

## NCERT Notes: Emperor Akbar (1556-1605)

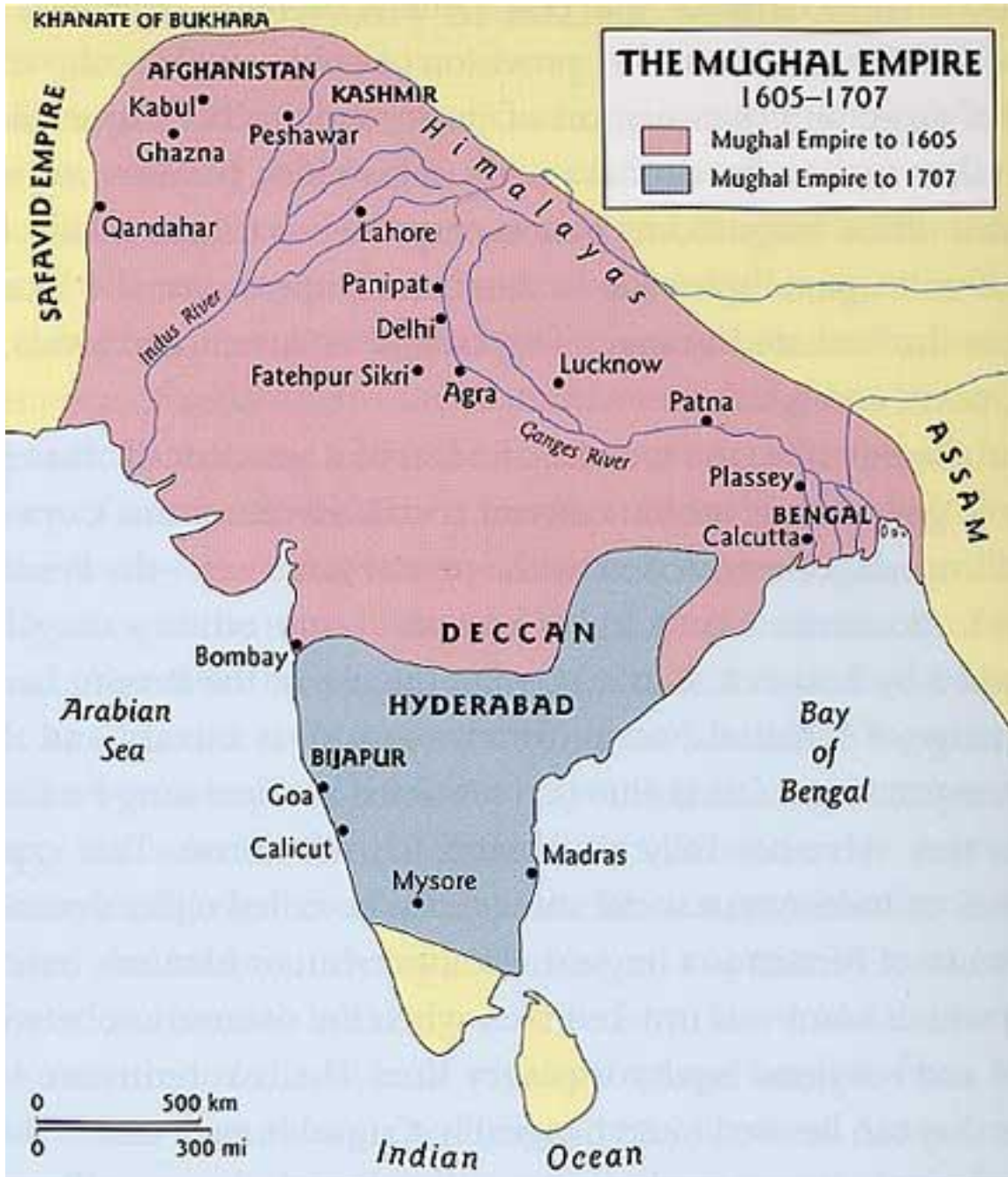
Abu'l-Fath Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar was one of the mightiest emperors during the Mughal era. With a strong personality and a successful general, Akbar gradually enlarged the Mughal Empire to include much of the Indian subcontinent. His power and influence, however, extended over the entire subcontinent because of Mughal military, political, cultural, and economic dominance.

This article gives all relevant information about the events during the reign of Akbar like his religious policies, relationship with other Indian kingdoms, etc.

