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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY LECTURE NOTES

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Title of the Course: History of Medieval India (1526 to 1857)

Unit-1

Chapter No 1.

Mughal Dynasty (1526 to 1857)

Introduction:

The Mughal Dynasty was a powerful Muslim empire that ruled most of the Indian subcontinent from 1526 to 1857. Founded by [Babur](#), a descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan, the dynasty brought significant cultural, architectural, and administrative unity to India. Its height, known as the "Great Mughal" period, saw advancements under rulers such as Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan before declining in the 18th century and ending under British rule.

Key Aspects of the Mughal Dynasty

- **Founder:** Babur established the empire in 1526 after defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat
- **The "Great Mughals" (1526–1707):** This period marked the empire's peak, characterized by strong, influential rulers: Babur, Humayun, Akbar (known for religious tolerance and expansion), Jahangir, Shah Jahan (builder of the Taj Mahal), and Aurangzeb (who expanded the empire to its greatest size).
- **Administration & Culture:** The Mughals introduced a highly centralized administration (the Mansabdari system), Persian art and culture, and a distinct architectural style characterized by domes and minarets.

- **Decline:** After Aurangzeb's death in 1707, the empire weakened due to weak leadership, court intrigue, and regional uprisings (such as the Marathas).

Conclusion:

The dynasty ended in 1857 after the British defeated the last emperor, Bahadur Shah II (Zafar), following the Indian Rebellion.

Babar (1483–1530)

Introduction:

Babar (1483–1530) founded the Mughal Empire by utilizing superior artillery, innovative "[Tulugma](#)" tactics, and disciplined cavalry to defeat larger forces. His key military achievements include the 1526 Battle of Panipat, 1527 Battle of Khanwa, 1528 Battle of Chanderi, and 1529 Battle of Ghaghra, consolidating control over North India and Afghanistan.

Key Military Accomplishments & Campaigns

- **[Conquest of Kabul \(1504\)](#):** After failing to retain Samarkand, Babar secured Kabul, establishing a crucial base for his Indian campaigns.
- **[First Battle of Panipat \(April 1526\)](#):** With only ~25,000 troops and advanced field artillery, Babar defeated Ibrahim Lodi's army of over 100,000, establishing the Mughal Empire in India.
- **[Battle of Khanwa \(1527\)](#):** Against Rana Sanga of Mewar, Babar employed his [artillery](#) to smash the Rajput elephant charge, cementing his dominance over northern India.
- **[Battle of Chanderi \(1528\)](#):** He defeated the Rajput forces under Medini Rai and took control of the fort, eliminating the remaining Rajput resistance.
- **[Battle of Ghaghra \(1529\)](#):** Babar defeated the combined Afghan and Bengali forces, securing eastern India

Key Strategic Innovations

- **Artillery and Gunpowder:** Babar introduced, for the first time on a large scale in India, mobile artillery (led by Ustad Ali and Mustafa) and personal firearms.

- **Tactical Strategy:** He utilized the *Tulugma* system—dividing his army into sections (wings, center, and reserves) to outflank opponents, paired with the usage of armored wagons ([raths](#)).
- **Cavalry Charge:** He replaced the slow-moving war elephants that were common in Indian warfare with fast-moving, expert cavalry archers.

Conclusion:

His military genius created a stable, though initially young, empire that shifted the military balance of power towards advanced gunpowder warfare in the region.

First Battle of Panipat (April 21, 1526)

Introduction:

The First Battle of Panipat was fought on April 21, 1526, because the Timurid ruler Babur aimed to invade North India and expand his kingdom, challenging the declining Lodi Dynasty. It resulted in a decisive victory for Babur over Ibrahim Lodi, marking the end of the [Delhi Sultanate](#) and the establishment of the Mughal Empire in India.

Why the Battle was Fought:

- **Expansionist Ambitions:** Babur, ruling in Kabul, was invited by local rulers to overthrow Ibrahim Lodi and wanted to claim the fertile plains of North India.
- **Weakness of Lodi Dynasty:** Ibrahim Lodi was an unpopular and weak ruler facing internal conflicts, providing an opportunity for invasion.
- **Strategic Control:** Control of Punjab and the Delhi region was essential for dominating India.

Results of the Battle:

- **Establishment of Mughal Rule:** Babur defeated the vastly larger army of Lodi, establishing the Mughal dynasty, which ruled India for centuries.
- **End of the Delhi Sultanate:** The battle brought the end of the 320-year-old Delhi Sultanate.

- **Introduction of Gunpowder:** It was one of the first major battles in India utilizing field artillery and gunpowder firearms, which were decisive against Lodi's elephant army.
- **Tactical Shift:** Babur's victory was secured by superior tactics like the *Tulughma* (encircling) system and the use of secured wagons as mobile defenses.
- **Casualties:** Ibrahim Lodi was killed in the battle, leaving a political vacuum that enabled the Mughals to seize power.

Conclusion:

Death of Ibrahim Lodi, destruction of the Lodi Dynasty, and the establishment of the Mughal Empire.

Chapter No. 2.

