

**TOPIC # 1**

**REASONS FOR THE DECLINE OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE  
PAST PAPER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 2000-2021**

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**REVIEW: Past Papers Questions Topic 1:**

**Question No.1:**

Was the infighting between Aurangzeb's successors the most important reason for the collapse of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer. (14)

November 2001. (Q.1.c)

**Question No.2:**

Briefly explain three reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire.

(7) June.2002. (Q.1.b)

**Questions No.3:**

“Aurangzeb's successors failed to live up to his courageous and determined personality”. Was this the most important reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Give reasons for your answer.

(14) November 2003 (Q.1.c)

**Questions No.4:**

Why were the British able to replace the Mughals as the dominant force in the Sub Continent by 1850?

(7) November 2004. (Q. 1.b)

**Question No.5:**

Were the **weak** and greedy characteristics of Aurangzeb's successors the most important reasons for the collapse of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.

(14) November 2005. (Q.1.c)

**Questions No.6:**

Explain why the Mughal Empire declined following the reign of Aurangzeb.

(7) June 2006. (Q.1.b)

**Question No.7:**

“The coming of the British was the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire”, do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.

(14) June 2007(Q.1.c)

**Question No.8:**

Explain why the successors of Aurangzeb failed to prevent the decline of the Mughal Empire.

(7) November 2008 (Q.1.b)

**Question No.9:**

‘The policies of Aurangzeb were the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire’. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.

(14) November 2009(Q.1.c)

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### **Question No.10:**

The spread of Maratha power was the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.

(14) June 2011 (Q.1.c)

### **Question No.11:**

Explain why the Mughal Empire declined following the reign of Aurangzeb.

(7) June 2012 (Q. 1.b)

### **Question No.12:**

Read the source below carefully to answer question (a).

The Mughal Empire took 150 years from the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 to break up. His empire was facing difficulties at the time of his death and following this, the tensions and problems only became worse. The most serious challenge to Mughal authority came from the Marathas.

**(a) Describe what the Marathas did.**

(4) June 2013 (Q.1.a)

### **Question No.13:**

How did the successors of Aurangzeb contribute to the downfall of the Mughal Empire?

(7) November 2013 (Q.1.b)

### **Question No.14:**

Were the invasions by the Persians and Afghans the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.

(14) November 2015 (Q.2.c)

### **Question No.15:**

Was the infighting between Aurangzeb's successors the most important reason for the break-up of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.

(14) June 2017. (Q.2.c)

### **Question No.16:**

**Who was Ahmed Shah Abdali?**

(4) June 2019 (Q. 2 a)

### **Question No.17:**

Were the policies of Aurangzeb the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.

(14) May June 2020 Q. no. 2 c

**PAST PAPER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS 2000-2020**

**QUESTION NO. 1:-**

**Was the infighting between Aurangzeb's successors the most important reason for the collapse of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14) November 2001. (Q.1.c)**

**(BEST ANSWER, LEARN AND REWRITE)**

The infighting between Aurangzeb's successors was one of the important reasons for the collapse of the Mughal Empire. The war of successions created bitterness, bloodshed, and loss of money and prestige of the empire which led towards its eventual fall.

After the death of a ruler, the princes fought for the throne. This eroded the strength and led to the instability of the Mughal Empire. **Aurangzeb** fought against his brothers **Dara Shiko and Shuja**. Infighting continued even after Aurangzeb like **Moazzam** who succeeded the throne under the name of **Bahadur Shah1** after Aurangzeb, defeated his brothers **Azam and Kam Baksh** and killed them. Bahadur Shah ruled for 5 years and died in 1712. His sons also fought for the throne. This infighting for the throne greatly weakened the Mughal Empire.

**"IT WAS the ONLY RULING FAMILY OF THE WORLD IN WHICH GRANDFATHER, FATHER, SONS, GRANDSONS AND GREAT GRANDSONS ...CONSIDERED ...ONE ANOTHER AS ENEMIES"**

The already weakened empire faced further encroachment by the **British**, which proved to be the last nail in the already drowning empire's coffin. The British who had initially come as traders, took full advantage of the weakening empire and soon became masters of the whole of India. Therefore the **rise of British** power was one of the main reasons of the decline of the Mughals. The British expanded the territory under their control with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like '**Subsidiary Alliance**' and '**Doctrine of Lapse**' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also had clear military advantage because of **Industrial development** in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong **naval** force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension.

