Course: Rise of the British and Muslim Rule in India (5680)
Semester: Autumn, 2021

ASSIGNMENT No. 2

Q.1 Internal disputes of Maratha provided the English an opportunity to interfere in the affairs of Maratha Confederacy. Comment.

Maratha Wars, (1775–82, 1803–05, 1817–18), three conflicts between the British and the Maratha confederacy, resulting in the destruction of the confederacy. The first war (1775–82) began with British support for Raghunath Rao's bid for the office of peshwa (chief minister) of the confederacy. The British were defeated at Wadgaon (see Wadgaon, Convention of) in January 1779, but they continued to fight the Marathas until the conclusion of the Treaty of Salbai (May 1782); the sole British gain was the island of Salsette adjacent to Bombay (now Mumbai). The second war (1803–05) was caused by the peshwa Baji Rao II's defeat by the Holkars (one of the leading Maratha clans) and his acceptance of British protection by the Treaty of Bassein in December 1802. The Sindhia and the Bhonsle families contested the agreement, but they were defeated, respectively, at Laswari and Delhi by Lord Lake and at Assaye and Argaon by Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington). The Holkar clan then joined in, and the Marathas were left with a free hand in the regions of central India and Rajasthan. The third war (1817–18) was the result of an invasion of Maratha territory in the course of operations against Pindari robber bands by the British governor-general, Lord Hastings. The peshwa's forces, followed by those of the Bhonsle and Holkar, rose against the British (November 1817), but the Sindhia remained neutral. Defeat was swift, followed by the pensioning of the peshwa and the annexation of his territories, thus completing the supremacy of the British in India.

Shivaji's father Shahji had earlier served as a Jagirdar under Adil Shah.Shivaji inherited this land and later revolted against the Adil Shahi dynasty, carving out a kingdom with Raigad as his capital. After Treaty of Purandar signed on 11 June 1665 ,[1] Shivaji was incorporated as a vassal and had to send his son Sambhaji to fight for the Mughals in the Deccan as a mansabdar along with 5,000 horsemen, Shivaji seeing that he wasn't getting much prestige in Mughal Darbar, revolted and fought against the Mughals and raided the rich city of Surat. He crowned himself in 1674 as a Chhatrapati, establishing the Maratha Kingdom Shivaji died in 1680. [2] After Shivaji, Sambhaji took up throne. He built strong army as well as navy. Mughal emperor Aurangzeb shifted his capital from Delhi to Aurangabad to defeat Sambhaji. The Mughals invaded, fighting an War of 27 years from 1681 to 1707 in which the Marathas under Tarabai were victorious. Sambhaji was captured during this war and killed by Mughals. Shahu, a grandson of Shivaji, ruled as emperor until 1749. During his reign, Shahu appointed the first Peshwa as head of the government, under certain conditions. After the death of Shahu, the Peshwas became the de facto leaders of the Empire from 1749 to 1761, while Shivaji's successors continued as nominal rulers from their base in Satara. Covering a major part of the subcontinent, the Maratha Empire kept the British forces at bay during the 18th century, until internal relations between the Peshwas and their sardars (army commanders) deteriorated, provoking its gradual downfall.

The Maratha Empire was at its height in the 18th century under Shahu and the Peshwa Baji Rao I. Losses at the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761 suspended further expansion of the empire in the North-west and reduced

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the power of the Peshwas. In 1761, after severe losses in the Panipat war, the Peshwas slowly started losing the control of the kingdom. Many military chiefs of the Maratha Empire like Shinde, Holkar, Gaikwad, PantPratinidhi, Bhosale of Nagpur, Dev (Gade) of Wardha, Pandit of Bhor, Patwardhan, and Newalkar started to work towards their ambition of becoming kings in their respective regions. However, under Madhavrao Peshwa, Maratha authority in North India was restored, 10 years after the battle of Panipat. After the death of Madhavrao, the empire gave way to a loose Confederacy, with political power resting in a 'pentarchy' of five mostly Maratha dynasties: the Peshwas of Pune; the Sindhias (originally "Shindes") of Malwa and Gwalior; the Holkars of Indore; the Bhonsles of Nagpur; and the Gaekwads of Baroda. A rivalry between the Sindhia and Holkar dominated the confederation's affairs into the early 19th century, as did the clashes with the British and the British East India Company in the three Anglo-Maratha Wars. In the Third Anglo-Maratha War, the last Peshwa, Baji Rao II, was defeated by the British in 1818 and the empire ceased to exist.

