



After the Tughluqs, the Sayyid and Lodi dynasties ruled from Delhi and Agra until 1526. By then, Jaunpur, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, Rajasthan and the entire south India had independent rulers. They had established flourishing states and prosperous capitals. This was also the period when new ruling groups from Afghans and the Rajputs emerged.

Zahiruddin Babur founded the Mughal empire in India. In 1526, Babur defeated the Lodi Sultan Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat and captured Delhi and later Agra. His famous successors were Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. From the later half of the sixteenth century they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the seventeenth century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent. They imposed structures of administration and ideas of governance that lasted even after their rule. For most of the time Red Fort in Delhi was the residence of Mughal emperors. Now the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on Independence Day from the old walls of the Red Fort in Delhi.

Who were the Mughals ?

From mother's side Mughals were descendents of **Genghis Khan** (died 1227), ruler of the Mongol tribes, China and central Asia. From father's side they were the successors of **Timur** (died 1404), ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern day Turkey. The word 'Mughal' is a variation of the word 'Mogul' which is derived from the Persian word 'Mongol'. The Mughals did not like to be called Mughal or Mongol. The name of Genghis Khan was associated with the massacre of innocent people. However, they were proud of being descendents of Timur whose son **Miran Shah** was the great-great grandfather of Babur.

Mughal Military Campaigns

Babur had inherited the small central Asia kingdom of Farghana. He succeeded to the throne of Farghana when he was only 12 years old in 1494. He soon lost his kingdom to warring Mongol tribe, the

Uzbegs. After years of wandering he seized Kabul in 1504. In 1526, he defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi and his Afghan supporters at Panipat and captured Delhi and Agra. One of the main reasons of his success was use of cannons which Lodi had none. In 1527, he defeated Rana Sanga, Rajput ruler and allies at Khanua. In 1528, he defeated the Rajputs at Chanderi. He defeated the Afghans in the Battle of Ghaghra. Thus, he quickly established his power from Delhi-Agra to Bihar. He ruled from 1526 to 1530.

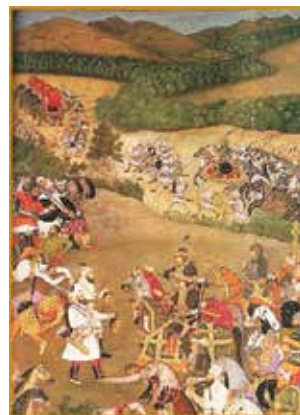
Humayun (1530-1540, 1555-1556) divided his inheritance according to the will of his father. His brothers were each given a province. But they were not satisfied with their lot. His brother Kamran weakened Humayun's cause against Afghan competitors. Sher Khan defeated Humayun in Chausa (1539) and Kanauj (1540), forcing him to flee to Iran. He received help from the Safavid Shah of Iran and recaptured Delhi in 1555; but died in 1556.

Sher Khan, after defeating Humayun in 1540, became the emperor of Delhi with the name **Sher Shah Suri**. He established the Suri dynasty. He built the Purana Quila in Delhi. He died in an explosion in 1545. His weak successor ruled until 1555. Although the Suri dynasty ruled for only 15 years, it introduced an extremely well administration. It borrowed elements of administration from Alauddin Khalji and made them more efficient. Sher Shah's administration became the model followed by the great emperor Akbar (1556-1605) when he consolidated the Mughal Empire.

Akbar (1556-1605) was 13 years old when he became emperor. Bairam Khan was his regent. In 1558, Akbar became independent of Bairam Khan and others. He launched military campaigns against the Afghans, Malwa, Gondwana and Uzbegs. He also suppressed the revolt of his half-brother Mirza Hakim. In 1568, he seized the Sisodia capital Chittor and in 1569, Ranthambor. From 1570 to 1585, military campaigns in Gujarat were followed by campaigns in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. From 1585 to 1605 campaigns were launched in North-west (Qandahar, Kashmir, Kabul) and Deccan (Berar, Khandesh and parts of Ahmadnagar). At the time of Akbar's death, the extent of his empire stretched from Kabul in the north-west, Kashmir in the north, Bengal in the east and beyond Narmada river in the south. This area was comparable in size to the territory of Mauryan empire 1800 years before.