**Persians** and **Afghans** also remained responsible for the decline of the Mughal Empire. The Afghans under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas at **Panipat (1747-1761)**. Although they made Mughal weak by their continuous invasions over Indian. They had been in control of much of the Empire for some time. The Afghans however were unable to make the most of their victory and returned to Kabul. However they were able to invade the Empire a number of times during the 18th Century. The Persians

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under **Nadir Shah** captured much of the Empire's wealth and returned home with gold, jewels and the Peacock throne from Delhi.

**(1738-39)Nadir shah killed 20,000 people in 57 days'**

**Brought 57 crores of rupees**

**55 crores of gold**

**Took 1000 elephants**

**7000 horses**

**10,000 camels**

**100 dancers**

**100 accountants**

**300 masons**

**200 black smiths**

**1600 stone cutters**

**To build a city like Delhi in Persia**

Rise of **Maratha** power was one of the main reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire. The Marathas were skilful Hindu guerrilla fighters who defeated a Mughal army in **1737** and took control of Delhi and eastwards towards Bengal. They belonged to southern Indian states. Marathas were reorganized by **Shivaji** during the reign of Aurangzeb. They defeated later Mughals in 1737 near Delhi and by 1760 they were the most powerful people in India and nothing could the Mughals do to stop it. Even powerful Aurangzeb spent more than **27 years** in Deccan, southern India desperately trying to suppress the Marathas. But eventually he found his treasury empty, and his best generals were also martyred. However, this was not the most important reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire.

Besides that the character of Mughal kings had deteriorated over a period of time. The **successive rulers** after Aurangzeb were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become **ease loving** and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties and were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. These later Mughal rulers were absolutely incompetent and weak. They were proven neither **good generals nor good statesmen** who could control or administer the large empire which covered nearly the whole of the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's rule. The later rulers were also pleasure loving and were renowned for **living an extravagant lifestyle** with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the empire. They also lacked courage, determination and training. Money was spent lavishly on fine buildings, jewellery, fine clothes and food. No infrastructure was created for the improvement of administration, industry or agriculture.

**Bahadur shah 1 was 70 years\ too old**

**Jahandar shah was fool**

**Farrukh siyar was coward**

**M. shah spent all his time watching animal fights /nicknamed as Rangilla /addiction to wine**

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In addition to all that, the **policies** of Aurangzeb also played a vital role in weakening Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb had an intolerant attitude towards non-Muslims/**Shias**. He introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the **jizya**. He destroyed Hindu temples and banned Hindu festivals (holli/Divali). Taxation was high as he had to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the **Deccan Wars** and he spent highly on luxurious palaces. Because of these he became an unpopular rule.

**Jazya/DRINKING/Music FORBIDDEN**

**He tried to ban SATTI**

**DEMOLISHED HINDU TEMPLES**

**DEPRIVED HINDUS FROM THEIR POSITIONS**

**Introduced PILGRIMAGE TAX**

**BANNED HINDUS TO CARRY ARMS**

**BANNED HINDUS NOT TO BURN THEIR DEAD BODIES AT THE BANK OF THE RIVERS**

Besides all that **moral degeneration of the nobility, demoralization of the army** lack of naval **power**, the failure of **Mansabdari system**, financial **position of the Mughals** and vast **area** also remained responsible for the decline of Mughal Empire.

**LEVEL 5: GIVE YOUR ANALYSIS/JUSTIFICATION**

**QUESTION NO. 2:-**

**Briefly explain three reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire.**

**(7) June.2002. (Q.1.b)**

**(BEST ANSWER, LEARN AND WRITE)**

The Mughal Empire reached its greatest extent in the time of Aurangzeb Alamgir, but it collapsed with dramatic suddenness within a few decades after his death. The Mughal Empire owes its decline and ultimate downfall to a combination of factors; **firstly Aurangzeb's r policies** are regarded as a cause for the decline of the Mughal Empire as it led to disunity among the INDIAN people. His policies made him

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unpopular and weakened the empire. He imposed Jizya tax on non-Muslims and lost the sympathy of Hindus and Rajputs. Aurangzeb spent the last 23 years of his rule in Deccan fighting against the Marathas and his long absence from the capital shook the roots of the Mughal administration.