Humayun (1530–1556)

Introduction:

Humayun (1530–1556) was the second Mughal emperor whose reign was characterized by, intense struggle, early expansion, and a significant 15-year exile after losing to Sher Shah Suri, before reclaiming his throne. His military successes included conquering Gujarat and Malwa, but he was ultimately defeated by poor decisions, disloyal brothers, and superior Afghan tactics.

Military Achievements

- **Initial Campaigns:** Soon after ascending in 1530, he defeated the Afghan forces at Daurah (1532), solidifying his position in Bihar and Jaunpur.
- **Conquest of Gujarat & Malwa:** Humayun displayed bravery and speed in defeating Bahadur Shah of Gujarat in 1535, taking over the rich regions of Gujarat and Malwa, though they were later lost.
- **Reclaiming the Empire:** After spending years in Persian exile, he forged a strong army with the help of the Safavid Shah and Bairam Khan.

- **Restoration:** He defeated Sikandar Suri at the **Battle of Sirhind (1555)**, allowing him to regain control of Delhi and Agra, thereby restoring the Mughal Empire.

Failures and Key Mistakes

- **Battle of Chausa (1539) & Kannauj (1540):** Humayun's greatest failure was his inability to handle Sher Shah Suri. He was militarily inept in these battles, losing his army, the empire, and nearly his life.
- **Lack of Strategic Planning:** He was often hesitant or overconfident, making poor choices on the battlefield, such as failing to immediately crush Sher Khan at the Chunar fort in 1532.
- **Division of Empire:** Upon accession, he followed a policy of dividing the empire among his brothers (Kamran, Askari, Hindal), which weakened his control and created internal strife.
- **Disloyal Brothers:** His brother Kamran was disloyal, often taking Punjab and failing to assist him during crucial battles against Sher Shah.
- **Personality Flaws:** Known to be generous to a fault, he lacked the ruthless tactical brilliance and timely decisions of his father, Babur, leading to long periods of instability.

Conclusion:

After losing his empire in 1540, Humayun lived in exile for 15 years before reclaiming his kingdom, during which time his son, Akbar, was born.

Chapter No. 3.

Sur Dynasty (1540–1556)

Introduction:

The Sur Dynasty (1540–1556) was a short-lived but impactful [Afghan Pashtun dynasty](#) that ruled North India, founded by [Sher Shah Suri](#) after defeating [Mughal Emperor Humayun](#). Known for exceptional administration, it introduced a standardized land revenue system, currency (the [Rupiya](#)), and infrastructural developments like the [Grand Trunk Road](#) before being conquered back by the [Mughals](#).

Key Aspects of the Sur Dynasty:

- **Founder:** Sher Shah Suri (original name Farid) took control of Delhi after defeating Humayun in the Battle of Kannauj/Bilgram in 1540.
- **Administration:** The empire was organized into 47 *sarkars* (districts), which were subdivided into *parganas* (administrative units). Key officers included the *Shiqdar* (law and order) and *Amin* (revenue).
- **Infrastructure & Economy:** Sher Shah constructed the *Sarak-i-Azam* (now the Grand Trunk Road) from Bangladesh to Pakistan. He introduced a standard silver coin called *Rupia*, which formed the basis of modern Indian currency.
- **Military:** The administration enforced a strict military structure, including the *Dagh* (branding of horses) and *Chehra* (descriptive roll of soldiers) systems, originally introduced by Alauddin Khalji.
- **End of Dynasty:** After the death of Sher Shah in 1545, his son Islam Shah ruled until 1554. Internal power struggles weakened the dynasty, allowing Humayun to regain Delhi in 1555 and ending the rule with the defeat of Sikandar Shah Suri by the Mughals in 1556.

Conclusion:

The Sur Dynasty (1540–1556) was an Afghan Pashtun dynasty founded by [Sher Shah Suri](#), which briefly interrupted Mughal rule in India by defeating Humayun. Spanning roughly 16 years, it controlled vast territories from modern-day Afghanistan to Bengal. It is renowned for creating a strong central administration, the Grand Trunk Road, and the silver *Rupia*.

Sher Shah Suri (1540–1545)

Introduction:

Sher Shah Suri (1540–1545) was a brilliant military strategist who established the Sur Empire by defeating Mughal Emperor Humayun at Chausa (1539) and Kannauj (1540). He consolidated North India through rapid conquests, including Bengal, Punjab, Malwa, Sind, and Rajputana (Marwar, Raisin), dying in 1545 during the siege of Kalinjar.

- **Defeat of Humayun:** His most significant victories were over Humayun, driving the Mughals out of India after the Battle of Chausa (1539) and the decisive Battle of Kannauj (1540).
- **Bihar and Bengal (1534–1539):** He consolidated power by defeating the Lohani chiefs and Muhammad Shah of Bengal, gaining complete control over eastern India.
- **Punjab (1540–1542):** Immediately after taking Delhi, he seized Punjab from Humayun's brother, Kamran Mirza.
- **Rajputana Campaigns (1542–1544):**
 - **Marwar (1543-1545):** He defeated Maldev, the ruler of Marwar, largely through a clever strategy involving forged letters to create mistrust among the Rajput generals.
 - **Raisin (1543):** He captured the fort after a long siege, infamous for violating a pact to spare its ruler, Puran Mal.
- **Malwa and Sind:** He annexed Malwa (1542) for refusing to aid him against Humayun and brought Multan and Sindh (1543) under his control.
- **Final Campaign (1545):** He died in 1545 from an explosion during the siege of the Kalinjar fort, his last military expedition.