### Age of Akbar [Consolidation of the Mughal Empire]

#### **Akbar (c. 1556 - 1605 CE)**

Akbar was one of the greatest monarchs of the Mughal dynasty. He was the son of Humayun and Hamida Banu Begum, born at Amarkot in c. 1542 CE. When Humayun fled to Iran, young Akbar was captured by his uncle Kamran, but he treated him well. Akbar was reunited with his parents after the capture of Qandahar. When Humayun died, Akbar was at Kalanaur in Punjab, commanding operations against the Afghan rebels there. He was crowned at Kalanaur in c. 1556 CE at the young age of 13 years and 4 months.



During the first few years of Akbar's reign (c. 1556 - 1560 CE), Bairam Khan acted as his regent. Bairam Khan was Humayun's confidante and gained the title of Khan-i-Khanan.

- Bairam Khan represented Akbar in the [Second Battle of Panipat](#) (c. 1556 CE) with Hemu Vikramaditya (wazir of Adil Shah of Bengal) who led the Afghan forces. Hemu was almost on the point of victory but an arrow pierced his eye and he became unconscious. His army fled and fortune favoured the Mughals.

- During the regency period of Bairam Khan, Mughal territories were extended from Kabul up to Jaunpur in the east, and Ajmer in the west. Gwalior was also captured.
- Bairam Khan emerged as the most powerful noble and started appointing his own supporters on important positions neglecting the old nobles. This caused resentment among other nobles who managed to influence Akbar as well. The growing arrogance of Bairam Khan also aggravated the problem. Akbar removed him and gave him the option of serving at the court or anywhere outside it or retiring to Mecca. Bairam Khan chose Mecca but on his way was killed by an Afghan at Patan near Ahmedabad. Bairam's wife and his young child were brought to Akbar at Agra. Akbar married his widow and brought up Bairam's child as his own who later became famous as Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, a noted Hindi poet and an influential noble.
- Akbar had to face rebellions from many groups and individuals in the nobility. This included his foster mother, Maham Anaga and her relations, particularly her son, Adham Khan. In c. 1561 CE, Adham Khan defeated Baz Bahadur and emerged victorious at Malwa. Adham Khan followed his victory at Malwa with an almost total massacre of the defending army, women and even children and sent only parts of the booty to Akbar. Removed from command, he laid claim to the post of wazir and when this was not granted, he stabbed the acting wazir in his office. Akbar was enraged and threw him down from the Agra Fort.

Uzbeks (Central Asian nobles) held important positions in eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Malwa. Between c. 1561- 1567 CE, they broke out in rebellion several times. Meanwhile, a rebellion by the Mirzas, who were Timurids, also turned against the emperor. Encouraged by these rebellions, Akbar's half-brother, Mirza Hakim, who had seized control of Kabul advanced into Punjab and besieged Lahore. The Uzbek rebel nobles declared Mirza Hakim as the emperor of Hindustan. However, by sheer grit, determination and a certain amount of luck, Akbar overcame these rebellions. Mirza Hakim was forced to flee to Kabul and the rebellion of the Mirzas was crushed, while the Uzbeks were completely routed by c. 1567 CE.

#### Early expansion of the Empire (c. 1560- 1576 CE)

Akbar conquered northern India from Agra to Gujarat and then from Agra to Bengal. He strengthened the north-western frontier. Later, he went to the Deccan.

#### Conquest of Gwalior, Malwa and Gondwana

- The first expedition was sent to capture Gwalior (c. 1559-1560 CE) before moving towards Malwa.
- Adham Khan, son of Akbar's foster mother, Maham Anaga defeated the ruler of Malwa, Baz Bahadur (c. 1561 CE). Due to the senseless cruelties of Adham Khan and his successor, there was a reaction against the Mughals which enabled Baz Bahadur to recover Malwa. After successfully dealing with a number of rebellions, Akbar sent another expedition to Malwa. Baz Bahadur had to flee and he took shelter under the Rana of Mewar. Later he moved from one

place to another and finally surrendered at Akbar's court and was appointed as a Mughal mansabdar. Thus, Malwa came under the Mughal rule.

