

NEXT IAS

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History of Modern India

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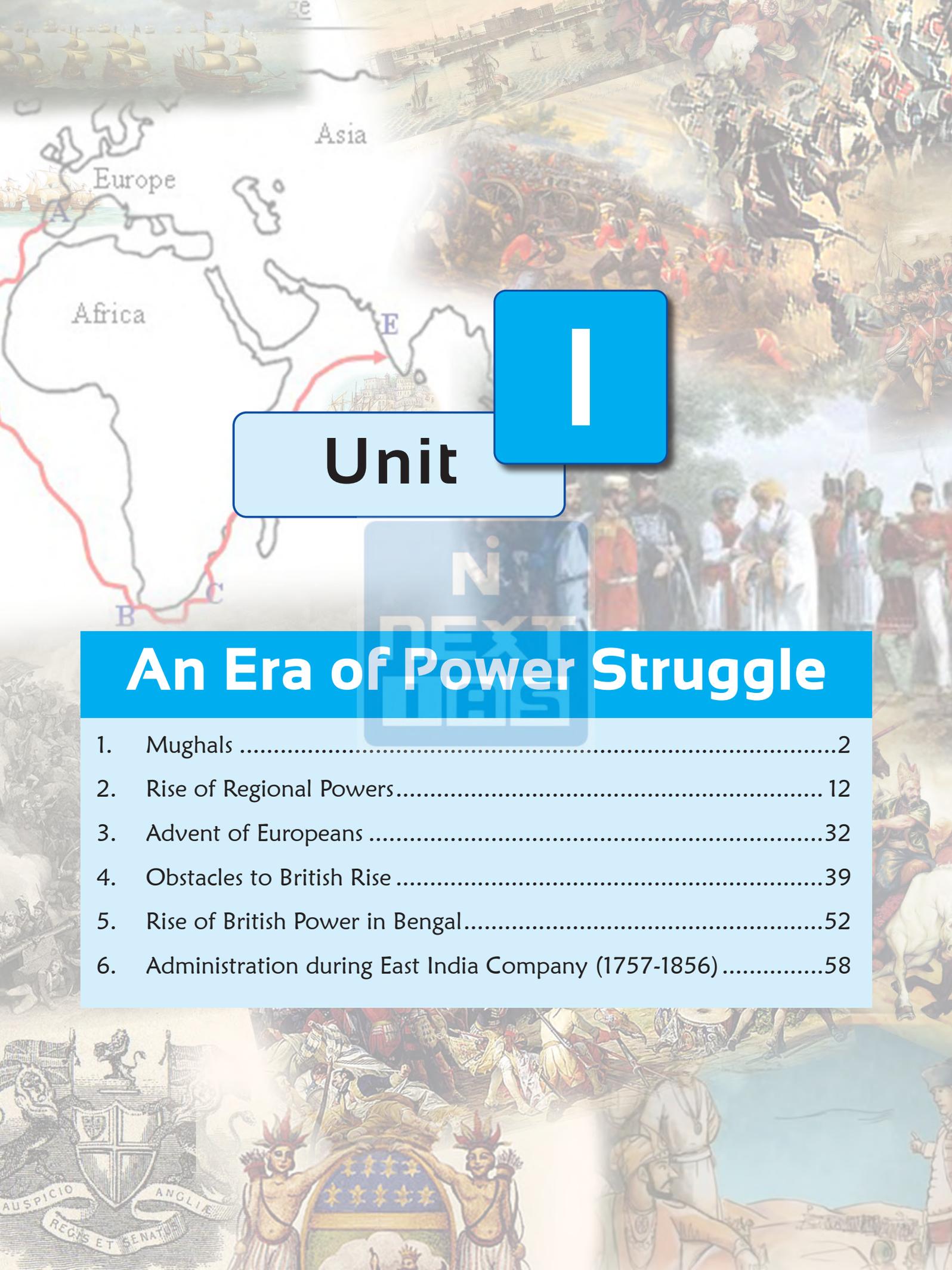
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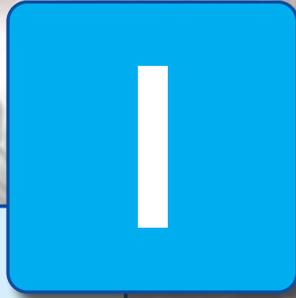


