

# **HISTORY OF INDIA 1526-1707 C.E.**

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**HISTORY OF INDIA 1526-1707 C.E**

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**Unit - I**

Babur's Conquests and Founding of the Mughal Empire- Humayun- Sher Shah's rise to power and administration

**Unit - II**

Akbar- Conquests, Administration, Mansabdari System, Land Revenue system- Religious policy- Rajput policy- Jahangir's career- Nurjahan

**Unit - III**

Shajahan- conquests - War of succession- Aurangazeb- Religious Policy- Deccan Policy- Reasons for the Decline of the Mughul Empire

**Unit - IV**

Socio- Economic conditions under the Mughuls- Bhakti Movement- Architecture and Literature under the Mughls

**Unit - V**

Sikhism- Rise of Sikh Militancy, Guru Gobind Singh- Rise of Maratha Power- Sivaji Conquests and Administration

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## UNIT - I

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### Lesson 1.1 - Babur: The Founder of the Mughal Empire

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#### Structure

- 1.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.1.2 Introduction
- 1.1.3 Babur's Life from Ferghana to India
- 1.1.4 India's Political Scenario: Prior to Babur's conquest
- 1.1.5 Military Exploits of Babur
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#### 1.1.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- understand the Central Asian experience of Babur
- know the political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion
- describe the military techniques and battles of Babur
- give an estimate on Babur

#### 1.1.2 Introduction

The period from 1526 to 1858 of Indian History is known as the Mughal Period. The Mughal Period is a glorious chapter in Indian History. The Mughals were natives of Central Asia and they moved towards India by the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The unstable political condition of India gave an opportunity for the Mughals to establish their power in India. Babur a native of Farghana was the founder of the Mughal Empire. Babur wanted to control and consolidate Samarkand which served as the capital of Timur, in this attempt he lost his principality Ferghana and for a while he was a king without kingdom. In the Central Asian region there was a tripartite struggle between the Uzbeks, Safavids and the Ottomans. Babur

was witness and for a short period was also part of this struggle. He was pushed out of the Central Asian Politics by the three powers. This central Asian experience richly helped Babur in his later days. He later moved towards Kabul and from there he conquered Delhi in 1526. He lived only for four years but laid the foundation for one of the greatest, richest and largest Medieval Empire in the World, The Mughals. He also wrote his biography which is an important source for the study of Mughals. In this lesson we will be focusing on the early days of Babur, the political condition of Central Asia, his conquest of Delhi, his war techniques and an estimate on Babur.

### **1.1.3 Babur's Life from Farghana to India**

#### **1.1.3.1: Babur's Early Life**

Zahīr ud-Dīn Muhammad Babur was born in 1483 CE, his father Umar Sheikh Mirza, a descendant of the famous emperor Timur, was the ruler of a small principality of Farghana in Turkistan. While matrilineally, his mother Qutlugh Nigar Khanum was a descendant of the great Mongol Genghis Khan. The territory of Farghana was a Timurid appanage held by his father Umar Sheikh Mirza. While Babur's paternal uncles, Sultan Ahmad Mirza and Sultan Mahmud Mirza, controlled Samarqand and Badakhshan, respectively. Mahmud Khan, a Chaghatai Mongol, was Babur's maternal uncle who ruled Tashkent. It is also noteworthy that due to the lineage of Timur, the Mughals are also referred as Timurids or Timurid-Mughals. Stephen Frederic Dale puts it, "Babur never thought of himself as a Mongol, but his dual descent justifies calling his Indian conquests the Timurid-Mughal Empire."

In the year 1494 CE, Babur inherited the small principality of Farghana from his father just as a lad of just eleven years and four months and had the burden of persisting the Timurid legacy and ruling over a venerable state over his shoulders. In his 12<sup>th</sup> year, Babur got caught into the political turmoil when both his Timurid and Chaghatai Mongol kinsmen descended at his Andijan stronghold, attempting to take control of some or all of the wealthy Farghana Valley for themselves. After repulsing the onslaught, Babur soon got accustomed to the atomistic, harsh political climate of the Turco-Mongol world. Babur being the man of his circumstances, attempted to oust his uncle from Samarqand. Babur spent the next decade alternating between his efforts to occupy and hold Samarqand and trying to survive the military disasters that followed each one of his attempts. He conquered the



city twice, but both times he lost it quickly. The second time, Samarqand was overrun by the Uzbek chief Shaibani Khan, defeating Babur. Soon, the opportunistic Timurid kinsmen of Farghana were rallied for by the Uzbeks to oust Babur from the valley. Eventually, the lack of dynastic unity amongst the Timurid kinsmen led to the fall of Timurid holdings under the sway of the Uzbeks like a stack of cards. Under the rule of the Shaibani Khan, Uzbeks executed Babur's Timurid kins and later his Chaghatai Mongol relatives, who in 1502 CE had belatedly come to his aid from their homeland in Mughulistan.

### 1.1.3.2 Babur as Padshah

Babur wrote in his autobiography, *Tuzuk-i-baburi*, "I had lost Samarqand for recovering Farghana but now I feel that I have lost even the first one without having possessed the second." Virtually, Babur was a king without a kingdom. For many years, says Farishta, "Babur was a king on a chess-board, moved from place to place, and buffeted about like a pebble on a seashore." Soon, Babur marched his Timurid-Mughal army of 200 towards Kabul. The city was previously ruled by his paternal uncle until his death. However, now it was held by a rival Timurid prince who had seized the city and married the late ruler's daughter. In 1504, the city of Kabul its surrounding region plus the smaller town of Ghazni was captured by Babur from his Timurid cousin-in-law. After ruling Kabul for four years and being the eldest Timurid ruler, Babur formally claimed clan leadership and the imperial title *Padshah*.

The Timurid-Mughal army of Babur largely comprised of warriors and mercenaries who had few resources other than their martial skills for their livelihood. Hence, Babur consistently made endeavours to enlarge his territories in order to provide them with an ample supply of money, gifts, and honours, ensuring their loyalty. Over a span of twenty years, Babur utilized Kabul as a strategic hub for carrying out opportunistic attacks and advancing his territorial control. In 1505 Babur personally led raids to the fertile lands of Sindh and Punjab, which he records in amazement: "I had never seen a hot climate or any of Hindustan before ... a new world came into view—different plants, different trees, different animals and birds, different tribes and people, different manners and customs. It was astonishing, truly astonishing." Another reason for his prompt attention towards India was the meagre resources of Kabul that could not provide well for his *begs* and kinsmen. The historian Abul Fazl remarks: "He (Babur)

ruled over Badakhshan, Qandhar and Kabul which didn't yield sufficient income for the requirements of the army; in fact, in some of the border territories the expense on the controlling the armies and administration was greater than income." However, his early endeavours in India were limited to occasional raid and plunder.

Similarly, Babur kept biding his time to capture back his homeland (Farghana and Samarkand) from the Uzbeks. In 1511 CE Babur with the military assistance of the Safavids seized Samarkand for the third time. In exchange for the aid, Babur accepted the Shia faith, pragmatically acknowledged Safavid sovereignty and minted coins in the name of the Safavid ruler Shah Ismail. Babur appointed his two half-brothers to govern his appanages in Turkistan. The episode was short lived, due to internal strifes and the rise of Uzbeks he was forced to abandon the city for the third time. Fleeing south to Badakhshan in northern Afghanistan, he gradually abandoned hope of resurrecting a Timurid state in Samarkand. So, Babur now focused on consolidating his position at Kabul and strengthening his dynasty through matrimonial ties. Tracing the trajectory of Babur, Michael H. Fisher comments, "During his two decades in Kabul, Babur made himself an increasingly experienced and educated ruler. He analysed the nature of authority, both divine and mundane. He presented his state as more than just predatory on the communities around him, expressing a sense of responsibility to impose his own just rule on them."

Witnessing the technological evolution of Safavid military, Babur reorganised and remodel his army in similar lines. Babur started hiring skilled Ottoman *ustads* (experts) to make special guns called matchlock muskets, operate expensive cannons, and learnt their military strategy *Rumi*. He also learnt the Uzbek war technique, *Tulughama*, Its a technique of enticing the enemy and encircling him and attacking him from all side. These war techniques were introduced by Babur in conquering Delhi. It was in Kabul that Babur laid the foundation of a gunpowder empire. However, with no hope of military gains at the west, Babur - armed with an advanced military tech of his times - turned his attention towards the east. Politically fragmented northern India with promising riches was the last viable territory where he could resuscitate Timurid fortunes. In fact, since his capture of Kabul, the memories of Timur's invasion of India lured him towards India, Babur fondly writes, "I had never ceased to think of the conquest of India."

### 1.1.4 Indian Political Scenario: The Prior to Babur's Conquest

The 16<sup>th</sup> century India was a land of diverse kingdoms and empires, each with its own unique culture, religion, and political structure. The subcontinent was characterized by a fragmented and chaotic political landscape, with numerous regional powers vying for supremacy. The Delhi Sultanate, which had once been a powerful and centralized authority, was in a state of steady decline. In 1517 CE the Sultan of Delhi Sikandar Lodi had died, and ambitious Ibrahim Lodi had succeeded him. However, the throne was contented by Alam Khan (an uncle of Ibrahim Lodi) who was living under the protection of Sultan Muzaffar of Gujarat. Daulat Khan Lodi, the Governor of Punjab, who was almost an independent ruler also posed a significant threat to the sovereignty of the Ibrahim Lodi. In order to consolidate his position, the Sultan of Delhi attempted to create a large centralized empire. Nevertheless, his attempts alarmed the Afghan chiefs as well as the Rajputs. Alarmed Daulat Khan Lodi sent his son to his court in order to pay homage, as a diplomatic attempted to conciliate Ibrahim Lodi. At the same time, he was trying to capture the neighbouring territories, frontier tracts of Bhirah, to strengthen his position.

#### 1.1.4.1 Invitations from India to Babur

Babur as a Timurid believed he had inherited a legitimate right to claim Hindustan. In 1518–1519 CE, Babur laid siege to the powerful fortress of Bhirah. His Bhirah campaign was much different from his earlier military encounters in India. In this campaign no longer Babur behaved like a raider and his ambitions had become much kinglier. He allowed no harm to its people, in fact he slit the noses of some of his warriors who had been harassing the inhabitants of Bhirah and executed others. Stephen Friedrich Dale notes: “The Bhirah episode represents the first, albeit preliminary, attempt to found a Timurid state in Hindustan.” Then Babur sent letters and verbal messages to Daulat Khan Lodi and Ibrahim Lodi, asking them to surrender all those places to Babur which were at once under the Turks. Daulat Khan Lodi cleverly detained Babur's envoy at Lahore, thus, preventing him from meeting Ibrahim Lodi. Babur was well aware that he was in no position to forcefully take Hindustan. However, his imperial ambitions were quite explicit, when he named his new born son as '*Hind-al*' (The Taking of Hind). Later, Babur appointed Jalal al-Din Hindu Beg Qauchin as the governor of Bhirah and returned to Kabul. Daulat Khan Lodi promptly occupied Bhirah and expelled the

Hindu Beg. Following the year, Babur once again crossed the Indus, and sequentially brought Bhira, Sialkot and Lahore under his sway. This victory opened the gateway of India for Babur again. However, the news of revolt in Qandhar, forced Babur to halt his advances in Hindustan. After a yearlong siege and subsequent capture of Qandhar, Babur turned his attention towards India. Now a barrage of invitations came knocking at the doors of Kabul from Hindustan. Daulat Khan Lodi, who was growing wary of Ibrahim Lodi, aware of the Sultan's plans against him, sent his son, Dilawar Khan, to Babur 1521-22 CE. He presented a case of Ibrahim Lodi's tyranny and rebellious nobles anxious for Babur's coming. Subsequently, Alam Khan Lodi visited Kabul, and Rana Sanga sent his envoy to Kabul with a proposition of joint military action. As Sathish Chandra puts it, "While Babur needed no invitation to attack India, the arrival of these envoys convinced him that the situation was ripe for undertaking the conquest of India."

### **1.1.5 Military Exploits of Babur**

#### **1.1.5.1 Punjab Campaign**

Actually, the trio expected Babur to withdraw, like Timur, and so that they could continue to rule and expand territories. As the struggle for Punjab between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi grew so did Babur's imperial ambitions in India. Babur's campaign of 1524 to capture Punjab was futile. The alliance between Babur and Daulat Khan Lodi fell apart over the division of the province after capturing it. Daulat Khan Lodi as always wanted the whole of Punjab, while Babur had other plans. Growing wary of Daulat Khan Lodi, Babur cautiously withdrew to Kabul, leaving a garrison at Lahore. The first to be haunted by the ambitions of Babur was Daulat Khan Lodi, as Sathish Chandra notes: "Daulat Khan Lodi who had invited Babur, could not see the logic of the situation. Nor could he see that in this struggle, he could only be the sacrificial goat." Daulat Khan kept no switching sides, and eventually came to a bad end.

In 1525, Babur stationed in Peshawar, received the news that Daulat Khan Lodi had switched sides and had ousted the *Amirs* of Babur from Sialkot and marched to Lahore. Ibrahim Lodi aware of the Punjab affairs marched his imperial army towards Lahore and ousted Daulat Khan Lodi from the city. With Lahore, the Sultan had hoped to strengthen his frontier from Babur. Nevertheless, Babur along with Humayun Mirza had

already marched his army across the river Indus. At Babur's approach, Daulat Khan's army scattered and the old man himself tamely surrendered only to be pardoned by Babur. Michael H. Fisher says, "Babur successfully invaded this different new world of South Asia." Within weeks, Babur became the master of Punjab.

#### 1.1.5.2 Battle of Panipat

After the futile attempt by Daulat Khan and Alam Khan to besiege Delhi, Ibrahim Khan Lodi advanced his imperial forces to Lahore, only to be repelled by Babur. Ibrahim Lodi was in no mood to cede Punjab to Babur, while Babur harboured the cause of a rival claimant, Alam Khan, to the throne of Delhi. Now, it had become clear that an open battle between Ibrahim Lodi and Babur was inevitable. The only obstacle between Babur and Hindustan was his daunting enemy Ibrahim Lodi. Abraham Eraly notes, "the going had been easy for Babur in India till then, as he had met only desultory resistance from the Afghan provincial forces in Punjab. Now he had to face the imperial Afghan army." In preparation, Babur had consolidated his position in Afghanistan by capturing Balkh from the Uzbeks and Qandahar; securing his rear and flank.

On 20 April, 1526, Babur reached the famous historical field of Panipat along with his army of 12000 from Kabul. According to Babur, his forces comprised of the "great and small, good and bad, retainer and non-retainer." Other the other hand, Ibrahim Lodi had mobilised a force estimated to comprise 100,000 strong and 1000 elephants to attack Babur at Panipat. Besides that, the force also contained Hindu allies, most notably Raja Vikramajit from Gwalior. Babur records in his memoir, "we placed our feet in the stirrup of resolve, grabbed the reigns of trust in God, and directed ourselves against Sultan Ibrahim.... He was said to have a standing army of one hundred thousand, and he and his begs [noblemen] had nearly a thousand elephants ..." Despite, the vast disparity in numbers between the duo, Abraham Eraly urges that "This Afghan advantage was somewhat offset by Babur's superior weaponry." The military lessons learnt by Babur from his Ottoman *ustads* would come handy in this historic battle. Wisely using his limited resources and the terrain for his advantage, Babur strengthened his position by posting one detachment of his army in the city of Panipat. In front, he put together 700 carts and joined them together by ropes of raw hide, and between every two carts, short breastworks were put up behind which matchlock men could stand and fire. The strategic

formation of *Rumdasturi* (the Roman or Ottoman manner) was devised by Ustad Ali Quli and Mustafa. Within the *Rumdasturi*, Badakhshani or Afghan foot soldiers were stationed at the interval of 20 to 25 feet, covering the venerable and slow phased matchlock men. Similarly, the Timurid archery and Mongol calvary were also synthesised with the formation. At intervals of loading matchlocks, archers were stations to continue the barrage of projectiles, while gaps were left within the formation for the cavalry to charge ahead. In order to repel the enemy cavalry, from the rear and flank, he barricaded his forces with ditches filled with branches. This sophisticatedly synthesised formation of Babur's army had virtually turned them into a meat miching machine.

Ibrahim Lodi, clueless of Babur's position, expecting a mobile Central Asian force, marched his large army to Panipat. For the first few days the two armies were at a face off, with occasional skirmishes. On the fateful day, when Ibrahim Lodi advanced his army to attack Babur's position, he found the strong and narrow front of Babur's army repelling. Hesitant to attack, Ibrahim Lodi ordered his forces to reorganise their formation. Ceasing the moment, Babur sent his flanking parties (*tulghuma mauver*) of cavalry to wheel around in the Uzbek fashion, and attack Ibrahim's army from the side and rear. While, his matchlock men, canons and archers unleashed havoc on the disorientated Lodhi army. In the melee, Ibrahim's praised war elephants scattered. Despite being surrounded from all sides, Ibrahim Lodi fought on bravely until his death, along with a group of 5000-6000 men. Soon after the Sultan's death the demoralised Lodhi army vanished into the thin air. R C Majumdar states, "Babur won a decisive victory over the Lodi Sultan, who, after a desperate resistance, fell on the field of battle with the flower of his army." It is estimated that more than 15,000 men were killed in the battle including Raja Vikramajit. Babur himself wrote, "By the grace and mercy of Almighty (God), the mighty army of Delhi was laid in the dust in the course of half a day." The significance of the decisive battle is not limited to Babur's military career alone, rather had made a mark in the history of India. Commenting on the immediate political significance of the decisive victory, Sathish Chandra writes, "It smashed the power of the Lodis, and opened up the entire territory up to Jaunpur to Babur's control." Facing little resistance, Babur immediately dispatched Humayun Mirza to seize Agra while he himself camped at Delhi. Babur ordered that the *khutba* in Delhi's mosques proclaim his name as the sovereign and that some money be distributed to poor of the city. During the siege, Humayun



gave safe passage to the royal family of deceased Raja Vikramajit of Gwalior from the fort, who had been previously held hostage by the Delhi sultan. In exchange, the family gave him many jewels and gems, among which was a famous diamond Koh-i Nur. Babur fondly mentions of Koh-i-Nur, a name given it centuries later, “many jewels and gems, among which was a famous diamond... that a gem merchant once assessed... at the whole world’s expenditure for half a day.” As Babur reached the outskirts of Agra, Humayun received him and offered him the famous diamond that he had acquired. However, Babur, out of generosity, returned the diamond back to Humayun, which earned him the name *Qalandar* (medicant). With the arrival of the victor of Panipat, Agra surrendered unconditionally. The seizure of the rich treasures of the Lodi Sultans in Agra relieved Babur from his financial difficulties. The rich exploits of Agra were distributed by Humayun to his followers, and mounted the Mughal throne in Agra, which became their capital. Babur lavishly spent his new found riches in Hindustan. Babur boasted, “All the Afghans, Hazaras, Arabs, and Baluch in the army and every other group were given cash from the treasury in accordance with their station. Every merchant and student, indeed every person who was along with the army took away a large share.” However, the Babur’s victory at Panipat was not the finale of the conquest of India, rather it’s a beginning.

### 1.1.6 Establishment of the Mughal Empire

Unlike his ancestor, Timur, Babur didn’t pillage and withdraw from India, rather he made it his homeland. However, his decision to settle in India was an unpleasant surprise to his *begs* (nobles). They expected Babur to return to Kabul after his victory against the Lodhi Sultan, from a land that was strange and hostile to them. As Babur himself opined, “once the water of Sind is crossed, everything is in the Hindustan way: land, water, tree, rock, people and horde, opinion and custom.” But Babur was very well aware that his imperial ambitions could only be materialised with the riches of Hindustan, not Kabul. “Not for us the poverty of Kabul again”, Babur records his intentions in his memoir. He thus granted leave to many of his *begs* (nobles) to return to Kabul. Babur’s initial victories in Hindustan, didn’t make him the sole sovereign of the land. The shattering of the Delhi Sultanate created a political vacuum and opened new possibilities for expansion by ambitious rivals. Every fortified town from Etawah and Sambhal to Bayana, Mewat, Dholpur, Gwalior etc came under the control of their local commanders, who would neither comply

nor yield. The most significant of these local powers were the Afghani chiefs of Kannauj and the Rajputs under Rana Sanga of Mewar. Thus, the struggle for the establishment of a hegemonic power was yet to begin for Hindustan.

Soon after the demise of Ibrahim Lodi, the Afghans of Jaunpur, known for their rebellious character under the Lodi rule, captured Kannauj and had invited Prince Bahadur Shah of Gujarat to assume the crown at Jaunpur. Simultaneously, after the battle of Panipat, Rana Sanga, anxious of Babur's unduly stay, devised an alliance to oust Babur out of Hindustan. It is not clear why the alliance between Babur and Rana Sanga went sour and if at all there was an agreement of joint military expedition, or a partitioning of the Lodi empire between the two? Sathish Chandra speculates, "If the latter, Sanga's desire was to seize Agra, why did he not move?" It was Babur who had captured both Delhi and Agra, without Rana Sanga's involvement. In fact, Babur accuses the Rana of breach of the joint military agreement; that Babur and Rana Sanga shall attack Delhi and Agra, respectively. Nevertheless, Rana Sanga was rightly alarmed by the Babur's advances in India. For him, Babur, now posed a greater threat than that of Ibrahim Lodi. As Shaikh Zain records in his *Fathenama* (letter of victory), "the authority of Rana Sanga was such that not one of all the exalted sovereign this wide realm as the Sultan of Delhi, the Sultan of Gujarat the Sultan of Mandu, could cope with (him and) one and all cajoled him and temporised with him. Rana Sanga, foremost of Rajputs, swiftly dispatched his army and captured the powerful fort of Qandahar near Ranthambhore."

Far from Agra, Babur considered Afghans to an immediate threat to his seat at Agra than Rana Sanga. Hence, he sent Humayun Mirza with an army to the east against the Afghans, while Babur remained at Agra. The Afghans were no match to the Mughal army, Humayun Mirza quickly captured the area up to Jaunpur. Despite the odds, Afghan rebels remained beyond the grasp of decisive defeat. As the manoeuvre was soon recalled by Babur, as the reports of Rana Sanga's advances on Agra reached his ears. Detachments were sent to various frontier fortress that surrounded Agra, such as Dholpur, Gwalior and Bayana. As the news of Rana Sanga's army reached the gates of Gwalior and Dholpur, the local commanders accepted Babur's terms, and surrendered the forts to him. However, the commander of Bayana, Nizam Khan, opened negotiations with both sides. Impatient of Nizam Khan, Babur advanced a detachment to Bayana, only to be defeated by the Rana's forces. An open battle with Rana Sanga had become eminent.



### 1.1.6.1: Babur Consolidation Process

Rana Sanga pressed north into the heart of India, with his formidable army, leading a coalition of Rajputs, Indo-Afghans including Mahmud Lodi, and Indian Muslim clans. Babur estimated that the Rana had a force of over 2,00,000 an army much larger than that of Ibrahim Lodi. Although exaggerated Rana Sanga had more men at his disposal than his counterpart. The problem was not just the numbers, for Mughals, the tales of Rajput valour was to be reckoned with. For the first time, Babur faced a powerful inter-faith military coalition led a non-Muslim. So, he sought sectarian and divine aid by emphasising his Muslim identity more than ever before. Babur further denounced the Afghans of Rana's camp as *kafirs* (disbelievers) and *mulhids* (heretics). These words were often put to political use than solely religious. According to Sathish Chandra, "Sanga represented a Rajput-Afghan alliance, the proclaimed objective of which was to expel Babur, and to restore the Lodi empire. Hence, the battle at Khanua can hardly be seen as a religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims, or even as a Rajput bid to establish a Rajput hegemony over North India." It was desperate Babur who often gave the conflict a religious colour and appealed to the religious sentiments of his disheartened *begs* (nobles) and soldiers to secure their allegiance for his ambitious cause. Firstly, he ordered exemption for all Muslims from taxes on cattle and goods. Then on the eve of the battle, posing as a religious Muslim, he publicly renounced wine (forbidden in Islam), even destroyed a newly arrived shipment three camel train of superior Ghazni wine, and distributed valuable shards to poor Muslims. His *begs* (nobles) and soldiers were made to swear their allegiance for the cause on the Quran. Babur exploited their religious susceptibilities by declaring the war against Rana Sanga to be a *jihad* or holy war and proclaimed his men as *ghazis* (Islamic warriors). As Mughal chronicler, Nazimuddin Ahmed records, Babur's "soul-inflaming words" and his high drama, swung the mood of the Mughal army from dread to daredevilry.

On 15 March 1527, the armies met at Khanua, near Agra. Babur cleverly positioned his army in the *Rumdasturi* (the Roman or Ottoman manner) formation, waiting for his enemy to act. Underestimating Babur, Rana Sanga, proud of his elephants and swordsmen, opting a traditional tactic, unleashed a furious attack over Babur's right flank. However, Babur contained the advances of the Rajputs and their Afghan allies, with his matchlock men and canon. The Commander of the Rajput army's vanguard, Silhadi's switching sides with Babur, gave the death blow to Rana Sanga. Despite Rana Sanga's valiant fight, Babur emerged victorious. Abraham

Early comments, “The battle of Khanua was a virtual replay of the battle of Panipat, except it lasted double the time and far more fiercely contested, resulting in heavy casualties on both sides.” As the numbers dwindled, Rana Sanga and his men fled the battle field, with Babur in their hot pursuit. According to Babur, the Mughal army chasing them “found no foot-space without the prostate foe.” Eventually, after a chase of three kilometres, Rana Sanga escaped from Babur. However, as Rushbrooke Williams notes, “The powerful confederacy which depended so largely for its unity upon the strength and reputation of Mewar, was shattered by a single defeat and ceased henceforth to be a dominant factor in the politics of Hindustan.” Yet again, superior military technology and sophisticated war tactics proved more effective than sheer numbers and bravery. Victorious Babur ordered to build a huge tower of enemy skulls in the Timurid fashion, to strike terror in potential adversaries. Babur officially styled himself as *Ghazi* and *Badshah-i-Islam* (to his own titles and coins. He also composed the verses:

“I have become a desert wanderer for Islam  
 Having joined battle with infidels [*kafir*] and Hindus.  
 I readied myself to become a martyr [*shahid*],  
 God be thanked I am become a *ghazi*.”

The constant invocation of Islamic nomenclatures and lavish spendings by Babur were his attempts to pacify his homesick *begs* (nobles) and army who had endured enough for his ambitious imperial cause in Hindustan. Soon after the victory of Khanua, he aspired to march against Chittor, only to later abandon the plan citing “little water and much heat on road.” He turned his attention towards the strategic region of Mewat, near Delhi. The ruler of Mewat, Hasan Khan, a Hindu convert to Islam, had previously rally behind the cause of Rana Sanga. Babur considered him the source of *sharr u shurr* (trouble and mischief) and denounced him as *mulahhad mardak* (heretical little man). The imperial Mughal army under Babur reached Mewat. As the royal family of Hasan Khan had been ruling Mewat for hundreds of years, considering the repercussions, Babur diplomatically left them undisturbed. In repercussion, Babur annexed its two capitals, Tijara and Alwar, in return rich parganas were bestowed to Nahar Khan, son of Hasan Khan. After settling the Mewat affair, Babur returned to Agra.

With his new found exploits, Babur suitably rewarded many of his men with fiefs and riches, and even promised them that he would eventually permit them back to Kabul. However, as monsoon was eminent, Babur

gradually returned to his relaxed and lavish lifestyle of Kabul. Despite the Muslimite veil that Babur had adored in the battleground, his enticement for wine haunted him. As Babur himself writes, "In truth the longing and craving for wine-party had been infinite and endless for two years past, so much so that sometimes the craving for wine brought me to the verge of tears." It is noteworthy that would break his vow towards the end of his life. He rather consorted him with good company, "In the company of friends, death is a feast" quoted Babur. He also extended the pleasure of rest and solace to men. Babur turned his *begs* (nobles) to their fiefs and required his forces for future campaigns. Emissaries were sent to the Safavid ruler to sing the ballads of *Fath-i Padshahi Islam* (Victory of the Emperor of the Faith). While Babur stationed himself at Agra, in the Garden of Eight Paradises.

#### 1.1.6.2 Suppression of Rajput Adversaries

Though Babur's position in the Gangetic doab was secure, it was not unchallenged. His Rajput and Afghan adversaries were in no mood to give up their suzerainty nor reconcile with the Mughals. Pandit Gourisankar Hirachand Ojha observes that though the Rajputs suffered a crushing defeat at Khanua, they still posed a legitimate threat to Babur. It was only a matter of time; they rally against Babur under a Rajput monarch. The prominent amongst them being Rana Sanga, a wounded monarch, nursing his wounds of Khanua, biding his time to unleash his vengeance upon Babur. As James Tod says after the battle of Khanua "Sanga retreated towards the hills of Mewat, having announced his fixed determination never to re-enter Cheetore but with victory." Rana Sanga advanced on Irij with the intention of reigniting the conflict with Babur. Just as it had been a year before, the Afghans appeared initially as a minor menace, he devised a grand offensive to crush the dominance of Rajputs and isolate Rana Sanga. Babur first casted eyes over the Raja of Chanderi, Medini Rao, a feudatory of Rana Sanga, had let an estimated of 12,000 Rajputs to Khanua.

On 9 December 1527, while Babur marched towards Chanderi, he also dispatched Muhammad Ali Jang-jang to confront Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli. As Babur grew suspicious of the former Lodi officer, whom Babur had rewarded with Awadh, send his commander to see if he still in line. Notably, the Mughal army led by Babur to Chanderi had adopted some Hindustani traits; employed more Hindustani commanders and utilization elephants in logistics. As Babur reached Chanderi, he sent two of his local loyalists, Shaikh Guran of Koil and Arayish Khan, offering Medini Rao, Shamsabad in exchange of Chanderi. On

28 January 1528, as negotiations failed to bear fruit, Babur attacked the fortress of Chander with his Canons. Within 2 hours, at ease, Babur's men successfully stormed the fortress. According to Abraham Eraly, the Rajput women and children faced with certain death, in order to protect their honour, committed the macabre rite of *Jauhar* or were killed by their own men. While the Rajput men "Stripping naked and fought to the death" says Stephan Dale. Two of Medini Rao's daughters, captured from the fortress, were given to Humayun and Kamran by Babur. The Mughal ruler declared the war as *jiḥād* (holy war) against pagans and proclaimed the victory as *Fath dar al-harb* (victory of the non-muslim rule). "In both places, Khanua and Chanderi, he ordered towers of pagan skulls to be erected. This was a practice adopted by Timur against his opponents, irrespective of religious beliefs", observes Sathish Chandra an interesting parallel.

After Chanderi, Babur had plans of campaigning against other Rajputs holds at Raisin, Bhilsa and Sarangpur. Babur also wished advance towards Chittor to decapsulate his arch rival Rana Sanga, not knowing that the Rajput monarch's demise (30 January 1528). Considering his ambitions against Babur to be suicidal, his own sardars poisoned him. After his victory over Chanderi, Babur actually intended to attack Silhadi or Silah al-Din, a former feudatory of Rana Sanga who defected to the Mughal camp at Khanua. Eventually, Babur's suspensions turned out to be true, as rebellious Farmuli and his Afghan allies jointed attacked the Mughal detachment, on January 1528. As news reached Babur, he abandoned his Rajput campaign. However, by late September 1528, his Rajput campaigns bore fruit. Rana Sanga's second son, Bikramajit, offered Babur his *daulatkhaliq ve kidmatgarliq* (good will and service) and control of Ranthambor in exchange for 70 lacs of revenue. Instead of Ranthambor, Babur arm twisted Bikramajit to cede Chittor by force.

#### 1.1.6.3 Suppression of his Afghan Adversaries

Babur had succeeded a decentralised tribal state from Ibrahim Lodi, comprised of sovereign Afghan clans scattered across the Ganges. Babur was convinced that "there was no solidarity among the Afghans and the opportunity was favourable for an adventurous drive," an expression that would eventually deflate. Even after the fall of the Lodis, various Afghan noblemen and warlords held fortresses, cities and iqtas. Amongst them, a considerable chunk, adamantly refused to yield their suzerainty to the Mughal *Padshah*. Unlike Babur, for the Afghans, the indigenous terrain, populace and princes were much familiar. Yet, their frequent internal tribal

feuds, along with their aversion to submitting to a sole leader, weakened them. In order to appease prominent Afghan noblemen within the vicinity of Agra, exploiting their disunity, Babur adopted a dual policy of cohesion and compromise to win over them. While military forces were dispatched to oust them, he also offered them terms for a peaceful surrender in exchange for *parganas* in grant. Yet, striving to legitimise his reign, Babur made conscious efforts to win over their allegiance. Important Afghan nobles and bluebloods, Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli, Fath Khan Sarwani (decorated by Babur as *Khan-i-Jahan*), and Biban were given *parganas* and privileges for their allegiance. *Parganas* worth of seven lakhs were bestowed upon Ibrahim Lodi's own mother, conspired to poison him. A mirrored tableau unfolded, as Babur soon became preoccupied elsewhere, many of his Afghan allies kindled rebellion against him. These unpleasant events nourished Babur's dis-trust for the Afghan nobles. However, his dual policy was quite effective in subduing various Afghan held forts such as of Dholpur, Bayana, and Gwalior.

Amidst Babur's fixation on his Rajput campaign, scattered Afghan nobles, alongside his own mutinous Afghan nobles, started to regroup. The Afghans of Jaunpur, who had previously eluded a definitive vanquishment, reoccupied the area up to Kannauj. Though the Afghans were predominantly based at the Jaunpur region, Bihar, known to be a no-man's land even at the times of Ibrahim Lodi, was their safe haven from the Mughal threat. Around 1527 to 1528, as their last collective attempt to resurrect the Lodi empire, numerous Afghans, including Biban and Bayazid, rallied behind Mahmud Lodi, brother of Ibrahim Lodi. Proclaiming him as their patriarch, the Afghan nobles enthroned Mahmud Lodi as the Sultan of Bihar. Far east, the Afghans of Bengal were ruled by Nusrat Shah. The ambitious sultan, exploiting Babur's absence, extended his dominion from Tirhut to Ballia. Likewise, his brother-in-law, Makhdum-i-Alam, further intruded into the territories claimed by Babur, expanded his rule on both sides of the river Ghagra up to Azamgarh.

With the news of Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli's rebellion, Babur was pretty much convinced of the Afghan threat. He quickly marched towards the northeast, in the pursuit of the rebellious Afghans. Crossing the Ganges, Babur's men unleashed havoc on them, suffering heavy losses, the Afghans fled further down the Ganges. Babur pursued them as far as Awadh, but apparently no further, as the Afghan rebels slipped across river Ghagra. The prospect of staying in the area no longer appealed to Babur, thus he entrusted Askari with its governance and returned to Agra. "Babur's failure



decisively to defeat Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli left the Afghans a major threat lurking down the river, but in fairness, the Afghan question following the Battle of Panipat was bewilderingly complex”, observes Stephen Friedrich Dale. Nevertheless, Babur’s swift advances in the Afghani heartland prompted the Sultan of Bengal, Nusrat Shah, to send envoys to Agra, assuring his neutrality.

On 1529, a year later, Babur once again marched against the eastern Afghans. Traversing through Prayag and Banaras, he marched, to Chunar and Buxar, gateways guarding Patna. In the midst of it all, emissaries from Nusrat Shah and Babur went to-and-fro, with mutual terms. On Babur’s interest, he wanted to isolate the eastern Afghans from Bengal and a safe passage across Ghagra. While, Nusrat Shah wanted Babur to recognise his possessions in Bihar, a demand which Babur refused to yield. It appears that the ambitious duo failed to reach a common accord. At the bend where the Ghagra merged with the Ganges, Babur was caught off guard by the sight of an unexpected confluence; on the opposite bank stood an army of a harmonious blend, that of Nusrat Shah and the eastern Afghans. The position of the united front was formidable, twenty-four points of defence, including a flotilla of boats, were placed to fend off Babur from crossing the river. On the contrary, Babur positioned his chief of firearms, Ustad Ali Quli, with his mortars and canon at a high point, launching projectiles over the Afghan position. For days to come the two forces, were at stand still, with occasional skirmishes. Devising a pincer attack, Babur led the crossing while his son Askari with a detachment of 20,000 strong crossed upstream, confronting the coalition forces from two sides. On 5 May, 1529, the rivalling forces fought the battle of Ghagra. With a double-sided attack, the defences of the coalition forces came to little use, taken by surprise, the Mughal army laid waste to their ranks. It is also noteworthy that Babur’s praised firearms were put to little in the battle, strategy and able commandership seem to have carried the day. As Babur emerged victorious, left with no cause, the Afghans surrendered to Babur en masse, including seven to eight thousand Nuhani. Yet, Biban and Bayazid fled across Ghagra along with Mahmud Lodi, and besieged Lucknow.

Amidst the unfolding of events, Babur orchestrated a settlement for Bihar. Reluctant to immerse himself in the intricate webs of Bihar’s daily affairs. Babur withdrew Khan-i-Zaman, as the governor of Bihar, and gracefully returned it to the its rightful stewards, the Nuhani chieftains. Foremost among them stood Jalal Khan, the illustrious son of the late

Sultan of Bihar, humbly submitted himself to the *Badshah's* sovereignty. In return, Babur solicited Jalal Khan to offer a grand tribute of one crore tankas, and additionally set aside an annual allocation of one crore for the *Badshah's* treasury. Another esteemed Nuhani chief, Mahmud Khan Nuhani, hitherto the *iqtdar* of Ghazipur, was granted dominion over lands and treasures worth fifty lakhs within the realm of Bihar. On 19 May, Babur received news from his emissaries that Nusrat Shah of Bengal had agreed to his three articles – unspecified by Babur – and wished for peace. However, it seems that the Bengali Sultan's holdings in Bihar were left unscathed. The pacts brokered by Babur in Bihar and Bengal were the most favourable in the given circumstances. "At ease concerning Bihar and Bengal" slackens Babur. Following these pacts, Babur dispatched an elite force under his Mongol cousins, Muhammad Zaman Mirza, numerous *begs* (nobles) and Hindustani *amirs* in pursuit of the rebellious duo, Shaikh Bayazid Farmuli and Malik Biban Farmuli. Initially, the Mughal forces ousted Biban and Bayazid from Lucknow, as they sought refuge in the embrace of Mahoba, Kalinjar. Persistent in his attempt, Babur further pursued the fleeing duo. Nevertheless, his attempts bore no fruit; so, he abandoned his unsuccessful pursuit and ordered at return to Agra. Yet, the Afghan quandary taunted Babur, persisting as an unsolved riddle in his mind. However, Babur eagerly sought to strengthen his empire in the doab.

#### 1.1.6.4. Homesick Babur

Babur's actual dominion comprised of a string of interconnected fortresses and cities woollen into a narrow territorial realm. Retaining control over the trans-Hindu Kush regions of Balkh and Badakhshan – eminent with Uzbek threat – proved quite challenging for him. After Babur's last major military campaign at Ghagra, he intended to free himself for a possible intervention beyond Hind Kush. Even while he was marching towards Patna, the reports of Uzbek-Persian conflict in Khurasan reached to Babur's attention. He received. "An old gleam now returned to Babur's eyes-maybe the Timurid lands could yet be recovered," notes Abraham Eraly. Following Shah Tahmasp's decisive victory over the Uzbek ruler, Ubaidullah, at Jam, the homeland of Timurids seemed highly favourable to Babur. Nevertheless, due to Babur's extended absence in Hindustan, the Uzbeks swiftly intruded into Babur's western periphery and captured Balkh. Soon, Humayun Mirza was entrusted to venture to defend Badakhshan and recover Samarkand with Safavid assistance. Humayun struggled to hold his

keep against the Uzbek offensive. Due to Babur's desire to be in proximity to the theatre of action, he recourse his way back to Kabul. However, these plans proved fruitless, as the Uzbeks reestablished their authority over Central Asia while the Safavids retreated. While Humayun Mirza terribly failed to recover Balkh nor capture Samarkand. The futile prince was ordered to abandon his military endeavour and return to Hindustan. Babur's dream of returning to the once Timurid stronghold remained an elusive destiny. Towards the close of 1529, he had already marched to Lahore, disheartened Babur abandoned his march to Kabul, instead he stationed himself at Lahore for a couple of months. "However, Babur decided to stay and to strengthen his hold over the fertile lands and wealthy cities of Hindustan" pens John F. Richards. By now, Babur's health had been failing for the past several years due to hard campaigning, and the hot climate of India which he wasn't used to. In fact, he himself mentions in his memoir that during the years 1528-29, he fell ill no less than six times. After his return to Agra, Babur died on 30 December 1530 after a short illness.

#### 1.1.6.5 Administration of Babur

Babur administered its partially subdued territories through a form of customary post-conquest military feudalism. He hinged primarily on the military might and numerous nobles (*aimrs* and *begs*) at his disposal. Due to the absence of an effective administrative apparatus that could yield land-tax, Babur, the ruler of an emerging empire, had to rely on capturing royal treasuries as a means to compensate his nobility. These dual pillars of Babur's new found empire was nourished through frequent conquest. Until his death, Babur periodically dispatched his commanders to crush the regional powers to subdue them as tributaries and extract war loot. The nobility was suitably rewarded with fiefs and riches that were procured as war spoils. In fact, it would seen the very blood line of Babur's *Padshahliq* (Kingship) was spontaneous *Mulkgirliq* (the act of kingdom-seizing). Observing the nature of state affairs under Babur, Michael H. Fisher comments, "In a patrimonial court like Babur's, the ruler often turned to a courtier or attendant at hand to take military governance over a newly available city." Initially, many of his Timurid *begs* were arbitrarily assigned unfamiliar lands as their hold, yet they had little to no affinity with the local populace. As Babur's territories expanded so did the composition of his nobility. He began to recruit Hindustanis (*Shaikhzadas*, Indian Muslims and Hindus) in the rank and file of his army and administration. "Babur's high-ranked officers (whom he named in his



autobiography) were all Muslim, but many of their unnamed subordinate officers and soldiers were not,” notes Fisher. Many Hindu clerical families, that had previously been at the service of the Delhi Sultanate, formed an integral part of Babur’s empire. Competent and well-versed authorities, deeply rooted in the local community equipped Babur’s *wajhdar* (lords) with the indispensable records and guidance. Due to continuous warfare, many of *wajhdars* were absent from their station, virtually leaving the local administration to the Hindustani officials. Babur, his Central Asian (begs), Hindustani confidants (amirs), and his new found subjects erected the mighty Mughal empire.