Military Strengths

- **Strategy and Diplomacy:** He used spies and deceptive strategies effectively to conquer strong forts, like Rohtas and Marwar.
- **Military Reforms:** He reorganized the army, introducing the practice of *dagh* (branding horses) and *chehra* (descriptive rolls for soldiers), and maintained a strong central standing army.
- **Army Structure:** His administration included specialized roles, such as the *Shiqdar* (military officer) to maintain law and order.

Conclusion:

His administration was so efficient that it served as a model for future rulers, including the Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Unit-2

Chapter No. 4.

Akbar (1556–1605)

Introduction:

Akbar (1556–1605) revolutionized the Mughal Empire through aggressive territorial expansion and sophisticated administration. He established a vast empire stretching from Afghanistan to the Godavari River, driven by military victories in Gujarat, Bengal, and Rajputana. He created a centralized, pluralistic state using the [Mansabdari system](#), [Dahsala land revenue system](#), and diplomatic alliances.

Military Achievements

- **Second Battle of Panipat (1556):** Secured his throne against Hemu.
- **Conquests in Northern & Central India:** Annexed Malwa (1561), Gondwana (1564), and Gujarat (1573), which secured trade routes.
- **Expansion:** Subjugated Bengal and Bihar (1576), Kashmir (1586), Sindh (1591), and Kandahar (1595).
- **Rajput Policy:** Combined military pressure (capture of Chittor and Ranthambore) with diplomacy, marrying Rajput princesses and appointing leaders like Raja Man Singh to high posts.
- **Deccan Campaigns:** Captured Ahmadnagar, Berar, and Khandesh (by 1601).
- **Innovations:** Modernized the army with improved matchlock muskets (bandook) and a strong artillery wing, using both for expansion.

Administrative Structure

- **[Mansabdari System](#):** Organized the bureaucracy and military into ranks (mansabs), demanding a specific number of cavalymen, which created a disciplined, centralized army.
- **[Land Revenue System \(Dahsala\)](#):** Implemented by Raja Todar Mal, this system calculated the average produce and prices over 10 years to determine cash revenue.

- **Provincial Administration:** Divided the empire into Subahs (provinces), Sarkars (districts), and Parganas (sub-districts) for efficient governance.
- **Religious & Social Policy:** Abolished sectarian taxes like the jizya and pilgrimage tax, promoting Sulh-i-kul (universal peace) to foster unity among Hindu and Muslim subjects.
- **Cultural Growth:** The court boasted the "Navratnas" (nine gems), including Birbal and Tansen, encouraging intellectual and artistic achievements.

Conclusion:

Akbar's administration focused on turning military gains into a stable, lasting government, laying the foundation for a prosperous, pluralistic Mughal India.

Mansabdari system (1571).

Introduction:

The Mansabdari system, introduced by Emperor Akbar around 1571, was a unique, centralized administrative and military structure. It organized officials into 66 grades (33 commonly used), ranging from 10 to 10,000 troopers, defining their rank ([Zat](#)), salary, and military obligations ([Sawar](#)), establishing a merit-based bureaucracy rather than a hereditary feudal system.

Key Features of Akbar's Mansabdari System

- **[Zat and Sawar](#):** The rank consisted of two components: *Zat* indicated the personal status and salary, while *Sawar* indicated the number of cavalrymen (contingent) the officer was required to maintain.
- **Grading System:**

Ranks ranged from 10 to 10,000, though early in his reign, 5,000 was the highest for nobles, with higher ranks reserved for princes.

- **Recruitment and Promotion:** It was a merit-based system, allowing for promotion based on performance, which reduced the power of hereditary local chieftains.

- **Payment Method:** Mansabdars were paid either in cash (naqdi) or, more commonly, through land grants called **Jagirs**, which they managed to collect revenue equivalent to their salary.
- **Military Obligations:** Mansabdars were responsible for maintaining a disciplined force, complete with horses and equipment, which were subjected to a inspection called Dag (branding) and Chehra (description) to ensure quality.
- **Dual Responsibility:** Officials held both civil and military duties.

Impact and Importance

- **Centralization:** The system successfully brought the military, nobility, and civil administration under the direct control of the emperor.
- **Diversity:** Akbar's structure allowed for the inclusion of Turanis, Persians, Indians, and particularly Rajputs into the administrative fold.

Stability: It provided a strong, organized army to sustain the expansion of the Mughal Empire. **Conclusion:**

Conclusion:

The Mansabdari system was officially introduced by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in **1571**. It was designed as a comprehensive administrative, civil, and military ranking system to organize the bureaucracy and army. It was further refined in 1595-96 with the introduction of *Zat* and *Sawar* ranks.

Chapter No. 5.

Religious policy of Akbar-Din-i-Ilahi

Introduction:

Din-i-Ilahi, or "Divine Faith," was a syncretic ethical system launched by Emperor Akbar in 1582, aiming to foster national unity and harmony (Sulh-i-kul) in his diverse empire by blending elements from various religions. It emphasized morality, devotion, and absolute peace over rituals, largely aimed at reducing religious prejudices.