Although the aforementioned policy did lead to weakening of the empire but another major cause of decline were ***unworthy and incompetent successors*** after Aurangzeb. The character of Mughal kings had deteriorated over a period of time. The successive rulers after Aurangzeb were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become ease loving and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties and were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. These later Mughal rulers were absolutely incompetent and weak. They were proven neither ***good generals nor good statesmen*** who could control or administer the large empire which covered nearly the whole of the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's rule. The later rulers were also pleasure loving and were renowned for ***living an extravagant lifestyle*** with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the empire. They also lacked courage, determination and training. Money was spent lavishly on fine buildings, jewellery, fine clothes and food. No infrastructure was created for the improvement of administration, industry or agriculture.

the ***rise of British*** power was the main reason of the decline of the Mughals. The British took full advantage of the weakness of the Mughals and gradually increased their power. The British expanded the territory under their control with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like '***Subsidiary Alliance***' and '***Doctrine of Lapse***' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also had clear military advantage because of ***Industrial development*** in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong ***naval*** force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension.

### ***QUESTION NO. 3:-***

***“Aurangzeb's successors failed to live up to his courageous and determined personality”.***

***Was this the most important reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Give reasons for your answer.***

***(14) November 2003 (Q.1.c)***

Aurangzeb's successors failed to live up to his courageous and determined personality because of their infighting and luxurious lifestyle. The Mughal Empire reached its greatest extent in the time of Aurangzeb Alamgir, but it collapsed with dramatic suddenness within a few decades after his death. The successive rulers after Aurangzeb were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become ease loving and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties and were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. These later Mughal rulers were absolutely incompetent and weak. They were proven neither *good generals nor good statesmen* who could control or administer the large empire which covered nearly the whole of the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's rule. The later rulers were also pleasure loving and were renowned for *living an extravagant*

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*lifestyle* with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the empire. They also lacked courage, determination and training. Money was spent lavishly on fine buildings, jewellery, fine clothes and food. No infrastructure was created for the improvement of administration, industry or agriculture.

The *absence of any definite law of accession* was another important factor. The war of successions not only led to bitterness, bloodshed, and loss of money and prestige of the empire over a period of time, but to its eventual fall. Wars of succession were also an important reason. After the death of a ruler, the princess fought for the throne. This eroded the strength and led to the instability of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb fought against his brothers *Dara Shiko and Shuja*, and later got *Kamran* killed. Infighting continued even after Aurangzeb like *Moazzam* who succeeded the throne under the name of Bahadur Shah after Aurangzeb, defeated his brothers *Azam and Kam Baksh* and killed them. Bahadur Shah ruled for 5 years and died in 1712. His sons also fought for the throne. The infighting for the throne greatly weakened the Mughal Empire.

The raids by *Nadir Shah* (1739), and repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761), resulted in further weakening of the empire. The rise of *Marathas* in Deccan and the Sikhs in Punjab weakened the Mughal power after Aurangzeb's death. Mughal Kingdom was reduced to an area 300 miles long and 100 miles wide near Delhi within 100 years after the death of Aurangzeb.

The already weakened empire faced further encroachment by the *British* and the French, which proved to be the last nail in the already drowning empire's coffin. The British and French, who had initially come as traders, took full advantage of the weakening empire and soon became masters of the whole of India. Therefore the rise of British power was the main reason of the decline of the Mughals. The British took full advantage of the weakness of the Mughals and gradually increased their power. The British expanded the territory under their control with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like 'Subsidiary Alliance' and 'Doctrine of Lapse' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also had clear military advantage because of Industrial development in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong naval force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension.

### LEVEL 5: GIVE ANALYSIS

#### **QUESTION NO. 4:-**

**Why were the British able to replace the Mughals as the dominant force in the Sub Continent by 1850?**

**(7) November 2004. (Q. 1.b)**

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The already weakened empire faced further encroachment by the **British**, which proved to be the last nail in the already drowning empire's coffin. The British, who had initially come as traders, took full advantage of the weakening empire and soon became masters of the whole of India. The British took full advantage of the weakness of the Mughals and their power further supported them. The British replaced Mughals and snatched the Indian Territory with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like '**Subsidiary Alliance**' and '**Doctrine of Lapse**' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also had clear military advantage because of **Industrial development** in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong **naval** force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension.