- The kingdom of Garh-Katanga (Gondwana) included the Narmada Valley and the northern parts of present-day Madhya Pradesh. The kingdom consisted of a number of Gond and Rajput principalities. It was ruled by Durgavati, the Chandella princess from Mahoba and the widow of Dalpat Shah, son of Sangram Shah. She ruled the kingdom with great vigour and courage. Meanwhile, the cupidity of Asaf Khan, the Mughal governor of Allahabad was aroused by the stories of the splendid wealth and beauty of Rani Durgavati. In c.1564 CE, he attacked Gondwana; Rani Durgavati fought bravely but lost the battle. She stabbed herself to death and Gondwana was captured by Asaf Khan. Akbar later restored the kingdom of Garh-Katanga to Chandra Shah, the younger son of Sangram Shah, after taking ten forts to round off the kingdom of Malwa.

### Conquest of Rajasthan

Akbar was well aware of the importance of the Rajput kingdoms and wanted them as allies in order to establish a large empire. The Rajput policy of Akbar was notable. He married the Rajput princess Jodha Bai, daughter of Raja Bharamal of Amber. He inducted Rajputs into Mughal services and many of them rose to the position of military generals. Bhagwant Das, son of Raja Bharamal was appointed joint governor of Lahore, his son Man Singh was appointed the governor of Bihar and Bengal.

Akbar's military conquests in Rajasthan-

1. The Rajput kingdoms Merta and Jodhpur were captured without much resistance.
2. A major step in his campaign against the Rajput states was the siege of Chittor which was considered a key to central Rajasthan. In c. 1568 CE, Chittor fell after a gallant siege of 6 months. At the advice of his nobles, Rana Udai Singh retired to the hills, leaving the famous warriors - Jaimal and Patta in charge of the fort. When the Mughals stormed the fort, a large number of Rajput warriors (~30,000) were massacred.
3. The Ranas of Mewar continued to defy despite several defeats. In the famous [Battle of Haldighati](#), Rana Pratap Singh, ruler of Mewar was severely defeated by the Mughal army led by Man Singh in 1576.
4. After the fall of Chittor, Ranthambhore (the most powerful fortress in Rajasthan) and Kalinjar were conquered. As a result of these successful conquests, most of the Rajput Rajas, including those of Bikaner and Jaisalmer submitted to Akbar. By c. 1570 CE, Akbar had conquered almost the whole of Rajasthan.
5. In spite of the subjugation of the whole of Rajasthan, there was no hostility between the Rajputs and the Mughals. Akbar's Rajput policy was combined with broad religious toleration. He abolished the pilgrim tax and the practice of forcible conversion of prisoners of war. In c. 1564 CE, he abolished the jizya which was often considered a symbol of Muslim domination and



superiority. The Rajput policy of Akbar proved beneficial to the Mughal empire as well as to the Rajputs. The alliance secured to the Mughal empire the services of the bravest warriors in India. The steadfast loyalty of the Rajputs became an important factor in the consolidation and expansion of the empire.

### **Conquest of Gujarat, Bihar and Bengal**

- Since the death of Bahadur Shah, Gujarat was in a state of confusion. Also, the Mirzas who rebelled against the Mughal rule had taken refuge in Gujarat. Akbar did not want Gujarat which was a rich province to become a rival centre of power. In c. 1572 CE, Akbar advanced on Ahmedabad via Ajmer and defeated Muzaffar Shah, the Gujarat ruler without much resistance. Akbar built the Buland Darwaza at Fatehpur Sikri to celebrate the win of Gujarat. Akbar then turned his attention to the Mirzas who held Broach, Baroda and Surat. In a short span of time, most of the principalities of Gujarat were brought under Mughal control. Akbar organised Gujarat into a province and placed it under Mirza Aziz Koka and returned to the capital. However, just within six months, rebellions broke out all over Gujarat. Hearing the news, Akbar quickly marched out of Agra and reached Ahmedabad in just ten days. He defeated the enemy and suppressed the rebellion (c. 1573 CE). After this, Akbar turned his attention to Bengal.
- Bengal and Bihar were dominated by the Afghans. They had also captured Orissa and killed its ruler. Internal fights among the Afghans and the declaration of independence by the new ruler, Daud Khan, gave Akbar the excuse he was seeking. Akbar first captured Patna and then returned to Agra, leaving Khan-i-Khanan Munaim Khan in charge of the campaign. The Mughal forces invaded Bengal and Daud Khan was forced to sue for peace. However, he soon revolted and in a stiff battle in Bihar in c. 1576, Daud Khan was defeated and executed on the spot. This ended the last Afghan kingdom in Northern India. It also brought an end to the first phase of Akbar's expansion of the empire.