Asia

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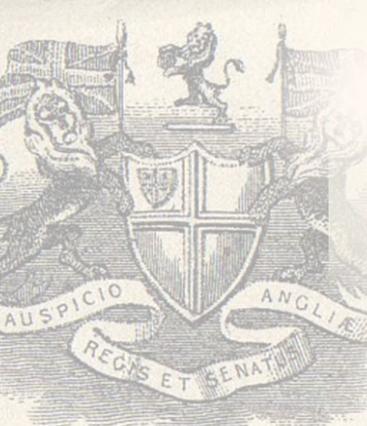
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Unit



An Era of Power Struggle

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1.1 Development of the Mughal Empire

The word 'Mughals' derives from the Mongols, a nomadic tribe native to Mongolia. In the thirteenth century A.D. Chengez (Genghis) Khan united fragmented groups of Mongol people to lay the foundation of the Mongol Empire, which straddled across Asia and Europe during the thirteenth and fourteenth century A.D. Later in the fourteenth century, Timur, a Barlas Turk, proclaimed himself as the son in law of the Genghis Khanid dynasty and declared himself as an independent sovereign. Babur a descendent of Chengez (Genghis) Khan founded the Mughal Empire in India by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the first battle of Panipat in 1526.

Babur

Babur's ancestor, Timur, had largely benefited of his Indian adventure. Timur had annexed some areas of Punjab, which remained with his successors for several generations. When Babur conquered Afghanistan, he felt he had right over these areas. This conquest made him think of the conquest of India.



Babur

Reasons for Conquest of India

Like myriad earlier invaders of India from Central Asia, Babur too was drawn towards India by the lure of its wealth. Babur was looking towards India as a place which could add to his meager revenue from Kabul. Moreover, he was apprehensive of the attack of Uzbeks on Kabul, because of which he considered India as a suitable base for refuge and also to carry out operations against Uzbeks. Also, the splintered political conditions of India suited Babur. He also received embassies from Afghan chief Daulat Khan Lodi and Rana Sanga, requesting him to invade India.

By defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat (20 April 1526), Babur established his control up to Delhi and Agra. But presence of Babur in the Indo-Gangetic valley was a threat to Rana Sanga. While Sanga wanted to confine Babur to Punjab, Babur accused Sanga of breach of agreement as Sanga did not join him against Ibrahim

Lodi. The armies of Babur and Rana Sanga eventually fought the Battle of Khanwa in 1527, where Sanga was defeated.



Painting of First Battle of Panipat

The Battle of Khanwa secured Babur's position in the Delhi-Agra region. He then led a campaign (Battle of Chanderi) against Medini Rai of Chanderi in 1528, in which he captured Chanderi.



Painting of Battle of Khanwa

But, the Afghans who were dominant in eastern Uttar Pradesh were not reconciled. In 1529, Babur started a campaign (Battle of Ghaghara) against them but could not win a decisive victory. He signed an agreement with Afghan chiefs, who were allowed to rule over Bihar. Shortly after, Babur died on 26th December 1530.

Although Babur was an orthodox Sunni, he was not bigot. He was one of the two important writers in the Turkish language. He wrote 'Tuzuk-i-Baburi'.

Significance of Babur’s Conquest of India

1. He brought Kabul and Qandhar within the North Indian Empire, which
 - secured the North-west frontier for almost 200 years.
 - increased India’s share of trade with China and Mediterranean seaports.
2. Defeat of Lodi’s and the Rajput confederacy under Sanga, eventually led to the formation of an all-India Mughal empire.
3. A new mode of warfare began in India. Although already known, Babur popularized gunpowder and artillery in India.
4. He formed a state based on strength and prestige of the crown.

Humayun

Humayun succeeded Babur in 1530. He had various challenges in the form of consolidation of the infant Mughal empire, timurid tradition of dividing the empire among all the brothers, the Afghans who were thinking of expelling Mughals from India and growing power of Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. Shortly, Humayun undertook Gujarat campaign. He won both Gujarat and Malwa from Bahadur Shah, but also lost them in a quick succession. However, he succeeded in destroying the threat posed by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.