Akbar



Mughal Army on Campaign



Army with cannons

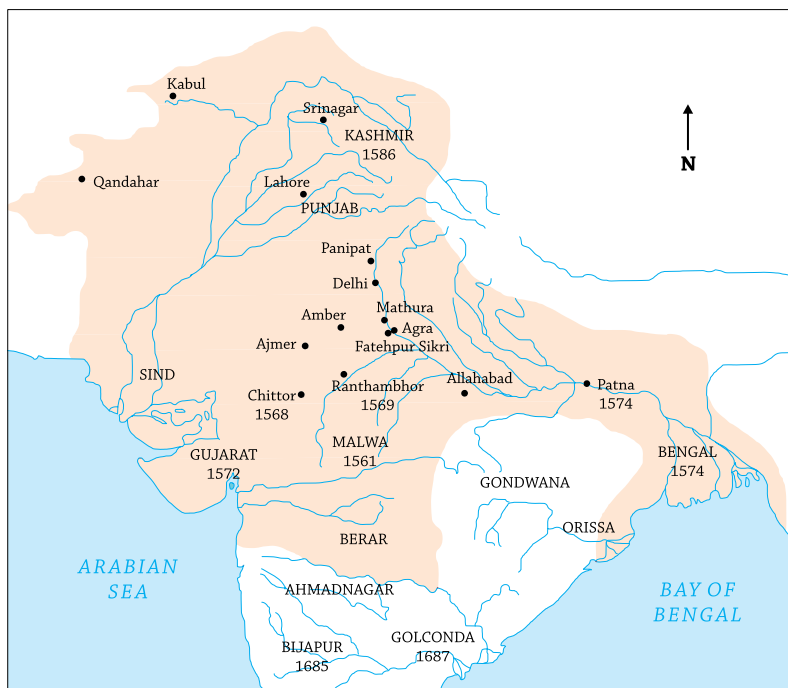


Mughal empire at the death of Akbar (1605)

Jahangir (1605-1627) continued the military campaigns. The Sisodiya ruler of Mewar, Amar Singh, accepted Mughal service. Less successful campaigns against the Sikhs, the Ahoms and Ahmadnagar followed. Prince Khurram rebelled in the last years of Jahangir's reign.

Shah Jahan (1627-1658) continued campaigns in the Deccan. The Afghan noble Khan Jahan Lodi rebelled and was defeated. Bundelas were defeated and Orchha seized. In the north-west, the campaign to seize Balkh from the Uzbegs were unsuccessful and Qandahar was lost to the Safavids. In 1632, Ahmadnagar was annexed and the Bijapur forces sued for peace. In 1658, Aurangzeb, his son, seized the throne by killing his two brothers, chasing his another brother out of India and imprisoning his own father, Shah Jahan.

Aurangzeb (1658-1707) continued the military campaigns. The Ahoms in the north-east were defeated in 1663. However, they rebelled again in the 1680s. Campaigns in the north-west against the Yusufzai and the Sikhs were temporarily successful. Rathores of Marwar rebelled.



Military campaigns under Akbar and Aurangzeb

Campaigns against Maratha chieftain Shivaji were initially successful. Prince Akbar rebelled with the support of the Marathas and the Deccan Sultanate. At last he fled to Safavid Iran. Bijapur was annexed in 1685 and Golconda in 1687. He personally managed campaigns against the Marathas who started guerrilla warfare.

Mughal Traditions of Succession

Mughals followed the Timurid custom of inheritance, to divide among all the sons. After they came to India, some of them tried to follow the Hindu system of inheritance that the eldest son inherited the father's kingdom. The controversy led to the rebellions by Mughal princes to occupy their part or the whole like Aurangzeb.



Mughal Relations with Other Rulers

The Mughals campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority. Once they defeated these rulers, Mughals treated them honourably. Many times they gave the conquered land (*watan*) as assignments (*jagir*). Sisodiya Rajputs are one example of this who fought with Mughals for a long time. The Mughal behaviour with the defeated ruler invited other rulers to join Mughals voluntarily. Some of them married their daughters into Mughal families.

Mughal Administration

The main source of income of Mughal rulers was tax on the produce on the peasants. Akbar's revenue minister, Todar Mal, surveyed crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10 years period, 1570-1580. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed on each crop in cash. Each province was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was known as *Zabt*. The land in Gujarat and Bengal, however, could not be surveyed. In most places, peasants paid taxes through the rural elites, the headman or the local chieftain, both called *Zamindars* by the Mughals.

Basic feature of imperial Mughal administration was the *mansabdari* system. *Mansab* in Persian means an office, position or rank. It was a part of army administration. It had spared the Mughal monarch from administrative duties and ensured its functional utility. It had also ensured to check the possible challenge of nobility, particularly of Afghan-Turkish origin and of ulemas. They also recruited administrators from Iranians, Indian Muslims, Rajputs, Marathas and other groups. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as mansabdars. It made the Mughal emperor the ultimate authority in all matters. It ensured efficient administration and religious toleration. Under this system graded ranks were given to commanders supplying sawars or cavalrymen upto 5000. The rank for **commanders** supplying above 5000 sawars were reserved for members of the royal family or princes. The *mansabs* were generally divided into 33 grades ranging from 10 to 10,000 horsemen, the rank being decided by the emperor.

