

The Mughal Empire

Babur (1526-1530) was the first Mughal emperor, who became the ruler of old Delhi by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526. From the latter half of the 16th century, the Mughals expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the 17th century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent. The legacy left by them stands unparalleled.

Who were the Mughals?

The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side, they were descendants of Genghis Khan and from the father's side, they were the descendants of Timur.

Mughal Military Campaigns

- Babur, the first Mughal emperor, captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the Battle of Panipat.
- Humayun captured Delhi back in 1555.
- Akbar captured Chittor (1568), Ranthambor (1569), Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Kashmir, Berar Khandesh, etc. (1585-1605).
- Jahangir took campaign against Sikhs and Ahoms.
- Shah Jahan captured Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.
- Aurangzeb waged a long battle in the Deccan.

Mughal Traditions of Succession

- The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate.
- They followed the custom of coparcenary inheritance or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.

Mughal Relationships with other Rulers

- The Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority.
- But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily. The Rajputs served the Mughals voluntarily.
- Mughals gave mansab and jagirs which helped them to expand their territories.
- The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry.

Akbar's Policies

- Akbar's works are found in the book Akbarnama written by Abul Fazal.
- Akbar divided his kingdom into provinces called subas governed by a Subedar.
- Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue.
- While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri, he started a discussion on religion with the ulemas, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics and Zoroastrians.
- The discussions took place in the ibadat khana.
- It led Akbar to the idea of Sulh-i-kul or universal peace.
- Shah Jahan and Jahangir also followed this principle.
- Akbar realized those religious scholars emphasized rituals and dogmas were often bigots.
- Abul Fazl, one of the Akbar's friends and courtiers wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled Akbar-nama.

The Mughals Empire in the 17th Century and After

- The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity.
- The Mughal emperors and their mansabdars spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods.
- Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs.
- The main source of income to Mughal rule was the tax received on the produce of the peasantry.
- The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this economic world.
- Primary producers, however, lived in poverty.
- By the end of the 17th century, the authority of the Mughal Empire declined which gave rise to many independent provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh.

The Mughals were great rulers. They created a huge empire. From the latter half of the 16th century, they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the 17th century they controlled nearly all the subcontinent.

The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan, ruler of the Mongol tribes, China and Central Asia. From their father's side they were the successors

of Jimur, the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern day Turkey. However, the Mughals were proud of their Jimurid ancestry.

Babur was the first Mughal emperor, He became the ruler of Delhi by defeating Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat in 1526. He also established his control over Agra. But he could not rule for a long time. After his death in 1530, his son Humayun became the second Mughal emperor.

Sherkhan defeated Humayun at Chausa in 1539 and Kanauj in 1540 forcing him to flee to Iran. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 with the help of Safarid Shah but died soon afterwards.

Akbar became the emperor of Delhi at the age of 13. He was very competent and soon began to handle the entire empire successfully. In 1568 he seized the Sisodiya capital of Chittor and in 1569 Ranthambhor. During the period 1570-1585 he started military campaign in Gujarat which was followed by campaigns in the east in Bihar, Bengal and Orissa. During the period 1585-1605 Akbar expanded his empire.

Jahangir became the emperor in 1605. He continued the military campaigns started by Akbar.

After Jahangir Shah Jahan took the control of the Mughal Empire. He continued Mughal campaigns in the Deccan.

Aurangzeb's reign ranges from 1658 to 1707. His campaign against Maratha Chieftain Shivaji was very important. Initially, Aurangzeb got success. But soon Shivaji declared himself an independent king after being insulted by Aurangzeb. He also resumed his campaigns against the Mughals.

From 1698 Aurangzeb personally managed campaigns in the Deccan against the Marathas who started guerrilla warfare. Aurangzeb also faced the rebellion in north India of the Sikhs, Jats and Satnamis.

The Mughals followed the Mughal and Timurid custom of Loharcenary inheritance or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.

One of the major policies of the Mughals was to campaign constantly against rulers who refused to accept Mughal authority. However, several rulers joined them voluntarily. Many Rajputs married their daughters into Mughal families to gain high positions. But at the same time there were many Rajputs such as the Sisodiya Rajputs, who resisted the Mughal authority.

The Mughal Empire was expanding to different regions. Hence, the Mughals recruited diverse bodies of people. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as mansabdars. These mansabdars held a mansab, meaning a position or rank. Rank and salary of the mansabdars were determined by a numerical value called zat.

Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs.

In Akbar's reign these jagirs were carefully assessed so that their revenues were roughly equal to the salary of the mansabdar. By Aurangzeb's reign this was no longer the case. The actual revenue collected was often less than the granted sum.

The main source of income available to Mughal rule was tax on the produce of the peasantry.

Akbar's revenue minister was Todar Mai. He carried out a carefully survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10-year period, i.e. 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 crop. This revenue system was known as zabt.

Abul Fazl, one of the Akbar's friends and courtiers wrote a three-volume history of Akbar's reign, titled Akbar Nama.

Abul Fazl explained that the empire was divided into provinces called subas, governed by a subadar.

The subadar carried out both political and military functions. Each province also had a financial officer or diwan.

Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue. By the end of the 17th century these nobles became independent..

During the 1570 Akbar started discussions on religion at Fatehpur Sikri with the ulama, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman catholics and Zoroastrians. These religious discussions led Akbar to the idea of Sulh-i Kul or 'universal peace',

Akbar's son Jahangir followed his father's policy of Sulh-i kul.

Mehrnuiza married the Emperor Jahangir in 1611 and received the title Nur Jahan. She was very supportive to the monarch.

The Mughal Empire exercised a great deal of influence and power. But by the end of the 17th century the authority of the Mughal Empire declined which gave rise to many independent provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh.

Genealogy: History of generations of one's family in sequence. '

Mansabdar: An individual who holds a mansab meaning a position or rank.

Zat: Ranks and salary were determined by a numerical value called Zat.

Jagir: Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called Jagirs. Zamindars. The headmen or the local chieftain.

Zabt: Each province during Mughals was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was called

as Zabt. Suba and Subadar. The empire was divided into provinces called Subas which were governed by a Subadar who carried both political and military functions.

Diwan: The financial officer of a Suba was called as Diwan.

1237: Genghis Khan died.

1404: Jimur died.

1526-1530: Reign of Babur. He captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire.

1539: Sher Shah defeated Humayun at Chausa.

1540: Sher Shah again defeated Humayun, this time at Kanauj.

1555: Humayun recaptured Delhi

1556: Akbar became the Mughal Emperor at the age of 13.

1568: Akbar seized Sisodiya capital of Chittor

1569: Akbar seized Ranthambhore

1605-1627: Jahangir ruled over Delhi as the Mughal emperor

1627-1658: Shah Jahan reigned over Delhi.

1632: Ahmadnagar was annexed by Shah Jahan

1658-1707: Aurangzeb reigned over Delhi.

1685: Aurangzeb annexed Bijapur

1687: Aurangzeb annexed Golconda

1698: Aurangzeb campaigned in the Deccan against the Marathas.