Humayun

Meanwhile, Sher Shah, a powerful Afghan sardar, increased his power when Humayun was busy in his Gujarat campaign. Although Sher Shah professed loyalty to the Mughals, he was planning to expel Mughals from India. Sher Shah defeated Humayun in the battle of Kannauj (1540). This battle made Humayun a prince without a kingdom and he had to take a shelter at the court of Iranian king.

The major cause of Humayun’s defeat was that he failed to understand the nature of the Afghan power. Afghan tribes were scattered over north India, who could always unite under a capable leader. Sher Shah gave them this leadership. Also, Humayun showed bad political sense in the form of his Bengal campaign against Sher Shah. Also, after Sher Shah’s victories he did not receive help from his brothers.

But in 1555, with the breaking up of the Sur empire, Humayun was able to recover Delhi. But he died soon thereafter, after falling from the first floor of the library building in his fort at Delhi. His tomb was build by his favourite wife Bega Begum.

Sur Empire (1540-55)

Sher Shah ascended the throne of Delhi in 1540. He ruled over the mightiest empire in the North India since the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. He added Malwa and Rajasthan to his territories. He died in 1545 and was succeeded by his son Islam Shah, who ruled till 1553. After Islam Shah's death, a civil war set in amongst his successors. This created an opportunity for Humayun, who in 1555 defeated Afghans, to recover Delhi and Agra.



Sher Shah Suri

Contribution of Sher Shah

1. He re-established law and order across his empire.
2. He improved communication by building roads which helped in fostering trade and commerce. He restored the Grand Trunk Road connecting Bengal with North-west. He built sarais and inns along these roads. Many of these sarai developed into market-towns (qasbas) and stages for news service or dak-chowki.
3. His currency reforms and standardisation of weights and measures all over the empire helped in increasing trade and commerce.
4. For land revenue administration, he insisted on measurement of the sown land for computation of average produce to determine the state’s share, which was one-third of the average produce.
5. The tomb built by Sher Shah for himself at Sasaram is seen as a culmination of Sultanat type of architecture and a starting point of a new Mughal style.

Akbar

Akbar was the greatest of the Mughal rulers. He was crowned in 1556. After the Second battle of Panipat between him (led by his wakil Bairam Khan) and Hemu, the Afghan leader, he established his control over the empire. During the first phase of expansion of the empire, he brought regions like Ajmer, Malwa, Garha-Katanga, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bengal under his control.



Akbar

The administrative changes made by Akbar as well as his liberal religious policy resulted in rebellions in Gujarat, Bengal and Bihar. These rebellions kept the empire distracted for two years (1580-81). Akbar with the services of his nobles like Todar Mal, Raja Man Singh etc. successfully handled these rebellions.

Soon after this, due to rising threat from Uzbeks, Akbar had to concentrate on the North-west frontier. He consolidated his power in the North-West and gave the empire a scientific frontier. He also captured Odisha (Earlier known

as Orissa) and Dacca. With this, by the turn of the century the political integration of the North India was achieved.

Hereafter, Akbar turned his attention towards the Deccan. He was afraid that sectarian rivalries of the Deccani states could spread into the Mughal empire in the North. Also, the Portuguese were trying to expand their position over the mainland. This along with proselytizing activities by the Portuguese impelled Akbar to get involved in the Deccani affairs.

Akbar himself marched down to capture Khandesh in 1601. In the same year control was established over Berar, Ahmadnagar and parts of Telangana. However, no lasting solution could be arrived at for the Deccani problem, as Bijapur was yet to accept Mughal suzerainty. This situation was left to be tackled by Jahangir.

Land Revenue Administration under Akbar

In the field of land revenue administration, Akbar instituted a new system called the dahsala (Ain-i-Dahsala). Under it, the average produce of different crops and average prices prevailing over the past 10 years were calculated. One third of the average produce was the state's share. The revenue demand was in cash. This system was called the zabti system. The zabti system was associated with Raja Todar Mal.

Other systems of assessment were also followed during Akbar's period. The batai or ghalla-bakshi system was the most common and oldest of all. Under it, the produce was divided in the fixed proportion between the peasants and the state. Under batai, the peasants had the choice to pay in either cash or in kind, but the state preferred cash. Another system which was used was nasaq.

