

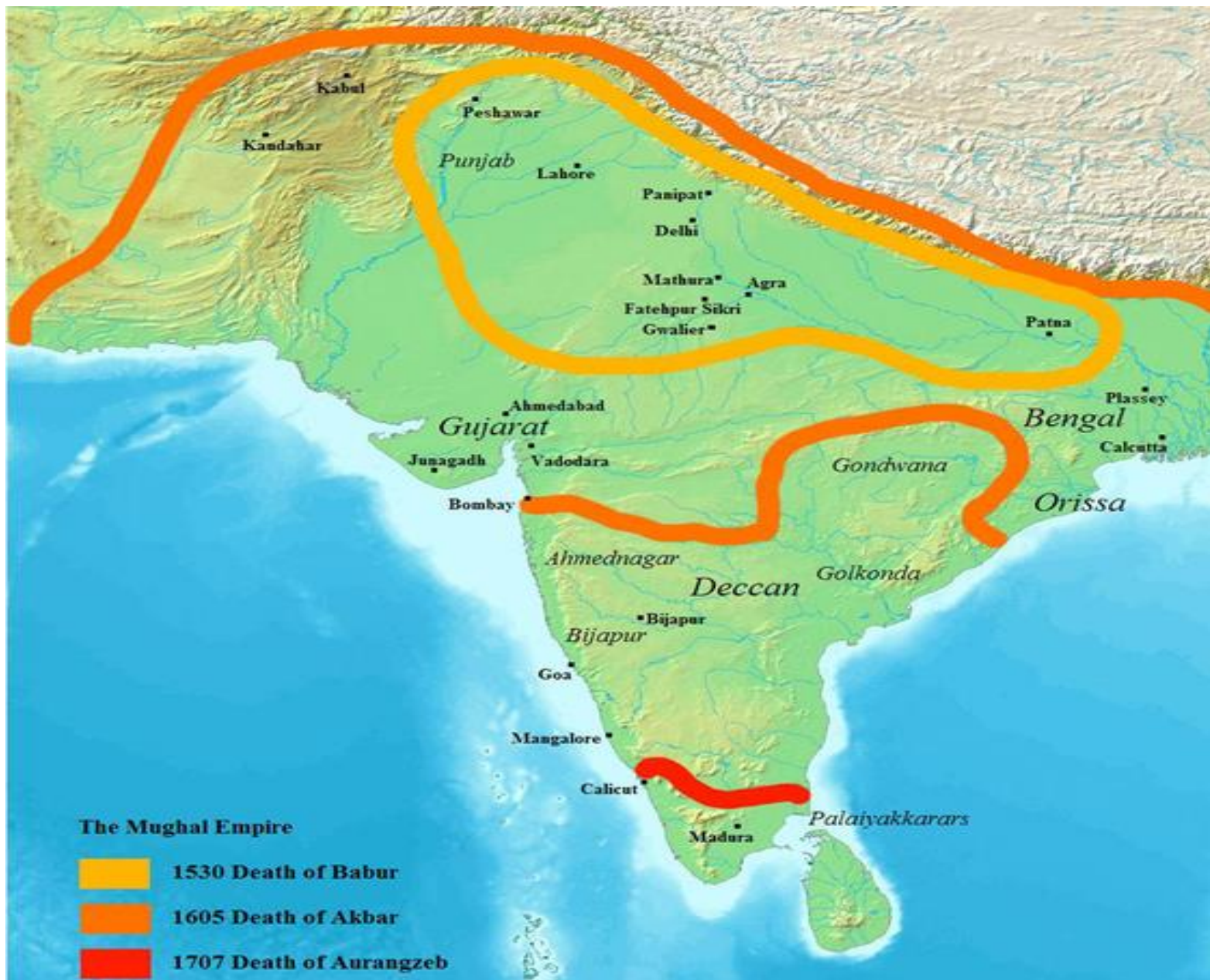


State in Indian History –II

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Contradiction addressed in the Mughal period 16th-18th century:

- Mughal state more centralised and efficient in appropriation (increased Khalisa, Todar Mal reforms)
- linkages of nodal centres and towns with rural hinterland
- therefore increasing urbanization, which is at once cause and effect of trade (%of urban population more in 17th century than 19th century)
- Administratively a proto-bureaucratic structure, assisted by an integration of the local elites (Rajputs and Marathas). More broad based in its ethnic composition



State in the times of Mughals:

- More Indian in nature (elite born in India, speaking Indian languages, literature local, theme local, no need for religious sanction)
- It helped sustain the empire for nearly 200 years
- The decline of Mughul empire understood more in terms of its inability to integrate provinces
- which were growing in their right and developing linkages with the regional social and economic formations
- Emergence of new institutions in trade and commerce along the coast

Transition to British Rule

The decline of Mughal empire:

- *can understood more in terms of its inability to integrate provinces*
- *which were growing in their own right and developing linkages with the regional social and economic formations eg: Bengal, Maratha state, Hyderabad, Avadh*
- *New states too: outmoded political edifice*

Indian Political scene in the 18th century

- Emergence of patrimonial segmented state formations bound by ethno-religious affiliations: Jats, Sikhs and Marathas
- These states were at once the cause and effect of the decline of a centralised state formation: Mughal state
- Mughal state: beset with institutional failures, lack of modern army, inability to adapt to change to newer administrative and financial edifice
- Exacerbated by foreign invasions
- These weaknesses beset other Indian state formations too
- Same story: strong society, economy but weak state



Dominant political trends in the 18th century

- Growing trade, urbanisation and the increasing centrifugal forces (in Bengal, Deccan and the Maratha areas) led to the formation of new political power centres
- North west decline post Abdali due to decline in trade (overland trade lost out to maritime trade), weakening of Persia and Central Asian states
- In these turbulent times, emergence of new powerful institutions like the East India Company altered the power equations
- Expansion via the East coast and the South towards the north

