CHAPTER V

FALL OF THE MUGHALS

The fall of Mughal Empire appears to have 'repelled' historians; not so much for lack of sources which are indeed vast and varied but for 'the immense number of separate political bodies and centres of action' that followed the dismemberment - 'a bag of loose stones constantly knocking against one another' that in totality present a dismal picture.\(^1\) Now that the great ship has gone down the deep, to review 'the wreckage, to gather the corks and broken planks' may be too poignant. Yet the tragedy of the immediate historic past - not only the liquidation of the once mighty Mughals but also of the interlinked 'utter failure' of the 'last Hindu attempt at empire building' is...

'no less potent to purge the soul' and 'no less wanting in the deepest instruction for the present'.

The earliest work, tackling the theme was a historical play Thomas Maurice, *The Fall of the Mogul - A tragedy* (1806). Though desirous of emulating Gibbon as a historian, unlike Gibbon, Maurice had hardly anything to commend regarding Muslim achievements in India, the counterpart of Gibbon's classical Rome was for Maurice, as it had been for his mentor William Jones, ancient India, *The Fall of the Mogul* presents the Mughals as the bane of the Hindus and Maurice ascribes the intellectual and moral degradation, and suffering of Hindus to their conquest by the Muslims. The chorus in the play is provided by Hindu priests with the object of presenting oppressors being tormented in their own turn by 'a greater evil than themselves'.

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3 Thomas Maurice graduated from Oxford in 1778 and under the influence of William Jones as a historian, decided to 'quit the barren field of poetry'. His major works in history include *Modern History of Hindustan* in two volumes and *The Fall of the Mogul*. Due to non-availability of book, the general information is borrowed from J.S. Grewal's *Muslim Rule in India - The Assessments of British Historians*, pp.58-60.
The next work covering "the story of confusion and transition" was H.G. Keene, The Fall of the Mughul Empire (1876). It covered the gap (1761-1803) that had been left in the 'standard' works of Elphinstone on Muslim India and of James Mill and Wilson on British India and made an attempt to 'show the state of the country under the Mughal rule' and the reasons why with so many good qualities the 'House of Timur' ultimately failed to form a durable dominion. Keene warned his reader that in 'the history of anarchy, much that is desired in a history will be sought in vain' — the state of the people or systems of government — but an interest was to be derived from the biographies of the persons chiefly

4 The British 'administrative historian' who was judge of the district and sessions courts at Agra and fellow of the University of Calcutta. A disciple of Elphinstone in 1860's, he became 'his rival as a historian of Muslim India in the 1890's, encouraged perhaps by the work of Elliot and Dowson. See J.S. Grewal, Muslim Rule in India — The Assessments of British Historians, pp.172-73. H.G. Keene brought out The Mogul Empire: from the death of Aurangzeb to the overthrow of Maratha Empire (1876). He published: The Fall of the Mogul Empire (1876), The Turks in India (1526-1761) (1879). He brought out A Sketch of the History of Hindustan (1885), in which he covered the Pre-Mughal Period also and had thus the satisfaction of having covered 'the whole history of Medieval Hindustan'.

5 H.G.Keene, The Fall of the Mogul Empire, 1876, 1st Indian reprint, Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1971, Preface, vi-vii.
engaged. For Keene the fall of the empire could be interpreted in two basic underlying factors - those characteristic of the dynasty and the general ones. To the first category belonged the reversal of Akbar's policy, particularly by Aurangzeb who lodged the destructive roots of Ficus religiosa in the very foundation on which the empire rested. He manifested an unwavering 'devotion to duty as he saw it'. He was identical to a great measure, to his European contemporary Louis Quatorze - 'with less pomp but not less of the lust of conquest, of centralization and of religious conformity'. He failed as any rulers would fail who try to make their 'personal feelings the measure of their subjects' 'rights'. He could have governed with as much success as his 'free thinking' and 'pleasure seeking' predecessors. There were now added the usual dangers of a large-empire, the peculiar perils of a 'jealous centralization of power and 'a deep seated disaffection of the vast majority of subjects' what was more, there had never been any fixed settlement of

6 H.G.Keene, The Turks in India (1879), Indian reprint, Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I, Delhi, Delhi, 1972, p. 144.
7 H.G.Keene, The Fall of the Moghul Empire, 1876, p. 28.
succession to the throne and the history after Aurangzeb was one of constant court intrigues and wars of succession, one puppet king replacing another, and the last of them dying in a remote and dishonoured exile.

In the general as well as final analysis Keene, following Montesquieu, concluded that the physical conditions of a country will always be the chief determining agents in forming the national character of those inhabiting it. Thus the 'feeble folk of Hindustan' - of the direct and often representatives of the dominant races of the world*, all but the offspring of converted Hindus represent foreign invasions by races more valrous and 'all these mighty conquerors, one after the other succumbed to the enervating nature of the climate, with its fertile soil and scanty motives to an exertion'. Fresh blood of a climate which gave hardness to frame, increased the number of human wants, as much as presented the difficulty of satisfying them, came to seek the 'gifts of fortune in India and America. Still the Mughal empire did not fall by the valour and ambition of the new comers like the English or the French. In the midst of

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8. The French Philosopher has illustrated this view in Book XIV of his Esprit - des - Lois, quoted in H.G.Keene's The Fall of the Moghul Empire, p. 278.

9. Ibid., p. 280.
anarchy that caused 'untold misery to the masses', the
'grossest incompetence on the part of nearly all natives
concerned in the administration' it was inevitable that one
or the other of the competing European nations should grasp
the prize. Having a 'better home government', 'more regularly'
supported and supplied' the British prevailed. India was,
when Keene wrote, relaxing in the sunshine of the Pax-
Britannica. However, Keene warned the British against
complacency, "Hindustan is a treacherous mistress, who slays
with smiles all who rest upon her bosom with too much con-
fidence".

H.G.Keene, like most of the late nineteenth
century British historians on Muslim India, depended on
literary evidence and native chronicles which he considered
'extremely inadequate' and used the 'inadequacy as an argu-
ment in justification of his own slipshod work'. The
classic of materials forced him to be 'intentionally

10H.G.Keene, A Sketch of the History of Hindustan, 1885,
Indian reprint, Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I Delhi, Delhi, 1972,
pp. 50-51.
11H.G.Keene, The Turks in India, Idarah-I-Adabiyat-I Delhi,
Delhi, 1972, p. 48.
12J.S.Grewal, Muslim Rule in India, Assessments of British
Historians, p. 173.
superficial and full of episode'. For Keene, however, the work of Elliot and Dowson had 'revolutionised our knowledge of the subject'. Keene, like most of his countrymen was proud of the British achievement of bringing order out of chaos, but it appears, the events of 1857 coloured some of his observations, nevertheless it was H.G. Keene who, for the first time gave a connected record of events of the fall of Mughal empire.

Sidney J. Owen, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire* (1912) did not differ much either in its sources or interpretation of H.G. Keene and contentwise it closed earlier narrating the events from the reign of Aurangzeb to the third battle of Panipat. He, however, benefitted from

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13 H.G. Keene, *A Sketch of the History of Hindustan*, Preface. "The Hindus have never cared to read or write history and the Muslim writers, though many chronicles have existed among them, are not with two or three exceptions, historically minded in modern sense of the word".

14 "All Asiatics are unscrupulous and unforgiving. The natives of Hindustan are particularly so, they are also unsympathic and unobservant in a manner that is altogether their own. From a languor induced by a climate and by centuries of misgovernment, they have derived a weakness of will, an absence of resolute energy and an occasional audacity of meanness, almost unintelligible in a people so free from the fear of death", H.G. Keene, *The Fall of the Mogul Empire*, p. 21.
William Irvine's translation of Manucci's Travels Storia de Mogor. Owen's work based on easily accessible sources in English,\(^{15}\) was the outcome of a course of lectures he had delivered to 'trace the operation of the causes in the course of a century that reduced the mighty and far famed empire of the great Moguls to a political shadow.'\(^{16}\) The object of his book was to show that the decline of the Mughal empire was not so much due to the degeneracy of its sovereigns, for 'it was irrevocably ruined in the reign of Aurangzeb' who lacked political insight and was a 'bigoted Mussulman' and struck the first blow by reversing Akbar's wise policy of ignoring distinctions of race and religion.\(^{17}\) Paradoxical though it may sound, it was none the less true that the solidarity and prosperity of the empire had been due to the 'Gallic disposition' of its sovereigns', though professed

\(^{15}\) His account of Aurangzeb is mainly based on Manucci's account translated and edited by William Irvine and that of his successors from the 'standard history' of Khafi Khan, translated by Dowson, for the later history he was indebted to Grant Duff's History of the Mahrattas, his sketch of Aliwardi Khan's career was taken from Haer-ul-Mutakheria (Sayyid-Gulam Husain Tohatabai), a contemporary work, translated under the auspices of Warren Hastings, where as the Panipat campaign was based on the account of Kashi Pandit (Kashi Pandit), a Maratha in the service of Nawab of Oudh. See S.J.Owen, The Fall of the Mughal Empire, Preface, vii–viii.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., v.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., v–vi.
votaries of Islam, were not animated by its 'exclusive and fierce spirit' to the extent to let it supersede their instincts as statesmen. It was Aurangzeb who 'frittered the empire away in a Quixotic tilt against Hinduism' - he not only estranged Rajputs the staunchest supporters of the throne into persistent enemies, the Marathas under Shivaji vindicated their independence and continued striking mortal blows at the integrity of the empire under the Peshwas too. The 'imminent prospect of Maharatha predominance' in India was however obliterated in a day and for ever in the field of Panipat in 1761.

