



# Sambhav

## Day 46

**Question 1.** The administrative policies of Mughals were the reasons for its own decline. Illustrate. (250 Words)

**Question 2.** Mughal period is called a second classical age following the Gupta age in northern India. Discuss the cultural development in the country during Mughal age. (150 Words)

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## Approach / Explanation / Answer

### Answer 1

#### Approach

- Introduce briefly about the Decline of Mughal Empire.
- Illustrate how the administrative policies of Mughals were the reasons for its own decline.
- Conclude suitably.

#### Introduction

The Mughal empire declined rapidly after the death of Aurangzeb. The Mughal court became the scene for faction fighting among the nobles, provincial governors began to behave in an independent manner. The Maratha depredations extended from the Deccan to the heartland of the empire, the Gangetic plains. The weakness of the empire was proclaimed to the world when Nadir Shah imprisoned the Mughal emperor and looted Delhi in 1739.

#### Body

- The downfall of the Mughal empire due to developments after the death of Aurangzeb was due to the mistaken policies adopted by Aurangzeb. The economic, social, administrative and intellectual situation prevailing in the country, and international trends contributed to its decline.

#### Administrative Cause:

- Mughal policy towards the zamindars was contradictory.
  - On the one hand, the zamindars were considered the main threat to the internal stability of the empire, on the other, efforts were made to draw them into the task of local

administration.

- The zamindars, as a class had become more powerful and influential in the process, were in no mood to submit to the illegal exactions of the nobles.
- In attempts to realize more from the jagirs, led to peasant discontent, uprisings led by zamindars, and attempts to carve out independent local kingdoms. **It was the crisis of jagirdari system.**
  - In consequence, many of them were unable to maintain their stipulated quota of troops.
  - **The position in the Deccan:** Due to lack of a proper contingent on the part of the nobles, many of the mansabdars entered into private agreements with the Maratha sardars to pay Chauth, if they did not create disturbances in the jagirs.
- Another problem was shortage of jagirs. The best and most easily manageable jagirs had been kept by Aurangzeb in the khalisa, and there was very little productive land remain to distribute among Jagirdar.
  - The ban on new recruitment, disappointment to the relatives of the serving old nobles, grant of a jagir became like "one pomegranate among a hundred sick."
- The multi race and creed nobility under the Mughals, lacked a national character, a sense of nationalism, and "loyalty to the salt" was also diminishing.
- The Mughal administrative system was highly centralized and needed a competent monarch to run it. Thus, individual failures and the breakdown of the system reacted on each other.
- At the time Aurangzeb came to the throne, the Mughal army had become outmoded, on account of neglect of the infantry armed with flint guns, and a mobile field artillery.

### **Economic Cause:**

- There is reason to believe that trade and manufacture, as well as agricultural production were not expanding as rapidly as the situation required.
  - Because no new methods of cultivation were available with heavy land revenue ( $\frac{1}{2}$  of produce), exhausted soil.
- The demands and expectations of the ruling classes expanded rapidly. Thus, the number of mansabdars rose from 2069 at the time of Jahangir's accession to 11,456 during the latter half of Aurangzeb's reign.
  - While the number of nobles rose five times, the revenue resources of the empire increased only slowly.
  - The opulence of the nobles who already enjoyed the highest salaries in the world increased further during the period.
- Many nobles took part in trade and commerce directly or through merchants, they tried to increase their income from land by squeezing the peasants and the zamindars as far as they could.

### **Political Causes:**

- Aurangzeb committed a number of serious mistakes.
  - His inability to understand the true nature of the Maratha movement, and his disregard of Jai Singh's advice to befriend Shivaji. The execution of Sambhaji was another mistake.
  - Aurangzeb failed to establish a trustworthy relation with the Maratha and left an open sore. Unlike the Rajputs, they were never given offices of trust and responsibility.
- Aurangzeb has been criticized for having failed to unite with the Deccani states against the Marathas, or for having conquered them thereby making the empire 'so large that it collapsed under its own weight.
- The impact of the Deccani and other wars on the Mughal empire and of the prolonged absence of Aurangzeb from northern India, affected negatively both economically and politically.
- **Rajputs:** The breach with Mewar and the long-drawn-out war which followed damaged the moral standing of the Mughal state. Rajput played an active role in the subsequent disintegration of the empire.
- **Aurangzeb's religious policy** should be seen in the social, economic and political context.
  - His failure to the susceptibilities of his non-Muslim subjects, his policy to the destruction of temples, and re-imposition of jizyah did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side, or to generate a greater sense of loyalty towards a state based on Islamic law.
  - On the other hand, it alienated segments of the Hindus and strengthened the hands of those section which were opposed to the Mughal empire.

## Conclusion

- The decline and downfall of the empire was due to economic, social, political and institutional factors. The neglect of modern science and technology by the Mughal ruling class was also an important factor.
- Akbar's measures helped to keep the forces of disintegration in check for some time. But it was impossible for him to effect fundamental changes in the structure of society.
  - By the time Aurangzeb came to the throne, the socio-economic forces of disintegration were already strong but he lacked the foresight and statesmanship necessary to effect fundamental changes in the socio-political structure, or to pursue policies which could, for the time being, reconcile the various competing elements.
- Under these circumstances the decline of Mughals, rise of other feudal powers and eventually India became the colony of European powers.