Driving force behind expansion

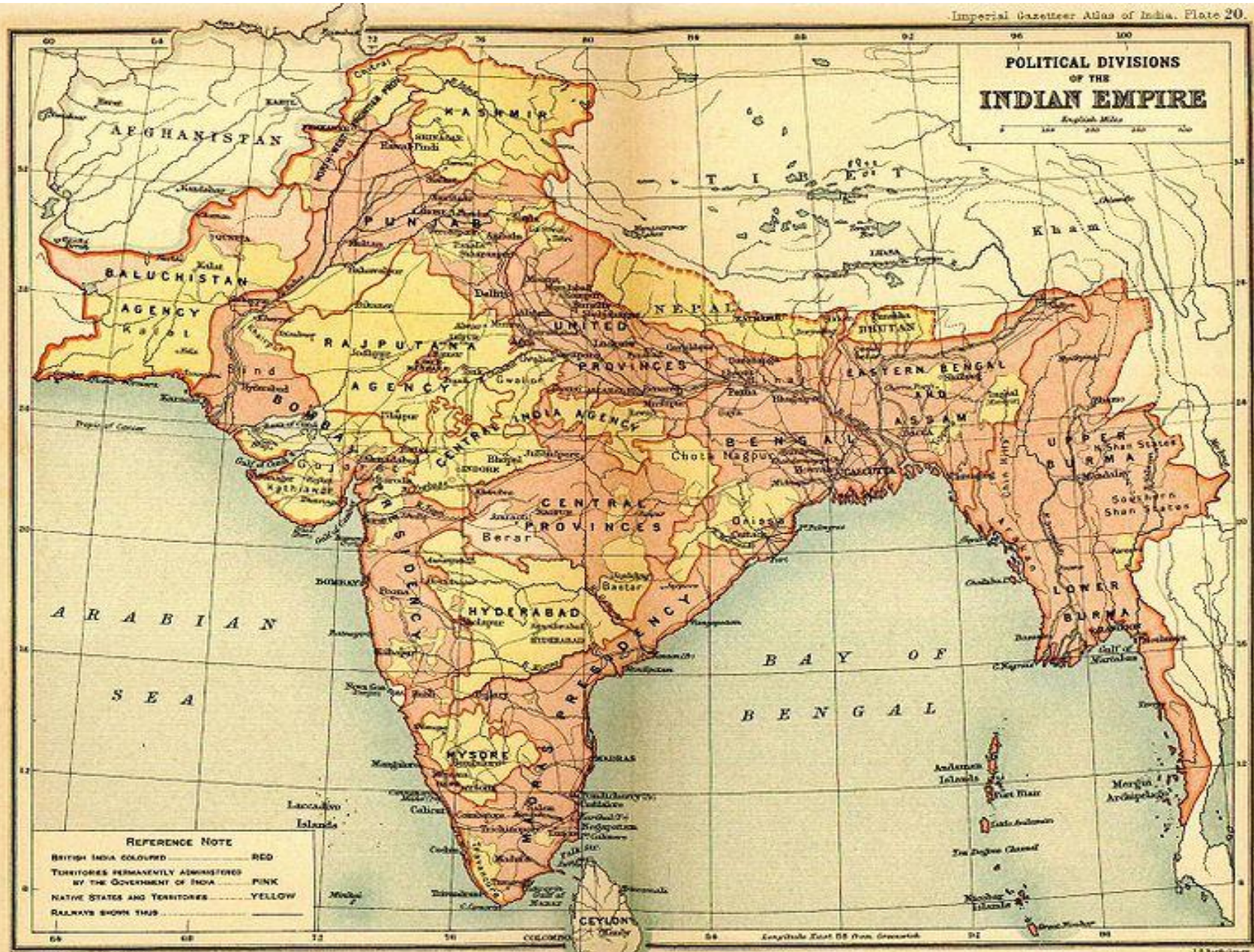
- Commercial: Trade
- Opportunism (to deny other European powers)
- and later Strategic: to safeguard the commercial interests
- East India Company's drive assisted by a case-to-case handholding by British govt
- British government bailed out East India Company financially and militarily on a number of occasions
- Wars were inevitably the last resort
- Main adversaries: Mysore, Marathas, Avadh and the Sikhs

British Supremacy over India established through:

- Institutional superiority of the Europeans (Joint stock company, better Accounting and sound finance principles)
- Standing army: better trained
- better leadership
- Better use of alliances and dissensions

BUT BASICALLY A FAILURE OF WEAK AND OUTMODED STATE INSTITUTIONS

British Indian Empire 1909



Nature of British Indian State

- *Despotic and Racist*
- *Predominance of commercial and mercantile interests and strategic considerations*
- *Evident from the fact that British India constituted only 65% of the total territory (areas of agrarian surplus, deltaic areas, markets and areas with industrial potential) of the sub-continent was under direct rule*
- *Led to impoverishment, rural and urban*
- *Drain of Wealth: Phases of imperialism*

Ideological Justification/legitimacy for conquest and rule provided by:

- *Enlightenment and Utilitarian values: therefore lot of social legislation (Bentinck, James Mill)*
- *Manifestation of British Nationalism softened by the “Roman Syndrome”*
- *inspired by the ideals of renaissance and enlightenment-these steps sought to mitigate the perfidy of the Company and;*
- *emancipation of the downtrodden-end of tyranny and misrule*

The Modern State

However, the importance of British rule is that it ushered in the era of modern state.

The 'modern state' characterised by:

- *Impersonal institutions of governance: as opposed to person-centric*
- *Civil Services based on merit: the ICS, IP*
- *Government penetration vertically and horizontally*
- *Territorial Integrity*
- *Introduction of the concept of private property*
- *Rule of law*
- *Western Education*
- *Greater economic role of the state: New forms of taxes (Income tax, wealth tax etc)*

Structure of the government

Three tier structure:

- **Secretary of State for India** (responsible to the British Govt): had overriding powers
- **Viceroy** (as opposed to Governor General, i.e the king's deputy) who was the real executive (executive council: like the cabinet portfolios)
- **Provincial government** (under Governor/Lt Governor/Chief Commissioner)
- Underlying idea was to ensure a more direct control of the British Government

