



Political History of Mughal India

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Introduction :

The Mughal emperors were the supreme monarchs of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent, mainly corresponding to the modern countries of India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh in the east, and the uplands of the Deccan Plateau in South India. The Mughal empire is conventionally said to have been 1526 by Babur, a Chieftain from what is today Uzbekistan, who employed aid from the neighboring Safavid and Ottoman Empire, to defeat the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, in the First Battle of Panipat, and to sweep down the plains of North India. The Mughal imperial structure, however, is sometimes dated to 1600, to the rule of Babur's grandson, Akbar. This imperial structure lasted until 1720, until shortly after the death of the last major emperor, Aurangzeb, during whose reign the empire also achieved its maximum geographical extent. Reduced subsequently to the region in and around Old Delhi by 1760, the empire was formally dissolved by the British Raj after the Indian Rebellion of 1857.

Babur (1526-30) :

Mirza Zahiruddin Muhammad born on 14th, February 1483 at (Principality of Uzbekistan) and Died on December 1530 At Agra in India. Babur led four expeditions to India but without any significant results. His fifth invasion battle of Panipat marked his success and completely changed the political history of India. Delhi Sultan Ibrahim Lodi was the ruler of Delhi at this time. Babur defeated him in the battle of Panipat 21st April 1526 and established the Mughal empire in India.

Humayun (1530-40/1555-56) :

Humayun born on 6th March, 1508 at Kabul, in Afghanistan and died January 1556 at Delhi in India. He was second Mughal ruler in India. He was the son and successor of Babur. Humayun ruled from 1530 to 1540 and again from 1555 to 1556. Humayun occupied Gujrat in 1535. Meanwhile, Afghan soldier of fortune Shershah of Sur. He had consolidated his power in Bihar and Bengal. He defeated Humayun at Chausa in 1539 and at Kannauj in 1540, expelling him from India. So, Humayun became a homeless wanderer, seeking support first in Sindh, then in Marwar and then in Sindh again his famous son Akbar was born in 1542. He reaching Iran in 1544. Humayun was granted military aid by Shah Tahmasp and went on to conquer Kandahar (in what is now Afghanistan) and to seize Kabul three times from his own disloyal brother Kamran the descendants of Sher Shah. Humayun captured Lahore (now in Pakistan) in February 1555. And after defeating Sikandar the rebel Afghan Governor of Punjab at Sindh.

Humayun recovered Delhi and Agra in July 1555. Humayun was fatally injured by falling down the staircase of his library. His tomb in Delhi, built several years after his death. It is the first of the great Mughal architectural masterpieces. It was designed a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993.

Akbar (1556-1605) :

Abul-Fath Jalal-din Muhammad Akbar born on 15th October 1542 at Umarkot (now in Sindh province Pakistan) and died on 27 October 1605 at Fatepur Sikri, Agra in India. Akbar was greatest of the Mughal emperors of India. He reigned from 1556 to 1605 and extended Mughal power over most of the Indian subcontinent. In order to preserve the unity of his empire. Akbar adopted programmes that won the loyalty of non-Muslim populations. He reformed and strengthened his central administration. Also centralized his financial system and reorganized tax-collection processes. Although he never renounced Islam. He took an active interest in other religions. Illiterate himself, he encouraged scholars, poets, painters, and musicians making his court a centre of culture. Jalal-din Muhammad Akbar, was the greatest of the Mughal emperors to have ever ruled India and one of the noblest kings the world has ever witnessed. He extended his sway over an area stretching from Kandahar in the west to Dacca in the east and Srinagar in the north to Ahmednagar in the south. Akbar, after the death of his father Humayun, ascended the throne on February 14, 1556. The foundation of the Mughal empire in India was laid down by his grandfather Babur in 1526 after

defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the first battle of Panipat. Babur was the descendent of changez Khan and Timur. As Akbar was a minor at the time of his tutor and guardian Bairam Khan was appointed his regent. Akbar with the help of Bairam Khan defeated the army of Mohammad Adil Shah in the second battle of Panipat in 1557 and consolidated his hold over the throne of Delhi. Akbar was a brave soldier as well as a capable administrator. Though uneducated, he was highly cultured and erudite. He was a great organizer and statesman and a great patron of art and literature. His court was adorned by statesmen, scholars and singers. Birbal and Tansen, the two well known historical personalities, were among the famous 'Nine Jewels' (Navratna) of Akbar's court.

