

Ques:- Clarify how mid-eighteenth century India was beset with the spectre of a fragmented polity?

ans- The mighty Mughal Empire met its demise during early 18th century and up to mid 18th century Mughal emperor simply remained to be a figure head as almost all the important regions seceded from the empire.

At the demise of Mughal Empire a motley of Indian states, which were of different origin, enjoyed different status and defined their relationship with the Mughal empire differently, were visible. Some of them were successor states such as Bengal, Oudh and Hyderabad. They were being ruled by old Mughal officers. Different from them, there were rebel states like Jat state, Sikh State, Afghan states and Maratha states. Apart from them there were some other states which had remained to be the outside of the orbit of Mughal empire and were playing important role in regional polity. These were state of Mysore and that of Travancore.

Among these states none of them tried to rise above regional polity and play an important role at trans-regional level. Although, Marathas were having a vast region under their control and also were inclined to play an important role at all-India level but as they represented feudal polity and regressive socio-economic structure so they could not give a substitute to mighty Mughal emperor. Then, finally after their military debacle at the third battle of Panipat they receded into their own shell.

Therefore, political scenario of 18th century India was marked by the presence of multiplicity of states and fragmented polity. The net gainer from this situation was British East India Company which had come to India as a mercantile company but the condition of India encouraged it to move for political adventures. Then moving from the battle of Plassey and Buxar, British Company was converted into a political power.

In this way the political fragmentation in India in 18th century prepared the way for company's rule in India.

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