William Irvine, Later Mughals (1922) originally intended to cover the period 1707-1803, but his untimely death left the narrative at 1738. It was edited, and augmented by

18 S.J. Owen, The Fall of the Mogul Empire, p. 5.
19 Ibid., p. 265.
20 He was a son of a Scotch advocate, served in India, 1863-1888, a serious student of Indo-Muslim history, a great collector of Persian historical MSS., he kept in his pay a Muhammadan scribe to search for Persian MSS. as could be had for love or money. His other major works are Army of Indian Moghuls and his translation and edition of Niccolao Manucci's Travels in the Mughol Empire the Storeia-de-Mogor. See William Irvine, Later Mughals, 1922, edited by J.N. Sarkar, reprint, New Delhi, 1971, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation. J.N. Sarkar, 'William Irvine : A Biography', xiii-xv.
addition of Nadir Shah's invasion to it by Jadunath Sarkar. Irvine made an exhaustive use of the available original sources in his factual narration of the events, covering a period of 30 years in about 800 pages. In the Foreword Irvine did not claim for his book 'in the highest sense of the word, the name of history', but that 'it was the result of some research and labour, things sadly lacking in Indian history as a preparatory clearing of the ground for more ambitious work'; he of course would be satisfied to be 'acknowledged in a foot-note 'by some Gibbon of the future'. Indeed few Britishers took the task of the study of Mughal history as seriously as Irvine's Later Mughals reflects.

21. No more competent an authority than Prof. J.N. Sarkar could have been found to edit it (Irvine's Life's work). P.E. Roberts in English History Review, quoted by K.R. Qamungo, "Jadunath Sarkar As a Historian", Life and Letters, p. 63.

22. William Irvine, Later Mughals, edited by J.N. Sarkar. J.N. Sarkar on "William Irvine as a Historian", xxiv. "He brought light to bear on his subject from every possible angle; Persian, English, Dutch, and Portuguese records, the correspondence of the Jesuit Missionaries in India, books of travel and parallel literatures were all ransacked by him".


In his day 'his knowledge of the particular period of history was unrivalled. Being a pioneer study in detail, it had to be essentially 'a mere narrative of events' without those reflections and generalizations that had distinguished Gibbon's work on the fall of the Roman empire. It drove a 'broad pathway through a very tangled jungle and cleared up many disputed points'.

Sir Jadunath Sarkar undertook study of the 'headlong decay of the age old Muslim rule in India' and the 'utter failure of the last Hindu attempt at empire building', and devoted about 25 years to plan and execute a comprehensive study of the fall of the two empires and the rise of the third, making a synthesis of the Persian, Marathi, English, French, Hindi, Rajasthani and Sanskrit sources to reconstruct the story of the fall of the Mughal empire from the departure of Nadir Shah in 1739 to the British conquest of Delhi. The British assumed the 'keepership' of the Mughal emperor in 1803.


and the Mughal empire as a political institution came to an end. It was while editing and augmenting William Irvine's *Later Mughals* that he decided to complete the tragic story of the downfall of the Mughal empire. He acknowledged inspiration from Irvine on the subject, but the rest was his own genius and dedication to the subject for about a quarter of a century. Indeed his *Fall of the Mughal Empire* in four volumes, forms only one of his major studies of the period, to which his other contributions have their own place and significance.

The historian's major studies on the period:

1. *Bihar and Orissa during the Fall of the Mughal Empire*  
   Vol. I. 1932
   Vol. I 2nd ed. 1949
   Vol. I 3rd ed. 1964
   Vol.II 1934
   Vol.II 2nd ed. 1950
   Vol.III 1938
   Vol.III 2nd ed. 1950
   Vol.III 3rd ed. 1964
   Vol.IV 1950

27 William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, edited by J.N. Sarkar. J.N. Sarkar "William Irvine As a Historian", xxv-xxvi. "Later Mughals intended to cover the century from the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 to the capture of Delhi by the English in 1803... his successor in the same field will have to begin at the very beginning and can hope to arrive at Mr. Irvine's position only after twenty years of preliminary study".
3. **Nadir Shah in India**, Patna University Readership Lectures, 1922

4. **Marathi Sources (1732-1774)**

5. **Bengal Affairs (1742-1752)**, some important dates and events.

6. **Poona Residency Correspondence (edited)**

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7. **Persian Records of Marathas History (translated into English)**
   - **Poona Letters from Delhi, Vol. I** 1953
   - **Mahadi Sindhia as Regent of Delhi, Vol. VII** 1953

8. **Nawabs of Bengal (Sir William Jones Bicentenary Series No. I, Asiatic Society)** 1952

In keeping pace with the latest researches on the subject and as original pieces of great interest, his articles and papers, mostly printed in journals, have a

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29. Typed Ms. in 'Sir J.N. Sarkar Collection' at National Library, Calcutta. (n.d.).
value of their own. 30

When the historian started working on the period, he had already, by editing Irvine's 'mass of papers with

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A. Modern Review

1. 'Delhi During the Anarchy' - (1749-1788) February, 1921.
2. 'The End of Nadir Shah' May, 1929.
3. 'A Lesson of Indian History' June, 1929.
4. 'English Residents with Mahadji Sindhia' April, 1929.
5. 'From Asaf Jah I to Osman Ali, The Fate of Hyderabad' August, 1948.

B. Proceedings of Indian Historical Records Commission

7. 'The House of Jaipur' December, 1929.
8. 'The Mission of James Browne to the Delhi Court (1780-83)' December, 1937.

C. Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society


D. Indian Historical Quarterly

amazing thoroughness' cleared the way in a tangled jungle and brought the account to 1739; added Nadir Shah's invasion to it also. The 'jungle' gets thicker after Nadir Shah's invasion, with the process of dismemberment speeding up and the springing up of a number of independent centres and their interaction making the history of the period extremely intricate. In addition Ahmad Shah Abdali loomed large in the north-western horizon and the Maratha army clattered through the length and breadth of a hapless country. Yet the historian fulfills his promise, not to let his reader lose his way in the tangle of woods; he is constantly by the reader's side to whisper, 'Delhi is not far off'. It is for this purpose that he eliminates 'every side issue that may divert the mind from the main theme - the Emperor and his keepers'. Hence, the provinces that had cut themselves apart from the empire, e.g., Bengal and Bihar 1757, Malwa and Gujrat 1741-50,


33J.N. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. I, Foreword, iv.
the Punjab after 1758, Oudh after 1761 and the six subhas of Deccan in 1748 - do not have their events narrated except for the briefest reference - to light up the history of the central government, 'the historian of Delhi' omits the Anglo-French struggle for the Indian empire, while Rajputana and Bundelkhand are embraced in the survey, they too owed only nominal allegiance to Delhi but remained till the end of the century, the cockpit of activities of those who held Delhi. It was only by enforcing such limitations that the historian gave a masterly unity of structure to an otherwise unwieldy theme.

Volume I of the *Fall of the Mughal Empire* opens with the scene after Nadir Shah's departure. Outwardly 'dignity and splendour returned to the Delhi Court' but the moral canker was striking fast at the roots; 'a nemesis worked itself out inexorably on the destiny of the Empire from the character of the emperor and his leading ministers' as evident from contemporary
The historical stage of Delhi was soon to be dominated by Ahmad Shah Abdali and Volume I closes with the fall of Ahmad Shah the 'last emperor of Delhi who showed any independence'.

34. J.N. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. I, p. 4; A Contemporary Picture of the Mughal Court*, Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society*, Vol. xvii, 1931, Part IV, 339-340. Muhammad Shah with his childish love of fruits, absorbing fondness for fake animal combats, his over indulgence in opium and harem, his utter indifference to public business... Like king like Minister. The emperor became a 'conformed invalid at the age of 40 due to excesses and a deep melancholy set in... he turned to the company of *fagire* Muhammad Shafi Tehrani (Pen-name Warid) whose youth had been nurtured in the dignified and strenuous reign of Aurangzeb wrote (Mirat-i-Waridat 117-118) in the bitterness of his heart about the times of Muhammad Shah, "for some years past it has been the practice of the Imperial court that whenever officers of the Deccan or Gujrat and Malwa reported any Maratha incursion to the emperor, his Majesty, in order to soothe his heart affliated by such sad news either visited the gardens... or rode out to hunt in the plains, while his grand wasir Itimad-ud-daulah Qasim-ud-din Khan went to assuage his feel­ings by gazing at the lotuses in some pools situated four leagues from Delhi where he would spend a month or more in tents enjoying pleasure or hunting fish in the rivers and deer in the plains. At such times Emperor and Wazir alike lived in total forgetfulness of the business of administra­tion, the collection of revenue, and the needs of the army. No chief, no man thinks of guarding the realm and protecting the people, while these disturbances daily grow greater", *Newsletters of the Mughal Court* 4th May (1743).