Jahangir (1605-27) :

Nur-ud-din Muhammad Salim born on 30th August 1569 at Fatepur Shikar and died on 28th October 1627 at Rajouri. He was the fourth Mughal Emperor who ruled from 1605 until his death in 1627, Jahangir was famous for his chain of Justice. In Contemporary paintings it has been shown as a golden chain with golden bells. In his memoir Tuzuk-i-Jahangir he has written that he ordered the creation of this chain for this oppressed subject to appeal to the emperor if they were denied justice at any level.

Shah Jahan (1628-58) : Shah Jahan born on 5th January 1592 at Lahore (now in Pakistan) died on 22nd January 1666 at Agra fort, Agra. The period of his considered as the golden age of Mughal art and architecture. Shah Jahan is best known for erecting many splendid monuments, the most famous of which in all the world, is the Taj Mahal at Agra, built in 1632-1648 as a tomb for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707) (31 July 1658- 3rd March 1707) 48 years 7 months : Aurangzeb born on 3rd November 1618 at Dhod Malwa, India and died on 3rd March 1707. He was the last of the great Mughal emperors. Under him the Mughal empire reached its greatest extent. Although his policies helped lead to its dissolution. Unfortunately, he possessed a suspicious nature. He trusted neither his officers nor his sons. Consequently, he had to do too many things himself. It was impossible for an individual to carry on the work of the administration of the country single-handed and no wonder he failed. He failed in spite of all his talent, skill, and patience. He interfered too much into the work of his subordinates. The result was that his subordinates lost all sense of responsibility and initiative. Such a bureaucracy was not fit to carry on the administration of the country.

Successors of Aurangzeb

Azam Shah (1707-1707) (14th March 1707-20th June 1707) : Mirza Abul Fayaz Qutbudin

Mohammud Azam commonly known as Azam Shah, was briefly the seventh Mughal emperor from 14th March to 20th June 1707. He was the third son of the Sixth Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

Bahadur Shah Jafar-I (1707-1712) (19th June 1707-27 February 1712) : He was more than 63 years old and he had passed the age when he could be expected to show initiative in any work. He was the first and the last of the later Mughals to have exercised the real authority. He was learned, dignified and there was evidence of the reversal of some of the narrow-minded policies and measures adopted by Aurangzeb. He pursued a conciliatory policy towards the Rajputs and the Marathas. He adopted a more tolerant attitude towards the Hindu chiefs and rajas. There was no destruction of temples in his reign. The Jiziyah imposed by Aurangzeb was withdrawn and the independence of Mewar and Marwar was acknowledged. But his policy towards the Maratha Sardars (chiefs) was that of half-hearted conciliation. He did not recognize Shahu as the rightful Maratha king. While he granted them the Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan, he failed to grant them the Chauth. Thus, he failed to satisfy them fully. The result was that Shahu and the Maratha Sardars remained dissatisfied and the Deccan continued to be prey to disorder. Bahadur Shah Zafar I made reconciliation with Guru Gobind Singh and granted him high Mansab. But after the death of the Guru, the Sikhs once again raised a revolt under the leadership of Banda Bahadur. The Mughals led a campaign against Banda Bahadur. A battle was fought between the two at Lohgarh, a fort built by Guru Gobind Singh. Banda Bahadur was defeated, but the Sikhs were neither crushed nor conciliated and in 1712 they recovered the fort of Lohgarh. During the course of this campaign Bahadur Shah died in 1712.