Akbar was interested in advancement of cultivation. Under him, loans (taccavi) to peasants was provided for seeds, implements etc. In fixing of the land revenue, continuity of cultivation was taken into account. Also, the land was classified as per the quality of the land.



Todar Mal and Akbar

Mansabdari System

Under this system, every officer was assigned a rank (Mansab). The lowest rank was 10 and the highest was

5000 for the nobles, which was later raised to 7000. The rank decided the personal status (zat) of a noble and salary due to him as well as the number of cavalymen (sawar) he was required to maintain. Ideally, for every one cavalryman, two horses had to be maintained.

The Mansabdars were paid by assigning jagirs to them. But, sometimes paid in cash too. Akbar would not have been able to expand his empire and maintain his hold over it without a strong army. For this purpose, it was necessary for him to organize the nobility as well as his army. Akbar realized both these objectives by means of the mansabdari system.

Relations with the Rajputs

Akbar expanded Humayun's policy of winning over the Rajputs through matrimonial alliances. But, he did not insist upon matrimonial relations as a precondition. Many Rajputs, like rulers of Ranthambhor, Banswara etc. surrendered to him without entering into matrimonial relations. The Rajput policy also had the angle of broad religious toleration. The only state that defied Mughal suzerainty was Mewar, led by Rana Pratap.



Akbar Greeting Rajput Rulers

Akbar's policy of inducting the Rajput rajas into Mughal service and treating them at par with Mughal nobles benefited. This along with his religious tolerance cemented Akbar's ties with the Rajputs. Akbar's Rajput policy was continued by his successors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Akbar's Religious Policy

Akbar followed a liberal religious policy. He emphasized that the state should be based on sulh-i-kul i.e. equal toleration of and respect to all sections irrespective of their religious beliefs. In 1575, Akbar built Ibadat Khana, the Hall of Prayer at Fatehpur Sikri, where he discussed religious and spiritual topics with selected theologians, mystics, scholarly courtiers and nobles. He tried to establish a new order tauhid-i-Ilahi which literally means 'Divine Monotheism'.

Akbar also introduced social and educational reforms. He stopped sati and allowed it only when a widow herself

desired it. Widow remarriage was also legalized. The age of marriage was raised to 14 for girls and 16 for boys. The sale of wines and spirits were restricted. But, as Akbar was living in the age of superstition, these steps got limited success. Akbar also revised educational syllabus wherein emphasis was given on moral and secular subjects like mathematics, agriculture, history, logic etc.

Jahangir

Jahangir succeeded to the throne in 1605 and ruled till 1627. His main achievement was the settlement of outstanding dispute with Mewar and thereby strengthening of the alliance with the Rajputs. He also subjugated Deccani states, but preferred not to get deeply embroiled in the Deccani affairs. He settled the rebellion of the Afghan chiefs in the Bengal region. But the Persian conquest of Qandhar and Shah Jahan's refusal to proceed to Qandhar to save it on apprehensions of court intrigue eventually led to a rebellion by Shah Jahan. This coupled with, worsening health of Jahangir led to rise of Shah Jahan.



Jahangir

He settled the rebellion of the Afghan chiefs in the Bengal region. But the Persian conquest of Qandhar and Shah Jahan's refusal to proceed to Qandhar to save it on apprehensions of court intrigue eventually led to a rebellion by Shah Jahan. This coupled with, worsening health of Jahangir led to rise of Shah Jahan.

Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1628. During the confusion in the Agra due to Jahangir's weak health, rebellion by Shah Jahan and ambitions of Mahabat Khan led to loss of control over Deccani States. To establish peace in the Deccan for the Mughals, Shah Jahan felt it was necessary to subjugate Ahmadnagar.



Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan tried to form alliance with Adil Shah of Bijapur against Ahmadnagar. But in between the struggle against Ahmadnagar, Adil Shah felt the threat of Mughals and thus, he changed the sides. Therefore, Mughals failed to control the area. Hereafter, Shah Jahan turned his attention to Bijapur. At the same time he offered the division of Ahmadnagar between Mughals and Bijapur.

