

Date: 25-09-2025

## 1. Riddled in various internal conflicts, Indian rulers readily played into the British machinations of divide and rule which ultimately caused British supremacy over India. Elucidate.

**Introduction:** The British strategy of "divide and rule" was a critical factor in establishing and maintaining their supremacy over India. This strategy capitalized on the internal conflicts among Indian rulers, exploiting regional, religious, and social divisions to consolidate British power.

### Evolution of the strategy of Divide and Rule (1744-63):

1. The policy of divide and rule was first deployed by the French Governor General Dupleix, when in 1748, a situation arose in the Carnatic and Hyderabad which gave full scope to Dupleix's talents for intrigue.
2. During this time, the English learned a few important and valuable lessons such as in the absence of nationalism in the country they could advance the political schemes by taking advantage of the mutual quarrels of the Indian rulers.

### The race to the throne of Bengal and Clive's Strategy (1756-65):

1. In the 1750s, the race between various contenders for the throne of Nawab gave a good opportunity to Clive to side with one of them to get a puppet Nawab who can fulfil his conditions of various trade relaxation to the company.
2. Clive's conspiracy and the battle of Plassey: In an effort to control these Nawabs Clive secured the support of Mir Jafar in the battle of Plassey, and once again reaped the benefits of internal quarrels between the Indians by establishing the British empire in India.
3. Even after the battle no one came to the aid of the Nawab of Bengal, except the Weak Mughal emperor and the Nawab of Awadh, this led to humiliating defeat of these Indian powers at Buxar in 1764.
4. While in the third battle of Panipat the Marathas were defeated by the invading Afghan army of (Ahmad Shah Durrani), supported by three Indian allies. This demonstrated the lack of trust between Indian powers and cleared the way for English.

### THE PROBLEMS IN THE SOUTH AND POLICIES OF WARREN HASTING AND CORNWALLIS (1772-93):

1. In 1766 when the Nizam of Hyderabad attacked Haidar Ali of Mysore the English wisely sided with the Nizam of Hyderabad.
2. Then, in 1775, The British officials in Bombay decided to intervene on behalf of Raghunath Rao, when an intense struggle for power was taking place among the Marathas.
3. In 1782 Marathas signed the Treaty of Salbai with the British which enabled them to exert pressure on Mysore, as the Marathas promised to help them in recovering their territories from Haidar Ali.
4. In 1780, the Nizam of Hyderabad once again went with the British and withdrew from the anti-British alliance helping Warren Hastings to cope with the powerful king of Mysore.

### QUARREL BETWEEN THE MARATHA'S AND OPPORTUNISTIC LORD WELLESLEY (1798-1805):

1. **Decline of Mysore and Maratha:** By 1797 the two strongest Indian powers had declined due to their conflicts with other Indian states.

2. **To achieve his political aims Wellesley relied on three methods:** the system of Subsidiary Alliances, outright war, and the assumption of previously subordinated rulers.
3. Under pressure and with a goal to destroy the other Indian powers the Nizam of Hyderabad fell into the trap of the British to sign Subsidiary Treaties with Lord Wellesley in 1798 and 1800 and with the help of Nizam the British attacked and finally defeated Tipu Sultan.
4. **Playing against each other:** Wellesley had repeatedly offered a Subsidiary Alliance to the Peshwa they refused but when on 25 October 1802, Holkar defeated the combined armies of the Peshwa and Sindhia, the Peshwa rushed into the arms of the English. The Company used this opportunity to conquer Marathas one by one and finally conquered the last Maratha power in 1818.

## Conclusion

The British strategy of divide and rule was highly effective in establishing and maintaining their supremacy over India. By exploiting internal conflicts, regional rivalries, religious and social divisions, and economic dependencies, the British were able to control and dominate a vast and diverse country. This strategy not only facilitated the initial conquest of India but also ensured the longevity of British colonial rule, as it prevented the emergence of a unified and coordinated resistance movement. The legacy of these policies continued to affect Indian society even after independence, highlighting the profound impact of colonial rule on India's political and social fabric.

