

kingdoms. By 1765, notice how another power, the British, had successfully grabbed major chunks of territory in eastern India. What these maps tell us is that political conditions in eighteenth-century India changed quite dramatically and within a relatively short span of time.

In this chapter we will read about the emergence of new political groups in the subcontinent during the first half of the eighteenth century – roughly from 1707, when Aurangzeb died, till the third battle of Panipat in 1761.



Map 2
British territories in the mid-eighteenth century.

The Crisis of the Empire and the Later Mughals

In Chapter 4 you saw how the Mughal Empire reached the height of its success and started facing a variety of crises towards the closing years of the seventeenth century. These were caused by a number of factors. Emperor Aurangzeb had depleted the military and financial resources of his empire by fighting a long war in the Deccan.

Under his successors, the efficiency of the imperial administration broke down. It became increasingly difficult for the later Mughal emperors to keep a check on their powerful *mansabdars*. Nobles appointed as

?
See Chapter 4, Table 1. Which group of people challenged Mughal authority for the longest time in Aurangzeb's reign?

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