Q.2 How far Bentinck had been influenced by the Utilitarian thought of Jeremy Bentham and gave vent to liberal views during his term as Governor General in India?

A common theme – or at least an oft-repeated one among some scholars – when discussing elements of British imperialism in India in the 19th century is that of the philosophy of Utilitarianism and its supposed influence on government policy and the men who made it.

Since Lord William Bentinck held office at that time, it is no surprise that he should be associated in some way with these ideas and this school of historical thought. It is rather frequently suggested that he was influenced by Utilitarian notions and the ideas of its founder, Jeremy Bentham.

One thing is for sure: Bentinck did express opinions which were considered liberal – perhaps even 'radical' – by many of his age. He was not a political conformist, and much of what he wrote and said about the need to protect 'political liberty' in countries like Italy and India seems decidedly ahead of its time.

In a similar way, the supporters of Bentham were perceived to be radical, too. They had ideas which were disdained by many or simply ignored; some of them were written off as amusing eccentrics, or boring obsessives, or even dangerous radicals. Theirs was not a big social circle; and though the influence of Bentham (and, of course, some of his acolytes) has been great, during their lifetimes this was not certain. After all, history remains unwritten – at least in many cases – until after the lives of its subjects have ended; and it would take clairvoyant skill to predict the scope and scale of post-mortem influence and esteem.

The debate over whether Bentinck subscribed to the tenets of Jeremy Bentham's philosophical radicalism is an interesting one, and the notion that he did is something which has been repeated. The historians Bart Schultz and Georgios Varouxakis, in their book Utilitarianism and Empire, write of a scene which has been afforded a great deal of ex post facto significance.

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Stokes relates an anecdote about Lord William Bentinck, who in 1827 had just been appointed governor-general of India. As James Mill delightedly reported to Bentham, Bentinck had told him at a farewell dinner, 'I am going to British India; but I shall not be Governor-General. It is you that will be Governor-General.'

This story seems to have a definitive statement of intent; and it seems also to contain a real declaration of influence. Its usefulness lies in its directness, and in that alone it is almost too good to be true. While there is little use in debating the validity of the story, what can be certain is that Bentinck, despite possessing little in the way of tact and much familial prickliness, would have wanted to speak graciously; even a gruff old solider such as he occasionally spoke a little too grandly. In this case it seems reasonable to suggest that the above declaration was nothing more than politesse, gleefully seized upon as evidence of influence by a man who ought to know better.

In addition, as John Rosselli, author of Lord William Bentinck: The Making of a Liberal Imperialist, points out, one could have subscribed to general principles shared by the Benthamites without being one of them; these positions can be viewed 'as part of a general movement of which the Benthamites were – at times eccentric – outriders'.

And even that is to an extent suspect; Bentinck was not – as evidenced by his lack of social graces – a clubbable man. He did not have much of a circle; naturally, therefore, he was not very close to new ideas in politics and philosophy and the social circles these things bred. (Though it must not be argued that he was an ignorant man, as he was well-read and reasonably educated, his apparent lack of intellectual refinement has occasionally been used to argue that he was a vessel through which the Benthamites sold their ideas to an initially unwilling governing class. Considering the aforementioned, this seems rather unlikely.)

According to Rosselli, any idea that Bentinck was influenced in any substantive way by the philosophy of Bentham is based on decidedly suspect testimony: 'What is clear is that [Bentinck] was not a Benthamite in the narrow sense'. In addition, it seems that whatever existed in the way of connections between Bentinck and the Utilitarians was subsequently given greater weight than was warranted. Rosselli again:

His links with the inner group were tenuous; they were exaggerated by a hopeful old man (Bentham himself) and, much later, by a somewhat snobbish old woman with an inexact memory (Mrs Grote).

The wishful thinking of Mill and Bentham has become almost axiomatic. Bentinck, many say, was a Utilitarian, a keen student of the two of them; and these supposed beliefs are then read into his later actions. Uday Singh Mehta, for example, writes that Bentinck was 'a self-avowed follower of Mill', which does not seem right; and he also repeats the story of how Bentinck, as governor-general, apparently 'went so far as to consider demolishing the Taj Mahal for the sake of its marble' as part of his 'disparagement of India's historical legacy', which seems also to be incorrect on both counts. (Bentinck in fact had great respect for India's Mughal past; and, in addition, he never considered demolishing the Taj Mahal.)