Besides that they were also highly supported by local Indians. Indian Rajas, Maharajas, nawabs and other princes also supported British against Mughals with men and money.

Mughals also became weak and their infighting continuously provoking British to expand their rule to the borders of the sub-continent. Finally till 1850 whole of the Indian Land was under the British possession.

### **QUESTION NO. 5:-**

**Were the weak and greedy characteristics of Aurangzeb's successors the most important reasons for the collapse of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14) November 2005. (Q.1.c)**

### **MARKING SCHEME BY CAMBRIDGE:**

Level 1: Simplistic statement [1-2]

They were weak and lacking character

Level 2: Description of reasons in general [3-6]

They were weak and loved a rich lifestyle

Level 3: Explains one factor [7-10]

Level 4 explains at least two factors [9-13]

The Emperors were renowned for living an extravagant lifestyle and spending money with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the Empire. This led to inefficiencies and a lack of interest in the running of the Empire. However there were other reasons. The absence of a definite line of succession led to a significant amount of in-fighting amongst his successors which, also led to instability and the downfall of the Empire.



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Other reasons included, A's religious policy, the expense of fighting the Deccan Wars, degradation of the military, military inefficiency, financial inefficiencies, vastness of the Empire and Invasions.

Level 5: As level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation [14]

### **QUESTION NO. 6:-**

**Explain why the Mughal Empire declined following the reign of Aurangzeb.**

**(7) June 2006. (Q.1.b)**

#### **MARKING SCHEME BY CAMBRIDGE:**

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement  
Aurangzeb was to blame [1]

LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons  
Aurangzeb's successors were weak. There was no law of succession. [2-4]

LEVEL 3: Explains reasons

Aurangzeb's successors became lazy, weak and corrupt and left the administration to their ministers who often put their own interests first.

There was no law of succession. Instead there was usually a struggle for succession which ended in war. Succession often depended upon the ability of the candidates and the support they could get. Fighting wars became expensive and the military was stretched and suffered much inefficiency. The successors failed to run the Empire effectively becoming very extravagant and so suffered from financial inefficiencies.

The vastness of the Empire made it hard to defend and as such suffered several invasions. Eventually the British overran the Empire and were superior in such areas as military might.  
[5-7]

(Bajwa pages 56-59, Kelly pages 11-13)

#### **COMPLETE ANSWER:**

Although the policies of Aurangzeb remained responsible for weakening of the empire but the major cause of decline were *unworthy and incompetent successors* after Aurangzeb. The character of Mughal kings had deteriorated over a period of time. The successive rulers after Aurangzeb were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become ease loving and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties and were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. These later Mughal rulers were absolutely incompetent and weak. They were proven neither *good generals nor good statesmen* who could control or administer the large empire which covered nearly the

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whole of the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's rule. The later rulers were also pleasure loving and were renowned for *living an extravagant lifestyle* with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the empire. They also lacked courage, determination and training. Money was spent lavishly on fine buildings, jewellery, fine clothes and food. No infrastructure was created for the improvement of administration, industry or agriculture.

The *absence of any definite law of accession* was another important factor. The war of successions not only led to bitterness, bloodshed, and loss of money and prestige of the empire over a period of time, but to its eventual fall. Wars of succession were also an important reason. After the death of a ruler, the princess fought for the throne. This eroded the strength and led to the instability of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb fought against his brothers *Dara Shiko and Shuja*, and later got *Kamran* killed. Infighting continued even after Aurangzeb like *Moazzam* who succeeded the throne under the name of Bahadur Shah after Aurangzeb, defeated his brothers *Azam and Kam Baksh* and killed them. Bahadur Shah ruled for 5 years and died in 1712. His sons also fought for the throne. The infighting for the throne greatly weakened the Mughal Empire.