"The Emperor came to the foot of the Jharokha and looked at the preparation of lamps for illumination. Keshe Rao reported the news of the army of Balaji Baji Rao 5th May - The emperor came on foot to the Jharokha and viewed the dancing and singing of the beggars. 6th May. The emperor came on foot to the Jharokha and witnessed the mimicry of the bafoons (bhand)."

35. "When the fallen monarch cried out for water in the agony of thirst and mental anguish, Saifullah Khan held out to his lips some water put in the shred of a broken earthen pot lying in the dust there, and the king of kings of an hour ago was glad to drink from it", *Fall*, I, p. 339.
In Volume II of *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, of the 18 eventful years, the central theme is the Afghan Maratha contest culminating in the Third Battle of Panipat.

In the second edition, published 16 years after the first, the historian made use of the relevant historical material that became available in the intervening years: A. Ahmad Shah Abdali's letters during the Panipat Campaign which J.N. Sarkar translated from Persian in the *Modern Review*, May 1946, and the *Jangnamah* or the history of his invasion, written by the eye witness Qazi Nur Mohammad edited by Ganda Singh, 1939. B. The French text of Rene Madec's *Memoire* translated by J.N. Sarkar. C. The Persian *New letters* to the Peshwa from his agents in Delhi. D. Further volumes of Marathi historical letters and old family papers; J.N. Sarkar's *Panipat*, Calcutta, 1934, reprinted from the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol.X, No.2, June 1934, based on the fullest and best source on the momentous event, Kashinath's account. Kashiraj, the Brahman Secretary of Shujaudullah, the Nawab of Oudh and was present with his master throughout the campaign, took a personal part in the negotiations with Bhau and later in the search for the slain Maratha Chiefs and their cremation.

In depicting the minute details of the Afghan-Maratha contest, the historian's flair for military history is most impressive. A description of the topography of the environs of Panipat with a map to help visitors (p. 214), his explanation of the plans of battle (p. 233) and his Appendix on 'Historical sources on Panipat' (263-269) make it a masterly study by the author of *Military History of India*, and would do honour to a De-Jomini (the Tsar's A.D.C.), a greatman of arms experienced in the Napoleonic campaigns whose *Art of War* had impressed Jadunath Sarkar most as a young college student.

The reflective historian does not follow the 'fashion with Maratha writers since the days of V.K. Rajwade to belittle the result of the battle of Panipat as no disaster to the Marathas except for the death of so many chiefs and so many thousands of soldiers' and is of the view that contrast of the Maratha position from 1760 to 1789 can be most easily realized if we imagine, that the Marathas triumphed on 14th January, 1761 - 'Consequences of the battle of Panipat', J.N. Sarkar, *Fall II*, 255-259.
It was at Panipat that 'in a twinkle of the eye Maratha army vanished from the field like camphor', convincing the onlookers that Maratha friendship was a 'very weak reed to lean upon', for the 'historian of Delhi' one of the significant outcome was that Delhi Government had a respite from Maratha intrusions nearly till the reign of the new Peshwa Madhavrao Ballal (1761-1772). The same volume also traces the 'abrupt rise and still more abrupt fall of the Jat kingdom of Bharatpur within the span of a decade only. The period also witnessed the bankruptcy of the Delhi Government when all provinces except Bengal had ceased to send any revenue and the people of the capital itself were subject to continued lawlessness and anarchy. For Royalty the events centred around the murder of Alamgir II, the banishment from capital and power, of Ali Gauhar (Shah Alam II of the next reign) and 10 months reign of the crowned puppet Shah Jahan II. 'Horror is piled upon horror almost throughout the period but at the end the worst is over' with Sikhs establishing their rule over a large part of the Punjab and its people enjoying internal security and agricultural prosperity unknown for the last sixty years. Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Oudh


38 Ibid., pp.116-119, 149-150, 376-379.

upto Allahabad under British peace being on the verge of unprecedented revival of trade industry and agriculture after 'the unbroken anarchy of one full generation'. When Shah Alam II rode into the capital on 6th January, 1772, it happened to be exactly the close of the Muslim month of fasting and the eve of the Id rejoicings; it was also within three months of the beginning of the governorship of Warren Hastings the 'creator of British India'.

Volume III of the Fall of the Mughal Empire took double the time of the historian to write as against volume II because of the 'immensity, variety and confused character of the historical sources on which it is based'.

The sources in Persian, English and Marathi include Persian news letters collected by Claude Martin - running in 1500 manuscript pages, the invaluable memoirs of Faquir Khair-ud-din, the Persian secretary of the Anderson brothers (British residents with Sindia) running to a thousand pages. During the same period the historian collected and edited the despatches of the British Residents James Anderson, William Kirk Patrick and William Palmer under the title of Mahadil Sindhi and North Indian Affairs 1785-1794, historical papers.

40 Ibid., p. 398. J.N.Sarker quotes from Munna Lal's Tarikh-i-Shah Alam, 109-120 and Kale Akhbarat SPD XXXIX.
relating to the Gwalior State; 5 volumes edited by Parasins, papers relating to Mahadji Sindhia published by the Satara Historical Research Society, Poona Residency Correspondence edited by J.N. Sarkar and others, 14 volumes, Diliyeltil Narthvanchen Raikaranen or despatches of the Maratha envoys at Delhi, edited by Parasins, two volumes. The historian still lamented the dearth of French sources - except for the very short memoir of Rene Madec - and blamed De - Boigne's cosy chair in France and Perron's being a 'weaver's son who hated to touch a pen', for it. 41

Volume III of Fall of the Mughal Empire carries the history of the Mughal empire from the entrance of Shah Alam II into his capital in 1772, the tasks before the Delhi government through seventeen years of his rule to the 'bloody tragedy of 1789' the atrocities committed by Ghulam Qadir Rohilla, a 'dance of Demons for nine weeks' and the

41See J.N. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. III, Preface, iii.
end of the Rohilla chief. More than ever before the Mughal Monarch was now a mere tragic shadow over the empire' with his government transferred to a perpetual vicar (Regent). The most dominating figure now to be over the Delhi kingdom was that of Mahadji Sindhia, the last of the Maratha soldier - Statesman of genius. The regency ushered in a period of comparative peace and prosperity for Delhi and the districts that acknowledged the authority of

42 Ghulam Qadir Khan, the son and successor of Zabita Khan, his grand father Najib-ud-daula had been the regent of the empire for 10 years. Zabita Khan had roused Shah Alam's wrath and had been defeated, his two seats at Pathargarh and Ghasugarh had been sacked with every cruelty. Now was Ghulam Qadir's turn for avenging the wrongs; with his manly Afghan clans at his back, he claimed to be Qahar-i-Khuda (the scourge of God). He must 'abase into dust the cowards and lechers who soiled the throne of the empire of India'. Shah Alam was deposed and blinded, the princes flogged, princesses dishonoured, servants beaten till they died, the palaces turned upside down by digging for concealed treasure'. See J.N.Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol. III, pp. 295, 301-302, 307-308.

43 For Mahadji Sindhia's Regency, Fall III, 196-268, Mahadji's Policy and action during Ghulam Qadir's usurpation vindicated, pp. 302-304.
Military reorganization and economic development was fostered with the aid of French genius and industry.

In shouldering the regency a sense of patriotism appears to have weighed more than personal gains. Till middle of November 1784, all Mahadji's acts showed that he valued his solid new conquests in Malwa more than the empty dignity of the regency of an insolvent empire. Even when the emperor 'threw himself upon Mahadji's neck' and entreated him to save the state by undertaking to be its helmsman, the Maratha general hesitated for a full fortnight, till the hopeless disruption around him forced his hands and he at last realized that the guidance of such a realm could not be left to a child of three (the previous Mir Bakshi Afrasiab's son) with the Kashmiri servants of his household acting vicariously for him. Such a step would complete the downfall of the imperial power and bring the English to Delhi as the de-facto rulers in the guise of the emperor's keepers. Infact such a policy was being openly pursued under Mahadji's eyes by Major Browne, the British agent accredited to the Delhi court, "the very danger the Peshwa had been urging Sindia in letter after letter for past three years to do his best to avert it" See J.N.Sarkar, Fall, III, pp. 204-25.

See also Sir John Shore, the British Governor General's Minute on the death of Mahadji Sindha, "the intelligence from Poona, communicated through the suspicious channel of the Nizam, a short interval before Sindha's death imparts motives of this nature (i.e. of venturing upon a contest with the English power) which I cannot but deem conformable to the general character of his policy", Poona Residency Correspondence, Vol. II, Mahadji Sindha and North Indian Affairs, edited by J.N. Sarkar, Government Central Press, Bombay, 1936, pp. 400-401.