Key Aspects of Din-i-Ilahi and Akbar's Religious Policy:

- **Syncretic Nature:** It was not a rigid religion but an elite moral code, drawing from Islam, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and Christianity.
- **Ethical Rules:** It emphasized piety, prudence, abstinence, and kindness, prohibiting vices like lust, pride, and slander.
- **Practices:** Members, including high-ranking officials like Birbal, addressed each other with "Allah-hu-Akbar" and "Jalle-Jalal-e-hu," and were encouraged to abstain from meat.
- **Sulh-i-Kul (Universal Peace):** The philosophy behind the policy, promoting peaceful coexistence among different religious groups.
- **Opposition:** The policy faced significant opposition from orthodox Muslim religious leaders (Ulema), and the Din-i-Ilahi itself did not gain widespread popularity,

Conclusion:

He main goal was to forge a cohesive political entity (nation) by reducing religious barriers and promoting tolerance.

Chapter No. 6.

Akbar's Rajput policy

Introduction:

Akbar's Rajput policy was a strategic, diplomatic, and pragmatic approach designed to secure the loyalty of the warrior Rajput clan to strengthen the Mughal Empire's foundation. It combined military pressure with, marital alliances, high administrative roles, and religious freedom, allowing Rajputs to maintain internal autonomy while accepting Mughal suzerainty.

Key Features of Akbar's Rajput Policy:

- **Matrimonial Alliances:** Akbar married Rajput princesses (e.g., Harkha Bai, daughter of Raja Bharmal of Amber) to create ties of kinship and trust.
- **High Administrative Positions:** Rajput kings were made high-ranking Mansabdars, and positions of authority (like governors or military commanders) were given to loyal Rajputs like Raja Man Singh and Raja Todar Mal

- **Religious Tolerance:** Akbar abolished the pilgrim tax (1563) and jizya tax (1564), ensuring his Hindu subjects, including Rajputs, enjoyed religious freedom.
- **Respect for Autonomy:** Rajputs who accepted sovereignty were treated as allies, allowed to govern their hereditary kingdoms (Watan jagirs), and maintain their culture.
- **Alliance over Conflict:** Instead of forcing complete conquest, Akbar opted to partner with them, creating a "national" empire rather than a foreign one.

Impact and Significance:

- **Consolidation of the Empire:** The policy turned staunch enemies into powerful allies, providing the Mughals with loyal and brave warriors.
- **Stability and Cultural Synthesis:** It reduced rebellions and fostered a new cultural, social, and political synthesis in North India.
- **Expansion:** It assisted in the expansion of the empire into Gujarat, Bihar, and Bengal.
- **Enduring Alliances:** Although Mewar (Rana Pratap) offered resistance, most Rajput houses stayed loyal to the Mughals for generations following this policy.

Conclusion:

The **Rajput policy of Akbar** was a strategic approach aimed at integrating the Rajputs into the Mughal Empire. Key aspects include

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Chapter No. 7.

Jahangir (1605–1627)

Introduction:

Jahangir (1605–1627), the fourth Mughal emperor, maintained a generally stable, prosperous, and culturally rich empire while focusing on consolidating Akbar's conquests. His key achievements included suppressing

internal revolts, achieving peace with Mewar (1615), capturing the strategic Kangra Fort (1620), and administering justice through his "Chain of Justice".

Military Achievements

- **Mewar Campaign**: Successfully ended the long-standing conflict with the Rajput state of Mewar in 1615, where Prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan) forced Rana Amar Singh to accept Mughal suzerainty through a treaty.
- **Eastern Bengal and Northeast**: Subdued the Bara-Bhuiyans and Afghan chiefs, notably Usman Khan in 1612, consolidating control over Bengal, Kamrup, and Tipperah.
- **Kangra and Deccan**: Captured the fort of Kangra in 1620. His campaigns in the Deccan faced stiff resistance from Malik Ambar but maintained Mughal influence through strategic, albeit often limited, advances.
- **Loss of Kandahar**: A major setback was the loss of Kandahar to the Persians in 1622, largely due to internal friction between Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Administration and Policies

- **The Chain of Justice**: Established a golden "Chain of Justice" (Zanjir-i-Adl) connected to his palace, allowing any subject to directly appeal to him.
- **Governance Style**: Continued Akbar's, his revenue system on the principles of Raja Todarmal, showing a preference for a steady administration over constant expansion.
- **Tolerance and Stability**: Generally maintained religious freedom and followed a policy of sulh-i-kul (universal peace), although his relationship with religious figures was mixed, including the execution of Guru Arjan Dev.
- **Art and Culture**: A significant patron of painting, he also built the famous Shalimar Bagh in Kashmir.
- **Foreign Trade**: Permitted the British East India Company to establish trading posts, with representatives like Sir Thomas Roe visiting his court (1615–1619).

Conclusion:

His reign is often characterized as a period of consolidation and cultural refinement rather than aggressive expansionism.

Chapter No. 8

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Shah Jahan (1628–1658)

Introduction:

Shah Jahan (reigned 1628–1658) was the fifth [Mughal emperor](#) known for ushering in a golden age of architecture, most notably building the [Taj Mahal](#) in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Born Prince Khurram, he was a skilled military strategist who expanded the empire. His reign was marked by artistic, economic, and territorial growth, alongside strict, sometimes orthodox, administrative policies.