Mughal architecture in India was in its nascent stage during the reign of Babur, many important monuments were erected during his time. Babur introduced the concept of Gardens in India. Babur’s redefining of Mughal aesthetic resulted in the best-chiselled *baghs* (gardens). A unique feature of it being the *charbagh* – the symmetrical, quadripartite gardening. His appreciation for gardens can be observed in his memoir Baburnama, where he combines recollections of military exploits with accounts of time spent re-creating his idealised formal garden setting in and around Agra. During his station in Kabul in 1504, he passionately built the *Bagh-e-Babur*, which eventually become Babur’s tomb. Similarly, the first garden the emperor built in Agra was named *Bagh-i-Nur Afshan*, the light scattering garden. After Babur’s death, his body was interred here before being taken to Kabul, which the Agra’s citizens referred to as *Aram Bagh*, or Garden of Rest. Besides gardens, during his reign, Babur erected numerous monuments, tombs, mosques and madrassas. To commemorate the victory against Ibrahim Lodhi, Babur erected the Kabuli Bagh Mosque at Panipat in 1526 CE at the banks of Yamuna.

#### 1.1.6.6 Baburnama

Babur was not only a daring soldier and an able commander but also a fine scholar and painter. He was a lover of nature. He wrote his biography Tuzuk-i-Baburi in his mother tongue Turkish inspite being very fluent in Persian. This book serves as the Primary source for the study of Mughals. This book was translated in many languages and he is also known as “Prince of biographers”. Babur in his introduction wrote, “I have simply written the truth. I do not intend by what I have written to compliment myself: I have simply set down exactly what happened. Since I have made it a point in this history to write the truth of every matter and to set down no more than the reality of every event,

as a consequence I have reported every good and evil I have seen of father and brother and set down the actuality of every fault and virtue of relative and stranger. May the reader excuse me; may the listener take me not to task.” This book gives the history of the decline and fall of the Timurid power in central Asia, his journey from central Asia to Delhi, life and culture in India and his military campaigns.

#### **1.1.7 Estimate on Babur**

Babur was a native of central Asia faced many adversities but because of his indomitable courage he conquered Delhi and laid the foundation for Mughal rule. His central Asian experience was very useful for his conquest of Delhi. Babur was a good strategist and tactician he was equally successful as a diplomat. He also found time to write his autobiography, Tuzuk-i-Baburi which is an important source for the understanding Mughal India.

#### **1.1.8 Let us some up**

Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire, life was a testament to ambition, perseverance, and adaptability. From his humble beginnings as a descendant of Timur and Genghis Khan, Babur rose to prominence through a series of military campaigns and strategic alliances. With the victory over Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat, and the subsequent wars, Babur established the Mughal empire. Babur's reign was marked by a synthesis of diverse cultures, resulting in a vibrant artistic and intellectual milieu known as the “Indo-Islamic” tradition. Under his patronage, architecture, literature, and the arts flourished, creating a rich legacy that continues to influence the region's cultural landscape of India. Furthermore, Babur's legacy is not limited to his military and political achievements. His memoir, the Babur Nama, stands as a testament to his literary expertise. The comprehensive memoir offers valuable insights into his persona, everyday life, and accomplishments; virtually offered a window into the complexities of 16th-century India. As Sathish Chandra puts it. “Babur's Tuzuk or Memoirs is rightly classified as a classic of world literature.”

#### **1.1.9 Self -Assessment Questions**

1. Discuss the central Asian politics during the time of Babur
2. Describe the military campaign of Babur
3. Give an estimate on Babur

**1.1.10: References:**

1. Dale, Stephen F. *Babur: Timurid Prince and Mughal Emperor, 1483-1530*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2018.
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## Lesson 1.2 - Humayun: Accession and Troubles

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### Structure

- 1.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.2.2 Introduction
- 1.2.3 Early Career of Humayun
- 1.2.4 Accession to Throne
- 1.2.5 Humayun's Struggle with Sher Shah
- 1.2.6 Exile and Recovery
- 1.2.7 Humayun's contribution to Art and Architecture
- 1.2.8 Let us Sum up
- 1.2.9 Self- Assessment Questions
- 1.2.10 References

### 1.2.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- discuss the early career of Humayun
- explain his accession to throne
- know about his struggle with Sher Shah
- describe his exile and recovery of India

### 1.2.2. Introduction

Humayun was the second emperor of the illustrious Mughal dynasty. Humayun, the name means fortunate but he was an unfortunate man in the Mughal history. He was the eldest son of Babur. He assisted his father in the Battle of Panipat and in other military campaigns. Humayun's early life and ascension provide valuable insights into the foundations of Mughal power and the political ethos of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Indian Subcontinent. When Humayun fell ill Babur prayed to God to take his life and give the life of Humayun. In his death bed Babur advised Humayun to take care of his nobles and brothers well. This advice caused him heavily. In addition, Humayun was an easy-going man and was addicted to drinking. He lost the empire to Sher Shah and was on exile to Persia. With the support of the Shah of Persia he recovered his territory. After recovering his territory back, he didn't live long to rule India. He died rolling from the steps.

### 1.2.3. Early Career of Humayun

Mirza Nasir-ud-din Muhammad, with the surname of Humayun (the fortunate) was born in Kabul, Afghanistan on the 6<sup>th</sup> of March 1508, as the eldest son of Babur and Mahim Begum. Babur, in his memoir, records with great pride the birth of his heir as proclaimed by his poets as *Sultan Humayun Khan* and *Shah-i-Firuz Qadr* (Shah of Victorious Might). It was in the same year in which Humayun was born, Babur assumed the title of *Padshah* – diverging from the conventional Timurid title of *Mirza* – asserting his superiority over the Chaghtai and other Timurid rulers. Humayun had three younger brothers, Kamran, Askari and Hindal, who would go on to play, along with him, a significant role in the establishment of the Mughal empire. From a young age, Humayun was immersed in the rich cultural heritage and military traditions of his father's kingdom. As a member of the Timurid lineage, Humayun inherited a legacy steeped in Central Asian influence, which played a crucial role in shaping his future as a ruler. Humayun's upbringing was characterized by a strong emphasis on education and intellectual pursuits. This cultivated an intellectual depth that would later manifest in his patronage of arts and literature during his reign.

#### 1.2.3.1 Humayun's Military Career

Humayun's initiation into the world of politics and warfare came at a young age. To give him administrative training, following the Timurid tradition, Babur appointed him the governor of Badakhshan. As semi-autonomous monarch, Humayun held his seat at Badakhshan for a period of 9 years. However, he often had to join his father, Babur, in Kabul and assisted him in some of his military on-going campaigns. Humayun along with his father marched the Timurid-Mughal army across the river Indus, marking the commencement of the Hindustan campaign. It is noteworthy, that Humayun, just an eighteen-year-old then, would go on play a pivotal role in the campaign. Babur, with pride writes, "This was Humayun's first exploit and his first expedition. The whole affair was a most excellent omen of future success." Furthermore, Babur bestowed upon him a reward a crore of silver *tankas*, the *jagir* of Hisar Firoza, a dress of honour of the highest quality, and a valuable horse from the royal stables.

Subsequently, Humayun marched along with father to the decisive Battle of Panipat, 1526 CE. For the initial few days, the Afghan army led by Ibrahim Lodi and the Mughal army, holding their positions, were

at a stalemate, limiting themselves to occasional skirmishes. Humayun led the right-wing flank of Babur's imperial army in the battle. After the decisive victory, Humayun was ordered by his father to seize Agra while he himself camped at Delhi. As the Mughal army approached Agra, its inhabitants offered their submission to Humayun, but requested the prince not to advance his army into the fortified area. Humayun accepted it. Unwilling to unleash violence upon the inhabitants, Humayun instead besieged to the inner citadel of Agra, blockading the bluebloods and their riches from flight. The prince had also laid strict directions against plundering the inhabitants of their holdings. In the course of the siege, Humayun gave safe passage to the royal family of deceased Raja Vikramajit of Gwalior from the fort. Notably, the royal family of Gwalior were kept at the fort as hostages by the then Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, for the monarch's good faith. In exchange, the family gave him many jewels and gems, among which was a famous diamond Koh-i Nur. As Babur reached the outskirts of Agra, Humayun received him and offered him the famous diamond that he had acquired. Babur fondly mentions Koh-i-Nur, a name given it centuries later, "many jewels and gems, among which was a famous diamond... that a gem merchant once assessed... at the whole world's expenditure for half a day."

Though the victory at Panipat and the capture of Agra had established the Mughal empire in Hindustan, it still had to face a more formidable enemy, Rana Sangha. As Rana Sangha advanced towards Agra, Humayun was recalled by Babur and was asked to command against Rana Sangha at the Battle of Khanua. On 15 March 1527 as the armies of Babur and Rana Sangha met at Khanua, near Agra. Humayun was posted to command the right wing of the Mughal position. Despite constant Rajput advances towards Humayun's position, he held position valiantly. As Iswari Prasad notes, "He played his full part in the fight which the hopes of the Rajputs and placed the new dynasty securely upon the throne of Hindustan." After the decisive victory at Khanua, recognizing his pivotal contribution, Humayun was rewarded and given permission to return home along with his troops. On 16<sup>th</sup> of April, 1527, he took leave of his father, and he started his journey back to his keep. While passing through Delhi, he plundered houses and looted its treasures. An action that would subject him to intense scrutiny and censure. At first glance, it's perplexing to discern the reasons behind such actions. However, the explanation is not hard to find. It appears evident that Humayun, like many members of Babur's court,

regarded the operations in Hindustan as a large-scale raid that would eventually conclude with a sudden and hasty withdrawal to Kabul. Babur, as anticipated, was deeply vexed upon receiving the news, and penned a letter to his son filled with sharp words. The emperor's disappointment appears to have stemmed not only from his son's disregard for the matter of Hindustan's occupation but also from a perceived lack of dutiful obedience.

### 1.2.3.2 Humayun's life at Badakhshan

It seems, by in general, he was quite popular amongst his subjects at Badakhshan. However, the details about Humayun's time in Badakhshan on his return, is not clear. Nevertheless, some of the key life events of Humayun did occur at Badakhshan. Towards the end of 1528, Humayun's wife Bega Begum delivered his first son, namely Al Aman (protection). At the eve, Babur showered Humayun and his wife with heartfelt congratulations. However, he couldn't help but express his concern about their choice of naming the child 'Al Aman'. In the emperor's eyes, the name carried an ominous undertone and grammatical inconsistencies. Though the word meant protection in Arabic, the common folks often pronounced it as *Alaman* or *Illaman*, which meant robber in Turkic. It can be asserted that, it was during his station at Badakhshan, Humayun grew lazy and worldly.

Following Shah Tahmasp's decisive victory over the Uzbek ruler, Ubaidullah, at Jam, the homeland of Timurids seemed highly favourable to Babur. The emperor had determined to make another attack upon his old enemies, in a pursuit to reconquer the Timurid lands. Nevertheless, due to Babur's extended absence in Hindustan, the Uzbeks swiftly intruded into Babur's western periphery and captured Balkh. As the news of Uzbek offensive reached Babur, he ordered Humayun to defend Badakhshan and recover Samarkand with Safavid assistance. Likewise, his brother Kamran and Kabul begs were ordered to rally against the Uzbeks at Hissar and Merv. At the verge of war, Babur writes to Humayun, "you must put aside your taste for solitude, and that uncouth disposition which makes you fly from the society of others... Instead of allowing your younger brothers and the Begs to assert their independence, you must make them wait upon you twice a day, so that you can take counsel with them on whatever happens." In essence, Babur counsels Humayun, his elder most heir, to show qualities of kingship, as indolence and laziness has no place in the exercise of sovereignty.



Receiving his father's letter, Humayun articulated plans for the campaign against the Uzbeks. The plan consisted of three separate movements. The first, led by Shah Quli, the younger sibling of Sultan Wais of Muhghalistan, aimed to push for Hissar. The second, commanded by Tarsun Muhammad Sultan, intended to make progress through Tirmiz to Kabadian. The third movement, led by Humayun himself, aimed to swiftly attack Samarkand. However, despite competent leadership, the campaign ultimately ended in failure, presumably due to insufficient forces. However, the attempt failed to yield the intended result. Eventually, in 1529 both the parties opted for peace as hostilities dried out. At the end, Humayun terribly failed to recover Balkh nor capture Samarkand; was asked to abandon his military endeavour. After his return to Badakhshan, the futile prince was ordered to station himself at his *Jagir* of Sambal.

### 1.2.3.3 Babur's Letter to Humayun

Despite Humayun's failure, there was no doubt that he was the chosen heir of Babur. There was no dispute over Humayun's succession of the Mughal throne. By the commencement of the central Asian campaign, Babur's health began to show signs of decline. Similarly, Humayun too grew ill after his return to Hindustan. Aware of Humayun's illness, Babur experienced profound distress and executed the renowned act of self-sacrifice in order to preserve his son's life. As a co-incident, Humayun recovered while Babur, who was already unwell, deteriorated rapidly. At his death bed, Babur proclaimed Humayun as his legitimate successor. On 11<sup>th</sup> of January, 1529, Babur writes a secret letter to his successor and son Humayun. In the letter, Babur emphasizes over various key kingly positions that he expected his successor to hold over various socio-political and religious issues. The future Mughal attitude to such administrative matters will be significantly influenced by the opinions articulated by Babur.

Over the matter of reigning over the Hindustan, Babur writes, "Oh my son! The realm of Hindustan is full of diverse creeds. Praise be to God ... that He has granted unto thee the empire of it. It is but proper that you, with heart cleansed of all religious bigotry, should dispense justice according to the tenets of each community. And in particular refrain from the sacrifice of cow, for that way lies the conquest of the hearts of the people of Hindustan; and the subjects of the realm will, through royal favour, be devoted to thee." On the matter of spreading Islam and Temple pillage, Babur counsels his son, "The temples and abodes of worship



of every community under the imperial sway, you should not damage. Dispense justice so that the sovereign may be happy with the subjects and likewise the subjects with their sovereign. The progress of Islam is better by the sword of kindness, not by the sword of oppression.” He also lays down the foundation for the future synthesis and peaceful co-existence of Shia and Sunni Islam in Mughal empire. To which he writes, “Ignore the disputations of Shias and Sunnis,” a dispute that ravaged empires and brew bloody wars, “therein is the weakness of Islam...” Further on he emphasizes kinship over kingship, “Humayun, I commit you and your brothers and my kin and your people to God’s keeping, and all of them are confided to you.... The cream of my testamentary directions is this: Do naught against your brothers, even though they may deserve it,” writes Babur.

#### 1.2.4 Humayun’s Accession to the Throne

On 26<sup>th</sup> of December, 1530, Babur died at Agra. The same day, Prime Minister, Nizamuddin Ali Muhammad, attempted to defy Humayun’s succession to the throne and instead promoted Mehdi Khawaja. However, this scheme came to an end on the third day. The emperor’s death was kept a secret to avoid riots during the interregnum. Three days later, Humayun, a 23-year-old, ascended the Mughal throne at Agra as the *Padshah* of Hindustan. Although Humayun initially inherited the throne with minimal Opposition. The empire bequeathed to him and his own personal life were soon beset with many problems. Some of them having been left behind by his predecessor, he had to grapple with a number of serious problems. Despite conquering a significant portion of northern India, Babur departed from the empire with an exhausted treasury, and the specter of Indo-Afghan and Rajput threat still haunted the Mughals. Furthermore, the post-military feudal administration, upon which stood the Mughal empire, was unstable and the desires of the *begs* seeking to establish their authority constituted a significant issue. Though Humayun inherited all of Babur’s holdings, following his father’s authoritative testament and the Central Asian custom, the patrilineal members of the royal family shared sovereignty. Humayun reconfirmed the authority given to his three half-brothers by Babur. A new problem emerged regarding the distribution of the empire among his siblings. Kamran was granted the regions of Punjab, Kabul, and Kandahar, while Askari received Sambhal as his fiefdom, and Hindal was given the district of Mewar. This partitioning of land among the brothers proved to be an error, particularly in relation

to the territories bestowed upon Kamran. Moreover, Babur had assigned the responsibility of overseeing Badakhshan to their cousin and adoptive brother, Mirza Sulaiman. At times, Mirza Sulaiman acknowledged the authority of either Humayun or Kamran, but occasionally he asserted his independence in opposition to Babur's sons. These areas had been under Babur's authority for the longest period, and Humayun could have relied on them for consistent taxation and as a recruitment base. During the interregnum period following the arrival of a new emperor, Humayun's younger siblings, along with numerous Timurid princes who had taken refuge under Babur, were actively seeking a chance to make the best out of the situation. As Michael H. Fisher puts it, "Each half-brother had dynastic ambitions of his own, at times claiming independent sovereignty." Over the following decades, Mirza Hindal and Mirza Askari, who were younger and held lower ranks, alternated between serving Humayun and Kamran, as well as asserting their own autonomy. Tragically, Hindal was slain by Kamran's troops. Though Humayun frequently and benevolently showed mercy to his brothers despite their bloody betrayals, he eventually banished rebellious duo – Askari and Kamran.

#### 1.2.4.1 Humayun's Renewed Militarism

After assuming the throne, Humayun promptly initiated his military expeditions to consolidate his sovereignty over Hindustan. Many of his father's unfinished expeditions against his fleeing Afghan enemies were taken up by Humayun. Firstly, as Abdul Fazl notes, he marched to the mighty fortress of Kalinjar of Bundelkhand in 1531. The strategic position of the fort had much to offer to the empire's southern defense. As the Chandela Raja of Kalinjar who favoured the Afghans, often gave refuge to the Afghans, opposed a serious threat to Humayun's campaign against the Afghans. For a period of four months, the fort was seized, but later on Humayun entered into a peace treaty with the Raja. A Persian inscription in the fort, attested Humayun's contact with it, as it proclaims him as *Padshah Ghazi* (The Muslim Warrior Emperor). Humayun's primary challenge during the period stemmed from the Afghans residing in eastern regions of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Hence, he diverted his attention towards the east of his empire. With a substantial army, Humayun crossed the Ganges and confronted the Afghans at Dadrah, situated along the Gomti River, where he achieved a resounding victory, causing significant damage to the Afghan forces led by Mahmud Lodi. In the battle, Shaikh Bayazid

lost his life, effectively weakening the Afghan opposition. Notably, Sher Khan refused to align with the Afghans residing in eastern U.P., resulting in allegations of “betrayal” against him. Faced with a dim prospect of defeating the Mughals, a few Afghan leaders sought refuge at Bahadur Shah’s court.

Following the defeat of Mahmud Lodi, Humayun proceeded to besiege the fortress of Chunar, which was under the control of Sher Khan (Sher Shah Suri) at that time. After a duration of approximately five months, Sher Shah was compelled to surrender, leading Humayun to lift the siege. Sher Khan’s shrewd diplomatic maneuvers enabled him to secure control of the Rohtas fortress. However, this decision proved to be a significant blunder on Humayun’s part. Instead, he should have completely crushed Sher Khan’s power when the opportunity presented itself. Had Humayun done so, the course of Indian history might have been altered, and he may have avoided the immense difficulties he encountered later. Regrettably, Humayun failed to comprehend Sher Khan’s deceitful nature, wrongly perceiving this event as a major triumph, and subsequently wasting valuable time celebrating in Agra.

#### **1.2.4.2 Humayun’s Gujarat Campaign**

In the wake of Mahmud Lodi’s defeat, the spotlight turned to Gujarat—a thriving realm fueled by the commerce of its bustling port emporiums. At the helm of this prosperous kingdom stood Bahadur Shah, a dynamic and ambitious ruler, who was of almost the same age as Humayun. Initially, witnessing Babur’s successes against the Afghans and Rajputs, Bahadur Shah believed that a conflict with the Mughals should be avoided at all costs. However, this attitude of his soon change, with his early military success, he emerged as the leading figure among the Afghans. Defiant Afghans from across Hindustan, along with a handful of Mughal rebels, were flocking to Gujarat, fleeing the Mughal army. Amongst them was Alam Khan, the relentless Lodi pretender, who had initially facilitated Babur’s entry into Hindustan. Likewise, Mehdi Khwaja, the pretender to the Mughal throne and Humayun’s brother-in-law, also found refuge at Gujarat. The presence of such figures in Gujarat sparked Bahadur Shah’s ambitions, fueling his determination to take assertive actions in multiple directions. As Sathish Chandra writes, “Bahadur Shah soon showed himself to be a ruthless but capable and ambitious ruler.” Right after Humayun’s succession, Bahadur Shah of Gujarat harbored a hostile attitude towards

the new ruler. Entering an arms race with the Mughals, like Babur, he employed Ottoman *ustads*, Amir Mustafa and Khwaja Safar, to modernize his army. Bahadur Shah held a firm belief that, aided by his newly acquired military technology and supported by his Afghan and Timurid allies, he would triumph over Humayun, whom he perceived as lacking expertise and efficiency. He dispatched his armies in different directions, with the intention of intimidating the Deccan sultanates in the south, Rajasthan, and Punjab in the north, and Malwa and other regions in the east. As the forces of Bahadur Shah surrounded the territories of the Mughal empire, it appeared as if he intended to devour the Mughal territories in a single enormous gulp. These imperialist maneuvers of the Sultan instigated Humayun to focus his attention on Gujarat. It is also noteworthy that the conflict between the Mughals and a power in western India was inevitable, considering the historical pattern of consolidation and expansion over the fertile regions and strategic trade hubs. The link between Malwa, Gujarat, and northern India's alluvial plains through Rajasthan made it a crucial territory for both parties.

In 1532, Bahadur Shah's siege of Chittor ran the bells for Humayun. The intention behind this act was to retaliate against the Rana, who had previously been an ally but had irked Bahadur Shah by aiding Salhadi. Recognizing the potential threat to the Mughal stronghold in Agra and Delhi, Humayun understood that Bahadur Shah gaining control over eastern Rajasthan would immediately endanger their position. Consequently, to send a cautionary message to Bahadur Shah, Humayun decided to relocate to Gwalior. Nevertheless, Bahadur Shah became anxious when he learned of Humayun's arrival in Gwalior, prompting him to quickly negotiate a treaty with the Rana. Despite the treaty boosting Bahadur Shah's authority and reputation, Humayun seemed content with the fact that Bahadur Shah was unable to seize Chittor. As a result, Humayun returned to Delhi and dedicated a year to building a fresh capital named *Din Panah* (Shelter of Faiths) alongside the Jamuna River – as a symbol of imperial tolerance of all religions. It is also noteworthy, that the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, congratulated him a year later for the completion of *Din Panah*. Humayun responded kindly to Bahadur Shah's friendly act. In return, he sent an embassy and asked that no refuge be provided to Delhi's refugees, considering the friendly bond between their kingdoms. However, Bahadur Shah perceived Humayun's friendly attitude to find a middle ground as a display of weakness. To weaken the Mughals, Bahadur Shah made efforts to support Sher Khan financially, providing him with substantial amounts of money.

With a series of strategic actions, Bahadur Shah set in motion a chain of events that would ultimately lead to an unavoidable clash between him and the Mughals. Bahadur Shah's actions inevitably led to conflict with the Mughals. In late 1534, he marched on Chittor for the second time. Even worse, he favored Muhammed Zaman Mirza, a Timurid prince who had previously conspired against Humayun. After Humayun defeated Mirza, he imprisoned him in Bayana, and ordered his blinding. However, with the help of his jailor, Mirza managed to escape this fate and fled the prison. Bahadur Shah welcomed him in Chittor, seeing him as a tool to sow division and confusion among the Mughals. Taking the matter to its next phase, Bahadur Shah initiated a three-pronged assault on the Mughals. Tatar Khan, renowned for his valour and son of Alam Khan, was appointed as the leader of this campaign. Tatar Khan's objective was to attack Agra, while additional forces were assigned to strike Kalinjar in Bundelkhand and create disturbances in Punjab. With an army of 40,000, Tatar Khan successfully captured Bayana. However, as Mirza Askari and Hindal led an advancing Mughal force, the Afghan troops disintegrated. Tatar Khan valiantly continued fighting with a small group of soldiers but ultimately met his demise. The other two fronts of the attack also proved futile. Although Tatar Khan had been instructed not to engage with the Mughals and await Bahadur Shah's arrival, the outcome did not unfold as planned. As Abraham Eraly argues, "There was, however, a fatal flaw in Bahadur Shah's strategy. He mistook territory for power, and in ranging out in too many directions, spread his power thin, instead of concentrating it against the one man-Humayun-whom he had to defeat to realize his ambitions."

#### 1.2.4.3 Defeat of Bahadur Shah

Despite achieving initial success against the Mughals, Bahadur Shah and his supporters ultimately abandoned the battle and fled when faced with Humayun's confrontation. By early 1535, Humayun marched out of Agra with his imperial Mughal army. However, instead of directly advancing towards Chittor, which was under siege by Bahadur Shah, Humayun chose a different route. He marched through Raisen and Sarangpur, ultimately reaching Ujjain. This decision allowed him to gain control over eastern Malwa and positioned himself advantageously to intercept Bahadur Shah if he attempted to retreat to Mandu in Malwa or his capital. This movement made Bahadur Shah's camp anxious, although his *ustad*, Rumi Khan, was confident that he could quickly subdue the commanders of Chittor with his fire power. The Rajputs put up a strong resistance that lasted longer

than expected for Rumi Khan's operation. After two months, when the fort finally fell, Bahadur Shah confronted Humayun at Mandsor, located 80 miles north of Ujjain. Rumi Khan, confident in his artillery, argued that cannons were superior to swords and spears, insisting on the Ottoman tactic of using carts and ditches to protect his front and sides, allowing the artillery to operate safely. However, Rumi Khan overlooked the fact that Humayun was not an Afghan military leader like Ibrahim Lodi, who would have launched a frontal attack. Instead, Humayun ordered his forces to cut off the food supplies to Bahadur Shah's camp, resulting in horses dying and severe food shortages within two weeks. Bahadur Shah, facing distress, secretly fled to Mandu with a small group of followers abandoning his most powerful artilleries. Soon, Humayun captured the venerable camp, with its monarch missing, notable nobles of Bahadur Shah, like Khudawand Khan and Rumi Khan, swiftly joined Humayun's service.

After arriving in Mandu, Bahadur Shah initiated negotiations with Humayun, proposing to surrender Malwa in exchange for retaining control over Gujarat and Chittor. Although the proposals were tentatively accepted, no formal agreement was made. Exploiting the relaxed vigilance of the garrison, a group of Mughal soldiers managed to breach the city walls and allow their comrades to enter. Amidst the chaos, Bahadur Shah fled with a small detachment of his soldiers. Humayun permitted his troops to pillage Mandu for three days before setting off towards Champanir, where Bahadur Shah sought refuge. The formidable fortress of Champanir was surrounded by dense jungle, making it an ideal sanctuary for Bahadur Shah, from where he could hold out against Humayun for a considerable period. As Bahadur Shah lacked the will to confront Humayun, he sent his family members and some valuable treasures from the fort to Diu. On the event of Humayun's arrival, he entrusted the fort's command to his confidants and fled. Nevertheless, Humayun pursued Bahadur Shah relentlessly to Cambay (Khambhat) and caught him by surprise. Fleeing from place to place, evading Humayun's pursuit, Bahadur Shah finally managed to escape to the island of Diu, where he found sanctuary away from the Mughal forces on land. Thus, Humayun successfully expelled Bahadur Shah from Gujarat. After leaving Cambay, Humayun returned to Champanir, after a rigorous siege, captured the fort by the August of 1535. The Mughal conquest of southern Gujarat was finalized with the capture of Champanir. However, the northern region, comprising Ahmadabad and Patan, continued to be governed by Bahadur Shah's forces.



As Bahadur Shah was caught up with the Mughals, his sultanate was at a serious lapse in collection of tax from its feudatories. Hence, Bahadur Shah appointed his slave Imad-ul-Mulk to handle this task in northern Gujarat. Imad-ul-Mulk, utilizing the funds he gathered and taking advantage of the prevailing anti-Mughal sentiment, mobilized an army of 30,000 strong. Imad-ul-Mulk's forces clashed with Humayun, who led the Mughal forces, at Mahmudabad near Ahmadabad. After a fierce battle, by the October of 1535, the Mughals emerged victorious, allowing them to gain access to Ahmadabad. In a span of just ten months after departing from Agra, Humayun swiftly conquered both Malwa and Gujarat. However, Humayun faced a dilemma regarding the future of Gujarat, as the nobles were growing weary of the long expedition. As many of his nobles had settled in the Agra-Delhi region after Babur chose to establish his permanent residence in Hindustan. They were reluctant to uproot their families again by staying in Gujarat. Furthermore, with Bahadur Shah's defeat and the acquisition of his treasures, many notable nobles including Hindu Beg believed that the expedition's main objectives had been accomplished. However, Humayun vehemently disagreed, stating that a hard-won empire should not be discarded. He insisted on organizing and directly administering Gujarat under Delhi's control. Consequently, Humayun appointed Askari as the overall authority in Gujarat, assisted by Hindu Beg and 5,000 troops. The rest of Gujarat was divided into five divisions, each under the supervision of a notable noble, mirroring Babur's governance model in the Doab region.

After making necessary arrangements to consolidate his position, Humayun marched to Mandu, choosing it as his headquarters due to its favorable climate and strategic location. However, the administration he had established in Gujarat collapsed soon after his departure. The nobles in charge of various divisions were unwilling to stay in Gujarat, seeing it as a foreign land. Simultaneously, there was a resurgence of regional independence in Gujarat and a revival of Bahadur Shah's power. Amidst this turmoil, Askari rejected a suggestion to declare independence, but rumors spread, causing disarray among the Mughal nobility. Humayun, lacking initiative or orders, failed to intervene. Meanwhile, Bahadur Shah with his army advanced on Ahmadabad from Surat. Askari and Hindu Beg, divided and lacking courage, unable to face Bahadur Shah, retreated to Champanir. Tardi Beg, the commandant of Champanir, refused Askari entry without direct orders from Humayun. Suspicion and mutual mistrust prevailed, leading Askari to move towards Agra in anger. Eventually, Bahadur Shah's threat was neutralized when he died in a clash with the Portuguese. Despite the setbacks, the Gujarat expedition showcased Humayun's leadership and

eliminated the Mughal threat from Bahadur Shah. However, in hindsight, it would have been wiser for Humayun to stay longer in Ahmadabad to settle the administration and gain local support. Humayun failed to comprehend the tactical situation, his nobles' motivations, and displayed both overconfidence and suspicion towards Askari. The clash between imperial unity and regional independence, inherent in Indian history, once again emerged.

### **1.2.5 Humayun's Struggle with Sher Shah**

Upon Humayun's return from the Gujarat campaign, he was uncertain regarding his next steps. In the wake of his homecoming to Agra, Humayun spent a full year in a state of idleness, finding solace in opium and the indulgences of the harem. Immersed in his intricate studies and imaginative creations, he was consumed by a world of profound complexity. However, news of Sher Khan's increasing power and activities in the eastern regions reached him. This prompted Humayun to make a firm decision to conquer Bengal. Initially, he had initiated this endeavor prior to the Gujarat campaign and had progressed as far as Kalpi. During his 1531 campaign against Mahmud Lodi, Humayun had clashed briefly with Sher Khan, and had reduced him to a Mughal vassal. Unfortunately, the threat posed by Bahadur Shah compelled him to abandon the project and return to Agra. Meanwhile, Sher Khan, biding his time, built up his power brick by brick and tier by tier, hastening slowly, to establish himself as the virtual ruler of Bihar, a king in all but name. The firm control over Bihar merely served as a steppingstone in Sher Khan's ambitious journey, a brief interlude between aspirations. Once Sher Khan solidified his control over Bihar, he set his sights on Bengal. Despite moving away from Mughal territory and strategically timing his actions to coincide with Humayun's absence in Malwa and Gujarat, this expansion brought Sher Khan into direct conflict with Humayun for the second time. Initially, Humayun dismissed Sher Khan as a troublesome subordinate who did not warrant his personal attention. However, when the Khan extended his authority into Bengal, he posed a significant threat to Mughal supremacy, effectively becoming a rival monarch. It appeared that Sher Khan's eastern ambitions in Bengal were merely a steppingstone towards gaining strength and eventually challenging the Mughals in the west. Consequently, now he was determined to subdue Sher Khan, and to conquer the territories of Bengal.



In July 1537, during the rainy season, Humayun departed from Agra and made a leisurely march until he reached the outskirts of the formidable Chunar fort. After spending some time in Banaras, Humayun realized the importance of capturing Chunar, as leaving it in enemy hands would jeopardize his movements towards Bengal. However, the siege of the fort took longer than anticipated, despite the efforts of Humayun's skilled master-gunner, Rumi Khan. By the time Chunar fell in June 1538, Sher Khan had already conquered Gaur, the capital of Bengal. Once Chunar was captured, Humayun offered Sher Khan a choice of land (*jagir*) in Chunar, Jaunpur, or elsewhere if he submitted to him, abandoned his plan to capture Bengal, and returned the royal umbrella and other symbols he had taken from the Bengal ruler. In Humayun's view, Sher Khan was simply a prominent Afghan leader who could be appeased with land. This demonstrates Humayun's lack of understanding regarding the Afghan challenge he faced. According to later Afghan historians, Sher Khan had already resolved to expel the Mughals from India and was working towards unifying the Afghans under his banner to achieve this goal. However, it appears that the main source of conflict between Sher Khan and Humayun was not Chunar or even Bihar but Bengal. The rulers of Bengal had a history of clashes with Bihar, and after establishing his dominance over Bihar, Sher Khan had to repel several Bengali invasions. Following the death of Nusrat Shah and the subsequent seizure of the throne by Sultan Ahmad Shah, Sher Khan turned his attention towards Bengal to further increase his power and wealth without directly provoking the Mughals. Humayun's demand for Bengal caught Sher Khan by surprise, and he firmly stated that he had not exerted so much effort and sacrifice to conquer Bengal only to relinquish it. Instead, Sher Khan proposed to cede Bihar to Humayun and pay an annual tribute of ten lakhs of rupees from Bengal, on the condition that his control over Bengal was acknowledged. Despite the negotiations, as Humayun moved towards Bengal, Sher Khan detained Humayun at Sikrigalli until he had safely transported most of Bengal's treasures to fort Rohtas, his new place of refuge. Thereafter Humayun had an easy passage to Gaur. However, he faced new challenges as he struggled to govern Bengal effectively, like his experience in Gujarat. However, he came to the realization that to bring stability to the administration, he needed to remain in Bengal for a while. The exact duration of Humayun's stay in Bengal and how he utilized his time there is a subject of debate among historians. Some suggest it was three months, others say nine months or even a year. It is likely that Humayun arrived in Gaur after the rainy season, around September 1538, and departed early the following year.

Contrary to allegations of inactivity, it is important to note that Humayun was not completely idle during this period. Despite his engagements, he found time to meet foreign envoys and even sent Shaikh Bahlol to intercede with Hindal when he heard of his rebellion in Agra. However, Humayun's stay in Bengal did not address the core issue he faced in Gujarat. The Mughal nobles, considering Gujarat their home, were unwilling to remain so far away, and had little interest in administering Bengal. Neglecting administrative duties, they indulged in lavish lifestyles and ignored their responsibilities. Humayun, either due to his leniency or desire to avoid displeasing them, failed to reprimand them. The situation deteriorated to the point where Humayun, upon learning of Hindal's expanding rebellion, appointed Zahid Beg as the governor of Bengal, only to receive a sarcastic response and subsequent flight to Agra by Zahid Beg along with Haji Muhammad and Dindar Beg, who were meant to assist him in Bengal. Despite the challenges faced, Humayun managed to establish a functioning government in Bengal and began his return journey. However, his army suffered losses due to the adverse climate, and Sher Khan took advantage of Humayun's absence by capturing various territories and disrupting communication between Humayun and Agra. This absence also revealed internal rivalries among Humayun and his loyal brothers, Askari and Hindal. Hindal, disregarding permission, went to Agra where dissatisfied Mughal nobles joined him. Hindal declared himself an independent king and even marched towards Delhi but was denied entry by the Mughal fort commander, forcing his return to Agra. Kamran, upon hearing of Hindal's rebellion, advanced from Lahore and convinced Hindal to abandon his dreams of independence.

#### **1.2.5.1 Battle of Chausa**

In an attempt to exert pressure on Sher Khan, Humayun embarked on a march towards Bihar via the Grand Trunk Road. The stage was set for a clash of titans, as both armies bristled with seasoned warriors, innovative tactics, and a fervent desire to emerge victorious. If he had attacked the enemy immediately, he would have fared well against Sher Shah, as the Afghan soldiers were tired after a long journey. However, Sher Khan cunningly enticed Humayun to cross the Ganga River and settle on its southern bank at Chausa. The two armies set up camps and engaged in peace negotiations for three months. On 26 June 1539, taking advantage of the rainy season, Sher Khan launched a surprise attack on the Mughal

forces, leading to chaos and disarray. Humayun in a daring pursuit, he made his way to the river's edge, guiding his horse into the rushing waters. Just as it seemed his fate was sealed, an unexpected savior emerged—a humble water carrier by the name of Nizam saved him from drowning. Grateful for this act of heroism, he rewarded Nizam with an extraordinary gesture, granting him the throne for a brief but memorable two-day reign. While the annals of history reveal the heavy toll of approximately 8000 Mughals who perished in the consequential battle, this tale serves as a testament to the unpredictable twists and turns of fate. Sher Khan triumphantly seized the Mughal camp, along with their weaponry and harem. Notably, Sher Khan treated the women of the harem with kindness and arranged for their safe return to Humayun. Despite occasional periods of inactivity, proved himself to be a capable ruler and skilled general until he encountered Sher Khan, who demonstrated superior tactics and military acumen. In some ways, Humayun was ahead of his time with his ambition to unify northern India under a single authority. Considering the limitations of the Mughal ruling class and their inability to establish deep roots in India within a short period, this vision was not feasible. Nevertheless, it was only after his defeat at Chausa that his brothers lost faith in him and drifted away, or opposed him, or even tried to get him killed.

#### **1.2.5.2 Battle of Bilgram or Kanauj**

In Agra, the Mughal brothers gathered to discuss how to deal with their enemy, Sher Shah, who had recently won a significant victory and claimed the throne. Kamran, in charge of a battle-hardened Mughal force of 10,000 soldiers, refused to support Humayun because he had lost faith in his leadership. Likewise, Humayun did not trust Kamran to command the armies, fearing he would seize power for himself. This mistrust grew until Kamran decided to return to Lahore with his army. Meanwhile, Sher Khan declared himself Sultan with the victory in the Battle of Chausa. He gained more power and prestige and took the title Sher Shah while Humayun and his brothers were misspending their time with futile arguments. Consequently, Humayun along with his brothers – Askari Mirza and Hindal Mirza – had to face the advancing Afghan army alone near Kanauj. Though Humayun gathered a large army of 90,000, they were inexperienced and unfamiliar with warfare. Taking advantage of heavy rain and the resulting disarray among the Mughal soldiers, Sher Shah ordered his men to attack on May 17, 1540. Due to the muddy conditions, Humayun could not use his heavy artillery effectively. Despite their valour,

the Mughals were defeated, and Humayun and his brothers had to flee once again. Humayun had almost become a fugitive after his defeat at the battle of Kannauj. Though Humayun managed to reach Agra, he was forced to flee once more as Sher Shah pursued him. Sher Shah captured Delhi and Agra, taking the throne away from the Mughals and proclaimed himself as the monarch. Subsequently, Humayun reunited with his brothers in Lahore, but they were unable to form a united army against Sher Khan due to their individual ambitions. Kamran focused on protecting Punjab and Afghanistan, while Hindal aimed to conquer Sindh. Following the battle of Kannauj, Humayun spent the following 15 years living in exile.

### **1.2.6 Humayun's Exile and Recovery**

In his quest to reach Kashmir, Humayun faced an obstacle when Kamran prevented his passage. Consequently, he redirected his journey towards Sind. However, an unexpected turn of events occurred when Maldev of Marwar, who had initially extended an invitation, had a change of heart and sought to arrest Humayun in order to appease Sher Shah. In the meantime, Humayun married Hamida Banu, the daughter of a Shia Sufi spiritual master from Sindh named Shaikh Ali Akbar Jami, in September 1541. Being refused by Maldeo Rao of Jodhpur for help, Humayun had no choice but to retreat to Sind, seeking refuge at the palace of the Raja of Amarkot. It was during his stay there in 1542 that his son Akbar was born. It was also at this juncture that Bairam Khan, one of his loyal chiefs and Akbar's future guardian, met Humayun and advised him to proceed to Persia. In late 1543, after crossing the Indus, he arrived near Kandahar only to discover that Askari was compelled to recognize Kamran's authority, while Hindal's refusal had led to his imprisonment. Meanwhile, Sher Shah began constructing the formidable and strategically significant Rohtas Fort near Jhelum in Punjab to prevent the Timurids from entering India. To exacerbate matters, Kamran ordered Askari to capture Humayun, who was encamped near Kandahar. At this point, Humayun found himself with no remaining support in India. Facing this predicament, he swiftly and thoughtfully decided to flee westward to the Shia Safavid Persia. He left behind his fourteen-month-old son, Jalal (later known as Akbar), at the mercy of the invaders. Askari not only adopted Jalal but also convinced Kamran to treat the infant with leniency. It is possible that Kamran took Jalal as a hostage. Nevertheless, Jalal's childhood would be filled with adventures in and around Kabul. Until Humayun's return, Askari took on the responsibility of caring for Jalal and ensuring his safety from Kamran.

Despite the hardships encountered, Humayun made his way to Persia. In Persia, he received a warm welcome from King Shah Tahmasp, who pledged his support in reclaiming Humayun's throne under the condition that Humayun embrace the Shia creed, deliver speeches in Shah's name, and relinquish Kandahar to the Shah once successful. Helpless and devoid of alternatives, Humayun yielded to these demands. It seems that Hamida's prominent Shia heritage likely played a significant role in enhancing the relationship between the two rulers. In an effort to reclaim his former territories, with the exception of Kandahar, Tahmasp offered his backing to Humayun by providing a force of 12,000 soldiers. With the aid of an army provided by Shah Tahmasp, consisting of 1400 soldiers, Humayun managed to seize Kandahar from his brother Askari in 1554 and recapture Kabul from Kamran. Reuniting with his son Jalal (Akbar), Humayun imprisoned Kamran and later blinded before being sent to Mecca, while Hindal, another brother, perished in battle. Askari, too, departed for Mecca. Later, Humayun appointed Akbar as the governor of Ghazni, where he displayed his abilities that would later define his rule in India throughout the 16th century. By 1555, the state of affairs in India had deteriorated significantly. Around the same time, his rival Sher Shah Suri was killed during a siege at Kalinjar in India. Despite these victories, Humayun would spend the next ten years trying to conquer Delhi without success.