The already weakened empire faced further encroachment by the *British* and the French, which proved to be the last nail in the already drowning empire's coffin. The British and French, who had initially come as traders, took full advantage of the weakening empire and soon became masters of the whole of India. Therefore the rise of British power was the main reason of the decline of the Mughals. The British took full advantage of the weakness of the Mughals and gradually increased their power. The British expanded the territory under their control with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like 'Subsidiary Alliance' and 'Doctrine of Lapse' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also had clear military advantage because of Industrial development in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong naval force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension

### **QUESTION NO. 7:-**

**“The coming of the British was the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire”, do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.**

**(14) June 2007(Q.1.c)**

The coming of British was the main reason of the decline of the Mughals. The British took full advantage of the weakness of the Mughals and gradually increased their power. The British expanded the territory under their control with the help of their superior administration and organization. A series of battles and annexations, through steps like 'Subsidiary Alliance' and 'Doctrine of Lapse' and effective administration the British gradually assumed control over a vast territory in the subcontinent. They also

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had clear military advantage because of Industrial development in England (1750-1850). The British had better weapons, superior war techniques and a well-trained and disciplined army. The British possessed a strong naval force. The result was that by 1803 the British took over Delhi and placed Shah Alam under British protection with a pension and later till 1857 they became the master of India.

However there were many other reasons led to the decline of the Mughal empire. one of the major reasons was *unworthy and incompetent successors* after Aurangzeb. The character of Mughal kings had deteriorated over a period of time. The successive rulers after Aurangzeb were weak and lacked the character, motivation and commitment to rule the empire strongly. They had become ease loving and cowardly. They totally disregarded their state duties and were unable to detain the declining empire from its fall. These later Mughal rulers were absolutely incompetent and weak. They were proven neither *good generals nor good statesmen* who could control or administer the large empire which covered nearly the whole of the subcontinent during Aurangzeb's rule. The later rulers were also pleasure loving and were renowned for *living an extravagant lifestyle* with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the empire. They also lacked courage, determination and training. Money was spent lavishly on fine buildings, jewellery, fine clothes and food. No infrastructure was created for the improvement of administration, industry or agriculture.

The *absence of any definite law of accession* was another important factor. The war of successions not only led to bitterness, bloodshed, and loss of money and prestige of the empire over a period of time, but to its eventual fall. Wars of succession were also an important reason. After the death of a ruler, the princess fought for the throne. This eroded the strength and led to the instability of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb fought against his brothers *Dara Shiko and Shuja*, and later got *Kamran* killed. Infighting continued even after Aurangzeb like *Moazzam* who succeeded the throne under the name of Bahadur Shah after Aurangzeb, defeated his brothers *Azam and Kam Baksh* and killed them. Bahadur Shah ruled for 5 years and died in 1712. His sons also fought for the throne. The infighting for the throne greatly weakened the Mughal Empire.

The raids by *Nadir Shah* (1739), and repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761), resulted in further weakening of the empire. The rise of *Marathas* in Deccan and the Sikhs in Punjab weakened the Mughal power after Aurangzeb's death. Mughal Kingdom was reduced to an area 300 miles long and 100 miles wide near Delhi within 100 years after the death of Aurangzeb.

The degeneration of the rulers had also led to the moral degeneration of the nobility. Under the early Mughals, the nobles performed useful functions and distinguished themselves both in war and peace. But the elite under the later Mughals was more interested in worldly pursuit and self-enhancement. The nobles who had once been talented men with integrity, honesty, and loyalty, turned selfish and deceitful. Growth of hostile and rival clique in the court also undermined the strength of the government. Widespread corruption in the administration started and taking bribes became common.

Analysis:

### **QUESTION NO. 8:-**

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**Explain why the successors of Aurangzeb failed to prevent the decline of the Mughal Empire.**

**(7) November 2008 (Q.1.b)**

### **MARKING SCHEME BY CAMBRIDGE:**

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement [1]  
They weren't any good as rulers.

LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons [2-4]  
Aurangzeb's successors were weak. There was no law of succession.

LEVEL 3: Explains reasons [5-7]

Aurangzeb's successors tended to be lazy, weak and corrupt, leaving the administration to their ministers who often put their own interests first. There was no law of succession. Instead there was usually a struggle for succession which ended in war. Succession often depended upon the ability of the candidates and the support they could get.

