

continent under a single rule, with notable emperors.)

Topic:

Causes of Muslim Downfall

The fall of the Mughal empire began in 1707 CE, after Aurangzeb's death. Even though Mughal rulers were still in power, they didn't hold the same power as the previous ones. The factors contributed to the downfall of Muslims are:

- Internal Factors
- External Factors

Internal Factors

The internal factors are:

- Wars of Succession
- Incompetent Successors of Aurangzeb
- Moral Decadence

- Internal Intrigues
- Demoralized & undisciplined army
- Faltered economy
- Lagging in Education.
- Rise of independent Dynasties
- Sway from religion

1. Wars of Succession

The bloody and bitter wars of succession constitute one of the most important factors that led to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

The Mughals didn't have clear rules for deciding who would become the next ruler. Whenever a ruler died, there appeared many princes to claim for the right to succession. There was a war among them. Because of this, the nobles and the army would split into different groups. This weakened the government's power & reputation. Many skilled generals were killed during these succession wars. Death of

Aurangzeb was followed by infighting b/w his sons. The eldest son Azam Shah and Bahadur Shah I were fighting for the throne. After assembling his army, Bahadur Shah attacked & defeated Azam Shah. Similar

2. Incompetent Successors of Aurangzeb

Fissures in the Mughal Empire began to appear after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707. The successors of Aurangzeb were not competent enough to administer the vast Mughal Empire. After Aurangzeb's death, laxity had set in and the end of Mughals came when there were no noteworthy rulers left. Rulers like Muhammad Shah Rangila and Jahandar Shah were most interested in singing & dancing than in governing the empire. A contemporary historian Khafi Khan wrote:

“In the brief reign of Jahandar, violence had full sway. It was a

fine time for minstrels & singers & all the tribes of dancers and actors."

3. Moral Decadence

The successors of Aurangzeb were morally depraved. The degeneration of the rulers had also led to the moral degeneration of the nobility. The Mughal nobility as a whole degenerated into a pleasure loving and dissipated group. The character of Mughal kings had deteriorated over a period of time. They were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become case loving and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties & were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. Under the early Mughals, the nobles performed useful functions and distinguished themselves both in war and peace. But the elite under the later Mughals was more interested in worldly

pursuit and self-enhancement. The nobles who had once been talented men with integrity, honesty, and loyalty, turned selfish and deceitful.

4- Internal Intrigues

Internal intrigues had become a routine affair during the waning days of Mughal Empire. The court was divided along sectarian and ethnic lines and each group was wary of the others. The Afghans were against Persians whereas Hindus were intriguing against the Muslims. Instead of paying attention towards administration and countering rising dangers, infighting among the nobles accelerated the demise of the once mighty Mughal Empire.

Mir Jafar, was a close associate of the ^{Singh and Daulan} Nawab of Bengal, colluded with the British when they invaded Bengal.

Mir Jafar helped the Robert Clive by revealing the secret passages into the fort. After the Battle of Plassey, he was appointed the Nawab of Bengal.

for this help.

5. Demoralised and Undisciplined Army

One of the most potent cause of the the fall of the Mughal Empire was the deterioration and demoralization of the army. The military had not only become inefficient but also lack in training, discipline and cohesion. It consisted of contingents maintained by various nobles which was the main source of army's weakness. As the weakening of the nobles occurred, so did the army. This was because of the soldiers, instead of identifying and uniting a Mughal Indians, identified themselves with different ethnic groups like Persian, Afghans, and Central Asians. In the 16th century, when European nations came to India, they took advantage of the weakness of the Mughal army and took control of their territories.

"Discipline is the soul of an army."

(George Washington)

6- Flattered Economy

Another reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire was their terrible financial situation. The wars for power, rebellions, and extravagant lifestyle of the rulers had emptied the treasury and caused financial ruin. Shah Jahan's ambitious idea of building the Taj Mahal had depleted the resources, and Aurangzeb's war in the South didn't help matters. The production of crops fell as the revenue demand rose. Battles were fought to choose the successors as well. All these incidents led to the Mughal empire becoming bankrupt. The economic collapse was more evident during the rule of Alamgir II. Their bankruptcy went on for 50 years.

7) Lagging in Education

(During the time when Muslims were in charge, education was mainly controlled by religious institutions that were managed by trusts. However, when the British took over, they took away these trusts. Because of this, Muslims fell behind in education. They didn't work together with the conquerors and they didn't want to learn the English language, which was imp. for modern science. This backwardness had a big impact on their economy and political lives. As a result, Hindus took up important positions in government office while Muslims were left behind in all areas of life.)

(Mughal rulers failed miserably to devote even a fraction of their treasuries on anything resembling modern education. Aurangzeb was especially sceptical about the relevance of modern science and technology. Whereas

the British had begun to invest on modern science and technology).

"Education is the man's
cheapest defence."

(Edmund Burke)

8- Rise of Independent Dynasties

During the time of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire had expanded to reach its vastest size, extending from Afghanistan to Assam and from Kashmir to Mysore.