### **Rebellions and further expansion of the Mughal Empire**

Around c. 1580 - 1581 CE, Akbar had to deal with a series of rebellions, particularly in Bengal, Bihar, Gujarat and the northwest. The main cause of the rebellion was the strict enforcement of the *dagh* system or branding of the horses of the jagirdars and strict accounting of their income. The discontent was further aggravated by some religious divines who were unhappy at Akbar's liberal views, and his policy of resuming the large revenue-free grants of land which had been obtained by them sometimes illegally. The rebellions kept the Mughal empire distracted for almost two years (c. 1580 - 1581 CE).

- Due to the mishandling of the situation by local officials, Bengal and almost the whole of Bihar passed into the hands of the rebels who proclaimed Mirza Hakim (who was in Kabul) as their ruler. Akbar sent a large force under Raja Todar Mal and Shaikh Farid Bakshi, and brought the situation in the east under control. Raja Man Singh and Bhagwan Das offered a stout defense to Mirza Hakim's attack on Lahore. Akbar crowned his success by marching to Kabul (c. 1581

CE). Akbar handed over Kabul to his sister, Bakhtunissa Begum and later on, Raja Man Singh was appointed governor of Kabul and it was handed over to him as jagir.

- Abdullah Khan Uzbek, the hereditary enemy of the Mughals, had been gradually gaining strength in Central Asia. In c. 1584 CE, he overran Badakhshan which had been ruled by the Timurids and next, he was aiming at Kabul. Mirza Hakim and the Timurid princes who were ousted from Badakhshan now appealed to Akbar for help. Akbar sent Man Singh to Kabul and himself moved to Attok on the river Indus. Akbar wanted to block all roads to the Uzbeks, so he sent expeditions against Kashmir (c. 1586 CE) and against Balochistan. The whole of Kashmir including Ladakh and Baltistan (called Tibet Khurd and Tibet Buzurg) came under the control of Mughals.
- Expeditions were also sent to clear the Khyber pass which had been blocked by the rebellious tribesmen of Roshanai. The sect was established by a soldier called Pir Roshanai and his son Jalala was the head of the sect. In this expedition, Akbar's favourite, Raja Birbal lost his life. But the tribesmen were gradually forced to submit.
- In c. 1590 CE, the conquest of Sindh opened the trade down the river Indus for Punjab. By c. 1595 CE, Mughal supremacy was established over the northwest region. Akbar stayed at Lahore till c. 1598 CE when the death of Abdullah Uzbek finally removed the threat from the side of the Uzbeks. The consolidation of the northwest and fixing a frontier of the empire were two major contributions of Akbar.
- After the consolidation of the northwest region, Akbar turned his attention towards the affairs of eastern and western India, and the Deccan.
  - In c. 1592 CE, Raja Man Singh, the Mughal governor of Bengal conquered Orissa which at that time was under the control of Afghan chiefs.
  - He also conquered Cooch-Bihar and parts of East Bengal, including Dacca.
  - Mirza Aziz Koka, the foster brother of Akbar, brought Kathiawar in the west under the domain of the Mughal empire.
  - In c. 1591 CE, Akbar adopted a policy of aggression towards the Deccan and sent an expedition to the Deccan under the command of Prince Murad (who was the governor of Gujarat) and Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan.
  - In c. 1595 CE, Mughal forces invaded Ahmednagar and Chand Bibi (who was the sister of the deceased Sultan Burhan) was defeated.
  - After huge losses, an agreement was signed and Chand Bibi ceded Berar to the Mughals. After some time, Chand Bibi tried to regain control over Berar with the help of Adil Shahi and Qutab Shahi.
  - The Mughals suffered huge losses but could retain their position.
  - Meanwhile, differences grew between Prince Murad and Abdul Rahim Khan Khanan that weakened the Mughal position.
  - Akbar recalled Khan Khanan and deputed Abu Fazl to the Deccan.
  - After Prince Murad's death in c. 1598 CE, Prince Daniyal (youngest son of Akbar) and Khan Khanan were sent to the Deccan and Ahmednagar was again captured.