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In something of a final word on the subject, Rosselli surmises that '[i]t is by no means … clear that he had absorbed much of the specific Utilitarian doctrine'. And even if he had, there is very little evidence – aside, that is, for his broadly liberal approach to governing India in general – that he even gave that doctrine much thought. In broader society, Utilitarians – the eccentric outriders – had something rather comic about them. They were odd; they believed strange things; and their demeanour was less than usual in many ways. Despite Bentinck's aversion to fashion – in both the sartorial and social senses – he was not one to go for any set of ideas in spite (or even because) of their marginal or unpopular nature. Indeed, Bentinck's 'only recorded use of [the term 'Utilitarian'] was as a joke', as Rosselli has it.

Furthermore, '[t]he term was in the air; the doctrine had some general influence; knowledgeable disciples were few'. It barely needs mentioning that even possessing knowledge of what the Utilitarians wanted meant little in terms of actually believing the stuff – still less when deciding whether actually to implement it as a matter of policy. At one point it seems Mill approached Bentinck with ideas concerning the promise of a 'Panopticon', the notion of a prison where all inmates could be under constant observation, which was designed and championed by Bentham. Regardless of whether this information was received – gratefully or not – no such prisons were built in India, by Bentinck or any subsequent British governor-general.

In a similar vein, it is known that Bentham himself attempted to open up some kind of correspondence with Bentinck while he was in his post; the idea, one imagines, was to influence him intellectually and steer his thinking – and the subsequent direction of policy – in a direction more amenable to the Utilitarians. But the records of such a correspondence – if it ever occurred at all – simply do not exist. And it can be safely assumed that if some interchange of ideas did take place, and if it was consequential, it would have been preserved or in some way commemorated. As things stand it was not; and from that one can only deduce that what happened was of little consequence.

In summing up on the subject of his subject's beliefs and influences, and with reference to Bentinck's position at the beginning of his second Indian term, Rosselli writes that:

He went to Indian for the second time as an Evangelical Liberal of moderate political convictions, of radical temper, and of unusually wide sympathies for the son of a duke, determined to wipe out the trauma of his recall twenty years earlier, and to do good.

Amid this jostle of competing ideas, notions, interests and personal beliefs, the Utilitarianism of Mill and Bentham does not appear. This does not mean that Bentinck was not a reformer, or one who wanted to improve the material conditions of the territories he governed; and it does not mean that he did not possess and attempt to implement elevated ideas which were seen as somewhat unconventional in his own time. But it seems that among all of his personal views and the complexities which determined his individual motivations – his very perspective, in other words – the tell-tale signs of Benthamite influence are absent. He governed as himself; what Mill said did not come about.

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What this means can be summarised rather succinctly: just because a fair few historians assert something as fact, this does not mean it is necessarily true; and furthermore, one cannot take for granted – and indeed construct entire historical narratives on the basis of – some excitable words shared at a party between two historically significant men. Sometimes what is said may be rather less vital – and rather less consequential – than could be suggested in retrospect.

Q.3 According to Innes 'If the Afghan episode is the most disastrous in our Indian annals, that of Sindh is morally even excusable'. Sindh's annexation by Napier was considered by friends and foes alike as wanton aggression. Comment.

Actual power, however, resided with the army, which was itself in the hands of panchs, or military committees. Relations with the British had already been strained by the refusal of the Sikhs to allow the passage of British troops through their territory during the First Anglo-Afghan War (1838–42). Having determined to invade British India under the pretext of forestalling a British attack, the Sikhs crossed the Sutlej River in December 1845. They were defeated in the four bloody and hard-fought battles of Mudki, Firozpur, Aliwal, and Sobraon. The British annexed Sikh lands east of the Sutlej and between it and the Beas River; Kashmir and Jammu were detached, and the Sikh army was limited to 20,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry. A British resident was stationed in Lahore with British troops.

The Second Sikh War began with the revolt of Mulraj, governor of Multan, in April 1848 and became a national revolt when the Sikh army joined the rebels on September 14. Indecisive battles characterized by great ferocity and bad generalship were fought at Ramnagar (November 22) and at Chilianwala (Jan. 13, 1849) before the final British victory at Gujrat (February 21). The Sikh army surrendered on March 12, and the Punjab was then annexed.

