

Reign of Mughals and Advancement of Europeans in India

Dr. Sangeeta Gupta

Associate Professor, Head of the Department of History, S.D.(PG) College Panipat Haryana

Abstract: Before the entry of Mughals in India, this country was ruled by local kings. In the 1500s, Mughals entered India with the help of their first ruler Babar. Then, gradually, other rulers as Humayun, Akbar and Aurangzeb expanded Mughal territory in India. Mughals ruled for nearly 300 years in India with 20 rulers. However, they were ousted with the entry of the British East India Company. With the entry of the British East India Company in India, other European countries such as France, Denmark and Dutch also attempted to establish trade in India. However, only the British East India Company succeeded in India and it later colonized the country by ousting the Mughals. In this research paper, discussion has been made on the history of Mughal reigns in India and the advancement of the Europeans in the country. Some important historical facts on this information have been highlighted. It has been identified that with the decline of Mughals, British rulers got the opportunity to colonize India and to explore its rich resources. They ruled for 200 years and looted many resources from the country until they left the country in 1947 due to significant resistance from people.

Keywords: Decline of Mughals, Culture, Power, Resources

INTRODUCTION

India always has been a country of rich tradition and culture. Ancient Indian culture has been based on Hinduism and before the 16th century, there were many Hindu kingdoms in the country. There were kings who battled for increasing the size of their kingdoms and were rich in resources. India before the 16th century was one of the richest nations in the world with abundance of minerals and resources that were of high values (Kumar, 2018). Culture of India was also significant one as can be witnessed in some of ancient temples and caves in the country that were developed with unique architecture and design. However, fate of India changed with the entry of Mughals in the Northern parts of the country in the 16th century. Mughals started ruling the Northern parts of the country from 1526 with the entry of Babur as the first ruler of the Dynasty.

Mughals started their conquest from Kabul and gradually conquest other parts of Northern India. Then they started approaching other parts of the country by defeating the Rajput's and other Kingdom that were ruling the country at that point of time (Patterson, 2019). On the other hand, Europeans came much earlier than the Mughals in India. Entry of Europeans started with Vasco da Gama was the first European who came to the South-Western part of India through sea. His entry influenced other Europeans to involve in trade with India. Portugal was the country that started trading with India. However, their presence was short-lived with the entry of the British in 1600s. British traders set up the British East India Company and gradually, they ousted Mughals from the country and colonized India from 1700s. Thus, Dutch and French came to the country, however; they could not make much impact compared to the British.

Hence, Mughals started the entry of foreign rulers in India, Europeans continued to rule after expanding their territory and finally, India achieved its Independence after ousting British from the country. This is the short concept on the reign of the Mughals and advancement of Europeans in India. However, this paper will conduct a detailed analysis on the reign of Mughals in India and the history on the entry of the Europeans and their expansion in the country. In this process, some historical data will be used from relevant sources as the evidence of completing this research.

Mughals initiated the concept of colonization in India and Europeans followed them and expand their reigns all over the country in the search of rich properties and minerals that were abundant in the country at that point of time.

MUGHALS IN INDIA:

Before the entry of Mughals, India was predominant with Hindu culture and Kings used to rule different regions of the country and aimed on expanding their kingdoms. However, after the formation of Mughal Dynasty by the ruler of Central

Asia, Babur, he decided to control the Northern parts of India through Kabul. He entered India from Kabul through Khyber Pass and he was able to win Northern India after the Battle of Panipat with the Lodhi Dynasty (Chandra, n.p.). However, later he faced significant resistance from different dynasties of North India and power of Babur just was limited. Even his son, Humayun who succeeded him was not able to capture other parts of India as he went to exile in Persia after protests from the rebels. However, Mughals were able to increase their strength and established their rule in India with the entry of Akbar who was the son of Humayun. With the help of Bairam Khan, Akbar was able to establish Mughal Empire in the country.

Akbar also strengthened the military power of the Mughals and fought with the Rajput's to conquer a large part of the country. Akbar was significantly successful in this process with his diplomacy and bravery (Jamsari *et al.*, nap). He was also even able to conquer the Godavari region of India in the South. Gradually, under his rule, Mughals were able to capture almost all the parts of India. Akbar also traded with the Europeans and under his rule, Mughal Dynasty in India became significantly rich, and economy was flourishing. Under his rule, Akbar also made India as one of the richest countries in the world at that period. Akbar developed some significant monuments, buildings and roadways that helped in modernization of India. Thus, along with colonization, rule of Akbar also benefited Indian people to some extent, and this is the reason, Akbar is considered as the greatest Mughal leader who has ruled in India at that period. He also established modern administration and influenced cultural development in the country.

