

A Critical Evaluation of the Economic Aspect of Deccan Policy under Aurangzeb

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Abstract

Contrary to the adverse economic consequences, Aurangzeb's Deccan policy proved very productive also. This is borne out by the fact that the economic reforms started by Murshid Quli Khan and Aurangzeb in the Deccan during Shahajahan's period were adopted by the British later. Thomas Munro, introduced the Ryotwari system in the Mughals. And the circulation of the silver coins by the existing economic system of the Mughals. The circulation of the silver coinage became very popular in the South. It led to the establishment of many Mughal mints in that province. Uniformity of the currency strengthened the feeling of unity among the people of India. The influx of gold coins from the South to North India played an important role in checking the price rise, because during the time of Shahajahan, the difference between Jama and hasil was 100 : 25 p.c. but it decreased to 100:67 in the time of Aurangzeb. This was became possible only because of the wealth acquired from the Deccan. One of the far reaching consequences of Aurangzeb's Deccan was that the Mughal economic resources continued to survive under the British. The Deccan policy under Aurangzeb was not his own product but the changing circumstances determined it. His Deccan policy started the expansionist Mughal policy initiated by Akbar. This fully supports the statement of Abdul Fazl who remarked that the conquest of the neighbours or their subordination was essential for the safeguard of the Mughal empire itself.

Introduction: The deccan policy of the Mughal emperors was the product of the changing circumstances and pressing factors such as the administrative structure of the empire,¹ the position of the nobility,² the safeguard of the state by maintaining a large and well equipped army,³ the variance between Jama and Hasil⁴ and preventing the arrogance of the ambitious Mughal nobles.⁵

A careful study of the situation of the Deccan policy during Aurangzeb's time indicates that it had tremendously changed from the time of his predecessors⁶ and now the emperor was forced to complete and to adopt an expansionist policy in the Deccan.⁷ These new elements may be summarized as the rise of an anti-Mughal power in the form of the Marathas.⁸ Bijapur and Golconda established their relations with the Mughals⁹ and Marathas keeping in mind their own interests,¹⁰ the difference between Jama and Hasil which was 52:100 in the South and 67:100 in the north, the award of high mansab to the nobles who had joined Aurangzeb after war of succession. For overcoming these economic problems.¹¹ Aurangzeb wanted to enhance the economic resources of the empire.¹²

Deccan Policy Under Aurangzeb: For the convenience and proper understanding the Deccan policy of Aurangzeb is divided into two distinct phases:

First Phase (1658-59-1680 AD): Immediately after his coronation in 1659 AD, Aurangzeb appointed Shaista Khan, the subedar (governor) of the Deccan to look into its affairs. He succeeded in bringing Poona, Chakan, Kalyan etc, under his dominion in 1661-62 AD and the failure of the Mughals to check him completely led to the removal of Shaista Khan. He was succeeded by Mirza Raja Jai Singh in 1665 AD. He won Shivaji on his side¹³ and attacked Bijapur in the same year but he too proved incapable. The other nobles, who succeeded him also equally failed to bring the situation upto satisfaction level till 1685 AD.

The main causes of the annexation of Golconda were the claims of Golconda on the Jagir of Mir Jumla in Karnataka and the opulence of Coromondal coast. These two economic factors¹⁴ played very significant role in determining Aurangzeb's relation with Golconda. The other political and contributing factor was the assistance extended to Shivaji by its ruler Abdullah Qutub Shah in 1665-66 AD and his son Sultan Hasan the following year.¹⁵

Second Phase (1681, 82 – 1707 AD): The second phase started with the march Emperor Aurangzeb in person in 1681- 82 AD and taking the command of the Deccan in his own hands.¹⁶ The reasons which forced the emperor to do so were the economic losses that the empire was suffering from the last twenty years and consecutive failure of the Mughal campaigns.¹⁷ To establish law and order which was being deteriorated periodically due to the plunder of different areas by the Deccanis, it was now essential to grant Jagirs to the Mughal officers in the Deccan. This assumption is corroborated by F. Bernier's statement which read as "Deccan as the food for the army of Hindustan."¹⁸

On account of the annexation of Bijapur in 1686 AD¹⁹ and that of Golconda in 1687 AD, the emperor got an extensive territory.²⁰ As a consequence the Mughal territorial limit increased from 95,998 Sq. Mile to 3,46,459 Sq. Mile which amounted 27.7% of the total Mughal empire.²¹

Subsequent to the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda, the main task before Aurangzeb was to suppress the Marathas completely. For the same task, he started his aggressive policy and captured Kavi Kalash and Shambhaji in 1689 AD. Following the death of Shambhaji in the same year, Tara Bai and Raja Ram kept the struggle against the Mughals alive, though they failed to achieve much success but the imperial authority also failed to subdue them completely. In this state of chaos and confusion, Emperor Aurangzeb died on 2 March, 1707 AD in the Deccan.

Findings: Thanks to Aurangzeb's Deccan policy, the number of mansabdars of rank 1,000 Zat and above, increased many fold. In the frisk, the total number of such mansabdars was 58, but from 1679 to 1707 AD, it reached 160.²² It led to the creation of new Jangirs to settle the financial affairs of these mansabdars. On the other hand, the size of the available Jagirs became much smaller.²³ Besides, the ratio between Jama and Hasil reached 100:52. The total income during this period is estimated around

3,17,00,19,814.32 dams/year.²⁴ But on account of the rapid increase in the number of mansabdars, the expenses to be incurred on their payments reached 3,49,56,00,000 dams/year.²⁵ Thus, the expenses on the sawars from the actual income of the Deccan was more than 32,55,80,105.32 dams/year or 8,13,95,036.32 Rs./year. This constituted the most devastated consequence of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy.²⁶ It enhanced the economic crisis of the Mughal empire.²⁷ This disturbed the smooth running of the apparatus of the empire which had been under control for about last two centuries.

Contrary to the adverse economic consequences, Aurangzeb's Deccan policy proved very productive also.²⁸ This is borne out by the fact that the economic reforms started by Murshid Quli Khan and Aurangzeb in the Deccan during Shahajahan's period were adopted by the British later.²⁹ Thomas Munro, introduced the Ryotwari system in the Mughals and the circulation of the silver coins by the existing economic system of the Mughals.³⁰ The circulation of the silver coinage became very popular in the South.³¹ It led to the establishment of many Mughal mints in that province.³² Uniformity of the currency strengthened the feeling of unity among the people of India.³³ The influx of gold coins from the South to North India played an important role in checking the price rise,³⁴ because during the time of Shahajahan, the difference between Jama and hasil was 100 : 25 p.c. but it decreased to 100:67 in the time of Aurangzeb.³⁵ This became possible only because of the wealth acquired from the Deccan.³⁶ One of the far reaching consequences of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy was that the Mughal economic resources continued to survive under the British rule.

To Conclude: the Deccan policy under Aurangzeb was the outcome of the changing circumstances determined it. His Deccan policy started the expansionist Mughal policy initiated by Akbar. This fully supports the statement of Abdul Fazl who remarked that the conquest of the neighbors or their subordination was essential for the safeguard of the Mughal empire itself. The critical analysis of the economic aspect of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy indicates that the administrative structure in which there was shortage of Jagir had which necessity Aurangzeb to initiate such a policy. Conclusively, his Deccan policy led to the foundation of an all India administrative, political and cultural system.

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