During the eighteenth and early years of the nineteenth century, the red tide of British expansion had covered almost the entire Indian subcontinent, stretching to the borders of the Punjab. There the great Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh had developed his military forces to thwart any British advance into his kingdom north of the River Sutlej. Yet on the death of Ranjit Singh, unworthy successors and disparate forces fought over his legacy while the British East India Company seized on the opportunity and prepared for battle. In the winter of 1845, the First Anglo-Sikh War broke out. Amarpal S. Sidhu writes a warts and all tale of a conflict characterized by treachery, tragedy and incredible bravery on both sides. In an innovative approach to history writing, the narrative of the campaign is accompanied by battlefield guides that draw on eyewitness accounts and invite the reader to take a tour of the battlefields, either physically or virtually. The Sikh kingdom of Punjab was expanded and consolidated by Maharajah Ranjit Singh during the early years of the nineteenth century, about the same time as the British-controlled territories were advanced by conquest or annexation to the borders of the Punjab. Ranjit Singh maintained a policy of wary friendship with the British, ceding some territory south of the Sutlej River, while at the same time building up his military forces both to deter aggression by the British

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and to wage war against the Afghans. He hired American and European mercenary soldiers to train his artillery, and also incorporated contingents of Hindus and Muslims into his army.

Aided by disunity among the Afghans, the Sikhs conquered the cities and provinces of Peshawar and Multan from them, and also incorporated the states of Jammu and Kashmir into their empire. Once order was restored in Afghanistan, the British became obsessed with the idea that Emir Dost Mohammed Khan of Afghanistan was conspiring with Imperial Russia and launched the First Anglo-Afghan War to replace him with the compliant Shuja Shah Durrani. This move had Sikh support, in return for the formal cessation of Peshawar to the Sikhs by Shuja Shah. Initially successful, the British invasion took a disastrous turn with the Massacre of Elphinstone's Army, which lowered the prestige of the British, and the Bengal Army of the British East India Company in particular. The British finally withdrew from Afghanistan, and from Peshawar which they held as an advance base, in 1842.

Ranjit Singh died in 1839. Almost immediately, his kingdom began to fall into disorder. Ranjit's unpopular legitimate son, Kharak Singh, was removed from power within a few months, and later died in prison under mysterious circumstances. It was widely believed that he was poisoned. He was replaced by his able but estranged son Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, who also died within a few months in suspicious circumstances, after being injured by a falling archway at the Lahore Fort while returning from his father's cremation.

At the time, two major factions within the Punjab were contending for power and influence: the Sikh Sindhanwalias and the Hindu Dogras. The Dogras succeeded in raising Sher Singh, the eldest illegitimate son of Ranjit Singh, to the throne in January 1841. The most prominent Sindhanwalias took refuge on British territory, but had many adherents among the Army of the Punjab.

The army was expanding rapidly in the aftermath of Ranjit Singh's death, from 29,000 (with 192 guns) in 1839 to over 80,000 in 1845 as landlords and their retainers took up arms. It proclaimed itself to be the embodiment of the Sikh nation. Its regimental panchayats (committees) formed an alternative power source within the kingdom, declaring that Guru Gobind Singh's ideal of the Sikh commonwealth had been revived, with the Sikhs as a whole assuming all executive, military and civil authority in the State, which British observers decried as a "dangerous military democracy". British representatives and visitors in the Punjab described the regiments as preserving "puritanical" order internally, but also as being in a perpetual state of mutiny or rebellion against the central Durbar (court). Maharajah Sher Singh was unable to meet the pay demands of the army, although he reportedly lavished funds on a degenerate court. In September 1843 he was murdered by his cousin, an officer of the army, Ajit Singh Sindhanwalia. The Dogras took their revenge on those responsible, and Jind Kaur, Ranjit Singh's youngest widow, became regent for her infant son Duleep Singh. After the vizier Hira Singh was killed, while attempting to flee the capital with loot from the royal treasury (toshkana), by troops under Sham Singh Attariwala, Jind Kaur's brother Jawahar Singh became vizier in December 1844. In 1845 he arranged the assassination of Peshaura Singh, who presented a threat to Duleep Singh. For this, he was called to account by the army. Despite attempts to bribe the army he was butchered in September 1845 in the presence of Jind Kaur

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and Duleep Singh. Jind Kaur publicly vowed revenge against her brother's murderers. She remained regent. Lal Singh became vizier, and Tej Singh became commander of the army. Sikh historians have stressed that both these men were prominent in the Dogra faction. Originally high caste Hindus from outside the Punjab, both had converted to Sikhism in 1818. Immediately after the death of Ranjit Singh, the British East India Company had begun increasing its military strength, particularly in the regions adjacent to the Punjab, establishing a military cantonment at Ferozepur, only a few miles from the Sutlej River which marked the frontier between British-ruled India and the Punjab. In 1843, they conquered and annexed Sindh, to the south of the Punjab, in a move which many British people regarded as cynical and ignoble. This did not gain the British any respect in the Punjab, and increased suspicions of British motives.

