



गुल्लक Gullak



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Mughal Empire of India (AD 1526-1540; 1555-1857) Part II

Decline (1707-1857)



Aurangzeb's son, Shah Alam, repealed the religious policies of his father, and attempted to reform the administration. However, after his death in 1712, the Mughal dynasty sank into chaos and violent feuds. In 1719 alone, four emperors successively ascended the throne.



During the reign of Muhammad Shah, the empire began to break up, and vast tracts of central India passed from Mughal to Maratha hands. The far-off Indian campaign of Nadir Shah, who had reestablished Iranian suzerainty over most of West Asia, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, culminated with the Sack of Delhi and shattered the remnants of Mughal power and prestige. Many of the empire's elites now sought to control their own affairs, and broke away to form independent kingdoms. But, according to Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, the Mughal Emperor, however, continued to be the highest manifestation of sovereignty. Not only the Muslim gentry, but the Maratha, Hindu, and Sikh leaders took part in ceremonial acknowledgements of the emperor as the sovereign of India.



The Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II made futile attempts to reverse the Mughal decline, and ultimately had to seek the protection of outside powers i.e. from the Emir of Afghanistan, Ahmed Shah Abdali, which led to the Third Battle of Panipat between the Maratha Empire

and the Afghans led by Abdali in 1761. In 1771, the Marathas recaptured Delhi from Afghan control and in 1784 they officially became the protectors of the emperor in Delhi, a state of affairs that continued further until after the Third Anglo-Maratha War. Thereafter, the British East India Company became the protectors of the Mughal dynasty in Delhi. The British East India Company took control of the former Mughal province of Bengal-Bihar in 1793 after it abolished local rule (Nizamat) that lasted until 1858, marking the beginning of British colonial era over the Indian Subcontinent. By 1857 a considerable part of former Mughal India was under the East India Company's control. After a crushing defeat in the war of 1857-1858 which, he nominally led, the last Mughal, Bahadur Shah Zafar, was deposed by the British East India Company and exiled in 1858. Through the Government of India Act 1858 the British Crown assumed direct control of East India Company-held territories in India in the form of the new British Raj. In 1876 the British Queen Victoria assumed the title of Empress of India.



Causes of Decline

Historians have offered numerous explanations for the rapid collapse of the Mughal Empire between 1707 and 1720, after a century of growth and prosperity. In fiscal terms the throne lost the revenues needed to pay its chief officers, the emirs (nobles) and their entourages. The emperor lost authority, as the widely scattered imperial officers lost confidence in the central authorities, and made their own deals with local men of influence. The imperial army, bogged down in long, futile wars against the more aggressive Marathas lost its fighting spirit. Finally came a series of violent political feuds over control of the throne. After the execution of emperor Farrukhsiyar in 1719, local Mughal successor states took power in region after region.



Contemporary chroniclers bewailed the decay they witnessed, a theme picked up by the first British historians who wanted to underscore the need for a British-led rejuvenation.



Modern Views on the Decline

Since the 1970s historians have taken multiple approaches to the decline, with little consensus on which factor was dominant. The psychological interpretations emphasize depravity in high places, excessive luxury, and increasingly narrow views that left the rulers unprepared for an external challenge. A Marxist school (led by Irfan Habib and based at Aligarh Muslim University) emphasises excessive exploitation of the peasantry by the rich, which stripped away the will and the means to support the regime. Karen Leonard has focused on the failure of the regime to work with Hindu bankers, whose financial support was increasingly needed; the bankers then helped the Maratha and the British. In a religious interpretation, some scholars argue that the Hindu powers revolted against the rule of a Muslim dynasty. Finally, other scholars argue that the very prosperity of the Empire inspired the provinces to achieve a high degree of independence, thus weakening the imperial court.