De-Boigne, Mahadji's French general not only reorganized the Maratha army along the European lines, he was also the first to settle European indigo planters in the Aligarh district...a single factory used to earn from 6 to 10 lakhs of rupees per year" (Indigo in Aligarh, Atkinson, N.W.P.Gaz, 472-473). Next to Indigo the most important export of De-Boigne's district was saltpetre in which India had a monopoly of the European market during the wars of the French Revolution. In 1794, this commodity alone fetched three lakhs of rupees a year. Both indigo and saltpetre were shipped at Farukhabad down the Ganges to Calcutta for exportation to Europe.
Malwa and to lesser extent Rajputana, apart from their domestic feuds, began to know peace.

The last volume on *Fall of the Mughal Empire* commences with the year 1789 and a survey of Mahadji Sindhia's problems and measures and closes with the extinction of the Mughal empire as a political institution in 1803. When after his 'eclipse' and Ghulam Qadir's end in 1788 Mahadji again became the 'controllor' of the Delhi empire, his position had been deeply weakened since even when he had first become the Regent four years back. The effect of anarchy was aggravated by a drought and famine that raged in Rajputana and western Hindustan throughout 1790-91, the meteoric rise of Ghulam Qadir having already evidenced that the anti-Maratha party at the Delhi court was very much active, now it was led by Ismail Beg, who led the mercenary foreign troops known as the Mughlais; he was not only the living champion of Muslim domination at the court but also the only hope of the Rajputs in building an anti-Maratha coalition. The worst however, was to come from 'home' itself. Tukaji Holkar, whose power had been eclipsed by Mahadji Sindhia's genius, continued cantankerous opposition, and Nana Padsis who sought to apply 'brakes' to Sindhia's rise after seeing 'the things of Delhi empire

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through his ears', displayed utter lack of statesmanship.\textsuperscript{47}

Infact, 'No policy could have been more blind or unpatriotic. This open sore drained away all the life and energy of the Maratha power in the Mughal dominions, it paralised the hands of Mahadji and made it impossible for him to impose Maratha suzerainty over north India as a generally accepted change'.\textsuperscript{48}

In the midst of it all, the stage was being set for the establishment of British paramountcy. In the 'ashes of Mahadji Sindhia's funeral pyre (12th February, 1794) perished also the hope of a Maratha empire in Hindustan'. The hereditary rivalry between Sindhia and Holkar houses culminated in the suicidal wars between Daulat Rao and Jaswant Rao - two persons who along with Peshwa Baji Rao II 'formed evil sufficient to ruin even a more established empire'.\textsuperscript{49} While the villainy of Ambaji Ingle, Mir Khan and others must have contributed each his quota,

\textsuperscript{47}J.N.Sarkar, \textit{Fall of the Mughal Empire}, Vol.IV, 4-6. "Infact Nana Padsnis, the dictator of the central Government of the Marathas, was jealous of Mahadji Sindhia's rise to the first place in the political world of India... he deliberately kept the Holkar-Sindhia quarrel open in order to weaken Mahadji..." Nana Padsnis lived blind to the moving outer world like the proverbial frog in the well... one cannot help feeling that Nana Padsnis 'wrong policy was due even more to his ignorance of north-Indian conditions''.

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 4-5

\textsuperscript{49}N.K.Sinha, \textit{Jadunath Sarkar Re-Read}, \textit{Bengal Past and Present}, Vol.XCII, July-December, 1973, Part II, Serial No. 174, p. 286, "Jaswant Rao Holdar was described by Ranjit Singh as a 'determined rascal' but all three deserve this description".
subdivisions of caste, rivalry between Shenvi and Desastha Brahmins might have weakened the military system, economic exhaustion and treachery of European military adventurers like Perron may have hastened the end but it was Maratha leadership that pranced to self-destruction as the protectors of the Mughal empire and as rivals of the rising power of the British. After Newri, Satwas, Baramati and Hadaspur, the outcome of the Anglo-Maratha contest at Lasvari and Assaye does not surprise a student of history—'the last

50 Mahadji Sindhia as a shrewd judge of men had maintained an admirable balance in his ministry by placing the civil administration in the hands of Desastha Brahmins and his army under Shenvi Brahmins—these two groups though theoretically branches of the same Brahmin caste, lived apart in their social relations beyond the possibility of uniting or even fraternising. After Mahadji's death the balance was upset and Aba Chitnis, his Chief Minister, courted Nana Fadnis' support against his Shenvi rivals and promised subservience to his policy of "making the Sindhias know their own place". See Fall, IV, 143-145; For Perron's duplicity, pp. 254-257 of Vol. IV of Fall of the Mughal Empire.

51 All these battles (Fall, IV, 202-224) are enlivened by J.N. Sarkar's masterly touch for detail and precision as well as punctent style. Thus, in the battle of Baramati between Peshwa Baji Rao II and Jaswant Rao Holkar (8th Oct., 1802) describing the cowardly flight of Peshwa's commanders and soldiers, he writes, "Nana Pundore, the Chitpavan Commander in Chief, was first in the race for safety and galloped away with his bare life, the second in command Pondoji Kunjar ran so blindly, that for three days after he could not be traced, to the intense grief of his worthy father Baloji, the favourite pimp of Baji Rao. The soldiers were worthy of such leaders".

Battle of Hadaspur (25th October, 1802) between Sindhia and Holkar—a decisive victory for Holkar.
fruit of civil war is the loss of national liberty'. It was by the treaty of Sarji Anjangaon on 30th December, 1803 that Daulat Rao Sindhia renounced all claims upon Emperor Shah Alam II. Lord Lake 'took care' not to sign any treaty with Shah Alam II. Whereas the latter had been legally the sovereign of the Regent - before whom even Mahadji Sindhia had prostrated and laid his head down on his feet before he was raised up and declared 'son of the emperor' - the emperor now was a British subject. No British Governor General ever interviewed the emperor of Delhi or required his formal letter of appointment. The immemorial practice of Indian princes seeking confirmation of their succession from the emperor of Delhi, was also set aside, the privilege now rested with the British. Even in the territory reserved for the emperor's support called the crownland or Delhi District, administration was carried out by the British Resident. The emperor henceforth had 'no revenue, law courts or troops of his own'. The treaty of Sarji Anjangaon of 30th December, 1803, 'marks the true end of the Mughal empire as a political institution. The Mughal emperor, however, remained a 'harmless fiction' for another 54 years when the very name of the Mughal dynasty was to be 'struck out from the pages of Time'.

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52 J.N. Sarkar, *Fall*, IV, 335-336.
53 Ibid., 337.
54 J.N. Sarkar, *Fall*, XIII, Preface, iii.
"The Mughal empire and with it the Maratha overlordship of Hindustan fell because of the rottenness at the core of Indian society. The rottenness showed itself in the form of military and political helplessness. The country could not defend itself, royalty was helplessly depraved or imbecile, the nobles were selfish and short sighted. Corruption, inefficiency and treachery destroyed all branches of the public service. In the midst of decay and confusion our literature, art and even true religion had perished". 55

By the 18th century 'Mughal civilization was like a spent bullet'. 56 Life of the majority of the subjects, the Hindus under Quranic polity had been exposed to political and social disability, deprived of 'light of knowledge, free exercise of natural activities, economic resources and use of opportunities'. 57 the outstanding exception of which being Akbar's reign. The inherent weakness of the Hindu society too exposed itself fully under the 'Hindu revival' during the rise of the Marathas - the intensification of orthodoxy

55 J.N.Sarkar, Fall, Vol. IV, 343-344.
burst forth in caste - bickerings - that humiliated a leader of the calibre of Shivaji, played no small role in the fall of Shambhuji and reinforced the civil war among the Maratha chiefs and degraded Hindu society in general. No patriotic or enlightened priesthood arose to check the 'separatist' tendency in their existent form of religion and society.

The Muslims in India too had declined and for a different reason: "The rigidity of Islam has enabled its followers in all lands to succeed upto a certain point. But there they have stopped, while progress is the law of life, of the living world." On the one hand Persia had ceased to be the spring head of Islamic culture with the degeneration of the Safawids by the end of the 17th century, on the other the Muslim in India was an 'exotic' and the orthodox


59Also See V.S.Kadam's, "The Privileges enjoyed by the Brahmins under the Later Peshwas", The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies, Vol.XII, 1972-73, No.3, pp.236-242. The Brahmins in Maharashtra considered all other castes as Shudras or as Ati Shudras and along with the Highest social status enjoyed by them, there were a number of religious, economical, and judicial privileges exclusively for them".

60J.N.Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 255.
Muslim ever felt that 'he was in India but not of it'. He still looked to Persia and Arabia for culture, language, literature; even Muslim civil and criminal law was incapable of growth and change unless reflected thus by work of the jurists in Baghdad and Cairo. It was not till about 1780 that they took Zaban-i-Hindavi or Hindustani, after desperate and ruinous attempts to cling to Persian, well evident by the literary barrenness and lack of spread of education during the period. Gibbon was perhaps not unreasonable in tracing the failure of the Muslims in their 'betrayal of reason'.