## 2. The Indian economy during British period was mainly shaped by colonial interests of the British. Explain

The Indian economy during the British period was fundamentally shaped by the colonial interests of the British Empire. The economic policies and practices implemented by the British were designed to serve the needs of the British economy, often at the expense of India's economic development.

### 1. Deindustrialization and the Decline of Handicrafts

- **Destruction of Indigenous Industries:** Before British rule, India was known for its thriving textile industry, particularly its handloom sector. The British imposed high tariffs on Indian textiles to protect their own textile industry, leading to the decline of Indian manufacturing.
- **Import of British Goods:** The British flooded the Indian market with cheap, machine-made textiles from Britain, which undercut and destroyed local handicraft industries. This resulted in massive unemployment among Indian artisans and craftsmen.

### 2. Land Revenue Systems and Agrarian Distress

- **Permanent Settlement:** Introduced in Bengal in 1793, this system fixed land revenue and created a class of zamindars who were responsible for collecting taxes from peasants. The zamindars often exploited the peasants, leading to widespread agrarian distress.
- **Ryotwari and Mahalwari Systems:** In other parts of India, these systems placed the responsibility of tax payment directly on the cultivators. High revenue demands led to debt and dispossession of land among peasants.

### 3. Commercialization of Agriculture

- **Cash Crop Cultivation:** The British encouraged the cultivation of cash crops like indigo, cotton, jute, tea, and opium to meet the demands of British industries. This shift from subsistence farming to cash crops reduced the area under food crop cultivation, contributing to food insecurity.
- **Plantation Economy:** Large tracts of land were converted into plantations for tea, coffee, and rubber, owned by Europeans and worked by Indian laborers under harsh conditions.

#### 4. Infrastructure Development for Colonial Benefit

- **Railways and Roads:** While the British built an extensive network of railways and roads, these were primarily designed to facilitate the transport of raw materials from the hinterlands to ports for export to Britain. They also enabled the import of British manufactured goods into the Indian market.
- **Ports and Shipping:** Development of ports and shipping lines was aimed at enhancing trade between India and Britain, ensuring a steady flow of raw materials to British factories.

#### 5. Drain of Wealth

- **Economic Drain Theory:** Indian nationalists like Dadabhai Naoroji highlighted the "drain of wealth" from India to Britain. Profits generated in India were repatriated to Britain, depriving India of its capital and leading to a lack of investment in local development.
- **Unfavourable Trade Balance:** India's exports of raw materials and imports of finished goods created an unfavourable trade balance, further draining Indian resources.

#### 6. Exploitation of Natural Resources

- **Mineral Extraction:** The British exploited India's rich mineral resources, including coal, iron ore, and other minerals, to fuel their industrial revolution. The profits from these resources primarily benefited British companies.
- **Forestry Policies:** The British implemented forestry policies that prioritized commercial exploitation of timber for shipbuilding and railway sleepers, often disregarding the needs of local communities.

#### 7. Labor Exploitation

- **Indentured Labor System:** Many Indians were sent as indentured laborers to British colonies like the Caribbean, Fiji, and Mauritius to work on plantations. This system was exploitative and often involved harsh working conditions and poor living standards.
- **Low Wages and Poor Working Conditions:** In India, laborers in factories, mines, and plantations faced low wages and poor working conditions, with minimal regard for their welfare.

#### 8. Lack of Industrialization

- **Stunted Industrial Growth:** The British colonial policy discouraged the growth of Indian industries. While some industries like jute and tea did grow, they were largely controlled by British interests and catered to export markets.
- **Dependency on Agriculture:** The lack of industrial development meant that India remained primarily an agrarian economy, making it vulnerable to agricultural crises and famines.

#### Conclusion

The Indian economy during the British period was heavily shaped by colonial interests aimed at maximizing the economic benefit to Britain. Policies were designed to extract resources, exploit labour, and create a market for British goods. This led to deindustrialization, agrarian distress, and a drain of wealth from India to Britain. The long-term consequences included widespread poverty, economic underdevelopment, and a lack of infrastructure that served the needs of the Indian population. The legacy of these colonial policies continued to impact India even after independence, necessitating significant efforts to rebuild and develop the economy in the post-colonial period.