

Comparative Challenges of Imperial Expansion and Colonial Rule

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Empire, Expansion, and the Problem of Governing Diversity

An empire basically entails a central state that has a hold on diverse areas and populations. Empires rise and spread as their power gets strengthened but they do fall as soon as they lose control over the territory or is conquered by someone else. As these empires are large they are usually reduced to much smaller political and manageable units named provinces.

While comparing the rise and development of the empires, we viewed some history and came up with some similarities and differences. Cyrus the Great, having hold over the Achaemenid Persian Empire, developed significantly in less than 30 years and reached its greatest extent within 75 years. In the sixth century, the Roman Republic came into being, but on the other hand, the Roman Empire didn't reach its greatest extent till 117CE. Certain reasons came up as a cause of rise and growth. The Achaemenids ' Persian empire was built mostly through the defeat of the military. The Maurya Empire in India combined religious conversions, political sabotage and military defeat in order to increase its tenure of rule. (Said, 1978) In an aggressive society, the Romans did not come to conquer the place, but they got involved in many wars. After defeating enemies as a reward for loyalty, Romans offered them citizenship to some extent. Alexander the Great is known as one of the greatest empire builders in history. The growth of his empire within no time set an example for everyone of how one small state can be turned into a huge empire. Depicting the way in which situations and events elsewhere in the central state play a role in the state's success in building an empire. Philip II of Macedon, also known as the father of Alexander, ruled from 359 BCE to 336 BCE- he was a talented commander in the army and king. He created the platform for the victories of Alexander over Persia. He used threats, bribery, and warfare to make his kingdom secure. Plus, without his understanding and willpower, Alexander would not have been highlighted in the industry.

When we talk of the fall of the empires, we basically mean that the principal government did not implement its extensive power. This situation happened because the government was terminated, or the government's power was reduced as parts of the country became independent of the control. As kingdoms are complicated and big, when we hear about their fall, there must be multiple reasons rather than one cause.

Financial, Social, Ecological, and Political Pressures on Imperial Rule

Major issues historians suggested were:

- Financial issues
- Societal and ethnic issues
- Ecological issues
- Governmental issues

Reviewing the history, before the conquest of Alexander, Achaemenid Persia had internal conflicts plus the kingdom remained integral for the fourth to fifth centuries BCE. Conversely, the reality of the internal divisions made Persia helpless to intruders eager to make Persia out of the territory.

Alexander of Macedon occupied the Persian Empire in 334 BCE, but in 330 BCE, Darius III, the Persian King, died, rumoured to have been murdered by one of his generals. Alexander took over the power of Persia and gave the charge to all the institutions and officials to manage his massive empire. Hence, we can observe that Alexander was taking over as a new ruler and securing the Persian Empire instead of destroying the Persian state. After the death of Alexander in 323 BCE, he was without any heir. So, the empire was distributed among the generals, and thus, at that point, Persia collapsed and was replaced by multiple competing states. This division was done within years.

So, the main factors that played a vital role in the fall of Achaemenid Persia were military and political factors. Political divisions made the empire weaker militarily. During the reign of the Guptas, they had control of a large empire in the northern area of India, which lasted from 320 CE to 550 CE. From 450 CE onwards, the Kingdom of Guptas was exposed to assaults in the northwest region of the Kingdom from Hephthalites- known as White Huns. Such unending invasions made the Gupta's military and its financial resources weak thus leading to the long process of decline.

External Invasion and the Decline of the Gupta Empire

A continuous grudge against the White Huns made the Gupta Empire lose a great area of its territory by 500 CE. The Empire of Gupta compelled the Huns to leave the territory in 528 CE. However, the fiscal impact of the loss of territory and a long period of fighting made the Empire of Guptas tired and weak. Within the next several decades, many regions were taken away from the control of the Empire of Gupta plus the Vakataka Kingdom and Malwa, and the neighbouring states became more powerful. Till 550 CE, the empire of Gupta didn't exist, but a small area of the empire sustained for another decade. This Empire of Gupta is an illustration of the regal downfall where the dominant government still was not in a state to exercise its authority plus affect an inadequate region. The

scenario can be compared with the Empire of Western Roman, whose latter king was compelled to move beyond the authority, eradicating the municipal of Romans.

Factors that were seen as major causes of the empire of Gupta were mainly economic and military. The financial issues were the result of many challenges the military of the empire faced. (Osterhammel, 2005) This led to political issues as the state lost the region and deteriorated.

Furthermore, other issues include Culture. British culture was forced on colonists, whereas they banned, forgotten, and ignored the original culture. The economy, being one of the issues for colonists, decreased as the profit earned from the goods was taken to Britain. Soldiers of the colonies, for the sake of Britain, struggled and perished. Without the empire, the soldiers would not have expired or even fought. Religion was one of the sensitive causes. The preachers who came along with the Empire compelled Christianity on the colonists, banning the exercise of various religions. Disease, along with the British, brought new viruses to other or far-living colonies, and a great lot of people died due to unawareness. Theft became one of the issues as the empire took charge of the assets and area of the colonies, resulting in the death of many native tribes like Aborigines. Similarly, Slavery was also one cause. Slaves, which were Africans, were sent to America to be sold.

References

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