Sher Shah's death in 1545 marked the beginning of a turbulent period for the Sur Empire. His successor, Islam Shah Suri, faced a series of swift successions to the throne. In November 1554, Islam Shah Suri also passed away in Delhi, leading to a power vacuum. His young son and heir, Firoz Shah, fell victim to assassination by his uncle, Muhammad Adil Shah. However, Muhammad Adil Shah's rule was short-lived as he was overthrown by his brother-in-law, Ghazi Khan, also known as Ibrahim Shah. Meanwhile, Sikandar Shah declared his independence in Lahore and successfully defeated Ibrahim near Mathura at the Battle of Farah. Sikandar Shah emerged as the new emperor within a span of only six months, effectively shattering the Sur Empire's foundation. Throughout these tumultuous events, Humayun, who had been biding his time for 15 years, seized the opportunity. With no formidable rivals obstructing his path, Humayun set his sights on Delhi, the de facto capital of India for centuries. During the Sur civil war, Humayun strategically captured important strongholds, including Rohtas Fort, initially constructed by Sher Shah to impede Humayun's entry into Hindustan. He then proceeded

to seize Dipalpur and Lahore in early 1555. The decisive battle took place at Sirhind on June 22nd, 1555. Sikandar Shah Suri was defeated, forcing him to flee towards the Himalayas in present-day Himachal Pradesh. With the eminent threat of Sikandar invading from the north, Jalal (Akbar), a twelve-year-old, was left in Punjab under the guardianship of Bairam Khan as Humayun marched for Delhi accompanied by another trusted lieutenant, Tardi Beg. In July of 1555, Humayun successfully entered Delhi, after a fifteen-year exile, he reclaimed the throne of Hindustan. However, fate played an ironic twist on him once again. In late January of 1556, Humayun lost his life due to injuries sustained while descending the stairs of Sher Mandal, believed to be either Sher Shah's library or possibly an observatory, situated within the Old Fort in Delhi. As Lane Poole rightly said – "he tumbled out of life as he had tumbled through it."

### 1.2.7 Humayun's contribution to Art and Architecture

Humayun's passion for art and architecture was nurtured during his exile in Persia, where he encountered the splendour of Persian art and absorbed its influences. When he ascended to the throne, he brought back Persian artists, craftsmen, and architects to his court in Delhi, thereby fostering a cross-cultural exchange that would shape the artistic direction of the Mughal Empire. One of Humayun's most significant architectural achievements was the construction of his mausoleum, located in Delhi, known today as Humayun's Tomb. This grand structure, completed in 1572, is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture and serves as a precursor to the Taj Mahal. The tomb's design, attributed to the Persian architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, exhibits a perfect synthesis of Persian and Indian architectural elements. It features a grand double dome, intricate geometric patterns, exquisite marble inlay work, and lush gardens, all of which became defining characteristics of Mughal architecture. Humayun also played a pivotal role in the establishment of the *charbagh* style of garden layout, which became a hallmark of Mughal gardens. These gardens, divided into four quadrants by water channels, symbolized the Islamic concept of paradise on earth and offered a serene and harmonious environment. Humayun's love for gardens is evident in the layout of his tomb's surroundings, with meticulously manicured lawns, fountains, and water channels that enhance the beauty and tranquillity of the monument. Humayun's *Din Panah*, also known as the "Refuge of Humayun," was a significant architectural marvel built during the 16th century in Delhi. This grand citadel served as his refuge after his exile and subsequent victory to reclaim the Mughal throne. The imposing structure displayed a unique blend



of Persian and Indian architectural styles, featuring intricate stone carvings, elegant domes, and spacious courtyards.

Furthermore, Humayun's patronage of the arts extended beyond architecture. He was a connoisseur of calligraphy, painting, and literature. His court became a hub of artistic activities, attracting renowned artists and scholars from different parts of the world. The emperor's love for books led to the establishment of an extensive library at his court, which became a centre for intellectual exchange and the production of illuminated manuscripts. Under Humayun's patronage, the art of miniature painting flourished, laying the foundation for the later development of Mughal painting. The emperor himself was known to be an avid patron and practitioner of this art form. Mughal miniature paintings from this era typically showcased intricate details, vivid colours, and a blend of Persian and Indian artistic styles. These paintings often depicted scenes from court life, royal portraits, historical events, and epic tales. Humayun's contributions to art and architecture were not limited to his own time but had a lasting impact on subsequent Mughal emperors and their architectural endeavours. His emphasis on incorporating diverse cultural influences and his patronage of the arts set a precedent for the fusion of Persian, Indian, and Central Asian styles, resulting in the unique and awe-inspiring monuments that define Mughal architecture. In conclusion, Humayun's artistic and architectural contributions were instrumental in shaping the Mughal Empire's aesthetic legacy. Through his patronage and passion for art, he laid the foundation for the magnificent structures, breathtaking gardens, and exquisite artwork that would characterize the Mughal era. Humayun's dedication to promoting cross-cultural exchange and his keen eye for beauty continue to inspire and captivate admirers of art and architecture to this day.

#### **1.2.8. Let Us Sum Up:**

Humayun, the second Mughal Emperor of India, remains an intriguing figure in history, offering both triumphs and failures that shaped the trajectory of his reign and the Mughal Empire as a whole. While he inherited a vast empire from his father, Babur, Humayun faced numerous challenges throughout his rule, including internal conflicts, external invasions, and political instability. His inability to effectively govern and consolidate his power led to constant rebellions and the gradual erosion of the empire's authority. His military defeats against Sher Shah Suri exposed weaknesses in his leadership and military strategies, highlighting his lack of foresight and strategic acumen. Despite his

initial setbacks and periods of exile, Humayun eventually managed to reclaim his throne with the help of Persian allies. During his second reign, he made notable contributions to the arts, culture, and architecture, leaving behind an enduring legacy. The construction of iconic structures such as the Humayun's Tomb in Delhi exemplifies his patronage of art and architecture, blending Persian and Indian influences to create a distinct Mughal style.

### **1.2.9 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Discuss the early difficulties faced by Humayun
2. Describe the Gujarat campaign of Humayun
3. Elaborate Humayun encounter with Sher Shah and his reaccession to throne

### **1.2.10 References**

1. Bhargava, Meena. Exploring Medieval India 16-18 Century: Vol I & Vol II, Orient Blackswan, 2010
2. Chandra, Satish. Medieval India: From Sultanat To The Mughals Part Two Mughal Empire (1526-1748), Har-Anand Publications Pvt Ltd., 2007.
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## Lesson 1.3 - Sher Shah's Rise to Power and Administration

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### Structure

- 1.3.1 Learning Objectives
- 1.3.2 Introduction
- 1.3.3 Farid to Sher Shan
- 1.3.4 Sher Shah Suri's Regin
- 1.3.5 Sher Shah's Reforms
- 1.3.6 Sher Shah's Military Campaigns and Contributions
- 1.3.7 Estimate on Sher Shah
- 1.3.8 Letu us Sum Up
- 1.3.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 1.3.10 References.

### 1.3.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- know about the early career of Sher Shah
- to summarise his regime
- appreciate his contribution to administration
- give an estimate on Sher Shah

### 1.3.2 Introduction

Sher Shah was an Afghan by birth overthrew the Mughal rule and reestablished the Afghan power at Delhi. He was the founder of Sur dynasty. This dynasty was in power for a period of 15 years; 1540-1555. This period is known as the Sur Interregnum. Sher Shah started his career as a Jagairdar in Bihar and later with his talent rose up to the position of King. He was with the Mughal army for a short period of time; observed and learnt their strategies and later defeated Humayun. He is known for his administrative measures. The administrative institutions and system which was introduced by Sher Shah was later taken up Akbar and it was refined and implemented as Mughal administration.

### 1.3.3 Farid to Sher Shah

Sher Shah Suri was born in 1486 as Farid Khan in a noble Pashtun family that traced its ancestry to the Afghan Sur tribe. His father Hasan Khan, a small Jaghirdar of Jaunpur. Though there is limited information available regarding Farid's early education, it is known that he grew discontented with his father's disregard for his mother in favour of a younger wife, who happened to be an Indian slave-girl. In response, Farid left his home and journeyed to Jaunpur, where he immersed himself in religious texts, Arabic language, history, and other subjects at a reputable *Madrassa* for a couple of years. Eventually, by 1515-16, he reconciled with his father, who entrusted him with the administrative responsibilities of the two parganas under his control. During his posting, young Farid gained firsthand experience of the administrative operations at the pargana and village levels. He proved himself capable and played a crucial role in resolving the issues caused by defiant Rajput zamindars in the parganas. Farid formed local forces to tackle the jungles, and in cases where villages resisted, he even resorted to severe measures such as killing the men, enslaving the women and children, and introducing new peasants. While strict in collecting dues from other villagers, he showed generosity in levying taxations. Unfortunately, after about three to four years, due to his stepmother's intrigues, Farid was removed from his position. Frustrated and unemployed, he turned to banditry, targeting Hindu rajas and zamindars in northern and eastern Bihar. Eventually, he found employment under Taj Khan Sarangkhan, the commander of Chunar, followed by Nasir Khan Nuhani, the muqta of sarkar Ghazipur. Later on, he arrived in Agra, where he joined the service of Darya Khan Naib. Through his patron, Farid submitted a petition to Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Hindustan, requesting the dismissal of his father from his jagir in Sahsaram on grounds of his age and influence from an Indian slave-girl. However, Ibrahim Lodi firmly rejected the petition. Eventually, his father was killed in a battle while fighting against the Rajputs. With the authority of Ibrahim Lodi's *Farman* (Royal Decree), Farid arrived in Sahsaram determined to reclaim his father's estate and jagir from his stepbrothers, who had wrongfully seized control in his absence.

#### 1.3.3.1 Rise to Power: When Farid Khan Became Sher Khan

After Ibrahim Lodi's downfall in the Battle of Panipat, Bahar Khan proclaimed himself as the Sultan of Bihar assuming the title of Sultan Muhammad Shah. He bestowed honours upon several Afghans who had

been loyal to him, including a man named Farid. According to the insights of modern historian K.R. Qanungo, Farid was granted the title of Sher Khan, either during this event or possibly earlier, in recognition of his valuable services, rather than for a literal act of slaying a tiger (*sher*), as Afghan historians often claim. As Babur was consolidating his position in Hindustan, Sher Khan had already become a significant player in the political landscape of Bihar. Virtually, the Nuhani dynasty of was kept alive for only due to the efforts of Sher Khan. However, the prominent Afghan households were much divided amongst these over issues of transfer or division of the *iqtas*. Using this internal rift for his advantage, Babur favoured one or the other faction of Afghans to infiltrate Awadh and Bihar. Babur's actions caused disruption and unrest among the Afghans residing in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Sher Khan, who had lost his *jagir* (land grant) to Muhammad Khan, his brother, sought refuge with the Mughal governor of Jaunpur, Husain Barlas. In a gesture of support, Husain Barlas reinstated Sher Khan's *jagir* and granted him a few extra *parganas* (administrative divisions). The Mughal Empire faced consecutive threats from both Sanga and later Humayun's rival, Bahadur Shah. These challenges jeopardized the Mughals' ability to maintain control over their jagirs, particularly those held by Afghan nobles supported by the Mughal rulers. Sher Khan was among those who switched sides, further complicating the situation for the Mughals.

After the death of Muhammad Shah, the ruler of Bihar, his widow Dudu took control of power as their son Jalal was still a minor. Dudu appointed Sher Khan as the guardian of Jalal and entrusted him with the affairs of the state. A similar situation occurred when Taj Khan Sarangkhan, the commandant of fort Chunar, passed away, and his wife Lad Malika inherited his wealth and power, even though her stepsons were present. To protect herself, Lad Malika proposed marriage to Sher Khan, offering him a significant number of precious jewels, pearls, and gold. This not only provided Sher Khan with the means to raise a large army but also granted him control over a formidable fort and its surrounding territories. Sher Khan's fortunate streak continued when Gauhar Gosain, the widow of Nasir Khan Nuhani of Ghazipur, sought his hand in marriage, bringing him an additional 300 mans of gold. Furthermore, Bibi Fath Malika, the daughter of Mian Muhammad Kalapahar Farmuli and the niece of Sultan Bahlol, came into great wealth. Initially considering retreat to Bhata in Bundelkhand to safeguard her possessions, she was convinced by Sher

Khan to join him under the promise of protection and non-interference with her wealth and freedom. However, Sher Khan later acquired 300 mans of gold from her, leaving her with only a small amount of gold and some villages for her sustenance. Through his charisma, diplomacy and strategic matrimonial alliance, Sher Shah soon rose to prominence. It is also noteworthy to witness the relative autonomy and agency that women enjoyed in tribe-oriented Afghan Muslim societies opposed to more feudal oriented hierarchical societies.

Sher Khan's path to dominance in Bihar was paved by the ongoing conflict between Bihar and Bengal, which Babur deliberately avoided getting involved in. This provided Sher Khan with his first opportunity to seize control. Subsequently, when the conflict between Bihar and Bengal resurfaced, Sher Khan capitalized on it again. Fearing Sher Khan's growing power, Jalal Khan, the ruler of Bihar, sought refuge with Sultan Nusrat Shah of Bengal, who saw this as a pretext to invade Bihar and defeat Sher Khan. However, the invasion proved unsuccessful, bolstering Sher Khan's wealth and influence. Consequently, the Nuhani dynasty lost its influence in Bihar, transforming into a pawn of an adversarial force. After the death of Sultan Nusrat in 1535, his brother Sultan Mahmud took up the mantle to conquer Bihar. He initiated two campaigns, the first targeting Makhdum-i-Alam, the Bengali governor of North Bihar. Allegedly, Makhdum-i-Alam's friendship with Sher Khan hindered his support in the previous Bihar campaign. Although the expedition proved unsuccessful, Makhdum-i-Alam was killed, and his entrusted property, given to Sher Khan for safekeeping in exchange for assistance, fell into Sher Khan's hands. Likewise, following the demise of Sultan Muhammad, by 1530 Sher Khan emerged as a dominant figure in Bihar. With a series of significant triumphs against the formidable kingdom of Bengal, Sher Khan solidified his power and grew in self-assurance, surpassing even Humayun's expectations. His victory at Surajgarh in 1534 thwarted the Bengali threat to Bihar, but Sher Khan remained cautious. In the subsequent year, he launched an invasion of Bengal, compelling Sultan Mahmud to surrender territory up to Sikrighali and pay a substantial indemnity. Sultan Mahmud, like his counterpart in Gujarat, sought support from the Portuguese. In response, Sher Khan's son, Jalal Khan, besieged and captured Gaur in 1537, effectively ending Sultan Mahmud's dynasty and eliminating the danger of Portuguese encroachment in East Bengal. The intricate dynamics in Eastern U.P. and Bihar, influenced by Mughal preoccupations elsewhere, the socio-political



climate within Bihar and East U.P., and the ongoing Bihar-Bengal conflict all played pivotal roles in Sher Khan's ascent to power.

### 1.3.3.2 Sher Khan to Sher Shah: Ascending to the throne

Following the defeat of Mahmud Lodi, Humayun proceeded to besiege the fortress of Chunar, which was under the control of Sher Khan at that time. After a duration of approximately five months, Sher Shah was compelled to surrender, leading Humayun to lift the siege. Sher Khan's shrewd diplomatic manoeuvres enabled him to secure control of the Rohtas fortress and evade the threat posed by Humayun. While the Mughal emperor was busy with his Gujarat campaign, Sher Khan, biding his time, built up his power brick by brick and tier by tier, hastening slowly, to establish himself as the virtual ruler of Bihar. Upon Humayun's return from the Gujarat campaign, news of Sher Khan's increasing power and activities in the eastern regions alarmed the Mughals. In July 1537, during the rainy season, Humayun departed from Agra and made a leisurely march until he reached the outskirts of the formidable Chunar fort. However, the siege of the fort took longer than anticipated, despite the efforts of Humayun's skilled master-gunner, Rumi Khan. By the time Chunar fell in June 1538, Sher Khan had already conquered Gaur, the capital of Bengal. Once Chunar was captured, Humayun offered Sher Khan a choice of land (*jagir*) in Chunar, Jaunpur, or elsewhere if he submitted to him, abandoned his plan to capture Bengal, and returned the royal umbrella and other symbols he had taken from the Bengal ruler. Humayun's demand for Bengal caught Sher Khan by surprise, and he firmly stated that he had not exerted so much effort and sacrifice to conquer Bengal only to relinquish it. Instead, Sher Khan proposed to cede Bihar to Humayun and pay an annual tribute of ten lakhs of rupees from Bengal, on the condition that his control over Bengal was acknowledged. Despite ongoing negotiations, as Humayun moved towards Bengal, Sher Khan detained Humayun at Sikrigalli. Sher Khan had seized every road leading from Bengal, he was laying siege to Chunar and Jaunpur, held all the country as far west as Kanauj, and had proclaimed himself king at Rohtas with the title of Sultan Sher Shah. The Mughal emperor was almost trapped inside Bengal. As Stanley Lane-Poole writes, with mutiny open or concealed at Agra, with a rival king standing across his communications and besieging his cities, with no hope of succour from any side, it was certainly time to act. Six months had he trifled in Bengal, and now the question was how to get out. In a time of dire circumstances, Humayun found himself in a desperate situation and

chose to initiate negotiations. Through these diplomatic efforts, a treaty was successfully established, outlining the terms under which Sher Shah would maintain control over Bengal and a portion of Bihar. However, a crucial condition of this agreement was the requirement for Sher Shah to openly acknowledge and respect Humayun's authority as the supreme ruler. It is likely that Humayun arrived in Gaur after the rainy season, around September 1538, and departed early the following year.

In an attempt to exert pressure on Sher Khan, Humayun marched towards Bihar and Bengal. Sher Khan had seized every road leading from Bengal, he was laying siege to Chunar and Jaunpur, held all the country as far west as Kanauj, and had proclaimed himself king at Rohtas with the title of Sultan Sher Shah. The Mughal emperor was almost trapped inside Bengal. As Stanley Lane-Poole writes, "with mutiny open or concealed at Agra, with a rival king standing across his communications and besieging his cities, with no hope of succour from any side, it was certainly time to act." Six months had he trifled in Bengal, and now the question was how to get out. In a time of dire circumstances, Humayun found himself in a desperate situation and chose to initiate negotiations. Through these diplomatic efforts, a treaty was successfully established, outlining the terms under which Sher Shah would maintain control over Bengal and a portion of Bihar. However, a crucial condition of this agreement was the requirement for Sher Shah to openly acknowledge and respect Humayun's authority as the supreme ruler. Had Humayun attacked immediately, he would have had an advantage as the Afghan soldiers were fatigued from their long journey. However, Sher Khan cunningly lured Humayun across the Ganga River to settle on its southern bank at Chausa. The two armies established camps and engaged in peace talks for three months. On 26 June 1539, during the rainy season, Sher Khan launched a surprise attack, causing chaos and disarray among the Mughal forces. In a daring act, Humayun reached the river's edge and faced the risk of drowning. Thankfully, a humble water carrier named Nizam emerged as an unexpected saviour, saving him from this fate. In gratitude, Humayun rewarded Nizam by granting him a brief but memorable two-day reign. Despite the heavy toll of approximately 8000 Mughal casualties, this tale exemplifies the unpredictable nature of fate. Sher Khan triumphantly seized the Mughal camp, including their weapons and harem, yet notably treated the women with kindness and ensured their safe return to Humayun. While Humayun had shown himself to be a capable ruler and skilled general, it was Sher Khan who showcased superior tactics and military acumen.

In Agra, the Mughal brothers convened to address the growing threat posed by Sher Shah, their victorious rival who had seized power. Kamran, in command of a battle-hardened Mughal force of 10,000 soldiers, refused to support his brother Humayun due to a lack of confidence in his leadership. Similarly, Humayun harboured doubts about Kamran's intentions, fearing he would seize control of the armies for himself. The mistrust between them escalated, leading Kamran to withdraw to Lahore with his troops. Meanwhile, Sher Khan capitalized on his triumph in the Battle of Chausa, proclaiming himself Sultan and acquiring more power and prestige. While Sher Shah rose to prominence, Humayun and his brothers wasted valuable time in futile arguments. Consequently, Humayun, Askari Mirza, and Hindal Mirza found themselves confronting the advancing Afghan army near Kanauj without Kamran's support. Despite gathering a large but inexperienced army of 90,000, Humayun's forces were ill-prepared for warfare. Taking advantage of heavy rain and the resulting chaos among the Mughal soldiers, Sher Shah ordered an attack on 17<sup>th</sup> of May, 1540, marked the historic battle of Kanauj (Battle of the Ganges). The muddy conditions rendered Humayun's heavy artillery ineffective. "Before the enemy had discharged an arrow," says the historian Mirza Haidar, who was present, "the whole army was scattered and defeated by mere panic and crowding; not a gun was fired." Caught up in the chaos, attempting to flee, Mughal soldiers rushed towards the river Ganges. Unfortunately, the bridge they were crossing collapsed, leading to the tragic drowning numerous fleeing soldiers who were burdened by their heavy armour. Miraculously, Humayun narrowly managed to survive yet another close call. Humayun teetered on the brink of becoming a fugitive following his loss at the Battle of Kannauj. Although he managed to reach Agra, Sher Shah's pursuit compelled him to flee once more. Sher Shah captured Delhi and Agra, wresting the throne from the Mughals, and declared himself as the monarch. In the aftermath of the Battle of Kannauj, Humayun endured 15 years of exile, only to return after Sher Shah Suri's death. Meanwhile Sher Shah had reduced the greater part of Hindustan to submission.

#### **1.3.4 Sher Shah Suri's Regim**

Sher Shah Suri's ascent to power was a consequence of his military prowess and astute political manoeuvring. After defeating the Mughal Emperor Humayun in the Battle of Chausa in 1539 and subsequently in the Battle of Kannauj in 1540, The fading glory of the Afghans was

resurrected by Sher Shah. Sher Shah's authority, says his historian, Abbas Khan, "whether he was absent or present, was completely established over the race of Afghans." Sher Shah established himself as a formidable contender for the throne. However, Sathish Chandra argues, "Sher Shah's rise to power cannot be seen in isolation. It was a reflection of the power struggles within the Mughal Empire, where Humayun's reign was marked by internal divisions and external threats. Sher Shah seized this opportunity to assert his claim and establish a new dynasty." Pataliputra, that beautiful capital of Asoka the Great, which fell into ruins in the seventh century, was rebuilt by Sher Shah and named it Patna. Sher Shah gathered the finest elements of Indian art and knowledge, resulting in a court known for its brilliance and the modest elegance befitting a righteous Muslim ruler. His aim was to ensure absolute fairness towards the burgeoning vitality of his nation's existence, encompassing trade, industry, and transportation. The Afghan monarch had inherited a vast stretch of land, with a throne that had loose sovereignty over its chieftains. Hence, he soon had to subdue the numerous rebellious chieftains to establish and expand his dominion. On one hand he kept his pursuit active to capture Humayun, still a plausible threat, while on the other hand, he took efforts to reform his administrative apparatus. Though short lived for just five years, the Afghan empire under Sher Shah, at its zenith, extended across northern and central India. "Sher Khan was not an angel (malak) but a king (malik). In six years, he gave such stability to the structure (of the empire) that its foundations still survive. He had made India flourish in such a way that the king of Persia and Turan appreciate it." writes Mirza Aziz Koka in a letter to Emperor Jahangir.

### **1.3.5 Sher Shah's Reforms and Contributions**

Sher Shah Suri's administration, characterized by visionary reforms and effective governance, left an indelible mark on the region's history. The administrative system that his predecessor, Humayun, had left behind was characterised with mystical idealism and ceremonialism. A system that proved to be ineffective in reigning over a vast and diverse land like Hindustan. Hence, Sher Shah reorganised a different administrative apparatus that aimed at centralization and effective governance. As Henry George Keene mentions, "his ordinances touched on almost all the primary parts of administration and evince a real care for the people's welfare." Much of Sher Shah's administrative policies and reforms were an anti-thesis to the Afghan theory of Kingship. In contrast to the Turkish

concept of kingship, which upheld the idea of absolute monarchy and divine rule, the Afghan theory of kingship was largely characterised by a system of tribal oligarchy and rule of power. As the Turkish Sultans had reigned as individual despots, with limited participation of the nobles in the state affairs. While the Afghan theory of kingship had a system that resembled oligarchy. This theory emphasized democratic processes in selecting the head of state, with the Sultan being elected by the nobility rather than following a strict succession plan. Each Afghan noble laid claim to commanding their own forces, refusing to consider their troops as part of the Sultan's army. The nobles maintained their own armies and enjoyed *jagirs* (land grants) and privileges on an equal footing with the Sultan. In fact, the Sultan relied on the nobles for both manpower and resources, highlighting their significant influence and contribution. The Afghan way of running the state affairs being too dispersed and loosely organised was a mismatch to an ambitious ruler like Sher Shah. Hence, the Afghan ruler established a political system that concentrated all the vital powers in the hands of the Sultan.

#### 1.3.5.1 Administrative Division and Reorganisation

Like many of his contemporaries Sher Shah was a despot. In his hands rested the consolidated power of policy, civil affairs, and military might. Everyday administrative tasks were entrusted to his ministers, who were appointed following the model of the Sultanate era. Sher Shah establish four important ministries to handle specific state affairs – Revenue, Military, Foreign Affairs and Royal Proclamations. In the imperial administration, the *Wazir*, also known as the head of the *Diwan-i-Wazarat*, held the position of Minister of Revenue and Finance Administration. This role encompassed the responsibility for managing the empire's income and expenses, as well as exercising general oversight over other ministers. The *Ariz-i-Mamalik*, in charge of the *Diwan-i-Ariz*, served as the army minister, responsible for the recruitment, organization, and discipline of the military forces. While not the commander-in-chief, this minister handled tasks such as ensuring troops and officers received their salaries and overseeing the army's deployment on the battlefield. The third ministry, known as the *Diwan-i-Risalat* or *Diwan-i-Muhtasib*, operated as the foreign ministry, with the minister acting as a liaison with ambassadors and envoys to and from foreign states. Additionally, this minister likely managed diplomatic correspondence and sometimes oversaw the charity and endowment

department. Lastly, the *Diwan-i-Insha* constituted the fourth ministry, led by a minister responsible for drafting royal proclamations and dispatches. This minister also maintained communication with governors and other local executive officers and was entrusted with the management of government records. In addition to the main officers, there were also several lesser officials, among whom held relatively high positions were the Chief *Qazi* (Head of Judiciary) and the head of the news department. Other departments, often considered as ministerial, included the *Diwan-i-Qaza*, responsible for overseeing the judicial administration and handling both initial cases and appeals from provincial courts, and the *Diwan-i-Barid*, which was headed by the *Barid-i-Mamalik*. The *Barid-i-Mamalik*'s primary responsibility was to inform the king of significant events by providing regular intelligence reports. Furthermore, he also established a sophisticated spy system, which was overlooked by the *Diwan-i-Qza* who managed the reports, news writers, and the spies across Hindustan.

The administrative structure of the provinces was divided into districts known as Sarkars. Each Sarkar was headed by two important officials: the Chief *Shiqdar* and the Chief *Munsif*, also referred to as *Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran* and *Shiqdar-i-Munsif* respectively. The Chief *Shiqdar*, as the head of the Sarkar, had a small contingent under his command to maintain law and order. Additionally, he supervised the work of the *Shiqdar* of parganas (sub-districts) within his district. On the other hand, the Chief *Munsif* was responsible for revenue collection and civil justice, primarily functioning as a judge. The Chief *Munsif* also oversaw the work of the *munsif* (subordinate judge) of the parganas. Each Sarkar consisted of multiple parganas, and each pargana had a *Shiqdar*, a *Munsif* (Amin), a treasurer, and two clerks. The *Shiqdar* maintained a group of soldiers to ensure peace, while the *Munsif* supervised land revenue administration and the collection of government dues. The *Munsif* also presided over civil and revenue cases and held the same status as the *Shiqdar*. The treasurer played a significant role, as all collections were entrusted to them, and they maintained records of income and expenses for the pargana. Two clerks, known as *Karkuns*, were employed one to maintain records in the court language and the other to keep duplicate records in the vernacular languages. Sher Shah introduced a unique system of government in the administration of Sarkars and Parganas, known as dyarchy, aimed at preventing rebellions. This system involved appointing two individuals of equal rank—one in charge of military functions and the other overseeing finance. This arrangement served as a check on each other's



powers, as rebellions often arose due to the concentration of military and financial control in the same person. At the village level, the lowest unit of administration, Sher Shah implemented a policy wherein the local population was held responsible for maintaining peace and security in their respective areas. Recognizing the autonomy of villages, which were governed by their own Panchayats, Sher Shah gave legal recognition to these panchayats. Composed of village elders, the panchayats ensured the welfare of the people and administered justice. Sher Shah established a connection with the villages through village officials, namely *Patwari* (village accountant) and *Chowkidar* (village watchman).

#### 1.3.5.2 Sadak, Sarai and Spy System

One of his most notable achievements was the establishment of a robust system of law and order throughout his empire. Recognizing the importance of safe and secure transportation routes, Sher Shah prioritized the protection of roads and implemented strict measures to crack down on criminals, particularly robbers and dacoits. In order to guarantee the security of the roads, he firmly believed that it was imperative to exercise authority over the zamindars, as certain individuals among them were collaborating with the robbers. In his *History of Sher Shah*, Elliot writes, “Sher Shah made certain laws, both from his own ideas, and by extracting them from the works of the learned, for securing relief from tyranny, and for the repression of crime and villany; for maintaining the prosperity of his realms, the safety of the highways, and the comfort of merchants and troops.” Likewise, his roadways projects’ implications were beyond the realm of commerce and internal administration, it also transcended to the realm of military and logistics – like in the case of his Multan campaign. One of his notable achievements was the restoration of the ancient imperial road, stretching all the way from the river Indus in the west to Sonargaon in Bengal. Additionally, he constructed a road connecting Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor, likely linking it to the seaports of Gujarat. Another major road was built from Lahore to Multan, serving as a crucial starting point for caravans traveling to western and central Asia. The longest of these, called the Sadak-e-Azam or the “Badshahi Sadak” (renamed “Grand Trunk Road” by the British) survives till this day. Furthermore, a fourth road was established between Agra and Burhanpur, which also connected with the seaports of Gujarat.

To ensure the safety and comfort of travellers, the ruler implemented the construction of *sarais* along these highways, spaced at intervals of approximately four miles. These *sarais* consisted of separate quarters for Hindus and Muslims, providing them with beds and cooked meals. Both Muslim and Brahman cooks were employed to cater to their respective dietary requirements. The *sarais* also made arrangements for uncooked food supplies to be provided to Hindus who adhered to specific caste rules. Remarkably, the ruler enacted a rule that anyone arriving at the *sarai* would be served food from government funds based on their social status, while their horses were provided with grain and water. Additionally, a custodian was appointed at each *sarai* to safeguard the goods of merchants, who were allocated rent-free lands in the surrounding areas to cover their expenses. The expenses of the *imam* and the *muezzin* for the mosque, present in each *sarai*, were also accounted for in the allocated lands. These measures aimed to foster safe and convenient travel, as well as support trade and religious practices within the empire. Sher Shah brought several married slaves and appointed them as attendants of the *Sarais*. Usually, the *Sarais* were managed by Bhatiyaras as a familial unit, with larger *Sarais* were run by more than one Bhatiyara, each caring for three or four rooms, a section of a *Sarai*. According to historical accounts, Sher Shah constructed approximately 1700 *sarais*, which can be described as robust fortified inns. These structures were built with great strength, as evidenced by the fact that several of them have managed to withstand the test of time till the present day. According to *Tarikh-i-Sher Shah*, "On both sides of the highway, Sher Shah planted fruit-bearing trees such as also gave much shade that in the hot wind travellers might go along under the trees, and if they should stop by the way might rest and take repose." Sher Shah's visionary approach also involved the establishment of markets within each *sarai*, transforming many of them into bustling trading centres known as *mandis*. These *mandis* not only facilitated the sale of agricultural produce by local peasants but also served as the foundation for the emergence and flourishing of towns, known as *qasbas*, where commerce and handicrafts thrived.

In addition to their primary function, the *sarais* were also utilized as *dak chowkis*, providing postal services. A system of popular postal service was arranged, and 3,400 horses were maintained to ensure speed and regularity. Every *Sarai* had two horses for transmitting news of far and near to the centre. Moreover, the infrastructure included the presence of two *Tariqh nawis* (post house clerks) who were responsible

for meticulously documenting the arrival and departure of mail carriers. The carriers predominantly hailed from tribal backgrounds or belonged to depressed castes, known as *mewars* (messengers). On an average these horse-riding messengers travelled more than eight miles per hours. According to Rukhsana Iftikhar, “it is on the record that Husyan Shiqdar rode eight hundred Khurohs in one day in an emergency.” To ensure smooth operations, a superintendent known as the *Darogh-a-Dak Chawki* was appointed as the head of the post office, responsible for handling administrative dispatches to the ruler. The communication department was effectively overseen by the *Diwan-i-Insha*. As the primary function of the department was to issue letter and royal *Farmans* (orders), it often employed the infrastructure and logistics of the *Dak Chawkis* (post offices). In the course of this transportation mechanics, there were designated stations known as *Chawkis* situated every three *Kos*, equivalent to six miles. These *Chawkis* housed *Harkaras*, (news gatherers) individuals specially assigned by the chief superintendent of the *Harkaras* (*Daroghashi-Harkaras-kul*), who resided there and promptly carried the letters to the next destination upon receiving them. In order to relay crucial information to the emperor, the spies gathered intelligence via their agents and meticulously compiled a confidential dossier. This collection of classified documents was discreetly dispatched to its recipient alongside the regular mail, containing vital updates pertaining to the specific region assigned to each operative. Sher Shah remained constantly updated on their physical manifestation through his network of spies. This system enabled Sher Shah Suri to receive news of disaffection amongst his troops, zamindars, and nobles from distant provinces before they spread in the area concerned. During his reign Sher Shah had virtually established a self-sufficient multi-purpose system that ensured fair trade, swift movement, and vigilant surveillance.

#### 1.3.5.3 Revenue Assessment and Monetary Systemization

In terms of significant contributions, Sher Shah’s most notable achievement was his reform of the revenue system. This endeavor was particularly fitting for him, given his thorough understanding of the existing revenue system, thanks to his experience managing his father’s jagir and his decade-long rule over Bihar starting in 1530. Sher Shah aimed to eliminate the reliance on crop-sharing or estimation for land-revenue assessment and prevent the transfer of the burden onto the weaker sections by village headmen and zamindars. As a ruler, he insisted on implementing a measurement system known as *zabt*. While the practice of measuring

the sown area had a long history in India and was initially established or revived by Alauddin Khalji, Sher Shah introduced a distinct measurement system. In the traditional approach, the crop yield was estimated based on sample cuttings taken from the sown area. However, Sher Shah categorized the lands into three types—good, bad, and middling—and calculated the average yield. The state's share was determined as one-third of the average yield. Likewise, the system also classified agricultural land on the basis of the frequency of it being cultivated – under continuous cultivation (*Polaj*) and the lands which kept out of cultivation temporarily (*Parauti*). Consequently, a crop-rate (*ray*) was devised, enabling the prompt determination of the state's share as soon as the sown field was measured. A survey charge of 2.5% called *Jaribana* and collection charge of 5% called *Muhasilans* was also collected. This share could then be converted into rupees using local rates. Although peasants were given the choice of paying in cash or kind, Sher Shah preferred cash payments. Notably, Multan was the only region excluded from measurement due to special circumstances, with the old system persisting there and the state's share reduced to one-fourth. Additionally, Sher Shah stipulated the charges to be paid to the measuring parties. Sher Shah Suri also introduced a new coinage system that had a lasting impact on currency, even to this day. The coins were inscribed with the name of the issuing town and the corresponding dates. In a significant move, he replaced the traditional Indian currency denominations of *tanka* and *jetal* with the introduction of the *rupayya*, also known as the rupee coin. In addition, Sher Shah's reign saw the introduction of a copper currency known as the *Dam*, which was later adopted by Akbar, the Mughal King, and incorporated into his monetary system. This coin was commonly referred to as *paisa*.

In order to address the recurring issue of famine, an annual measurement of fields was implemented, accompanied by a levy of two and a half seers per bigha as a precautionary measure. The application of these reforms during the reigns of Sher Shah and Islam Shah has been a subject of controversy, with debates over whether the settlement was made with individual cultivators or with village headmen and zamindars. While Abul Fazl claimed that Hindustan transitioned from crop-sharing to measurement under these rulers, further examination by Irfan Habib revealed that the measurement system was primarily prevalent in settled regions such as the doab, Punjab, and Malwa during Akbar's era. It is likely that this system did not cover the entire land in any province. Nonetheless, the introduction of the *zabt* system marked a significant development.

Each peasant's payment amount was recorded on a document known as *patta*, ensuring that no additional charges could be imposed. Some historians have drawn comparisons to the British ryotwari system, suggesting a direct relationship between the state and peasants. However, modern research does not support this notion. Although attempts were made to assess individual cultivators' obligations, local headmen and zamindars were involved in both assessment and collection processes, receiving remuneration for their services. The medieval state lacked the capability to eliminate the muqaddams and zamindars, only managing to restrict their exactions. Sher Shah's attitude towards the peasantry exhibits conflicting elements. While he demonstrated concern for their well-being, acknowledging their vital role in agriculture, he took measures to ensure that his army did not disrupt cultivated fields during marches. Strict actions were taken against soldiers who violated these rules. However, Sher Shah's solicitude was limited to loyal and compliant peasants who adhered to imperial regulations and promptly paid their dues. Those zamindars and their followers who failed to make payments or neglected their responsibilities were dealt with harshly, with their villages being captured, men killed, women and children enslaved, and their possessions seized, a commonality of the era.

#### 1.3.5.4 Military Reforms

According to historical accounts, Sher Shah held a strong aversion towards the Mughal government's structure, which entrusted significant authority to corrupt ministers and nobles. As a result, Sher Shah took matters into his own hands, personally overseeing every aspect and tirelessly dedicating himself to the state affairs. Unlike Humayun, relentless commitment led Sher Shah to embark on frequent tours across the country, ensuring thorough governance. Much of his military reforms were modelled similar to Alauddin Khilji's reforms. In his efforts to revitalize certain administrative practices, he reintroduced the use of branding systems for horses and descriptive rolls, which had fallen out of favour. Sher Shah implemented measures such as keeping detailed records of soldiers' *huliya* (physical attributes) and the horse through *dag* (branding) for identification purposes. The enforcement of these measures was severe, extending even to recording details of palace staff such as sweepers and female slaves. Remarkably, he personally conducted interviews with each soldier, determining their pay prior to their induction

into the army. Maintaining a formidable force, he commanded a personal army consisting of 150,000 cavalry, 25,000 infantry and bowmen, including matchlock-men, a contingent of artillery, and 5,000 war elephants. Accompanying these forces were noble commanders, some leading groups of 20,000, 10,000, or 5,000 soldiers. While the exact recruitment process for these soldiers remains unknown, it is possible that the Afghan nobles recruited them on a tribal basis. The monthly stipends of newly enlisted soldiers were determined by Sher Shah, but the precise amount remains undisclosed. According to Kalika Ranjan Qanungo, "The severe discipline in Sher Shah's camp in one campaign was sufficient to turn a raw recruit into a seasoned veteran." It appears that both the nobles and soldiers received payment through land assignments or *iqtas*. Prior to embarking on any military campaign, he would inquire if any of his chiefs or soldiers lacked land assignments, ensuring provisions were made for grants before setting off. The chiefs were strictly instructed not to encroach upon the land assigned to the soldiers. Therefore, contrary to speculations, Sher Shah did not seek to eliminate the *iqta* or jagir system. Sher Shah also appointed a military officer known as *Bakshi-e-Lashkar* for his help in the military administration.

### 1.3.6 Sher Shah's Military Campaigns

Soon after his assertion, he sent an army to Multan in pursuit of Humayun, as the fleeing Mughal empire still posed a valid threat to his throne. Though Humayun escaped Sher Shah's grasp, Multan came under his sway. At this stage he made no further effort to enter upper Sindh, to pursue Humayun. With the Mughal forces scattered, Humayun posed no further danger to Sher Shah. In 1543, Sher Shah initiated a military operation aimed at liberating Multan from the Baloch tribes that had taken control of the region. The appointed commander, Haibat Khan Niazi, was entrusted with the task of eliminating the notorious bandit leader Fath Khan Jat of Kabulah and driving out the Baloches from Multan to restore its prosperity. This strategic move not only aimed to protect India's trade with West and Central Asia, with Multan being a crucial trading hub, but also to exert pressure on Maldeo, who had established a close relationship with Humayun. Haibt Khan successfully implemented a comprehensive pacification policy, resulting in the annexation of Multan, upper Sindh, including Bhakkar and Sehwan, to the Afghan empire. Furthermore, Sher Shah's construction of a new road from Lahore to Multan played



a significant role in facilitating these endeavors. After establishing his authority in Punjab and the Northwest, Sher Shah devoted his efforts to building a strong administrative system instead of constantly pursuing conquests.

Sher Shah soon had to divert his attention towards consolidation of his power in the Northern Hindustan. Firstly, As Mallu Khan, known as Qadir Khan, declared himself as the king, after Humayun had left Malwa. Likewise, the Rajputs of Chanderi and Raisin who were under his suzerainty also reigned independently. Concerned with it, Sher Khan successfully invaded and conquered Malwa in 1542. Nevertheless, he allowed many of the Hindu rajas to retain their own principalities under the Afghan Empire. In the subsequent year, he returned to Malwa to suppress a rebellion and took the opportunity to remove the influential Rajput chief Puran Mal of Chanderi. Despite Puran Mal's heroic resistance during the siege, it was evident that the Rajputs stood no chance against the Afghan army. Hence, Puran Mal sought out an agreement with Sher Shah for peaceful surrender. The as he retired from the fort with four thousand Rajputs and their families. Tragically, they were all betrayed and massacred near Sher Shah's camp, disregarding the solemn safe conduct promised to them. An act that tarnished Sher Shah's high held reputation.

The initial conquests of Malwa and Chanderi served as a precursor to the ambitious goal of conquering Marwar, where Maldeo had established his rule in 1531. Over time, he expanded his influence to encompass a significant portion of western and eastern Rajasthan, including Sambhal and Narnaul in Shekhawati. Reports even placed his armies near Hindaun and Bayana, on the outskirts of Agra. Maldeo strategically fortified existing forts like Ajmer, Merta, and Jodhpur, while also constructing new ones at key locations. His successful conquest of Satalmir and Pokharan allowed him to bolster his army with the renowned Bhatias, known for their bravery. Maldeo's most recent triumph was the capture of Bikaner, where his relatives had valiantly fought until their last breath before the fort surrendered. However, a few surviving members of the ruling family, Kalyanmal and Bhim, along with Biramdeo of Merta, sought refuge at the court of Sher Shah. Maldeo's relentless expansionist policies not only caused conflicts with the displaced *thikanedars* (hereditary fiefs) and his own kin, but also drew the ire of the Rana of Mewar, the Kachhawahas, and the Shaikhawati chiefs. These internal divisions would ultimately play a significant role in Maldeo's eventual defeat and downfall.