This led to the treaty between Mughals and Bijapur in 1636. With this treaty, the Mughal suzerainty was established in the Deccan. But the ambitions of Maratha nobles like Shahji and after him, his son Shivaji, and of Golconda nobles kept the area disturbed. Also, arrival of Aurangzeb as the viceroy of the Deccan precipitated the crisis.

Administration during Jahangir and Shah Jahan

The administrative machinery and the revenue system developed by Akbar were maintained with minor variations under Jahangir and Shah Jahan. However, some changes were made in the mansabdari system. Jahangir introduced

du-aspah sih-aspah system under which selected nobles could be allowed to maintain a large quota of troopers, without raising their zat rank.

This was further modified during Shah Jahan's reign to reduce the number of troopers a noble was required to maintain. This reduction was a result of the financial stress on the exchequer due to number of reasons. This in turn affected the efficiency of the Mughal cavalry on the whole. Despite this the mansabdari system functioned properly under Shah Jahan due to his personal attention and services of highly competent wazirs.

Aurangzeb

The last years of Shah Jahan's reign were clouded by the war of succession among his sons. Aurangzeb with his high handed approach towards his father and brothers, succeeded to the throne. During his rule, the Mughal empire reached its territorial climax. It stretched from Kashmir in the north to Jinji in the south and from Hindukush in the west to Chittagong in the east.



Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb was orthodox in his belief. He demolished many Hindu temples which created disquiet among large sections of the Hindus. Also re-imposition of jizyah in 1679 created resentment amongst the Hindus. But his religious beliefs cannot be considered as the basis of his political policies.

Although Aurangzeb attached great value to the alliance with the Rajputs his policy of subjugation towards Marwar and Mewar weakened the alliance with the Rajputs. He was also involved in conflict with the Jats, Afghans and Sikhs. All this put strain on the empire. Moreover these preoccupations of Aurangzeb relaxed the pressure of Mughals on Shivaji during a crucial period of consolidation of Maratha kingdom.

In 1681, Aurangzeb started his Deccan campaign. He successfully triumphed against Bijapur and Golconda. He made inroads in the Maratha kingdom too, but the Marathas were not defeated. Finally, in 1707 he died, leaving behind an empire which was sorely distracted, and in which all the internal problems were coming to a head.

1.2 Later Mughals

Period after Aurangzeb's death in 1707 was marked by

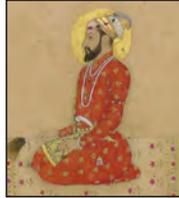
- Weak successors
- War of succession
- Increase in power of nobles, who either became 'kingmakers' or carved out semi-independent/independent kingdoms.

- Court intrigues
- Religious intolerance
- Decline in authority of the Emperor
- Decline in area of effective control

Later Mughals and important events during their reign.

Bahadur Shah-I

- He emerged victorious in war of succession that followed Aurangzeb's death.
- He favored a pacific policy.
- He made peace with Guru Gobind Singh but later led campaign against the Sikhs, who rose in rebellion under Banda Bahadur.
- State finances deteriorated on the account reckless grant of Jagirs.



Bahadur Shah-I

Jahandar Shah (1712-13)

- He became king with the support of Zulfiqar Khan, who was appointed as the Wazir or Prime Minister.
- The administration was under Zulfiqar Khan.
- He encouraged ijarah or revenue farming, which resulted in oppression of the peasants.
- He was defeated by Farrukh Siyar supported by Saiyad brothers.



Jahandar Shah

Farrukh Siyar (1713-19)

- He was engaged in strife for power with Saiyad brothers, who had been gaining influence in administration of the Empire.
- He was killed by Saiyid brothers in 1719.



Farrukh Siyar

Saiyid Brothers

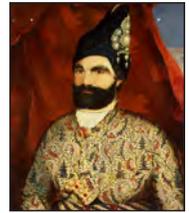
- Saiyid brothers-Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali Khan.
- They were popularly known as 'king makers' for their role in enthroning and dethroning kings at will
- Their influence in administration increased substantially.
- They tried to save the empire from rebellions and administrative disintegration but failed due to court intrigues



Saiyid Brothers

Muhammad Shah (1720-48)

- He neglected administration of the empire
- He himself indulged in court intrigues
- Nadir Shah invaded India during his reign.
- Area of effective control under the empire declined during his reign.