This vast area had become impossible for one ruler to control and govern from one center. Communications were difficult, distances were enormous. It was during the later

Mughals that Deccan, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa declared their independence.

This not only caused loss of revenue but also exposed the fallacy of the once mighty Mughal

Empire. 1* Due to weak central government, the Marhatas & Sikhs rose in rebellion and started to challenge the Mughals.

9- Sway from Religion

Another factor contributing to the decline was Muslims Sway from Religion. Akbar started a new religion called 'Deen-e-Ilahi', ^{but} some of his actions went against the teachings of Islam. This caused a lot of damage to his empire & eventually led to its decline. Moreover, the loss of spirit of Jehad became another cause of downfall. The idea of Jehad, which means fighting for the Islamic government, has always been the main driving force. However, Akbar weakened this spirit by favoring Hindus over Muslims.

وہ زمانے میں معزز تھے مسلمان ہو کر
اور تم خوار ہوئے تارک قرآن ہو کر

(اقبال)

Translation:

They were respected in their time by being Muslim; and you were disgraced by being Tarik-e-Quran.

External factors

The external factors are:

- Absence of Naval Power
- Incursion of Nadir Shah
- Attack by Ahmed Shah Abdali
- Rise of British.

1. Absence of Naval Power

The Muslim rulers in the subcontinent didn't think navy was important, but the European countries had strong fleets that made them powerful in coastal areas. They could easily take over new lands using their navy. The Muslims didn't have a navy to protect their coastal territories. It is mentioned in the book The Proudest Day: India's Long Road to Independence written by Anthony Read and David Fisher which states:

"It was not until 29 November, 1612.

when Captain Thomas Best sailed the good ship Red Dragon into Surat harbour and used his cannons to rout four Portuguese galleons and 'a whole fleet of frigates', that the Mughal attitude to the English changed. With no sea power of their own, the Mughals had depended on the Portuguese to escort their annual pilgrim voyages across the Arabian sea to Mecca. After Best's impressive display, they turned to the English for protection at sea, and when the company's next ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, presented himself in 1615, he was well received.

It was this weakness that the French & the British used to their advantage, and were eventually able to establish their control over India.

2 - Incursion of Nadir Shah

In 1738, the Persian king Nadir Shah attacked Delhi, and defeated the Mughal king Muhammad Shah Rangila. This attack was a big blow to the Mughal Kingdom. He sacked Delhi, slaughtering thousands of people and looting all the wealth of the Mughals including the famous Peacock throne and the Kohinoor diamond. The invasion laid bare the weakness of the Mughal Empire and Kabul, Sindh and West Punjab were never to be under Mughal rule again. The invaders caused a lot of destruction in Delhi which harmed the country's economy and made the Mughal Emperor lose his respect.

3 - Attack by Ahmed Shah Abdali

After the incursion of Nadir Shah, the Marathas weakened the Mughals even more. Between 1748 and 1761, Afghan general Ahmed Shah Abdali launched five attacks into the sub-continent.

In the final attack, he defeated the Marathas at the third Battle of Panipat but it again brought to light the weakness of the Mughals. Consequently, British felt emboldened and kick started their own campaigns to capture territory in the subcontinent.

4- Rise of British

British had come into the subcontinent as traders but soon their trade activities metamorphosed into political activities.

They took advantage of the internal chaos and instability. Owing to the decline of Mughals, the British started to capture territories in the subcontinent.

The foundation of the British rule in the subcontinent was laid after the defeat of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula at the Battle of Plassey in 1757. They made secret plans with Meer Jafar and took control of Bengal. The wealth of Bengal helped them succeed in the wars b/w

the English and French in Deccan region. In Mysore, they convinced Meer Saadiq to betray Tipu Sultan. They used their superior military power and clever strategies to weaken the Muslim government and achieve their imperialistic goals. After the failed Independence War in 1857, they ended Muslim rule and gained control over the entire subcontinent.

“The paramount power of the Great Mughal was broken by the Mughal viceroys. The power of viceroys was broken by the Marathas. The power of Marathas was broken by the Afghans, and while all were struggling against all, the British rushed in and were able to subdue them all.”

Karl Marx, New York Daily Tribune,
August 8, 1853

Conclusion:

The fall of the Mughals was a result of numerous events that took place during an extended period of time and the wrong decisions of the emperors. However, the major issues that were especially responsible for this fall were the wars on succession, deterioration of army, incompetent successors of Aurangzeb, foreign invasion and the lack of administrative skills.

Critical Analysis:

Current Scenario of Muslim Around the Globe

Most of the Islamic world is in turmoil. They are economically, diplomatically and developmentally weak. The causes are same to the ones that resulted in the weakening of the Mughal empire. The major reasons are the internal conspiracies, lagging in education, moral decadence, ~~and~~ ignoring public

welfare, Sway from religion and instable economy.

Suggestive steps to counter the challenges faced by Muslim Ummah

Getting close
to Allah Almighty

Economic development
framework

Unification of
Muslim Ummah

Countering the
Political crises

Ending the sectarian
violence

Focus on Educational
and technological
development