Jahandar Shah (1712-13) (27 February 1712- 11th February 1713) : The death of Bahadur Shah was followed by a civil war among his four sons, Jahandar Shah, Azim-us-Shah, Rafi-ush-Shah and Jahan Shah. In this civil war, Jahandar Shah, one of the less able sons of Bahadur Shah, came out successful with the help of Zulfikar Khan. Zulfikar Khan was a prominent leader of the Irani party, and soon he was appointed as a Wazir by Jahandar Shah. During Jahandar Shah's reign, the administration was virtually in the hands of the extremely capable and energetic Zulfikar Khan. Zulfikar Khan made an attempt to improve the finances of the Empire by checking the reckless growth of jagirs and offices. Nobles (Mansabadars) were asked to maintain their official quota of troops. But he also started an evil practice of revenue farming or Ijarah whereby the government began to contract with revenue farmers and middlemen who paid the government a fixed amount while they were free to collect whatever they could from the peasant. This led to increased

oppression of the peasant. Jahandar Shah soon became generally odious and despicable.” During his eleven months reign, Jahandar Shah squandered away most of the treasurer accumulated by his predecessors. Taking advantage of the situation, Farrukh Siyar, the second son of Azim-us-Shah, won over the Saiyyid brothers to his side and marched to Delhi. Jahandar Shah’s inglorious reign came to an end in January 1713 when he was defeated at Agra by Farrukh Siyar.

Farrukh Siyar (1713-19) (11th January 1713- 28th February 1719) : Farrukh Siyar owed to the Saiyyid brothers. To repay that obligation the emperor appointed Saiyyid Abdullah Khan as Wazir and Hussain Ali Khan Barakow as Mir Bakshi or virtually the Commander-in-chief. Farrukh Siyar was utterly weak, thoughtless and devoid of physical and moral courage. He lacked the ability to rule. He was led by his personal favourites, Mir Jumla and Khan Dawan Khan. He wanted to exercise personal authority and was not willing to give the Saiyyid brother a free hand in administration. As Saiyyid brother had put him on the throne, they wanted complete control over the government. Thus, there ensued a prolonged struggle for power between the Emperor Farrukh Siyar and his Wazir and Mir Bakshi. For three years this struggle continued and finally in 1719, the Saiyyid brothers deposed and killed Farrukh Siyar. After deposing Farrukh Siyar the Saiyyid brothers placed on the throne Rafi-ud-darajat, a son of Rafi-us-shan. He died of consumption within four months. Then they enthroned his elder brother Rafi-ud-daula with the title of Shahjahan-II. He was also suffering from consumption. He ruled from June to September 1719 and died on 17 September 1719.

Rafi-ud-Darjat (1719-1719) (28th February 1719- 6th June 1719) : From the deposition of Farrukh-siyar on 28th February 1719 to the accession of Muhammad Shah on 24th September 1719. Three princes were raised to the throne like bubbles of water rising to the surface, only to end their ephemeral existence in a very short time. After the deposition of Farrukh-siyar, the Saiyyid Brothers raised to the throne a puppet named Rafi-ud-Darjat. The Marathas were permitted to return to the Deccan. They carried with them three Farmans granting the concessions demanded by them. The cruelty of the Saiyyid brothers towards Farrukh-siyar was resented by the people of Delhi. Ajit Singh was subjected to insult and ridicule. The rivals of the Saiyyid brothers set up Niku-syar, another puppet Emperor at Agra. Added to that was the growing mistrust and rivalry between the Saiyyid brothers themselves. Abdullah Khan favoured settlement with Niku-syar but Husain Ali insisted upon a fight with him and his view prevailed. Meanwhile, the health of Rafi-ud-Darjat began to decline fast and on his suggestion the Saiyyid brothers raised to the

throne his elder brother Rafi-ud-Daulah on 6th June 1719. He was briefly the eleventh Mughal emperor. He was the youngest son of Rafi-ush-Shan, the nephew of Azim-ush-Shan and a grandson of Bahadur Shah Jafar-I.

Rafi-ud-Daulat (1719-19) (28th February 1719- 6th June 1719) : The new Mughal emperor was virtually a prisoner in the charge of Saiyyid Himmat Khan Barha. He was not permitted to attend the Friday prayers, not to go out hunting nor even to converse with any nobles, except in the presence of his custodian. He fell ill and died on 17th September 1719.