Rise to Power and Reign

- **Early Life:** Born on January 5, 1592, in Lahore to Emperor Jahangir and Jagat Gosani. He was favored by his grandfather, Akbar.
- **Military Success:** Known as a skilled commander, he forced the state of Mewar into submission in 1614, a feat his grandfather had not achieved.
- **Accession:** After his father's death in 1627, he overcame rivals—including executing his brothers—to take the throne in 1628.
- **Territorial Expansion:** Expanded the Mughal Empire by conquering the Deccan sultanates and maintaining campaigns against the Portuguese and Safavids.

🌐 The Golden Age of Architecture

Shah Jahan's reign is considered the peak of Mughal architecture:

- **Taj Mahal:** Built in Agra as a mausoleum for his wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.
- **Other Monuments:** Commissioned the Red Fort, Jama Masjid in Delhi, the Shalimar Gardens, and the famous Peacock Throne.

- **New Capital:** He built the city of Shahjahanabad in Delhi, transferring the capital from Agra.

Administration and Culture

- **Economy & Culture:** His reign was a period of stability and prosperity in the early stages, with significant investment in infrastructure like roads and bridges.
- **Religion:** A devout Sunni, he held a more orthodox view than his predecessors, reversing some liberal policies and imposing restrictions, such as the destruction of 76 new temples in Banaras.

Final Years and Succession

- **War of Succession:** After an illness in 1657, a brutal power struggle emerged among his four sons—Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad.
- **Imprisonment:** His third son, Aurangzeb, defeated his brothers and imprisoned Shah Jahan in the Agra Fort for the rest of his life (1658–1666).
- **Death:** He passed away in 1666 and was buried alongside his wife in the Taj Mahal.

Conclusion:

He was a prolific builder, constructing the Red Fort, Jama Masjid in Delhi, and the city of Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi).

Chapter No. 9.

Aurangzeb (1658–1707)

Introduction:

Aurangzeb (1658–1707) was the sixth and last "Great Mughal" emperor who expanded the empire to its greatest territorial extent, covering nearly the entire Indian subcontinent. A pious Sunni Muslim, his reign was marked by intense military expansion, imposition of Sharia law, and administrative reforms, but also severe controversies regarding religious policies, continuous Deccan wars, and subsequent imperial decline.

Rise to Power and Early Life

- **Birth:** Born Muhi-ud-Din Muhammad on November 3, 1618, in Dahod, Gujarat, he was the third son of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal.
- **War of Succession:** After displaying exceptional military and administrative skills as Viceroy of the Deccan, Aurangzeb defeated his brothers—Dara Shikoh, Shuja, and Murad—in a bloody power struggle in 1658.
- **Accession:** He imprisoned his father, Shah Jahan, in Agra Fort and assumed the title of Alamgir ("World Conqueror").

Aspects of Aurangzeb's Foreign Policy

- **Deccan Campaign (Primary Focus):** After 1681, Aurangzeb shifted his focus to the Deccan, attempting to suppress the Marathas and annex the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda. This 27-year campaign brought territory but severely drained the treasury, known as the "Deccan Ulcer".
- **Northwest Frontier Policy:** Aimed to secure the border against Central Asian tribes and the Persian Safavids, ensuring the empire's safety and projecting strength.
- **Diplomacy and Relations:** Maintained diplomatic exchanges with the Safavid dynasty in Persia, despite territorial disputes over Kandahar. He also interacted with the Ottoman Empire and maintained trade links.
- **European Powers:** While dealing with the French East India Company (granting them a factory in Surat), his later reign saw growing tensions with European trading powers who began exploiting the weakened Mughal central authority.
- **Expansionist Limitations:** While aiming to widen the borders, the relentless campaigns weakened administrative discipline and financial resources, accelerating the decline of the Mughal Empire.

Death: He died in 1707 in Ahmednagar, marking the end of the powerful Mughal rule and initiating the gradual decline of the dynasty.

Conclusion:

Aurangzeb's foreign policy, intended to assert power, ultimately resulted in the erosion of the empire's structural strength due to the heavy human and financial costs of his prolonged wars.

South Indian policy of Aurangzeb

Introduction:

Aurangzeb's South Indian policy (Deccan policy) was a long, aggressive campaign (1658–1707) aimed at eliminating the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golconda and crushing the rising Maratha power. It aimed to extend Mughal authority over the entire subcontinent but resulted in a military, economic, and administrative drain, significantly contributing to the Mughal Empire's decline.

Key Aspects of the Deccan Policy:

- **Expansionist Goals:** Aurangzeb sought to destroy the Shi'a-dominated Sultanates (Bijapur and Golconda) to expand his orthodox Sunni empire.
- **Three Phases of Campaigns:** The first phase (before 1681) focused on containment; the second (1681-1687) involved direct, massive military confrontation, leading to the annexations of Bijapur (1686) and Golconda (1687).
- **The Maratha Challenge:** Aurangzeb failed to anticipate the strength of Maratha resistance under Shivaji and his successors. After 1687, the focus shifted to a futile fight against the Marathas, who used guerrilla tactics.
- **Administrative Failure:** The long absence of the Emperor from the North and the exhaustion of the treasury fighting in the Deccan led to anarchy elsewhere.

