**Decline of Mughal Empire**

**After Aurangzeb’s death in 1707 revolts took place here and there and Mughal Empire started declining.** There were many causes for the downfall of this great dynasty.

**The top 6 reasons for the decline and downfall of Mughal Empire in India are given below:**

1. None of Aurangzeb successors could give stability to the empire. They were absolutely inefficient.
2. The Nobles took advantage of this situation and they enriched and strengthened themselves.
3. Aurangzeb’s son Muajjan won the first round of succession war and ascended the throne under the name of Bahadur shah. He was very inefficient and after his death a quarrel took place among his four sons.
4. The eldest, [Jahandar Shah](https://www.importantindia.com/5325/jahandar-shah/" \t "_blank) got the throne but was assassinated in 1713 and his nephew [Farruksiyar](https://www.importantindia.com/5327/farrukhsiyar/" \t "_blank) was made emperor by two very influential brothers – the Sayyids. The [Sayyid brother](https://www.importantindia.com/3017/sayyid-brothers/" \t "_blank) (Sayyid Hussain Ali and Sayyid Abdullah) were so influential that they could make or unmake everything. Farruksiyar was soon dragged down and killed and the Sayyids made Muhammad Shah emperor of Delhi.
5. Muhammad Shah was pleasure-loving but he ruled for longer time than did his immediate predecessors. It was he who at last broke the power of the Sayyids. It was, moreover, in his reign that Nadir Shah of Persia invaded India in 1739 A.D.. He carried destruction everywhere. India hardly recovered from this shock. Muhammad shah died in 1748.
6. During the next reign the different parts of the empire began to fall apart. Oudh or Ayodhya, Bengal and Hyderabad became independent. The two later emperors, [Alamgir II](https://www.importantindia.com/5343/alamgir-ii/" \t "_blank) and Shah Alam II, were powerless. The Mughal empire from that time remained just a name without any real power.

### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* Causes of Mughal decline:

1. 1. What are the causes for the decline of the Mughal Empire?

Aurangzeb’s responsibility: Aurangzeb was largely responsible for the downfall of the empire. His ancestors did a lot to win over the loyalties of their subjects, particularly the Rajputs and the Hindus. But Aurangzeb was a fanatic and could not tolerate the non-Muslims. He imposed jazia tax and forbade the celebration of Hindu festivals. He thus lost the friendship and loyalty of the Rajputs. His execution of the Sikh guru and his enmity with the Marathas forced them to raise arms against him. His excessive obsession with the Deccan also destroyed the Mughal army, the treasury and also adversely affected his health. Being a fanatic Sunni Muslim, he could not tolerate even the Shias. They too turned against him. He laid too much stress on simplicity and was against singing, dancing and drinking which were common habits of the Muslim nobles. They did not like a king who was so much against their ways.

Weak Successors: The successors of Aurangzeb were both weak and incompetent. The later Mughals spent more time in their harems and in pleasure and soon lost control of the states.

No Definite Law of Succession: The Mughals did not follow any definite law of succession. After the death of every emperor, there ensued a bloody war of succession amongst his sons. Each one, used nobles and members of the royal family to get the throne thereby dividing the nobles who fought for their self-interest only. This created anarchy. Nobles resorted to conspiracies and made the Mughal power weak and vulnerable.

Poor Economy: The economic stability of the empire was ruined because of the constant wars. Some of the wars did not add even an inch to the Mughal Empire. Besides this, the Mughal rulers spent lavishly on buildings and monuments. Finally, the foreign invasions completely shattered the economy.

Moral Degradation of the Soldiers: An excess of wealth and luxury made the Mughal army lazy, corrupt and inefficient. The soldiers and the generals became pleasure loving and easygoing. Often they proved to be disloyal. Now they could not even go to the battlefield without their train of attendants and women. Sometimes they only fought for money and easily succumbed to bribes.

Rise of New Powers: New powers such as the Sikhs, Jats and Marathas came onto the scene. Gradually they broke off from the Mughal domination and established their own independent states.