During the general decline the country had, ceased to produce leaders too with exceptions like Mahadji Sindhia, the solid evidence of it being the fact of our rulers Muslims and Hindus alike handing over the command to French, Portuguese and Eurasian adventurers and runaways from school to conduct war, 'the supreme test of a nation's efficiency'. The contact with the west was open but the

64 Such as George Thomas, Perron and James Skinner and others noticed by Bishop Haber in Journal 11, 342, quoted by J.N. Sarkar in Fall, IV, pp. 342-344.
only things imported by our rulers were those catering to luxury and vice, not European knowledge in science or technology.65

It was with the death of such an age and an 'empire' that middle ages in India were to end and modernization under the Pax Britannica shortly to begin, unlike Europe, limping back to light, nearly a thousand years after fall of the Roman empire. Hence 'the intellectual and moral regeneration of India' was to go down in history as 'the greatest glory of British imperialism', true nationhood however, could not be 'imposed upon a people by a decree of alien rulers', the British too failed to form a nation in India.66

Jadunath Sarkar's volumes of Fall of the Mughal Empire and his other works on the period, have had a wider appeal for the people in India and abroad, even today it is a subject 'neither dead, nor remote, nor alien', it records poignantly the defects of our national character and leadership that proved our undoing in 1803. "For those who seek to analyse how our national character influenced history, will

65 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, IV, p. 344.
66 Ibid., pp. 343, 347.
have enough to learn from the account". Also it is not
"wanting in the deepest instruction for the present... if
we wish to find out true solutions of the problems of Modern
India and avoid the pitfalls of the past". For those who
seek ammunition for propaganda of communal hatred in the
pages of history or charge the historian for bias against
Muslims, attention may be drawn to his account of Maratha
atrocities. For the historian hence, after defeat of the
Marathas at Panipat, "Delhi Government practically enjoyed
a respite from Maratha intrusion for another 11 years". Again, while describing Abdali's invasion of 1757, the
historian writes with deep pathos, "The blue waves of the
Jamuna gave eternal repose to such of her daughters as could
fly to her outstretched arms, some other happy women found a
nearer refuge from dishonour in the dark depths of the

67 N.K. Sinha, "Jadunath Sarkar Re-Read", Bengal Past and
Present, Vol.XCII, July-December, 1973, Part II,
Serial No.174, p. 284.
68 J.N. Sarkar, Fall of the Mughal Empire, Vol.I, Foreword, iii.
69 "The Marathas felled all the timber and fruit trees of the
gardens around Panipat... they employed the timber making
the retaining walls of the ditch and of the raised gun-
platforms. For want of fuel, they consumed the planks, beams
and doors of the houses, ruining the roofs and walls... Marbleslabs from the tombs of holy men were burnt in kilins
and turned into lime for their Pan (betal leaf)", Fall, II,
p.223, J.N. Sarkar quotes a noble of the city Shakir Khan on
the eve of Panipat.
70 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, II, p. 259.
household wells", 71 even the sixteen year old maiden daughter of emperor Muhammad Shah, who had earlier pronounced preference for death to marriage with Alamgir II, mainly on account of age-difference, 72 had no escape from being decked a bride for "the fierce Afghan of grandfatherly age, whose two ears had been docked and nose was rotting from a leprous carbuncle" 73 or when the self-proclaimed Qahar-i-Khuda (the scourge of God) 'the Champion of crescentade against the kafirs from the south, removed the gold coating of the cupola of the Jamia Masjid and sold it but was prevented from similarly stripping the remainder by Maniyar Singh, a condottiere chief in his army". 74 In these narratives no Hindu has a reason to feel proud of Maratha doings, no Muslim can find a cause for satisfaction in the victory of a fellow

71 Ibid., p. 83.

72 Hazrat Begum to Alamgir II, who demanded her hand in marriage, "I prefer death to such a marriage... I regard you as my father, and you too should look upon me in the same light as your three daughters. If you use force, I shall kill myself", J.N. Sarkar quotes Tarikh-i-Alamgir Sani, 67, 185-186, in Fall, II, 3.

73 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, II, 89-90.

74 Fall, III, 314, J.N. Sarkar quotes from Ibid, 158.
Muslim. Betrayal was the keynote of the period. The shame of it could not but touch the historian to the deepest core of pathos.

The historian of *Fall of the Mughal Empire* is 'on a more severe trial with regard to his balance of judgement and impartiality' - in making his award between the Mughals and the Marathas, the Jats and the Ruhelas, the Sikhs and the Afghans. Perhaps there is in general nothing much to choose from - except some illuminating and outstanding personalities in the dark jungle like the 'valiant and prudent' Surajmal, the hope of the Maratha empire in Hindustan, Mahadji Sindia.

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75 It was not communal instability that proved our undoing. When Pathan Nawab of Cuddapah murdered Nasir Jung and prepared the ground for French ascendency in the Deccan and when Mir Jafar, Yar Latif and Rai Durlabh betrayed Siraj-ud-daula at Plassy, they did something which was very consistent with the whole tenor of 18th century Indian history", N.K. Sinha, "Jadunath Sarkar Re-Read", *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol.XCII, July-December, 1973, Part II, Serial No.174, p. 286.

76 J.N. Sarkar to G.S. Sardesai in a letter dated 15th May, 1950. ('Sarkar-Sardesai Correspondence') *Life and Letters of Sir Jadunath Sarkar*, 263. "I have given the finishing touch to the last chapter of my *Fall of the Mughal Empire*. I can say that I have written it not with ink, but with my heart's blood - in saying so, I am not thinking of the personal sorrows and anxieties which have clouded the evening of my day, nor of the minute study and exhausting labour that had to be devoted to the subject in this terrible summer heat... but the subject matter of the last few chapters - the imbecility and vices of our rulers, the cowardice of their generals and the selfish treachery of their ministers. It is a tale which makes every true son of India hang his head in shame".
Najib-ud-daulah, who rose to the highest position in the realm by 'sheer ability and strength of character', Zakaria Khan, the just and vigilant ruler of Punjab, 'whose unselfish generosity rendered thousands of Indian homes happy' when he saved their members from the clutches of Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah Abdali, who was 'no unworthy heir to Nadir's empire and tradition, Marquess and Arthur Wellesley, the former as 'the statesman of marvellous vision, a man who took initiative' and the latter - the 'future conqueror of Napoleon' in whom the promise of future was already fully evident - all have places of their own in the estimate of the historian who admires efficiency, valour, tact and human virtues where ever they are found and never shuns credit where it is due.

In his overall treatment of the period and personalities, he like Thucydides appears 'calm and dispassionate, severely just and yet possessed of enough fire and firmness.
to admonish and inspire...”

It is in this light that when both Muslim Badshah and Hindu Pad-Padshah stand self-condemned in the perspective of history that standing at the ’misty dawn of a new age’ he welcomes ‘the intellectual and moral regeneration of India as the greatest glory of British imperialism’. However, if the historian shared the view of those who ’recognized a divine dispensation in the fall of the Mughal Empire’, he was also the one to be ’despaired of Indian political salvation ever coming from British hands’.

77 G.S. Sardesai, “Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him”, Life and Letters, p. 19; K.R. Qamungo (ibid, p. 72) puts it, “We cannot get rid of the element of opinion or bias – history is not an exact science but an interpretation of human affairs – opinion and varities of opinion intrude as inevitable factors. So bias there must be in Jadunath also whether he is aware of it or not... In his Fall of the Mughal Empire, his bias turns against the Marathas, particularly, the ruling Chitpavan Brahmns – ”hundred knots in one span” of a Brahmin having borne down the patience of the historian. The historian does not share the grief of Maharashtra after the catastrophe of the third battle of Panipat, because he has nothing to choose between the Peshwa and the Abdali... most of the Hindus feared worse rapacity and unblushing bad faith in the event of a Maratha victory... that Jadunath’s opinion or bias is ‘the right kind of opinion – broad – all embracing, philosophic, not a narrow kind that excludes half or more of reality, will be admitted by any sensible person who cares to glance over any piece of his writing. This bias has not affected an objective study on approved scientific basis. See also, G.M. Trevelyan, “Bias in History”, An Autobiography and Other Essays, p. 68.

78 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, IV, p. 349.

Like many other great historians and sages, Jadunath Sarkar believed in 'true history' being 'an object lesson to the people for all ages to come'.\(^80\) Thus, for him 'our immediate historic past... like a true tragedy to purge the soul... had the deepest instructions for the present... the light of our fathers' experience is indispensably necessary for guiding aright the steps of those who would rule the destinies of our people in the present'. It was with this purpose too, that 'the head long decay of the age old Muslim rule in India and the utter failure of the last Hindu attempt at empire building'\(^81\) was to be studied and analysed, for 'History when rightly read is a justification of providence, the revelation of a great purpose fulfilled in Time'.\(^82\)

Beveridge hailed Jadunath Sarkar as 'Gibbon of Hindustan' after reviewing his Fall of the Mughal Empire.\(^83\) The historian's deep erudition of the subject, the excellence

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\(^81\) J.N. Sarkar, Fall, I, Foreward, iii-iv.