Consequences:

- **"Deccan Ulcer":** Similar to Napoleon's "Spanish Ulcer," the Deccan was a fatal drain on the Mughal army and resources.
- **Decline of the Empire:** The prolonged conflict emptied the treasury and allowed the Marathas to regroup and gain strength.

Conclusion:

Even after conquering the kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda, the Mughals could not enforce their authority over the region, resulting in a fragile, overextended empire until Aurangzeb's death in 1707.

Religious policy of Aurangzeb

Introduction:

Aurangzeb's religious policy was defined by strict adherence to orthodox Sunni Islam, reversing the liberal, pluralistic approach of his predecessors. He re-imposed the *jizya* tax (1679), ordered the destruction of several key Hindu temples, restricted public celebrations of Holi and Diwali, and enforced a puritanical legal code (*Fatawa-e-Alamgiri*), causing widespread conflicts.

Key Features of Aurangzeb's Religious Policy

- **Re-imposition of *Jizya*:** In 1679, he brought back the *jizya* tax on non-Muslim subjects, which Akbar had abolished.
- **Destruction of Temples:** He ordered the demolition of several prominent temples, including the Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, Keshavdeva Temple in Mathura, and Somnath Temple.
- **Enforcement of Sharia:** He established *Fatawa-e-Alamgiri* (a compilation of Islamic laws) to govern the empire, banning music at court, stamping of *Kalma* on coins, and the practice of *Jharokha Darshan*.
- **Restrictions on Hindus:** Non-Muslims were restricted from wearing fine clothes, riding horses or elephants (except Rajputs), and faced higher customs duties.
- **Execution of Religious Leaders:** He executed the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, in 1675 for refusing to convert to Islam.

Key Conflicts Stemming from Policy

His policies fueled significant uprisings that weakened the empire:

- **Sikhs:** Rebellion led by Guru Gobind Singh following the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur.
- **Rajputs:** Conflict with Marwar and Mewar in 1679 over issues of succession and religious interference.

- **Marathas:** Long-standing struggle with Shivaji and his successors.
- **Jats and Satnamis:** Peasants and religious sects who revolted against his restrictive policies.

Analysis of the Policy

- **Orthodoxy vs. Politics:** While strongly driven by religious piety, some historians argue that the destruction of specific temples was also motivated by political rebellion against his authority, not just religious fervor.
- **Hiring Patterns:** Despite these policies, Aurangzeb employed a high number of Hindu officials in his bureaucracy, even more than his predecessors, suggesting a complex, often contradictory approach.
- **Regional Differences:** In his later years, specifically after his Deccan campaigns, he adopted a more conciliatory approach towards local Hindu powers to maintain control, reducing the strict application of his earlier laws in that region.

Conclusion:

His religious policies ultimately alienated key allies (like the Rajputs) and strengthened the resolve of regional groups, leading to the rapid decay of the Mughal Empire after his death in 1707.

Cause for the decline of Mughal dynasty

Introduction:

The decline of the Mughal dynasty (early 18th–mid 19th century) was caused by a combination of weak successors after Aurangzeb, incessant wars of succession, administrative corruption, and severe financial crises. Key factors included military decay, the rise of regional powers (Marathas, Sikhs), Aurangzeb's costly, long-term Deccan campaigns, and foreign invasions.

Key Causes for the Decline of the Mughal Empire:

- **Weak Successors and Succession Wars:** Following Aurangzeb's death in 1707, subsequent emperors were weak, inefficient, and incompetent in governing a vast empire. The lack of a fixed law of succession resulted in

violent wars between princes, which decimated the military and destabilized the administration

- **Aurangzeb's Policies:** Aurangzeb's long-lasting military campaigns in the Deccan drained the treasury and his orthodox religious policies (e.g., reimposition of Jizya) alienated Rajputs, Sikhs, and Marathas, leading to widespread rebellions.
- **Economic and Financial Crisis:** The empire faced bankruptcy due to constant warfare, luxurious lifestyles of the nobility, and a decline in revenue collection, causing significant agrarian distress.
- **Degeneration of the Nobility:** The Mughal nobility became corrupt, faction-ridden, and focused on self-interest rather than the stability of the state, often creating intrigue in the royal court.
- **Military Weakness:** The army lacked discipline, modern weaponry, and technology compared to the invading forces and European armies, becoming demoralized and ineffective.
- **Foreign Invasions:** Invasions by Nadir Shah (1739) and Ahmad Shah Abdali (1748, 1761) exposed the military weakness of the empire and plundered its wealth, including the Peacock Throne.
- **Rise of Regional Powers and Europeans:** The rapid growth of regional powers like the Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats, combined with the encroachment of European trading companies—particularly the British East India Company—eventually caused the collapse of Mughal authority.

Conclusion:

The collapse led to political fragmentation, economic decline, and paved the way for European colonial rule.

Unit-4

Chapter No. 10.