1. [2.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-2-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) Coming of the Europeans:

The Europeans, especially the British, played an important role in putting an end to the Mughal Empire. They first obtained a freeman to trade with India, but gradually began interfering in Indian politics and gradually set up a British empire in India that lasted for 200 years.

Foreign Invasions: The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali proved fatal for the Mughal Empire. Not only were the Indians defeated but their weakness was exposed and India became as easy prey to other foreign powers too.

Punjab: Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh guru, had organized the Sikhs into a military force. After his death, his disciple Banda Bahadur carried on his struggle against the Mughals. However, Banda was finally captured and put to death in 1715 during the reign of Farukh Siyar. But the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali gave the Sikhs a fresh opportunity to once again challenge the authority of the Mughals. They organized themselves into small groups known as misls. These misls were twelve in number and each one had a leader. Although these misls could not unite for a longtime, they carried on their struggle with each other’s cooperation. By the end of the eighteenth century, Ranjit Singh, however, brought them together and founded a Sikh kingdom. He brought the entire area to the west of the Sutlej under his control. Under Ranjit Singh, the Sikhs power reached the zenith of its glory, but his death was followed by an internal struggle for power. The Rajputs were strong military-like warriors but they had a major drawback in that they never organized themselves into a single power. They were constantly at war with each other. Even after the fall of Aurangzeb, they failed to rise to the occasion and grab power. The royal patronage that they received during the days of Akbar was now lost. The most important ruler of this period was Raja Jai Singh of Jaipur who built the Pink city and also the astronomical observatories. But during the eighteenth century, the Rajputs became very weak due to the rise of the Sikhs, Jats and the Marathas.

Summary: By 1576, Bengal had become part of a mighty Mughal Empire whose achievements impressed all who came into contact with it. However, within 150 years, the Empire was in decline as internal weaknesses and external threats brought an end to the Mughal supremacy. Main events

1. [3.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-3-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) ♣ 1620 British get permission from Emperor Jahangir to conduct trade.♣ British East India Company started trade since 1650, ♣Nishan was awarded to East India Company by Shah Suja in 1651. ♣1678 Mughal Aurangzeb annexes Marwar and angers Rajputs.♣ 1679 Jizia tax imposed to non muslims ♣ 1686/7 Annexation of Golcunda and Bijapur angers Marathas♣ 1688 British blockade Bombay and Mughal ports♣ 1690 British sign treaty.♣ 1700 Founding of Fort William by British.♣ 1707 Death of Aurangzeb: war of succession.♣ 1739 Persian Nader Shah plunders Delhi.

There were many reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire, beginning with succession disputes and ending with the arrival of the British, who took advantage of the lack of central control, the discontent and factionalism. Some of the specific reasons were:1. Struggle for succession After the death of Aurangazeb, a war of succession broke out among his three sons, Muazzam (Governor of Kabul), Muhammad Azam (Governor of Gujrat) and Muhammad Kam Baksh (Governor of Bijapur). In his will, Aurangazeb had directed his sons to divide the Empire peacefully among them. But at his death, there rose a bitter struggle for the throne of Delhi. The competition for power led to the death of Azam and Muhammad. Muazzem took up the title of Bahadur Shah (also Shah Alam I) but when he died in February 1712, a fresh war of succession brokeout among Muazzam’s four sons. Three out of his four sons were killed in this conflict. The remaining son, Jahandar Shah, became the emperor. But soon, Farrukhsiyar, a son of one of the defeated princes, deposed Jahandar Shah to avenge his father’s death. A series of such conflicts arising out of battles for succession, resulting in the absence of a long-lasting central authority, weakened the Mughal Empire.

1. [4.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-4-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) 2. Religious policy Aurangzeb was brave and untiring in carrying out his duties. He was also a great soldier and general but he failed to be a good ruler because of his religious conservatism. He appeared to be an emperor of the Muslims only, not of all the people of India who had different religious and cultural identities. In 1679, here-imposed the Jizia on the non-believers. He denounced the idea of joining hands with the Hindus for the integrity of the Empire. He rather focused on the Muslims only. He also banned sati, the Hindu sacrifice of widows. These and other of his religious policies insulted the non-Muslims and caused discontent and unrest.