\(^83\) Quoted in K.R. Qamungo's "Jadunath Sarkar as a Historian", Life and Letters, p. 71.
of his style in English and the masterly drawing of the researcher's thread in the historians' tapestry of the 'carpet of the evening twilight of our medieval history' impressed the 'greatest modern British authority on Muslim India', deeply enough to win such high praise. Yet the sincerity and fairness alone of Bevridge's judgement cannot make a Gibbon of Jadunath Sarkar in the estimate of the world at large – as eloquently expressed by K.R. Qanungo, "If Jadunath like Gibbon had written his epics of history in his own language, if he could have the advantage of Gibbon in having the raw materials dug out by generations of scholars before him, if decaying Delhi had been smouldering Rome and above all, if the historical knowledge of the present generation about Indo-Muslim history had been on a par with that of Gibbon's contemporary Europe, then only could Jadunath have had the scope to rise to the stature of a Gibbon. He could not afford to be picturesque without being suspected and challenged at every step". 84

It is from the historian too, that we learn of the hindrances on way to being a Gibbon in the context of fall of the Mughal empire when he wrote on 'Irvine as a Historian'. If Irvine's account of Later Mughals was a

84 Ibid., p. 71.
'mere narrative of events, without those reflections and generalizations that raise *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* to the rank of a philosophical treatise and a classic in literature... they forget that Indian historical studies are at present at a much more primitive stage than Roman history was when Gibbon wrote... we have yet to collect and edit our materials... premature philosophising based on unsifted facts... will only yield a crop of wild theories and fanciful reconstruction of the past like those which J.T. Wheeler garnered in his now forgotten *History of India* as the futile result of years of toil".  

Jadunath Sarkar's work on fall of the Mughals marks a distinctive progress of historical study since the days of William Irvine, in not being a 'mere narrative of events' but has not only brief references to general condition of the people and reflections worthy of the doyen of Indian historians, what lacked in the work, the historian was too well aware of, but it had to be left for the next generation to carry the work to 'perfection'. The study of the Mughal empire which he began in 1901 with *India of Aurangzeb* :  

Statistics, Topography and Roads was carried on for over half a century. Such a long survey based on hunting, sifting and often editing of original sources in different languages did impose certain limitations on the historian; it was not merely the 'trend of the day', as is sometimes held by his critics as well as admirers. Perhaps none was more aware than the historian who had started the study of Aurangzeb not with political, but topographical account and who in one sentence, had summed up the fall of the Mughal empire and of Maratha overlordship, "to the rottenness at the core of Indian society", when he himself acknowledged "A more serious defect is that the social and economic history of this long stretch of time has been crowded out of the present series, though I have made many short excursions into that field". Hence, the awareness of a vast hinterland

86  Fall of the Mughal Empire, 2nd edition, March, 1952.

87  N.K.Sinha, "Jadunath Sarkar Re-Read", Bengal Past and Present, Calcutta, Vol.XCII, Part II, No.174, July-December, 1973, pp.279-290. "We are now aware of the desiccation and sterility of political history. Was it so in 1901? the year of his first publication. But that phase of history writing appears to be almost over. But is it really so? If some historian takes it into his head to write on Dynamics of Politics in Mughal Court 1658-1803, he would be very much lauded in these days of sophistication".

88  J.N.Sarkar, Fall, IV, Preface, iii. His works on socio-economic and religious history, and general themes, include Studies in Mughal India, Studies in the Reign of Aurangzeb, India Through the Ages, Economics of British India, India of Aurangzeb, Its Topography, Statistics and Roads, Chaitanya's Life and Teachings, History of Dashnami Sect. These are analysed in chapters III and VI.
of social and economic history was very much there; but first thing came first - as topography came before political history - in the historian's treatment of history; the underlying idea of unity of conception and theme was not lost sight of.

No reader of his works will perhaps ever know his patience and thoroughness over search for detail and accuracy; how many manuscripts were closely scrutinised to establish a fact or how many different maps were consulted for one topographical detail. When the historian says 'the dates of thousands of laconic Marathi despatches had to be ascertained, their obscurities cleared, and the textual reading and arrangement of the Persian manuscript sources had to be corrected before a single page of my narration could be composed', we get only an inkling of it.

90 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, III, Preface, iii.
91 E.g. the Persian newsletters collected by Claude Martin and now preserved in the British Museum in two volumes, running to 1500 manuscripts pages, do not, except in the rarest cases, give the year and hence the owner had bound them by placing all the sheets of a particular month for these nine years, lumped together in one place in order of days of the month only! It was only after ploughing his way through these huge collections of reports and concentrating light on their contents from the three languages, Marathi, Persian and English that the historian was able to date and interpret this class of sources correctly. Again, to collate, his Khuda Baksh Library copy of memoirs of Khairuddin from a defective and wrongly arranged original, the historian had to spend two months at the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal and in the Society's manuscript too several folios had been placed out of order at the time of binding! See Fall, Vol. XXX, Preface, iii-iv.
The historian however, had reason to feel elated over the 'marvelous expansion of sources' during his life time's investigation of the subject. The records of the Central Government of India and the National Archives of France had at last been thrown open unreservedly to scholars besides starting their publication work. Bombay Government had also made available in print most of their Marathi records and English Residency Correspondence. Even the priceless Jaipur records of the Mughal times were being allowed to be read. What was more, advances in far cheaper reprography such as photostats, electrostats and micro-filming had brought the once most vigilently guarded documents from all over the world, within the reach of Indian libraries and even private scholars. The Indian Government's Survey Department had also started giving invaluable though little utilized aid to Indian historical study by publishing accurate and detailed maps of every part of India. All these facilities were 'beyond the dreams' of research workers when Jadunath Sarkar started and carried through his work. So when his last volume on Fall of the Mughal Empire went to press, the historian could well feel assured that the advancement in historical studies would lend 'solid support to his more fortunate successor in the next half century'.

92 J.N. Sarkar, Fall, IV, Preface, iii.
93 Ibid., Preface, iv.
A much limited work in scope and content for fall of the Mughal empire, in fact a misnomer, in that respect is Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals* (1951), that nonetheless sought to fill the gap in the "tale of the Empire's dying throes told with masterly clarity by Sir Jadunath Sarkar up to 1772". What Spear's work unfolds itself into - is actually a study of the city of Delhi and the adjoining territory 1761-1857, and is divided into three sections, the first dealing with the "emergence of the kingdom of Delhi until the British conquest in 1803, based largely on secondary authorities", the object being "to analyse and coordinate already available material" the kingdom, its resources, its degree of independence etc. are traced thus from the time when Afghans and Marathas 'swept over the empire' to the times it became a completely British

94 Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals*, 1951, reprint, Oriental Book Reprint Corporation, New Delhi, 1969, p.2. According to Percival Spear the gap consisted of the fate of citizens of Delhi, Jadunath Sarkar having concentrated more upon the fortunes of 'picturesque personalities' having found them 'more attractive than the citizens of Delhi'. A study of the volumes of *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, however, reflects the constant touch of the historian of fall of the Mughal Empire with its people rather than concentrating, like Spear on 'the Delhi City and Territory' alone, which highlights the glory of the British administration in the region by contrasting it with the anarchy in the same area during the last decade of the Mughal 'rule'.

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city after the war of 1857. The second section deals with the study of kingdom of Delhi under British administration 1803-57, and the third, with a number of topics (like the British life in Delhi, the Colebrooks case, the Fraser murder) ending with the Mutiny and its aftermath.

As Spear found, the city of Delhi, in fact, had always held a fascination for West in general and Britain in particular, as the most renowned city of entire East from Constantinople to Canton; it was also the destination of ambassadors and adventurers seeking concessions, wealth and glory in the great days of the empire. Fifty years after Panipat (1761), the power that had controlled it, decayed rapidly. In filling the political 'depression' both the Afghans and the Marathas failed; the former had 'war-like vigour and the financial sinews of war but lacked political cohesion', the latter possessed 'military skill' and 'political finesse', but lacked the 'necessary resources for

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95 Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughals, Preface, ix.

96 Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughals, p. 137. It is to such a spirit that we owe Franklin's History of the Reign of Shah Aulam and Daniell's engravings; according to Manucci, there were English men in Akbar's artillery service.
a continued effort'. Panipat revealed 'political bankruptcy' of the former and 'material poverty' of the latter. Hence, eventually the British were to be proved the residuary legatees of the unclaimed estate of Hindustan.

The once splendid province of Delhi had suffered not only from the disintegration of the Mughal empire but also from the rapacity, caused by imposition of power upon power - Persians, Afghans, Marathas, French officers and European adventurers. All administration had vanished and all that was 'left was the central authority at one end, collecting what it could, when it could and from whom it could'. In the villages it was ceaseless diplomatic and sometimes physical warfare between the government agents and the village representatives, the Mukaddams. The Delhi territory hence provided one of those virgin tracts for Pax-Britannica for the 19th century British administrators, 'to rule well, was to improve; to improve was to interfere'. In Spear's assessment, of the situation, the British were proved wrong in one assertion - they had thought that 'In India village had

97Percival Spear, Twilight of the Mughals, pp. 3-4.
98Ibid., pp.115-116.
99Ibid., pp. 84-96.
survived down the ages inspite of constant neglect by
governments - it had survived because of their constant
neglect,¹⁰⁰ is reflected not only a specific English view
point but is also a commentary on the nature of British
administrative modernization, what Jadunath Sarkar called
'orderly and mechanical',¹⁰¹, that could not have added to
the formation of a nation in India.