Mughal administration- contributions to culture, society, religion, literature,

Introduction:

Mughal administration (16th-18th centuries) significantly transformed Indian culture and society by fostering a unique synthesis of Persian, Islamic, and indigenous Indian traditions. Key contributions include establishing a unified administrative system (Mansabdari), promoting religious syncretism ([Sulh-i-Kul](#)), developing the Urdu language, and creating lasting architectural masterpieces like the Taj Mahal.

Contributions to Culture:

- **Architecture:** The Mughals created a distinct architectural style using red sandstone and white marble, characterized by large domes, minarets, and gardens (e.g., Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Humayun's Tomb).
- **Art and Literature:** They heavily patronized painting, leading to the development of a unique miniature painting style that blended Persian, Indian, and European influences. Persian became the official court language, while literature and poetry flourished.
- **Urdu Language:** Urdu was developed during this era, representing a synthesis of Persian, Arabic, and local Indian languages.
- **Music and Cuisine:** The court supported the development of Hindustani classical music, and Mughal cuisine, renowned for its rich flavors (influenced by Persian cooking), was established.

Contributions to Society:

- **Administrative Unity:** The Mughals introduced a uniform administrative system across India, including a centralized revenue system ([Zabt](#)), which stabilized the economy.
- **[Mansabdari System](#):** This system integrated the military and bureaucracy, allowing for social mobility and organizing the aristocracy, which impacted social structure.
- **Religious Syncretism:** Under emperors like Akbar, the policy of *Sulh-i-Kul* (universal peace) encouraged religious tolerance and dialogue between diverse communities.
- **Urbanization and Trade:** The construction of cities like Delhi, Agra, and Lahore, alongside improved infrastructure (roads, rest houses), spurred urbanization, trade, and economic growth.

- **Cultural Exchange:** The mingling of diverse traditions resulted in a, syncretic, cosmopolitan culture.

Contributions to Religion:

- **Sulh-i-Kul and Tolerance:** Akbar promoted religious inclusivity, abolishing the jizya tax (1563) and hosting interfaith dialogues.
- **Administrative Inclusivity:** The administration included high-ranking Hindu nobles (Rajputs) in its military and administrative ranks, stabilizing the empire.
- **Sufism and Syncretism:** The state supported Sufi orders, fostering a cultural synthesis that eased tensions between Hindu and Muslim communities.
- **Religious Policies Shift:** While Akbar was highly pluralistic, policies fluctuated, with Shah Jahan maintaining some patronage while Aurangzeb enforced stricter Islamic orthodoxy and reintroduced *jizya*.

Contribution to Literature:

- **Persian Literature:** The official court language saw the rise of massive historical and philosophical works (e.g., Akbar-nama, translations of the Upanishads and Ramayana).
- **Vernacular Literature:** Regional languages flourished, with major contributions in Hindi, including bhakti poetry by poets such as Tulsidas.

Translation Departments: The Mughals established departments to translate Sanskrit texts into Persian to facilitate cultural understanding.

Conclusion:

These efforts helped create a rich, shared cultural, and religious legacy in India.

Mughal art and architecture

Introduction:

Mughal art and architecture (1526–1857) represents a distinct, symmetrical fusion of Persian, Turkic, and Indian styles, characterized by red sandstone, white marble, bulbous domes, and lush gardens. Key features

include massive gateways, pietradura (inlaid stone), *charbagh* planning, and intricate calligraphic ornamentation.

Mughal Architecture

- **Materials:**

Extensive use of red sandstone (Akbar) and white marble (Shah Jahan).

- **Key Design Elements:** Large bulbous domes (onion domes), tall thin minarets at corners, massive halls, vaulted gateways, and arched roofs.
- **Layout:** The *Charbagh* layout (four-quartered garden style).
- **Decoration:** *Pietra dura* (inlaid precious stones) and *Jalis* (lattice screens).

Evolution by Ruler

- **Babur (1526-1530):** Introduced Persian-style gardens, specifically the *Charbagh* style.
- **Akbar (1556-1605):** Known for massive structures, predominantly using red sandstone. Key projects: Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri, Buland Darwaza.
- **Jahangir (1605-1627):** Focused on gardens and fine arts; commissioned the Shalimar Gardens.
- **Shah Jahan (1628-1658):** Peak of architectural splendor; used white marble and pietradura. Key projects: Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Jama Masjid.
- **Aurangzeb (1658-1707):** Decline in architectural patronage; his notable work is Bibi Ka Maqbara.

Prominent Mughal Monuments

- **[Taj Mahal \(Agra\)](#):** Built by Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for Mumtaz Mahal.
- **[Agra Fort \(Agra\)](#):** Built primarily by Akbar, containing palaces like Jahangiri Mahal.
- **[Fatehpur Sikri \(near Agra\)](#):** A fully planned city containing the Buland Darwaza.
- **[Humayun's Tomb \(Delhi\)](#):** Precursor to the Taj Mahal with Persian influence.

- **Red Fort (Delhi):** Known as Lal Qila, built by Shah Jahan.

Mughal Painting and Art

- **Origins:** Humayun brought Persian miniature painting techniques to India.
- **Style:** Combined Persian, Indian, and later European influences. Focused on portraits, historical scenes, and nature.
- **Patronage:** Akbar established official workshops (*karkhanas*), and Jahangir brought it to its peak, favoring realistic depiction.

