

# PST IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

Date / Month / Year /

## **QUESTION NO: 1**

Condition of Sub-continent before the advent of Islam.

## **QUESTION NO: 2**

Comparative analysis between the Hindu and Muslim Society.

## **QUESTION NO: 3**

Effect of Islam on Hindu Society

OR

The Sub-Continent after the advent of Islam.  
(Both Questions have same answer)

## **QUESTION NO: 4**

Causes of downfall of Muslim Society.

## **QUESTION NO: 5**

Explain failures of War of Independence.

## **QUESTION NO: 6**

Describe Political Events from (1857 - 1924)

## INDIA BEFORE THE ADVENT OF ISLAM

From ancient eras continuous processes of migration into India were at work and a free society continued to evolve from early times. The *vedas* (knowledge) exhorted worship of Nature by man, but otherwise man was free from the hold of high priests. The early eras of Vedism and of the freely evolving society came to an end by 900 BC with the emergence of high priests, the Brahmins, who during the next four centuries institutionalised sacrifices and caste divisions. In the 5th century BC, Gautama, the Buddha (the 'Enlightened' one), rejected the tyranny of caste-system, affirmed human equality, and above all he taught his people the right course of action and the courage of dying without killing. For over two thousand years Buddha's words of patience, of tolerance and of love have directly or indirectly influenced one half of the civilized world. And today the other half is beginning to listen to them. His contemporary, Vardhamana ('The Prosperous'), the Mahavira (Great Hero), condemned caste divisions, also rejected the Brahminical blood-shedding sacrifices, and founded Jainism based on peace and pacifism.

The rise of the Imperial Guptas in the 4th century AD, marked the beginning of a transition from 'Ancient India' to 'Medieval India'. The new upsurge, binding the priest and the prince together, consolidated the power of the Imperial Guptas. In terms of its cultural impact and significant achievements, the glory of the Guptas was a milestone between the early medieval eras and the later historical eras of the Muslim Period.

A long period of nearly half a millennium intervened between the decline of the Guptas (6th century AD) and the establishment of Muslim power in Northern India (12th century AD), though the advent of the Arab Muslims in Sindh occurred earlier in the 8th century AD. This period of about six centuries intervening between the Imperial Guptas and the establishment of the Muslim power is characterized as the "period of decline", both political and social. The factors/conditions which were mainly responsible for the general decline both on human and material fronts on the eve of Muslim conquest of India are listed below:

**1. Political Conditions:** For about six centuries after the death of Harsha (647 AD) there was no central government for the whole of the country that could think and act for the entire subcontinent. As a matter of policy the state was divided into provinces and each province was headed by a *Raja*. Whenever, they found a weak king on the throne they declared themselves independent. They even tried to come on the throne and thus founded new dynasties, which very frequently came into existence. These rulers were very ambitious and wanted to have as much area under their control, as possible they could. The result of this greed was that they usually fought with each other and thus wasted both energy and resources. The result was that no ruler could have an extensive empire for himself.

**2. Religious Conditions:** Before the advent of Islam India was dominated by three major religions i.e. Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. The three religions of India lacked uniformity and suffered due to great deal of differences amongst them. Hinduism was the dominant and main religion of the people and most of the kings of

this period were also Hindus. Both Buddhism and Jainism were on the decline. One reason for this was that the *Rajas* which dominated India during this period did not believe in the philosophy of non-violence which these religions preached. Still there was perfect religious freedom. No ruler discriminated against any religion and provided every facility to propagate all religions without fear or hindrance. There were, therefore, no communal clashes. The individual Hindu was free to decide for himself what kind of god he would worship. To many Hindus there were many gods, each with different responsibilities. The principal gods were Brahma—the creator, Vishnu—the preserver and Shiva—the destroyer.

To attract masses to their own religion, the Brahmins began to worship as gods their national heroes like Rama and Krishna and gave place to Gautam Buddha as a god among their own gods. The result was that the innocent people began to worship the national heroes as gods. The Brahmins gave great prominence to rituals and ceremonies in religious life. And since most of these rites and ceremonies could be performed by the Brahmins alone, they occupied a very powerful position in the society.

**3. Social Conditions:** There was a total collapse of the social order. The Hindu society consisted of many castes and sub-castes, though theoretically it recognized only the four main castes—the Brahmin, the Khatri, the Vesh and the Sudar. It was believed that the god Brahma created people belonging to the different castes from different parts of his body and hence they were assigned work in the society accordingly.<sup>5</sup> Brahmins, the highest caste, were born out of the head of god Brahma so they were regarded as the custodians of all spiritual knowledge—the priests. It was under the guidance of the Brahmins that people could attain salvation. The Khatris were supposed to have sprung from the arms of god Brahma and they were assigned work in the society performed by hands i.e. they were warriors and nobles. The Veshs were born out of the stomach of god Brahma and hence they were given the profession for stomach i.e. they were farmers, herdsmen, traders, artisans and, later, minor officials. Sudars, the lowest caste, grew out of the feet of god Brahma and were labourers, servants and slaves, the out-castes or untouchables.