The actions and attitudes of the British, under Governor General Lord Ellenborough and his successor, Sir Henry Hardinge, are disputed. By most British accounts, their main concern was that the Sikh army, without strong leadership to restrain them, was a serious threat to British territories along the border. Sikh and Indian historians have countered that the military preparations made by these Governors-General were offensive in nature; for example, they prepared bridging trains and siege gun batteries, which would be unlikely to be required in a purely defensive operation.

The British attitudes were affected by reports from their new political agent in the frontier districts, Major George Broadfoot, who stressed the disorder in the Punjab and recounted every tale of corrupt behaviour at the court. For some British officials, there was a strong desire to expand British influence and control into the Punjab, as it was the only remaining formidable force that could threaten the British hold in India and the last remaining independent kingdom not under British influence. The kingdom was also renowned for being the wealthiest, the Koh-i-Noor being but one of its many treasures. Despite this, it is unlikely that the British East India Company would have deliberately attempted to annex the Punjab had the war not occurred, as they simply did not have the manpower or resources to keep a hold on the territories (as proven by the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Sikh War).

Q.4 Do you agree that Dalhousie was the most capable administrator of British East India Company? Support your argument with evidence.

The accession of Lord Dalhousie inaugurated a new chapter in the history of British India. He functioned as the Governor-General of India from 1848-1856. He belonged to an aristocratic family of Scotland. Earlier he had served as the President of the Board of Trade. He is regarded as one of the greatest Governor-General of India.

His eight years rules are full of important events in every sphere. He was great both in war and peace. He introduced a number of reforms which paved the way for the modernisation of India and also earned the title, "Maker of the Modern India". He believed that, "the promotion of civilization meant the promotion of western reforms, that western administration and western institutions were as superior to Indian as Western arms had proved more potent."

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Administrative Reforms:

Dalhousie's chief aim was the consolidation of British rule in India. So he adopted the principle of centralization. For the newly acquired territories he devised the 'Non-Regulation System" under which commissioners were appointed to deal with the administrative problems.

They were made responsible to the Governor-General in the Council. He handed over all other powers relating to justice, police, and land revenue to the District Magistrates. Dalhousie also made provision for the appointment of a Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. By the Parliamentary Act of 1853, the Governor-General was relieved of his functions as the governor of Bengal.

Military Reforms:

After the conquest of Punjab, Sindh and Avadh, the frontiers of the company were extended and the military interest of India was transferred to the North. Thus Dalhousie shifted the headquarters of the Bengal Artillery from Calcutta to Meerut. The army head-quarter was also transferred to Shimla so that the army could remain is touch with Governor-General who resided is Shimla.

Dalhousie also ordered for the general movement of troops from around Calcutta and from the lower provinces of Bengal towards the west. He could clearly foresee that the future safety of India depended upon the numerical strength of the army and on the maintenance of balance between British and Indian forces.

After some reduction in the strength of the Indian element the army stood at 2, 23,000 men in 1856, as against 45,000 Europeans. As he had no confidence in the Indians, a new Gurkha regiment was created. A new "Irregular Force" was also formed and posted in Punjab. These regiments proved to be of great assistance to the British during the revolt of 1857-58.

Railway Reforms:

Dalhousie introduced a new system of internal communication in India. He was the father of Indian Railways. Dalhousies' famous Railway Minute of 1853 convinced the home authorities of the need of the railways and laid down the main lines of their development.

He envisaged a network of railways connecting the main places with the ports and providing both for strategically needs and commercial development. The first railway line connecting Bombay with Thane was laid down in 1853. It covered a distance of twenty-six miles.

The following year a railway line was constructed from Calcutta to Raniganj coal-fields. Gradually all important cities and towns were linked up with railway lines. The railway lines were not built out of the Indian Exchequer but by private English Companies under a system of "Government Guarantee". Besides facilitating trade and commerce, minimizing distances the railways have gone a long way in uniting India.

