

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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DECLINE OF MUGHAL EMPIRE

Q: The policies of Aurangzeb were the main reason for the decline of Mughal Empire. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.[14]

ANS: The policies of Aurangzeb were one of the main reasons for the decline of Mughal Empire. Historians are divided about Aurangzeb's attitude towards religion. Some says that he was intolerant and wanted to destroy other religions. They point out that he reintroduced non-Muslims tax *Jizya*. He destroyed a number of Hindu temples and he also tried to ban some of Hindu practices such as Suttee. He also enforced Islamic law making Hindu and Sikhs live according to Quran. Perhaps much of the criticism is the result of his austere measures, such as appointing censors of public morals, banning the consumption of alcohol, and stopping singing and dancing at court and even determining maximum length for beards. But there were also many other reasons for the decline of Mughal Empire:

1) ADMINISTRATION:

The huge Empire was very difficult to administer. Decisions were often relayed over thousands of miles. Obviously the Emperor could not know exactly what was happening in every part of the Empire. This is the reason why Aurangzeb started the use of Mansabdars, but many problems remained when the rebellion broke out it was many months before that the Emperor could know exactly and take decisive action to end them.

2) MILITARY COSTS:

The Mughal Empire was very huge and within the Empire there was an array of different people and religion. The Emperors were continually fighting against rebellions; there was always a pressure on the Empire from the separatist elements. The cost of putting down rebellion and fighting wars against invaders such as Nadir Shah was enormous.

3) SUCCESSION:

It was often true that huge sums were wasted when an Emperor died there was a succession dispute. When Shah Jahan fell sick in 1657 all his four sons ended up

fighting to succeed him-even though he had not yet died! It was to avoid costly wars that Aurangzeb decided to divide the Empire between his three sons but this was not successful and the succession dispute continued to erode the Empire.

4) DECLINING MILITARY EXPERTISE:

When dynasties are in great power over for long periods it is easy to become complacent and to imagine the success will continue forever. This happened with the Mughal Empire who let their army's expertise decline until it was no longer an effective fighting force. When it became obvious that the Mughal strength was declining discontented groups within the Empire were quick to act.

5) PLEASURE SEEKING:

The wealth created by the Mughals also encouraged the nobility to become pleasure loving and degenerate. They betrayed the Principles of Islam and instead enjoyed pleasures brought about by wealth. Nobles often had finest clothes, Jewellery and food. One friend of Akbar is to have ordered 100 courses at each meal. The Emperors also set a poor example. Fine buildings were a symbol of power and culture, but some times they were so expensive that they were the symbol of extravagance.

6) WEAK CONTROL:

The nobility grew highly powerful at the court and some Emperors find it difficult to control them. (Some such as Allamgir II was assassinated by powerful courtiers) With the weak control from the center mansabdari system was not sufficiently supervised administration efficiency declined. Discontent grew and revenue from tax collection declined.

7) THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH:

Since the time of Jehangir the English East India Company (EIC) tried to take advantage of the wealth to be gained by India. The EIC was a private trading company but behind it was the Government of the most powerful country in the world. England had been the first country to experience industrial revolution. Its industries were producing cheap manufactured goods which were sold all over the world. With the wealth this created the British could afford a military strength that the Mughals could not match. The weaknesses of the Empire together with the strength of the British meant that decline of one of the mightiest dynasties in History was inevitable.

Q: Assess the reasons for the down fall of the Mughal Empire from the time of Aurangzeb until 1857? [7-14]



ANS: There were many reasons for the decline of Mughal Empire. Some reasons are as follows:

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So, because of the reasons above the decline of Mughal Empire after Aurangzeb was inevitable.