A *mansabdar* means an individual who holds a mansab, meaning a position or rank. It was a grading system to fix rank, salary and military responsibilities. Rank and salary were determined by a numerical value called *Zat*. The higher the *Zat*, the more prestigious was the noble's position in court and the larger his salary. The military responsibilities of a *mansabdar* required him to maintain a specified number of sawars or cavalrymen. A *mansabdar* would progress to a higher level depending on the number of *sawars* supplied. In return they were given both civil and military duties and maintain troops which could also be used by the emperor whenever he wished.

A *mansabdar* received his salary as cash or revenue assignments called jagirs, somewhat like *iqtas*. But unlike *muqtis*, most *mansabdars* did not



A mansabdar on march with his sawars

actually reside in or administer their *jagirs*. They themselves served in some other part of the country. Their revenue was collected by their servants. The Mughal emperor also treated Rajput chiefs as *Zamindars*. They received high ranks only when they served the Mughal court loyally. They were given additional assignments generally outside their homelands called *watans*. This enabled the Mughal emperors to wield enormous power.

But the emperor was not entirely dependent on the *mansabdars* for troops. He also maintained an elite group of troops, so the *mansabdars* could not exploit him, as happened in the past.

In Akbar's reign there were 29 *mansabdars* with a rank of 5000 Zat. By Aurangzeb's reign the number of *mansabdars* had increased to 79. It meant a long wait before they received a *jagir*. Many *jagirdars* tried to extract maximum revenue while they had a *jagir*. Aurangzeb was unable to control this situation. Exploitation of *Zamindars* by Mughal administrators could drive them to revolt. These revolts challenged the stability of the Mughal Empire, from the end of the seventeenth century.

There was a *Kotwal* (town police commander) to protect the citizens from the thieves and other criminals.

Sources of Mughal History

Baburnama (autobiography of Babur), biography of Humayun by Gulbadan Begam, *Akbarnama* (biography of Akbar) and Tuzak-i Jahangiri (autobiography of Jahangir) give us information of the Mughal rule. Out of these *Akbarnama* is the longest, written by Abul Fazl, a courtier and close friend of Akbar. *Akbarnama* has three volumes. The first volume dealt with Akbar's ancestors and the second volume recorded the events of Akbar's reign. The third volume is called the *Ain-i-Akbari*. It deals with Akbar's household, administration, army, revenues and geography of his empire. It gives numerical details of crops, yields, prices, wages, revenues, etc. It also narrates the traditions and culture of the people living in India.

Case Study : Akbar's Administration and Policies

At higher level the empire was divided into provinces called *subas*, each *suba* governed by a *subadar* who carried out both political and military functions. Each province also had a *diwan* (financial officer). For the maintenance of peace and order, the *subadar* was supported by *faujdar*s (military commanders), *bakhshi* (military paymaster), town police commander (*kotwal*), *sadar* (the minister in-charge of religious and charitable patronage).

Nur Jahan's Influence in Jahangir's Court

In 1611, Jahangir married Mehrunnisa, daughter of a noble at Akbar's court. He was attracted by her wit, intelligence and beauty and gave her the title of Nur Jahan (Light of the World). As a mark of honour

Jahangir struck silver coins bearing his own titles on one side and on the other the inscription 'struck in the name of the Queen Begum, Nur Jahan'. Later Nur Jahan was promoted to the status of Padshah Begum. When Jahangir fell ill, she administered the empire with the help of her father, her brother and prince Khurram (later Shah Jahan). Her name appeared on all farmans (orders) along with the imperial signature. After Jahangir's death Nur Jahan retired from court life.



Nur Jahan

Akbar's court was adorned by nine gems—people who were highly learned and distinguished in their respective fields of activity—literature, music, wit, revenue, military, medical, etc. Akbar also discussed religious matters with *Ulemas*, *Brahmanas*, Jesuits and Zoroastrians. He introduced the idea and policy of *sulh-i-kul* or universal peace. He focused on a system of honesty, justice and peace for all. He abolished the *jaziyah*, pilgrim tax and the practice of forcibly converting prisoners of war to Islam.

The Mughal Empire in the Seventeenth Century and After

The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity. It was all based on the revenue that was high percentage of the produce of the peasants and artisans. Therefore, the luxury was prevalent with the nobles and elites, merchants and bankers, big peasants and artisanal groups. At the same time the pitiable poverty of the remaining population most of which were hand to mouth. They were not in such a position that they could increase productivity by purchasing some tools and get supplies of the seeds or raw material.