The ruling period of Akbar was considered as the golden age of Mughal Dynasty in India and before handing over the Empire to his son Jahangir, Akbar was able to create a significant influence of Mughals in the country. However, Jahangir could not conduct his duty as an Emperor with perfection. This is because; Jahangir was addicted to opium and ignored the necessity of state welfare. He also failed to live up on the expectation of his father and the impression that his father had created about the Mughals in India. However, it was the son of Jahangir who was again able to re-establish the declining Mughal power in the country. Shah Jahan the son of Jahangir increased the cultural influence of Mughals in India as evident from the construction of Taj Mahal that is considered among the Seven Wonders of the World. However, Shah Jahan struggled on bringing in the desired revenues that were important to maintain the power of Mughals in India. After he got ill, he was succeeded by his son Dara Shikoh. He was instrumental on uniting Hindu and Islamic culture in India.

However, reign of Dara Shikoh was short-lived as his brother Aurangzeb defeated him in the battle and forcefully became the Mughal ruler. After overcoming illness, Shah Jahan wanted to re-establish Dara Shikoh as the ruler. However, after a series of wars, Aurangzeb house arrested Shah Jahan and continued as a leader. Aurangzeb was instrumental in enhancing political power of Mughals in India and he also increased economic strength of the Dynasty as well. He also established Sharia or the Islamic law in India and this brought in significant controversy in the country. During his rule, Aurangzeb captured the maximum parts of South Asia and overcame all the resistances from the kingdoms that were not captured by Mughals till then. Aurangzeb thus was considered as the most powerful Mughal ruler in India. However, Aurangzeb lost his goal to capture the Deccan Valley and after the loss, he went to depression.

It was then; Aurangzeb handed over the Dynasty to his son Shah Alam. Rule of Shah Alam as only short-lived as he died early and since then, Mughal Dynasty began to weaken in India. Decline of Mughals in India was evident during the rule of Muhammad Shah who was the 13th Emperor of Mughal Dynasty (Alam, 2018). During his rule, the Empire began to break and the power in Central India went over to the Marathas. Since then, Marathas played significant role in declining power of Mughals in India. Mughals faced further setback when the British East India Company increased its power and gradually began to colonize India part by part. British captured the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar. In this way, Mughal rule in India came to an end after more than 300 years. Then, British Raj started in the country with British rulers almost colonized the whole country. Thus, Mughals were significant in modernization of India and helped in increasing resources and economic power of the country during their rule.

EUROPEANS IN INDIA

Entry of Europeans started with Vasco da Gama was the first European who came to the South-Western part of India through sea. His entry influenced other Europeans to involve in trade with India. Portugal was the country that started trading with India. However, their presence was short-lived with the entry of the British in 1600s (Anjum, 2018). British traders set up the British East India Company and gradually, they ousted Mughals from the country and colonized India from 1700s. Thus, Dutch and French came to the country, however; they could not make much impact compared to the British. Europeans when came to know about the growing economy of India under Mughal Empire showed significant interest on trading with the country. Although Portuguese traders were not able to make significant impact in India, however; European trading increased when the Mughal Emperor Akbar showed interest to trade with the Europeans. However, he never allowed Europeans to enter India for settlement.

However, after end of the reign of Aurangzeb, Mughals started to decline, and this is when the British East India Company got the opportunity to colonize India by defeating the Mughals. At the initial stage from 1600 to 1650, the British East India Company was more interested in trading rather than on colonization. However, with the changes in trading policy for the British Government, the British East India Company decided to colonize India for better trade. In this way, British utilized the declining Dynasty of Mughals and started colonization of India. In later stages, French and Dutch traders came to India, however; they were able to do trading from only a few regions of the country. It was the British East India Company that ruled in trading. The British East India Company not only established their market in India, however; gradually started looting resources and economy of the country that were built by Akbar and later by Aurangzeb. Details of these historical incidences will be discussed in the next section.

EXPANSION OF EUROPEANS IN INDIA

With the British East India Company finding the opportunity to increase its trade with India, it started realizing that it could earn more profit if it is able to colonize the country. In this way, British started fighting against Mughal resistance and slowly was able to capture Northern and Eastern India at first. However, British faced significant resistance from the Marathas, the Rajput's, and the Deccan's. It became difficult for the British to capture these parts as resistance was significant. Although, Mughals were ousted, however; British continued to face resistance from some local kingdoms of the country. However, the uprising of 1857 brought in the opportunity for the British to colonize India completely. Indians fought bravely in the battle, however; they were defeated due to the lack of the weapons and resources that were required to fight against strong British army. The loss of battle made India completely colonized to British and the British East India Company was the able to trade from whole India.

British gradually exported many valuable items free of cost from India to England. In this way, economy of India was destroyed that was once flourishing under Mughal rule. However, before the domination of the British East India Company, the Dutch East India Company was dominating in India in the initial years of 1600s. The Danish East India Company was also established in India in 1616 and it made Serampore of Bengal as their headquarters. However, both the companies could not establish and continue their business for long with the increasing power of the British East India Company the British East India Company. In the meantime, French East India Company was also established and this company targeted Surat as the main hub of business. However, in 1760, the Battle at Wandiwash took place in which French surrendered to the British.