3. Aurangzeb’s Deccan policy Aurangzeb’s determination to crush the Marathas was also responsible for the decline of the Empire. The Emperor went to the Deccan to annex Golcunda in 1686 and Bijapur in 1687. These two states were not only Shia states but also supportive to the Marathas by providing employment and even military training. A friendly policy towards these two states could have made them his allies against the Maratha. But Aurangzeb could not see this possibility. The Mughal Empire, by this time, had become too vast to be controlled efficiently by a centralized administration, especially Karnataka. Communication and transport were poor and the frequent Maratha raids made it difficult for the nobles to collect the taxes. This was a serious setback to the prestige of the Empire.

4. Aurangzeb’s Rajput policy Aurangzeb did not attach enough importance to the Rajput alliance. In December 1678, he introduced a change of policy towards the Rajputs who had contributed much to the growth of the Mughal Empire in India. When he annexed Marwar, Aurangzeb’s aggressive policy drove the Rajputs to gather forces and the Rajput War turned into almost a national uprising. The war continued till Bahadur Shah I, Aurangzeb’s son and successor, recognized Ajit Singh as the Rana of Marwar in 1709.

5. Maratha revival By 1691, the Marathas (under the Peshwas) had become strong enough to rise up in rebellion under Raja Ram and other Maratha chiefs. They consolidated their positions in western India, dreaming of a greater Maharashtra Empire. The Marathas grew into the strongest power in northern India and took up the role of defenders of Hindustan against foreign invaders like Ahmed Shah Abdali. The Maratha conquests in the north accelerated the disintegration of the Empire.

1. [5.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-5-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) 6. The weak nobles and party factions The weak characters of the nobility hastened the downfall of the Mughal Empire. The nobility were only interested in increasing their power and influence. The country was often broken apart by civil wars due to the quarrelsome nobles. The nobility was divided into two broad factions:♣ The Hindustani or Indo-Muslim party, who were the Afghan nobles, the Sayyids of Barha and Khan-i- Dawran whose ancestors had come to India from Badakhshan. These Indian Muslims were mostly aligned with the Hindus.♣ The foreign nobles were called Mughals as a whole but were divided into two groups. Those who came from Trans-oxania and other parts of Central Asia were mostly Sunni (The Turrani Party). The Irani nobles who were from Persia were mostly Shias. During the reign of Bahadur Shah and Jahandar Shah, the Irani party was in power with Zulfikhar Khanas leader. But from the time of Farrukhsiyyars reign, the Hindustani party, together with the Turrani group, took over power. At the end, the Turranians and the Iranians joined together against the Hindustanis. This factionalism grew stronger in the absence of a strong emperor.
2. 7. Administrative weaknesses corrupt administration The Mughal administration became full of corruption even before the death of Aurangzeb. Officers of all ranks took bribes. On the other hand, the high rate of taxation ruined the people who lost interest in production. In the reign of Shah Jahan, the state demand had been raised to half of the produce. His immense expenditure on the construction of numerous buildings worsened the condition of the finances. The tyrannical administration of the provincial governors brought further misery to the people who could go nowhere for redress. The Mansabdari system A mansab meant an official appointment of rank and profit, which was held by every officer of the state. They were bound theoretically to supply a number of troops for the military service of the state. The mansabdars were the official nobility of the country. They were directly recruited, promoted and suspended by the Emperor himself. The mansabdari system later deteriorated, therefore, with the ascendancy of weak rulers on the throne and as corruption and repression increased.
3. [6.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-6-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) Condition of the people

The people of India suffered greatly. The land revenue taxes increased from the time of Akbar. The nobles were mistreated and cheated out of their land rights. In response, they often broke official regulations and behaved cruelly. People’s miseries increased after Aurangzebs death and peasants often left their lands in despair. The discontent of the peasants was an added reason for the uprisings of the Satnanis, the Jats and the Sikhs. Many peasants formed bands of robbers and adventurers weakening law and order further.

