

29th SEPT

1.) In which respect did the policies of Aurangzeb contribute to the disintegration of Mughal Empire? (20 M).

Ans) Aurangzeb was one of the last Great Mughal of the Mughal empire in India. ~~His~~ Historian Jadunath Sarker had termed Aurangzeb's policies as divergent from the traditional Mughal policies followed by his predecessors, which ultimately resulted in the disintegration of Empire. Thus, he blamed Aurangzeb's policies for downfall of empire on several basis:

- Aurangzeb was a religious bigot, whose policies of imposition of Jaziya and destruction of both old and new temples created discord in Empire, leading to its downfall.
- His suspicions on Rajput rulers resulted in breach of Mewar and Marwar. Aurangzeb lost the crucial support of Rajputs, which was traditionally maintained under Mughal rule. It is due to this that Rajputs did not help in checking the downfall of Mughal Empire.
- He followed direct involvement and annexations in the Deccani states, which was against Mughal policy of only sovereign powers. It resulted in Deccani Uter, which played a crucial role in weakening of the empire.

However, it can also be pointed out that most of Aurangzeb's policies were as per the need of political conditions such as:

- Though he was an orthodox Muslim, but the number of Hindu ~~rulers~~ Mansabdars in his reign were 'around 33%, which was only 25% during Shahjahan's rule and also greater than Jahangir's rule. Moreover, Rajput rulers like Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh were accorded rank of 7000 zat and above, where no other Rajput ruler was ever employed.

Also, many <sup>Hindu</sup> temples continued to get land grants during his reign and his orders for their destruction was more political than religious in nature. He didn't destroy ~~of~~ temples during his conquest of Bijapur and Golconda, when there was no need for it.

- Also the breach with Rajputs was only with Mewar and Marwar. Rest of Rajputana such as Kota, Bundi, Kishangarh, Hadoti, ~~Amber~~ Amber etc. continued to remain with Mughals.

It can also be said that Rajputs lost favour also due to lack of any great military commanders in the Rajputana during Aurangzeb's later phases.

- His Deccani policies were also more or less, in continuation

of the predecessor's policies. Ahmadnagar and Khandesh were already annexed by the previous rulers and Aurangzeb only went for direct annexation of Bijapur and Golconda after 30 years into his reign. It shows his lack of initiative to Deccan states without any political compulsion for their capture.

However, it can also be said that Aurangzeb's arrogance and lack of strategical and visionary thinking for carrying out his policies accentuated the problems from which the Mughal empire was suffering. Agrarian crises had already seeped in, along with Jagirdari crisis in the empire. This coupled with weak successors of Aurangzeb also played a crucial role in disintegration of Mughal rule.

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2.) How was the Afghan nobility responsible for the decline of Afghan empire? Discuss. (20 M).

Ans) Afghan empire was established in country under the ruler Sher Shah Suri. Afghans had also established their control under the Delhi Sultanate era as could be witnessed in the Khalji dynasty and Lodi dynasty.

However, it was the peculiar custom of Afghan nobility



which made it to function effectively only under strong monarchs like Alauddin Khalji, Sikandar Lodi or Sher Shah Suri.

The Afghans believed in the theory of Sultan being the first among the equals. They were not accustomed to give exemplary status to their ruler on the basis of his position or lineage. This custom proved to be the biggest and weakest link to divide the Afghan empire after the removal of strong monarch.

Thus, Afghan nobility submitted to Alauddin Khalji under his strict Administrative reforms. Similarly, Sikandar Lodi exalted the status of Sultan by making Afghan nobles to stand in court in front of Sultan and to come out of town to meet the orders of Sultan. Sher Khan centralised the whole administration under his hand preventing any Afghan noble to rise.

However, in the absence of such rulers, Afghan nobility itself became the cause for the disintegration of empire due to court intrigues and infighting. It is due to this that Afghan empires were not able to last for longer period in Indian history.