- Soon, Mughals also captured Asirgarh and adjoining regions bringing them into direct conflict with the Marathas.
- Akbar died of dysentery in c. 1605 CE and was buried at Sikandra (near Agra).

## Art and Architecture

- During the reign of Akbar, many indigenous art styles were encouraged which led to the common use of sandstone. Akbar built a series of forts, the most famous of which is the fort at Agra (in red sandstone). His other forts are at Lahore and Allahabad.
- Akbar built Fatehpur Sikri (city of victory) near Agra. Many buildings of Gujarati and Bengali styles are found in this complex. The most magnificent building in it is the Jama Masjid and the gateway to it is called Buland Darwaza (176 ft high), built in c. 1572 CE to commemorate Akbar's victory over Gujarat. Other important buildings at Fatehpur Sikri are Jodha Bai's palace and Panch Mahal with five storeys.
- He built his own tomb at Sikandra (near Agra) which was completed by Jahangir.
- Akbar built a temple of Govindadeva at Vrindavan.
- He also built Jahangir Mahal in Agra Fort.
- Akbar commissioned the illustrations of several literary and religious texts. He invited a large number of painters from different parts of the country to his court. Both Hindus and Muslims joined in this work. Baswan, Miskina and Daswant attained great positions as Akbar's court artists.
- Illustrations of Persian versions of Mahabharata and Ramayana were produced in miniature form.
- Many other Indian fables became miniature paintings in the art studio established by Akbar.
- Historical works like Akbarnama also remained the main themes of Mughal paintings.
- Hamzanama is considered to be the most important work which consisted of 1200 paintings. Indian colours such as peacock blue, Indian red began to be used.
- Akbar patronised Tansen of Gwalior who composed many ragas. It is believed that he could bring rain and fire through singing the ragas Megh Malhar and Deepak, respectively.
- The Persian language became widespread in the Mughal empire by the time of Akbar's reign. Abul Fazl was a great scholar and historian of his period. He set a style of prose writing and it was followed for many generations. Many historical works were written during this period. They include Ain-i-Akbari and Akbarnama by Abul Fazl. The translation of Mahabharata into the Persian language was done under the supervision of Abul Faizi (brother of Abul Fazl). Utbi and Naziri were the other two leading Persian poets. From the time of Akbar, Hindi poets were attached to the Mughal court. The most famous Hindi poet was Tulsidas, who wrote the Hindi version of the Ramayana - the Ramacharitmanas.

## Administrative System under Akbar

### Organisation of Government

Akbar paid great attention to the organisation of the central and provincial governments. His system of central government was based on the structure of government that had evolved under the [Delhi Sultanate](#) but the functions of various departments were carefully reorganised and meticulous rules and regulations were laid down for the conduct of affairs. The territories of the empire were classified into Jagir, Inam and Khalisa. The Inam lands were those which were allotted to the religious and learned men. Jagirs were allotted to nobles and members of the royal family including the queens. Income from the Khalisa villages went directly to the royal exchequer.

#### *Central Administration*

##### 1. The Emperor

- a. The emperor was the supreme head of the administration and controlled all military and judicial powers. He had the authority to appoint, promote and remove officials at his pleasure.

##### 2. Wazir

- a. The Central Asian and Timurid tradition was of having an all-powerful wazir under whom various heads of departments functioned. He was the principal link between the ruler and the administration. Bairam Khan, in his capacity as wakil, exercised the power of an all-powerful wazir.
- b. Akbar reorganised the central machinery of administration on the basis of division of power between various departments, and of checks and balances. Akbar took away the financial powers from the Wazir. While the post of wakil was not abolished, it was stripped of all power. This post was given to important nobles from time to time, but they played little part in administration. The head of the revenue department continued to be wazir but he was no longer the principal adviser to the ruler. The wazir was an expert in revenue affairs and was titled diwan or diwan-i-aala. The diwan was responsible for all incomes and expenditures and held control over Khalisa, Inam and Jagir lands.

##### 3. Mir Bakshi

- a. Mir Bakshi was the head of the military department and also the head of the nobility. Recommendations for appointment to mansabs or for promotions, etc. were made to the emperor through him. After acceptance of the recommendations by the emperor, it was sent to the diwan for confirmation and for granting a jagir to the appointee.
- b. He was also the head of the intelligence and information agencies of the empire. Intelligence officers (Barids) and news reporters (waqia-navis) were posted to all parts of the empire. It was Mir Bakshi who presented the intelligence reports to the emperor.