Conclusion:

The Mughal art and architecture was a tool of statecraft, designed to reflect the power and refinement of the empire.

Chapter No. 11.

Maratha Empire (1674–1818)

Introduction:

The Maratha Empire (1674–1818) was a dominant Indian power that replaced Mughal supremacy, founded by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in western India. Utilizing guerrilla warfare and strong, fort-based administration, the Marathas expanded rapidly under the Peshwas to control much of the subcontinent, before declining due to internal rivalry and British expansion.

- **Founder:** Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680) united Marathi-speaking warriors against Adil Shahi and Mughal rule.
- **Administration:**
 - **Ashta Pradhan:** Shivaji established a council of eight ministers to manage the state.
 - **Taxation:** Introduced *Chauth* (25% of revenue for protection) and *Sardeshmukhi* (additional 10% levy).
 - **Military:** Focused on guerilla tactics, light cavalry, and strong fort defenses (e.g., Raigad).

- **Rise of the Peshwas:** After Shahu's rule, power shifted from the Bhosle king to the Peshwas (Prime Ministers) in Pune, making it the administrative center.
- **Maratha Confederacy:** Later structure composed of semi-autonomous chieftains: Peshwas (Pune), Scindias (Gwalior), Holkars (Indore), Gaekwads (Baroda), and Bhonsles (Nagpur).
- **Expansion & Downfall:**
 - **Peak:** Controlled large parts of India by the mid-18th century, reaching up to Peshawar.
 - **Third Battle of Panipat (1761):** Major defeat against Ahmad Shah Abdali, which crippled their power.
 - **Anglo-Maratha Wars (1775–1818):** Three wars against the British ultimately led to the end of the empire and British supremacy.

Conclusion:

The Marathas left an indelible mark on Indian history, known for their martial spirit, administrative skills, and role in defending the cultural and political landscape of India.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680)

Introduction:

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj (1630–1680) founded the Maratha Empire, pioneering "Ganimi Kava" (guerrilla warfare) and establishing a strong, disciplined standing army and navy. He built/captured over 300 strategic forts, implemented a decentralized, merit-based administration with an *Ashtapradhan* (eight-minister) council, and enforced strict ethical codes, fostering a welfare state.

Military Achievements:

- **Guerrilla Warfare Specialist:** Known as "Mountain Rat" for his strategic use of rugged Sahyadri terrain.

- **Founder of Indian Navy:** As the "Father of the Indian Navy," he built a formidable fleet of ~57 warships and 5,000 men to protect the Konkan coast from the Siddis, Portuguese, Dutch, and British.
- **Strategic Fortification:** Captured and built key forts like Torna, Raigad, and Sindhudurg, ensuring defensible strongholds.
- **Key Victories:** Famously defeated Afzal Khan (Bijapur) in 1659 and launched daring raids against Mughal forces, including the sack of Surat and the dramatic escape from Agra.
- **Army Organization:** Replaced feudal troops with a permanent standing army, paid directly by the state in cash to prevent local feudal power bases, ensuring loyalty.

Administrative Structure:

- **Ashtapradhan (Council of Eight):** Guided by a council of eight ministers, with the *Peshwa* (Prime Minister) leading the administration.
- **Revenue Reform:** Abolished the old system of land revenue farming, conducting a systematic land survey and collecting taxes directly, often taking 40% of the produce while protecting farmers.
- **Secular Policies:** Maintained high religious tolerance, employing people of all faiths, and strictly respecting women, even in enemy territory.
- **Law and Order:** Enforced a just judicial system and strong local governance, focusing on the security of his subjects.

Conclusion:

Chhatrapati Shivaji-his military achievements, Administration leadership successfully challenged the mighty Mughal Empire, making him a revered figure in Indian military history.

Maratha contributions to Indian culture

Introduction:

The Maratha Empire (17th–18th centuries) significantly revived Indian culture by protecting indigenous traditions, promoting the Marathi language, and fostering art, music, and distinct fort architecture. They broke Mughal

dominance, establishing [*Swarajya*](#) (self-rule) and a "Hindu Padshahi" that preserved cultural identity. Their legacy includes a unified political consciousness and a resilient cultural revival.

Contributions to Indian culture:

- **Cultural & Religious Revival:** The Marathas, influenced by Bhakti saints like Tukaram and Ramdas, fostered a resurgence of Hindu religious traditions and cultural identity, resisting foreign domination.
- **Language and Literature:** Marathi flourished under Maratha patronage, transitioning from a regional tongue into a rich literary language.
- **Architecture & Arts:** They constructed iconic, tactical forts (e.g., Raigad, Pratapgad) and temples, blending traditional aesthetics, creating a distinct architectural style.
- **Administrative and Social Structure:** Shivaji introduced the *Ryotwari* system, eliminating middlemen, and fostered a just, disciplined society, with strong local governance via Panchayats.
- **Impact on Indian Nationalism:** By defying Mughals and Afghans, they provided a base for regional power and set a precedent for indigenous rule, influencing future nationalistic movements.

Conclusion:

the Maratha contribution lies in creating a lasting cultural renaissance amidst foreign dominance, fostering regional unity, and leaving a lasting legacy in language, architecture, and administration that remains central to modern Indian culture.