Maldeo had an ambitious goal to establish Rathor dominance over the entirety of Rajasthan. However, Rajasthan-based empire alone would have faced insurmountable challenges in successfully challenging and defeating a power backed by the combined resources of Punjab and the Upper Ganga Valley up to the Bihar border. Knowing this reality, Maldeo refrained from openly confronting Sher Shah. Consequently, after Maldeo's conquest of Malwa in 1541, Sher Shah effortlessly occupied Ranthambhore and the Kachhawaha region in eastern Rajasthan, encountering no resistance from Maldeo. Sher Shah then turned his attention to capturing Shaikhawati, including Nagor, while simultaneously sending a message to Maldeo, offering recognition of his Bikaner conquest if he expelled or captured Humayun. The implicit threat of invasion compelled Maldeo to distance himself from Humayun, who was advancing towards Jodhpur with a small retinue based on a previous invitation extended by Maldeo. Humayun wisely chose to change his course considering these circumstances, although it should not be assumed that Maldeo had intended to harm his guest. This action averted Sher Shah's impending invasion for the time being, but events would later demonstrate that it merely postponed the inevitable. A power centered in Delhi and Agra could not tolerate a Rajasthan-based power capable of posing a flank threat and disrupting communications with Malwa and Gujarat.

In 1543, Sher Shah led a massive army from Agra to Jaitaran, positioning himself strategically between Jodhpur and Ajmer. Despite Maldeo's smaller force of 50,000 soldiers, the Rajputs lacked artillery. Sher Shah fortified his camp with trenches and earthworks, making it virtually impregnable. After a month of confrontation, Maldeo considered retreating to Jodhpur and Siwana for better preparation, but his sardars disagreed, deeming it dishonorable. This dissension, coupled with doubts sown by Sher Shah, caused disunity among the Rajputs, ultimately allowing Sher Shah to triumph easily. Although Maldeo sought refuge in the fort of Siwana, the Afghans conquered Jodhpur and Ajmer. Sher Shah then turned his attention to Mewar, where the Rana surrendered Chittor to secure peace. Sher Shah extended his control over Rajasthan, except for a small region in the west. Sher Shah's famous statement, "I had given away the country of Delhi in exchange for a handful of millets," was not an indication that Maldeo had almost won the battle; rather, it honored the bravery of Jaita and Kupa, the Marwar army leaders, and the Rajputs' willingness to face death against insurmountable odds.

After conquering Rajasthan, it would have been logical for Sher Shah to proceed with the conquest of Gujarat and upper Sindh. However, for some inexplicable reason, he diverted his attention to the conquest of Bhata (Rewa) in Bundelkhand. While besieging the fort of Kalinjar, Sher Shah met his demise in May 1545 due to burns caused by a rocket mishap. Nevertheless, he witnessed the fort's surrender before his unfortunate death. Sher Shah was succeeded by his second son, Jalal Khan, who assumed the title of Islam Shah. Islam Shah's reign of nearly nine years was largely marked by internal strife, primarily a civil war with his elder brother, Adil Khan, and conflicts with the nobility. Although Islam Shah had gained recognition as a skilled warrior during his father's rule, he proved to be severe and highly suspicious, particularly towards the nobles who had been loyal to his father and instrumental in establishing the empire. Instead of considering them as partners in the kingdom, as per Afghan tradition, Islam Shah sought to assert the monarchy's supremacy. He introduced elaborate ceremonies, conducted every Friday, where the Sultan's slipper and quiver were placed on a *qursi* (highchair), while high-ranking commanders bowed before them in strict order. Islam Shah also attempted to exert greater control over the financial aspects of the nobles' estates (iqtas or jagirs), leading to accusations that he aimed to centralize all jagirs under *khalisa* (imperial control). Additionally, he sought to replace the traditional practice of granting jagirs with cash salaries for soldiers. These measures resulted in resentment among the Afghan nobles, which erupted after Islam Shah's death in 1553 and ultimately led to the rapid disintegration of the Sur empire. This power vacuum provided the Mughals with an opportunity to reestablish their dominance. The period of Indian History from 1540-55 is known as the Sur Interregnum.

#### 1.3.6.1 Sher Shah's contribution to Art and Architecture

Sher Shah's legacy is not only as an Empire builder but also on public welfare works. His construction projects had a lasting impact. After lying in ruins for many centuries since the seventh century, Pataliputra, the once splendid capital of Asoka the Great, was reconstructed by Sher Shah and bestowed the name - Patna. Sher Shah dedicated considerable focus to fortifying various cities in India, exemplifying his commitment to defense and security. A fort named as "little Ruhtas" was built to guard Kashmir. He also ordered the construction two forts in Delhi; a small fort was constructed for the governor's residence, while a larger one, named Khar Fort, was built with a jami mosque which was decorated lavishly with red semi-precious

stones. Likewise, he orders construction projects of various fortress across his dominion, Sher Garh (Lion House) in Kannauj, Rohtasgarh Fort in Bihar, fort of Bhurkundah and the fortification of Delhi. As Sher Shah Said once famously said, “if I live long, I will build in every Sarkar a fort on the strategic point which may in the time of trouble serve the purpose of shelter for the oppressed. It would be an outpost for the rebels, and I will convert all the earthen work *sarais* into brick built one.” The Sher Shah Suri Masjid in Patna is an example of the Afghan style of architecture and the monarch’s keen sensibility to architecture. The central dome of the mosque lies in the middle of the roof and is surrounded by Four small domes. The unique part of this design is that, at any angle, there appears to be only three domes. The splendid mosque of Bhera, located at the present-day Pakistan, is also named after the Afghan ruler as Sher Shah Suri Mosque, which is the only standing relic of his ambitious city construction project. He also built a magnificent mausoleum for himself at Sahsaram which was in a class by itself. Sher Shah showcased his architectural prowess by constructing a city in Delhi along the banks of the Jamuna River. While the majority of the city no longer stands, two notable remnants that have withstood the test of time are the imposing battlements of the *Purana Qila* (Old Fort) and the splendid *Qila-i-Kuhna* mosque nestled within its walls. Within the premises of *Purana Qila*, there lies *Sher Mandal*, a remarkable octagonal edifice that later fulfilled the role of Humayun’s library. However, it is noteworthy, that the Afghan monarch had razed his Mughal predecessor’s *Din Panah*, an architectural complex, to build his own capital in Delhi. These remaining structures serve as compelling evidence of Sher Shah’s profound comprehension and aesthetic sensibility when it came to architecture.

### 1.3.7 Estimate on Sher Shah

Sher Shah Suri stands as a towering figure in the annals of Indian history. His indomitable spirit, administrative reforms, and visionary policies have left an indelible mark on the subcontinent. From his humble beginnings to his meteoric rise as a formidable ruler, Sher Shah’s legacy continues to inspire and captivate. His military prowess, exemplified by his victorious campaigns and the construction of the Grand Trunk Road, showcased his determination to unite and develop the vast empire he governed. Additionally, his innovative administrative reforms, such as the introduction of the land revenue system and the establishment of efficient administrative structures, laid the foundation for a more equitable and

efficient governance system. As the British Historian, Mountstuart Elphinstone writes, “Sher Shah appears to have been a prince of consummate prudence and ability towards his subjects, his measures were as benevolent in their intention as wise in their conduct. Notwithstanding his short reign and constant activity in the field, he brought his territories into the highest order and introduced many improvements in his civil government.” However, Sher Shah’s rule was not without its flaws. His military conquests often came at the cost of immense human suffering and loss of life. His strict enforcement of the law, while intended to maintain order, sometimes bordered on authoritarianism, stifling dissent and curtailing individual freedoms. Despite his untimely demise, Sher Shah’s contributions to Indian history are enduring and serve as a testament to the power of vision, perseverance, and transformative leadership. His life and achievements remind us that great leaders can shape the destiny of nations, leaving an enduring legacy that transcends time and continues to shape the course of history.

### 1.3.8 Let Us Sum Up

Sher Shah belong to the Afghan tribe, born as Farid at Bihar as a son of a Jagirdar later rose up to the position of King of Delhi through his charisma, diplomacy and strategic matrimonial alliance. He defeated the Mughal Emperor Humayun and established the Sur Dynasty. Sher Shah is known for his administrative capabilities. The reforms introduced by Sher Shah was later taken by the Mughals.

### 1.3.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Trace the transition from Farid to Sher Shah
2. Describe the administrative reforms introduced by Sher Shah
3. Sketch the military career of Sher Shah

### 1.3.10 References

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## UNIT-II

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### Lesson 2.1 - Akbar: As Consolidator of Mughal Power

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#### Structure

- 2.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.1.2 Introduction
- 2.1.3 Early Life of Akbar
- 2.1.4 Regency of Bairam Khan
- 2.1.5 Military Campaigns
- 2.1.6 Let us Sum up
- 2.1.7 Self-Assessment Questions

#### 2.1.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- describe the early life of Akbar
- explain the role of Bairam Khan
- discuss the imperialist policy of Akbar

#### 2.1.2 Introduction

Akbar, the son of Humayun was the third ruler among the Great Mughals. Akbar means Great but he is the Greatest of all the Mughals known for his administrative skills and successful military campaigns. He consolidated the Mughal rule. He was born in a Rajput house at Amarkot when his father Humayun was a fugitive. He was brought by his uncles and later got united with his father. Bairam Khan the Persian general strongly supported Akbar to ascend the throne. Akbar through his military exploits expanded the Mughal Empire, for the first time the borders of Mughal Empire reached the Deccan region.

#### 2.1.3 Early Life of Akbar:

Akbar, son of Humayun and his Persian wife Hamida Banu Begum was born on October 15, 1542, at the Palace of Rana Virsal in Amarkot. Vincent Smith says “‘Though a foreigner in India’ who had no drop of

Indian blood in veins, he received in hereditary, three distinct strains of blood- The Turks, The Mongols and the Persian.” During his birth the future of the Mughals in India was in turmoils, Humayun was in exile after being defeated by Sher Shah, who was also pursuing Humayun. The infancy of Akbar was filled with incessant vicissitudes when Humayun fled for Qandahar, to the misfortunes of Akbar he fell hostage in the hands of Kamran who was the brother turned adversary of Humayun. Kamran after Humayun’s defeat in Chausa became independent ruler of Kabul. Akbar was brought to Kabul, where he was cared and nurtured by his foster mothers Maham Anaga and Jiji Anaga who remained as support during his hard times. The early life of Akbar was filled with miseries, he was used as a pawn in the hands of Kamran. In 1545, Humayun with the help of Shah Tahmasp’s forces captured the Kabul fort. Akbar was reunited with Hamida Banu Begum, which was short-lived as Kamran again resurfaced and captured the fort back in 1546. Akbar was treated in inhumane ways during this time. In November, 1547, Kabul was attacked by Humayun, Kamran exhibited heartlessness by placing Akbar in the rampart of the fort gates. The tactical moves of Humayun’s commanders and Akbar’s luck saved him from the artillery. After the capture of Kabul onslaughts of Kamran was resisted till his capture in 1551.

At the age of nine Akbar was made governor of Ghazni. Humayun left Kabul in November, 1554 and captured Lahore in 1555. Humayun now turned his attention towards Sirhind, the Afghans fought valiantly against the Mughal onslaught but were defeated. Akbar was credited with the victory of Sirhind and was made heir apparent. Humayun reclaimed the Delhi throne on July 23, 1555. Though the throne of Delhi was in the hands of the Mughals the threat imposed by Afghans was imminent. Adding to the problem, Humayun tumbled in the stairs of his library in January, 1556. Akbar was in Kalanaur when the unfortunate news reached him. His death was kept a secret for 17 days. The formal coronation was done in Kalanaur itself. The Kutba was read on Akbar’s name who was enthroned at the age of thirteen with Bairam Khan as his regent. The re-emergence of the Mughals in Delhi did not end the Afghani threat; they were on the verge of being expelled from India again after the death of Humayun in Delhi. As Ishwari Prasad says “Even in the disruption of the Afghan empire, there were ample resources, both in men and leaders, to have made the reconquest of India by the Mughals a virtual impossibility.”

### 2.1.3.1 The Second Battle of Panipat:

Akbar's position was still precarious. His army was small, and even the Panjab was not completely subdued. The Afghans drove out the Mughal governors from the Agra-Bayana region; Delhi, which was suffering from a terrible famine, had been seized by Hemu. Hemu, a seasoned commander and general of Muhammad Adil Shah Sur marched towards Delhi with a force of 50,000 cavalry, 1,000 elephants, 51 pieces of cannon, and 500 falconets. Despite the tough resistance of Tardi Beg who was in charge of Delhi, the capital was conquered by Hemu. The discourse of Hemu's succession to the throne is debated. Nizamuddin Ahmad merely says that Hemu had assumed the title of Raja Bikramjit. Satish Chandra states that "However, the assumption of the title of "Vikramjit" does not imply that Hemu had proclaimed himself as an independent king." Akbar's nobles had divided opinion on the invasion of Delhi. Tardi Beg advised Akbar to challenge his half-brother Mirza Hakim who had declared himself an independent ruler of Afghanistan, while Bairam Khan wanted to march towards Delhi. Akbar took the drastic decision of marching toward Delhi. Tardi Beg was diplomatically executed by Bairam Khan on the charge of treason.

Hemu who headed a disciplined army, out of haste despatched a small contingent with most of his artillery to Panipat. They were sabotaged by Ali Kuli Khan who led a surprise attack on the forces and the entire artillery fell into the hands of the Mughals. On 5th November, 1556, both armies met in Panipat. Albeit the previous debacle on the side of Hemu, the victory of the Mughals was uncertain. Akbar was left under the protection of 5,000 Mughal troops who were given orders to flee from the battlefield in case of defeat. The valiant battle posed by the army of Hemu crushed the left and right wing of the Mughal army. Hemu's offensive attack had pushed back the Mughal archers and cavalry and was about to win the battle by bringing in his war elephants and reserve cavalry to scatter Akbar's center. When an arrow pierced his eye and made him faint, Consternation spread swiftly among Hemu's army, which broke and fled. Hemu was brought to Bairam Khan who pleaded with the young emperor to hack off the head of the infidel and earn the title of Ghazi, but Akbar politely declined, observing that slaying a defenceless enemy was unchivalrous. Badauni records the statement of Akbar "Why should I strike him now that he is already as good as dead?".

There upon Bairam Khan himself drew his sword and decapitated Hemu. Abul Fazl praises Hemu for his lofty spirit, courage, and enterprise, and wishes that if Akbar had come out of his veil, or if there had been some wise master in his court, they would have kept Hemu as a prisoner, and if he had been persuaded to enter the royal service, he would have provided distinguished service.” Akbar entered Delhi with triumph, but this didn’t end the Afghan danger. Bairam and his royal servants after a month’s stay in the capital marched towards Lahore and were on the search for Sikandar Sur, who was still at large. He shut himself in the fort of Mankot, which he surrendered in May, 1557 after a long siege. He was treated well, and Bairam Khan honored his status by assigning him certain districts in the east.

#### 2.1.4 Regency of Bairam Khan

Before his death, Humayun appointed his loyal general Bairam Khan as his son’s guardian. As a Persian by race and Shia by faith, he was an immigrant who joined Humayun as a Soldier. Bairam Khan is credited for his loyalty towards his master who stood by him in his turmoil and got recognized as his son’s guardian by the emperor himself. Bairam Khan played a significant role in capturing Qandahar and Kabul. He was made Wazir by Humayun who later became Vakil us Sultanate i.e. Prime Minister with the designation of Khan I Khanan. His role in retaining the Mughal position in Delhi and his guidance for Akbar has been already discussed in the foregoing pages. Bairam was acquainted with Akbar from a young age, he was dearly called ‘**Khan Baba**’. Bairam Khan was certain on clearing his path in establishing his position in the court. Assassination of Tardi Beg is one fine example of his fancies. The fact that Tardi Beg’s execution was kept secret for three months lends validity to this charge. Before that, another noble, Abul Muali, who had been close to Humayun, was apprehended and imprisoned while attending a feast for Akbar’s coronation. It is also highlighted by the decision of Munim Khan, the governor of Kabul and a close confidant of Humayun, to postpone his departure from Kabul to India upon learning of these developments. This provides context for what is known as Bairam Khan’s regency, which lasted a span of four years, from 1556 to 1560.

Bairam Khan consolidated the position of the Mughals within a month of time. Sikander Shah was dealt with sheer diplomacy. Gwalior’s powerful fort was captured. Malwa was conquered through an expedition. Muhammad Adil

Shah was defeated and killed in 1557. In 1560, Jaunpur was released from the influence of Afghans. The threat posed to Kabul by Mirza Sulaiman, the ruler of Badakhshan, was averted, and the kingdom extended from Kabul to Jaunpur in the east and up to Ajmer in the west. He also strengthened the empire internally. The rise and fall of Bairam Khan was quick. The race and faith of Bairam Khan were the initial causes of jealousy among fellow nobles. Bairam Khan, as regent and prime minister, consolidated control of the reclaimed region. When Pir Muhammad with his unintended act insulted Bairam Khan and he was removed from his post.

The next factor was the utmost power exercised by him, this made him surrounded by flatterers. Faithful nobles like Pir Muhammad Khan was appointed as his personal Wakil, Khwaja Aminuddin was made as Bakshi and Shaikh Gadai was made as Sadr. Sadr began to interfere in revenue affairs, and he was very arrogant and close-fisted in giving madad-i-maash (revenue-free lands), and likewise, only after a personal appearance by the applicant. His growing power alienated the 'Atkah Khail' or 'foster-father battalion,' consisting of Akbar's nurses' families and their relatives. Their efforts were bolstered when Akbar's mother, Hamid Banu Begum, and other female relatives of the young Emperor, who had remained in Kabul throughout this period due to political unrest, joined him in Agra. He had cordial relations with the powerful group of Turkish nobles represented by the Uzbeks, such as Ali Quli Khan Zaman, his brother Bahadur Khan, etc. The Turkish nobles were prepared to work with Bairam Khan, but they were extremely envious and always tried to poison Akbar's ears against Bairam Khan.

Bairam Khan's success in consolidating all power and authority in his hands could only be fleeting. Some modern historians see his downfall as a reaction by the nobles to a centralizing tendency. Only a ruler with the necessary military skill and political acumen could carry out such a policy successfully. When Akbar turned eighteen he became more active in Administration. The centralized policy of Bairam Khan and the atrocities of his flatterers even shadowed the power of Padshah. Favourites of Bairam held privy purses while the emperor himself was dependent on his regent.

In March, 1560, a conspiracy was formed in which the principal partners were Hamida Banu Begum, Maham Anaga, her son Adham Khan and relative Shibabuddin. Maham Anaga was able to transfer Akbar from Agra to Delhi on the pretext of Hunting. From there, Akbar wrote to Bairam to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca. On 31 January, 1561, Bairam Khan was assassinated by an Afghan at Patan in Gujarat on his way to Mecca. His

camp was plundered, but his four-year-old son, Abdur Rahim, was sent to court, and later became a trustworthy noble of Akbar. Some modern historians contend that Bairam favoured members of the Shia sect, and this contributed to his downfall. This is far from the truth. Bairam saw himself as a defender of Mughal interests rather than the Shia sect. Even zealous Sunnis like Badauni regarded him as unparalleled in wisdom, generosity, sincerity, and humility. Badauni correctly concludes that it was Bairam's tireless efforts, bravery, and statesmanship that enabled the Mughals to establish an empire in India for the second time.

Akbar's reign from 1560 to 1564 has been described as a petticoat government, but this is untrue. On the contrary, he quickly assumed command of the administration. It is evident that Maham Anaga rose to be a confidante of Akbar, but it doesn't mean he turned into a puppet in the hands of the former. Akbar was experimenting through appointing numerous Prime Ministers. By frequently changing his wakils or prime ministers, he weakened the importance of the position while increasing his personal power. The two immediate contenders for the post of Wakil were Maham Anaga, who wanted the position for her son, Adham Khan, and Shamsuddin Atka Khan, Akbar's foster father, who had played a key role in Bairam Khan's demise. Anaga saw herself as "the substantive wakil, and sat on the masnad as such." However, even this period cannot be described as a "petticoat government" because Akbar's wishes had to be considered and his orders obtained before any matter could be resolved. J.L. Mehta criticizes this period as the so-called 'Petticoat government'.

## **2.1.5 Military Campaigns of Akbar**

### **2.1.5.1 Invasion of Malwa:**

Adham Khan was sent for the conquest of Malwa in 1560. Nizamuddin Ahmad, Akbar's Bakhshi, tries to provide further justification of the Mughal attack on Malwa by saying that Baz Bahadur occupied himself with "unlawful and vicious practices". Baz Bahadur, the ruler of the Malwa was defeated, and a large booty was acquired by Adham Khan, who led the invasion. When Akbar discovered that Adham Khan kept the spoils of war, including some rare beauties, he marched in person from Agra on 13 May, 1561, to punish him, and forced Adham Khan to surrender the elephants and other booties. Adham Khan strategically acquired forgiveness through his mother's intercession. Munim Khan's removal in November 1561, and the appointment of Atka Khan as wakil, intensified the party conflict and



decreased Maham Anaga's influence. Adham Khan who was in the race of wakil had a rift with Atka Khan, later assassinated Atka Khan in his public diwan as a result of this. Akbar was furious and sentenced Adham Khan to death by throwing him from the fort's first floor. After this incident 40 days later Maham Anaga breathed her last breath. Pir Muhammad was made as governor who mismanaged things that war broke out again in Malwa, and Baz Bahadur once more recovered his lost kingdom. Which he lost again in a short time. Akbar who has cleared his path to sovereignty adopted two objectives in administration and appointments. Firstly, to identify the competent nobles, and secondly, to use their competency for the advancement of the state.

#### **2.1.5.2 Imperialist Policy of Akbar:**

The expansionist policy of Akbar can be studied as:

- a. Consolidation of Northern India
- b. North-West Frontier policy
- c. Deccan Policy

##### **2.1.5.2.a. Consolidation of Northern India:**

##### **Conquest of Gujarat (1572-1573)**

Akbar after his invasion of Malwa and Chittor turned his attention towards Gujarat. After the death of Bahadur Shah in 1537 there was anarchy in Gujarat. The disloyal nobles defied the authority of Muzaffar Shah III, who was incompetent and unpopular among the public. This confusion was used by Akbar. Itimad Khan Habshi an adversary of Muzaffar Shah III sought the help of Akbar who himself marched on the aid of the revolting chief. Albeit the reasons for defeating the tyrant and restoring the peace, there was another major reason for the conquest. Akbar realized that the expansive policy of the Portuguese laid a threat to the Mughals. Muzaffar Shah was defeated in the battle. Nevertheless, both conspired against the Mughals later. Mirza Aziz Koka was made governor of Gujarat. Akbar made similar administrative arrangements as done by his father. Mirza Aziz Koka milk-brother of Akbar was made the Governor of Gujarat. Ensured by the arrangements made for the administration of Gujarat, Akbar returned to the capital on March 1573. Though the peace was ensured, Habshis and Hindu rulers were waiting for an opportunity to revolt. The peace ensured was short lived by the revolt of Muhammad Husain and Gujarati nobles.

Akbar started from Delhi with 3000 cavalymen and swiftly reached Gujarat in 11 days. After ensuring peace Akbar returned to Fatehpur Sikri within Forty-three days. The Buland Darwaza was designed and constructed in 1573, to commemorate the victory in the imperial conquest of Gujarat.

#### **Conquest of Bengal and Bihar (1574-76):**

After the conquest of Gujarat Akbar turned his attention towards eastern India. Bengal has consistently been the most refractory province of the Delhi Empire. The throne of Gujarat was usurped by Daud Khan after the treacherous murder of Bayazid Khan Karanni. Karannis were the predominant holders of Jagirs in Bihar. This made Akbar invade both Bihar and Bengal. Daud Khan turned headstrong because of his strong army and declared independence by reading Khutba in his name and minting Sikka. Akbar who was busy in the siege of Surat sent Munim Khan to siege Patna which was defended successfully by Afghanis. Akbar with a huge army marched towards Bihar, Daud retreated to Bengal and Patna was captured without opposition. Akbar realized the unrest in Gujarat and ordered Munim Khan to pursue Daud Khan in Bengal and headed back to Agra. Daud Khan was defeated and a treaty was concluded in March, 1675. The unfortunate death of Munim Khan led to another outbreak under Daud who retrieved Tanda - capital of Bengal. This time Akbar appointed Hussain Quli Khan-i-Jahan as the new governor of Bengal and Daud was killed in the battle that followed. Unlike his father Akbar more diplomatically invaded and conquered Bihar and Bengal collectively.

#### **Conquest of Kashmir, Sindh, and Orissa:**

In 1586, Akbar decided to conquer Kashmir since the local ruler, Yusuf Khan accepted the Parmouncy of Akbar and failed to pay his homage. The initial attack was defended by Yaqub, son of Yusuf Khan. Qasim Khan completed the task after an initial invasion by Raja Bhagwant Das was repelled. In 1587, Yaqub Khan and his father were captured and transferred to Bihar. After the invasion of Kashmir, Akbar's first visit to Kashmir was in 1589. Abul Fazl in his book Akbarnama describes the serenity of the Kashmir valley. He writes " Srinagar is a great city that has long had people, River Jhelum flows through the city ..., and the roofs have Tulips and other flowers and in the spring, these rival flower gardens."

Only Sindh and Balochistan remained outside the empire's grasp in Northern India. Upper Sindh was already under the Mughals since 1573.

The conquest of the Lowers Sindh was required to open up the trade route from Qandahar to Multan and the Indus River to the sea. Meanwhile, areas in North India that had remained outside Imperial control, such as Balochistan, were also subdued. In 1590, Mirza Abdur Rahim was appointed governor of Multan and given the order to suppress the independence of the principality of Thatta, which was ruled at the time by Mirza Jani beg. He was defeated in two fierce battles and was forced to surrender both Thatta and the fort of Sehwan. Jani Beg was brought to the court and treated with dignity. In 1595, the whole of Balochistan was captured and annexed to the Mughal empire. This completed the North Indian conquest of Akbar and he turned his attention towards Deccan.

#### **2.1.5.2.b North-West Frontier policy:**

The North-West Frontier issue has always been a source of great concern for Delhi's rulers. The western frontier had always been guarded by distinguished officers since Balban's time, and a chain of military outposts had been built to protect the route. It was only natural for Akbar to establish a strong hold on the northwestern frontier. The Uzbeks and the wild and turbulent Afghan tribes who lived all along the north-west border were potential threats to the empire. Abdulla Uzbeg was a formidable opponent and imposed constant challenges for the Mughal defenses. The encounter between Akbar and Mirza Hakim highlighted the empire's vulnerability from the North-West. Though untrustworthy and unpredictable, the emperor's half-brother had served as a barrier between the Uzbeks and the Mughal heartland. Mirza Hakim died in July, 1585 as a result of his excesses, and Kabul was annexed to the empire. But now that he was gone, Akbar needed to keep a closer eye on the unstable North-West and the dangerous Uzbeks. To manage the affairs, Akbar himself advanced up to Lahore and stayed at Attock, and appointed Man Singh as governor of Kabul.

Zain Khan and Raja Birbal marched with mission to suppress the Yusufzais, Another troublesome tribe who were part of Roshnias movement, who had to be suppressed in order to put an end to Abdulla Khan's motives. Birbal, was surrounded and killed during one of these operations after advancing too far into the mountain where they were ambushed. Akbar was grief-stricken by the news of Birbal's death. As a result, in 1586, he relocated his capital for the third time, abandoning Fatehpur Sikri to Lahore. Akbar now sent a large army under the command of Todar Mal to chastise the Roshnias. Raja Man Singh as governor of Kabul led expeditions around Kabul and subdued the warring tribes.

Akbar stayed in Lahore from 1586 to 1598 till the death Abdulla Khan uzbek to consolidate the North western frontier of the Mughal empire. Annexations of Sindh and Balochistan were much more than mere imperial expansion, they were methods to chastise the tribes and to end the incessant revolts. Akbar had long desired possession of Qandahar, the key to the northwestern position. The campaign began in 1590, but it wasn't until 1595 that the final conquest was completed, Qandahar was the gateway to Persia and India. Even during the time of Humayun, Shah Tahmasp, was keenly interested in holding Qandahar. The Shah Abbas of Iran had captured Qandahar during the early reign of Akbar, but his growing preoccupation with the wars against Abdullah Khan Uzbek and Ottaman Turks provided Akbar with the opportunity to reclaim it. He dispatched an army led by his famous general Abdur-Rahim Khan-i Khanan. Muzaffar Mirza, the governor of Qandahar, surrendered and was granted a mansab of 5,000. Abdullah Khan Uzbek recognised the Hindukush as the border between Transoxiana and the Mughal empire a year later.

Qandahar was annexed to the empire without causing any conflict with the Shah's relations. Undoubtedly, it was a diplomatic masterstroke. Akbar unlike his predecessors tried to devise a scientific solution towards development of defense mechanisms in the frontier provinces. The division of boundaries between Afghanistan and Hindukush was devised and the heavily garissoned military posts were established. In 1586, through his ambassador, Abdullah Khan Uzbek acknowledged the boundaries between Turani and Hindukush regions. The exchange of ambassadors ended the unabating adversary of Uzbeks.

#### ***2.1.5.2.c Conquest of Deccan:***

Once the consolidation of Northern India was complete Akbar turned his attention towards Deccan. Since the decline of Delhi Sultanate the states of North and South never remained isolated. The dominant Deccani states were states that followed expansionist policy. It was challenging for them to put together an enduring united front to repel a northern invader due to their mutual rivalries. In addition to these rivalries, ethnic unrest, and sectarian violence also preoccupied the Deccani states. Similar to the Bahmani sultanate, the nobility was divided as foreigners, also known as Afaqis or Gharibs, who made up the majority of the nobility and Deccanis were divided as The Habshis and Afghanis where the former came from Abyssinia in Africa. Many of the Afaqis came from Iran and Khurasan,

While Deccanis supported Sunni-ism, many Gharibs supported Shia-ism. As the Deccani party gained power, it revived Sunniism while persecuting Gharibs and Shia-Islam. This sectarian divide which existed in the Deccani courts led to the disunity among the nobility.

The Deccani invasion of Akbar had numerous reasons. According to Abul Fazl's remarks, it is obvious that the Mughals believed they had the divine right to rule over the entire country of India, from the Himalayas to the sea's edge. To emphasize this, the Mughal emperors frequently referred to the rulers of the Deccan as "Marzaban," or chiefs, and never used the term "Shah " for them. Akbar's growing concern over the Portuguese's activities has been stated as another factor in his desire to extend Mughal rule over the Deccan. In order to free pilgrim traffic to the Hejaz, Akbar appointed an army under Qutbuddin Khan in 1580 to drive the Portuguese out of the ports. Without a powerful navy, Akbar likely realized that his chances of defeating the Portuguese were slim. He might have, however, believed that with greater Mughal control over the Deccan states, he would be able to apply more diplomatic and military pressure to the Portuguese.

#### **Invasion of Khandesh:**

The first Mughal invasion of Khandesh was in 1562. This invasion was mainly to punish the ruler of Khandesh for aiding Baz Bahadur who was sheltered in the fort. This invasion was repulsed. Akbar was that time busy and only after the subjugation of Gujarat Akbar sent his ambassador Muhammad Hussain Mirza to the Ahmadnagar, who stayed in the court of Ahmednagar itself. In 1576, When Raja Ali failed to pay tribute, Akbars sent a force to Khandesh. Raja Ali agreed to pay the tribute despite being urged by the Nizam Shah to resist because he understood that the Deccani states had their own self-serving goals and were aware of his susceptibility to Mughal power. Raja Ali also imprisoned Muhammad Hussain Mirza and sent him to the Mughals. Khandesh was the first Deccani state to accept the Mughal Supremacy. The aggression of Daud Khan in Bengal shifted the attention of Akbar towards Bengal.

#### **Siege of Ahmednagar:**

To subjugate the Deccan states, Akbar appointed his son Prince Murad as governor of Malwa in 1591. The Nizam Shahi state of Ahmednagar was in complete disarray due to the fighting between the Habshis and Deccanis factions. Four missions were dispatched to the four Deccani kings in 1591. The court poet Faizi, who is Abul Fazl's brother, was sent to Khandesh

to counsel Burhan Nizam Shah to change his ways. Akbar's help in the enthronement of Burhan Nizam Shah should be noted. Raja Ali, the king of Khandesh, submitted to Mughal rule. Other missions returned knowing that Akbar was too occupied in the north-west to take decisive action against them, they came bearing gifts and letters of goodwill but little was achieved. Burhan Nizam Shah behaved impolitely; he sent no gifts and abruptly dismissed the Mughal envoy. The failure of the envoy to Deccan and the death of Burhan Nizam Shah in 1595 and his successor Ibrahim Nizam Shah gave an opportunity for Akbar. Chand Bibi, sister of Burhan Nizam Shah with the support of Habshis nominated Bahadur Nizam Shah while Mian Manju, a Deccani noble supported the cause of Muhammad Khudaband. Mian Manju, a supporter of the Deccani party, requested assistance from the Mughals out of fear that Chand Bibi was leaning towards the Habshis.

Prince Murad was appointed as governor of Gujarat to prepare for the expedition. Hence, he was fully ready when he received the invitation of Mian Manju. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan was in charge of the campaign. Up until they arrived in Ahmednagar, the Mughals encountered no resistance due to internal conflicts between the Nizam Shahi nobles. However, as they drew near, Mian Manju regretted inviting them and decided to team up with Chand Bibi to repel them. Chand Bibi also pleaded for assistance from Bijapur and Golconda. A 7,000-strong Bijapuri force's arrival allowed Chand Bibi to build a strong defence. The defeat of the combined forces of Bijapur, Golconda, and Ahmednagar led to an agreement with the Mughals. Berar was ceded to the Mughals.

Despite Chand Bibi's support for adhering to the terms of the 1596 treaty, she was powerless to stop her nobles from harassing and attacking the Mughals in Berar. As a result, Ahmednagar was subject to a second Mughal siege. Chand Bibi demonstrated extraordinary abilities for organization and command throughout the siege. But the group that opposed her charged her with treachery. She was murdered by one of his own men. The Mughals received the fort of Ahmednagar and the surrounding areas. The empire also included Balaghat, Daultabad, which the Mughals had previously claimed, and Ahmadnagar had a Mughal garrison stationed there.



**Siege of Asirgarh:**

After the capture of Ahmednagar Fort Akbar nor turned his attention towards Asirgarh. The fort was besieged in 1600. It was considered to be one of the few formidable forts in Deccan. The siege lasted nearly a year. The mountainous terrain prevented the besiegers from using mines and explosives. The blockade was the only possible warfare. Akbar now resorted to trickery, and commanders of Bahadur were lured with power and money. He was persuaded in the name of peace talks and was arrested treacherously. Bahadur finally surrendered the fort of Asirgarh in January 1601. Bahadur was sent as a prisoner to Gwalior.

The conquest of Asirgarh ended the military conquests of Akbar. The revolt of Salim and political unrest diverted the attention of Akbar towards North India. The state of Ahmednagar would have disintegrated after the fall of the Ahmednagar fort and the capture of Bahadur Nizam Shah by the Mughals, and various portions of it almost certainly would have been absorbed by the neighboring states, but for the rise of a remarkable man named Malik Ambar. Malik Ambar was from Ethiopia. The Mughal commander in the Deccan, Khan-i-Khanan, offered Malik Ambar, who was fighting for the cause of the Nizam Shahis, a compromise amidst the disorganized fighting. The siege of Asirgarh by Akbar gave the first step for the Mughal conquest of Deccan.

**2.1.6 Let us Sum up**

Akbar the Great was the most prominent ruler in the Mughal dynasty. He became the King at an early age and was supported by Bairam Khan. For a short period, he was under the tutelage of Bairam Khan and later under the Royal Women. Akbar pursued a vigorous military policy and slowly the Mughal empire expanded. It was during the Akbar's period the Mughal penetration started down south.

**2.1.7 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Discuss the regency of Bairam Khan
2. Elaborate the Second Battle of Panipat and its impact
3. Describe the Deccan policy of the Mughal.

### 2.1.8 References

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## Lesson 2.2 - Policies of Akbar

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### Structure

- 2.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.2.2 Introduction
- 2.2.3 Rajput Policy
- 2.2.4 Religious Policy
- 2.2.5 Let us Sum up
- 2.2.6 Self-Assessment Questions

### 2.2.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- elaborate the Rajput Policy of Akbar
- discuss the Maharana Pratap's struggle over Akbar
- describe the different phases of religious policy of Akbar

### 2.2.2 Introduction

Akbar's victory at the Second Battle of Panipat gave only an entry to Delhi. But his position at Delhi was not very safe. The regions around Delhi were surrounded by the Rajputs who were formidable and very ready to measure swords. Akbar wished to bring all the rulers under his control directly or indirectly. With the Rajputs he followed the policy of Carrot and Stick; those Rajputs who sided with the Mughals were employed as Mansabdars and they were allowed to retain their ancestral lands as watan-jagirs and also given additional jagirs in the Mughal domain to match their Mansab. Those Rajputs who opposed the Mughals were defeated but were not humiliated. In addition, Akbar also initiated the matrimonial alliance where he himself married Rajput women. This marriage proved very beneficial to the Mughals. The Rajput who opposed the Mughals became the pillars of Mughal rule.

### 2.2.3 Rajput policy:

Dr. Ishwari Prasad remarks, "Without the Rajputs, there would be no Indian empire, and there might be no social or political synthesis without their thoughtful and proactive cooperation". The term "Rajput" means

Rajah's and Putra, meaning "son." They were the warrior caste of North India. The Rajputs ruled many small kingdoms in North India from the beginning of the 7th century and opposed the Turkish rule and also battled among each other. Akbar after conquering Delhi decided to deal with the Rajputs. He also had the advice of his father Humayun who wanted to establish a friendly relation with the Rajput, who were known for their valour, loyalty and words.

Three major periods can be identified in the development of Akbar's Rajput policy. The Rajput Rajas who bowed to him were regarded as devoted allies throughout the first phase, which lasted until around 1573. The tale of Akbar's marriage to Bai Harkha, the daughter of Raja Bhara Mal of Amber, at Sambhar, while traveling back from Ajmer, where he had first visited Muinuddin Chishti's grave for prayer. The situation began when Bhara Mal informed Akbar, as he was traveling to Ajmer, that Mirza Sharfuddin, the Mughal hakim of Mewat, was harassing him because of his disagreement with his older brother, Suja. Sharfuddin was unsatisfied and sought to eliminate Bhara Mal, who had a modest following. Bhara Mal agreed to pay Peshkash and offered his son and two of his nephews as hostages. The Raja's daughter had to be married to Akbar, who insisted that the Raja submit to him personally. After completing this, Akbar requested Sharfuddin, the emperor's sister's husband, not to meddle in the raja's affairs.

The Rajputs grew closer as a result of Akbar's Rajputs policy's second phase, transitioning from being devoted allies to the empire's sword arm. The Kachawahas were the most dependable Rajputs, and they were given the responsibility of keeping an eye on the Mughal harem. This responsibility was successively held by Raisal Darbari, Ram Das, and Bhagwan Das. Akbar did not simply show favors to the Kachhawaha family alone. Akbar had assigned Rai Rai Singh of Bikaner command over Jodhpur and Sirohi before departing for the Gujarat campaign in order to protect against any incursions from the side of the Rana and to maintain the road to Gujarat.

In 1578 marked the beginning of Akbar's relationship with the Rajputs' third phase. In this third and last phase, the Rajputs become allies in the kingdom and a counter-balance to the other royalty, particularly the Turani nobles, whose loyalty to Akbar was unsure after his split with the Ulama.

In the Mughal hierarchy, Raja Bhar Mal and Bhagwan Das Kachawaha of Amber were given the position of 5000 Mansabdar, a position equal to or higher than that granted to any Turani or Irani nobility. Akbar made

a point of highlighting his close ties to the family in numerous ways. As a result, Bhagwant Das, the son of Bhara Mal, was continually there with him during the Uzbek uprising. In April, 1576, Akbar despatched Man Singh and Asaf Khan from Ajmer to battle the Rana. Only one other noble, Mirza Aziz Koka, had the rank of 7000 when Man Singh was appointed governor of Bihar and Bengal. These were the key changes in the Mughal-Rajput relationship at the time.

The Mughal-Rajput alliance benefited both sides. The Mughals received the services of the most courageous warriors in India, thanks to the partnership. The Rajput's unwavering loyalty played a significant role in the Mughal empire's consolidation and growth. The Rajput rajas, on the other hand, were able to assume important managerial positions while serving in the Mughal empire, which allowed them to serve in locations far from their homes. Their reputation and social standing were increased as a result.

It became evident that in the end, the emperor's consent was required before succession could be regarded as legitimate. In essence, rather than being a matter of right, succession was a matter of Imperial favor. The Turani and Irani nobles, the only two racial groupings he inherited, occasionally made Akbar suspicious in the early years of his reign. He was forced to rely on the other group when one of these factions revolted or caused issues. He made the decision to bring in additional racial groupings to his nobility in order to establish a more durable equilibrium. His selection was primarily limited to the Afghans, Shaikhzadas, and Rajputs. Akbar was also aware that the Surs had driven his father Humayun out of India. Consequently, he preferred Rajputs to Afghans. Akbar preferred to approach the Rajputs diplomatically. If it didn't work, he chose the difficult route. The hard method involved using the military forces, while the soft method involved persuasion and compromise. Asif Qandhari explains why Akbar chose the tactful approach. He claims that there were between 200 and 300 rajas who had forts that were highly powerful. Any Hindustani Emperor could not have forced fully subdued all the rajas in his lifetime if it took one or half a year to conquer each fort.

Therefore, Akbar believed that reaching a compromise was the best course of action. Akbar fundamentally altered the dynamics of their relationship. Akbar pushed them to the forefront and regarded them as partners in the sovereign authority and the wealth of the Empire rather than letting them manage their own affairs. Another important aspect of these weddings was that they were not forced marriages, and in many instances,

the Rajput chiefs brought their own Dolas to marry the princesses to the members of the Mughal royal family. Akbar additionally treated them socially on par with the Turani and Irani nobles. The Rajput wives also had complete liberty in the Mughal harem, and as a result of their influence, Hindu holidays like Dussehra, Diwali, Holi, Rakhi, etc. were cheerfully observed at the Mughal court. Man Singh, Manohar Shaikhawat, and Ram Chand Baghela were granted the titles Mirza, Farzand, and Bhaiya, accordingly, as signs of the two families' close social ties. The Mughal officials typically prefixed their names with the title Mirza. Akbar appreciated the Rajput chiefs' contributions by elevating them to higher mansabs and raising their jagirs. These jagirs brought in much more money than their former chiefdom did. Akbar made it plain right once that he holds the most important succession-related authority. When there was a disagreement on the Jodhpur succession in the early 1570s, Akbar kept Jodhpur in khalisa for almost twenty years. When a disagreement occurred over succession between the late Meghraj's son Kishan Singh and brother Man Singh, in the matter of the gaddi of Umarkot, Akbar overruled Kishan Singh's succession and gave it to Man Singh. Both Bundi and Bandhogarh dealt with the succession concerns in a similar way. Thus, Akbar's relationships with the Rajput people served to reinforce the idea of unity at the political, administrative, social, and cultural levels. Satish Chandra claims that "The induction of the Rajputs and other Hindus into the Imperial service, and according to them a status of equality with the rest of the population, was a big step towards the establishment of an integrated ruling class." Ain-i-Akbari shows that between 1575 and 1595, the Hindus numbered 30 out of a total of 184, or about one-sixth of the total. Out of the 30 Hindus, the Rajputs numbered 27. A unified ruling elite was thus made possible by an equitable nobility and an integrated religious, cultural, and political view point.