##### 4. Mir Saman



- a. An important officer who was in charge of the royal household and royal workshops called karkhanas. He was responsible for all kinds of purchases, manufacturing of different kinds of items for use and their storage for the royal household. Only trustworthy nobles were appointed to this post. The maintenance of etiquettes at the court, the control of royal bodyguards, etc. were all under the supervision of Mir Saman.

#### 5. Chief Qazi/ Sadrus Sudur

- a. Chief Qazi was the head of the judicial department. This post was sometimes combined with that of the Chief Sadar (Sadrus Sudur) who was responsible for all charitable and religious endowments. Interestingly, the chief Qazi during Akbar's reign, Abdun Nabi, was accused of corruption. Later, several restrictions were imposed on the authority of the Sadar for the award of revenue-free grants. Two important features of the inam grants were-
  1. Akbar made it a deliberate part of his policy to grant inam lands to all persons irrespective of religious faith and beliefs. Sanads of grant to various Hindu maths made by Akbar are still preserved.
  2. Akbar made it a rule that half of the inam land should consist of cultivable wasteland. Thus, inam holders were encouraged to extend cultivation.

#### 6. Mutasibs

- a. These were appointed to ensure the general observance of the rules of morality. They also examined weights and measures and enforced fair prices, etc.

#### *Provincial Administration*

In c. 1580 CE, Akbar divided the empire into 12 subas or provinces. These were Bengal, Bihar, Allahabad, Awadh, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Kabul, Ajmer, Malwa and Gujarat. Later on, Berar, Ahmednagar and Khandesh were added. With the expansion of the Mughal empire, the number of provinces rose to twenty. The empire was divided into-

Suba (Province) ⇒ Subedar (Governor)

⇓

Sarkar (district) ⇒ Faujdar (law and order) and Amalguzar (assessment and  
⇓  
Collection of revenue)

Parganas (sub-districts) ⇒ Shiqdar (Executive Officer)

⇓

Village ⇒ Muqaddam (village head man).

## Suba

1. Each suba was under the control of a Subedar (provincial governor) who was directly appointed by the emperor. He maintained general law and order.
2. The head of the revenue department in the suba was Diwan. He supervised the revenue collection in the suba and maintained accounts of all expenditures. Also, taccavi (advance loans) were given to peasants through his office.
3. The Bakshi was appointed at the recommendations of the Mir Bakshi and he performed the same functions as were performed by Mir Bakshi at the centre. He issued the pay bills of both the mansabdar and the soldiers.
4. Sadar was the representative of the central Sadar at the provincial level. He was in charge of the judicial department and supervised the working of the qazis. He also looked after the welfare of those who were engaged in religious activities and learning.
5. Darogai-i-Dak, appointed at the provincial level, was responsible for maintaining the communication channel. He used to send letters to the court through the Merwars (postal runners).

## Sarkar

The chief officers of the Sarkar were:

1. Faujdar - He was primarily responsible for maintaining law and order.
2. Amalguzar - The Amalguzar or Amil was responsible for the assessment and collection of the land revenue.

The faujdari was an administrative division whereas Sarkar was a territorial and revenue division.

## Pargana

The shiqdar was the executive officer at the level of the pargana. He assisted the Amil in the collection of revenue. The Quanungo was in charge of land records in the Pargana. The Kotwals in the towns were responsible for maintaining law and order.

## Village

The village headman was called the Muqaddam and the patwari looked after the land revenue records. The zamindars maintained law and order in their areas and also helped in revenue collection.

### *Land Revenue Administration*

The land revenue system of Akbar was called Zabti or Bandobast system. It was based on [Sher Shah's](#) land revenue system with certain modifications. It was further improved by Raja Todar Mal and was named as Dahsala system which was completed in c. 1580 CE. By this system, Todar Mal introduced a uniform system of land measurement. The revenue was fixed on the average yield of land assessed on the basis of the past ten (dah) years. One-third of the average produce was the state share and payments were generally made in cash.

The land was classified into four-

- Polaj (cultivated every year)
- Parauti (cultivated once in two years)
- Chachar (cultivated once in three or four years) and
- Banjar (once in five or more years).

Both chachar and banjar were assessed at concessional rates.