The Electric Telegraph:

In 1852 Dalhousie introduced the Electric Telegraph System in India. The first telegraph line from Calcutta to Agra was opened in 1854, covering a distance of 800 miles. By 1857, it was extended to Lahore and Peshawar.

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In Burma a line was laid down from Rangoon to Mandalay. People could send message from one place to another place very easily by this telegraph system.

Postal Reforms:

The credit of establishing Postal Department also goes to Lord Dalhousie. In 1854 a new Post Office Act was passed. Under this system, a Director-General was appointed to supervise the work of Post Offices in all the Presidencies; a uniform rate of half-anna per letter was introduced and for the first time postage stamps were issued.

A postal Department was established for the whole country. As a result of these reforms the post offices became the sources of revenue of the government. The people were benefited by the modern postal system.

Public Works Department:

Before Lord Dalhousie, military boards were in charge of the construction of Public Works. Hence Civilian works were completely neglected by the military board. A separate Public Works Department was established by Lord Dalhousie. The Chief Works of this department was to construct roads, bridges and government buildings. The chief Engineer, other highly trained engineers were brought from England to supervise the work of construction. Irrigational works were undertaken on an extensive scale.

The construction of Ganges Canal was completed and was inaugurated on April 8, 1854. Many bridges and canals were constructed and also the construction of Grand Trunk Road was taken up. Dalhousie's special contribution was the construction of an engineering college at Roorkee and in other presidencies. He thus ranks as the father of technical education as distinct from professional education in India.

Social Reforms:

Dalhousie abolished female infanticide which was prevalent among the Rajputs of higher castes. He also abolished the practice of human sacrifice practiced by the khonds of Orissa, Madras and Central Provinces who had blind belief that the fertility of the soil would be increased by sacrificing human beings. By that time it was in practice that if any person became a convert, he was deprived of his ancestral property.

This system checked the speed of conversions in India. But Dalhousie passed the Religious Disability Act in 1850 which enabled the Hindu convert to inherit his ancestral property. Moreover, he also passed the Widow Remarriage Act in 1855 which legalized the marriage of Hindu widows. However, these reforms annoyed the people of India and became one of the reasons of the revolt of 1857.

Commercial Reforms:

Dalhousie followed the policy of free trade. Dr. Ishwari Prasad writes, "Dalhousie's commercial reforms were designed to throw open the produce and market of India to the exploitation of English Capital." All ports of India were declared free. The harbours of Karachi, Bombay and Calcutta were developed and light houses were also constructed. All the sea-trade was captured by the English merchants who had power and resources. The commercial reforms of Dalhousie spoiled the Indian trade and economic conditions of Indians became miserable.

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Educational Reforms:

Lord Dalhousie had introduced a number of reforms in the field of education. The Government did not take any step for the promotion of vernacular education. In 1854 Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control sent his recommendations known as "Wood's Despatch of 1854" to India reorganizing the whole structure of education.

The wood's dispatch laid the foundations of modern education system. It recommended Anglo Vernacular Schools throughout the districts, Government Colleges in important towns and a University in each of the three Presidencies in India.

In each province a separate department of education was to be established and it was to be placed under a Director General of Public Instruction. The government should encourage private enterprise by providing grants-in-aid to the educational institutions opened by private bodies. Dalhousie completely reorganized the department of education on the basis of Wood's recommendations.

In 1857 examining universities on the model of London University were established at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. These universities were to hold examinations and award degrees. Vernacular Schools were opened in the villages and education was imparted to the children through vernacular or regional language of the province in the Lower Classes.

Q.5 Critically evaluate British relations with the Punjab during Ranjit Singh and post Ranjit Singh period.

Ranjit Singh, also spelled **Runjit Singh**, byname **Lion of the Punjab**, (born November 13, 1780, Budrukhan, or Gujranwala [now in Pakistan]—died June 27, 1839, Lahore [now in Pakistan]), founder and maharaja (1801–39) of the Sikh kingdom of the Punjab.

Ranjit Singh was the first Indian in a millennium to turn the tide of invasion back into the homelands of the traditional conquerors of India, the Pashtuns (Afghans), and he thus became known as the Lion of the Punjab. At their height, his domains extended from the Khyber Pass in the northwest to the Sutlej River in the east and from the Kashmir region at the northern limit of the Indian subcontinent southward to the Thar (Great Indian) Desert. Although he was uneducated, he was a shrewd judge of people and events, free from religious bigotry, and was mild in the treatment of his adversaries.

Ranjit Singh was reported to be short and unattractive. He was blind in one eye and had a face pitted with pockmarks. A lover of life, he liked to surround himself with handsome men and women, and he had a passion for hunting, horses, and strong liquor.

He was the only child of Maha Singh, on whose death in 1792 he became chief of the Shukerchakias, a Sikh group. His inheritance included Gujranwala town and the surrounding villages, now in Pakistan. At 15 he married the daughter of a chieftain of the Kanhayas, and for many years his affairs were directed by his ambitious mother-in-law, the widow Sada Kaur. A second marriage, to a girl of the Nakkais, made Ranjit Singh preeminent among the clans of the Sikh confederacy.

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In July 1799 he seized Lahore, the capital of the Punjab (now the capital of Punjab province, Pakistan). The Afghan king, Zamān Shah, confirmed Ranjit Singh as governor of the city, but in 1801 Ranjit Singh proclaimed himself maharaja of the Punjab. He had coins struck in the name of the Sikh Gurus, the revered line of Sikh leaders, and proceeded to administer the state in the name of the Sikh commonwealth. A year later he captured Amritsar (now in Punjab state, India), the most-important commercial entrepôt in northern India and sacred city of the Sikhs. Thereafter, he proceeded to subdue the smaller Sikh and Pashtun principalities that were scattered throughout the Punjab.

His later forays eastward, however, were checked by the English. By a treaty with them, signed in 1806, he agreed to expel a Maratha force that had sought refuge in the Punjab. The English then thwarted his ambition to bring together all of the Sikh territories extending up to the vicinity of Delhi. In 1809 they compelled him to sign the Treaty of Amritsar, which fixed the Sutlej River as the eastern boundary of his territories.

Ranjit Singh then turned his ambitions in other directions. In December 1809 he went to the aid of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra in the Lesser Himalayas (in what is now western Himachal Pradesh state) and, after defeating an advancing Ghurka force, acquired Kangra for himself. In 1813 he joined a Bārakzay Afghan expedition into Kashmir. Although the Bārakzays betrayed him by keeping Kashmir for themselves, he more than settled scores with them by rescuing Shah Shojāʿ—brother of Zamān Shah, who had been deposed as Afghan king in 1803 and had fled from the Bārakzays—and by occupying the fort at Attock on the Indus River, southeast of Peshawar, the Pashtun citadel. Shah Shojāʿ was taken to Lahore and pressured into parting with the famous Koh-i-noor diamond. In the summer of 1818 Ranjit Singh's troops captured the city of Multan, and six months later they entered Peshawar. In July 1819 he finally expelled the Pashtuns from the Vale of Kashmir, and by 1820 he had consolidated his rule over the whole Punjab between the Sutlej and Indus rivers. All Ranjit Singh's conquests were achieved by Punjabi armies composed of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. His commanders were also drawn from different religious communities, as were his cabinet ministers. In 1820 Ranjit Singh began to modernize his army, using European officers—many of whom had served in the army of Napoleon I—to train the infantry and the artillery. The modernized Punjabi army fought well in campaigns in the North-West Frontier (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan, on the Afghanistan border), including quelling an uprising by tribesmen there in 1831 and repulsing an Afghan counterattack on Peshawar in 1837.

In October 1831 Ranjit Singh met with British officials regarding the disposition of Sindh province (now in southeastern Pakistan). The British, who had already begun to navigate the Indus River and were eager to keep Sindh for themselves, prevailed on Ranjit Singh to accept their plan. Ranjit Singh, however, was chagrined by the British design to put a cordon around him. He opened negotiations with the Afghans and sanctioned an expedition led by the Dogra commander Zorawar Singh that extended Ranjit Singh's northern territories into Ladakh in 1834.

In 1838 he agreed to a treaty with the British viceroy Lord Auckland to restore Shah Shojāʿ to the Afghan throne at Kabul. In pursuance of that agreement, the British Army of the Indus entered Afghanistan from the

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south, while Ranjit Singh's troops went through the Khyber Pass and took part in the victory parade in Kabul. Shortly afterward, Ranjit Singh was taken ill, and he died at Lahore in June 1839—almost exactly 40 years after he entered the city as a conqueror. In little more than six years after his death, the Sikh state he had created collapsed because of the internecine strife of rival chiefs.

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