Muhammad Ibrahim (1720-20) : Abdul Fath Zahaud-Din Muhammad Jahangir II was a claimed to the throne of the Mughal empire. Reign 15 October 1720-13th November 1720. He died on 31st January 1746, aged 42.

Muhammad Shah rangila (1719-48) (27th September 1719- 26th April 1748) : Although Muhammad Shah owed his throne to the Saiyyid brothers, he tried to dispose them off and he actually succeeded in doing so in 1722. The Saiyyid brothers fell victim of the Mughal court politics by the leaders of the Turani faction, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Governor of the Deccan, Mir Muhammad Amin Khan leads of the Mughal society and his cousin Abdus Sammed Khan, Governor of Lahore as well as the chiefs of the Irani factors. All were tired of Saiyyid and they decided to destroy them. First Saiyyid Hussain Ali Khan who was the viceroy in the Deccan and his son were killed in Deccan in October 1720. A month later his brother Saiyyid Abullah Khan was made prisoner and was later poisoned to death. Thus, ended the domination of the Mughal empire by the Saiyyid brothers, known in Indian history as the king maker. After the call of Saiyyid brothers the rapid decline of the Mughal empire commenced. Though Muhammad shah’s long reign of nearly thirty years (1719-48) was the last chance of saving the empire. The Mughal rule was still held in high esteem by the people. The Mughal army and particularly the Mughal artillery was still a force to reckon with.

Ahmad Shah Bahadur (1748-54) (29th April 1748- 2nd June 1754) : Muhammad shah was succeeded by his only one son Ahmad Shah. He was a very weak and unworthy ruler. The weak defaces of the north west encouraged Ahmad Shah Abdali, who invaded India twice in 1749 and 1752, when he marched upto Delhi. With a view of two avoid destruction at Delhi, The Mughal emperor made peace by ceding Punjab and Multan to Abdali. Delhi became a hot bed of intrigues and rival factions disputed power. The power of Wazir-ud-din increased. He killed Ahmad Shah and enthroned Alamgir II.

Alamgir-II (1755-59) (3rd June 1755- 29 November 1759) : Alamgir II was the second son of Jahandar Shah. He was very weak ruler and was mearely a

puppet in the hands of his Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. During his reign Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded Delhi in 1757 and the imperial city was plundered. The relations between him and his Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk were strained and the latter got him killed in 1759.

Shah Jahan-III (1759-60) (10th December 1759- 10th October 1760) 282 days : His full name was Muhi-ul-Millat Shah Jahan III. He was the Mughal emperor Briefly. He was also called Akbar II. He was placed on the Mughal throne on 10th December 1759 to 10th October 1760. As a result of the intricacies in Delhi with help of Imad-ul-Mulk. Shah Jahan III was the ruler who gave Rajaram Mohan Roy as 'Raja' title. He was later disposed by Maratha Sardars.

Shah Alam-II (1760-88) (10th October 1760- 31st July 1788) : 27 years 301 days : Shah Alam II was regarded as the sole and true ruler. But he unable to return to Delhi until 1772. When he was protected by Maratha Commander Maharaj Shinde. Shah Alam II was participated in Battle of Buxar in 1764 against the British East India Company. During his reign Mughal authority was so diminished. Shah Alam II escaped to Awarh (1761-64 A.D.) as a result of his struggle with the Wazir. When the Marathas reestablished their control over Delhi. Shah Alam II accepted their invitation to enter the city. Shah Alam II faced several invasions, most of which were led by the Amir of Afghanistan Ahmad Shah Abdali which resulted in the Third Battle of Panipat (1761) between the Maratha Empire. Which retained suzerainty over Mughal affairs in Delhi and the Afghans commanded by Ahmad Shah Abdali. In 1760 the Marathas handed by Sadasivrao Bahu drove away Abdalis invading armies and removed Shah Jahan III. The puppet Mughal emperor of Imad-ul-Mulk and restored Shah Alam II as the legitimate monarch (1760-1772). The Battle of Buxar took place on 1764 A.D. between forces led by Hector Munro of the British East India Company and united armies of Mir Qasim Nawab of Bengal, Shah-ud-Daula Nawab of Awadh, and the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II. The Treaty of Allahabad (1765 A.D.) ended the conflict by granting the British East India Company Diwani rights (the right to collect land income) in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Shah Alam II was the first Mughal ruler to become a pensioner of the British East India Company on 19th November 1806. Shah Alam II died of natural causes.