Fighting wars was very expensive and the military was stretched and suffered much inefficiency. These emperors failed to run the Empire effectively, becoming very extravagant and so suffered from financial inefficiencies.

The vastness of the Empire made it hard to defend and as such suffered several invasions from stronger rivals. Eventually the British overran the Empire and were superior in such areas as military might.

### **QUESTION NO. 9:-**

**'The policies of Aurangzeb were the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire'. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.**

**(14 )November 2009(Q.1.c)**

The policies of Aurangzeb were one of the main reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire. Aurangzeb had an intolerant attitude to non-Muslims. He introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the Jizya. He destroyed Hindu temples and tried to ban Hindu practices. Taxation was high as he had to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars and he spent highly on luxurious palaces. Because of these he became an unpopular ruler.

But besides that (SUMMARY OF THE POINTS)

- **Absence of any definite line of succession**
- **Moral degeneration of the nobility**

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- *Unworthy and incompetent successors*
- *Deterioration and demoralization of the army*
- *Lack of navel power*
- *Financial position of the Mughals*
- *Vastness of the Empire*
- *Raids by Nadir Shah (1739) and Ahmad Shah Abdali (1761)*
- *Raise of Marathas in Deccan and the Sikhs in Punjab*
- *Rise of British and the French*
- *Failure of Mansabdari system*

### **Question No.10:**

**The spread of Maratha power was the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire. Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer.**

**(14) June 2011 (Q.1.c)**

*Maratha power was one of the main reasons for the decline of the Mughal Empire. The Marathas were skilful Hindu guerrilla fighters who defeated a Mughal army in 1737 and took control of Delhi and eastwards towards Bengal. They belonged to southern Indian states. Marathas were reorganized by Shivaji during the reign of Aurangzeb. They defeated later Mughals in 1737 near Delhi and by 1760 they were the most powerful people in India and nothing could the Mughals do to stop it. Even powerful Aurangzeb spent more than 23 years in Deccan, southern India desperately trying to suppress the Marathas. But eventually he found his treasury empty, and his best generals were also martyred. However, there were other reasons for the decline.*

Aurangzeb had an intolerant attitude to non-Muslims. He introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the Jizya. He destroyed Hindu temples and tried to ban Hindu practices. Taxation was high as he had to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars and he spent highly on luxurious palaces. Because of these he became an unpopular rule.

After his death Mughal Emperors were renowned for living an extravagant lifestyle and spending money with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the Empire. This led to inefficiencies and a lack of interest in the running of the Empire.

The absence of a definite line of succession led to a significant amount of in-fighting amongst his successors, which also led to instability and the downfall of the Empire.

Continuous attacks by Nadir Shah and Ahmed Shah abdali also threatened the Mughal rule.

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The British expansion into the sub- continent was rapid and their forces and equipment was no match for the Mughals, who fell into rapid decline as a result.

### ANALYSIS:

#### **Question No.11:**

**Explain why the Mughal Empire declined following the reign of Aurangzeb.**

**(7) June 2012 (Q. 1.b)**

### **MARKING SCHEME BY CAMBRIDGE:**

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement  
[1]

It was Aurangzeb's successors that were to blame.

LEVEL 2: Identifies reasons  
[2-4]

Aurangzeb's successors were weak. There was no law of succession.

**LEVEL 3: Explains reasons**  
[5-7]

Aurangzeb's successors became lazy, weak and corrupt and left the administration to their ministers who often put their own interests first. There was no law of succession. Instead there was usually a struggle for succession which ended in war. Succession often depended upon the ability of the candidates and the support they could get.

Fighting wars became expensive and the military was stretched and suffered much inefficiency. The successors failed to run the Empire effectively becoming very extravagant and so suffered from financial inefficiencies.

The vastness of the Empire made it hard to defend and as such suffered several invasions. Eventually the British overran the Empire and were superior in such areas as military might.