Jeffrey G. Williamson has argued that the Indian economy went through deindustrialization in the latter half of the 18th century as an indirect outcome of the collapse of the Mughal Empire, with British rule later causing further deindustrialization. According to Williamson, the decline of the Mughal Empire led to a decline in agricultural productivity, which drove up food prices, then nominal wages, and then textile prices, which led to India losing a share of the world textile market to Britain even before it had superior factory technology. Indian textiles, however, still maintained a competitive advantage over British textiles up until the 19th century.



Administrative Divisions

Subah (Urdu: صوبہ) was the term for a province in the Mughal Empire. The word is derived from Arabic. The governor of a *Subah* was known as a *subahdar* (sometimes also referred to as a "*Subah*"), which later became *subedar* to refer to an officer in the Indian Army. The *subahs* were established by padshah (emperor) Akbar during his administrative reforms of 1572-1580; initially they numbered 12, but his conquests expanded the number of *subahs* to 15 by the end of his reign. *Subahs* were divided into *Sarkars*, or districts. *Sarkars* were further divided into *Parganas* or *Mahals*. His successors, most notably Aurangzeb, expanded the number of *subahs* further through their conquests. As the empire began to dissolve in the early 18th century, many *subahs* became effectively independent, or were conquered by the Marathas or the British.

The original 12 Subahs created as a result of administrative reform by Akbar:

- Agra Subah
- Ajmer subah
- Awadh Subah
- Bengal Subah
- Bihar Subah
- Delhi Subah
- Gujarat Subah
- Kabul Subah
- Illahabad Subah
- Lahore Subah
- Malwa Subah
- Multan Subah



Economy

The Indian economy was large and prosperous under the Mughal Empire. During the Mughal era, the gross domestic product (GDP) of India in 1600 was estimated at about 22.4% of the world economy, the second largest in the world, behind only Ming China but larger than Europe. By 1700, the GDP of Mughal India had risen to 24.4% of the world economy, the largest in the world,

larger than both Qing China and Western Europe. Mughal India was the world leader in manufacturing, producing about 25% of the world's industrial output up until the 18th century. India's GDP growth increased under the Mughal Empire, with India's GDP having a faster growth rate during the Mughal era than in the 1,500 years prior to the Mughal era. Mughal India's economy has been described as a form of proto-industrialization, like that of 18th-century Western Europe prior to the Industrial Revolution.



The Mughals were responsible for building an extensive road system, creating a uniform currency, and the unification of the country. The empire had an extensive road network, which was vital to the economic infrastructure, built by a public works department set up by the Mughals which designed, constructed and maintained roads linking towns and cities across the empire, making trade easier to conduct.



Coinage

The Mughals adopted and standardized the Rupee (*Rupiya* or silver) and Dam (copper) currencies introduced by Suri Emperor Sher Shah Suri during his brief rule. The currency was initially 48 Dams to a Rupee in the beginning of Akbar's reign, before it later became 38 Dams to a Rupee in the 1580s, with the Dam's value rising further in the 17th century as a result of new industrial uses for copper, such as in bronze cannons and brass utensils. The Dam was initially the most common coin in Akbar's time, before being replaced by the Rupee as the most common coin in succeeding reigns. The Dam's value was later worth 30 to a Rupee towards the end of Jahangir's reign, and then 16 to a Rupee by the 1660s. The Mughals minted coins with high purity, never dropping below 96%, and without debasement until the 1720s.



Despite India having its own stocks of gold and silver, the Mughals produced minimal gold of their own, but mostly minted coins from imported bullion, as a result

of the empire's strong export-driven economy, with global demand for Indian agricultural and industrial products drawing a steady stream of precious metals into India. Around 80% of Mughal India's imports were bullion, mostly silver, with major sources of imported bullion including the New World and Japan, which in turn imported large quantities of textiles and silk from the Bengal Subah province.