British traders set up the British East India Company and gradually, they ousted Mughals from the country and colonized India from 1700s. Thus, Dutch and French came to the country, however; they could not make much impact compared to the British. After 1845, the British East India Company was the sole European company that dominated the market of India and colonized the country successfully. In this way, the British East India Company paved the way for the British Government to colonize India. As India was having high economic growth, British claimed this opportunity and looted maximum resources from the country. In this way, economy of India felt down, and England gradually became one of the powerful nations of the world in the end 1800s. British Government with the help of the British East India Company was successfully able to expand its colonization. It made Calcutta as the capital of India and the main headquarters from where the overall trading operations were implemented. The British East India Company set up a port in Calcutta from where it could export resources to England and other countries from trading.

Thus, it was the British East India Company that helped in expansion of British rule in India. British however also made significant contribution on developed of infrastructures in India. They developed roads, bridges, and railway tracks for increasing their operations in India. There were many remote places in India that were difficult to reach. Hence, to expand its trade in India, the British East India Company developed the roadways and transportation system (Ahmed, 2019). British also completely ousted the kingdoms in India and established the modern political system that is evident in the country in the modern society. Although British rulers played significant part of modernization of India, however; they did so by destroying the economy of the country. The British East India Company constructed some buildings for their trade and those building can be still witnessed in India especially in modern day Kolkata and Mumbai. However, the problem is that to expand their rule, British ended up on torturing Indian people.

Mughals were instrumental on establishing cultural diversity in India and they enhanced bonding between Hindus and Muslims. However, British implemented divide and rule policy in which they influenced communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims in India. British rulers found it an efficient strategy to create division among Indian people so that they could face less resistance in the country to increase their rule. Hence, British attempted to destroy the cultural elements that were set by the Mughals especially by Akbar and Aurangzeb. At the initial stage from 1600 to 1650, the British East

India Company was more interested in trading rather than on colonization (Dutt, 2017). However, with the changes in trading policy for the British Government, the British East India Company decided to colonize India for better trade. In this way, British utilized the declining Dynasty of Mughals and started colonization of India. When British started to think about colonization that was when expansion of the British rule started in India.

Thus, there were some significant historical incidences that established Mughal reign in India and resulted in the expansion of European rule in the country.

SUMMARY

Babur was the first Mughal ruler who came to India and conquered the Northern parts of the country. He entered India from Kabul through Khyber Pass and he was able to win Northern India after the Battle of Panipat with the Lodhi Dynasty. However, later he faced significant resistance from different dynasties of North India and power of Babur just was limited. However, Akbar was the main ruler who was able to completely establish Mughal rule in India and was also instrumental on economic development of the country. Aurangzeb further continued this tradition and Mughals ruled India until the Europeans established their trade in the country. Among all the European company, the British East India Company earned most success in the country. British traders set up the British East India Company and gradually, they ousted Mughals from the country and colonized India from 1700s. Thus, Dutch and French came to the country, however; they could not make much impact compared to the British. Europeans when came to know about the growing economy of India under Mughal Empire showed significant interest on trading with the country.

It was the British who rule for nearly 200 years in India and the rulers looted most of the valuable resources from the country. However, British rule ended in 1947 and thus long-term colonization of the country by Mughals and then the British ended in that year. These are the main information that has been evaluated in this paper. It is a fact that the British rulers showcased their power to oust Mughals from the country and they were able to establish the European dominance in India for almost 20 years. These are the main elements that have been discussed in this paper.

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of data, it has been identified that Mughals implemented their reign in 1500s and continued till the end of 1700s. After their end of reign, British stated to colonize the country. Other European countries failed to make any significant impact in the country as they lost the rule against the British who showcased the power significantly. This paper conducted a detailed analysis on the reign of Mughals in India and the history on the entry of the Europeans and their expansion in the country. In this process, some historical data have been used from relevant sources as the evidence of completing this research.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Ahmed, Q. (2019). Condition of peasants during British rule in India. *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities*, 4(6), 15-18.
- [2]. Alam, P. (2018). TEMPLE DESTRUCTION AND THE GREAT MUGHALS' RELIGIOUS POLICY IN NORTH INDIA: A Case Study of Banaras Region, 1526-1707. *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion*, 3(1), 1-18.
- [3]. Anjum, F. (2018). 'AND NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET': PRE-COLONIAL EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS AND THE 'REALITY' OF INDIA. *THE HISTORIAN*, 16.
- [4]. Chandra, H. Mughal Rajput Relations (1526-1705): A Study.
- [5]. Dutt, R. C. (2017). *The Economic History Of India-Vol. I*. Publications Division Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- [6]. Jamsari, E. A., MZA, H. A., Nor, M. R. M., Sulaiman, A., Safiai, M. H., Ibrahim, I. A., & Ahmad, M. Y. (2017). Akbar (1556-1605) and India unification under the mughals. *International journal of civil engineering and technology*.
- [7]. Kumar, P. (Ed.). (2018). *Exploring dynamic mentoring models in India*. Springer International Publishing.
- [8]. Patterson, J. (2019). Enlightenment and Empire, Mughals and Marathas: the Religious History of India in the work of East India Company servant, Alexander Dow. *History of European Ideas*, 45(7), 972-991.