Shah Jahan IV (1788-1788) (31st July 1788-11 October 1788) 63 days : Mirza Muhammad Shah Bahadur also known by his regnal name Shah Jahan IV. He was 18th Mughal emperor for a brief period in 1788 as a puppet of Ghulam Kadir. Shah Jahan IV died in 1790.

Akbar Shah-II (1806-37) (19th November 1806-37) : Shah Alam II was succeeded by his son Akbar Shah II. Like his father, he was also a pensioner of

the British. The British consolidated during his time. He died in 1837. He gave the title of Raja to Rammohan Rai. In 1835, the coins bearing the names of Mughal emperors were stopped.

Bahadar Shah Jafar-II (1837-57) (28th September 1837-21 September 1857) : After the death of Akbar Shah II, his son Bahadur Shah Jafar II ascended the Mughal throne. He was allowed to retain the imperial title. He was fond of poetry and hand the title of Zafar. He was the last of the Mughal rulers. During his time British political power increased. He participated in the revolt of 1857. The revolt was ultimately crushed by the British and he was captured and tried by the British. Bahadur Shah Jafar II was prosecuted and punished. He was deported to Rangoon where he died in 1862. Thus Mughal dynasty came to an end.

Conclusion :

Babur was great scholar and he had taken up a responsibility of building up of schools and colleges in his empire. Humayun had huge love for books, of subject related to starts and natural features. He also built many Madarsa next to Delhi, so that people's can go there and learn. Akbar made to built a large numbers of colleges and schools at Agra and also Fatepur sikari for higher learning he wants to that every single person of his empire would receive an education. Jahangir was the great researcher of languages like Turki and Persian. He also had written a book Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, he expressing all his memories. Akbar brings out the level of Persian to status of the state language which led to the growth of literature in Persian. Work in Sanskrit could not be shaped up the level as desired by Mughals, during the rule of Mughal Emperors. Golden period to the development of painting in India is considered to be a Mughal period. Different kinds of tools for teaching art were as follows : Schools of old tradition, Mughal painting, European painting, Rajasthan school of painting. Also Mughal emperors encouraged music, art and architecture. Persian was the language of administration in Mughal empire. Sanskrit and regional languages Mughal empire. The greatest contribution in the field of literature during the Mughal empire was the development of Urdu is the common language of communication for people. Babur wrote his autobiography, Tuzuk-i-Baburi in Turki language. This autobiography gives details of flora and afauna in India. Babarnama was written in Persian by Abdul Rahim Khan. Abdul Fazl has written Akbarnama, history of Akbar, and Ain-i-Akbari, administrative book. Jahangir wrote his autobiography Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. Mutamid Khan has written biography of Jahangir as Iqbalnamah-i-Jahagiri. Shahjan's biography padsahnamah was written by two authors. They were Abdul Hamid lahari and Inayat Khan. Inayat Khan wrote Shajahannama. Persian literature was enriched by

translation of Sanskrit work. The Mahabahrata was translated under the supervision of Abul Faizi, brother of Abul Faizal, and a court poet of Abul Fazal. Dara Shikoh translated the Bhagvat Gita and Upanishads into the Persian language his most famous work, Majama-ul-Baharin. Badauni was bitter critic of Akbar. He translated Mahabhart into Persian as Razanamah. Taj Mahal in Agra fort in Agra. Itmad-ud-Daula in Agra. Jama Masjid in Delhi. Red fort, Humayun Tomb in Delhi. Jama masjid. Tom of Akbar. These are the important literature and art, architecture in the Mughal empire.

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