Khatris were one of the privileged castes. The lower castes were kept in a state of degradation. Al-Biruni informs us that when a Vesh or a Sudra was proved to have recited the Vedas, his tongue was cut off as a punishment. In other words, the Sudars were like beasts of burden in the Hindu society. There were no inter-marriages between the various castes, and as for the Sudars, even their touch was considered unclean.

Opposed to this was the Buddhist ideal of life which laid stress on the self-efforts of the individual for personal salvation, as well as on the equality of man in social life. In their struggle against Buddhism, Brahmins made caste system very rigid. The result was that in place of the four original castes, a number of new sub-castes sprang up.

Birth of a girl was not cherished in the family. For a common family the birth of such a child was regarded as a bad omen. The system of infanticide had come to stay. The women were divided into two categories; on the one hand were those who belonged to upper classes, while on the other were lower classes women. The women of the upper classes took a prominent share in administration and in social life. They moved freely

and got higher education as well. On the other hand, the society had put many restrictions on the women belonging to the lower classes and they enjoyed less respect than those of the upper classes. But in both the cases the women were not considered at par with men. They were considered definitely inferior as compared with men.

The cruel custom of *sati* was in practice, according to which Hindu widows were obligated to burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands. It was believed that by burning herself on the funeral pyre, a widow sanctified her ancestors, removed the sins of her husband and got rest for herself for ages to come. She was believed to live in heaven after death.

**4. Economic Conditions:** From economic point of view the people could be divided into two categories. On one hand there were the kings and landlords as well as the provincial governors and also the rich few. They lived life of pleasure and joy. All comforts of life of those days were available to them. The revenue collected by them was spent by them on their own comforts. Trade, both internal and external, was sound profession and thus the trading class was quite happy and rich.

But their number was not large. On the whole, the vast majority of the people was poor and lived a simple life. Agriculture was their main occupation. They lived in the villages which were not well developed. In addition, they did not know about the comforts of life. They lived a simple life in kacha houses.

**5. Education and Literature:** All over the country there were schools and colleges and the people, in general, were well-educated. There was a residential university at Nalanda in Bihar where thousands of students received education free of any charge. Vikramshila (Bihar), Kashi (Benaras), Ujjain and several other places were famous centres of learning. There were very able teachers and professors in the country. Even scholars from outside came to India to receive education. Excellent poems and dramas, fables and parables, medicine, chemistry, astronomy and other sciences were written. Vernacular literature developed and languages like Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati etc., made great progress.

**6. Architecture:** While religion fostered king-worship, humbleness, self-denial, renunciation, and a host of other virtues admired during times of peace and prosperity, it also gave a great impetus to artistic expression of all kinds. Along with other forms of arts, medieval Hinduism expressed itself luxuriantly in temple architecture. Grand and attractive temples like the Mart and Sun temple of Kashmir, the Khajuraho Vishnu temple of Central India, the rich Jain temple of Mt. Abu, and the famous Shiva and Vaishnava temples of South India, were built by them.

In short, on the eve of the Muslim conquest, the country was in a chaotic condition, and there was the scene of great political disturbances.

## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HINDU AND MUSLIM SOCIETY

**1. Social Difference:** Hindu and Muslim society stand poles apart in their attitude of life. The Hindu society is based on the rigid system of *Varna* (literally: colour) or

the Caste system, with the four major castes—Brahmin, Khatri, Vesh and Sudar, with Brahmins at the top and the Sudars or ‘untouchables’ at the bottom, in spite of the scientific fact that both the Brahmins and Sudars, when they are dead, supply an equally nutritious food to the impartial worms. The institution of the caste dominates Hindu social life, manners, morals and thought. Each group of families with particular caste are internally united by peculiar rules for observance of ceremonial purity especially, in matters of death and marriage. The same rule serves to fence it off from all other groups each of which has its own set of rules. It is almost impossible for a Hindu to regard himself otherwise than a member of some particular caste. All others who disregard this come under the category of *Malachha*,<sup>6</sup> outcast barbarians. Caste in Hindu society, therefore, in one word, means exclusiveness.<sup>7</sup> A society with such ideals will hardly tolerate the idea of the equality of men. Such an idea will mean a challenge to the faith and such challenges will have to be met with sword to be absolutely eliminated. The Muslim society, on the other hand, considers the man as the highest creation of God and insists on the equality of human beings before the law. The Islamic community demands from each individual a certain level of character, rational conduct, understanding, tolerance and unselfish devotion.