#### **Question No.12:**

**How did the successors of Aurangzeb contribute to the downfall of the Mughal Empire?**

**(7) June 2013 (Q. 1.b)**

- Successor were weak and incompetent
- Lazy and corrupt
- No law of succession and infighting
- No control over nobles and ministers

## TOPIC # 1

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- After Aurangzeb , prince Moazam established himself as an emperor, then his 4 sons fought for the throne, but the successor Jahandar shah was murdered
- Other successors like Farukhsiyar was coward and Mohammad shah was badly addict of wine.
- Fighting wars became expensive and divided
- State treasury became empty
- Weak successors also attracted rebellions and invasion

### **Question No.13:**

**Were the invasions by the Persians and Afghans the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14)November 2015(Q.2.c)**

### **MARKING SCHEME BY CAMBRIDGE:**

LEVEL 1: Simplistic statement. [1-2]

They were too strong

LEVEL 2: Description /identification of reasons [3-6]

Aurangzeb's successors had a decadent lifestyle and the invaders were able to defeat the Mughal soldiers

LEVEL 3: Explains the invasions of the Persians and Afghans OR other reasons [7-10]

LEVEL 4: Explains the invasions of the Persians and Afghans AND other reasons [9-13]

*There were a number of reasons for the Empire's decline. As the Empire started to decline; it found itself at risk from invasion. The Afghans under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas at Panipat. They had been in control of much of the Empire for some time. The Afghans however were unable to make the most of their victory and returned to Kabul. However they were able to invade the Empire a number of times during the 18th Century. The Persians under Nadir Shah captured much of the Empire's wealth and returned home with gold, jewels and the Peacock throne from Delhi.*

However there were other reasons for the decline. Aurangzeb had an intolerant attitude to non-Muslims. He introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the Jizya. He destroyed Hindu temples and tried to ban Hindu practices. Taxation was high as he had to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars and he spent highly on luxurious palaces. Because of these he became an unpopular ruler.

## TOPIC # 1

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After his death Mughal Emperors were renowned for living an extravagant lifestyle and spending money with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the Empire. This led to inefficiencies and a lack of interest in the running of the Empire.

The absence of a definite line of succession led to a significant amount of in-fighting amongst his successors which, also led to instability and the downfall of the Empire.

The Marathas were skilful Hindu guerrilla fighters who defeated a Mughal army in 1737 and took control of Delhi and eastwards towards Bengal. By 1760 they were the most powerful people in India and nothing could the Mughals do to stop it. The British expansion into the sub-continent was rapid and their forces and equipment was no match for the Mughals who fell into rapid decline as a result.

LEVEL 5: As Level 4 – also produces a judgement or evaluation. [14]

### **Question No.14:**

**Was the in-fighting between Aurangzeb's successors the most important reason for the break-up of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14) May June 2017 Q. no. 2 C**

### **Level 5: Explains with evaluation**

The absence of a definite line of succession led to in-fighting, instability and the downfall of the Mughal Empire. It led to inefficiencies and a lack of interest in the running of the Mughal Empire.

Other reasons

- As the Mughal Empire started to decline it became at risk from invasion.
- After Aurangzeb's death, Mughal emperors were renowned for living an extravagant lifestyle and spending money without considering the effect on the economy of the Empire.
- The Afghans under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas at Panipat. The Afghans had been in control of much of the Empire for some time but were unable to make the most of their victory and returned to Kabul. However they did invade the Empire a number of times during the 18th Century. The Persians under Nadir Shah captured much of the Empire's wealth and returned home with gold, jewels and the Peacock throne from Delhi.
- Aurangzeb often showed intolerance to non-Muslims. He introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the Jizya. During Aurangzeb's reign, some Hindu temples were destroyed and some limits were placed on Hindu practices. Taxation was high as because of the costs of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars and building luxurious palaces. Because of these he became an unpopular ruler.



## TOPIC # 1

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- Maratha guerrilla fighters defeated a Mughal army in 1737 and took control of Delhi and eastwards towards Bengal. By 1760 they were the most powerful group in India and the Mughals were unable to limit their expansion.
- The British expansion into the subcontinent was rapid, overwhelming the Mughal forces and equipment.

### **Question No.15:**

**Was British expansion in India the most important reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14)November 2018(Q.2.c)**

Level 5: Explains with evaluation 14 (As top Level 4 plus judgement or evaluation)

Level 4: Explains WHY British expansion AND other reasons led to the decline of the Mughal Empire 9–13

e.g. • British expansion into the subcontinent was rapid. They were experienced in warfare and had many weapons and other resources, so they were difficult to defeat.