He ruled over northern India from Agra to Gujarat and from Bengal to Assam's borders after that. After that, he fortified his northwestern border and started to conquest of the Deccan. The Rajput nations usually sided with him, but his own unruly Turani commanders remained a serious threat to his plans to establish a powerful, centralized Mughal empire. He therefore took precautions and established his hegemony with the least amount of violence and murder possible. Like Todarmal and Birbal who joined his service impressed him with the brilliance and ability of the Hindus, and the Emperor grew more and more prone to show his favour



to them and to consider them co-developers of the grandiose plan of an empire, identifying regardless of caste and creed, which he was evolving in his mind. Without the Rajputs, there would be no Indian empire, and there might be no social or political synthesis without their thoughtful and proactive cooperation. Noorul Hasan states “ Akbar’s attempt was to synthesize the growing unity between the Hindus and the Muslims in different national regions into an all-embracing unity on an all-India scale. He tried to prevent the Mughal empire from becoming the monopoly of any single race or nationality.” As a result, he constructed a provincial administration that gave the local nations some room for growth while also including Rajputs, Iranians, and other groups in addition to Turks and Mughals in the administration.

Dr. Beni Prasad rightly observes that ‘ it symbolized the dawn of a new era in Indian politics; it gave the country a line of remarkable sovereigns; it secured to four generations of Mughal emperors the services of some of the greatest captains and diplomats that medieval India produced.’ As Abul Fazl says, the rajas entering into such alliances were considered “ distinguished among other zamindars”. Akbar was a tolerant and compassionate monarch by nature. When his father was an exile traveling and disowned the life of a Rajput, he was born under the protective care of a Hindu. Akbar also expressed sympathy for Hindus and tried to make friends with them through people who had benefited from his favour. Akbar’s aspirations for expansion and conquest were different to those of earlier imperialists. He chose a conciliatory approach and refrained from seeing them as inferiors because they were unbelievers or infidels.

## **Conquest of Rajasthan:**

### **2.2.3.1 Siege of Mewar:**

On October 20, 1567, Akbar arrived at Chithor Fort and set up camp with his troops in the enormous plain. In accordance with the advice of his superiors, the Rana had already left Chittor and withdrawn to the hills, leaving the fort in the hands of Jayamal and Patta, who had 8,000 gallant Rajput soldiers under their leadership. Mewar, unlike the other Rajput states, was well-positioned to stand out for independence because of its vastness and its highly forested, steep topography.

It was also aware of its status as Rajasthan’s most important and prominent state. When the imperialists besieged the fort, Akbar gave the

order to build Sabbats. The Rajputs battled valiantly, and the emperor himself twice came dangerously close to dying. The battle continued nonstop until February 23, 1568, when a bullet from the Emperor's pistol struck Jayamal in one of his legs. The Rajputs suffered a severe loss when he fell, but they never gave up hope. Despite their valiant efforts to protect Mewar's honour, Jayamal and Patta were ultimately killed in the battle. When Akbar arrived at the city, he ordered a thorough massacre because every member of the garrison had been killed in battle to a man. When he arrived at Agra, he gave the order to have the sculptures of Jaimal and Patta installed at the fort's gate since he had been so moved by the Rajputs' bravery. After these conquests, a number of additional Rajput chiefs made their submission to Mughal imperialism.

#### **2.2.3.2 Maharana Pratap and his resistance:**

In 1576 plans were made for an expedition against Maharana Pratap, son of Uday Singh of Mewar. Maharana Pratap did not constitute a threat to the empire, but Akbar's strategy of subjugating the Rajput princes was put to the test by his frequent declarations of independence. In an effort to sway Maharana Pratap off his ancestor's path of enmity to the Mughals, Akbar despatched three missions in succession beginning in September 1572, six months after Pratap ascended to his father's throne. However, none of these missions were able to convince the freedom-loving Maharana to accept the Mughal rule. Raja Bhagwant Das subsequent visit was more successful. The Rana put on the robe that Akbar had sent, and his son, Amar Singh, went to the Mughal capital with Bhagwant Das, but they were unable to establish a close bond. Next, Raja Todar Mal made vain attempts to convince the Maharana to establish cordial ties with the Mughals. Akbar now made the decision to employ force. In March 1576, he travelled to Ajmer where he appointed Man Singh as Maharana Pratap's enforcer.

#### **Battle of Haldighati:**

On June 18, 1576, a bloody battle took place in Haldighati, close to Kumbhalgarh. The Rana moved from his palace at Kumbhalgarh with a force of 3,000 men and took up position close to Haldighati, at the entrance of the gorge leading to Kumbhalgarh. Since the Mughals found it difficult to move any weaponry through the rugged terrain, the fight of Haldighati was primarily fought among cavalymen and elephants. It appears that Rana lacked firearms, either because he detested them or

because he lacked the resources to produce or get them. Even though the Maharana was hurt, his attendant managed to spin his horse, allowing him to flee to safety. Large numbers of valiant warriors were lost by both sides. Anticipating an ambush, the worn-out Mughal warriors were unable to properly pursue the Maharana and were unable to either capture or kill him. Disappointed Akbar left Ajmer on October 12, 1576, but he didn't stop trying to surround and capture the Maharana. Following rebellions in Bengal and Bihar and Mirza Hakim's incursion into Punjab in 1579, Mughal constraints on Mewar began to ease. Akbar relocated to Lahore in 1585 and stayed there for the following 12 years, keeping an eye on the situation in the northwest. The Maharana almost escaped capture in 1585, but Akbar had become weary of the never-ending pursuit by this point and slowed down his pursuit. Many of Rana Pratap's lands were reclaimed, notably Kumbhalgarh and the regions close to Chittor. But he was unable to find Chittor himself.

Maharana carried on fighting insurgently until his demise in 1597. The battle of Haldighati can hardly be seen as a conflict between Hindus and Muslims as Man Singh led the Mughal army. Furthermore, as significant portions of the Rajputs had already allied themselves with the Mughals, it cannot be said that the war is for Rajput independence. At most, the conflict can be seen as a declaration of the value of regional autonomy. Amar Singh, the son of Rana Pratap, succeeded his father as king. Rana Amar Singh successfully repelled several expeditions launched by Akbar.

#### **2.2.3.3 Conquest of Ranthambore:**

In 1568, the Mughal army led by Akbar besieged the fort. The fort was built on a steep hill that was impossible to climb, rendering artillery worthless. Surjana Kara, the chief of Ranthambore, came to the conclusion that more resistance was futile after observing the imperial army's superior might. He sent his sons Duda and Bhoja to the emperor through the mediation of Rajas Bhagwan Das and Man Singh, who bestowed upon them honor robes and returned them to their father. Surjana Kara expressed a desire to serve the emperor after being moved by his generosity. The Rai's dream came true, as he presented Akbar with the fortress's keys while being escorted by Husain Quli Khan. He agreed to serve the emperor and was assigned to the position of qiladar at Garhkantak before being chosen to lead the province of Benares and the fort of Chunar.

#### **2.2.3.4 Siege of Kalinjar:**

A sizable force led by Manjnu Khan Qaqshal was sent to destroy the Bundelkhand Fort of Kalinjar. Raja Ramchandra gave the fort to the imperial commandant in August 1569 after hearing of the loss of Chittor and Ranthambore. He offered his greetings to Rana, who received a jagir close to Allahabad.

#### **2.2.3.5 Conclusion:**

Akbar fostered a friendly policy with the Rajputs. There is a close affinity between the Rajput and the Religious Policy of Akbar. In Rajasthan, local rulers were permitted to rule over their territories as long as they accepted "Mughal overlordship, maintained law and order within their borders and in their dealings with their neighbors, and served the emperor when required. This model was one that was developed and implemented by Akbar. He also initiated matrimonial alliance to strengthen it.

#### **2.2.4 Religious Policy of Akbar**

Two aspects of Akbar's religious policy need to be distinguished, his state policies and his own personal ideas and beliefs. While no distinction can be made between the two, it should be realized that personal ideas and beliefs did not always determine state policies. A portion of the orthodox Muslims disliked Akbar's policy of not discriminating against non-Muslims and of purposefully establishing precise standards of governance and administration without any mention of the Shariat. Akbar had received sound theological instruction from both Shia and Sunni teachers when he was younger, but as an adult, he regretted his life before the age of twenty-one, admitting that he had "persecuted men into conformity with my faith and deemed it Islam." Humayun chose Abdul Latif to be one of the tutors for young Akbar despite the fact that he was regarded as a Shia in India and a Sunni in Iran. The three stages of Akbar's religious policies are as follows:

##### **2.2.4.1 The First Phase (1556-73)**

The dynamics of Mughal religious discourse were altered by Akbar's marriage to the Rajput princess Harkha Bhai in 1562 and the entrance of Raja Bagwandass and Man Singh. Akbar was profoundly affected by the courage of the Rajputs and their unflinching resolve as they fought against

their own men. In 1562, a rule that prohibited violence against the men and women of conquered territories was published. The first action of Akbar's religious tolerance was the repeal of the Pilgrim tax in 1563. Jiziya was a protection tax paid by Hindus who received the rank of Zimmis, and it was abolished in 1564. The Kashmiri emperor Zainul Abidin preceded Akbar, who was the first to prohibit Jiziya. It has been alleged in some contemporary writings that Abul Fazl purposefully delayed the abolition of jizya till 1564 rather than Badayuni's 1579, in order to emphasize Akbar's liberalism. Akbar suffered a terrible financial setback that put the state's stability in jeopardy. The traditional Ulamas opposed the idea of doing away with the centuries-old custom. Although Akbar carefully addressed the complaints, he strongly thought that the balance between Hindus and Muslims was essential for the stability of the nation.

In 1573, Sheikh Mubarak was introduced to Akbar. A liberal-minded Muslim, Sheikh Mubarak and his sons Faizi and Abul Fazl later assisted Akbar in creating a secular nation-state. In 1574, Faizi and Abul Fazl were first mentioned. During this time, Akbar conducted himself in a way that was typical of an observant Muslim. He meticulously observed the daily prayers and even took it upon himself to clean the mosque. Abdun Nabi was so pious, anyone wearing a ring, silk clothing, or robes in the colours of pink or saffron would not be allowed to attend his sermons. He once chastised Akbar in front of the entire court for donning a saffron-colored robe and was on the verge of striking him with a stick.

#### **2.2.4.2 The Second Phase (1573-80)**

##### **Ibadat Khana Discussions**

The realm of spiritualism eventually absorbed Sheikh Mubarak and Akbar's liberal views. In order to integrate and comprehend the core principles of his religion, Akbar had Ibadat Khana - the house of devotion built in 1575. The Ibadat Khana discussions were initially restricted to Muslims Ulamas alone. Later, Jews, Christians, Sufis, and Hindus all participated in public debates to fulfill their intellectual curiosities and to prove the superiority of their respective faiths. Akbar participated enthusiastically in these discussions. Only a small number of the Emperor's favourite associates and servants were initially permitted entry. They were separated into four groups, and Akbar was among them. The group of theologians, however, had the most animated conversation. How many wives the ruler may legitimately take was one of the topics

that was discussed. Different explanations were offered, upsetting Akbar. Even though Akbar pleaded with the throng that his sole purpose was “to ascertain the Truth and discover the reality,” it soon became clear that the Ulama had other objectives. They attempted to intimidate their opponents into submission in an effort to prove their dominance over the others. They lost control during the procedure, and if the Emperor hadn’t been there, they might have fought. They began by persuading Akbar that all religions included truth, and that they all led to the same supreme reality. The idea of sulh-i-kul, or world peace, evolved during this crucial period in the development of Akbar’s personal religious beliefs. Second, the arguments exposed the court Ulamas prejudice, bigotry, and haughtiness in public and caused a rift between them and Akbar. As a result, the Ibadat Khana discussions were essential to the development of a new liberal, tolerant state.

#### **Mahzar:**

There has been a great lot of debate regarding the Mahzar, or attested statement, made in 1579 and signed by seven prominent Ulamas, including Shaikhs Abdun Nabi and Abdullah Sultanpuri as well as Shaikh Mubarak, the father of Abul Fazl. According to Vincent Smith, Akbar had given himself “the attributes of infallibility” by following the Pope’s lead. The Mahzar, which was published in September, 1579 during Akbar’s reign was signed by significant Ulamas, has been given a fresh interpretation by Vincent Smith. He seemed to be under the mistaken assumption that the declaration was unlawful because Akbar attempted to assume the spiritual authority of the Indian Muslims. He further claims that Akbar was influenced by Western European ideas of the papacy and that the order gave him the “attribute of infallibility” in this context.

The argument of legal validity of the document are

- a. that Akbar was the Khalifa of the age;
- b. that the rank of the Khalifa is higher than that of a mujahid,
- c. that in case of a difference of opinion among the mujtahids, Akbar can select any one opinion;
- d. Lastly, it was argued that Akbar himself could issue any degree which did not go against the nas

Since the Timurids had never recognised an outsider as khalifa, there was little objection to Akbar being proclaimed the khalifa of the period. As a result, the issue of disputing Ottoman or Iranian claims rarely comes



up. The idea that Akbar was acting in a papal manner is too fanciful to be discussed, given that Khilafat is fundamentally an Islamic concept. Even though he was appointed to interpret Islamic law, he was constrained to express his ideas only when there was disagreement. This leads us to believe that Vincent Smith's criticism of the Mahzar is actually based on a lack of knowledge. Despite the fact that Rizvi claims "The actual significance of the Mahzar, it seems, was that "it was the first effective pronouncement of the principles of sul-i-kul which he had resolved to apply forcefully," Rizvi's statement is nevertheless significant. As a result, there would eventually be a rift between him and the traditional Ulama.

#### 2.2.4.3 Third Phase (1581-1605)

During the final stage, Akbar's personal religious views and ideologies eventually came into focus. Akbar was able to see that truth is not limited to a certain faith, as a result of the conversation at Ibadat Khana. The acquisition of this information sparked the growth of a fresh spiritual movement. Din i Ilahi was started by him on 1582 as a result of this conversation. Din i Ilahi placed emphasis on the virtue of personal life. The Jesuit priests at Akbar's court and Badayuni support the claim that Akbar had rejected Islam by claiming that Akbar had founded a new religion named Din-i-Ilahi. As some historians have incorrectly claimed, Akbar did not instruct his followers to reject Islam; rather, he instructed them to reject the religion's orthodox interpretation. Qureshi, on the other hand, views this as even more detrimental, referring to Akbar's rule as "the darkest hour of Islam" in India since it allowed for the admission of several foreign elements, jeopardising the Islamic identity. As is well known, this has traditionally formed the cornerstone of "fundamentalism". The idea that Akbar aspired to start a new religion is not supported by current research. It has been noted that Din-i-Ilahi lacked a priesthood, rituals, or beliefs, as well as any written works. According to Badayuni, Akbar later renounced Islam. The charges of Badayuni and Jesuit missionaries regarding Akbar's renunciation of Islam has been contended by modern historians. The idea that Akbar aspired to start a new religion is not supported by current research. It has been noted that Din-i-Ilahi lacked a priesthood, rituals, or beliefs, as well as any written works.

The Ten Virtues and the Din-i-Ilahi:

1. Liberality and beneficence.
2. forbearance from bad actions and repulsion of anger with mildness.
3. Abstinence from worldly desires.

4. Care' for freedom from the bonds of the worldly existence and violence as well as accumulating precious stores for the future real and perpetual world.
5. Wisdom and devotion in the frequent meditation on the consequences of actions.
6. Strength of dexterous prudence in the desire for sublime actions.
7. Soft voice, gentle words, pleasing speeches for everybody.
8. Good society with brothers, so that their will may have precedence over our own.
9. A perfect alienation from creatures and a perfect attachment to the Supreme Being.
10. Dedication of soul in the love of God and union with God the preserver of all.

Individually an Ilahian was -

1. Not to feast after death.
2. Not to feast on life during life.
3. To avoid flesh as far as possible.
4. Not to eat with butchers, fishers, and bird catchers.
5. Not to cohabit with pregnant, old and barren women nor with women under the age of puberty

Two groups could be made up of Din-i-Ilahi members. One group adhered to the credo in all of its internal and exterior manifestations, while the other group merely embraced the "Shast." About 18 disciples underwent initiation. The fact that only one of them, Birbal, was a Hindu, is extremely noteworthy. The Din Ilahi was neither an offshoot of Islam nor an outside religion. Some of the rules were founded on Akbar's support for universal religious freedom and opposition to unquestioning tradition that was not grounded in logic. As a result, a Hindu who had been coerced into becoming an Islamist was free to return to his original religion. Akbar both as a statesman and human respected the philosophy of Sul i Kul- universal peace. Thus his policies had secularism as their pivot.

### **The Revolt of 1581**

In the early years of his rule, Akbar must put up with several uprisings by his own brothers. These uprisings were either put down by loyal commanders or by Akbar himself. At the opportune moment, the Uzbek,

Afghan, and Mirza insurrection was put down. Akbar's Rajput policy may have developed as a result of his own men betraying him. Of all rebellions, the crisis of 1581 rocked the Mughals basis on both a political and religious level. Akbar's acumen, who made intelligent decisions, dealt with this dire circumstance with great skill. Akbar had to contend with a significant uprising in the east from 1580 onwards, as well as conflict in Bengal, Bihar, Rajasthan, and the north and west, as well as the expansion of the empire in the east, west, and Deccan.

Akbar's religious liberalism clashed with the interest of conservative Sunni's who waited for the right moments. The signing of Mahzar further increased the position of Akbar. This made Khwaja Mansur, Muhammad Yazdi and Mir Muizul Mulk to hatch a conspiracy against Akbar, whom they considered this act as Jihad. The nobility stationed in Bengal engaged in a violent insurrection at the beginning of 1580. Deep animosity had been generated by the system of dagh - branding horses that was implemented in 1574 as well as the requirement for a regular evaluation of the dagh and the calibre of the horses utilised by the lords. These rules had not been strictly followed because of the Bengal battle against the Afghans. When the bhatta - stipend for duty in Bengal and Bihar was cut in half or less, that was the last straw. Both Bengal and Bihar were affected by the uprising, which went so far as to have the khutba read in honour of Mirza Muhammad Hakim. The severe policy of Muzaffar was the direct cause of the uprising. He took away the jagirs from the amirs and harshly enforced the dagh system and by other people who had their own complaints against the government. After learning of the uprising, the emperor dispatched Raja Todarmal and other officers to reestablish order in the province, but they were unsuccessful. Soon after Muzaffar's execution, the rebels took control of the entirety of Bengal and Bihar. Todarmal attempted to appease the rebels but was unsuccessful.

The invasion of Muhammad Hakim, who ruled Kabul, was more severe than the uprising in the east. Muhammad Hakim was Akbar's brother. Even though Akbar was aware of Hakim's plans, he always excused them by arguing that they served as a tribute to Humayun, "He is memorial of His Majesty Jahanpanah. A son can be acquired but how can a brother be obtained." Akbar made the decision to march against the Mirza only grudgingly after learning of his advance. On his way to Kabul, Akbar crossed the Indus and continued his march towards Sirhind and Ambala. As soon as the emperor learned that Hakim intended to seek

asylum with the Uzbeks, he forgave him, gave him back his kingdom, and demanded that he stay obedient to his ruler. Following the ascension of Abdullah Khan Uzbek, who conquered Badakhshan in 1584, the empire's northwestern expansion entered its next phase. Mirza Hakim and Mirza Sulaiman, the exiled Timurid ruler of Badakhshan, pleaded with Akbar for assistance because they were worried about an Uzbek invasion on Kabul. Before Akbar could take any action, Mirza Hakim passed away in 1585 from excessive drinking. This put an end to Mirza Hakim's uprising but jeopardized the northwestern frontier's defence.

### **2.2.5 Let us Sum up**

Akbar after winning the Second Battle of Panipat wanted to consolidate his power. He initiated the policy of 'Carrot and Stick Policy' to deal with the Rajputs. He further strengthened the relationship through matrimonial alliances. The Rajputs who opposed the Mughals; later became the sword arm of the Mughals. Akbar also formulated a religious policy with the concept Sulh-i Kul which means universal peace. Some historians are of the view Akbar wanted to start a new religion known Din-i-Ilahi but he did not enforce it on others.

### **2.2.6 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Examine the Rajput Policy of Akbar
2. Discuss the different stages in the religious policy of Akbar
3. State the principles of Din-i-Ilahi.

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## Lesson 2.3 - Akbar as Administrator: Revenue and Military Administration

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### Structure

- 2.3.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.3.2 Introduction
- 2.3.3 Land Revenue Administration
- 2.3.4 Administration: Central, Provincial and Local
- 2.3.5 Mansabdari System
- 2.3.6 Let us Sum Up
- 2.3.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.3.8 References

### 2.3.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- describe the land revenue experiments of Akbar
- know about the Central, Provincial and Local administration of Akbar
- estimate the role of Mansabdari System and its impact on the Mughal rule.

### 2.3.2 Introduction

Akbar after consolidating his power decided to do carry out his experiments in the field of administration. Early to Akbar, Sher Shah had carried out his experiments in land revenue but he had a short life so he was not able to implement it completely. Akbar took the model of Sher Shah and worked on it with the support of Raja Todarmal. He also systematized the central, provincial and local administration which continued till upto the British times. For effective administartion he introduced a Mansabdari system who formed the bureaucracy of the Mughal rule. The Mansabdar were military commanders who also carried out civil administration. The administrative system which was established by Akbar gave a strong consolidation for the Mughal Empire for the next 100 years.

### **2.3.3 Land Revenue system:**

In the Mughal state, the land revenue system is a contentious issue. The entire surplus was intended to be extracted through the land revenue system. The peasants were left immiserated. The alienation of the peasant's surplus produce in the form of land tax, which served as the primary source of state revenue, was the key element of the Mughal agrarian system. The Mughal Empire had two main goals in mind: first, assessing and collecting enough revenue; and second, providing the army with enough contingents. With regard to the forms, it was thought necessary that, as often as possible, the emperor or his nominees should collect the revenue directly from the actual cultivator. As a result, zamindars were in charge of the local financial system. They were only had to pay a set amount of revenue each year but were free to collect as much revenue as possible out of the peasantry. During the rule of Sultanates in the upper doab region, an effort was made under Alauddin Khalji to assess the land revenue on the individual cultivator so that the burden of the strong did not fall on the weak. It is uncertain how much of a success it was. Additionally, he developed a way to measure the arable land. However, it was distinct from the measurement systems that Sher Shah presented and Akbar subsequently improved.

#### **2.3.3.1 Sher Shah and his Land Revenue System:**

As mentioned in the preceding chapter regarding Sher Shah's land revenue system, Akbar added to Sher Shah's system of measuring land. According to Abul Fazl, Sher Shah set prices for three different crops, and the demand for each product was set at one-third of the average of these prices. This procedure was a component of the Zabti method of evaluation and so could only be used in the Hindustani provinces. After measuring the area sowed, Sher Shah Suri introduced a schedule of tariffs that would serve as the foundation for estimating revenue demand. For the sake of the national administration, Sher Shah ordered a broad survey of the land. A register with the rights of the owners and measurements of all arable and other pieces of land was created on the basis of this survey. Sikandar Lodi's gaz measuring 32 digits in length was utilized with a hempen rope - tanab as the tool of measurement. The Sher Shah survey provided a good basis for establishing the new jama on the basis of which he apportioned jagirs of his Afghan officers for the survey. In 1566, Sher Shah's crop rate, which was transformed into a cash rate known as dastur ul amal or dastur by adopting a single price list, remained unchanged. However, this led to a great deal of suffering because



the prices used to convert crop rates into cash rates were those in use in the royal camp. The peasant would have had to pay extra because prices were often higher in rural areas and distant from the royal camp.

#### **2.3.3.2 Akbar and his experiments:**

The Land Revenue was the major source of income to the Mughals. Akbar carefully carried out experiments in Land revenue system so that the peasants will not be burdened and at the same time the Government gets more income. The collection of land revenue consisted of two stages; Jama and Hasil. The Jama was the amount assessed whereas the Hasil was the amount received or collected. In 1563, Akbar appointed Aitmad Khan as Imperial Diwan. Aitmad Khan divided the khalisa lands into 18 parganas from which revenue was assessed and he also tried to reintroduce Sher Shah's revenue system. This experiment became a failure. In the second experiment Muzzafar Khan and his deputy Todar Mal deduced two issues in the existing system. Firstly, Proxy rent rolls of officials and secondly, defect method of state method in cash. He also intended to survey the cultivatable lands. Ten top qanungos examined the accounts of the region under direct administration for the years 1567–1571; based on their findings, the evaluation known as jama i raqmi, which had been in place since the reign of Bairam Khan, was discarded, and a new projection of the empire's revenue was established. Instead of a single price list for the entire empire, the crop-rates started to be translated into money based on the prices common in different locations thanks to the information provided by the qanungos.

##### **2.3.3.2.1 Nasq or Kankut System:**

In 1569, Shihabuddin Ahmad introduced Nasq or Kankut System. Through this revenue system, growers and government officials reached a consensus on a broad estimate of the yield. Instead of estimating the harvest, Kankut genuinely wanted to collect the state portion from the produce. As the estimation is made when crop is ripened, they were nearly accurate. Therefore, these two approaches were ineffective for the Mughal emperor's goal of reaching a broad conclusion. Though the process was time consuming which led to delayed collection of revenue.

##### **2.3.3.2.2 Zabti System or Dahsala system:**

This system was introduced by Todar Mal in 1582. The old system of assessment- Kankut used preparation of rent rolls was abolished. From 1870, Todar Mal adopted an uniform method of measurement of land.

In 1573 when he was sent as Diwan of Gujarat., he ordered the survey of entire cultivatable lands of the province. The survey and classification of land gave a detailed report on the lands and it formed the basis of the Zabti system. In 1582 when Todar Mal was promoted as the Imperial Diwan, the government has already establishes a connection with riots. The major challenge was the conversion of the income collected. The rectified and a defined system of Land revenue was adopted by AKbar i.e the Dahsala or Zabti system.

This was by far most scientific system of land revenue in Medieval times. This system was initially introduce in the the provinces of Agra, Oudh, Ajmer, Allahabad, Malwa, Delhi Multan and Lahore. Irfan Habib, says, it is “improbable that the Zabt covered the whole land in any province”. According to the Ain, the amalguzars were instructed to accept any system of assessment which the husbandman preferred. The detailed proces followed in this system was:

- i. Measurement of land.
- ii. Classification of land.
- iii. Assesment of the government demand in kind.
- iv. Conversion of the demand into cash.
- v. Mode of collection.

#### **Measurement of Land:**

A new system of measurement was devised after several outdated units of measurement were abolished by Akbar and Todar Mall. The land measuring used to calculate the state's share of the produce per Bigha led to the measurement of the land. Akbar split his dominion into 12 Subahs; however, he later expanded it into 15 Subahs, 187 Sarkars, and 3367 Mahals. The Ilahi Gaj was established as the official unit of land measurement after he ordered a standardisation of measurement units. This Ilahi Gaj measured between 29 and 32 inches, or roughly 41 fingers. Akbar commanded the construction of the Tanab with fragments of Banboos connected by iron rings. This ensured that Tanab's length hardly changed throughout the course of the year. Another alteration Akbar made was to give the Bigha of land a precise measurement. 3600 Ilahi Gaj were used to create a Bigha, and several Bighas combined to form a Mahal. For the purpose of determining the amount of produce per Bigha, several Mahals were combined into Dasturs. The village was tha standard administrative unit for the measurement purpose. aroris, were placed in charge of lands which could yield a crore of tankas or two

and a half lakh rupees. The karori, assisted by a treasurer, a surveyor. and other technical staff was to measure the land of a village, and to assess the area under cultivation. According to some observers, he was also to survey the banjar i.e. uncultivated land, and to encourage the peasants to bring it gradually under cultivation, preferably within three years.

### **Classification of Land:**

Following the standardisation of land measuring, Akbar focused on determining the quantity of produce produced per Bigha and the state's portion of that production. Akbar followed the method and determined various incomes for each of them after making a comparison evaluation of the output of the lands. Here are the four categories:

- i. Polaj: Actual cultivation of land for each successive crop.
- ii. Parauti: Land left fallow for a time to recover its strength.
- iii. Chachar: Land that had lain fallow for three or four years.
- iv. Banjar: Land uncultivated for five years and more.

The best form of land in Akbar's dominion was polaj. Throughout the empire, Polaj land was never permitted to vary from the ideal and best form of land and is annually cultivated for each crop in turn. When cultivated, parauti land generates the same income as polaj. Further classifications of the lands were good, terrible, and moderate. The state's portion of the typical crop was one-third. However, one-fourth was charged in several places, like Multan and Rajasthan. The state share in Kashmir, where saffron was sown, was fifty percent. It is important to distinguish between the state's demand and what the peasant actually had to provide .

### **Assessment of the government demand in kind.**

Akbar next proceeded to fix the rate of assessment in kind. This was the most contentious part and in fact several changes were done in the system till 1585. The peasant's tax was based on annual system of collecting prices and settlements of revenues for the previous years. Pargana or Tehsil was as administrative unit for the assessment of state demand. The average produce per bigha is calculated accordingly to the crop produced for the past ten years from 1570-1580. One-third of the average produce per bigha of land respect to the various crops from various categories of land was fixed as state demand. The state demand of every year was recorded to assess in future.

**Conversion into cash:**

The land revenue in kind was converted into cash with the price schedules prepared by the officials. The empire was divided into Dasturs. The average produce calculated is converted to cash based on the cash rate devised by calculating the unchanging agrarian patterns and social factors. Sometimes a number of parganas formed dastur although sometimes there were many dastur inside a pargana itself.

**Collection of land revenue:**

Akbar had a defined structure of land revenue collection. Amulguzar was appointed as the revenue collector of the districts. In paraganas it was done Amil and he was assisted by patwaris and quanangos. The importance of the state providing the peasant with a patta or qabuliat (letter of acceptance) that details the area sown, the crop, the schedule, and the amount owed by him has been emphasized. The patta meant little to the peasant because he was illiterate. But it was a method by which the state could examine the real collection made by the zamindar or the village headman.

The village headman, the zamindars, or both were in charge of collecting while assessment was dependent on the individual cultivator. In reality, the zamindars or the more successful growers still had a lot of room to manipulate the evaluation in their favour or hide their holdings.

Although ghalla bakhshi and kankut were common, zabti was the most significant way for estimating revenue. The unique aspect was that revenue was typically realised in cash, which fueled monetization and the market economy. There were some provisions for assistance in the handling of poor crops under this technique of income assessment. In ghallaa bakhshi and kankut, the state's portion would fluctuate based on the current harvest, and assistance was given during natural disasters. The state used to provide loans called taqavi and concessions in the form of nabud, and a considerable number of officials were involved in the management of land revenue. These were referred to as the state's land revenue system's machinery.

**2.3.4 Administration system:**

The king served as the head of state. The task of reorganising the administration came to Akbar's attention once he took control of the

government in his own hands. Akbar exercised absolute power. King, in accordance with Islamic political doctrine, was Amir ul Momin - Commander of the Faithful. A system of governance based on the knowledge gained by the Delhi Sultanate was left to Akbar. Babur and Humayun were unable to update the system since Sher Shah had given it a fresh push. A system of checks and balances was therefore developed. Akbar gave the system fresh life in this way. According to his biographer, Abul Fazl, Akbar had certain religious beliefs and a concept of suzerainty. According to Abul Fazl, "Royalty is a light emanating from God, and a ray from the sun". This light was called farr-i-izidi - the divine light, and it was "communicated by God to kings without the intermediate assistance of anyone, and men in the presence of it bend the forehead in submission". Akbar adopted Zil i ilahi, which is Arabic for "the shadow of God." Royalty was therefore a gift from God. Everyone had to surrender to one who had it because the king was not dependent on it or the ulama. Absolute monarchy, the idea of the secular nation-state, and public welfare were the three cornerstones of Akbar's ideology of state. Akbar's state theory was ground-breaking. Akbar set up the administrative system in a workable fashion since he was a practical administrator.

#### **2.3.4.1 Central Government**

##### **Padshah or The Sovereign**

The Mughals were autocratic tyrants who consolidated both civil and military power. The head of the state was the sovereign. He was the commander of the imperial forces. The king, who served as the centre of power, ruled with good intentions. His approaches were different from those of the pre-Mughal emperors. He declared a policy that was founded on liberal and humanistic values at a young age and was the total ruler of his realm. Padshah followed various customs such as Jharokha - darshan. He was head of the state, who exercised the ultimate authority over all. The theory of kingship followed by mughals was Zil i ilahi - shadow of the god on earth.

##### **The Vakil**

The Mughals prime minister was alternately referred to as Vakil or Wazir. As the King's principal counsellor, he had additional authority to supervise and command the entire administrative system. With Bairam Khan's appointment as Vakil and emperor's protector, a new circumstance

developed. He was a strongman who oversaw policies, appointed and fired high-ranking officials, and managed both military and financial issues. Vakil performed these duties as an all-powerful wazir. Revenue and financial matters were gradually separated from the vakil's office. Mirza Aziz Koka, a favourite of Akbar's, was appointed vakil in 1595, and he held that position till Akbar's passing. Despite being immensely powerful, he doesn't appear to have had any involvement in the administration.

### **The Imperial Diwan or Grand Wazir**

According to Abul Fazl, "the person who headed the department of income and expenditure was the wazir, also called diwan. The Diwan was the emperor's lieutenant in all financial matters, who superintended the imperial treasuries and checked all accounts. he was the head of the revenue department, and questions pertaining to the assessment and collection of revenue were decided by him." Under Akbar, the term "diwan" or "diwan-i-ala" was more commonly used. The Diwans of Akbar were frequently guys with greater expertise in financial matters. A diwan's responsibilities are generally understood. He oversaw the Imperial Treasures, served as the emperor's lieutenant in financial issues, and verified all financial transactions. Abul Fazl downplays his political position by referring to him as "in reality a book keeper". Overall, Akbar put together a group of highly qualified financial professionals and gave them his entire backing. However, none of them were permitted to believe he was necessary. The military and civil arms of government were not clearly separated from one another. Every civil officer was a mansabdar who was sent for expeditions

### **Mir Bakhshi**

Under the name of diwan-i-ariz, the position of Mir Bakhshi had been in place in the Delhi Sultanate since the reign of Balban. He oversaw the military establishment and served as the paymaster general. It was widely acknowledged that a separate military department was required in order to restrict the wazir's authority. Some of the permanent responsibilities of this ministry included the army's recruitment, horse inspections, and the regular mustering of troops. His responsibility was further increased by the creation of the Mansabadari system, and as a result, the officials were added to Mir Bakshi's payroll. Due to the fact that all nobles were given a military rank, or mansab, and that the Mir Bakhshi was the one who offered all applicants for appointment to the Emperor, the Mir Bakhshi of the Mughals had all the authority of the diwan-i-arz. According to the



Ain i Akbari, Mir Bakshi is the commander of the army and is responsible for assigning troops and formulating strategy. He inspects the horses and keeps the military paperwork. Similar to this, the bakhshi would occasionally inspect the soldiers and horses of all mansabdars. He observed the arrangements of the royal camp, particularly the allocation of spaces within the camp to the mansabdars, while accompanying the monarch on his trips.

### **Chief Sadr and Qazi**

The leader of the ulama, known as the sadr or sadr-us-sadur, was regarded as the king's principal advisor on matters pertaining to the application and interpretation of sharia, or the holy law. He was responsible for overseeing clerical matters and religious endowments. The sadr exerted a type of censorship over the populace's education, thoughts, and morality as the most esteemed scholar of Islam and its spiritual leader. The awarding of Madadd i Maash to deserving academics, divines, and weaker sections was one of the sadr's main responsibilities. In criminal cases, which he decided in accordance with Islamic law, the Qazi served as the Chief Judge. By being appointed, Qazi's power was decentralised.

Typically, Sadr and Qazi were the same individual. He appointed qazis across the empire in his capacity as head of the judiciary. The mufti assisted the king in hearing matters, but he served as the final court of appeal. In addition to the core four officials, Mir Saman oversaw the royal household, which included the harem, the royal kitchen, and the imperial guards. To raise Muslim moral standards, the Muhtashib, or censor of public morality, was created. Also included in the imperial government were Mir i Atish, Mir i Bahr, and Mir Munshi.

### **2.3.4.2 Provincial Government**

Before Akbar, there was no established provincial administration. With Humayun's recapture of Delhi, a new arrangement was required. He divided the entire nation among his generals, but the arrangement was ineffective in practise, and the fiefholders grew their holdings and made moves to free themselves from the yoke of the empire.

### **Subahdar**

The entire empire was split by Akbar into twelve Subahs. Three more Subahs were added later, bringing the total to fifteen when Ahmadnagar

was taken. Subadhar was formally referred to as the Sipahsalar and had unrestricted power because the Subah was an exact clone of the empire in every way. The empire was not clearly divided into several provinces throughout the reign of the Delhi Sultanate. Iqta owners, known as muqtis, had military and executive authority and were expected to assist in maintaining law and order and collecting land taxes. A diwan, a bakhshi, a sadr-cum-qazi, a mir i adl for justice, a kotwal, a mir bahr or superintendent of rivers and ports, and a waqia-navis or news writer provided support to the head of the subah, or governor.

Although they were under the governor's authority, these officials were not chosen by him. They were appointed directly by the emperor and reported to both him and the central figure who oversaw their ministry. As a result, the provincial governments were introduced to the concept of checks and balances. The governor was in charge of maintaining peace and order, overseeing general government operations, and ensuring the welfare and prosperity of the subahs' populace. He also served as the commander of the province army. The governor was also in charge of paying the province's vassal chiefs tribute. A governor's tenure was indefinite, however they were frequently moved around.

### **Diwan**

The diwan was the second-most significant subah officer. Although initially the governors were allowed to appoint the diwans to help them, starting in 1595, the diwans started to be appointed centrally, maybe on the top diwan's proposal. From that point on, the diwan was no longer the governor's subordinate but rather a fellow official, even if the governor continued to be in charge of the government. He was in charge of the auditing and accounting of the land revenue as well as other taxes. The governor was restrained by the Diwan in order to keep him from acquiring excessive power. He was in charge of the finances and signed all bills of exchange.

### **Bakshi**

Upon the advice of Mir Bakshi, Padsah appointed Bakshi. The bakhshi also served as the head of the intelligence service, which occasionally put him at odds with the governor if the latter launched legal accusations against him. One important function of the bakshi was the building and upkeep of the forts.

## Sadr and Qazi

The central government nominated the provincial Sadr, whose main responsibility was to oversee the Sayurghals. Provincial Sadr served as Waqaya Nawis, the military intelligence's chief monitor. In his interactions with the Sipahsalnr, he was more independent than the Diwan and had a separate office. The sadr headed the judiciary division and recommended grants to religious persons. Akbar appointed a mir adl as a judge in the provinces because he was dissatisfied with the qazis' performance. He was gonna be assisted by the qazi. The governor decided the appeals made in response to Qazi's decision. In addition to the provincial officials already mentioned. The Kotwal was chosen to oversee law and order in large cities. Kotwal served as both a police chief and a municipal commissioner.

### 2.3.4.3 Local Administration

Sher Shah left Akbar a first-rate municipal government structure. Subahs was split up into Sarkars, or districts, which were then subdivided further into Parganas. A faujdar served as the head of each sarkar and was in charge of maintaining law and order as well as general government. He was also expected to support the amalguzar, who was in charge of valuing and collecting land taxes. Other individuals selected for the administration of local government included Amulguzar (revenue collector), Bitikichi (writer of records), and Kazhandar (treasurer). Shikdar (head), Amil (revenue officer), Fotdar (in charge of treasury), and Quanungo (head of Patwaris) were in charge of the parganas. The lowest level of government organisation was the hamlet, which was separated into Parganas. Elders who were also referred to as Lambardar were in charge of running the village. The village administration had two "semi-officials," the patwari and the chukidar.

### 2.3.5 Mansabdari system

'Mansab' literally refers to a position or a rank and 'Dar' refers to holder. Mansabdar means Rank Holder. Additionally, it denoted a duty, privilege, or role. The state of the army was far from ideal when Akbar assumed the throne. The empire was split up into Jagirs, and the Amirs who ruled each one were obligated to maintain a specific number of horsemen and to aid the empire in its hour of need. Akbar was quickly made aware of the urgent need for military reform. When Shahbaz Khan was chosen to serve as Mir Bakhshi in 1571, the emperor created a reform plan. Akbar enacted rules pertaining to the all mansabdars, or holders of

mansabs, were put on the military payroll regardless of whether they were needed to carry out civil or military responsibilities or both. The system's most important component was this. The Mughals in India came up with the novel system known as Mansabdari system. According to Irvine, who carefully examined the Mughal military organisation, its goals were to establish pay grades and establish precedence. The only thing a Mansab meant was that the possessor was obligated to serve the state, whether that service was military or not. The bearer may be appointed to any military or administrative position or required to remain in court. Mansabdari, as a single service that handled both civil and military duties. Although the wage might be paid in cash, in most cases it was granted as a jagir.

The mansabs given to nobles were in multiples of 10, up to 100, and then by 50 or 100, establishing sixty-six categories with mansabs ranging from 10 to 5000. However, given that the number sixty-six is a symbolic, sacred number, it is uncertain whether all of these sixty-six grades were truly awarded. Despite being a general name, only individuals with ranks up to 500 were commonly referred to as mansabdars. Later, when the ranks were raised to 10,000, blood princes were only eligible for Mansabs above 5000. But at the conclusion of Akbar's rule, two nobles—Mirza Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh—who were related to the emperor by marriage, the former as his milk-brother and the latter as his uncle—were promoted to the rank of 7000.

#### **Features of the Mansabdar System**

- Secular and Non-discriminatory in character and it is open for all persons with merit.
- was based on the principle of direct command- all mansabdars were directly subordinate to the Emperor.
- institutionalized in character- there was proper mechanism for the appointment & removal and it was done by the king
- in order to check the influence of the Mansabdar, the Jagirs were allotted in a distant province where the Mansabdar had no control
- the revenue collected from his Jagir was to be deposited to the Imperial treasury and from the treasury his salary was released
- the Manbsabdar was frequently transferred from one province to another to curb his influence.

### 2.3.5.1 Introduction of Zat and Sawar system

Because the jama was so inflated at the time, Akbar found it impossible to be clear how many horsemen a mansabdar truly entertained. In order to close the disparity between the number of horsemen listed on paper and those actually employed, Akbar took action. The branding or Dagh system, which was introduced in 1573, was the main tool used for this. The nobility opposed the dagh system, and a few of the more powerful lords, such as Munim Khan and Muzaffar Khan, who was wakil, were hesitant to present their contingent for the brand.