While there were some microscopic and scholarly
studies, on branches of the falling Mughal tree during the
historian's life-time by some of his outstanding pupils
like K.R.Qamungo, History of the Jats (Calcutta, 1925 ),
A.L.Srivastava, The First Two Nawabs of Awadh (Lucknow, 1933),
Shuja-ud-Daulah in two volumes (1945), Raghuvir Singh, Malwa
in Transition (Bombay, 1936), H.R.Gupta, History of the Sikhs
in three volumes (1939-44), Studies in the Later Mughal,
History of Panjab (Lahore, 1944), and by others like Sheik
Ali's, Haider Ali and Timu Sultan (1936), Yusuf Husain,
The First Nizam - The Life and Times of Nizam-ul-Mulk - Asaf
Jah I, Bombay, 1936, K.K.Datta, Alivardi and his Times
(Calcutta, 1963), Mahdi Husain, Bahadur Shah II (Delhi, 1958)

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 114.
¹⁰¹ J.N.Sarkar, Fall, IV, p. 343.

Some other works, though not dealing with the theme of fall of the Mughal empire in the entire scope and period as clarified by their titles, have nonetheless highlighted some of the significant causes of fall of the Mughals in recent researches and interpretations. A notable work in the direction is Satish Chandra, *Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court 1707–1740* (1959). Historically covering the same period as William Irvine, *Later Mughals*, the value of Satish Chandra's work lies not only in incorporating the fresh material on the subject that became available since the publication of Irvine's work in 1922, notably the mass of *Jaipur Akbharat*, records in the *Peshwa Daftar*, the letters of Qutb-ud-Daulah Abdullah Khan ( *Balmukand Namah*), the *Iqbalnamah* etc., but also the work being a study of nobility as an institution and its significant role in downfall of the Mughal empire, the position of various ethnic and religious factions in the nobility, basis of the rise and struggle of the parties at the court, its impact on rise of Marathas, Jats and other indigenous forces, on administration, their attitudes towards external foes like Nadir Shah, have all received due attention in the study of the period. The author closes his account at
1740, for "the Mughal nobility ceases to play a dominant role in shaping the politics of the country after the invasion of Nadir Shah." 102

Satish Chandra has traced the evolution of the institutionalised form of Mughal nobility to the political and economic developments in West Asia under Islam and the peculiar socio-economic condition of India that demanded a strong political authority. The institution played 'an extremely important role in the establishment, expansion and consolidation of the empire'. By the time Aurangzeb came to the throne, 'the successful working of the institution posed a number of economic and administrative problems', 103 to which 'no lasting solution could be found'. The crisis that assumed the form of an acute scarcity of Jagirs, had its origin in the agrarian and industrial failure to cope with the increasing requirements. On the administrative front the despotism of the Mughals would not allow the growth of a constitutional monarchy like that of England. The Mughal monarchs, hence, instead of symbolising stability, became the 'focus of intrigue against their own wazirs'. It was in such a situation that nobles like the Salyids took steps for placing only such monarchs on throne who might be 'amenable'.

102 Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, 1959, Preface, vii-viii, xv-xvi.
103 Ibid., xvi.
and leave the authority in the former's hands'. Such measures, however created jealousies and counter nobility factions. For the monarch, as was evident under Nazim-ul-Mulk's Wazarat, 'the only alternative to an all powerful wazir was the break-up ofthe empire'.

Hence, to Satish Chandra, "It appears unhistorical to ascribe to Aurangzib's religious policy, a major responsibility, for the downfall of the Mughal empire". More so, when the Jiziyah and other discriminatory practices were given up within six years after the death of Aurangzib. In the decline and fall of the Mughals, 'Individual failings and faults of character also played their due role, but they have necessarily to be seen against the background of these deeper, more impersonal factors'.

Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707), (Bombay, 1963), is a work on agrarian economy, administration and its social structure. This study of the material structure of the Mughal empire had its own interpretation as regards collapse of the Mughal empire. The

104 Ibid., p. 259.
105 Ibid., p. 265.
106 Ibid., p. 268.
author's survey of the peasantry and land, the village community, agricultural production, its trade, land revenue and the zamindars, revenue assignments and grants, material conditions of life of the peasantry, brings out that the Mughal empire had dug its own grave, on which Sadi's explanation of the fall of another great empire serves as an appropriate epitaph.  

The Mughal empire that spread over a sub-continent and was held united by a highly centralised administration, owed its great success to its cavalry that remained invincible till the Marathas found the answer in another method of warfare. There was a very close relation between the maintenance of Mughal cavalry, Mansabdars and the Jagirdari or assignment system. The latter made the former entirely dependent on the will and absolute power of the emperor. Even for the management of his jagir, rate of land-revenue and methods of its assessment and collection, he carried out

107 'The Emperors of Persia
Who oppressed the lower classes;
Gone is their glory and empire,
Gone is their tyranny over the Peasant'


108 Ibid., p. 297.
directions of the Imperial government. The Imperial policy of 'leaving the peasant only the barest minimum needed for subsistence' led to a contrast between the fabulous wealth of the rich and abject poverty of the common people, seldom found in Indian history. At the same time, there was 'some contradiction between the interests of the Imperial administration and the individual Jagirdar', the 'extent' of zamindar's share in the land revenue formed the major point of his conflict with imperial authorities. A jagirdar whose assignment was liable to be transferred any moment and who never held the same jagir for more than 3 or 4 years at the most, could never follow a far-sighted policy. On the other hand, his personal interests would sanction any act of oppression that conferred an immediate benefit upon him, even if it ruined the peasantry and so destroyed the revenue paying capacity of that area for all time. The corruption in administration rarely led to punishment of jagirdars and the punishments for the gravest acts of oppression committed by jagirdars were light. Hence the structural flaw of the system led to migration or flight so long as there was enough cultivable land or eventually to starvation and armed

109 Ibid., pp. 319-320.
110 Ibid.
111 Ibid., p. 297.
resistance. The present huge rural proletariat may not be entirely a heritage of the Mughal times, but the continued oppression of peasantry and the agrarian crisis destroyed the empire.  

M. Athar Ali, *The Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb* (Bombay, 1966) finds the crisis, in context of fall of the Mughal empire, as arising out of the creation of an unfavourable situation by nobility as an institution, inherent in the constitution to which passage of time and the long military involvement of Aurangzeb had greatly added. His Deccan involvement led not only to a great influx of the Deccanis (the Bijapurs, the Hyderabadis and the Marathas) into the Mughal aristocracy, for military and diplomatic purposes, they were also given extraordinarily high ranks, affecting adversely the recruitment and promotion of older sections, such a stage of scarcity eloquently of the depressed position of the Khanzads. The Marathas, practically insignificant a generation earlier, now outnumbered the Rajputs.  

112 Ibid., pp. 53, 329.  
113 Ibid., pp. 121, 350.  
115 Ibid., p. 173. Mamuri speaks eloquently of the depressed position of the Khanzads. The Marathas, practically insignificant a generation earlier, now outnumbered the Rajputs.
of jagirs too arrived when jagirs could not be given to those whom mansabs had been granted. The process eventually weakened the military strength of the empire, encouraged rebellions and carving of independent principalities by members of nobility. The nobility failed the Mughal empire in 'its failure to change and adapt itself to a new developing situation', and 'Aurangzeb's attempt to give a new religious basis to the Empire may indicate that he felt that a change was called for; but the complete failure of this policy showed that religious revivalism could be no substitute for a thoroughgoing overhaul of the Mughal administrative system and political outlook". 116

Waldemar Hansen, The Peacock Throne (1972) is a study of the collapse of the Mughal empire limited in period as well as in scope. The 'massive prose elephant' to quote the author, of 560 pages, draws attention essentially by the tales of horror and intrigue, betrayal revenge and nemesis with ample literary and historical illusions told in a masterly

116 Ibid., p. 174.
style. The work centres around the last two of the
'Great Mughals'. Shah Jahan who had the famous throne created
and Aurangzeb who proved its most determined aspirant. The
war of succession among the sons of ShahJahan did not merely
settle a family dispute over a crown, it was 'perhaps the
most decisive military engagement that had ever been fought
and lost... the disaster presaged three hundred years of
vital events: British conquest, the ultimate division of
Pakistan and India... medieval Mogul splendor had ended and
the so called Age of Akbar with its liberal coalition of
Moslem and Hindu, its fused nationalism in politics and art
was gone for ever: Aurangzeb would see to that. With the
end of all possible rivals for throne, the only factor to
threaten the stability of the usurped empire was the usurper
himself. Aurangzeb's rigid orthodoxy amounted to 'a form
of suicide,' especially in his dealings with the Jats, Satnamis,
Sikhs, Rajputs and Marathas. Driven by 'an unquenchable

Thus while Shahjahan is King Lear and something more,
Aurangzeb puts Richard III in shade. Dara is the 'doubt
ridden Hamlet and Jahanara fills the role of Cordelia.
Nurjahan in 'Modern Blunt idiom' is 'a scheming bitch'
Muntaz Mahal a 'Juliet' and a Monalisa combined, Raushanara
'a budding Messolina' and a 'Vindictive Salome'. Waldemar
Hansen, The Peacock Throne, 1st Indian reprint, Motilal

Ibid., p. 257.
Ibid., p. 453.
Ibid., pp. 453-463.
aggression', he broke down the two powerful dams of Deccan that had held back the mounting Maratha torrent of reaction. Also the Mughals under Aurangzeb had swallowed more than they could digest. Mughal tragedy ended where it began - the fateful Deccan - knowledge of it was to come at the very close of Aurangzeb's life, 'too late for him'. The growth of sacred Tulsi of the Hindus along with Saba a shrub sacred to Muslims, was not really a botanical mockery - they had found place together only on Aurangzeb's grave. With 18th century ensued the period of the 'The Great Anarchy' - India was exhausted and awaited a new conqueror.

J.F. Richards, Mughal Administration in Golconda (Oxford, 1975), is an attempt to "fill in a peculiar regional gap in his (J.N.Sarkar's) narrative". The work significantly

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121 Ibid., p. 395.
122 Ibid., pp. 486-487.
123 J.F. Richards, Mughal Administration in Golconda, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1975, Acknowledgements, vii. 'I have relied again and again on the writings of that master historian Jadunath Sarkar... he set the narrative frame for the late Mughal period virtually single handed. Because I have been trying to fill in a peculiar regional gap in his narrative, I am most aware of his skills. I am indebted in a similar manner to M.Athar Ali, Irfan Habib and I.H.Qureshi whose monographs have tutored me in the intricacies of the Mughal administrative system.'
adds a new dimension in explanation of fall of the Mughal empire, by reviewing it *from below* and in full awareness of the larger problems facing the empire. It brings out that at least in eastern Deccan the empire collapsed because of the failure of imperial management of affairs rather than due to any structural flaw of Mughal administration in itself. 124 The study includes, by way of background the Sultanate of Golconda, its agrarian system and is followed by chapters on political change and Imperial aggression in the Deccan, the procedure of conquest (1687-1688), the configuration of Imperial power, the regional aristocracy, fiscal organization, operation of the revenue system in Hyderabad (1690-1700), governorship of Prince Muhammad Kam Baksh, (1700-1707), the downward trend in the years (1707-1713) and Hyderabad under the last Mughal governor Mubariz Khan (1713-1724), a proto-dynastic figure. He reasserted 'the long-standing role of the ruler of Hyderabad city as the focus of power within the region and severance of nearly all meaningful administrative ties with the central administration of the empire.' 125 It was his legacy to the first Nizam Asaf Jah I, who but for a few formalities to centre, set forth an independent kingdom.

124 Ibid., pp. 306-311.
125 Ibid., p. 264.
J.F. Richards concludes that 'in the 17th century a realm of public order existed which was the responsibility of the state, not of private individuals or groups'. The Mughal conquest removed the pivot of Golconda's political system when it became an imperial province from a regional kingdom, 'replacement of the deposed monarch could never fill this loss'. More so when the Mughal emperor failed to consolidate his conquest of the region. Resources of the empire and energies of the emperor and his most reliable administrators were diverted to 'the larger goals of Aurangzeb in Deccan, and Mughal failure (in Hyderabad, Bijapur and the two Karnatiks) was not a failure of the administrative system, but a failure of its management'. Revenue of the territories of Bijapur and Golconda 'should have added an additional 23% or 53 million rupees annually to the total income of the empire'. The emperor had ignored the task of successful absorption of the two conquered kingdoms.

126 Ibid., p. 311.
127 Ibid., p. 71.
128 Ibid., p. 309.
129 Ibid., p. 311.
130 Ibid., p. 309.
Z.U. Malik, *The Reign of Muhammad Shah 1719-1748,* (Bombay, 1977) while commenting on decline and fall of the Mughal empire, has expressed the opinion. 'The source of the decline of the Mughal Empire, therefore, clearly lay in the decadence of its military and civil institutions',\textsuperscript{131} To stress the personal failings of the emperors as the major cause, is overlooking the basic defects of the existing institutions, the role of the ruling class and the socio-economic factors.\textsuperscript{132} Z.U. Malik appears in full agreement with Satish Chandra, as regards the remedy, that could have been effective "What was really required was the rapid expansion of industry and trade, introduction of new technology and removal of all barriers hindering that expansion,"\textsuperscript{133} and concludes with the remark, "failing in this direction was not of one individual - A king or noble, but almost of all classes that had been fastened to the chariot of the Imperial order."\textsuperscript{134}


\textsuperscript{132}Ibid., p. 140.


One could not single out political, religious, socio-economic or personality factor as the sole cause of the collapse of the empire. Mughal emperor as the pivot of the empire, however, remained not a mere 'personality factor' but got well merged with other factors too. Aurangzeb's religious policy was also 'in defiance of the laws of economics', if not 'an act of economic insanity'.

It can hardly be called 'unhistoric' in contributing directly or indirectly, in a significant way, to other major causes of the fall of the empire. The economic problems of the empire of Aurangzeb, which he bequeathed to posterity, were more often than not the indirect results of his religious policy. Aurangzeb's quarter of a century's campaign against

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135 J.N. Sarkar, History of Aurangzeb, Vol.III, pp.180-181. When on 9th May 1667, Aurangzeb abolished the customs duty altogether in case of Muslim traders, while on Hindu traders, it was retained at the old rate (5%) 'apart from the political immorality of favouring one creed above all others, the direct sacrifice of public revenue was very great and the real loss to state greater still as the Hindus traders, had now a strong temptation to pass their goods off as the property of Muslims, in collusion with the latter: the danger was not unknown to Aurangzeb, as this very ordinance warns the local officers to guard against such fraud' (Mirat-i-Ahmadi ), pp. 272, 280.

136 Anees Jahan Syed, Aurangzeb in Muntakhab-Al-Lubab, Introduction, xxxii. Imposing Jizya was 'an act of economic insanity which Aurangzeb considered a part of religion'.

the Marathas and the Shias of Deccan apart from the rebellions in the north, with the accompanying lawlessness destroyed agriculture, industry and trade, so vividly recorded by Bhimsen, Mannuci, F.Martin and others, and drained the economy in a most durable manner. Even when Aurangzeb's religious policy with its discriminatory measures was 'abandoned within half a dozen years after his death', it had already alienated majority of the subjects of the empire and sucked the economy dry. In retrieving the situation his successors met with as much success as they did in other directions.

In those days, India was not like England on way to a constitutional monarchy, 'social forces' in the direction being 'far too weak'. If it is accepted that 'the only alternative to an all powerful wazir was the break of the empire', it was because the deeper and impersonal factors, including the agrarian and the administrative crisis rested largely with the personal factor - the man at the helm of affairs - to impel, devise, contract, adapt and improve or

138 Satish Chandra, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court, 1707-1740, pp. 239-260.
let the matters deviate or drift. Had there been strong and capable rulers, a faction controlling the Mughal emperor or the Mughal emperor intriguing with another may not have been a regular feature of the period after 1707. 'All classes' were no doubt 'fastened to the chariot of the Imperial Order'; the direction, in those days, however, rested with the charioteer, more than anyone else.

In the midst of it all, the estimate of Jadunath Sarkar's work on the fall of the Mughals, made nearly 25 years back, still holds good. It remains a unique work of its kind. He had not only carried the 'narrative' of Irvine to 1803 but had also acquired the 'position' to philosophise on 'ascertained and unassailable facts'.

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139 Mughal India had not been sealed against the west, specially since the middle of the 17th century there had been considerable commercial exchange between India and England and the choice of what to import, rested with our ruling classes. "None cared for European knowledge, no printing press, not even the cheapest and smallest lithographic stone was installed by the Mughal Emperors or the Peshwas. They imported only what catered to their luxury and vice", J.N. Sarkar, Fall, IV, p. 345.


141 The Statesman (Calcutta), May 20th, 1958, Obituary, p.4, col. 7. "His was the first attempt to reconstruct the story of fall of the Mughal empire with the copious use of Persian, Marathi, English, French, Hindi and Sanskrit sources and his knowledge of India during this period was probably unequalled among scholars".
social and economic history, to which he could only make valuable 'excursions'; he had but to leave to his 'more fortunate successor in the next half century' to weave in the narration - with immense mass of sources dug and edited for him. There has been, no doubt, a good number of fine spinners, another master-weaver is yet to be. For the entire period of fall of the Mughal empire, it is none but Jadunath Sarkar alone who comes closest to the description: "A giant standing on a mountain top in isolated grandeur while entire races, kingdoms and centuries pass in view before his eyes and his reader shares this majestic survey under his guidance". 142

142 Jadunath Sarkar on Gibbon in *Patna University Convocation Address*, 29th November, 1930, Patna, 1930.