Constitutional reforms:

- *From 1858-1947 there were a series of Acts passed*
- *The trend was to broad base governance with checks and balances (Secretary of State vs the Viceroy; Nationalists vs Imperialists; nationalists vs the princes)*
- *Idea to devolve more powers to the Indians (but delegation with a view to Divide and Rule: as Britain has been doing to all its colonies): progression from 1909, 1919 and 1935*
- *Culminating in 1947 Independence Act*
- *Greater autonomy also (ostensibly) to the Indian government viz-a-viz the British Parliament and the office of the Secretary of State.*
- *Reforms were initiated in response to political pressure (Nationalist)*
- *Reforms only political in nature not social*

Such Political changes went hand in hand with the institutional changes in the economy:

- *Growth of modern capitalism: including home-grown business*
- *Investment in infrastructure: Growth and Improvement*
- *Joint Stock companies, Managing agencies (box-wallahs)*
- *Greater monetisation and cash crops with land becoming a commodity*
- *modern industries*
- *participation in global trade*

Growth in the economy was nevertheless designed to fit in the imperial scheme of things

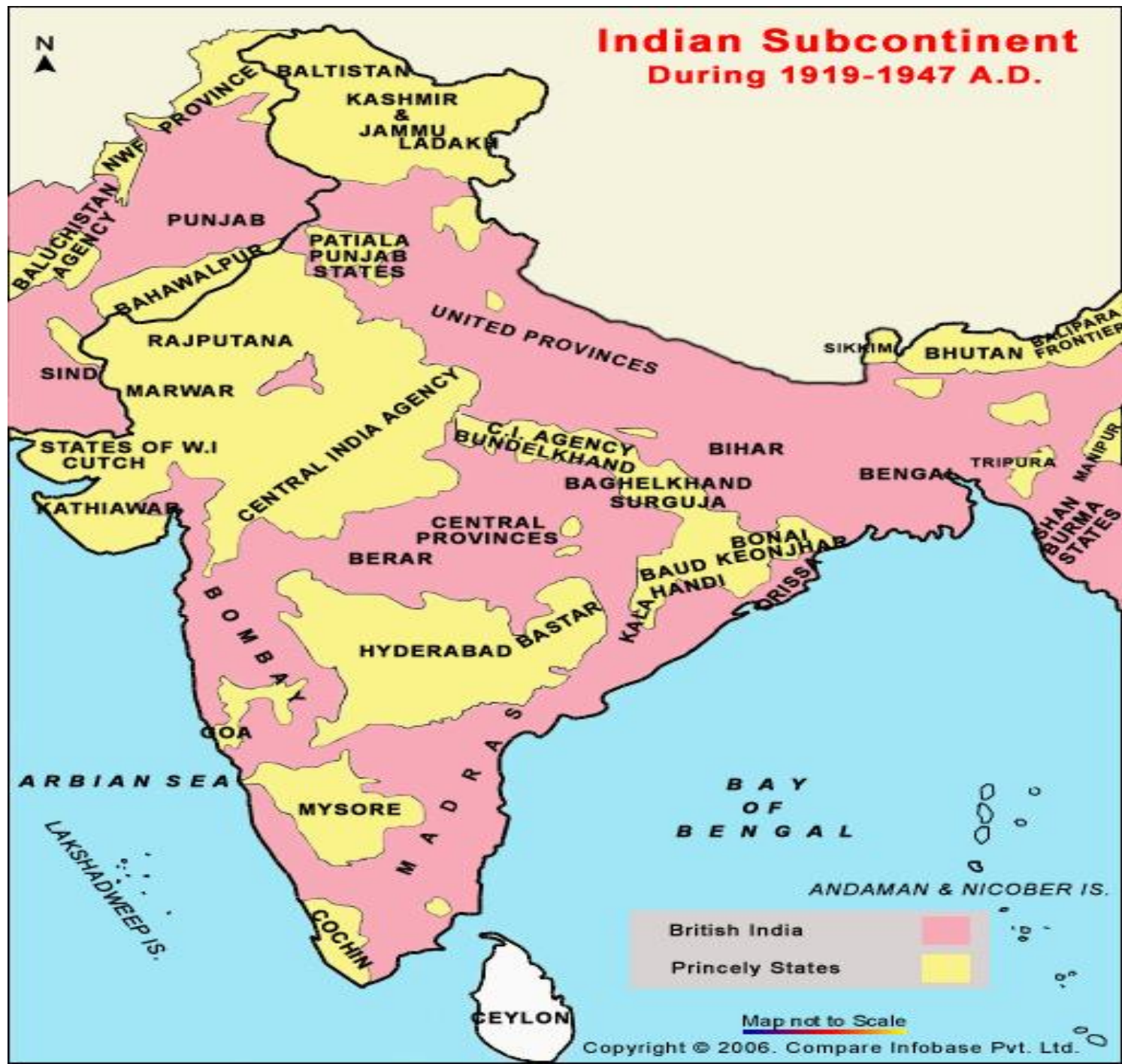
Consequently, the society also underwent rapid changes as an outcome of the British Raj:

- *Greater mobility: social and geographical
 - brought about by territorial integrity,
 - rule of law
 - western education
 - integration of the village societies with the market*
- *Social and religious reform movements*
- *Challenges to the traditional social order: caste and anti-brahmanical movements; growing religious movements*

Social Impact of the British Raj contd:

- *Change in the patterns of dominance: certain castes and communities growing as opposed to other*
- *Uneven pattern of regional growth: between provinces and within the provinces*
- *Policy of seeing everything in black and white & policy of divide and rule led to:*
 - Crystallization of identities- Seeds of communalism*
 - Increase in regional/caste identities*

Indian Subcontinent During 1919-1947 A.D.



Nature of Modern Indian State

- Outcome of colonial experience, freedom struggle, partition and a reaction to Colonialism
- Ideals and the mission articulated beautifully in the Constitution
- Bold experiment in democracy (Universal adult franchise, parliamentary democracy)
- Civilian control
- Federal & Secular
- Acknowledgement of diversities
- State as guarantor of rights & liberty;

Modern (post independence) Indian State:

- *Agent of democratisation and modernisation*
- *Articulator of nationalism*
- *Directional and Interventionist*
- *“Welfare State”*
- *Bureaucracy's role even more important: - agent of change*
 - *politically neutral*
 - *Selection based on merit*
 - *protection from political arbitrariness.*

New themes in state discourse

- Theme of centre vs state still dominant
- Role of pressure groups and interest groups: caste, regional, ideology, now civil society
- Political parties: nature: major players in the polity
- Primordial loyalties still relevant: Spirit of Nationalism still nascent
- Impact of globalisation and wired world
- Externalities: Energy, geo-strategic concerns
- Demographic bulge: need for economic growth imperative than ever

Challenges before the Modern Indian State:

- *Governance deficit:*
 - *Leading to erosion of credibility of institutions*
 - *Judicial Activism*
- *Growth of aspirations of a burgeoning middle class*
- *Aspirations of the marginalized and the peripheral populations*
- *Crux of the problem: no rule of law*

Challenges before Indian State:

- *Parliamentary Democracy and crisis of legitimacy of politics:*

How representative is our polity? Can it be said to be a leader and articulator of ,ass aspirations

- *Interplay of centre-state issues*
- *Civil Society, NGOs and media*
- *Role of Civil Services as agents of change*
- *“Soft State”: for whatever compulsions*
- *In global context: “A Reluctant Power”*

Indian State in the next 50 years:

- More representative
- Therefore more inclusive and therefore stronger
- Demographic dividends will continue till 2040
- Environmental issues and energy and water crisis
- Top leadership would always be an issue
- What if.....strong society and economy but a weak polity and state syndrome stays?

QUESTIONS ???

THANK YOU