Despite the rigidity of the dagh, it was discovered that the mansabdars weren't actually keeping the required amount of sawars. In order to convey final opinions about them, the dual rank, the zat and the sawar, were introduced in 1595. The Zat was Mansabdar's personal rank, but the Sawar rank added a number of additional horsemen for which an officer was permitted to receive additional compensation. They were separated into three groups by Akbar: those with troopers equal to their mansab, those with half or more, and those with fewer than half.

A mansabdar's compensation was deducted from the zat rank along with the expense of the horses, elephants, camels, and carts that were, under the schedule, his responsibility. The quantity and calibre of horses that a sawar was required to keep were strictly regulated by the state. The basic guideline was that there should be 20 horses for every 10 sawars. The dah-bisti, or ten-twenty system, was used for this. The zat salaries were set according to whether a noble belonged to the first, second, or third category, i.e., had a sawar rank equal to, less than, or equal to, his zat. Abuse of the Mansabdari system was widespread. The emperor tried his best to prevent corruption in his service, but the purity he wished always remained a far-off, endearing ideal. The officers frequently misbehaved themselves, and even those in high positions helped the lower ranks' depravity. Akbar established the Mansabdari system to provide an efficient administrative framework. Although Akbar did not invent the system, he must be given credit for making it more practical and efficient. Despite the corruptions, the process of integrating the slaves into the imperial service produced a devoted administrator who fought for the empire's stability. The Mansabdar System was implemented to bring about the integration of the Mughal army, nobility and the bureaucracy into a single imperial service, so that proper control could be maintained over the civil and military administration.

### 2.3.6 Let us Sum Up

Akbar in order to govern the state introduced an effective administrative system. He focused on the Land revenue system. He modified the land revenue system of Sher Shah with the support of his minister Todarmal. The Zabt System or Dahsala system was implemented by him. He also made effective arrangement for administering the state. He divided the administration into Central, Provincial and Local where the appointments were made by the emperor. Akbar also introduced the Mansabdar system. The Mansabdar's were military commanders who acts as civil administrators in the provinces and in lieu of their salary they were assigned Jagirs which was not under their direct control. The Mansabdars acted as the emperor's eyes and ears, the oil which caused the bureaucratic wheels to revolve.

### 2.3.7 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the experiments carried out by Akbar in the Land Revenue Settlement
2. Explain the administrative system of the Mughals
3. Describe the Mansabdar system of the Mughals.

### 2.3.8 References

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## Lesson 2.4 - Jahangir Worthy Successor of Akbar

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### Structure

- 2.4.1 Learning Objectives
- 2.4.2 Introduction
- 2.4.3 Accession and Troubles
- 2.4.4 Military Conquest of Jahangir
- 2.4.5 NurJahan and her role in Mughal Politics
- 2.4.6 Estimate on Jahangir
- 2.4.7 Let us Sum Up
- 2.4.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 2.4.9 References

### 2.4.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- elaborate on the accession and troubles faced by Jahangir
- examine the expansionist policy of Jahangir
- understand the role of Nur Jahan in the Mughal Politics

### 2.4.2 Introduction

Jahangir was the son of Akbar who ascended the throne in 1605. He introduced 12 ordinances and he also carried a vigorous military policy. He wanted to prove that he is more powerful than his father, Akbar. He defeated the House of Mewar, the Mughal rule was established firmly in Deccan region during his regime. He had a troubled relationship with the Sikhs. He is known for the passion towards painting. In 1611 he married Nur Jahan this marriage had a great impact on the future Mughal politics. His rule also marked the arrival of Europeans for the purpose of trade.

### 2.4.3 Accession and Troubles

On October 24, 1605, Prince Salim succeeded to the throne of the Mughals. He adopted the name Jahangir, which means "Conqueror of the World." The revolt of Salim and his hand on assassination Abul Fazl dearest of Akbar has created huge repercussion in Mughal politics. Akbar in his final phase of life

struggled with his sons uprising on one side and Kushrau and his uncle Man Singh on the other side. Although Murad and Daniyal, two of his younger brothers, had already passed away from intoxication, Salim's ascension was not without controversy. Salim was beloved by his father, who showered him with attention, but he had let him down by acting carelessly in the fight against Mewar, to which he had been sent. He had earlier declined invitations to travel to Transoxiana or the Deccan. Akbar was also dissatisfied with his heavy drinking, which was the Timurids' cardinal sin. In March, 1606, Jahangir, who was safely installed on the throne, celebrated the first Nauroz with tremendous grandeur and magnificence. The 17 or 18-day celebrations came to an end with the magnificent gifts given to the state's illustrious and devoted employees. The son of Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahman, was elevated to the rank of 2,000, while Aziz Koka, who had plotted against him, was let to keep his position and jagirs. Jahangir was quite astute in how he handled his rivals. With the exception of his son Kushrau, Jahangir pardoned all of his political rivals. He enacted twelve ordinances to mark his ordination, which the emperor ordered to be followed as moral guidelines throughout his vast domain.

Wine and tobacco sales were prohibited by Jahangir. On Sunday, the day of his father's birthday, and on Thursday, the day of his coronation, he outlawed the slaughter of animals. The chain of justice, known as Zanjir i Adil, was established to hear complaints from the populace against government officers. This was supplemented by the well-known twelve ordinances, which the emperor ordered to be followed as moral guidelines throughout his vast realms. Jahangir was educated in all of the widely used literary languages, including Persian, Turki, Arabic, and Hindi. Salim was a skilled marksman like Akbar. He was very much into paintings.

#### **2.4.3.1 Revolt of Prince Kushrau**

Raja Man Singh had plotted to install Prince Khusrau as king when Akbar was on his deathbed. Following Akbar's demise, Man Singh and Salim were reconciled, and Khusrau was produced in court. He received warm treatment from the emperor, who also gave him a lakh rupees to build a house suited for a man of his status. While Khusrau, a fiery and impetuous youngster who was hardly able to assess the repercussions of his own acts, still wanted to make an attempt to realise his dream of obtaining the throne, Jahangir believed that his son had irreversibly harmed him. Despite Khusrau's pardon, Jahangir worried about his son. Jahangir and his flatterers humiliated and insulted the Prince. Prince Khusrau, accompanied

by 350 horsemen, fled the Agra fort on April 6, 1606, under the excuse of visiting his grandfather's tomb. When he arrived in Mathura, Husain Beg Badakhshani joined him with around 3,000 horsemen. On his approach to Lahore, he amassed over 12,000 fans and received prayers for victory from well-known sufis and yogis. He surrounded Lahore there, which Dilawar Khan bravely defended. Jahangir heard the news of the uprising. Sheikh Farid was dispatched after Jahangir's son. The imperial army had blocked the highways in Bengal, and Jahangir believed that an alliance with Man Singh would jeopardise his position. After nine days of the siege, the prince received word that the emperor had arrived near Lahore at the head of a large force. Khusrau was apprehended while attempting to flee to Kabul; he was then imprisoned, and several of his most important backers were put to death.

After nine days of the siege, the prince received word that the emperor had arrived near Lahore at the head of a horse force. This could account for Jahangir's brutality after defeating Khusrau in a little skirmish at Bhairawal and capturing him shortly after as he attempted to flee to Afghanistan. At Lahore, two rows of gibbets were built over which Khusrau's supporters were executed. The news of Khusrau's capture delighted Jahangir greatly. Khusrau adherents were executed by public hanging. In order to win the respect of his people, the prince was transported to Delhi on a filthy elephant past the gibbets. Khusrau was ordered to be blinded by Jahangir so that he would no longer be eligible to inherit the throne.

#### **2.4.3.2 Death of Guru Arjan Dev**

Khusrau was blessed by Guru Arjun by having a tika placed on his forehead and receiving financial assistance. Guru Arjun, who had taken over as guru in 1581 and was in charge of building the Harmandir shahib (Golden Temple) at Amritsar, was penalised for this act. He was told to pay a two lakh rupee fine in accordance with Sikh law. Because the Guru resisted paying the fine, he was put to death. Khusrau was in great anguish when Guru Arjuna showed compassion to him. Guru was called before the court to answer for his actions. His possessions were seized, and he was executed. Despite being motivated by politics, the Guru's assassination was a terrible act. Jahangir erred greatly by treating the Guru like a common criminal. The Sikh rebellion against the Mughal empire started. It gave rise to new piri and miri policies. Both the spiritual and temporal leadership of the Sikhs were taken over by Guru Hargobind, the son and successor of Guru Arjan dev.

#### **2.4.4. Conquests of Jahangir:**

##### **2.4.4.1 Revolt in Bengal:**

The tranquillity in the east was impacted by Qutubuddin's passing and Man Singh's recall in 1606. Although Akbar had broken the Afghans' back in this area, Afghan chiefs continued to hold sway in a number of areas in East Bengal. Bengal as a whole fell into anarchy in 1611 under Usman Khan's rule. Jahangir sent Islam Khan, a personal friend and the descendant of the Mughals' patron saint Shaikh Salim Chishti, to Bengal in 1608. Islam Khan handled the situation with amazing vigour and forethought despite being young and inexperienced. He established his headquarters at Dacca, which was strategically located, and gained the support of numerous zamindars, including the raja of Jessore. Musa Khan and his allies, known as the Barah Bhuiyan, were in charge of Sonargaon, which was where he originally focused his efforts. After a three-year offensive, Sonargaon was taken.

Musa Khan eventually gave himself up and was brought before the court as a prisoner. Then it was Usman Khan's turn, and after a bloody struggle, he was vanquished. Now that the Afghan resistance's back had been broken, the remaining insurgents quickly submitted. They annexed the principalities of Jessore, Sylhet, Cachar, and Kamrup. The provincial capital was moved from Rajmahal to Dacca, which started to expand quickly, in order to fully govern the region. The Assamese Ahom monarch was the target of an attack, but it was abjectly unsuccessful. Jahangir put an end to this uprising and pursued a conciliatory policy to turn the Afghan people into loyal servants of throne. Khan i Jahan Lodi, who was in charge of the Mughal operations in the Deccan and had high favour with Jahangir, was the foremost Afghan noble under Jahangir.

##### **2.4.4.2 Invasion of Mewar**

Even after Akbar's death, the Mughals and Sisodia Rajputs kept fighting nonstop. Amar Singh, the son of Rana Pratap, carried on his father's fight. In 1599, Akbar ordered Salim to battle the Rana, but little was accomplished. In 1603, he was once more assigned for the job, but his rejection had already been extensively covered. Jahangir took up the issue more actively after his ascension. Prince Parvez, Mahabat Khan, and Abdullah Khan led further expeditions, but none of them succeeded in

influencing the Rana. Jahangir travelled to Ajmer in 1613 to personally oversee the campaign. Prince Khurram assigned a sizable force to occupy Mewar's hilly regions.

The constant Mughal pressure, the high death toll among the Rajputs, the nation's population decline, and the destruction of the agricultural sector finally had an impact. Through Prince Khurram, the Mewar sardars pushed for peace and started talks with the Mughals. With reluctance, the Rana agreed. Jahangir's conciliatory and statesmanlike demeanour made a deal easier. He dispatched a very courteous farman who was impressed by his hand to the Rana and gave him the go-ahead for Prince Khurram to negotiate with him. The Rana arrived to wait on Khurram and sent his son Karan Singh to Ajmer to wait on Jahangir. Jahangir did not insist on the Rana's personal submission in order to preserve the Rana's reputation.

A very warm welcome and a tonne of gifts were given to Karan Singh. He received a jagir, a mansab of 5000 zat, and 5000 sarwar. All the paraganas of Mewar, including Chittor, were returned to the Rana, and Sagar, the son of Rana Udai Singh, who had joined Akbar during the rule of Rana Pratap and been given the title of Rana and installed there by Jahangir, was disregarded.

A son or a brother of the Rana was required to wait on the Emperor and serve him, but Jahangir established a tradition that the Rana of Mewar would be excused from personal attendance and service at the Mughal Court. In the Deccan, Prince Bhim, the younger son of Rana Amar Singh, served with Khurram. The Rana was never forced into marriage with the Mughal Emperor by Jahangir. The Rana was simply required to agree that the Chittor fort walls would never be restored by Jahangir. The Mughals were reportedly reluctant to see the Chittor fort repaired to a situation in which it could once again be used to challenge Mughal authority because it was a very strong bastion. By getting married to them, Jahangir maintained Akbar's strategy of developing personal ties with the Rajput rajas. In Akbar's lifetime, he had previously married two princesses: Mani Bai of Kachchawaha, Raja Bhagwant Das's daughter; and Jodhpur's Mota Raja Udai Singh.

He had also wed princesses from Jaisalmer and Bikaner. Following his succession, he entered into several further unions with Rajput royal families, including those with the daughters of Ram Chand Bundela and Jagat Singh Kachchawaha, Raja Man Singh's eldest son. These unions were

formed while Mewar continued to defy the Mughals. Matrimonial ties between the Mughals and the important Rajput states became uncommon once Mewar succumbed and the alliance with the Rajputs achieved a certain level of stability. Jahangir's actions in this matter are entirely deserving of appreciation. Mewar had caused the Mughals considerable trouble, but the emperor overlooked the past and pursued a tolerant course of action in his interactions with the Rana. Prince Khurram and the Rana met, exchanged greetings, and gave precious gifts to one another during the encounter.

The expedition was given the leadership of Prince Khurram. The prince launched the campaign with vigour, helped by some of the most talented military officers. Long-lasting Rajput resistance infuriated the Mughal warriors, who carried fire and sword in their train and left vast swaths of land desolate. In order to starve the enemy into submission and cut off their supplies, the prince built military outposts in advantageous locations. The Mughals were impressed by the Rajputs' reckless boldness despite their refusal to stop fighting. But the latter's strategies were successful. The Rana was placed in such a precarious situation by the marching columns of the Mughal army that he started to wish the campaign would end. To negotiate the terms of the treaty, the Rana dispatched his maternal uncle Shubh Karan. He consented to honour the emperor and send his son to the court of the emperor, but he asked to be excused from personal attendance due to his advanced age.

#### **2.4.4.3 Deccan policy**

The Deccan was Jahangir's top priority after Mewar. On his own initiative, he dispatched the Khan-i Khanan in 1608 to conquer it. The state would have broken apart into several entities after the collapse of the Ahmadnagar fort, but Malik Ambar's strategies prevented this. Malik Ambar was an Ethiopian-born Abyssinian. He was eventually bought by a merchant who looked after him well and took him to the Deccan, a promising region. Malik Ambar achieved success while working for Chingiz Khan, a well-known and powerful minister under Murtaza Nizam Shah. Ambar initially travelled to Bijapur and Golconda to try his luck after the Mughals invaded Ahmadnagar. However, he soon returned and joined the significant Habshi (Abyssinian) group, which at the time was hostile to Chand Bibi. After Akbar died and Jahangir became preoccupied with Prince Khusrau's uprising, Ambar launched a vigorous battle to drive the Mughals out of Berar, Balaghat, and Ahmadnagar.



The most famous of his changes was the organisation of the rent system, which was done in the manner of Raja Todarmal in the north. He improved the Nizamshahi kingdom's military prowess and transformed Deccan combat techniques. He was the first to introduce the Marathas to guerilla warfare, which they perfected later and immensely aided in their destruction of the Mughal Empire. The Khan-i-Khanan promised to put Bijapur under the control of the imperial realms in addition to restoring the territory lost to Malik Ambar in two years. Ambar drove Khan I Jahan into Burhanpur after receiving reinforcements from Bijapur and the Marathas' active assistance. After Ahmadnagar was lost, Parvez was forced to make a dishonourable peace with Ambar. As a result of the fall of Ahmadnagar, Parvez was forced to make a shameful peace with Ambar.

The Khan-i-Khanan, who had been reassigned as the viceroy of the Deccan during the Mughal era. Khan I Jahan leveraged Malik Ambar's issues with his nobility to his advantage and gained the favour of numerous Habshis and Deccanis. On March 6, 1617, Jahangir dispatched Prince Khurram to the Deccan together with the most intrepid imperial generals. Adil Shah personally greeted the prince, presented him with gifts totaling 15 lakhs, and made a commitment to return all of the land that Malik Ambar had taken control of. Ambar retook control of a sizable chunk of Ahmadnagar and Berar as he continued to spearhead the Deccani struggle against the Mughals. Prince Shah Jahan was appointed as the Mughal campaign's commander in 1621. The allied Deccani army were severely defeated by the Mughals once more. All of the Mughal lands, together with an additional 14 kos of land bordering Ahmadnagar, had to be restored by Ambar. The state's officers who participated in the battle were duly compensated, and Prince Khurram received the title of Shahjahan and an increase in mansab to 30,000 Zat and 20,000 Sawar. Jahangir adopted a strategy of seclusion and consolidation. Malik Amber was estranged from Bijapur and Golconda by him. Later, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb employed a similar tactic.

He was portrayed by the majority of authors as the brave defender of Deccani independence against the Mughals. "The valiant fighter for Deccani independence and the upholder of the rights of the Nizam Shahi Dynasty can, with equal justice, be looked upon as a gifted man who utilised a complex political situation to push himself forward," Satish Chandra writes in his article on the Mughals' Deccan Policy.

#### **2.4.4.5 Conquest of Kangra**

The conquering of the renowned citadel of Kangra in November 1620 is the most noteworthy achievement of Jahangir's reign. There were several fortifications surrounding it that were controlled by hill chiefs. There was a famous temple, Nagarkot nearby, to which tens of thousands of devotees travelled from all over the nation. The castle came under siege during Akbar's reign, but the imperial generals failed to capture it despite a protracted siege. The mission was put under Shahjahan's leadership. The imperialists launched their onslaught with full force, and the hill chiefs suffered severe humiliation. For several weeks, Kangra was under siege; the supply lines were severed. They gave up on November 16, 1620, following a lengthy 14-month siege.

#### **2.4.4.6 Foreign Policy of Jahangir**

The strategic significance of Qandahar has already been covered in the pages above. Up until the passing of Akbar, Kandhar remained a part of the Mughal Empire. Shah Abbas, one of the greatest kings of his era, was the ruler of Persia at the time. The attack was launched by the Persians, but Shah Beg bravely resisted it. However, he didn't give up on trying to get back Qandhar. Shah Abbas used diplomacy to promote his goals after trying to take the region by open war but failing. He dispatched a number of ambassadors to the Mughal court and profusely and adoringly complimented the emperor.

In 1622, the Shah attempted the conquest once more and lay siege to the fort. Jahangir and Nurjahan, who were in Kashmir at the time, promptly left the area and started making preparations for the assault. The army's princes and generals received orders to mobilize their soldiers and march to the battleground. Shahjahan, however, unexpectedly obstructed the imperial plan by declining to join the expedition. There were barely 3000 Mughal soldiers in the fort when the Persians attacked in 1622, according to Iqbalnama-i-Jahangiri. Despite being small, the army may have lasted for a long time with a capable and motivated commander. After more than a month and a half of siege, the Persians had taken control of Qandahar. The dispatch of a new envoy to persuade Jahangir that the Persian King had a legitimate claim to Qandahar came next.

##### **2.4.4.6.1 Trade Concessions to Europeans**

It was during the period of Jahangir the European countries were looking for trade concessions. Captain William Hawkins and Sir Thomas Roe of

England came to India to get trading rights for the English. The former came to Jahangir's court in A.D.1608 with a letter from James I, King of England. The Portuguese who were already in India was not happy with the coming of other Europeans but they attacked the ship of Jahangir's mother and the emperor was furious and upset. The English Ambassadors came at the right time. Moreover Hawkins could speak Persian and Turki and was invited to all parties. In spite of the intimacy with the king, he was not able to secure the facilities which he wanted to get for his countrymen. He had written an account of the King's Life, the luxuries and etiquette of the court, the administrative system and the social and economic life of the people.

The next visitor was Sir Thomas Roe who visited the court in A.D.1615 as the accredited ambassador of the king of England. His education, culture, intelligence and tact eminently fitted him for the role of an ambassador to emperor and even though Roe remained in India for nearly three years his experience was no better than that of his predecessor. Finally, he succeeded in getting a Farman by which the British were allowed to trade freely and hire any house they wished for establishing a factory. No tolls were to be levied on goods entering into a port. They were to enjoy the right of self-government and no English refugee was to be detained even if he became a Muslim. The grant of this Farman was a landmark in the history of India which later gave way for the British conquest of India.

#### **2.4.5 Nur Jahan Junta:**

In his scholarly work A History of Jahangir, Dr. Beni Prasad advanced the hypothesis that a "junta" made up of Nur Jahan Begum, Itimad ud Daula (Nur Jahan's father), Asaf Khan, and Prince Khurram came to rule the Mughal court. One of the key moments in Mughal history was the union of Jahangir and Nurjahan. Few women in the history of the world have exhibited such exemplary traits: of bravery and statesmanship as this exceptional woman, who for many years controlled the state and held her husband in the lead. Iranian immigrant Itimad ud daula was once known as Ghiyas Beg. Due to pressure from unfavourable circumstances, Ghiyas Beg decided to move to Hindustan with his wife, who was heavily pregnant, in quest of work. Ghiyas the Beggar was appointed by Akbar and given 300 Mansabs.

Ghiyas Beg attained the position of Kabul's Diwan under Akbar through sheer force of will and perseverance. Sher Afghan, a Mughal imperial servant, and Meherunnisa, later known as Nur Jahan, were

married. After Sher Afghan participated in the uprising, Sher Afghan's misdeeds were pardoned by Jahangir, who also reaffirmed Sher Afghan's jagir and assigned him to the Subah of Bengal. Sher Afghan was murdered in 1606 by Bengal's then-governor Qutubuddin's troops. Meherunnissa and her daughter were sent to Jahangir's palace, where Sultan Salima Begum looked after Meherunnissa. Jahangir finally ran into her during a nauroz parade four years later. Many contemporary historians disapprove of the claim that Jahangir married Meherunnisa for selfish reasons. When Nur Jahan wed married the emperor, she was getting close to age 35. Nur Jahan participated fully in the proceedings of the court. During this time, the Court was divided between supporters of the Nur Jahan junta and Khusrau's opposition party, which was running for the throne. Khurram left the Junta because of his initial support for the trio's succession to the throne and later departure. The later support of Shahriyar by Nur Jahan and the marriage of Ladli Begum confirm this theory. The aforementioned theory needs to be carefully examined, however, as it would suggest that the junta began meddling in its own interests quite early in Jahangir's reign, ignoring Jahangir's interests, and that the party coalitions at the court were focused on the junta and its opponents. However, a detailed look at the sources and the timeline of the events indicates that this theory cannot be supported.

For a clear understanding of the main politics, it is necessary to further evaluate the nature of the groupings at the court, the internal conflicts among the nobles, and the role of the emperor. It is impossible to deny the sharp increase in I'timad-ud-Daula and his family's mansabs. But starting in 1616, a noticeable increase in their mansabs is observed. The family's mansabs up until the beginning of 1616 were I'timad-ud-Daula (6000/3000) and Asaf Khan (4000/2000). Since Akbar's reign, it has been common to present high mansabs to numerous members of the families of the nobility. Jahangir carried on the custom, and Itimad-ud-Daula's family was not the only one whose members frequently earned high mansabs. It would be incorrect to conclude that being close to the Junta served as the only qualification for promotion based on the careers of the aforementioned lords because promotions were pretty evenly distributed. Many nobility who had their ranks raised did not even know who the junta was.

It is essential to comprehend Nur Jahan's influence and function. Jahangir's regular friend, Nur Jahan, was a sure shot and accompanied him on all of his hunts. Careful research must be done on Nur Jahan's exact

participation in public affairs. According to what is known, she would occasionally sit in the jharoka window where she would give officers commands and receive important messengers. In her name, farmans were occasionally issued. Her name was imprinted on coins in the dam, the dirham, and even a silver rupee. The inscription “Badshah Begum” on the coins refers to her formal title. According to his Memoirs, Jahangir kept a deep interest in national issues. She had to deal with a circumstance that was particularly challenging after 1622. Her main goal was to preserve her husband’s life and honour. She also introduced a new style in the Mughal architecture known as Pietra dura also called as “parchin kari”, it is an inlay technique of using cut and fitted, highly polished colored stones to create images. The Tomb of I’timad-ud-Daula was the first building where the Pietra dura technique was used. After the death of Jahangir and with the accession of Shah Jahan, she retired to Lahore and resided there until she passed away 18 years later.

#### 2.4.5.1 Revolt of Shah Jahan

In addition to enhancing the reputation of the empire, Khurram’s success in the Mewar war appears to have persuaded Jahangir that Khurram was the most capable of his sons. Following his triumph in Deccan, Khurram gained the emperor’s favour, was given the historically rare title of Shahjahan, had an astonishing rise in his mansab, and was identified as the heir apparent. Khusrau was still well-liked, therefore Shahjahan believed it best to steer clear of him. Shahjahan ordered the killing of Prince early in 1622, and the emperor was informed that Prince had passed away naturally. It has been noted that there is no contemporaneous evidence of a factional alliance between 1611 and 1620 that would support Nur Jahan and Khurram’s alliance. This claim is based on the testimony of European sources, particularly on claims made by Sir Thomas Roe, the English ambassador to Jahangir’s court.

The Europeans, who did not speak Persian, mostly depended on rumours that were going about. But even they mention that Khurram and Nur Jahan fell out after 1616. Nur Jahan’s primary concern was the defence and maintenance of Jahangir’s position. Khurram did not obtain his job as a result of Nur Jahan’s assistance and encouragement.

When Shah Abbas captured Qandahar in 1622. Shah Jahan, who was at the time leading the effort to relieve Qandahar, was urgently summoned by Jahangir when he was in the Deccan. Shah Jahan feared that the campaign

against Qandahar would be protracted and challenging and that plots against him would be developed when he was absent from the court. Nur Jahan skilfully made use of this circumstance.

The imperialists and Shahjahan engaged in their first decisive fight in 1623 in Bilochpur, which is south of Delhi, where the imperialists prevailed. Shah Jahan made an attempt to speak with Malik Ambar, who deftly declined to assist him. He then travelled in the direction of Golconda and requested Sultan's assistance, which disappointed him. Prince then travelled to Orissa before humiliating Bengal and Bihar. Despite his early victory, Bengal's gates were stormed by Mahabat Khan, a powerful foe. Shah Jahan moved back to Deccan after his loss, and Malik Ambar this time offered assistance. Parwez and Mahabat Khan chased Shah Jahan as he besieged Burhanpur. Shah Khan now moved in the direction of Rohtas. He did still control the forts of Asir in the Deccan and Rohtas in the north, but these could not withstand an intense and protracted siege by the imperialists. In a letter, Shan Jahan begged for forgiveness after conceding defeat. Since Nurjahan was wary of Mahabat's expanding power and his partnership with Parwez, he seized the chance to accept the dissident prince's request.

In exchange for a promise of good behaviour, he was asked to hand over the forts of Rohtas and Asir and bring his two sons, Dara and Aurangzeb, to the imperial court. Some people viewed Mahabat Khan's influence and relationship with Prince Parvez as a possible threat. First, Khan-i-Jahan Lodi took over as guardian of Parvez, and Mahabat Khan was named governor of Bengal. Mahabat Khan was required to give an accounting and hand over the war elephants he had seized. In response to Prince Parwez's protests, Nurjahan issued a directive requiring Mahabat Khan to appear in court and directing the prince to remain in Burhanpur. The return of Mahabat Khan did not satisfy Nurjahan. She had the audacity to accuse him of being crooked. Another ridiculous accusation was that Mahabat had married his daughter off to Khwaja's son without the king's consent.

The son-in-law of Mahabat Khan was detained and shackled. Mahabt Khan could take no more of this slander. After spending a few months in Lahore following his return from Kashmir, the emperor left for Kabul in March 1626. When the royal camp was crossing the Jhelum River on its journey to Kabul, Mahabat Khan arrived with a reliable group of Rajputs and captured the emperor at the perfect time. While evading capture, Nur Jahan crossed the river, but an attempt to attack Mahabat Khan was abjectly unsuccessful.



Nur Jahan now explored many approaches. In order to be near Jahangir, she gave herself over to Mahabat Khan. The majority of the nobles on Mahabat Khan's side were able to defect to Nur Jahan. Nurjahan worked hard to come up with ways to escape her captors' grasp, and she eventually was successful. Nur Jahan planned an army procession and, under the guise of a clash of communities, carefully separated the Rajput army from the imperial force. To Mahabat Khan's surprise, every noble turned against him and joined Nur Jahan. Mahabat Khan lost the war.

Jahangir also wrote his biography Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. His sickness worsened in 1628, and he passed away. Shah Jahan was given another chance as a result of his untimely death and the ensuing disarray in the realm. Asaf Khan, who was the father-in law of Shah Jahan who had been given the position of wakil by Jahangir and who had been meticulously laying the groundwork for his son-in-law, Shah Jahan, to succeed him, now emerged into the open. He effectively imprisoned Nur Jahan and summoned Shah Jahan from Deccan with the help of the diwan, the major nobles, and the army. Shah Jahan arrived in Agra and was crowned as the next ruler.

#### **2.4.6 Estimate of Jahangir**

Jahangir ascended the throne in a clumsy atmosphere, his father Akbar gave only a partial consent to his accession. His conquest of Mewar was a major achievement. Dr. Beni Prasad, summarizing the achievements of the age, remarks that 'Jahangir's reign, on the whole was fruitful and peace and prosperity to the Empire. Under its auspices, industry and commerce progressed, architecture achieved notable triumphs; painting reached its high watermark; literature flourished as it has never done before; Tulsidas composed the Ramayan. The political side of Jahangir's history is interesting enough but its virtue lies in cultural development.' Nurtured in the liberal atmosphere of his father's court, he developed eclectic tendencies and practiced toleration towards all religions. He had undoubted faith in God and was inclined more towards Vedanta and Sufism. He had a genuine love for natural beauty and his aesthetic sense sometimes broadened into a spirit of scientific enquiry. In art, his favourite branch was painting and as a lover of literature he was well-versed in Persian Literature. He was also fastidious in his dress and keen about the pleasures of the table.

But his good qualities were to some extent neutralized by his intemperance about which he speaks with so much frankness in his Memoirs. In course of time he indulged in such excessive drinking that his

health was completely ruined preventing him from taking an active part in administration. Later he reduced the quantity of liquor and abstained from it on Thursday and Sundays and during day-time. Himself a drunkard, he was a great authority on temperance and prohibited drink and smoking among his subjects. Another weakness was his lack of the spirit of self-assertion and a tendency to fall under the influence of those whom he loved. These were responsible for some of the troubles which disturbed the empire towards the closing years of his reign. But “on the whole he stands in the roll of Indian monarchs as a man with generous instincts, fond of sport, art and good living, aiming to do well to all, and failing by lack of the finer intellectual qualities, to attain the rank of great administrators.

#### **2.4.7 Let us Sum up**

Jahangir succeeded Akbar and proved to be a worthy son. He pursued a vigorous military policy and captured Mewar, the Deccan policy which was initiated by Akbar was pursued further. His accession created troubles such as Revolt of Khurasav and murder of fifth Sikh Guru Arjun Dev. He was a benevolent ruler and carried for his subjects. His regime saw the entry of Europeans to India. His marriage with Nur Jahan had a big impact on the Mughal Politics.

#### **2.4.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Sketch the military campaigns of Jahangir
2. Write a note on Nur Jahan Junta
3. Discuss the advent of Europeans to India during the reign of Jahangir.

#### **2.4.9 References**

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## UNIT- III

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### Lesson 3.1 - Shajahan: Military Exploits and Master Builder

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#### Structure

- 3.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.1.2 Introduction
- 3.1.3 Early Career of Shah Jahan
- 3.1.4 Conquest of Shah Jahan
- 3.1.5 Shah Jahan, The Master Builder
- 3.1.6 Shah Jahan Period as Golden Age
- 3.1.7 War of Succession
- 3.1.8 Let us Sum Up
- 3.1.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 3.1.10 References

#### 3.1.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- know about the early career of Shah Jahan
- describe the military expeditions of Shah Jahan
- elaborate on the monuments built during his period
- examine the reasons for war of succession
- discuss the period as a Golden period

#### 3.1.2 Introduction

Shah Jahan succeeded Jahangir took the Mughal Empire to its zenith in all aspects. His period is known for aggressive military policy which includes both internal and external. His period is considered as the golden age of the Mughal rule as there was overall development during his reign. During his reign a number of buildings were constructed and he is also known as the Master Builder. The last days of regime saw the rise of war of succession in which his third son Aurangzeb came out successful and became the next ruler.

### 3.1.3 Early Career of Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan or Khurram, meaning “ever delightful” was the third son of Jahangir through his Rajput wife Jodh Bai. Jahangir made all arrangements for his sons to be trained in politics and military art. Khurram as a young man learnt many languages and was well trained in the military art. When Khusrau, Jahangir’s eldest son revolted him, the emperor left the administration in the hands of Khurram. In the absence of Jahangir, Khurram looked after the administration very well which pleased him. Sensing the capabilities of Khurram, Nur Jahan arranged for the marriage between Arjumand Banu (Mumtaz Mahal) her niece and Khurram. This marriage increased his influence in the court.

Khurram actively participated in the military expeditions during his father’s time. He played an important role in the conquests of Mewar, Ahamad Nagar and Kangra. He led the successful Deccan campaign which earned him the title Shah Jahan. During the last phase of Jahangir there was difference of opinion between him and his father. He stayed in Deccan itself. When Jahangir died Khurram was in the Deccan but his father-in-law, Asaf Khan at the Delhi cleared the way for him by killing other claimants. Khurram became the ruler as Shah Jahan on 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1628.

### 3.1.4 Conquest of Shah Jahan

#### 3.1.4.1 Rebellion of Jujhar Singh and Khan Jahan Lodi, 1628

Jujhar Singh was a Bundela Chief who was instructed not to go to his territory Bundelkhand. When Shah Jahan ascended the throne, he returned to Bundelkhand without the permission of the emperor. Shah Jahan took it as an insult and defeated him. He was asked to pay heavy penalty. After some time, Jujhar Singh disobeyed the orders of the emperor again. Now the imperial army under Aurangzeb besieged Orchha, the capital of Bundelkhand. Jujhar Singh and his son were later killed. His two other sons were converted to Islam. Women performed Jauhar and many were taken as prisoners of war. Khan Jahan Lodi was appointed as the Governor of Deccan by Jahangir; because of his rebellious attitude, he was recalled to the royal court. After a short time, he fled to Deccan but was defeated. He managed to escape. He was killed near Kalinjar in A.D.1631.

### 3.1.4.2 Suppression of the Portuguese, 1631

The Portuguese who had established strong on the West Coast also got two fortified settlements in Bengal; Hoogly and Chittagong. The emperor was disappointed with the attitude of the Portuguese for not assisting him during his rebellion. Further they annoyed him by their act of piracy, slave trade, compulsory conversion and collection of customs duties. The Portuguese also infuriated the queen by seizing two of her slave girls and refusing to release them. Shah Jahan therefore ordered Kasim Khan the governor of Bengal, to take action against them. Hoogly was attacked, the Portuguese were defeated and were forced to surrender. The Portuguese prisoners were given two choice; death or Islam.

A terrible famine followed with the suppression of rebellions which ravaged the country for two years from 1630 CE to 1632 CE. The emperor acted swiftly and carried many relief measures such as setting up of free kitchens, remitting one-eleventh of the total revenue. In 1631 his favourite wife queen Mumtaz Mahal died which devastated him.

### 3.1.4.3 Conquest of the Deccan

Shah Jahan's Deccan policy was guided by political ambitions and religious motive. He thought that it was his duty as an orthodox Sunni Muslim to wipe out the Shia kingdoms of the South. He pursued an aggressive policy like his predecessors. He first focused on Ahmednagar. Malik Amber the Prime Minister of Ahmendnagar had just died and there was power struggle between Fateh Khan, son of Malik Amber and the old Nizamshaihi ruler. At the instance of Mughal governor of Deccan he killed the Nizamshahi ruler and became the regent of the deceased minor son. But he did not stay faithful to Mughals. Therefore the Mughal forces under Mahabat Khan laid siege to Daulatabad. Fateh Khan surrendered and was enrolled in the Mughal service. After some time another ruler was placed on the throne of Ahmadnagar by Maratha chief Sahaji Bhonsle. Again, royal forces marched into Ahmadnagar and annexed it to the Mughal territory permanently.

Bijapur and Golconda were two other shia Deccan states were the next one to be dealt with. The ruler of the states secretly gave help to Shahji Bhonsle, the Maratha general who tried to indulge in Ahmednagar politics. Shah Jahan marched in person to the Deccan and forced them to enter into a treaty which lasted for nearly twenty years. They were forced to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Mughals, pay war indemnity,

and promise not to assist Shahji. Now the Mughal emperor had become the master of Deccan region; his suzerainty was established firmly. The emperor appointed Aurangzeb as the governor of Deccan he carried out many administrative measures. He appointed Murshid Kuli Khans as his revenue minister who introduced Todar Mal's system of revenue settlement with the necessary modifications. He also focused on improving the agriculture condition but then the War of succession took place.

#### **3.1.4.4 Loss of Kandahar**

The fort of Kandahar served as the doorways to India. The ruler of Delhi will be safe if Kandahar was under their control. It had strategic importance and commercial advantages served as a main link on the trade route between Persia and India. Akbar conquered it but Jahangir lost it to Persians. Shah Jahan wanted to recover Kandahar. The Mughals started negotiations with Ali Mardan Khan, the Persian governor of Kandahar to surrender the fort which he refused. The governor made arrangements to protect the fort. But these arrangements were misinterpreted to the Shah Abass II the ruler of Persia. Shah Abbas sent a general to capture Ali Mardan Khan alive or dead. Ali Mardan Khan was thus forced to betray the city to the Mughals and secure this favour. He entered the Mughal imperial service and was granted honours and rewards. However, Shah Abbas II, could not take the loss of Kandahar. He attacked during the winter of 1648 and recaptured it. The Mughal emperor made repeated attempts to regain the fort and organized three big expeditions, in vain. Kandahar was lost to the Mughals forever. The loss of Kandahar cost very heavy to the Mughals; its prestige, exposed its incompetence and weakness.

#### **3.1.4.5 Central Asian Policy**

Shah Jahan wanted to expand his territory in Central Asian region to establish his ancestral links. He desired to conquer Balkh and Badakshan. The outbreak of a civil war between Nazar Nuhammad Khan, the ruler of Bokhara who had control of Balkh and Badakshan and his son Abdul Aziz helped Shah Jahan to intervene in the region. In spite of the difficulties of leading the armies through the mountain ranges of the Hindukush mountains he sent an army under Prince Murad accompanied by Ali Mardan Khan. Prince Murad occupied the regions but found it difficult to consolidate. Moreover the prince was longing for the pleasures of the plains and returned to India even against the wishes of his father. Thereupon



Sadulla Khan was ordered to proceed immediately to Balkh and in the following year Aurangzeb was sent with a large army. But the Uzbegs were determined to maintain their independence and Aurangzeb found it difficult to make any headway against the national resistance. Finally out of sheer inability to maintain their position, the Mughals were compelled to retreat. Thus ended the disastrous Central Asian expedition. A huge sum of money and men had been lost but not an inch of territory was gained. After the Central Asian expedition, the War of Succession took place which had an shattering impact on the Mughals.

### 3.1.5 Shah Jahan, The Master Builder

Shah Jahan was a great patron of letters, arts and architecture. He also carried many public welfare measures such as setting up of free kitchen during famine, construction of public buildings and opened schools throughout his empire. Under the patronage of his eldest son Dara Shukoh there was lot of cultural transactions. The Upanishads and some other Sanskrit works were translated into Persian. Painting also flourished during his reign. The paintings of this period display brilliance of colour and lavish use of gold in keeping with the great splendour and luxury associated with the Grand Mughals. The Peacock Throne which is regarded as “ the crowning example of the union of jeweller’s art with the Mughal love of display, “ and the numerous precious articles displayed at the court dazzled the eyes of all and made the court famous throughout the world. Many scholarly works of Sanskrit were translated into Persian under his patronage. Munshi Banarsi Dar translated Prabodh-Chandrodaya and Ibn Har Kiran translated Ramayana . Abdul Hamid Lahori wrote Padshahnama and Am in Oazwani wrote Shahjahannama. “The period of Shah Jahan’s reign partially coincided with what is described as the most brilliant epoch in the development of Hindi literature and language” remarks Dr Saksena. Shah Jahan patronized all fine arts including painting. He patronized musicians like Sukhsen, Sursen, Jagannath etc., and was a singer and musician himself.

Shan Jahan’s reign undoubtedly marks the Golden Age of the Mughal architecture. He was known as Engineer King. He adorned many places of his empire, like Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Kashmir, Kandahar with beautiful buildings, royal palaces, gardens, mosques and forts. The most elegant of them are to be found in Agra and Delhi. He built a new capital in Delhi, which he called “Shahjahanabad” and studded it with magnificent

buildings. His grand palace in the city deserves the praise of the emperor that “if there is a paradise on earth, it is this; it is this. Another beautiful edifice was the Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque and simplicity is its charm. Another great building was the Jumma Masjid, which is “the most eminent of all in India.”

The grandest of all structures was Taj Mahal which is regarded as “a dream in marble, designed by Titans, and finished by jewellers.” It was built in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal at the bank of river Yamuna. According to contemporary European traveller Tavernier about 20,000 persons took 22 years to build the beautiful monument. It has been highly praised by various critics and is regarded as one of the wonders of the world.

In the beginning, Agra was his capital. Later he transferred it to Delhi. It was here he built the red fort. It is made of red sandstone. It contains many beautiful mansions like Rang Mahal, Moti Mahal, Diwan-i-Khas. The central trait of a significant number of the previously mentioned structures are the evolution of purely Indian style. Shah Jahan’s buildings, in contrast to those of his predecessors, are dominated by beauty and decoration, ignoring the Persian influence. Natural scenes, workmanship in gold, silver and precious stones were presented. Additionally, white marble dominated the architecture. He sent rich presents costing rupees two lakhs and fifty thousand to the mosque of Prophet Muhammad, another rupees fifty thousand to the chief priest at Mecca, another rupees sixty thousand to be distributed in charity to the people in Mecca and rupees fifty thousand for the people of Madina. His peacock-throne was prepared in seven years and costed nearly rupees one crore. He possessed the world-famous diamond, Kohinoor. Shah Jahan constructed two canals; the one was Ravi canal which went up to Lahore and was ninety-eight miles long and the other one was the Nahar-i-Shah which was the enlargement of the canal constructed by Firuz Shah Tughluq.

### **3.1.6 Shah Jahan Reign as Golden Age:**

There is debate among historians to describe the reign of Shah Jahan as Golden Age or Not. Most of the historians are of the view the empire had reached the highest point of expansion, consistent with stability, solidarity and prosperity so it can be called as Golden Age. On contrary some historians describe the period as the beginning of the weaknesses of the Mughul empire which, ultimately, resulted in its disintegration.