Muhammad Shah

The next Mughal Emperors Ahmad Shah (1748-54) and Alamgir-II (1754-59) were too weak to check the rot that had set in. The repeated raids by Ahmad Shah Abdali, loss of Punjab to Afghans and expansion by the Marathas reduced the Mughal Empire to the Kingdom of Delhi. Hereafter, the Mughal dynasty ruled as the puppets of either the Marathas or the British.

Shah Alam-II ascended to the throne in 1759. In 1764, he fought the Battle of Buxar against the British along with Mir Qasim of Bengal and Shuja-ud-Daula of Awadh. The defeat in the war made him a pensioner of East India Company at Allahabad. In 1772, under the protection of Marathas he returned to Delhi.

In 1803, the English captured Delhi. They kept the fiction of the Mughal Empire till 1858, when the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled to Rangoon.

1.3 Foreign Invasions

Nadir Shah's Invasion

Causes of the Invasion

1. Negligence of the North-west

Frontier: Aurangzeb was alert in the defence of the North-west frontier. But after 1707, the administration of Kabul and Ghazni became lax. For example, the salary of the soldiers was not paid for the last 5 years.



Nadir Shah

2. Unkept Promise: Nadir Shah had entered into an agreement with the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah not to give shelter to the fugitive Afghans in Kabul. This promise was not kept by the Mughals.

3. Abuse of Emissaries: The embassy sent by Nadir Shah to Delhi was attacked by the Mughal soldiers. Moreover, the practice of exchange of ambassadors with the Persian court was discontinued by the Mughals.

4. Lure of Wealth: Nadir Shah was allured by the wealth of India.

5. Invitation: He was invited to invade India by the Indian Amirs. This ensured him of the rot that had set in the Mughal Empire.

Consequently, Nadir Shah started the campaign in 1738. He dashed into Lahore without much resistance. The alarmed Mughal Emperor tried to gather force along with Nizam-ul-Mulk and Saadat Khan. But disunity, lack of planning, mutual jealousies led to the defeat of the Mughal forces in the Battle of Karnal (February, 1739).

Nadir Shah marched to Delhi and ransacked it. His total plunder was estimated to be around 70 Crores. He carried away the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond and the Peacock Throne of Shah Jahan.

Impact of Nadir Shah's Invasion

1. Apart from the financial loss, it eroded the prestige of the Mughals. The Marathas and the foreign trading companies took advantage of this later.
2. The central administration was paralysed.
3. The impoverished nobles tried to recover their losses by rack-renting peasants. They fought for rich jagirs.
4. The loss of Kabul and areas west of Indus exposed the Empire to threat of invasions from North-west.

Ahmed Shah Abdali's Invasions

In 1747, after the assassination of Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Abdali declared himself the ruler of Qandhar. Soon he formed the modern kingdom of Afghanistan. He invaded India number of times between 1748 to 1767. He fought and defeated the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat in 1761.



Ahmed Shah Abdali

Impact of Abdali's Invasions

1. Abdali's invasions hastened the downfall of the Mughal Empire.
2. The frequency of the raids paralysed the administration.
3. The finance of the Empire was weakened.
4. Importantly, it gave a big blow to the Maratha ambition of controlling the Mughal Empire.
5. The confusion created by the raids led to the rise of regional powers like, the Sikhs, the Rohillas etc.

1.4 Analysis

Causes of Decline of Mughal Empire

Responsibility of Aurangzeb

Under Aurangzeb's rule, the Mughal Empire reached its territorial zenith. But, it expanded beyond the control of the central authority. To control such a vast Empire at the time

when means of communication was undeveloped was beyond the capabilities of weak successors of Aurangzeb. Moreover, the religious policies of Aurangzeb created discontent in the Empire. It led to rebellions by the Sikhs, Jats, Bundelas etc. Also, his Rajput policy alienated the Rajputs. His policy of aggressive imperialism against the Deccani states and the Marathas drained the resources of the Empire.

Weak-Successors and Ambitious Nobles

A centralised rule like that of Mughals needs strong Emperors to control it. But the weak successors of Aurangzeb, who gave importance to luxurious life and ignored the administration, exposed the limitations of the centralised rule. The military too, was ignored. This resulted in rebellions, rise of regional powers and strengthening of powers like the Marathas. It also led to foreign invasions, which plundered the Empire of its resources.

