

DECLINE OF MUGHAL EMPIRE (PART-2)

मुगल साम्राज्य का पतन (भाग-2)

UG SEM-5 PAPER-MJC -9

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CAUSES OF THE DECLINE (पतन के कारण)

➤ 5. *Economic Bankruptcy:*

Shah Jahan's zeal for construction had depleted the treasury. As well as Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb's long war in the south had further drained the exchequer. They increased the state demand to one half of the produce of the soil and as the revenue demand rose, the production fell in the same proportion. The cultivators began deserting their fields but they were compelled by force to carry on the cultivation. Bankruptcy began to stare the Mughal government in the face in the times of Aurangzeb and his successors who had to fight many wars to gain the throne and retain it.

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The economic collapse came in the time of Alamgir II (1754-1759) who was starved and the revenues even of the royal privy purse-estate were usurped by the unscrupulous Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. A month and a half after his accession, Alamgir II had no suitable convenience to enable him to ride in procession to the *Idgah* and he had to walk on foot from the harem to the stone mosque of the Fort. The wonder is that the bankrupt Mughal government lasted for another 50 years.

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➤ 6. *Invasions:*

Foreign invasions sapped the remaining strength of the Mughals and hastened the process of disintegration. The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali resulted in further drainage of wealth. These invasions shook the very stability of the empire.

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► ***7. Size of the Empire and Challenge from Regional Powers:***

The Mughal Empire had become too large to be controlled by any ruler from one centre i.e. Delhi. The Great Mughals were efficient and exercised control over ministers and army, but the later Mughals were poor administrators. As a result, the distant provinces became independent. The rise of independent states led to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire.

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➡ 8. Aurangzeb's Deccan Policy:

Aurangzeb Deccan policy which cause the destruction of the best soldiers and undermined the Mughul prestige beyond repair, contributed materially to the downfall of his dynasty. He destroyed the *Shia* Kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda and waged a long, endless war for extermination against the Marathas. This obliged the hardy Marathas to fight in self-defense and when success came to them they were encouraged to take up the offensive, cross the Narmada and invade the Mughal provinces in Northern India.

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The Hindus in Northern India were already alienated by Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution and the Hindu officers and vassals of the empire were either indifferent or secretly hostile to the Mughal cause. This creates opportunity for the Marathas. They appealed to the common sentiments of Rajput and of the Hindus who secretly allied themselves with Bajirao when the latter boldly proceeded to execute his policy of striking at the withering trunk of the Mughal Empire in the belief that after the fall of that Empire the independent provincial Muslim dynasty would fall of them.

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Thus, within thirty one years of Aurangzeb's death, his successor had to wage war with the sikhs, Jats, Bundelas, Rathores, kachhwahas and Sisodias and no Hindu tribe of military value was left on their side.

The Emperor's long absence from Northern India lead too many provincial governors becoming independent, with some regions even turning turbulent .The long Deccan wars of Aurangzeb, thus, contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

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► 9. The Jagirdari Crisis:

The Mughal emperor was a highly centralized bureaucratized structure with the emperor at the top his vitality depending upon the strength of the military aristocracy, who were placed just below him. With the introduction of the mansabdari system in civil and military organisation in the late 16th century Akbar, had accommodated the aristocracy within this structure. Those mansabdars who were not paid in cash were awarded a *jagir* or landed estate in lieu of salary.

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They were the *jagirdars* who were required to collect the revenue from the particular *jagir* of which one part would go to the state and the other two parts would cover his personal expenses and the maintenance allowances for his soldiers and horses. During the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, the number of *jagirdars* appointed had risen to such a great number that there was a serious shortage of *paibaqi land* (land earmarked to be given as *jagirs*). This decrease in the resources of the Empire ruptured the functional relationship between the emperor and the aristocracy indicating the beginning of inefficiency within the imperial Mughal administrative system.

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As a result of this economic crisis in the 18th century the various ethno-religious group within the aristocracy began competing each other. About four-fifths of the land revenue of the Mughal Empires was under the control of mansabdars and jagirdars; but this income was unevenly distributed among them, creating jealousies within the aristocracy-particularly at the time when the resources of the Empire were diminishing.

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This economic situation known as the '**jagirdari crisis**' of the 18th century- has been defined by Satish chandra in the following words, 'the available social surplus was insufficient to defray the cost of administration, pay for Wars of one type or another and to give the ruling classes a standard of living in keeping with its expectations'. In this situation the actual revenue collection was much less than what had been estimated, there by diminishing the expected income of the *jagirdars*.

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The crises increased during the last year of Aurangzeb's reign mainly because of the Deccan war, since a greater number of mansabdars was required, the ensuing political turmoil made the collection of revenue a more difficult task. The jagirdari crisis led to an unhealthy competition to gain control over the fertile jagir. This added to the already existing factionalism at Court after the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712 A.D. the problem intensified as low ranking officials now found it difficult to maintain their lifestyle with the meager amount they got from the jagirs.

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As a result of several diverse yet interrelated factors led to the decline of the Mughal Empire with dramatic suddenness within a few decades following the death of Aurangzeb. The period of the great Mughals, which constitutes a glorious era in medieval Indian history ended in this manner, yielding way to the establishment of many independent regional Kingdom in its wake.

(To be continued)