V.A. Smith did not agree the reign of Shah Jahan as the golden age of the Mughul empire. He declares that historians who claimed Shah Jahan's rule as magnificent have been misled by the outward magnificence of his court and the beauty of his buildings particularly that of Taj Mahal. Otherwise, neither he was a capable commander nor a good organiser of the army. He writes- "In affairs of state, he was cruel, treacherous and unscrupulous." He also refers to the Peter Mundy the English merchant, French Physician Bernier who visited India during the reign of Shah Jahan and the court historian, Abdul Hamid to justify his contention. Dr Jadunath Sarkar in his book, *Studies in Mughul India* is not so much critical of Shah Jahan. He remarks Shah Jahan was extremely laborious, yet the seed of disintegration of the Mughul empire was sown during his reign. Another historian Dr A.L. Srivastava writes: "Shah Jahan's reign has been described as a golden period in the medieval history of India. This is true in one respect only and that is in the domain of art, particularly architecture." He further writes- "His religious bigotry and intolerance anticipated the reactionary reign of Aurangzeb. . . His love of presents accorded sanction to a pernicious custom of gilded bribery. The offering of presents became common not only at the royal court and camp, but also in the households of imperial nobles and officers and became responsible for a great deal of corruption in administration. His display of pomp and magnificence resulted in extorting money from the unwilling masses and classes, and his sensual tastes set a bad standard of public and private morality". So these historians pointed out the weakness in the Mughal Empire showed its origin from Shah Jahan's period and it cannot be accepted as Golden Age. But there are certain other historians such as S. R Sharma who have described his reign as the golden age of the Mughal empire.

S.R. Sharma writes, "In spite of the early rebellions, which were soon crushed; in spite of the foreign wars of aggression beyond the frontiers, which cost enormously with no return whatsoever; in spite of the famine in the Deccan and Gujarat, which devastated a vast portion of the country; and in spite of the constant fighting in the Deccan, which, while it resulted in the subjugation of Ahmednagar, Golkonda, and Bijapur, also involved a great drain on the resources of the empire, the age of Shah Jahan showed much that was glorious, and many an unmistakable sign of unique prosperity, to justify this period being described as the Golden Age of the Empire." He further argues that V.A.Smith has brought to light only those descriptions of Peter Mundy and Bernier which narrate only the unfavourable pictures of the reign of Shah Jahan and has forgotten those

descriptions which support the facts that his period was that of prosperity and the Emperor generously helped the poor.

Few other historians have described the reign of Shah Jahan as the golden age of the Mughal empire. Rai Bharmal a contemporary historian wrote that the paragana which yielded three lakhs per annum during the reign of Akbar now yielded ten lakhs per annum through which the emperor had collected enormous wealth in the treasury. Khafi Khan, another contemporary historian wrote- "Akbar was pre-eminent as a conqueror and law-giver, yet for the order and arrangement of his territory and finances and good administration of every department of the state, no prince ever reigned in India that could be compared to Shah Jahan." Tavernier who travelled widely in India, wrote- "(Shah Jahan) reigned not so much as a king over his subjects, but rather as a father over his family and children." Thus, the reign of Shah Jahan was the golden period of the Mughal empire from the point of view of the extension of the empire, peace and order within it. economic prosperity and cultural progress.

### **3.1.7 War of Succession**

Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb, and Murad Bakhsh were the four sons of Shah Jahan who received training in governance and administration. In 1657, Shah Jahan became unwell. Due to the other brothers' apparent disapproval of Shah Jahan's desire for Dara to succeed him, the four princes had to get ready for the succession dispute. Dara Shikoh was his father's first and most cherished son. During Shah Jahan's rule, he served as governor of Allahabad, Multan, Kabul, and Gujarat (for a while). He was a liberal when it came to religion and a learned man. Born as the second son of Shah Jahan, Shah Shuja held the position of governor over both Bengal and Orissa. Aurangzeb, was the third son and was the governor of the Deccan. Murad Bakhsh is the youngest of Shah Jahan's sons was the governor of Gujarat. The four princes readied themselves for the succession conflict as soon as the news spread that emperor Shah Jahan was ill.

There was no established rule of succession among Mughal princes so war of succession was inevitable. Dara possessed most of the resources and was with his father. Shuja proclaimed himself Bengal's independent king. He then advanced towards Agra. Dara sent a strong imperial force to defend against him, and when both forces met in the Battle of Bahadnapur, Shuja was utterly defeated and fled in retreat.

Aurangzeb and Murad both proclaimed themselves to be sovereigns on their own. Aurangzeb was the stronger and more capable of the two. He had persuaded Murad to join him by claiming that, should they win, they would split the realm. In order to prevent Murad, Dara also dispatched an army. However, upon arriving, they were routed by the united forces of Aurangzeb and Murad. Murad and Aurangzeb were encouraged by this victory and marched. With renewed confidence after their triumph, Murad and Aurangzeb advanced towards Agra. At this point Dara had sent out two war parties against his brothers. One had won, the other had failed. The triumphant army were still far in the east. Meanwhile Aurangzeb and Murad were marching towards Agra. Dara started to look for allies after realizing that his remaining force would not have been able to repel them. But Aurangzeb had gotten there before him. In the Battle of Samugarh, Dara ultimately faced Aurangzeb and Murad. Although he managed to assemble a sizable group of men, they were ill-prepared and assembled quickly. But the lesser forces of Murad and Aurangzeb defeated Dara and he escaped from the battle field. Shah Jahan was held as captive in the Agra fort after the Battle of Samugarh. The majority of Dara's men, including some who had stranded in the east, submitted to Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb then went ahead and had Murad imprisoned and killed. The beaten Shuja was still there, and Dara was still evading capture and preparing for his return. Now, to undermine Dara's authority, Aurangzeb appointed Shuja as the Governor of Bengal under his leadership. But Shuja proclaimed himself emperor once more. Aurangzeb eventually overcame him, and he escaped to Arakan, where he was killed. Dara was now Aurangzeb's sole real threat as a result. Dara continued to fight for the throne. Although he fled, he engaged Aurangzeb in battle a few times but was defeated. He was later betrayed by one of the generals and handed over to Aurangzeb, who executed him in 1659.

### **3.1.8 Let us sum up**

Shah Jahan was one of the important rulers of the Mughal dynasty. He succeeded his father, Jahangir. As a prince he has proved a worthy person in administration and warfare. As a King he was highly successful in his Deccan Campaign but failed in recovering Kandahar and his ambition of controlling the central Asian region also ended up in failure. He was known for his revenue experiments in Deccan and for erecting monuments. He is also known as Engineer King for his construction works. There are

two views in connection with his administration some historians claim his rule as Golden Age for the extension of the empire, peace and order, economic prosperity and cultural progress whereas some criticise his rule and remark it was the first step towards the decline of the Mughal Empire.

### **3.1.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Describe the early hurdles for Shah Jahan
2. Examine the Deccan and Central Asian policy of Shah Jahan
3. Estimate whether Shah Jahan reign as Golden rule.

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## Lesson 3.2 - Aurangzeb: The Last of the Great Mughals

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### Structure

- 3.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.2.2 Introduction
- 3.2.3 Early Life
- 3.2.4 Military Exploits of Aurangzeb
- 3.2.5 Religious Policy
- 3.2.6 Rebellions
- 3.2.7 Deccan Policy
- 3.2.8 Let us Sum up
- 3.2.9 Self-Assessment Questions
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### 3.2.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives for this lesson are to*

- known about his viceroyalty in Deccan
- discuss the War of succession
- describe the military exploits of Aurangzeb
- elaborate the religious policy of Aurangzeb
- examine the deccan policy and its impact

### 3.2.2 Introduction

Aurangzeb was the last of the Great Mughals. His reign is full of debate among the historians. The European Historians in their writings tried to give a communal colour to his regime. But the recent researches are coming out with a different version. The regime of Aurangzeb is fully mirrored with controversies and is subjected to discussions. He came to power by winning the war of succession and his regime is divided into two phases. In first phase he was in North India and in the second phase he stayed in Deccan. His stay at Deccan proved costly to his empire and to his reputation. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal empire had its decline.

### **3.2.3 Early Life of Aurangzeb**

Aurangzeb was the third son of the emperor Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. He was appointed as the viceroy of the Mughal Deccan, an extensive territory consisting of the four provinces of Khandesh, Berar, Telangana and Daulatabad. He managed it with much difficulty due to lack of funds from the center. Later he was sent to Gujarat and subsequently sent on an expedition to Balkh, Badakshan and Kandahar. He led the army successfully but the expeditions ended up in failure due to less patronage from the imperial court. On his return to Agra he found it difficult to stay in the court owing to the hostility of his brother Dara. He was therefore once again appointed as the viceroy of Deccan in A.D.1653. His absence in Deccan led to mismanagement of administration, oppressive taxes by the Jagirdars, and finally agriculture was ignored. Aurangzeb was further handicapped by his father's hostile attitude and his reluctance to send financial support. The prince tried his best to improve agriculture, but before he could achieve much in that direction, the War of Succession broke out. Aurangzeb, the Alamgir (world-seizer), ascended the throne in 1659 having emerged victorious out of the war of succession. Aurangzeb was a complex man of his times with his own sense of kingship and justice. He was a brilliant strategist and had marks of brilliance when it came to administration but also had his shortcomings.

### **3.2.4 Military Exploits of Aurangzeb**

#### **3.2.4.1 Confrontation in the East**

Jayadwaj Sinha, the Ahom ruler had took advantage of the raging civil war in the Mughal Empire and occupied Gauhati in 1658, capturing 140 horses, 40 pieces of cannon, 200 matchlocks and much property. Moreover he had also let Shah Shuja, brother of Aurangzeb to flee into his kingdom earning the ire of Aurangzeb. In 1660, Mir Jumla, the governor of Bengal was dispatched with an army of 12,000 cavalry, 30,000 infantry, artillery and a flotilla of several hundred-armed vessels. He captured Kuch Bihar and Assam and reached the Ahom capital, Garhgaon on 17th March 1662. The imperial army captured the deserted capital city and plunder its vast treasures. With the onset of the rainy season offered a setback to the Mughals who suffered from disease outbreak exasperated by the poor supply situation. The Ahoms used the opportunity to launch counter offensives but the Mughals resumed their attacks after the rainy season. The Mughals were able to force the Ahom ruler to conclude a treaty. The

Ahom ruler accepted the suzerainty of Aurangzeb and agreed to pay war indemnity. The Mughals also got half of Darrang province which known for its vast elephant herds. But the war though militarily success was not of sound economic benefits, it cost of a lot of lives including that of Mir Jumla, Aurangzeb's associate in the Deccan days and one of his best generals, who died on his way back to Dacca. Shaista Khan, Aurangzeb's uncle and son of Asaf Jhan, was sent to replace Mir Jumla as governor of Bengal, who waged armed campaign against Arakanese Magh and Portuguese slave raiding pirates operating out of Chittagong.

#### **3.2.4.2 Annexation of Palamau**

The chieftdom of Palamau (Palaun) situated between the hills of southern India and Chota Nagpur just south of Bihar. It is a heavily forested region with a sparse population who undertook a mixture of sedentary and shifting agriculture. The Cheros tribal people were forced to displace to Palau in order to escape rising Rajput power. By 1620s, Raja Medini Rai, who had once served under Shah Jahan but revolted prompting an imperial reprisal, extended the bounds of the Chero domains into Chota Nagpur and the southernmost portions of Bihar province. Friction between the imperial administration and the Cheros grew as the latter raided for cattle in the neighboring Mughal districts.

In 1661, Aurangzeb ordered Daud Khan to annex the chieftdom because of revenue arrears. The chieftdom had to pay 100000 rupees in revenue which was very taxing on the chieftdom's cash revenue had already dwindled to 250000 rupees. Daud Khan along with his faujdars and zamindars marched a 6400 strong army and stormed the fortress after two prior engagements. The ruling chief Pratap Rao fled and the chieftdom was annexed as a district of Bihar province ruled by a Mughal Faujdar.

#### **3.4.2.3 North West Frontier**

Kabul was of great strategic, political and economic importance to the Mughals. Historically, the Khyber and Bolan passes were the primary routes for invasion by outsiders to the subcontinent. The area was geographically mountainous with little in the way of agriculture forcing the growing Afghans into robbery and extorting the rich cities in Punjab. The area was also important for trade as it was a heavily trafficked route with frequent trade caravans going as far as Europe. In 1667, The Yousufzais revolted under their leader Bhagu, who proclaimed himself king in the Swat Valley.

They crossed the Indus above Attock and attacked the Hazara district, while some Yousufzai men also attacked western Peshawar and Attock district. Muhammad Amin Khan, the Imperial Mir Bakshi, brought 9000 man army from Delhi and was able to suppress the revolt in a few months.

The Afridis posed an even greater challenge to Mughal power in the region when in 1672 the Afridi chieftain Akmal Khan crowned himself king, struck coins in his name and even shut down caravan traffic. They ambushed and massacred an imperial army at Ali Masjid between Peshawar and Kabul. Muhammad Amin Khan, the Mughal commander and his senior officers escaped, but the army was lost. Other Pathan tribes joined Akmal Khan in revolt including the Khataks under famous Anti-Mughal poet Kush Hal. Kush Hal became a hero of the Pathan national uprising. In February 1674, the Afghans yet again ambushed an imperial army killing its commander Shuja'at Khan, though a part of the army was rescued by a force sent by Jaswant Singh, the Raja of Rathor. In 1674, Aurangzeb himself marched with an imperial army to Hasan Abdal near Peshawar suppress the uprising. Many rebel Afghan's were bribed with gifts, pensions, Jagirs and offices while the most troublesome were beaten into submission by force of arms. He sent out well protected and supplied columns to reopen the Kyber pass and others. Aurangzeb left Kabul after fortifying and garrisoning it in December 1675, leaving Amin Khan in charge. Amin Khan kept a close eye in Pathan politics with tactful diplomacy and was able to prevent another uprising for the next twenty years. R.C. Majumdar states that the ruinous effect of the Afghan revolt came to the fore when the employment of Afghan soldiers were made complicated in the subsequent Rajput wars.

### **3.2.5 Religious policy and state policies of Aurangzeb**

Aurangzeb's religious policy is of hugely contentious in the contemporary historical discourse. With the older historians labelling him as a zealot and the more recent historians seeing him as a King of the medieval period who was shaped his time and place and was a typical specimen of the same. According to Audrey Trushke, The British colonial historians had a motive to portray Aurangzeb as a overly religious zealot and contrast him with a more liberal Akbar and more relevantly, the British. However, Aurangzeb is a complex monarch with his own sense of piety, justice and what constituted good governance.

### 3.2.5.1 Missions to Mecca

Aurangzeb was troubled in his early reign by his imprisonment of Shah Jhan, which by Islamic law was unlawful and against the Sharia. The chief Qazi refused to recognise Aurangzeb and thus he was forced to retire and go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, which was a typical stand in for exile in Mughal India. Aurangzeb was recognised by a more loyal Chief Qazi who replaced his predecessor. In 1659, a caravan carrying gifts was sent to Sharif Zaid, the ruler of Mecca, but was rebuked and turned back. But a second mission was met with success and came back with holy relics and thereafter Aurangzeb was a generous patron to the holy places. He would send money regularly to men living in the holy city and employed a large number of them to act as his deputies in walking around the Kaba, bowing to the prophet's tomb and reading the two copies of Quran personally written by the emperor.

### 3.2.5.2 Abolition of certain Practices

Aurangzeb stopped the practice of engraving the Kalima on coins to prevent them from being desecrated in the hands of non-Muslims. In the eleventh year of his reign (1669), he forbade certain types of music in his court and stopped employing musicians from many public gatherings. However Audrey Trushcke notes that he reassigned these officers to other posts at enhanced salaries. She also takes note of Aurangzeb continuing to employ instrumental music and Naubat, the Royal Band, at his court. The music and other arts however were a matter of preference and they continued to thrive at princely courts. Aurangzeb himself writes to his grandson that music is he an appropriate Kingly activity and he himself had great knowledge on music and two of his favourite concubines were musicians. J.L. Mehta notes that the ban on music was to conform to strict Islamic court culture, while Satish Chandra notes that, "It is of some interest to note that the largest number of Persian works on classical Indian music were written in Aurangzeb's reign, and that Aurangzeb himself was proficient in playing the veena". Aurangzeb also changed the Imperial calendar from solar to lunar calendar in accordance with Islamic Calendars. This change caused some confusion in the collection of revenue. He also stopped the festivities of Nauroz, Eid, Muharram and some other Hindu festivals. Audrey Truschke states that Aurangzeb's main motive was the increased crime that followed the festivities as in those days it was common for violence to claim lives and thievery skyrocketed during festivals. Aurangzeb stopped employing court historians after the Alamgir Nama was finish in the tenth regnal year. He

appointed Muhtasibs or censors to ensure the enforcement of religious law and to look after the moral wellbeing of the empire's populace.

Aurangzeb stopped the practice of weighing himself and distributing equal weight of gold to the needy (Tuladan), a practice started by Akbar and have Hindu roots, though he may have resumed this practice later in his reign. Aurangzeb also discontinued the practice of Jharoka Dharshana, where the emperor would show himself to the public from castle window and receive their salutations.

### 3.2.5.3 Fatawa i Alamgiri

One of Aurangzeb's greatest achievements is the monumental intellectual work *Fatawa i Alamgiri*, a synthesis of Hanafi legal codes and fatwas in and outside India. The *Fatawa i Alamgiri* took eight years to complete and was intended to be a reliable reference of past Hanafi rulings.

### 3.2.5.4 Reaction against policies

Aurangzeb's policy was by and large the continuation of tolerant Mughal policies and social practice of his predecessors according to Audrey Trushcke, noting that, "He never broke from his Mughal heritage, but he refined it into his own distinctive creation." This point can be further inferred from the fact that the number of Hindu nobles with high Mansabs supporting Aurangzeb and Dara were more or less the same (twenty one and twenty four respectively). Thus at least in the early years Aurangzeb did not break off markedly from the previous policies. However, his policies were still markedly different from that of his rival Dara, in that he stopped the imperial stipend to Sanskrit works, such as when he cut off the imperial stipend to Kavindracharya Sarasvati, a Brahmin from Benares.

Aurangzeb was keen on leading a just kingdom and follow the tenets of Sharia, except it was always pushed to second place by his ambition, because he was a political ruler first and foremost. Audrey Truschke further notes that, "Aurangzeb's professed devotion to justice finds substantial support among many contemporary sources. For instance, the Italian traveller Niccoli Manucci, no Aurangzeb enthusiast, spoke of the king: 'He was of a melancholy temperament, always busy at something or another, wishing to execute justice and arrive at appropriate decisions.'"



Aurangzeb spent liberally to maintain and repair mosques, a move that chiefly benefitted the Ulema. The Ulema in general received enhanced prestige and posts in Aurangzeb reign.

#### **3.2.5.4.1 Reaction to religious policies**

The Hindus were protected as Dhimmis under the Sharia and had the right to worship and propagate their religion, maintain places of worship but no new places of worship is to be built. This was generally the case in Muslim ruled India since the eighth century. Aurangzeb was acting in this context when he issued the 1669 Farman to bring down recently built temples. The Mathura and Varamasi temples were particularly targeted, John F Richards notes that, "The emperor's special targets were the renowned stone temples in the holy cities of Mathura and Varanasi". Satish Chandra further affirms that this was not a major break from previous policies by noting that, "Aurangzeb's order regarding temples was not a new one. It reaffirmed the position which had existed during the Sultanat period and which had been reiterated by Shah Jahan early in his reign."

Aurangzeb's reign also saw the implementation of a tax on Hindu pilgrims and religious festivals. In 1665, a Farman decreeing that Muslims were to be taxed at 2.5 percent and Hindus at 5 percent on internal customs duties. An edict addressing the provincial governors and revenue officers to dismiss Hindu officers and appoint Muslim officers was issued but was largely not enforced.

In 1669, the Jizya was reintroduced by Aurangzeb, which is a contented scholarly topic with some scholars like John Richards and J.L Mehta believing it to further the cause of spreading Islam while scholars like Satish Chandra and Audrey Truschke believing it be primarily motivated by political considerations rather than religious zeal. A contemporary Khafi Khan remarks all the various taxes remitted by the Emperor, continued to be included in the jama dami or the assessed income of the jagirs. In consequence, the remissions remained a dead letter. Second, the income from Jizya was put in a separate treasury the proceeds from which were disbursed among the needy Muslims. But the measure was resented by Hindus who considered it discriminatory and were sometimes humiliated by the Ulema. Michael H Fisher notes that, "Theoretically, this tax was payment for the privilege of living under Muslim rule while not serving it, so many Rajputs and other Hindus working for the Empire were still exempt. During the succession war, far more Rajput mansabdars had

supported 'Alamgir than Dara or their brothers. Nonetheless, 'Alamgir imposed policies that especially burdened Rajputs. To help alleviate the overstressed jagir system, he largely limited Rajput mansabdars to jagirs in their homelands, reducing their effective income. Rajputs also tended to receive less prestigious postings. By 1678, the proportion of Rajputs with mansab 1,000 or above was 15 per cent and declining; indeed, Rajputs comprised an even smaller proportion of high mansabdars than immigrants to India."

### **3.2.6 Rebellions**

#### **Jats**

The Jats of Mathura were the first people to take up arms against the new imperial policies owing to oppression by Abdun Nabi, the Imperial faujdar. They were led by Gokla, Zamindar of Tilpat, in 1669 being able to rally 20000 men to take up arms and were successful in killing the faujdar. Hasan Ali Khan was appointed as the new Imperial faujdar and was able to successfully quell the rebellion. Gokla was executed, his family members were converted to Islam and his daughter married to one high ranking slave of Aurangzeb. According to Satish Chandra the Jat uprising had all the characteristics of a peasant Uprising and religion seems to have hardly played a role.

#### **Satnamis**

The Satnami were a religious sect founded by Birbhan of Bijesar in 1543, residing in the Narnaul and Mewat territories of Delhi. It is a monotheistic sect and led a life of partial renunciation of the material world. They were engaged in both cultivation and business. They were clean shaven including eyebrows hence their nickname the Mundiya Sadhus (Clean Shaven saints). In 1672, a Mughal foot soldier injured a Satnami in the head in a quarrel, which was taken as an insult by the Satnamis. The Satnamis in response murdered the Mughal soldier. The Shiqdar responded by dispatching troops to capture the murderers but the troops were defeated. The Satnamis rose in a general uprising and set up an independent state killing the imperial faujdar of Narnaul and collecting revenue. Aurangzeb sent a 10000 strong imperial force under Radandas Khan in response which quelled the uprising.

#### **Sikhs**

The Sikhs, a religious sect of monotheistic, non-sectarian character in Punjab founded by Guru Nanak. Akbar had good relations with the Sikh Gurus that succeeded Guru Nanak, but relations broke down when Guru Arjun blessed Khusrau which drew the ire of Jahangir and resulted in his execution. The Sikhs had gradually expanded and came to influence politics of the region. They were an ethno-religious community and their growing political influence can be inferred by looking at their collection of “contributions” from the faithful and the De Facto adoption of hereditary succession after Arjun was appointed as Guru after his father Guru Ramdas in 1581 and his son Guru Har Govind succeeding him. Guru Hargovind decided to wear two swords can be seen as a statement of his growing spiritual as well as temporal powers.

Aurangzeb was suspicious of the seventh Sikh Guru, Har Rai, and kept close watch on him and was also looking to influence the nomination of successive Sikh Gurus like his predecessors. Guru Har Rai was also rumoured to have supported Dara Shikoh during the war of succession. Aurangzeb was more lenient than Jahangir and summoned Har Rai to court who in turn sent his son Ram Rai to the Mughal court. Ram Rai was kept in Delhi as a safeguard for his father's conduct. Guru Har Rai was not satisfied with Ram Rai's conduct at Delhi and nominated his younger son Ram Kishan as Guru. However, Aurangzeb continued to patronise Ram Rai and gave land grants near Dehradun. Hereafter Aurangzeb stopped interfering in the nomination of Sikh Gurus. Tegh Bahadur was nominated as the Sikh Guru after Ram Kishan's death in 1664.

There was an absence of conflict between Sikhs and Mughals for some time, however in 1671 Tegh Bahadur returned from his missionary tour of Assam and erected a missionary centre in Makhawal (Anandpur). The matter of what led to the arrest and execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur has been matter of great controversy, some scholars say that the Guru was leading an armed resistance and pillaging the province of Punjab while some say Aurangzeb was paranoid of the Sikh Guru's growing influence, however what is clear is that Aurangzeb was not in Delhi from April 1674 to March 1676, as he was leading the campaign against the Afghan rebellion. Even so the execution could not have been carried out without Aurangzeb's knowledge. The Sikh Guru and five of his followers (Bhai Mati Dass, Gurditta, Uda, Chima and Dayala) were brought to Delhi and they were tried by the Qazis and sentenced to be punished for blasphemy. This act earned Aurangzeb the hatred of many Jat and Khatri Sikhs.

The martyrdom of Tegh Bahadur only solidified Sikh armed resistance to Mughal rule. Guru Govind Singh, who was only nine at the time of his father, Tegh Bahaur's execution. Aided by his uncle Kripal Chand, he amassed a small army and retreated into the Punjab hills. He founded the Khalsa or military brotherhood at Anandpur. The initiates were required to wear the five Ks - Kesh (long hair), Kangha (comb), Kachha (underwear), Kara( iron bangle) and Kirpan (sword). They have their own strict code of social conduct and they had the appellation 'Singh' in their names.

### **Rajput Campaign**

The Rajputs provided a formidable opposition that dwarfed the previous uprisings in the empire. The early phase of Aurangzeb reign saw the Rajputs having amenable relations with him and many Rajput mansabs even sided with Aurangzeb in the war of succession. Raja Jai Singh of Amber was a prominent noble under Aurangzeb and close to him so much that a contemporary historian refers to Jai Singh as the "Key to the brain of Aurangzeb". The Rajputs however found themselves increasingly having to share imperial privileges with the Marathas, with the influx of Maratha mansabdars in the wake of Deccan conquests. Jai Singh himself died in 1667 in the Deccan campaign.

Jaswant Singh, the ruler of Marwar died while commanding the Mughul frontier posts in the Khyber Pass and the Peshawar district in 1678. This created an opportunity for Aurangzeb to annex Marwar. Marwar was a powerful military state that held strategic strongholds along the profitable routes to the rich ports of western India. Moreover Jaswant Singh had supported Dara Shikoh in the war of succession. Aurangzeb started the annexation of Marwar under direct imperial rule by appointing his own officers as faujdar, qiladar, kotwal and amin. However John Richards and Satish Chandra are of the opinion that this was not an annexation, noting that, "Aurangzeb, upon receiving the news from Jamrud, immediately took the bureaucratic step of formally transferring all of Marwar to the status of imperial crown territories (khalisa). This was not annexation, but simply a measure necessary to reallocate the kingdom in jagirs." and "Thus, in 1669 when Rai Singh had usurped the gaddi of Nawanagar from his nephew, Satarsal (Chhatrasal), the state was occupied, the name of the capital being changed to Islamnagar and officials appointed to administer the state. After some time the state was restored to Tamachi, the son of Rai Singh, on the condition of "loyalty and strictly enforcing the regulations regarding

religious practices". Another parallel case was that of Jaisalmer. In 1650, on the death of Rawal Manohardas, who had died issueless, the queens and the Bhatias nominated Ram Chandra, a descendant of Rawal Maldeo's second son, Bhawani Singh." Satish Chandra also notes that many vassals under the Maharaja of Jodhpur withheld revenues and there were many territorial disputes and that the roads had become lawless, thus prompting Aurangzeb to consolidate the state of Marwar and oversee the succession crisis.

Two wives of Jaswant Singh were spared performing Sati because they were pregnant at the time, Aurangzeb ordered them arrested and brought to Delhi. They both birthed sons on the way to Delhi. On reaching the Rathor mansion in Shahjahanabad, Durgadas and other senior Rathor officers petitioned Aurangzeb to name the newborn son Ajit Singh to be the ruler of Marwar. Aurangzeb rejected and made a counter-offer that Ajit Singh would grow up in the imperial harem and attain the title of raja and noble rank when he came of age but on the condition that Ajit Singh be raised as a Muslim. The Rathors refused this offer and in a turn of events, the younger infant died. Aurangzeb ordered the two Rani's and the infant to be captured. When Durgadas Rathor refused, a musketry exchange ensued. The two Rani's disguised themselves as slaves and rode out with a contingent of Rathor light cavalry. The Rathors bravely led rear guard actions to slow down the imperial pursuers. Durgadas reached Jodhpur on 23rd July, 1679 and soon after Jodhpur was under siege. Aurangzeb put three Princes Muazzam, Azzam and Akbar in command of sections of the army. Aurangzeb personally set up in Ajmer in August 1679 to oversee the siege of Jodhpur.

The Ranas of Mewar had long felt that the influence of the Chittor - Sisodias had been negatively affected in the eastern and southern Rajputana and the Mughal patronage towards neighbouring Rajput states like Bikaner, Marwar and Amber. The Rana Raj Singh's wife was the sister of Rani Hadi, therefore he could gain influence if he participated in the succession crisis. Thus Mewar was keenly interested in the events that happened in the succession crisis and both parties were convinced that Mewar's involvement would be inevitable. Aurangzeb possibly amassed such a large army along with royal princes and high mansabdars like Shaista Khan to counter Mewar's involvement. Hasan Ali Khan led a contingent into Udaipur from the east and forced the Rana to flee into the hills. The Rana also abandoned his capital and led a guerilla campaign from the hills. Aurangzeb left for Ajmer leaving his sons and senior generals in command to besiege the Rana and pillage his territories. The hilly terrain favored

Rajput guerilla warfare and the war became a slow grind. Aurangzeb still refused to accept any peace offers from Mewar as well as Marwar.

Rana Raj Singh died in September 1680, which led to deterioration of the relationship between the Rathors and Sisodhias, which was already straining for years. Jai Singh, the new Rana, was also aware of the proposal to the Mughals by Sonak Bhati on behalf of Durga Das that the pargana of Gorwar should be detached from Mewar, and allotted to Ajit Singh as his jagir, presumably to compensate him for the loss of Jodhpur. This caused even more strain in the already tattered Rathor-Sisodhia alliance. The Rana was forced by Aurangzeb to cede the paragnas of Mandal, Bidnur and Mandargarh in lieu of jizyah, and promise not to support the Rathors. Some parganas were also siezed by the Mughals from Rana Jai Singh. Jagat Singh was returned and accorded a mansab of 5000/5000. Aurangzeb was still adamant in Ajit Singh's case and was prepared only to reiterate his earlier promise that mansab and raj would be given to him when he came of age.

Prince Akbar rebelled in January 1681 with support from the Rana. This shows that there was concern among the Mughal ranks of Aurangzeb's handling of the Rajputana war, however not many mansabdars sided with him and were not prepared to go against a ruling emperor still in his prime. Shujaat Khan, the faujdar of Jodhpur was successful in putting the Rajputs on the defensive. In 1681, Prince Akbar's daughter was returned to Aurangzeb by the Rathors as a show of goodwill, however Aurangzeb was insistent on keepng Jodhpur with the Mughals. In 1698, Ajit Singh was finally recognised as ruler of Marwar and was assigned mansabs but Jodhpur was still kept in imperial possession. He would attempt twice to rebel unsuccessfully to capture Jodhpur once in 1701 and again in 1706. The Rana of Mewar also failed to find lasting solution to disagreements such as assignments of parganas, troop contributions and payment of Jizyah.

Satish Chandra comments on the whole affair that the Marwar and Mewar campaign doesn't signify a breach with Rajputana as a whole, noting that, "Aurangzeb's breach with Marwar and Mewar in 1679 doesn't signify his breach with the Rajputs as such. The rulers of Amber, Bikaner, Bundi and Kota continued to serve in the Mughal armies even after 1679."

Athar Ali in his work *The Nobility under Aurangzeb* had calculated the number of nobles who were working under Akbar and Aurangzeb. In 1595



under Akbar 22.5% of Mansabdars were Hindus. During the last phase of Aurangzeb's reign (1679-1707) the proportion of the Hindu nobles were much higher than any other period; 31.6 % but there was reduction of Rajputs who were replaced by the Marathas.

### Marathas

The Marathas much like the Rajputs saw their rise in the medieval period, however unlike the Rajputs they weren't able to set up independent states and thus merely seen as local chiefs controlling patches of land. The Maratha rise is closely associated with the exploits of Shivaji Bhonsle, to whom Maratha Warrior castes and literate Brahmin castes flocked. Shivaji was the second son of Shahji Bhonsla, a Maratha general and aristocrat, and Jija Bai, daughter of one of the prominent Maratha noblemen in the Ahmednagar Sultanate. Shahji Bhonsle was influential in the waning days of Ahmednagar Sultanate and after its assimilation into the Mughal empire he served under the Bijapur Sultan. Shivaji was raised at Poona in the ways of Maratha aristocracy. Unlike his brothers he never assimilated into the Persian court cultures of Bijapur Sultanate. He seized control of his father's estate at the age of eighteen and began assembling a retinue of followers. By 1646 the Bijapur Sultan fell ill and Shivaji used this opportunity to slowly establish himself as an independent ruler.

Shivaji established dominance over other Maratha chiefs or *Deshmukhs* using diplomacy, intrigue, threats and occasionally violence. He also captured nearly forty hill forts from Bijapur. He employed nearly 10000 cavalry and 50000 infantry which were paid directly by the 1660s. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur in 1657 was a windfall for Shivaji, and Shivaji even negotiated with Aurangzeb for a time. However Aurangzeb distrusted Shivaji, when he made agreements with the Bijapur Sultan, he pardoned Shivaji but demanded that the Sultan employ Shivaji in Karnataka far away from Mughal borders.

During the Mughal civil war, Shivaji had conquered Purandar and seized north Konkan, including Kalyan and Bhiwandi ports, which were important for the Bijapuri exports as well as the import of warhorses. Hence the Bijapur Sultan dispatched Afzal Khan, a prominent Bijapuri noble along with 10000 men against Shivaji. Shivaji's forces knowing that they couldn't match the Bijapuri army in a pitched battle refrained from engaging them in the field. Shivaji murdered Afzal Khan by strangling him near Pratapgarh fort in a meeting inside the Bijapur commander's

audience tent in 1659. Thus, Shivaji was able to defeat the now leaderless Bijapuri expeditionary force.

Aurangzeb worried about the growing Maratha power, dispatched Shaista Khan, the newly appointed viceroy of Deccan, to defeat Shivaji. Shivaji was now faced with the focused might of the Mughal empire and lost Puna and northern part of his territories to Shaista Khan. However the Mughals paid dearly for every victory, Chakan a hill fort near Puna took nearly four months of siege to wear them out. Thus, Shaista Khan resorted to pillaging the countryside with Mughal cavalry. Aurangzeb sent a further reinforcement in the form of a 10000 strong Rajput contingent under Jaswant Singh Rathor.

Shivaji also raided and looted nearly one crore rupees from the port of Surat in 1664 which was a further humbling of the Mughal strength of arms. Aurangzeb appointed Mirza Jai Singh, one of the most skilled and veteran generals of Mughal empire to defeat Shivaji as well as annex Bijapur. He was given a 12000 strong army and was also empowered to allot Jagirs and give out promotions and demotions in the Deccan which was nominally the power of the Viceroy of the Deccan. Soon after he was also appointed as the Viceroy of the Deccan in place of Prince Muazzam, which was also nominally reserved for the royal princes. The hill fort of Purandar where Shivaji's family was residing was put under siege by the Mughal commander in 1665. Two months of brutal siege warfare ensued with repeated attempts on Maratha trenches, ceaseless gunfire and the Mughal cavalry devastating the countryside. With the repeated failed attempts to relieve the fort, Shivaji agreed negotiations and met Jai Singh under sacred oaths of protection inside the Mughal Commanders's audience tent just behind the siege lines. The Treaty of Purandar was signed in 1665.

Shivaji's son Sambhaji was given a Mansab of 5000 and Shivaji promised to personally support any Mughal campaigns in the Deccan. Jai Singh also wanted to crush Bijapur with the help of Shivaji, but Aurangzeb was distrustful towards Shivaji.. Jai Singh hoped to win imperial support for his plan by reconciling Aurangzeb and Shivaji by having Shivaji visit the imperial capital. However, Shivaji felt insulted at the court and walked out of there. Aurangzeb also refused to give Shivaji a Mansab higher than 5000. He escaped from Agra came back to his territory and Surat for the second time. In 1674, Shivaji crowned himself at Rajgarh and assumed the title Chhatrapati Shivaji.

### 3.2.7 Aurangzeb and the Deccani States

Aurangzeb's relationship with the Deccani states saw an evolution from a struggle to recover the territories surrendered to Bijapur in 1636 to contesting with Shivaji. The Marathas were in understanding with Bijapur and Golconda. He wanted to conquer and consolidate Bijapur and Golconda to counter growing Maratha influence. Till 1668, Jai Singh led campaigns against both Shivaji and Bijapur. But owing to the lack of imperial support in resources Jai Singh was unable to conquer Bijapur. The death of Ali Adil Shah in 1672 created instability in the Bijapur Sultanate. The brothers Madanna and Akhanna amassed considerable influence with Madanna as Wazir. They tried to form a tripartite alliance between Bijapur, Golconda and Shivaji. However the prevailing opportunistic nature of the nobles prevented progress in such a direction. Bahadur Khan, the governor of Deccan, negotiated with Khawas Khan, the leader of the Deccani faction in Bijapur. However his overthrowal by Bahlol Khan, the leader of the Afghan faction, resulted in Bahadur Khan invading Bijapur in 1676. Bahadur Khan occupied Gulbarga and Naldurg, thereby linking Mughal territories of Bhima and Manjira in the west. Aurangzeb was not impressed with the performance of Bahadur Khan and replaced him with Dilir Khan, who joined with Bijapur to invade Golconda unsuccessfully in 1677. This furthered the Deccani faction who succeeded in getting one of their leader, Sidi Masai, appointed as the wazir and stationing a Golconda resident at Bijapur court to advise them. A Mughal invasion of Bijapur in 1679 was thwarted by the efforts of Maratha intervention. Thus Dilir Khan only succeeded in uniting the various Deccani powers against the Mughals, and was recalled by Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb himself reached the Deccan in pursuit of the rebellious Prince Akbar in 1680. He was hard pressed to either win over the Marathas or the Deccani states but without much success. But despite the emperor being in the Deccan, there was a lack of any serious attempt to annex the Deccani states. This couldn't be fully accounted for by either the Afghan rebellion or the threat of a Persian invasion. Satish Chandra believes that Aurangzeb was reluctant to annex the Deccani states owing to the fact that it will tie up huge amounts of imperial resources in men and material for a very long time.

However by 1684, Aurangzeb came to see outright annexation of Bijapur and Golconda to be the only way to counter the growing Maratha influence. He sent an ultimatum to oust Sharza Khan, the leading noble hostile to the Mughals, provision the imperial army with supplies, allow them passage and send the obligatory contingent of 5000 to 6000 cavalry. The Bijapur

ruler appealed to Shivaji and Golconda for aid. However even the combined might of Marathas, Golconda and Bijapur couldn't match the full might of the Mughal empire being personally led by the emperor himself. Bijapur fell in 1686, after eighteen months of siege. Golconda followed soon after, with Aurangzeb demanding large war reparations and the exile of Madanna and Akhanna, who were promptly murdered in the streets of Golconda in 1686. Aurangzeb captured the Golconda fort after six months of siege, trickery, intrigue and bribery. Thus the entirety of the states of Bijapur and Golconda along with their conquests in Karnataka were annexed by the Mughal Empire.

From 1687 onwards the last phase of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy commenced. With the vanquishing of Bijapur and Golconda, Aurangzeb was free to concentrate his full might on the Marathas who were in turn distracted by internal enemies and other adversaries such as the Portuguese and the Sidis. Sambhaji was ambushed by an imperial army and he was captured & executed in 1689. This would prove to be a setback for the Mughals as they could no longer negotiate to a single Maratha leader, rather they were now split into the entire landscape. The younger brother of Shahji, Rajaram was crowned king, however he soon fled to Jinji, seeking assistance from his half cousin Shahji in Tanjore.

Attempts were made to integrate Deccani aristocracy with the Mughal elite society and bureaucracy. However, with the Mughal nobility having more of a bureaucratic and distant nature, the Mughal elites found it difficult to amass popular support in the region. With the flight of Rajaram to Jinji, the Maratha resistance continued and Zulfiqar Khan, the son of the Wazir, Asaf Khan, was sent with a contingent of 10000 horse and 15000 Rajput foot soldiers to subdue Karnataka and Jinji. However Jinji withstood all assaults and was even able to send a 30000 strong expedition into Karnataka. Possibly the long-winded campaigns had induced war weariness among the Mughal officers. This was a political baggage for Aurangzeb as this was a factor for discontent during his reign. Zulfiqar Khan was finally able to conquer Jinji in 1698, however Rajaram escaped to Satara and giving an impetus to Maratha resistance. The Marathas in the meanwhile had established themselves in parts of the old Bijapur Sultanate and appointed revenue collectors.

Aurangzeb himself relentlessly sieged fort after fort from 1700 to 1705, often requiring to be carried. Aurangzeb even rejected submission offer from Tara Bai, Rajaram's widow, after his death in 1700 to send a 5000 strong contingent for imperial service, a mansab of 7000 for Shivaji II and

proclaiming him the King of Marathas and the right to collect Sardeshmukhi in the Deccan, essentially Tara Bai was willing to submit and surrender the right to collect Chauth. Aurangzeb however rejected the offer and was confident in his ability to crush the Marathas. Perhaps he wanted to make Shahu, the son of Shahji who was captured and raised in the Mughal court the leader of Marathas. He was treated well, given a mansab of 7000 and the title of Raja. Aurangzeb finally decided to exit the constant campaigns in 1706, and retire to Aurangabad, constantly being harassed by Maratha troops. He finally departed the mortal world in February 21, 1707 and was buried in an unmarked plain grave nearby the tomb of Sheikh Zainuddin near Daulatabad. In conclusion 'Deccan proved to a grave for his reputation and to his body'.

### 3.2.8 Let us Sum up

Aurangzeb was the son of Shah Jahan who came to power through the War of succession. He had a solid training in the art of administration and warfare as a Prince. As a Prince he was deputed to Deccan, Gujarat, Kandahar and Central Asian campaigns so he had a complete idea about geography and its resources. His regime can be broadly divided into two phases; early phase he was in North India and the later phase he fully involved in the Deccan campaign. After he ascended the throne, he introduced certain reforms which resulted in rebellions. His regime is known for costly military campaigns and the Mughal territory expanded to the maximum. The expansion of territory also brought issues such as assigning Jagirs and replacement or introduction of new groups in the Mughal Nobility. This caused a lot of disturbance to Aurangzeb. His rule was mirrored with controversies such as reintroduction of Jizyah, reduction of Rajput Mansabdars and rebellions. The Deccan campaigns cost damage to the prestige and life of the emperor.