The nobles followed the example of their weak Emperors. They either took to luxurious life or carved out independent states for themselves. They also played the role of 'king-makers' in the war of succession by organizing themselves in various factions. This factionalism was so strong that the nobles failed to unite even during foreign invasions.

Military Weaknesses

The organization of the army on the feudal basis had its own limitations. The soldiers held mansabdar as their chief rather than the Emperor. This defect assumed alarming proportion during the later Mughals.

Also, the military lacked discipline, cohesion and modern equipment. The Mughal army was unwieldy to manage in wars. The military officials were infamous for changing sides. Due to financial crises, soldiers remained unpaid a number of times. Such military, without coherence and loyalty could not be expected to fight for the Empire.

Financial Crisis

Aurangzeb's Deccan campaign emptied the treasury and ruined the trade and commerce. The wars damaged the standing crops and thus demoralized peasantry gave up agriculture. This further affected land revenue collection.

Under the later Mughals, the situation deteriorated further. The independence of regional powers affected imperial revenue. Moreover, the wars of succession, lavish living of the Emperors and the nobles emptied the treasury. The payments in the form of jagirs and foreign invasions also affected resources of the Empire.

Rise of Marathas

Marathas were the most important external cause that brought about the collapse of the Mughal Empire. A policy of Hindu Empire envisaged by the Peshwas could only be realized with the fall of the Mughal Empire.

The Maratha ambitions were buttressed by the nature of the Mughal Empire which failed to unite Hindus and Muslims. Many Indian chiefs looked upon the Mughal rulers as foreigners and as enemies of India and of Hindu religion.

Invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah Abdali

The invasions by Nadir Shah and Abdali exposed the military weakness of the Mughal Empire. They plundered the Empire of its financial resources.

European Companies

The medieval character of the Mughal Empire was challenged by the dynamic and progressive West. In the race of civilizations the Europeans outperformed the Indians.



TRY THIS MAINS PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

1. Clarify how mid-eighteenth-century India was beset with the specter of a fragmented polity.

(2017)

Impact of the Mughal Rule

01

POLITICAL

- Mughals led to political integration of the country and institutionalization of the state.
- They secured the north-west frontiers of India and also the European companies from gaining territorial control as long as they were strong.

02

SOCIAL

- Their rule did not help in the improvement of the women.
- Purdah system spread.
- Nobility increased inequality.
- The caste system dominated, despite the sufi movement.
- The orthodox elements prevented modernization of education.

03

ECONOMIC

- The Indian economy continued to be feudal.
- Silver currency, the roads and sarais etc. had direct impact on the growth of trade and handicrafts.
- International Trade was poor due to inferior naval strength.
- Agriculture also suffered.
- Innovation was not encouraged hence Science and Technology suffered.

04

CULTURAL

- The Mughals patronized art and architecture.
- They Introduced char-bagh style, pietra dura etc.
- Built magnificent structures and mainly used red sandstone and Marble.
- They patronized paintings which also influenced the regional styles like Rajasthani Style, Pahadi Style etc.
- Also, many court poets of mughals were musicians

LATER MUGHALS

BAHADUR SHAH I

- Successor of Aurangzeb
- Tolerant
- Pacific and Friendly



(1707-1712)

JAHANDAR SHAH

(1712-1713)

- Friendly with Jats, Rajputs and Marathas
- Abolished Jiziya
- Checked Jagirs
- Encouraged Ijarat



FARRUKH SIYAR

- Saiyid brothers helped him to attain the throne
- Ratified trade privileges of East India Company



(1713-1719)

MUHAMMAD SHAH

(1720-1748)

- Invasion of Nadir Shah (1738)
- Invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali (1747)
- Puppet of Saiyid brothers



ALAMGIR II

- Battle of Plassey (1757)
- Weak King



(1754-1759)

SHAH ALAM II

(1759-1806)

- Battle of Buxar (1764)
- Puppet of Marathas and British



BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR

- Revolt of 1857
- Titular head of Mughal empire



(1837-1857)