Officials called karoris were appointed who were responsible for the collection of crores of dams (Rs. 2,50,000) and also checked the facts and figures issued by the qanungos.

Akbar was keenly interested in the improvement and expansion of cultivation. The Amil (revenue officers) were directed to advance money by way of taccavi (loans) to the peasants for implements, seeds, animals, etc. in times of need and to recover them in easy installments.

Akbar's settlement (with some changes) remained the basis of the land revenue system of the Mughal empire till the end of the 17th century.

### *Mansabdari System*

Akbar organised the nobility as well as his army by means of the mansabdari system. Under this system, every officer was assigned a rank - mansab. The highest rank was 5000 for the nobles and the lowest was 10. Princes of the royal families received even higher mansabs. Two premier nobles of the empire, Mirza Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh were honoured with the rank of 7000 each. All appointments, promotions and dismissals were made by the emperor himself.

- At first, there was only one rank but later, the ranks were divided into two-
  - Zat Rank - The word 'zat' means personal. It fixed the personal status of a person, and also the salary due to him.
  - Sawar Rank - It indicated the number of cavalymen (sawars) a person was required to maintain.

- There were three categories in every rank (mansab). A person who was required to maintain as many sawars as his zat was placed in the first category of that rank; if he maintained half or more, then in the second category and if he maintained less than half then in the third category.
- Persons holding ranks below 500 zat were called mansabdars, those from 500 to below 2500 were called amirs and those holding ranks of 1500 and above were called amir-i-umda or amir-i-azam. However, the word mansabdar is sometimes used for all categories. Apart from status, this classification had a significance, an amir or an amir-i-umda could have another amir or mansabdar to serve under him, but a mansabdar could not do so. Persons were usually appointed at low mansab and gradually promoted depending upon their merits and the favour of the emperor.
- In addition to meeting his personal expenses, the mansabdar had to maintain a stipulated quota of horses, elephants, beasts of burden (camels and mules) and carts out of his salary. Later, these were maintained centrally but the mansabdar had to pay for them out of his salary. The Mughal mansabdars formed the highest-paid service in the world.
- The chehra (descriptive roll of every soldier) and dagh system (branding of horses) was followed. Every noble had to bring his contingent for periodic inspection before persons appointed by the emperor for the purpose. Ideally, a 10-20 rule was followed which meant that, for every 10 cavalymen, the mansabdar had to maintain 20 horses. Interestingly, a sawar with only one horse was considered to be only half a sawar.
- Provision was made that the contingent of the nobles should be a mixed one - drawn from all the groups, Mughal, Pathan, Rajput and Hindustani. Thus, Akbar tried to weaken the forces of tribalism and parochialism.

The mansabdari system as it developed under the Mughals was a distinctive and unique system that did not have any exact parallel outside India. However, the lack of a strong navy remained a key weakness of the Mughal empire.

### *The Jagirdari System*

Jagirdari system was assigning revenue of a particular territory to the nobles for their services to the state. It was a modified version of Iqta of the Delhi Sultanate and was an integral part of the mansabdari system. The office of the central Diwan would identify parganas the sum total of whose jama was equal to the salary claim of the mansabdar. If the recorded jama was greater than the salary claim, the mansabdar was asked to deposit the extra with the central treasury. However, if the jama was less than the salary claim the remaining was paid from the treasury.

Classification of jagirs:

1. Tankha Jagirs - given in lieu of salaries and were transferable.



2. Watan Jagirs - were hereditary and non-transferable. It was given to zamindars or rajas in their local dominion. When a zamindar was appointed as mansabdar, he was given tankha jagir in addition to his watan jagir if the salary of his rank was more than his income from watan jagir.
3. Mashrut Jagirs - jagirs assigned on certain conditions.
4. Altamgha Jagirs - assigned to Muslim nobles in their family towns or place of birth.

Zamindars had hereditary rights over the produce of the land and had a direct share of 10-25 % in the peasants' produce. He assisted the state in the collection of the revenue and also rendered military services to the state at times of need. The zamindar was not the owner of all the lands comprising his zamindari. The peasants who actually cultivated the land could not be dispossessed as long as they paid the land revenue. Both the zamindars and peasants had their own hereditary rights over the land.