8. The demoralized Mughal army The condition of the army was deplorable. The immense wealth of India and the wine and comforts they enjoyed demoralized the Mughal army and led to its deterioration. The Mughal army was so weak that even after three attempts it failed to capture Kandahar. In 1739, Nader Shah, the Persian invader, easily plundered Delhi and carried out a wholesale massacre. The people lost all respect for the Mughal sovereign. Misuse of revenue by the nobles The Mughal army was formed of contingents maintained by the great nobles from the revenues or assignments of their posts. With the weakening of the central control, the nobles used those assignments to benefit themselves. Lack of discipline became lax in the army. There was no regular punishment for military crimes. Aurangzeb often ignored acts of treason and cowardice, and even neglect of duty. There was no drill in the army and each soldier trained as he wished with his weapons. Outdated weapons The weapons and methods of warfare had become outdated by this time. They depended mostly on artillery and the armour-clad cavalry. The artillery was local and followed by a huge camp of various people of different ages, combatants, and non-combatants, and numerous elephants, cattle and beasts of burden. In the eighteenth century, musketry was already introduced in other armies, and the Maratha cavalry with their swiftness and suddenness could easily bring disorder in the Mughal camps. Not a national army The Mughal army comprised various elements of people who fought battles in their individual ways. With the expansion of the Empire, the army became too huge and uncontrollable. Moreover, the jealousies and

1. [7.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-7-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) rivalries of the high-ranking officials in the army often destroyed the chances of victory during the campaigns.9. The Persion’s invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali The invasions of Ahmed Shah Abdali, the invader from Persia and the son of Nadir Shah, hastened the downfall of the Mughal Empire. These frequent invasions revealed the weakness of the Empire and brought chaos and confusion. The third battle of Panipat in 1761, fought between Ahmed Shah Abdali and the Marathas, ended in a disastrous defeat for the Marathas. It also weakened the Marathas and the Muslim rulers, paving the way for the British Rule in India.

10. The arrival of the British: The British There is sometimes a little confusion about what we mean by the term British, especially as Great Britain today includes England, Wales and Scotland, and the UK includes Great Britain and Northern Ireland! However, for the period of history that we are looking at, the best definition of British is from Britain, which meant England, Scotland, Wales or Ireland. Although the king or queen ruled all these lands, each of them had its own language. However, the language spoken by most people, and the official language, was English. The Mughals neglected the navy and this proved to be a disaster. The coastline was left unprotected and the Europeans were able to establish themselves in India with little difficulty. Various European nations who had established trade relations with India, seeing the weakness of the Mughal Empire, began to focus more on political influence than trade in India. Through diplomacy, military skill and persistence, the English East India Company emerged a successful in exploiting the volatile circumstances in India in general and Bengal in particular.

1. [8.](https://image.slidesharecdn.com/causesofmughaldecline1-120914140033-phpapp01/95/causes-of-mughal-decline-8-728.jpg?cb=1347631269) Succeeded in getting permission from Emperor Jahangir to build forts and conduct trade in Surat, Agra and Ahmedabad around 1620. But given the prevailing trend of decline in the Mughal Empire, particular towards the end of Aurangzeb’s reign, they gradually became politically ambitious. In 1688, the British blockaded the Bombay and Mughal ports and captured many Mughal ships. As the Mughal Emperor responded strongly, they were forced to sign a treaty in 1690. The company was given a license for trade only on condition that the captured vessels would be returned and a payment of one and a half lacs of rupees made. Though this treaty apparently restrained the British, this was not good for the Mughal Empire in the long run. The reason is that this treaty legitimized the presence of the British, as well their right to do business in India. From this time onwards, the British organized their strength in Bombay, Madras and Bengal and tried to help build up an alliance that was not sympathetic to the Mughals. The arrival of the British was to prove fatal to the Mughal Empire. Britain was the most technologically advanced country in the world and the British brought with them weapons far in advance of those used by the Mughals. The British also brought a unity and sense of determination which the divided Mughals lacked.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*