

DECLINE OF MUGHAL EMPIRE (PART-1)

मुगल साम्राज्य का पतन (भाग-1)

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DR. MD. NEYAZ HUSSAIN

PROFESSOR & HOD

PG DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

MAHARAJA COLLEGE, VKSU, ARA(BIHAR)



INTRODUCTION (परिचय)

The period of the Great Mughals, which began in 1526 A.D. with Babur's accession to the throne, ended with the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. Aurangzeb's death marked the end of an era in Indian history. When Aurangzeb died, the empire of the Mughals was the largest in India. Yet, within about fifty years of his death, the Mughal Empire disintegrated. The signs of degeneration were unmistakably visible in the institutions and systems intrinsic to its cultural character and administrative policies.



INTRODUCTION (परिचय)



The general rot that had begun to set in during the reign of Aurangzeb could not be curtailed by his weak successors, and the recurrent war of succession worsened the situation further. The Mughal army too was weakened by a dearth of able commanders; there was no further introduction of military reforms or new technologies as had been done by Akbar. The political situation in Northern India clearly indicated the waning of the glorious days of the Mughal Empire.

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE (पतन के कारण)

There are several reasons identified by historians for the decline and disintegration of the mighty Mughal Empire

Causes of the decline of the Mughal Empire:

1. Weak Successors:

The Mughals did not follow any law of succession like the law of primogeniture. Consequently, each time a ruler died, a war of succession between the brothers for



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the throne started. This weakened the Mughal Empire, especially after Aurangzeb. The nobles, by siding with one contender or the other, increased their own power. The successors of Aurangzeb were weak and became victims of the intrigues and conspiracies of the faction-ridden nobles. They were inefficient generals and incapable of suppressing revolts. The absence of a strong ruler, an efficient bureaucracy and a capable army had made the Mughal Empire weak.

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2. Degeneration of the Mughal Nobility:

The history of India of the time of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan was made by Bairam Khan, Munim Khan, Muzaffar Khan and Abdur Rahim Khan Khana , Itmad Ud daulah and Mahababat Khan, Asaf Khan and Saadulla khan. But with the decline in the character of the later Mughal Emperors decline also set in the character of the nobility wealth and leisure which the foreign Muslims acquired in India fostered luxury and sloth and the presence of many women in their harems encouraged debauchery, which, in their turn, undermined their character and love of adventure. Consequently, physical, moral and intellectual degeneration overtook the governing classes

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3. *Aurangzeb's Religious persecution of the Hindus:*

Aurangzeb failed to realize that the vast Mughal Empire depended on the willing support of the people. He lost the support of the Rajputs who had contributed greatly to the strength of the Empire. They had acted as pillars of support, but Aurangzeb's policy turned them to bitter foes. The wars with the Sikhs, the Marathas, the Jats and the Rajputs had drained the resources of the Mughal Empire.

Akbar had won over the Hindus by giving them religious toleration and opening careers to talent irrespective of caste, race or creed. He had enlisted Hindu

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Warrior tribes, chiefly the Rajput as reliable defenders of his throne. The Rajputs under him and his three immediate successors had carried the Mughal banner to the extreme corner of the subcontinent of India and also into the heart of Central Asia. But Aurangzeb re impose the hated *jiziya* on the Hindus, distrusted the Rajputs and made an unworthy attempt to convert the heir to the gaddi of Marwar to Islam. Hence the Rajputs, were alienated and were determined to fight the Mughal oppressor. The Rathors and Sisodias remained practically in rebellion till the downfall of the Empire. Their example was followed by the Bundelas and the Sikhs.

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4. Demoralization of the Mughal Army:

The demoralization of the Mughal Army was the another major reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire the Mughal army which by origin and composition was weak and defective. It consisted chiefly of contingents recruited and maintained by the high offices and nobles who were assigned revenues of large tract of the country for their maintenance. On account of this the individual soldier looked upon his *mansabdar* as his chief and not as his officer. There was no touch between the emperor and the individual soldiers who were paid by their, commander or *mansabdar* and not directly from the Royal treasury. The inherent defects of this radically and sound system work aggravated during the reign of Aurangzeb and his successors.

CAUSES OF THE DECLINE (पतन के कारण)

As the authority of the later Mughal emperors relaxed, the great nobles or officers of the empire began to convert the assignment which they held for maintaining troops, into their hereditary possessions. This left the emperor without a strong body of personal troops to enable him to assert his authority. Besides, on account of the weakness of imperial authority the *mansabdars* became so jealous of one another that a commander often deliberately refrain from bringing three-fourth won battle or a siege to a successful conclusion, if he felt that another officer would share the credit of a success.

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It became the habit of the Mughal officers from the last quarter of the 17th century to be in treacherous correspondence with the enemy. As the emperor and the Mir Bakshi themselves lacked ability and firmness of character they could not enforce proper discipline in the army which was reduced to a well-armed mob. Military crimes were overlooked even by Aurangzeb and no regular punishments were inflicted for dereliction of duty. For this reason the army which had carried the Mughal banners to the extreme corners of the country and even beyond to the river Oxus and the Helmand in Central Asia became useless for offence and defenses. **(To be continued)**