Labour

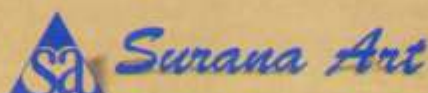
The Mughal Empire's workforce in the early 17th century consisted of about 64% in the primary sector (including agriculture) and 36% in the secondary and tertiary sectors, including over 11% in the secondary sector (manufacturing) and about 25% in the tertiary sector (service). Mughal India's workforce had a higher percentage in the non-primary sector than Europe's workforce did at the time; agriculture accounted for 65-90% of Europe's workforce in 1700, and 65-75% in 1750, including 65% of England's workforce in 1750. In terms of contributions to the Mughal economy, in the late 16th century, the primary sector contributed 52.4%, the secondary sector 18.2% and the tertiary sector 29.4%; the secondary sector contributed a higher percentage than in early 20th-century British India, where the secondary sector only contributed 11.2% to the economy. In terms of urban-rural divide, 18% of Mughal India's labour force were urban and 82% were rural, contributing 52% and 48% to the economy, respectively.



Real wages and living standards in 18th-century Mughal Bengal and South India were higher than in Britain, which in turn had the highest living standards in Europe. According to economic historian Paul Bairoch, India as well as China had a higher GNP per capita than Europe up until the late 18th century, before Western European per-capita income pulled ahead after 1800. Mughal India also had a higher per-capita income in the late 16th century than British India did in the early 20th century. However, in a system where wealth was hoarded by elites, wages were depressed for manual labour though no less than labour wages in Europe at the time. In Mughal India, there was a generally tolerant attitude towards manual labourers, with some religious cults in northern India proudly asserting a high status for manual labour. While slavery also existed, it was limited largely to household servants.

Calendar of Events 2017-18

| Month | Date | Place | Event | Venue |
|----------|-------|------------|---|--|
| October | 2-4 | Raipur | CG Gandhi Pex 2017 | Gas Memorial Centre, Jai Stambh Chowk, Modapra, Raipur, Chattisgarh |
| October | 14-15 | Patiala | Patiala Mudra Utsav | Panchayat Bhawan, Near Gurudwara Dukhniwaran Sahib, Patiala |
| November | 3-5 | Mumbai | 5th Coinex Mumbai | Shree Sunderbai Hall, Behind Income Tax, Churchgate, Mumbai |
| November | 7-9 | Gwalior | Virasat Coin Fair | Kaka Vithika, Padav, Nagar Railway Station, Gwalior, MP |
| November | 17-19 | Trichy | 24th National Leval Coins & Stamp Expo 2017 | SRT Hall, 2nd Cross, Thillai Nagar, Main Road, Trichy - 18 |
| November | 17-23 | Delhi | Royal Numismatic Expo 2017 | All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society, 1 Rafi Marg, New Delhi |
| November | 25-27 | Goa | The Centenary Conference of NSI | Institute Menezes Branganza Hall, Near Police Head Quarters, Panjim, Goa |
| December | 8-10 | Jamshedpur | Jam Coin Mela | Jamshedpur Coin Museum, Red Cross Society, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand |
| December | 15-17 | Pune | Coinex Pune 2017 | Sonal Hall, Karve Road, Pune. |
| December | 22-24 | Kolkata | Mudra Utsav (Kolkata) | Haldiram Banquet Hall, 24 Ballygunge park, Kolkata - 700019 |
| January | 5-7 | Nashik | Rare Fair 2018 | Indraprastha Hall, Near Old Gangapur Naka, Gangapur Road, Nashik |
| January | 5-7 | Coimbatore | Sonica coin & Currency Fair | 24, Ganesh Nagar, Peelamedu, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. |
| January | 12-14 | Mumbai | 2 nd ICCG Numismatic Expo 2018 | Expo Center, World Trade Centre, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai |
| January | 12-14 | Raipur | CG NPEX 2018 | Raipur |
| February | 9-11 | Ahmedabad | Coinex 2018 | Shree Sardar Patel Seva Samaj, Nr. Mithakhali Six road, Ahmedabad |



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