(a) A corrupt officer receiving a bribe A tax-collector punishing poor peasants Shah Jahan on his Peacock Throne

[The above figures are details from a miniature painting from Shah Jahan's reign depicting corruption in Jahangir's administration.]

In the twentieth year of Shah Jahan's reign, 61.5 per cent of total revenue was expended on 5.6 per cent of the total number of mansabdars as their salaries and their troopers' salaries. The enormous wealth and resources commanded by the Mughal elites made them an extremely powerful group in the late seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century the provinces of the empire had consolidated them

independent political identities also like Hyderabad and Awadh. This was because the authority of the Mughal emperor was slowly declining.

In Other Parts of the World

Akbar's near contemporaries in other parts of the world were the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth (1558-1603), the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas (1588-1629), Russian ruler (Zar Ivan Vasilyevich (1530-1584) and ruler of Ottoman Turkey, Sultan Suleyman (1520-1566). These all were great monarchs.

During the rule of Suleyman, the Ottoman state expanded into Europe, seizing Hungary and besieging Austria. His armies also seized Baghdad and Iraq. Much of north Africa, all the way into Morocco, accepted his authority. He also had a strong navy, both in the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian Sea. He passed large number of laws to standardise administrative procedures and to protect the peasant from forced labour and extraordinary taxes.



Key Words

- » Zabt : calculation of revenue on the basis of crop yields, prices and area of cultivation for a 10 year period.
- » Zamindars : local headmen of villages or powerful chieftains.
- » Mansab : position or rank.
- » Mansabdar : holder of a mansab.
- » Zat : a numerical value to determine rank of a mansabdar.
- » Jagirs : revenue assignments.


SUMMARY

- ▶ Zahiruddin Babur founded the Mughal empire in India in 1526.
- ▶ From mother's side Mughals were descendents of Genghis Khan and from father's side they were the successors of Timur.
- ▶ Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb were famous Mughal emperors.
- ▶ From the later half of the sixteenth century they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi until in the seventeenth century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent.
- ▶ The main source of income of Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasants.

Exercise Time

A. Tick (✓) the only correct choice amongst the following :

1. The First Battle of Panipat was fought in the year
a. 1526 b. 1536 c. 1527 d. 1537
2. Akbarnama was written by
a. Babur b. Abul Fazl c. Jahangir d. Akbar
3. The kotwal was the
a. Governor b. Military Commander c. Town police commander d. None of these

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4. Akbar discussed religious matters with
 - a. Ulemas
 - b. Brahamanas
 - c. Jesuits
 - d. All of these
 5. From father's side the Mughals were successors of
 - a. Genghis Khan
 - b. Timur
 - c. Afghans
 - d. None of these

B. Fill in the blanks :

1. Akbar was only _____ years old when he became the emperor.
2. The word 'Mughal' is a variation of 'Mogul' derived from Persian word _____.
3. Shah Jahan was imprisoned by _____.
4. The great-great grandfather of Babur was the son of _____.
5. The word 'Nur Jahan' means the _____.

C. Match the Following :

- | | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1. Nur Jahan | a. rank |
| 2. Mongol | b. governor |
| 3. Sisodiya | c. Uzbek |
| 4. Rathor | d. Mewar |
| 5. Subadar | e. Jahangir |
| 6. Mansab | f. Marwar |

D. Write true (T) or False (F) against the following statements in given brackets :

1. Humayun divided his inheritance according to the will of his father.
2. Mansabdars were given administrative assignments generally outside their homelands.
3. The ranks for commanders supplying above 5000 sawars were reserved for Rajputs.
4. Birbal was the author of Akbarnama.
5. Akbar abolished Jaziya tax on non-Muslims.

E. Define the following terms :

1. Zabt
2. Zamindars
3. Mansab
4. Diwan

F. Answer in one word or one phrase :

1. Name the founder of Mughal Dynasty in India and year of founding.
2. Who was the successor of Akbar ?
3. Give the total number of Mughal emperors who ruled India upto 1707.
4. Who was the Afghan who defeated Humayun and rose to the throne ?
5. Who was made Akbar's regent ?

G. Answer these questions briefly :

1. Why did the Mughals emphasise their Timurid and not their Zenghis descent ?
2. How did Babur capture the throne of Delhi ?
3. What was the relationship between the mansabdar and the jagir ?
4. What was the role of the Zamindar in Mughal administration ?
5. How important was the income from land revenue to the stability of the Mughal empire ?

PROJECT WORK

- On an outline map of india shade and label the territory of present day India ruled by Akbar.