
Module 3

Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb

Who was the successor of Jahangir?

Who was the last most power full ruler in the Mughal dynasty?

What was the administrative policy of Aurangzeb?

The main causes of Downfall of Mughal Empire.

Shah Jahan was the successor of Jahangir and became emperor of Delhi in 1627. He followed the policy of his ancestor and campaigns continued in the Deccan under his supervision. The Afghan noble Khan Jahan Lodi rebelled and was defeated. The campaigns were launched against Ahmadnagar, The Bundelas were defeated and Orchha seized. He also launched campaigns to seize Balkh from the Uzbegs was successful and Qandhar was lost to the Safavids. In 1632 Ahmadnagar was finally annexed and the Bijapur forces sued for peace.

Shah Jahan commissioned the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal marks the apex of the Mughal Empire; it symbolizes stability, power and confidence. The building is a mausoleum built by Shah Jahan for his wife Mumtaz and it has come to symbolize the love between two people. Jahan's selection of white marble and the overall concept and design of the mausoleum give the building great power and majesty. Shah Jahan brought together fresh ideas in the creation of the Taj. Many of the skilled craftsmen involved in the construction were drawn from the empire. Many also came from other parts of the Islamic world - calligraphers from Shiraz, finial makers from Samrkand, and stone and flower cutters from Bukhara. By Jahan's period the capital had moved to the Red Fort in Delhi. Shah Jahan had these lines inscribed there: "If there is Paradise on earth, it is here, it is here." Paradise it may have been, but it was a pricey paradise. The money Jahan spent on buildings and on various military projects emptied his treasury and he was forced to raise taxes, which aggravated the people of the empire.

Aurangzeb's administrative policies

Aurangzeb was the last powerful emperor of Delhi from the Mughal dynasty. In 1657-1658 there was a conflict over the succession amongst Shah Jahan's sons. Aurangzeb was victorious and his three brothers, including Dara Shukoh, were killed and Shah Jahan was imprisoned for the rest of his life in Agra. He was the third son of Shah Jahan. He assumed the title of "Alamgir".

Aurangzeb continued to his ancestor policy and campaigns in the north-east, the Ahoms were defeated in 1663, but rebelled again in the 1680s. He continued the campaigns in the north-west against the Yusufzai and the Sikhs were temporarily successful. The Mughal intervention in the succession and internal politics of the Rathor Rajput of Marwar led to their rebellion. The campaigns against the Maratha chieftain Shivaji were initially successful. Shivaji fought the Mughal Sultan Aurangzeb for many years. In A.D. 1660, Aurangzeb sent Shaistakhan. Shaistakhan lost the battle. Aurangzeb sent Raja Jaisingh to deal with Shivaji. He defeated Shivaji and made an agreement in Purandar. When Shivaji and his son were invited to Agra, they were not treated properly by Aurangzeb. On opposing, they were imprisoned. By making an excuse, he escaped from prison by hiding in a large basket filled with apples. Jai Singh was in favour of a Mughal-Maratha alliance against the Deccan States but his plans did not materialize and at the end his assault on Bijapur with a weak army did not succeed.

The Bijapuri ruler's siding with the Marathas led to Aurangzeb's siege of Bijapur and its fall in 1686 and later in 1687 the fall of Golconda signaled Aurangzeb's victory over the Deccan states. However, Aurangzeb's victory in Deccan was followed by a long phase of conflicts with the Marathas under the descendants of Shivaji. The situation was only exacerbated by the execution of Shivaji's successor Sambhaji by the Mughals. Agrarian disturbances and the Marathas frustrated all attempts by Aurangzeb to assert his control. Indeed, the conquest of Deccan and inconsistent policy followed by the Mughals resulted in crippling structural problems and can be considered the genesis of Mughal decline. Aurangzeb's Deccan Policy refers to the extended period of conflict and diplomacy between the Mughals and the states of Bijapur, Golconda and the Maratha Swarashtra under Shivaji and his successors.

Causes of downfall of Mughal Empire

1 The Vastness of the Empire:

The Mughal Empire covered almost all India from Kashmir to river Kaveri and from Kabul to Chittagong it became too vast to be governed from one center at the command of one man. Communications were difficult. Distances were enormous. The Empire therefore began to sink under its own weight.

2 Religious Cause. Aurangzeb's religious orthodoxy and his policy towards Aurangzeb's religious orthodoxy and his policy towards the Hindu rulers seriously damaged the stability of the Mughal Empire.

3. Weak Rulers

The first six Mughal Emperors from Babar to Aurangzeb are described as the great Mughals. The Emperors after Aurangzeb are called the latter Mughals. These later Mughal Emperor were weak and worthless. They could not save the Empire from rapid decline.

4. Wars of Succession and Civil Wars. Aurangzeb left the Empire with many problems unsolved the situation was further worsened by the ruinous wars of succession, which followed his death. In the absence of any fixed rule of succession, the Mughal dynasty was always plagued after the death of a king by a civil war between the princes.

Thanks

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