#### **• Other reasons**

- The Emperors were suspected of spending money with little thought to the effect it had on the economy of the Empire. This led to inefficiencies in the running of the Empire
- The absence of a definite line of succession led to a significant amount of in-fighting amongst his successors, which also led to instability
- Aurangzeb introduced a tax on non-Muslims, called the Jizya. He destroyed Hindu temples and tried to ban Hindu practices. As a result he faced insurgencies throughout his reign
- Taxation was high as Aurangzeb had to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars. He also spent highly on luxurious palaces. Because of this he became an unpopular ruler and enabling opposition to his rule and the Empire to grow.
- The expense of fighting the Deccan Wars meant there was little money for the upkeep of the Empire
- The military lacked investment, which meant they were reliant on outdated weaponry and were easily overpowered
- Financial inefficiencies meant that money that could have been used to support the Empire, had been wasted
- The size of the Empire meant that it was very difficult to defend from multiple invasions; the Empire's armies became exhausted in trying to repel them.
- The Marathas were skilful Hindu guerrilla fighters who defeated a Mughal army in 1737 and took control of Delhi and eastwards towards Bengal. By 1760, they were the most powerful people in India and the Mughals could do nothing to stop it.

#### **Analysis:**

### **Question No.16:**

**Who was Ahmad Shah Durrani?**

**(4) May June 2019 Q. no. 2 a**

## TOPIC # 1

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Level 1: One mark for each relevant point,

Two marks for a developed statement 1–4

e.g. • Known also as Ahmad Shah Abdali, an Afghan leader, a military genius who had excellent tactical skills. • He beat the Marathas at the battle of Panipat in 1761, which ended the ambitions of the Marathas. • Durrani was unable to make the most of his victory; as his followers mutinied he gave up his idea of an Indian empire and returned to Kabul.

### **Question No.17:**

**Were the policies of Aurangzeb the main reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire? Explain your answer.**

**(14) May June 2020 Q. no. 2 c**

## **MARKING SCHEME MAY JUNE 2020:**

**Level 5: Explains with evaluation**

**14**

(As top of Level 4 plus judgment / evaluation)

**Level 4:** Explains WHY the policies of Aurangzeb AND other reasons led to the decline of the Mughal Empire

9–13 (Two explanations, one Aurangzeb’s policies and one on other reasons, are worth nine marks. Additional explanations awarded up to 13 marks)

### **E.g. Aurangzeb**

- Aurangzeb introduced a tax on non-Muslims called the Jizya. He destroyed Hindu temples and tried to ban Hindu practices reducing his popularity and causing some insurgencies during his reign;
- Higher taxation was needed to pay for the cost of military campaigns such as the Deccan Wars increasing Aurangzeb’s unpopularity, which enabled opposition to his rule and the Mughal Empire to grow.

### **Other reasons**

- After his death Mughal Emperors were renowned for living an extravagant lifestyle and spending money without regard to the effect on the economy of the Empire;
- The absence of a definite line of succession led to in-fighting amongst his successors which contributed to instability and the downfall of the Empire;
- The Marathas were skilful Hindu fighters who defeated a Mughal army in 1737. The Marathas took control of Delhi and the land eastwards towards Bengal. By 1760 the Mughals could do nothing to stop them;

## TOPIC # 1

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- The Mughal forces and their equipment struggled to respond to the rapid expansion of the British into the sub-continent.

**Level 3:** Explains WHY the policies of Aurangzeb OR other reasons led to the decline of the Mughal Empire  
7–10

(One explanation is worth seven marks. Additional explanations awarded up to 10 marks)

See exemplars on L4

**Level 2: Identifies/describes reason(s) 3–6**

(One identification/description is worth three marks. Extra marks are awarded for additional identification/descriptions up to six marks)

- e.g. • Aurangzeb introduced the Jizya tax;  
• The lack of a definite line of succession caused problems.

**Level 1: Simple statement(s) 1–2**

e.g. • He was a strict ruler.

### **PRACTICE -PICTURE BASED SOURCE:**

**This source is related with the lavish lifestyle of the later Mughals. What can we learn from this source related to decline of the Mughal Empire?**

