior army and navy:** the British soldiers had better firearms than the Indian soldiers. They were also often better disciplined and better trained than their Indian soldiers.

So, in the early nineteenth century the British began to develop a uniform military culture. Soldiers were increasingly subjected to European style training, drill and discipline that regulated their life far more than before. Often this created problems since caste and community feelings were ignored in buildings a force of professional soldiers.

**Conclusion:** Thus the east India Company was transformed from a trading company to a territorial colonial power.