Q: Briefly explain three reasons for the decline Mughal Empire? [7]

ANS: There were many reasons for the decline of Mughal Empire. But the most important reasons were:

- 1) The arrival of the British
- 2) Administration
- 3) Succession

1) THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRITISH:

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2) ADMINISTRATION:



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Q: Aurangzeb's successors failed to live up his courageous and determined personality. Was this the most important reason for the decline of Mughal Empire? Give reasons for your answer. [14]

ANS: Yes this was one of the main reasons for the decline of Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb had become Emperor by defeating his rivals in the battle. He was determined to avoid such a war after his death. So he divided the Empire between his three sons but he did not succeed fighting broke out between them. And eventually Prince Muazzam established himself as an Emperor. He survived only a few years then his four sons fought over the throne, but the victor Jahandur Shah was murdered with in the year. In the ten years after Aurangzeb's death, twelve people claim to be Emperor at one time! The stable Mughal Empire had become weak and divided.

Muhammad Shah became Emperor in 1719 and ruled for almost thirty years, but he faced too much opposition, that he was really the last Mughal leader who could claim to be Emperor.

By 1784 the Mughal Empire was degenerating rapidly. The weaknesses of the Empire could be seen by the fact that much of the resistance to Ahmad Shah came not from the Mughal army but from the Marathas who were winning control of much of Southern India. Ahmad Shah Durrani stopped them capturing Delhi and helped place Muhammad Shah's son, Ahmad Shah on the throne. However the Empire he ruled was shrinking rapidly, as unrest in the Empire continued to increase. Indeed, Ahmad Shah was imprisoned by his own court and died in captivity. His successor, Allamgir II, was assassinated on the orders of his chief Minister and the next emperor, Shah Alam II remained in Bihar and chose not to

return to Delhi for another twelve years. In 1764 he suffered defeat at the hands of the British at the Battle of Buxar.

Shah Alam's defeat led to the British taking control of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. In 1803 they also occupied Delhi and placed the Emperor under the "British Protection". The British were now gaining a stranglehold on India and the final two emperors ruled in name only. Shah Alam's son Akbar II ruled parts of Delhi but little more. His son, Bahadur Shah II was expelled for his part in the 1857 War of Independence and died in exile in Rangoon. The once mighty Mughal Empire was over. But there were many other reasons for the disintegration of the Mughal Empire:

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Q: The arrival of the British was the main reason for the decline of Mughal Empire. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer. [14]

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Q: Aurangzeb was a pious and austere man. Elaborate it. [4]

ANS: Historians are divided about Aurangzeb's attitude towards religion. Some says that he was intolerant and wanted to destroy other religions. They point out that he reintroduced non-Muslims tax *Jizya*. He destroyed a number of Hindu

Prepared By:



temples and he also tried to ban some of Hindu practices such as Suttee. He also enforced Islamic law making Hindu and Sikhs live according to Quran. According to an Italian who visited India during Aurangzeb's period and wrote a book called "The History of Mughals". Aurangzeb says "My kingdom is full of Mosques instead of the most hideous temples. Instead of the most poisonous inns and brothels we have find group of holy men". But despite what Aurangzeb says in his Kingdom every day the most monstrous crimes in the world are committed! Perhaps much of the criticism is the result of his austere measures, such as appointing censors of public morals, banning the consumption of alcohol, and stopping singing and dancing at court and even determining maximum length for beards. "The history of Aurangzeb" written by an official in his court in 1668. Aurangzeb keeps fast on Fridays and during the month of Ramadan. He does not eat forbidden meals and does not listen to music in his court, no wicked talk, no backbiting or lying was allowed.

Q: Why was Aurangzeb unpopular? [7]

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Q: How the foreign invaders disintegrate the Mughal Empire? [4]

ANS: In 1738 the Persian leader Nadir shah invaded the Mughal. He defeated Muhammad Shah's forces at Kornal in 1739. After that he captures and sacked Delhi, taking over territories west of the Indus.

Nadir Shah did not intend to make himself emperor, but only to win as much booty as possible. When he left after two months he took huge amounts of gold and jewels. He also took the prestige of the Mughals. Now people saw how weak the Empire had become.

In 1747 an Afghan general called Ahmad Shah Duranni attacked Kabul, Peshawar and Lahore. By 1749 he had gained the control of Punjab and by 1856 he added Kashmir and Multan to his possessions.