## Answer 2

### Approach

- Introduce briefly about Mughals cultural activity.
- Discuss the cultural development in the country during Mughal age.
- Conclude Suitably.

### Introduction

There was an outburst of many-sided cultural activity in India under the Mughal rule. The traditions the field of architecture, painting, literature and music created during this period set a norm and influenced the succeeding generations.

### Body

#### Architecture:

- Mughal architectural traditions based on a combination of Hindu and Turko-Iranian forms and decorative designs. Mughal traditions influenced the palaces and forts of many provincial and local kingdoms.
- The Mughals built magnificent forts, palaces, gates, public buildings, mosques, bowlis (water tank or well), etc. They also laid out many formal gardens with running water.
- Akbar built a series of forts, like, fort at Agra (Built in red sandstone, with many magnificent gates).
  - Mughals take Indian tradition of fort-building, such as the ones at Gwalior, Jodhpur, etc. The climax of fort-building was reached at Delhi under Shah Jahan like famous Red Fort.
- Akbar's palace-cum-fort complex at Fatehpur Sikri, on top of hill with a large artificial lake, it included many buildings in the style of Gujarat and Bengal.
  - These included deep eaves, balconies, and fanciful kiosks. In the Panch Mahal built for taking the air, all the types of pillars used in various temples were employed to support flat roofs.
- The Gujarat style of architecture is used most widely in the palace built probably for his Rajput wife or wives.
  - Persian or Central Asian influence can be seen in the glazed blue tiles used for decoration in the walls or for tiling the roofs. The Buland Darwaza (the lofty gate) built to commemorate Akbar's victory in Gujarat.
- With the consolidation of the empire, the Mughal architecture reached its climax.
- At end of Jahangir's reign buildings entirely of marble and decorating the walls with floral designs made of semi-precious stones was a fashion. It is called Pietradura.
  - Shah Jahan used it on a large scale in the Taj Mahal.
  - Humayun's tomb built at Delhi may be considered a precursor of the Taj.
- The double dome (a bigger dome to be built with a smaller one inside) was another practice.
- Mosque-building also reached its climax under Shah Jahan, (he built Moti Masjid in the Agra fort, Jama Masjid at Delhi).

- Aurangzeb was economy-minded, puts hold on building construction.

### **Painting:**

- Mughals introduced new themes depicting the court, battle scenes and the chase, and added new colours and new forms.
- Humayun introduced new norms in miniature painting.
- A separate painting workshop was set up by the Akbar in one of the imperial establishments (Karkhanas).
- The Indian themes and Indian scenes and landscapes, thus, came in vogue and helped to free the school from Persian influence. Indian colours, such as peacock blue, the Indian red, etc., began to be used.
- Mughal painting reached a climax under Jahangir who had a very discriminating eye. He claims that he could distinguish the work of each artist in a picture. Apart from painting hunting, battle and court scenes, under Jahangir special progress was made in portrait painting and paintings of animals.
- Under Akbar, European painting was introduced at the court by Portuguese priests. Under their influence, the principles of foreshortening, whereby near and distant people and things could be placed in perspective was quietly adopted.
- While the tradition continued under Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb's lack of interest in painting led to a dispersal of the artists to different places of the country.
  - This helped in the development of painting in the states of Rajasthan and the Punjab hills.

### **Literature & Music:**

- The important role of Persian and Sanskrit as vehicles of thought and government at the all-India level, and the development of regional languages, largely as a result of the growth of the Bhakti Movement.
  - Regional languages also developed due to the patronage extended to them by local and regional rulers.
- Persian prose and poetry reached a climax under Akbar's reign. Abul Fazl was a great scholar and a stylist, as well as the leading historian of the age.
- Regional languages acquired stability and maturity and some of the finest lyrical poetry was produced during this period.
  - The dalliance of Krishna with Radha and stories from the Bhagawat Puran figure largely in lyrical poetry in Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Rajasthani and Gujarati during this period.
- Ramayana and the Mahabharata were translated into the regional languages.
  - Alaol composed in Bengali and also translated from Persian. In Hindi, the Padmavat, the story written by the Sufi saint, Malik Muhammad Jaisi (in 1540), used the attack of Alauddin Khalji on Chittor.
- In South India, Malayalam started its literary career as a separate language in its own right. Marathi reached its apogee at the hands of Eknath and Tukaram.

### **Music:**

- Akbar patronised Tansen of Gwalior who is credited with composing many new melodies (ragas).
- Jahangir and Shah Jahan as well as many Mughal nobles followed this example.
- Aurangzeb banished singing from his court, but not playing of musical instruments. In fact, Aurangzeb himself was an accomplished Veena player.
  - Music in all forms continued to be patronised by Aurangzeb's queens in the haram and by the princes and nobles. That is why the largest number of books on classical Indian music in Persian were written during Aurangzeb's reign.

### **Conclusion**

In this cultural development, Indian traditions were amalgamated with the Turko-Iranian culture. Peoples from different areas of India, as well as peoples belonging to different faiths and races contributed to this cultural development in various ways. In this sense, the culture developed during the period was tending towards a composite national culture.

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