### *Religious Policy under Akbar*

Akbar laid the foundation of an empire based on equal rights to all citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs. After marrying Jodha Bai of Amber, he abolished jizya and also the pilgrim tax. The liberal principles of the empire were strengthened by bringing able Hindus into the nobility. For instance, Raja Todar Mal rose to the post of diwan and Birbal who was a constant companion of Akbar.

- Akbar was deeply interested in religion and philosophy. At first, Akbar was an orthodox Muslim. He held in high esteem the leading qazi of the state, Abdun Nabi Khan, who was Sadr-us-Sadur. Gradually he moved away from the path of narrow orthodoxy.
- In c. 1575 CE, Akbar built a hall called Ibadat Khana or the Hall of Prayer at his new capital, Fatehpur Sikri wherein he invited learned scholars from all religions like Hinduism, Jainism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism and used to conduct religious discussions with them. Some of the scholars were -
  - Dastur Maharji Rana - Parsi (of Navsari)
  - Hira Vijaya Suri - Jain saint of Kathiawar
  - Purushottam Das - Hindu
  - Aquaviva and Monserrate - Christian (sent by the Portuguese on Akbar's request)
- In c. 1582 CE, Akbar discontinued the debates in the Ibadat Khana as it led to bitterness, the representative of each religion denounced the other and tried to prove that his religion is the best.
- In c. 1579 CE, Akbar also issued a declaration or mahzar which was called "Decree of Infallibility" by which he asserted his religious powers. He was entitled to choose any of the interpretations of the holy book, Quran, if there were a difference of opinion among the ulamas.
- In c. 1582 CE, he set up a new religion called Din-i-Ilahi/Tawhid-i-Ilahi (Divine Monotheism) which believes in one God and Sulh-i-Kul i.e, equal toleration and respect to all religious sects. It contained the good points of various religions. The Tawhid-i-Ilahi was an order of the Sufistic type. It, however, virtually died with the death of Akbar.

## Akbar's Navratnas

Nine of the courtiers were known as Akbar's navratnas (nine jewels).

### 1. Abul Fazl

- a) He authored Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari.
- b) He led the Mughal army in its war in Deccan.
- c) On the orders of Prince Salim, he was killed by Bir Singh Bundela.

### 2. Faizi

- a) He was a great Persian poet.
- b) Brother of Abul Fazl.
- c) Under his supervision, the Mahabharata was translated into the Persian language.
- d) He also translated Lilavati (a work on mathematics) into Persian.

### 3. Tansen

- a) He served as a great musician in the court of king Ramachandra who titled him "Tansen". He was born as Tanna Mishra.
- b) Akbar gave him the title of "Mian".
- c) It is believed that he could bring fire and rain through singing the ragas Deepak and Megh Malhar respectively.

### 4. Raja Birbal

- a) His original name was Mahesh Das.
- b) Akbar gave him the title of "Raja" and "Birbal".
- c) He died on the northwest frontier fighting the Yusuf Shahis.

### 5. Raja Todar Mal

- a) He was the head of the revenue system. He introduced standard weights and measures.
- b) He had earlier worked under Sher Shah Suri.
- c) Akbar honoured him with the title of "Diwan-i-Ashraf".

### 6. Raja Man Singh

- a) One of the trusted generals of Akbar.

### 7. Fakir Aziao Din

- a) He was one of the chief advisors of Akbar.

- b) He was a Sufi mystic.
- 8. **Abdul Rahim Khan-i-Khanan**
  - a) Son of Bairam Khan.
  - b) He was a great poet. He translated Baburnama into Persian.
- 9. **Mirza Aziz Koka**
  - a) Also known as Khan-i-Azam or Kotaltash.
  - b) Foster brother of Akbar.
  - c) He was also appointed Subedar of Gujarat.

## Frequently Asked Questions About Akbar

### How was Emperor Akbar's reign significant?

Akbar's reign significantly influenced the course of Indian history. During his rule, the Mughal Empire tripled in size and wealth. He created a powerful military system and instituted effective political and social reforms. By abolishing the sectarian tax on non-Muslims and appointing them to high civil and military posts, he was the first Mughal ruler to win the trust and loyalty of the native subjects.

### What were the cultural aspects of Emperor Akbar's reign?

Akbar is known for ushering in the Mughal style of architecture, which combined elements of Islamic, Persian and Hindu design, and sponsored some of the best and brightest minds of the era—including poets, musicians, artists, philosophers and engineers—in his courts at Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri.