

Firearms in Mughal India

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Summary

During the 16th century, firearms played a transformative role in Indian warfare, considerably enhancing the effectiveness of the Mughal army. The introduction of muskets and artillery by Babur in 1526 revolutionized military strategies, giving the Mughals a decisive advantage in battles and sieges. The Mughal army's structure, particularly under Akbar's *Mansabdari* system, centralized control and ensured a loyal, efficient military force. This technological and organizational superiority enabled the Mughals to consolidate power over diverse regions through a combination of military might and diplomacy. By the 17th century, there was a significant change in rebellions as firearms started being used by peasants. This shift in weaponry fundamentally altered the nature of these uprisings, empowering the peasantry in new ways to resist authority. Multiethnic regional powers also recognized the importance of firearms, acquiring them from the Mughals or Europeans, and employing them effectively in battles. In the mid-18th century, the Marathas and later the Mysore Sultanate took a notable step by establishing arms factories and engaging European experts to produce advanced firearms. This marked a departure from the past, where regional powers typically relied on the Mughals or European companies for firearm procurement. This shift toward domestic arms production signaled a move toward greater self-sufficiency and the development of advanced firepower. By the 18th century, the Mughal Empire was in decline, and multiethnic regional powers and European colonial forces, equipped with advanced firearms, challenged and eventually overshadowed Mughal dominance.

Keywords: [army](#), [battle](#), [firearms](#), [gunpowder](#), [military](#), [musket](#), [Mughal](#), [rocket](#), [South-Asia](#), [war](#)

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