**2. Religious Difference:** The greatest evil desire of man is possession of power and wealth. To achieve these, man exploits man. Hinduism adopted this evil desire of man as the basis of its society by giving religious sanction to the principles of exploitation of man through its *Varna* system, dividing human being into touchables and untouchables, clean and polluted, and through the worship of wealth (in the form of idol Lakhshmi) and power (in the form of idol Vishnu) by even making human sacrifices at its alter. A society, no matter how religious, which bases its ideals on the worship of wealth and power and religiously practices human inequality and human sacrifice, will always have one road to follow, the road of hatred of man for its self upliftment. Islam as a religion is strongly monotheistic. That led the believers to their own unity which is expressed by their similarity of thought, similarity of behaviour, and similarity of living.

In Hindu society, cow is a sacred deity to be worshipped. But the Muslim society believes that it is meant for the human service and comfort.

**3. Political Difference:** The Muslim society believes that the world is unity and the role of a Muslim in the world is self-affirmation and self-assertion with a view to establish the supremacy of moral values derived from Quran and *Sunnah*. To Hindu society, the world is *maya*, an illusion. The *maya* concept leads the Hindu society to the pursuit of wealth.

**4. Conceptual Difference:** For the Hindus, their war and peace are for self-preservation and personal ego to enslave man to exploit him. For the Muslim, their war and peace are to establish the kingdom of God, to embrace humanity, to free man from slavery in all aspects of life and to lead mankind to a free world where a man does not exploit another man.

**5. Cultural Difference:** The Hindu and Muslim societies have different cultural aspects. The Muslims claim that their culture is different because it is an Islamic culture. As the background, contents and contours of the two cultures are so different, their adherents

never evolved a common society. Muslims of India, by general consent, consider Urdu as their language. The Hindus have their own language, Hindi, which leans heavily on Sanskrit for its vocabulary. Urdu, on the other hand, borrows more freely from Persian and Arabic, though some of its sweetest phrases are from Hindi. In India the Hindus looked to their own ancient philosophy just as the Muslims traced their intellectual ancestry to Muslim thinkers like Avicenna and al-Ghazali. When the Hindu was contemplating his past, he thought of Kautallya (the author of *Artha-Shastra*); when the Muslim looked back, he recalled al-Farabi. The philosophic past of the two societies was so different that the Hindus and Muslims could not unite under the umbrella of a single community. In fact the Hindus and Muslims do not merely belong to two different societies but they belong to two different civilizations.

### **THE IMPACT OF ISLAM ON THE INDIAN SOCIETY**

Since the Hindu society was living in isolation for several thousand years under a tight Brahminic control, it had lost its vigour and vitality. Bottled in their own customs and rites the Hindus were politically divided and militarily weak. This naturally resulted in a major shakeup by the Muslims who were strong and better equipped. Islam as the most powerful movement to bring mankind into one brotherhood, free from exploitation and corruption, had at that time a firm moral, intellectual and political control over the civilized world.<sup>8</sup>

The character of Hindu society was substantially changed after long and intimate association with the Muslims. Islam introduced in India a conception of human equality, a pride in one's religion, a legal system which in many ways was an advance on the codes of the time.

**1. Impact on Religion:** In the field of religion the impact of Islam on Hinduism was perhaps deeper and more far-reaching in its subsequent manifestations. Medieval Hindu theism, the rise of the *Bhakti* movement, the softening of the rigour of the caste system, the release from the choking and soul-killing religious rituals can all be traced to the influence of Islam. No doubt Islam, with its clear, definite and simple creed, which stood in contrast to the indigenous vagaries of the imagination and speculation about God, appealed to many Hindus as a satisfying solution of the vexed problem of theology.<sup>9</sup>

Some Hindu leaders were highly influenced by Islamic norms. As the result, they started advocating the Islamic principles of love, equality, brotherhood and Oneness of God. This Islamic impact paved the way for the *Bhakti* movement. The leaders of *Bhakti* movement made earnest efforts to bring in harmony between the teachings of Islam and the rituals of Hinduism. The *Bhagats* preached identity of religions, unity of Godhead, brotherhood of man, dignity relative to action rather than birth. They condemned caste, formality and priesthood. *Ram* and *Rahim*, *Keshwar* and *Karim*, *Ka'aba* and *Kailash*, Quran and *Puran* very often go together in their devotional songs. The *Bhakti* cult made rapid progress in the hands of the masters who dominated the religious mind of India during the 8th and 16th centuries. Among the *Bhakti* leaders Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Ramananda, Chaitanya, Namadeva, Kabir and Baba Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion) occupied a prominent place.

**2. Impact on Social and Political Systems:** The Muslim conquest of India brought the Hindus in contact with a different kind of social system. As a conquered people the Hindus had put up a strong fight against the influence of Islam, which was very natural. The complex and rigid Hindu social system and the difficult military and political situation made large scale conversions impossible, with the result that Muslims in India had continued to be a separate community. So, for the first time in Indian history two distinct communities stood face to face and India was permanently divided into two powerful units. This division later took the title of Two-Nation Theory.

Social conditions, however, considerably changed with the coming of the Muslims in India. There was a gradual improvement in the condition of the Shudar and other classes at the bottom of the Hindu caste system. Muslim converts from the Hindu lower classes had, of course, great opportunities before them, and one of them, Khusrav Khan, even sat on the throne of Delhi. Later the preaching of Hindu reformers, due to the influence of Islam on them, also improved the position of these classes within Hindu society. The Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Sangathan movements were similar attempts to unify the lower sections of the Hindu society with the upper class.

Another important result of the advent of Islam was the restoration of contact with the outside world. India had close and deep relations with the Asian countries, particularly China, Rome, Egypt and Greece in the early Buddhist period. The collapse of the Gupta power (550 AD) and the rise of small states created a sort of vacuum in which India became self-centred and cut herself aloof from the outside world. The coastal ports did maintain India's contact with the outside world to some extent.<sup>19</sup> The Mughal government established commercial relations with European nations as well as allowed them to install their factories in coastal towns. This resulted not only in commercial contacts but also in an exchange of ideas, customs and traditions.

In the political sphere, where Muslims dominated, Islamic influence was considerable. New weapons and techniques of warfare were introduced. In fact, the whole military organization was revolutionized and a modern type of military became the principal political institution of Muslim India.

**3. Impact on Culture and Civilization:** Islam brought the greatest change in the field of culture and civilization of Indian society. The concept of freedom of thought and expression, respect for human dignity, universal brotherhood and equality of opportunity had all their impact on the Hindu culture. Mass education which was unknown to India even during the best days of Hindu ascendancy was another gift of Islam to the Hinduism. The inhumane burning of woman with the dead body of her husband was discouraged and it was only under acute circumstances that permission for the performance of *sati* was given. Unlike the Hindu religion the reward and punishment in Islam does not depend on the birth but on the good or bad deeds of an individual. The influence of the new ideas struck the Hindu philosophy of life at its very roots and many among them started thinking about the man-made bondage by Brahminism.

The cultural influence of Islam is also visible in dress, diet, in the celebration of fairs and festivals, in the ceremonies of marriage and in the manners of the court. Achkan and

*Shalwar*, the popular northern Indian dress owe their introduction to Muslim influence. Hunting, hawking, polo, and many other games assumed a Muslim character in form and technique. Balance, harmony and precision were the Muslim contributions in the field of gardening. The Muslims, generally leading a more luxurious life than the Hindus, were responsible for setting new fashions which were copied by the richer classes. They were accustomed to formal dinners and sometimes as many as 100 dishes were served on their tables. Abul Fazl enumerates these dishes in his famous work *Ain-i-Akbari*. It naturally led to the introduction of new articles of food and new styles of cookery, which in course of time became completely Indianized. Some of the well-known Mughul dishes such as *Pullao*, *Kurma*, *Sheermal*, *Zarda*, *Biryani*, *Kababs* of various kinds became quite popular and liked even today.<sup>11</sup>

**4. Impact on Language and Literature:** The sacred language of Islam was Arabic, which was also the mother tongue of the early invaders; the later conquerors spoke Turkish and Persian, as influenced and modified by Arabic. Though Arabic remained the language of religion, Persian became the language of the court during Muslim rule. Persian was, therefore, seriously studied by all those Hindus and Muslims who sought administrative positions, but it could not become the language of the masses. Hence Arabic, Turkish and Persian had to intermix with the local languages. This led to the birth of a new and common language called Urdu (from the Turkish word 'Urdu' meaning 'camp').

The impact of Islam also led to the development of local languages. Sanskrit ceased to be a living language even on a limited scale by the end of the 13th century when a major part of India was under Muslim rule. The peace and prosperity under the Muslim rule gave a literary stimulus and there was a sudden growth of vernacular literature throughout the country. A number of good works were produced in Bengali, Marathi, Sindhi and Punjabi.

**5. Impact on Art and Architecture:** The impact of Islam on Indian art and architecture was deep and pervasive. The contact of Islam with the Hindus resulted in the evolution of a new style of architecture called the Indo-Islamic school of architecture. Main characteristics of the Islamic architecture were openness and simplicity while the Indian school of architecture emphasized on solidity and grace.<sup>12</sup> The Fatehpur Sikri Complex, the Red Fort of Delhi and the Taj Mahal are a few of the many outstanding examples of Indo-Islamic architecture which represent both the Hindu and Muslim architectural features.

During the Sultanate period the Muslims developed decorative arts such as calligraphy and arabesque. They invented and improved floral designs and geometrical patterns "which enhanced the beauty of their buildings and illumination of their books". The Arabic script became a great art in Muslim lands. The art of painting was also practised by the Muslims and "there is evidence that mural paintings were widely in use for decorative purposes in royal palaces". Music, though disliked by the orthodox Muslims had such irresistible appeal that it could not be banished. The well-known *rag*, *khayal*, is attributed to a Muslim ruler of Jaunpur. Alauddin Khalji was a great lover of music and had a number of musicians in his court. Mohammad bin Tughluq, too, was a great patron of music. Indian melodies were collected during the reign of Sikander Lodi and named after him. There

were some reputed musicians during Sultan's period among whom the great poet Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) occupied the first place. He set some of his poems to the Indian tunes and is said to have improved some of the most popular musical instruments such as *Sitar*. He also invented 17 tones of *Dholak* and is looked upon as the originator of *Purbi rag* (Eastern tune) which was the favourite of Nizamuddin Auliya. Music, as other aspects of Indo-Islamic culture, reached its zenith at the time of Akbar, who was a great patron of art. Though dancing is considered irreligious in Islam, this art was also cultivated under the patronage of Muslim rulers. The *Kathak* or *Darbari* style of dancing is the contribution of Muslims.

**6. Impact on History:** Muslims made great contributions in the field of history. They introduced the art of historiography in India as the historical literature existed before the arrival of the Muslims was mostly legendary in character. Hindus were not interested in recording dates of the events. Arabs, on the other hand, kept a regular record of their campaigns and achievements in whatever part of the world they went. Their advent in India led to the production of a large number of chronicles, autobiographies, etc., which serve as source material for the history of the period. Hindu writers naturally copied their style and thus introduced a new and very useful element into Indian literature. Side by side with Persian, Sanskrit, the classical language of the Hindus, also received a great impetus at the hands of the Muslims. Some of the Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Al-Biruni who came to India during the 10th century was a great Sanskrit scholar who translated several works on different subjects from Sanskrit into Arabic. Under Sultan Sikander, the second ruler of the Lodi dynasty, medical treatises were translated from Sanskrit into Persian. In Sanskrit and Hindi many excellent books were written on history, religion and philosophy by the Hindu scholars.

The contact of Islam was beneficial in another way. Contrary to the Hindu practice of making a secret of their productions, the Muslims believed in copying and circulating their works on a large scale. The introduction of paper also helped this process. Many of the older Indian works were translated under the patronage of Muslim rulers, and freely circulated, which led to the diffusion of knowledge.

### Bhakti Movement

*Bhakti* is derived from the root of a Sanskrit word, *bhaj*, to serve, and means service of the Lord. It is the intense love for god or the supreme desire for god, for its own sake. *Bhakti* is the love in which, without seeking results, all works are dedicated to the teacher of teachers. It is a profound experience which negates all desire and fills the heart with love for God.

The literature about the origin of the *Bhakti* cult in Hinduism is somewhat controversial. Many religious scholars trace it to be the influence of Islam. Some others find it to be the influence of Christianity. But if we analyse sacred Hindu literature to some depth, then we will know that it is an indigenous growth.<sup>13</sup> The *Bhakti* movement first made its appearance in the shape of religious reform as reaction against the ritualistic religion of *Vedas*. Its early name was *Ekantika Dharma* or the religion of a single-minded love and devotion to one, and it was based upon the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*<sup>14</sup> in which Lord Krishna says:<sup>15</sup>

i) Describe the causes of Downfall of Muslim Society?

## CHAPTER

# 2

"Democracy is the govt.  
of people by the people for  
the people"-Abraham Lincoln

## DOWNFALL OF MUSLIM RULE

By the opening of the eighteenth century when Europe was ruled by strong monarchies and the European merchant communities were well on the road to prosperity, the Muslim powers everywhere in the world showed a rapid decline. The Mughul empire of India began to weaken rapidly after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir in 1707. The causes of the decline and disintegration of the empire is generally regarded as the weakness of the successors of Aurangzeb Alamgir, but really the loss of a feeling of solidarity among the Muslims was one of the principal causes of Mughul decadence.

### CAUSES OF THE DOWNFALL OF MUSLIM SOCIETY

**Ignorance of Religious Beliefs:** The unity of faith gave a unity of feeling to the Muslims. It was this sense of belonging to the same faith that enabled this numerically small minority to rule the millions of the non-Muslim population. The influx of heterodox ideas and consequent ignorance of religious beliefs shattered Muslim solidarity. Akbar raised the Hindus to positions of influence at the court. This policy changed the nature of the Muslim empire. This made the orthodox Muslims ineffective in protecting the interest of the empire. It was futile to hope that the Hindus would continue to support a Muslim empire. The Muslims were still the dominant group in the state; but it had ceased to be a Muslim empire. Akbar gave away so much, yet he was not able to reconcile the Hindu sentiment completely. Iqbal highlighted these ignorance of Muslims from religion in *Jawab-e-Shikwah* and says:

وہ زمانے میں معزز تھے مسلمان ہو کر  
اور تم خوار ہوئے تارک قرآن ہو کر

Being Muslim they were respectable in the world  
and you are wretched for abandoning Quran

**Lack of Solidarity:** It is a fact of history that in spite of all concessions and privileges, the Hindus remained hostile to the Muslims. The Muslim empire depended on the strength of the Muslims and their solidarity was their strength.

Since the disappearance of this solidarity made the Muslim empire dependent upon Hindu support, its foundation was undermined. Emperor Aurangzeb Alamgir sought and struggled to recreate this Islamic feeling and succeeded in a large measure. If his successor would have been a man of his ideals and determination, the task of reviving Muslim solidarity would have made substantial progress.

**Centralization of Mughul Administration:** The Mughuls had a highly centralized administration. The functionaries of the government were only to carry out by the orders of the emperor. The provincial administration was not autonomous. It was subject to the severe central control. This system had an inherent weakness. The moment the centre would become weak, conspiracies would find their way consequently. The crowns were placed and toppled down and thus the conspiracies encircled the rulers during the period of the later Mughuls.<sup>2</sup>

**No Law of Succession:** The Mughuls failed to establish any law of succession to the throne. The result was that every son of a deceased king felt that he had an equal claim to the crown, and succession to the throne was invariably accompanied by bloody warfare. In Mughuls the transfer of power was not a peaceful process except the few. Akbar was the only ruler in Mughul line who ascended to the throne unopposed, after the death of Humayn. At the end of every reign, there was war of succession. During the last years of Shah Jahan, a war of succession broke out among his sons.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, within a little more than a decade after Aurangzeb's death, seven fierce battles for imperial succession occurred, in which large numbers of princes and trained soldiers were killed. Apart from this loss of valuable personnel in repeated wars of succession, there was a continuous dislocation of administration. A disastrous development started when the princes, often governing vast territories, and their supporters, started making deals with the outsiders, to ensure their support at the time of the fateful struggle.<sup>4</sup>

**Weakness of Character :** The foremost cause of the loss of political power was a crisis in the Muslim character itself. Incompetence, short-sighted selfishness, corruption and other corroding evils had entered the soul of the Muslim. Aurangzeb Alamgir is found to complain repeatedly that men of honesty and sincerity had become rare in his time and that competent men were not available for responsible offices in the government. Commanders and ministers sacrificed the larger interest of the Muslim empire and were dictated to the narrow motives of selfishness and greed. The long period of prosperity and power which made the Muslim society extremely rich, gradually led them to a life of ease and comfort. The spirit of Jihad which was the foundation of the Muslim kingdoms faded gradually. This gave birth to corruption and loss of moral grace, particularly among the highly-placed Muslims. This brought a bad effect on the other sections of the society.

Thanks to a handful of intellectuals who spearheaded the revivalist movement to save the Muslims from the total destruction.<sup>5</sup>

**Educational Decline:** One great cause of the decline and fall of the Muslim society was that the Muslims had lost their dynamic character and they had reached a dead end. There was no creative activity in the field of science or in the realm of thought and ideas. The Muslims could not see the dynamic force of the new knowledge in Europe. Any society that ceases to be creative and falls into rigid traditionalism loses its vitality and progressivism. The world in which the Muslims had built an empire and sustained it had changed. The English and other European nations were making much development in the knowledge of science and techniques of organization. They had developed a strength that defied resistance. They (the Europeans) had developed techniques of efficient government and effective warfare, to which the East possessed no answer. The supremacy of the Muslims was being pushed back; even nations that were predominantly Muslims were threatened in their own homelands.

**Military Weaknesses:** The stagnation visible in the intellectual field was paralleled in the military sphere as well. Babar had introduced gun-powder in India, but after him there was no real improvement in military equipments of the Mughuls.<sup>6</sup> No real progress or large scale training of local personnel in the use of artillery was made or undertaken in Mughul India and the best which they could do was to hire foreigners for their artillery. With this condition of the Mughul army, the downfall of the Muslim rulers was only a question of time.<sup>7</sup> The ambitious *mansabdars* who were allowed to maintain an army for the emperor used it for the consolidation of their own power and thereby reducing the authority of the emperor. The invasion of Nadir Shah destroyed the prestige of the Mughul army and never afterwards it could regain its strength.

**No Naval Force:** It was a suicidal blunder that the Muslim rulers neglected to build a naval force. They remained uninterested to the potentialities of sea-power. They paid their attention to the defence of the passes of the north-west, as these were the historic routes followed by every invader including themselves to enter subcontinent. The Muslim rulers could not think that their empire would fall to the naval strength of the European merchant communities. The activities of the Portuguese in the latter part of the sixteenth century failed to act as an eye -opener for the Muslim rulers. Even in the time of a powerful emperor like Akbar, the Portuguese looted Muslim merchants and even the pilgrim ships. They raided coastal territories in Bengal in the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan. In the reign of Aurangzeb Alamgir, again, the English traders in Bengal and Surat were bold enough to challenge Mughul authority. These incidents clearly showed the approaching danger. Even then, the Muslim rulers learnt no lesson and ignored the importance of the need of navy. Nawab Ali Vardi Khan realized the gravity of the problem but it was too late to mend matters. And the old Nawab was himself so busy with the constant incursion of the Marhattas and the rebellions of his Afghan generals that he could not think of building a naval force. Nawab Sirajuddaulah failed to expel the English from his dominions for want of a navy. The Muslim rulers were destined to receive the disrespectful shock of their history from a trading company backed by the naval might of the country of its origin.<sup>8</sup>

Moulvi Ahmadullah Shah headed irregular troops and had no resources. On 1 March 1858, the British forces under Sir Colin Campbell entered Lucknow. After a few days' fighting Hazrat Mahal left the palace on 16 March and escaped to Bundi. She afterwards escaped into the territory of Nepal. Moulvi Ahmadullah resisted the enemy for three days more and was treacherously murdered—a great loss was done to the struggle for independence.

Kunwar Singh was the chief organizer of the revolt in Bihar. Although he was nearly 80 years of age at that time, he was perhaps the most outstanding military leader and strategist of the revolt. He fought the British in Bihar and also campaigned in Awadh and Central India. He defeated the British forces near Arrah where he sustained a fatal wound while fighting and died on 27 April 1858.

### **Causes of Failure of the War of Independence**

Some of the causes that were responsible for failure of the war of independence, 1857, are summed up as under:

**Localization of War:** The war of independence was localized. There were many parts of India which were not affected by it at all. Particularly, the territory south of the river Narbada remained undisturbed. The Marhattas, once the worst enemies of the Muslims, as well as of the English could not put a good show. Sindh, the Punjab and Rajputana were loyal. Central and Eastern Bengal remained undisturbed. Instead of joining the rebels, the Gorkhas rendered their services to the British. In spite of the fact that the Punjab had been conquered from the Sikhs only 8 years before the revolt, it remained quiet. If the people of the Punjab had joined the rebels, the story of the revolt would have been absolutely different. The loyalties of the Punjabis made the matter easier for the English. Not only they remained themselves loyal but they also helped the government in disarming and guarding the Bengal troops at Lahore, Multan and Peshawar. Those regiments which mutinied were put down. It was the tranquillity of the Punjab that enabled the provincial government to send reinforcement to Delhi. So great was the loyalty of the Punjab that practically all the troops left the Punjab and even then there was no trouble.

The chief of Sirhind rendered excellent help to the British. Sir Dinkar Rao and Salar Jung were responsible for maintaining peace in the territories of Sindhia and the Nizam. Without their devotion and sincerity, things might have been too hard for the British. Therefore, it is contended that if the revolt had not been localized and had spread in every corner of the country, the fate of the country would have been different.

**Lack of Leadership:** The rebels suffered a lot on account of the lack of leadership among them. There was no military genius, politicians, and statesmen worth the name. General Bakht Khan was a brilliant army officer, but he was not in charge of all the forces. Rani of Jhansi was a capable woman, but she was not an experienced army general. The Muslim forces were headed by incompetent and unwilling Mughul princes. The rebels worked without any plan, attacked on enemy like horde and they were defeated.

On the contrary the English had good leaders and military generals like Hodson, Sir

Henry Lawrence, Sir Colin Campbell, Havelock and Hugh Rose. They suppressed the revolt in a very systematic way. Their strategy and tactics were far superior to the Indians. The English were reinforced even from outside India whereas rebels were not only internationally but also locally isolated.

**Deficiency of Modern Weapons:** The technical side of the rebels was very weak. They fought with primitive weapons such as swords and lances. The rebels had practically no war material at their disposal. They had with them what they had managed to capture and when it exhausted, they could not reinforce it. On the other hand the English had up to date ammunition and weapons. As the British had control over the seas, they were in a position to send men and materials into India with no difficulty. A large number of troops were at once sent to India. The Indians fighting with primitive weapons were no match for the British with the Enfield rifles.

**Lack of Unity and Financial Resources:** During the war, the moneylenders were the main targets of the attacks by the villagers. The peasants and farmers destroyed the revenue records and the account books of the moneylenders. Thus moneylenders became hostile to the revolt. The merchants also gradually became unfriendly towards the rebels because rebels were compelled to impose heavy taxes on them in order to finance the war or to seize their stocks of foodstuffs to feed the army. The merchants often concealed their wealth and goods and refused to give free supply to the rebels. The zamindars of Bengal remained loyal to the British. The hostility of Bihar's peasants towards the zamindars frightened the Bengali zamindars. The big merchants of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras supported the British because their main profits came from foreign trade and economic connections with the British merchants.

The educated Indians also did not support the revolt. They stood for ending the backwardness of their country and they believed that the British government in India was destroying the feudal forces in the country and bringing in a new era of progress in the country. Their view was that the rebels of 1857 stood for the old order. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, the Muslim reformer after the war of 1857, actively fought from the side of English and encountered many attacks of Muslim forces at Bijnor.<sup>33</sup>

**Mutual Rivalry:** The rebel leaders were suspicious and jealous of one another and often indulged in serious disputes. The Begum of Awadh disputed with Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah and the Mughal prince Mirza Mughul was feeling hostility towards General Bakht Khan. Advisor of Nana Sahib asked him not to visit Delhi because by doing so he would look inferior to Bahadur Shah Zafar. Some Royal advisers and other officials were spying for the Britishers. Selfishness of the leaders weakened the strength of the revolt and prevented its consolidation.

**Lack of Direction:** The rebels were joined together with a common feeling of hatred against foreigners and when British power was overthrown from any area, they did not know what sort of power to create in its place. The rebels had no future programme to be implemented after the capture of power. The absence of a modern and progressive programme enabled the reactionary princes and zamindars to create unsatisfaction among the rebels.

**Deficiency of Inherent System:** India was essentially feudal and the victory of the farmer was a foregone conclusion. Whereas England was a capitalist country. A capitalist nation is socially, politically, economically and culturally stronger than a feudal people. A capitalist nation has a high sense of patriotism and nationalism since, unlike the feudal people who are physically separated, socially disunited and politically are highly unamalgamated Britters were, it is socially, economically and politically high integrated, living under one political regime and single economic system. This is why throughout the whole history of British conquest, we hardly find any Britisher who betrayed the interests of Britain in India, in contrast to hundreds of Indians, princes, generals and merchants who were loyal to the British and assisted them to dominate India.

### **Consequences of the War**

In spite of its failure, the revolt had a far-reaching effect on Indian politics and administration. It enabled the English to change their behaviour towards the Indians. The revolt no doubt, consolidated the English regime and resulted into the slavery of India, for some time, but now the English ruled over the India with a new orientation, policy and purpose. The English realized the national spirit of Indians as well as their courage. The aggressive English Imperialism got impetus by the revolt but at the same time the Indians also changed their outlook on life. The Hindus and Muslims, after 1857, led a new political life, which shaped their national sentiments in various ways on new European pattern and style because, they were much influenced by the modern European philosophy, culture and fine arts.<sup>34</sup>

**End of the East India Company:** As the direct result of the revolt of 1857, the Government of India Act of 1858 was passed which ended the East India Company's career as a ruling power and the Government of India was taken over by the Crown. The Board of Control and the Court of Directors were abolished and their place was taken by the Secretary of State for India and a Council of India consisting of 15 members was created to help him. The real administrative powers were assigned to the Governor General under a new title of Viceroy. He was to be personal representative of the Crown. Lord Canning, the last Governor General under the East India Company in 1856, was made the first Viceroy and Governor General of the British India dominion.

**Change in the Annexation Policy of Government:** There was a change in the policy of the Government of India towards the Indian princes. The loyalty of the Rajput, Marhatta and Sikh Chiefs and of the Nizam had been of very great value in preventing the spread of the revolt. An attempt was now made to integrate as well as reward them. Their territories were guaranteed and some received material recognition for special service. The most significant change was psychological. They were now regarded as members of an Order and not just survivors. They were an integral part of the Indian Empire and had personal relation with the monarch. Queen Victoria declared in her Proclamation of 1858 that the British Government in future would not annex the Indian States. The Indian Princes were assured the right of adoption and succession. They were given *sanads* and certificates of recognition of their status. The Government of India began to rely more and more on the Indian princes on account of the alienation of the feelings of the Indians.