### 3.2.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Describe the administrative measures introduced by Aurangzeb
2. Elaborate the religious policy of Aurangzeb and its impact
3. Discuss the military campaigns of Aurangzeb
4. 'Deccan proved to be a grave for his body and reputation' - Discuss

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### Lesson 3.3 - Decline of the Empire

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#### Structure

- 3.3.1 Learning Objectives
- 3.3.2 Introduction
- 3.3.3 Factors for the decline of the Mughals
- 3.3.4 Views of various Schools
- 3.3.5 Let us Sum up
- 3.3.6 Self-Assessment Questions
- 3.3.7 References

#### 3.3.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- describe the factors for the decline of the Mughals
- discuss the views of various schools of thought on decline

#### 3.3.2 Introduction

The Mughal empire was one of the greatest, richest and largest empire of the early modern World. The Mughal Empire had its origin by the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was in power for nearly two centuries but after the death of Aurangzeb the empire had a drastic decline in its power and prestige. The Mughal Emperor ruled over a 100 million people at a time when Elizabeth I was ruling only a population of 3 million. The Mughal Empire was known for his extraordinary Indo-Islamic synthesis. Some of its rulers attempted to create a tolerant and pluralist society which embraced all religions. After the death of Aurangzeb slowly the empire declined. The following are the major factors in the decline of the Mughal empire remarked by the Historians:

1. The personality and religion of the Mughal employers in particular the religious policy of Aurangzeb (William Irvine and J N Sarkar)
2. The assignment system or the nature of the Jagidari system (Satish Chandra)
3. The Agrarian Crisis (Irfan Habib)
4. The role of bankers and merchants and their failure to support the empire fiscally or commercially (The Great Firm Theory- Karen Leonard)

5. Cultural and scientific trends for other larger forces at work especially in view of the fact that three large empires Mughal, Safavid and Ottoman faced their decline at the same time (Athar Ali and Iqtidar Alam Khan)
6. The regional elites and the failure of the centre to retain their loyalty (Richard Barnett)

The European Historians created a rhetoric that the British were the inheritors of the Mughals and at the same time they justified the British rule had come to erase the tyranny of the Mughal rule over the Hindus. Indian Historians and recent researchers have come out with different factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire. With the decline of the Mughal power a number of independent principalities emerged throughout India.

### **3.3.3 Factors for the decline of the Mughals**

#### **Aurangzeb's Religious policy**

Aurangzeb failed to realize that the vast Mughal Empire depended on the willing support of the people. He lost the support of the Rajputs who had contributed greatly to the strength of the Empire. They had acted as pillars of support, but Aurangzeb's policy turned them to bitter foes. The wars with the Sikhs, the Marathas, the Jats and the Rajputs had drained the resources of the Mughal Empire.

Akbar had won over the Hindus by giving them religious toleration and opening careers to talent irrespective of caste, race or creed. He had enlisted Hindu Warrior tribes, chiefly the Rajput as reliable defenders of his throne. The Rajputs under him and his three immediate successors had carried the Mughal banner to the extreme corner of the subcontinent of India and also into the heart of Central Asia. But Aurangzeb reimpose the hated jiziya on the Hindus, distrusted the Rajputs and made an unworthy attempt to convert the heir to the gaddi of Marwar to Islam. Hence the Rajputs, were alienated and were determined to fight the Mughal oppressor. The Rathors and Sisodias remained practically in rebellion till the downfall of the Empire. Their example was followed by the Bundelas and the Sikhs.

#### **Weak Successors**

The Mughal Empire had become too large to be controlled by any ruler from one centre i.e. Delhi. The Great Mughals were efficient and exercised control over ministers and army, but the later Mughals

were poor administrators. As a result, the distant provinces became independent. The rise of independent states led to the disintegration of the Mughal Empire. The Mughals did not follow any law of succession like the law of primogeniture. Consequently, each time a ruler died, a war of succession between the brothers for the throne started. This weakened the Mughal Empire, especially after Aurangzeb. The nobles, by siding with one contender or the other, increased their own power. The successors of Aurangzeb were weak and became victims of the intrigues and conspiracies of the faction-ridden nobles. They were inefficient generals and incapable of suppressing revolts. The absence of a strong ruler, an efficient bureaucracy and a capable army had made the Mughal Empire weak.

### **Overextension**

There are accusations of Aurangzeb overextending the empire's borders thus stretching the resources of the empire too thin. This can be seen in the Afghan rebellion when armies had to be marched all the way from Delhi by the Mir Bakshi and even the emperor himself. The frontiers such as eastern Bengal frontier, north west, etc., were poor in tax income thus putting further strain on the imperial treasury. The border regions also faced difficulties with timely relief measures in times of siege and foreign invasion. These invasions sapped the remaining strength of the Mughals and hastened the process of disintegration. The invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali resulted in further drainage of wealth. These invasions shook the very stability of the empire.

### **Rajput Campaign**

The Mewar and Marwar campaigns strained the relationship with the Rajput nobles, however many Rajput nobles still were employed in the Mughal empire. Though this crack alone is not severe enough to restrict the Mughal potential, was combined with other deep-rooted issues like the Jagirdari Crisis. The Rajput nobles saw themselves increasingly in competition with the newly recruited Deccani nobles and also other factions such as Irani, Turani, Afghan and Sheikhsadars for privileges in the empire. This is an indication of the Rajputs losing their strategic importance within the empire.

### **Degeneration of the Mughal Nobility**

The history of India of the time of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan was made by Bairam Khan, Munim Khan, Muzaffar Khan and Abdur Rahim

Khan Khana, Itmad Ud daulah and Mahababat Khan, Asaf Khan and Saadulla khan. But with the decline in the character of the later Mughal Emperors decline also set in the character of the nobility wealth and leisure which the foreign Muslims acquired in India fostered luxury and sloth and the presence of many women in their harems encouraged debauchery, which, in their turn, undermined their character and love of adventure. Consequently, physical, moral and intellectual degeneration overtook the governing classes

### **Demoralization of the Mughal Army**

The demoralization of the Mughal Army was another major reason for the decline of the Mughal Empire the Mughal army which by origin and composition was became weak and defective. It consisted chiefly of contingents recruited and maintained by the high offices and nobles who were assigned revenues of large tract of the country for their maintenance. On account of this the individual soldier looked upon his mansabdar as his chief and not as his officer. There was no touch between the emperor and the individual soldiers who were paid by their, commander or mansabdar and not directly from the Royal treasury. The inherent defects of this radically and sound system work aggravated during the reign of Aurangzeb and his successors. As the authority of the later Mughul emperors relaxed, the great nobles or officers of the empire began to convert the assignment which they held for maintaining troops, into their hereditary possessions. This left the emperor without a strong body of personal troops to enable him to assert his authority. Besides, on account of the weakness of imperial authority the mansabdars became so jealous of one another that a commander often deliberately refrain from bringing three- fourth

won battle or a siege to a successful conclusion, if he felt that another officer would share the credit of a success. It became the habit of the Mughul officers from the last quarter of the 17th century to be in treacherous correspondence with the enemy. As the emperor and the Mir Bakshi themselves lacked ability and firmness of character they could not enforce proper discipline in the army which was reduced to a well-armed mob. Military crimes were overlooked even by Aurangzeb and no regular punishments were inflicted for dereliction of duty. For this reason the army which had carried the Mughal banners to the extreme corners of the country and even beyond to the river Oxus and the Helmand in Central Asia became useless for offence and defenses.

### **Economic Bankruptcy**

Shah Jahan's zeal for construction had depleted the treasury. As well as Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb's long war in the south had further drained the exchequer. They increased the state demand to one half of the produce of the soil and as the revenue demand rose, the production fell in the same proportion. The cultivators began deserting their fields but they were compelled by force to carry on the cultivation. Bankruptcy began to stare the Mughal government in the face in the times of Aurangzeb and his successors who had to fight many wars to gain the throne and retain it. The economic collapse came in the time of Alamgir II (1754-1759) who was starved and the revenues even of the royal privy purse-estate were usurped by the unscrupulous Wazir Imad-ul-Mulk. A month and a half after his accession, Alamgir II had no suitable convenience to enable him to ride in procession to the Idgah and he had to walk on foot from the harem to the stone mosque of the Fort. The wonder is that the bankrupt Mughal government lasted for another 50 years.

### **Aurangzeb's Deccan Policy:**

Aurangzeb's Deccan policy which caused the destruction of the best soldiers and undermined the Mughal prestige beyond repair, contributed materially to the downfall of his dynasty. He destroyed the Shia Kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda and waged a long, endless war for extermination against the Marathas. This obliged the hardy Marathas to fight in self-defence and when success came to them, they were encouraged to take up the offensive, cross the Narmada and invade the Mughal provinces in Northern India. The Hindus in Northern India were already alienated by Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution and the Hindu officers and vassals of the empire were either indifferent or secretly hostile to the Mughal cause. This creates opportunity for the Marathas. They appealed to the common sentiments of Rajput and of the Hindus who secretly allied themselves with Bajirao when the latter boldly proceeded to execute his policy of striking at the withering trunk of the Mughal Empire in the belief that after the fall of that Empire the independent provincial Muslim dynasty would fall of them. Thus, within thirty one years of Aurangzeb's death, his successor had to wage war with the Sikhs, Jats, Bundelas, Rathores, Kachhwahas and Sisodias and no Hindu tribe of military value was left on their side.

The Emperor's long absence from Northern India led too many provincial governors becoming independent, with some regions even turning turbulent. The long Deccan wars of Aurangzeb, thus, contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire.

### **Jagirdari Crisis**

The Mughal emperor was a highly centralized bureaucratized structure with the

emperor at the top, his vitality depending upon the strength of the military aristocracy, who were placed just below him. With the introduction of the Mansabdari system in civil and military organisation in the late 16th century Akbar, had accommodated the aristocracy within this structure. Those mansabdars who were not paid in cash were awarded a jagir or landed estate in lieu of salary. They were the jagirdars who were required to collect the revenue from the particular jagir of which one part would go to the state and the other two parts would cover his personal expenses and the maintenance allowances for his soldiers and horses. During the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, the number of jagirdars appointed had risen to such a great number that there was a serious shortage of paibaqi land (land earmarked to be given as jagirs). This decrease in the resources of the Empire ruptured the functional relationship between the emperor and the aristocracy, indicating the beginning of inefficiency within the imperial Mughal administrative system.

As a result of this economic crisis in the 18th century the various ethno-religious groups within the aristocracy began competing each other. About four-fifths of the land revenue of the Mughal Empire was under the control of mansabdars and jagirdars; but this income was unevenly distributed among them, creating jealousies within the aristocracy, particularly at the time when the resources of the Empire were diminishing. This economic situation known as the 'jagirdari crisis' of the 18th century has been defined by Satish Chandra in the following words, 'the available social surplus was insufficient to defray the cost of administration, pay for wars of one type or another and to give the ruling classes a standard of living in keeping with its expectations'. In this situation the actual revenue collection was much less than what had been estimated, thereby diminishing the expected income of the jagirdars. The crisis increased during the last years of Aurangzeb's reign mainly because of the Deccan war, since a greater number of mansabdars was required, the ensuing



political turmoil made the collection of revenue a more difficult task. The Jagirdari crisis led to an unhealthy competition to gain control over the fertile jagir. This added to the already existing factionalism at Court after the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712 A.D. the problem intensified as low-ranking officials now found it difficult to maintain their lifestyle with the meager amount, they got from the jagirs. As a result of several diverse yet interrelated factors led to the decline of the Mughal Empire with dramatic suddenness within a few decades following the death of Aurangzeb. The period of the great Mughals, which constitutes a glorious era in medieval Indian history ended in this manner, yielding way to the establishment of many independent regional Kingdom in its wake.

Athar Ali gives a detailed look at the Jagirdari crisis in which he discusses that a significant increase in the assignment of Jagirs created a demand for jagirs as well as delays in getting the assigned jagirs and extracting revenue from them. Moreover, the increase in Jagirs meant the shrinking of the Khalisa or crown lands, i.e, the income of the emperor which in turn means a reduction in the resources available to the emperor personally. Thus, a shift favorable to the regional states and governors further weakened the emperor's authority. The ascendancy of the Maratha power in the Deccan was a key factor as it was the Deccan expansion that necessitated the increase in Jagirs as a way of recruitment or bribery to induct and assimilate the Deccani nobles and soldiers.

### **Major Theories on Decline of Mughal Empire**

The Mughal Empire held sway over a large part of India for nearly three centuries, but a drastic decline in its power and prestige came about by the first half of the eighteenth century. The process of the decline and emergency of regional polities has been intensely debated among historians. It has also been a subject on which scholarly opinion is more sharply divided than on any other aspects of Mughal history. Each and every historian has different theories on the decline of Mughal Empire and the major theories were as follows:

#### **Satish Chandra, Jagirdari Crisis:**

The first and foremost among them is the thesis put forward by Satish Chandra in his *Parties and Politics of the Mughal Court* (1959). He builds up the hypothesis of a Jagirdari Crisis. According to him, the crisis was

- (a) Contracting hasil from the mahāls;
- (b) An increase in the number of total mansabdars; and
- (c) A general tendency to allot increasingly high mansabs.

All this, according to Satish Chandra led to a state of bejāgiri. Mughal decline has to be seen in the Mughal failure towards the end of Aurangzeb's reign, to maintain the system of the mansabdar-Jagirdar. As this system went into disarray, The Empire was bound to collapse.

#### **M. Athar Ali, Jagirdari Crisis:**

Athar's Ali Work on Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb [1966]), who made a count of the nobles in the Mughal Empire. According to his count of nobles of the rank of 1000 and above, the percentage of the khānazāds and the Rajputs started falling, while the Deccanis and the Marathas was growing which emphasized the subsequent shortage of jagirs. The sudden increase in the number of nobles, caused due to the expansion of Empire into the Deccan and the Maratha territory, created a crisis in the functioning of the Jagir system. According to Athar Ali, the nobles competed for better jagirs, which were increasingly becoming rare due to the influx of nobles from the South. The logical consequence was the erosion in the political structure which was based on Jagirdari to a large extent.

#### **Irfan Habib, Agrarian Crisis:**

The major theory of the Aligarh School was built by Irfan Habib in his Agrarian System of Mughal Empire (1963). Drawing on royal chronicles and state revenue documents, Habib argued that the Mughal state extorted the entire surplus produced by peasants reducing them to low levels of subsistence. He built up the hypothesis of an 'Agrarian Crisis'. He tries to work out the causes of the decline of the Mughal Empire in a class framework which does not stop simply at identifying the classes but extends to identify the Mughal state as 'the protective arm of the exploiting class'. He illustrates the basic nature of the Mughal land-revenue demand. The Mughal jagirdari system according to him contributed to a cash nexus and stimulated town-based crafts. Habib implicitly highlights a number of social contradictions in the society controlled and managed by the Mughal Empire. Thus he points out the contradiction between the village headmen, the peasant proprietors and menial workers on the one hand and the nobility on the other. He also points out at the intra-ruling class contradictions: the zamindars and the

intermediary zamindars on the one hand, and the nobility on the other. He also takes into account the contradictions between the muqaddams and the ordinary peasants, and between the ordinary peasants including the muqaddams and the menial classes.

The basic features of this 'Agrarian Crisis' as propounded by Irfan Habib are:

- (a) High rate of demand built in the zabt system (more than half of the actual produce);
- (b) Increasing gap between the actual hasil and the expected jama;
- (c) Rotation of jagirs, pressurizing the peasants and ruination of agriculture;
- (d) Ruination and flight of peasantry from the jagirs, which affected the zamindars also as they were closely linked to the Village Community; and
- (e) Breakout of agrarian revolts which were manifestations of peasant discontent.

So according to Habib these Peasant protests weakened the political and Social Fabric of the Empire.

### **J.F.Richards, Bejagiri:**

Further improvements were made in the theories of Mughal decline by J.F. Richards who pointed out that the state of bejagiri (be-jagiri, lack of sufficient jagirs) for assignment was caused by a deliberate policy of increasing the share of the khalisa ( Crown lands) revenues, the lack of Paibaki land (Paibaqi refers to revenue from reserved lands which were sent to the central treasury) was due to a deliberate decisions on Aurangzeb's part to keep the most lucrative jagirs under Khalisa in order to provide for a continued campaigning in the Karnataka and against the Maratha. This resulted in a further clamour for jagirs by the nobles and the concentration of more funds with the government from 1687 onwards.

### **Karen Leonard , Great Firm Theory**

In 1979, Karen Leonard put forth a hypothesis regarding the downfall of the Mughal Empire.<sup>1</sup> Her 'Great Firm' theory of Mughal decline suggested that when large, autonomous banking firms across the Indian subcontinent began withdrawing essential financial services from imperial officials and noblemen in the late seventeenth century, the Mughal agrarian economy and fiscal apparatus could no longer be sustained. Gradually, the imperial

edifice gave way to fledgling groups like the Maratha marauders in the Deccan, ethno-religious agrarian orders like the Sikhs in the Punjab, and European mercantile companies including the British East India Company in Bengal. According to Leonard, in trying to secure a material basis for perpetuating their own social orders, these regional groups relied on the financial resources and services of the very same 'Great Firms' that used to back the mighty Mughals. Even though Leonard's idea could not be corroborated due to lack of evidence, her theory was nonetheless provocative. It was criticized and challenged soon after by preeminent historian of Mughal India John F. Richards.

#### **Muzaffar Alam , Region-centric approach:**

Muzaffar Alam has used in their works region-centric approach to explain Mughal decline. M Alam, *The crisis of empire in Mughal North India, Awadh and the Punjab, 1707-1748* (1986). Muzaffar Alam has made comparative study of the development in the Mughals subas of Awadh and Punjab. According to Alam, the Mughal decline in the early 18th century has to be seen in the inability of the state to maintain its policy of checks and balances between the Zamindar, jagirdars, madad-i-ma'ash holders and the local indigenous elements like the shaikhzadas in awadh. In the early 18th century there was a thrust of the nobles towards independent political alignments with the zamindars in order to carve out their own fortunes. Alongside there was an attempt between the various co-shares of Mughal power to encroach on each other's rights and territorial jurisdictions. These developments were not entirely incompatible with what happened earlier. But in the Hey-day of the Empire these tensions had been contained. This was achieved at times by the use of military force and at other times by balancing out the power of one social group by settling another in the vicinity. Muzaffar Alam concludes that the decline of the Mughal Empire was manifested both in Awadh and the Punjab in a kind of political transformation and in the emergency and configuration of the elements of a new subadari. The genesis for the emergency of independent regional units was present in both the provinces. But in Punjab it ended in chaos, while Awadh witnessed a stable dynastic rule.

#### **Jadunath Sarkar, Deteriorating Characters of the Emperors and their Nobles:**

Jadunath Sarkar, in his work, *The Fall of Mughal Empire*, 1938, and *History of Aurangzeb*, 1912, attributed the decline to deterioration in the characters of the emperors and their nobles. Sarkar had analyzed the development of this period in the context of law and order he therefore held Aurangzeb as the arch culprit. According to Sarkar, Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic. He discriminated against sections of the nobles and of officials on the basis of religion. This led to wide scale resentments among the nobility. He argued that Aurangzeb's successor and their nobles were mere shadows of their predecessors and were thus unable to set right the evils of Aurangzeb's legacy. It is difficult to find the single explanation commonly applicable to the problems of the Mughal Empire in all its regions and provinces. For similar reasons it is difficult to accept a view of Mughal decline which applies uniformly to all parts of the Mughal Empire. The Mughal Empire at best represented a consensus of both the centers and the peripheries. Different regions were affected in different ways. While in some regions links with the Mughal core were severed, in others they were retained. It was logical that the different regions followed different path of dissociation from the Mughal Empire. Mughal decline was thus much more Complex than what the historians subscribing to the Mughal centric approach would have us believe.

### 3.3.5 Let us Sum up

The Mughal Empire which was founded by Babur in 1526 went on upto 1707 in a firm footing. In 1707 with the death of Aurangzeb slowly the empire had its decline. Historians have dealt in length and breadth about the factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire. There is no single factor that was responsible for the decline of the Mughal Empire. The Colonial Historians wanted to give a communal colour to the decline and they stress on the Aurangzeb and his religious policy where as the contemporary researches have focused on various others factors such as Jagirdari crisis, etc.,

### 3.3.6 Self-Assessment Questions

1. Discuss the factors for the decline of the Mughal Empire
2. Examine the views of Irfan Habib on the decline of the Mughals
3. Describe how land is closely associated with the decline of Mughal Empire?

### 3.3.7 References

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## UNIT - IV

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### Lesson 4.1 - Socio-Economic Condition under the Mughals

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#### Structure

- 4.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.1.2 Introduction
- 4.1.3 Condition of India prior to the advent of Mughal Rule
- 4.1.4 Social Condition during the Mughal Rule
- 4.1.5 Economic Condition under the Mughals
- 4.1.6 Religious condition during the Mughal Rule
- 4.1.7 Let us Sum up
- 4.1.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.1.9 References

#### 4.1.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- understand the condition of India prior to the advent of Mughals
- know the social condition of India during the Mughal rule
- describe the economic condition during the Mughal period
- examine the religious condition under the Mughals.

#### 4.1.2 Introduction

The Mughal Empire, spanning from the early 16th century to the mid-19th century, witnessed significant transformations in various aspects of society and economy. Understanding the socio-economic conditions during the Mughal era is essential for comprehending the historical context and legacies that have shaped modern India. The victory at the Battle of Panipat in 1526 marked the beginning of Mughal rule in India. However, it was under the reign of Babur's grandson, Akbar the Great, that the empire reached its zenith. Under Akbar's visionary leadership, the Mughal Empire expanded its territories through military conquests and skillful diplomacy. Akbar's policies, known as the "Akbari policy," aimed at fostering religious tolerance, administrative reforms, and cultural integration. His inclusive

approach brought together diverse communities, and he sought to create a strong centralised administration. Akbar's successor Jahangir period saw the advent of Europeans to India for seeking permission to start the trading activity in India. Shah Jahan regime witnessed construction of magnificent structures such as the iconic Taj Mahal Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Agra Fort, Moti Masjid and so on. The Mughal rulers interacted with the caste system, impacting social dynamics and opportunities for mobility. The land tenure system, including the roles of Zamindars and Jaghirdars, influenced agricultural production and rural society. Trade and commerce thrived during the Mughal era, leading to economic growth and urbanization. Agriculture was a vital sector, with advancements in techniques and infrastructure contributing to increased productivity. The Mughal emperors' patronage of the arts and architecture left a lasting impact on the cultural and artistic landscape of the era.

#### **4.1.3 Condition of India prior to the advent of Mughal Rule**

India immediately before the arrival of the Mughals was characterized by political fragmentation, regional conflicts, and a diverse socio-cultural landscape. The period saw the decline of prominent empires and the emergence of regional powers, which set the stage for the Mughal conquest and subsequent establishment of their empire.

##### **Political Fragmentation**

India was divided into numerous independent kingdoms and sultanates, each ruling over their respective territories. The Delhi Sultanate, which had been established by Turkic rulers in the 13th century, was facing internal strife and fragmentation. This led to the weakening of centralized authority and the rise of regional powers.

##### **Regional Powers**

Several regional powers emerged across different parts of India. The Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan, the Vijayanagar Empire in South India, the Malwa Sultanate, the Gujarat Sultanate, and the Bengal Sultanate were some of the prominent political entities that held sway over their respective regions. These powers engaged in frequent conflicts and alliances, vying for supremacy.

## **Socio-Cultural Diversity**

India displayed remarkable socio-cultural diversity. The caste system continued to play a significant role in society, with Brahmins and other upper castes dominating the social hierarchy. Hinduism remained the dominant religion, but Islam had gained a substantial following, particularly in regions under the Delhi Sultanate. The Bhakti and Sufi movements gained prominence, emphasizing devotion and spiritual experiences beyond religious boundaries. The period witnessed the flourishing of art, literature, and architecture. Regional schools of art and architecture developed, incorporating both indigenous and foreign influences. Notable examples include the Vijayanagar architecture of South India and the Indo-Islamic architectural styles that emerged in different regions.

## **Economic State**

Agriculture formed the backbone of the economy, with significant cultivation taking place in fertile regions such as the Gangetic plains and the Deccan plateau. Trade and commerce continued to thrive, with Indian goods being in high demand both domestically and in international markets. Ports along the western and eastern coasts facilitated maritime trade with the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa.

### **4.1.4 Social Condition during the Mughal Rule**

#### **Caste System and The Mughals**

The caste system remained a complex social structure that shaped social interactions, occupational divisions, and social hierarchies during the Mughal era. The empire's administrative apparatus, such as the revenue collection system, often relied on the cooperation of local elites, including caste-based intermediaries. The Mughal emperors interacted with the caste system to varying degrees, with some attempting to challenge its rigidity while others reinforcing it. The impact of Mughal policies on caste dynamics varied, presenting both opportunities and challenges for social mobility. The Mughal Empire's centralized administration and justice system provided opportunities for upward mobility. For example, individuals from lower castes could rise to influential positions through merit and service to the empire. At the same time, the caste system posed challenges and limitations for social mobility. The hereditary nature of caste and the associated stigma of low-caste occupations restricted opportunities for individuals to transcend their social positions.

The Mughal emperors recognized and interacted with the caste system, although their approaches varied. Akbar the Great, known for his inclusive policies, attempted to bridge the gaps between different castes and communities. He sought to undermine the rigid hierarchy by promoting religious tolerance, encouraging intermarriage, and appointing individuals from various castes to important administrative positions. Akbar's policies aimed at fostering social cohesion and reducing social unrest. However, subsequent Mughal rulers had mixed approaches towards the caste system. Aurangzeb, for instance, strictly adhered to religious orthodoxy and reinforced the existing social order, including the caste system. He did not promote intermarriage or attempt to challenge the established caste structure.

### **Position of Women**

Women in the Mughal era was primarily expected to fulfil domestic and family responsibilities. They were often considered the guardians of family honour and virtue, emphasizing modesty and domesticity. There are few Royal women who played a pivotal role in Mughal Politics such as Nur Jahan and Jahanara. They acted as advisors to the emperor, exerting political and administrative power. Education to women during the Mughal era varied based on social status and family traditions. Some noblewomen received education in subjects such as poetry, music, and literature. The Mughal court provided a platform for intellectual pursuits, with educated women engaging in literary and artistic endeavors. Marriage customs in the Mughal era were often arranged, with marriages serving political, social, and economic purposes. The practice of polygamy was prevalent among the nobility, allowing alliances and consolidation of power. Cultural influences shaped the lives of women during the Mughal era. Persian, Central Asian, and indigenous traditions influenced fashion, music, dance, and artistic expression. Women often participated in and patronized the arts, contributing to the development of Mughal art and architecture.

Women in the Mughal era faced challenges and limitations due to societal norms and customs. Purdah, the practice of seclusion, was prevalent among some Muslim communities, restricting women's mobility and social interactions. Patriarchal norms and religious customs also imposed constraints on women's access to certain spaces and opportunities.

## Status of Education

During the Mughal era, various educational institutions were established which fostered intellectual development. Both Madrasas and Gurukuls were patronized. Madrasas were Islamic schools that provided religious education and training in subjects such as Arabic grammar, Quranic studies, and Islamic law. Gurukuls were traditional Hindu learning centers where students lived with their teachers and received education in subjects like Vedas, philosophy, and sciences. The Mughal rulers patronized both Persian and Indo-Islamic literature and there was an increase in the number of published books. The Mughal emperors patronized scholars and provided them with financial support, grants, and land endowments. The royal court became a centre for intellectual activities, attracting scholars, poets, and artists. The Mughal era witnessed the emergence of several prominent scholars and intellectuals. Notable figures such as Abul Fazl, author of the *Ain-i-Akbari*, and Badauni, a historian and translator, made significant contributions to historical and literary scholarship. Additionally, scholars like Faizi and Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan excelled in poetry and were associated with the Mughal court.

### 4.1.5 Economic Condition under the Mughals

During the Mughal era, India witnessed remarkable economic advancements and became a major centre for trade and commerce. The empire's policies, advancements in agriculture, and patronage of arts and industries propelled economic growth and stimulated interregional and international trade. The empire's vast territories and diverse resources provided a strong foundation for economic expansion, making it one of the wealthiest and most prosperous regions in the world. British economist Angus Maddison in his 2007 book 'Contours of The World Economy, 1-2030 AD' remarks that India's share in the world economy declined from a massive 24.4% in 1500 to a measly 4.2% in 1950. It was during the time of Mughals close to quarter of world's GDP is from India. The Mughal emperors implemented a sophisticated revenue administration system to manage the empire's finances.

Agriculture formed the backbone of the Mughal Empire's economy. The empire encompassed diverse geographic regions, allowing for a wide range of agricultural practices. Traditional crops such as wheat, barley, rice, millet, and pulses were cultivated extensively. The Mughals also

introduced new crops, including cash crops like cotton, indigo, sugarcane, opium, and spices. The cultivation of these cash crops played a crucial role in generating revenue and supporting the empire's economic growth. The revenue generated from land taxes funded the empire's administration, military, and public works, stimulating economic development.

The Mughal Empire implemented a structured land revenue system to collect taxes from agricultural produce. This structured system provided a steady source of income for the Mughal rulers and facilitated economic stability. The empire focused on enhancing irrigation systems by constructing canals, wells, and water storage facilities. These irrigation systems enabled the cultivation of multiple crops throughout the year, resulting in higher agricultural output. The Persian wheel, a water-lifting device, played a significant role in drawing water from wells and irrigating farmlands. The Empire also encouraged the use of advanced agricultural tools and techniques. The iron ploughshare, for example, allowed for efficient tilling of the land, leading to improved soil cultivation and increased crop yields. Crop rotation and the use of manure were practiced to maintain soil fertility and enhance agricultural productivity. Additionally, the Mughals established large gardens, known as Baghs, where experimental farming techniques were employed. These gardens served as centers for botanical research, horticultural development, and the cultivation of exotic plant species. The Baghs also showcased the empire's wealth and grandeur, demonstrating the Mughals' appreciation for agriculture and nature. The empire's policies and advancements in agricultural practices resulted in surplus food production. The abundance of food grains ensured stability in food supply, supported the growing population, and contributed to the social welfare of the empire.

During the Mughal period, India had fairly developed commerce. Trade grew at the local, regional, and inter-regional levels as well as trade relations with other countries were maintained. Land routes were used to maintain commercial relations. The arrival of European trading companies such as the Portuguese, British, Dutch, and French increased trading activity in the Indian subcontinent. New commercial activities such as money lending, brokerage, insurance, and so on were active during the period. The inland trade began with the basic of supplying food grains to the towns and cities. The villages also supplied raw materials like cotton, indigo and other stuff for urban manufacturers. This trade was controlled by the village banyas or merchants and the banjaras or long distance merchants and supplied the stuff



to the mandis or local markets. The most popular items for inter-regional transport were food grains and textile. Bengal transported huge amount of food grains, silk, sugar and muslin. Gujarat on the other hand was the entry port for foreign goods. It sent fine textiles and silks like patola to North India. Lahore was a centre for production of handicrafts. The products from Kashmir were sorted and sold in Lahore. The products of Punjab moved down Sindh to Kabul and Qandahar on one way and on the other way to Delhi and Agra. The inland trade was connected via roads which were much improved after the legacy of Sher Shah. The transport arrangements also included the serais or the traveller's inn about eight to ten miles distance in the highway if it connected important centres. The movement of goods was facilitated by easy transmission of money through a system called hundi. Hundi was a letter of credit payable after a period of time at a discount. The hundis often included insurance or bima which was charged at different rates based on the value of the good and the mode of transportation. The Sarrafs specialised in this dealing and were acting as private banks.

The Portuguese dominated and controlled the overseas trade. They issued cartaz or permission to take the goods across the Persian Gulf. It is observed that between 16th century and 18th century India's overseas trade increased steadily. The presence of the English, Dutch and the French trading companies supported the overseas trade.

To support trading the Mughals produced the finest currencies which were perfect in uniformity and purity. It was a tri metallic currency. The silver rupee was the basic coin and medium of exchange. The Mughals also issued a gold coin, muhr or ashrafi which weighed 169 grains troy and was for hoarding purposes. The coin was practically of unalloyed metal. For small exchange there were copper coins, dam, of 323 grains.

The Mughal emperors implemented policies that facilitated and regulated trade and commerce. They promoted the development of infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and sarais (rest houses), along trade routes. The empire's administrative system ensured the protection of trade caravans and maritime vessels, contributing to a safe and secure trading environment. The emperors also levied customs duties and taxes on trade, generating revenue for the empire.

#### **4.1.6 Religious condition under the Mughals**

The Mughals followed a liberal religious policy and this enabled them to rule a diverse people with peace. The Mughal era witnessed an unprecedented

level of religious harmony and coexistence. The empire was home to a multitude of faiths, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Places of worship for different religions were protected, and the Mughal emperors patronized the construction and restoration of temples, mosques, and gurdwaras. This created an atmosphere of respect and tolerance, allowing followers of various religions to practice their faith freely.

The Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar the Great, adopted policies of religious pluralism, aiming to create an inclusive and harmonious society. Akbar introduced measures such as the abolition of the jizya tax on non-Muslims and the establishment of a new religion, Din-i-Ilahi, which sought to amalgamate elements of various faiths. This approach laid the foundation for a tolerant and diverse empire. Emperor Akbar and his successors played crucial roles in promoting religious pluralism. Akbar's close associates, such as Abu'l Fazl, served as influential intellectuals who advocated for religious inclusivity. Scholars from different religious backgrounds were welcomed at the Mughal court, contributing to an environment of intellectual discourse and cultural exchange. The execution of Sikh Guru by Jahangir and Aurangzeb created a rivalry between the Sikhs and the Mughals. Celebration of Holi, Diwali, Dusshera and observation of Jarokha Darshan by the Mughals brought the Hindus close to the Mughal Court.

The Mughal Empire's promotion of religious pluralism and social harmony left a lasting impact on Indian society. It influenced subsequent rulers, including regional kingdoms, to adopt policies of tolerance and respect for diverse religious beliefs. The principles of religious inclusivity and coexistence laid the foundation for India's pluralistic society, where people of different faiths continue to live together in harmony.

#### **4.1.7 Let us Sum up:**

The Mughal Empire, which spanned from the early 16th century to the mid-19th century, brought about a period of economic prosperity, cultural richness, and social advancements. The empire's policies aimed at maintaining social harmony and religious pluralism, fostering an environment of inclusivity and cultural exchange. The empire's strategic location, well-established trade routes, major trading centers, and diverse range of trade goods facilitated the exchange of commodities and cultural influences. The period also witnessed extra ordinary Indo-Islamic synthesis in all spheres of life.

**4.1.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Describe the condition of India prior to the advent of Mughal rule
2. 'The religious policy of the Mughals laid the foundation for its rule'- Discuss
3. Discuss the economic condition of India during the Mughal rule

**4.1.9 References**

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## Lesson 4.2 - Bhakti Movement

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### Structure

- 4.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.2.2 Introduction
- 4.2.3 Meaning of Bhakti
- 4.2.4 The Bhakti cult of South and North India
- 4.2.5 Leaders of Bhakti Movement
- 4.2.6 Impact of the Movement
- 4.2.7 Let us Sum up
- 4.2.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.2.9 References

#### 4.2.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- understand the concept of Bhakti
- know the about the Bhakti cult of North and South India
- describe the contribution of the individuals to the Bhakti Movement
- examine the impact of the Bhakti Movement.

#### 4.2.2 Introduction

Bhakti has played a significant role in India's culture and religion, becoming a way of life for many people in the country. Originating in South India during the seventh and tenth centuries CE, it gradually spread to the North during the medieval period. Unlike the philosophical schools of thought, bhakti transcended religion and ritual, becoming a form of protest against the divisive barriers of caste, creed, colour, and race. This inclusivity allowed it to reach out to a vast majority of people who were previously excluded from the rigid framework of Sanskritic tradition. The bhakti movement gave India a new spiritual drive and a pan-Indian outlook by generating a vast body of devotional literature, music, and songs.

#### 4.2.3 Meaning of Bhakti

The act of worshipping God with the ultimate goal of attaining moksha or salvation is referred to as "bhakti". This salvation, also known as mukti,

moksha, or nirvana, represents liberation from the continuous cycle of births and rebirths. The term “bhakti” is derived from the root “bhaj” and the suffix “ktin.” The root “bhaj” encompasses the meanings of “serving,” “sharing,” and “participating.” In essence, bhakti refers to a deep and intense devotion to God, where one’s aim is to serve, share, and actively participate in the divine experience.

By the 7<sup>th</sup> century a group of reformers known as the Nayanmars and Alvars emerged in the southern region of India. These reformers belonged to the Saiva and Vaishnava Schools of thought, respectively. They sought to address the complexities and exclusivity of religious practices by emphasizing a more accessible and inclusive approach to spirituality. Their teachings and contributions played a significant role in making the path of devotion and bhakti more accessible to the common man. These reformers strongly denounced the evils in Hinduism including superstitious practices, formalism and caste system etc. Their essence of Bhakti revolved around unwavering focus and devotion towards a single God, which combined elements of both monotheism and polytheism. This single God may have various attributes and forms. Devotees were told to engage in acts of devotion and veneration with the intention of obtaining the grace of God, known as “arul” or “karuna,” in order to attain salvation. The primary objective of Bhakti is to establish a deep connection with God, seeking divine favour and compassion as a means to achieve spiritual liberation.

### **Characteristic features of the Medieval Bhakti Movement**

- (A) The monotheistic movement, represented by various saints, exhibits certain common characteristics that contribute to its unity.
- (B) Many of the monotheistic saints hailed from low castes and recognized a shared unity of ideas among themselves. They were aware of each other’s teachings and influences, often mentioning and acknowledging one another in their verses, indicating a harmonious ideological affinity.
- (C) All the monotheistic saints were influenced to varying degrees by the concepts of bhakti in Vaishnavism and Sufism. The movement synthesized elements from these traditions, but also introduced innovations and adaptations that gave new meanings to existing concepts.

- (D) The monotheistic saints believed in establishing a personal communion with God through the path of experiential bhakti. They staunchly upheld the belief in one God, with Nanak emphasizing a non-incarnate and formless (nirankar), eternal (akal), and ineffable (alakh) divine entity. Additionally, they stressed the significance of repetitive chanting of the divine name, the guidance of a spiritual guru, communal singing of devotional songs (kirtan), and the company of fellow saints (satsang).
  - (E) The monotheistic saints pursued a path independent of both Hinduism and Islam, rejecting their authority and criticizing the superstitious and orthodox elements of both religions. They launched a vigorous ideological attack on the caste system, idolatry, and the authority of Brahmins and their religious scriptures. Kabir, known for his confrontational style, utilized ridicule as a powerful means to denounce orthodox Brahmanism.
  - (F) The monotheistic saints preached their teachings in vernacular languages, making them accessible to the common people.
  - (G) The saints travelled extensively to propagate their message, spreading their teachings far and wide.
- Overall, these common features unite the monotheistic movement and distinguish it from the dominant religions of the time, demonstrating its independent and reformative nature

#### **4.2.4 The Bhakti Tradition of Southern India**

The Bhakti movement in South India was enriched by the contributions of the 63 Nayanars (devotees of Lord Shiva) and the 12 Alvars (devotees of Lord Vishnu). The ruling Pallava and Pandya dynasties actively nurtured this movement, primarily to counter the growing influence of Buddhism and Jainism that prevailed in the southern regions from the 2nd to the 9th century CE. It is noteworthy that Karaikkal Ammaiyar, an early Shaivite saint of the fifth century, is believed to have been a contemporary of the Vaishnavite saints Bhuttalwar and Peialwar. The Nalayira Divya Prabandham, consists of 4,000 hymns composed by the 12 Alvars. Among them, the 1,102 verses by Nammalvar are widely regarded as particularly significant. These hymns form an integral part of the daily rituals in Sri Vaishnava temples. They condense the essence of the Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and the Puranas into Tamil verse, making them accessible and understandable to the common masses. One notable aspect



of the Bhakti movement in South India is its inclusivity and openness. The Alvars and Nayamars hailed from various social strata, including the Sudras and women. This demonstrates the liberal nature of the bhakti cult, which transcended caste, class, and gender divisions that were upheld by the larger pan-Indian tradition until then.

During a period when the popularity of the bhakti movement in South India was declining, the concept of bhakti was defended at a philosophical level by a group of talented Vaishnava Brahmin scholars known as acharyas. Leading the way was Ramanuja in the 11th century, who provided a philosophical justification for bhakti. Born in 1017 CE near Kanchipuram, Ramanuja was a renowned Vaishnava teacher. He advocated for the sincere worship of Narayan and Lakshmi as a means to liberate the soul from the cycle of birth and death. To promote his teachings, Ramanuja undertook extensive travels. He authored numerous books and treatises on the bhakti cult, including works such as Vedanta Sangraham and commentaries on Brahmasutra and Bhagavad Gita. Through his writings and teachings, Ramanuja contributed significantly to the understanding and propagation of the bhakti tradition striking to bring a delicate balance between orthodox Brahmanism and the inclusive nature of popular bhakti that welcomed people from all backgrounds.

Another influential figure was Nimbarka, a Telugu Brahman believed to have been a contemporary of Ramanuja. Nimbarka spent most of his time in Vrindavan near Mathura in North India. He advocated for the concept of total devotion to Krishna and Radha. Nimbarka's teachings emphasized the significance of unwavering dedication and love towards Krishna and Radha, which formed the core of his philosophical outlook. In summary, during a time when the bhakti movement was facing a decline in popularity, notable Vaishnava Brahmin scholars such as Ramanuja and Nimbarka stepped forward to defend and provide philosophical grounding to the concept of bhakti. They aimed to bridge the gap between traditional Brahmanism and the inclusive nature of popular bhakti, while emphasizing the importance of total devotion to deities such as Krishna and Radha.

### **The Medieval Bhakti Tradition of Northern India**

Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, a significant Bhakti movement spread throughout Northern India, led by Meera Bai, Kabir, Tulsi Das, Tukaram, and other mystics known as 'Sants.' Their philosophical perspective is referred to as Sant Mat, meaning the viewpoint

of the Saints. In their approach, they discarded the burden of rituals and the complexities of philosophies in favour of expressing intense love for God through vernacular language. The Saints can be categorized into two groups: the northern and the southern. The northern Saints, including Kabir and Raidas, composed their works in vernacular Hindi, while the southern Saints like Ramananda and Tukaram wrote in Marathi. Despite their heterogeneity, they share certain distinguishing features such as a non-sectarian attitude, the use of vernacular verse, a deep faith in divinity, a rejection of religious rituals, caste-based concepts, and liturgy. They also displayed a close affinity towards marginalized sections of society, including women and the untouchables, and advocated surrendering to the God who resides within the heart.

Scholars widely suggest that the bhakti movements during the medieval period in the Northern half of India can be closely associated with various South Indian Vaishnava acharyas. Due to this connection, many scholars argue that these movements can be seen as a continuation or revival of the earlier bhakti movement. They propose that there were philosophical and ideological links between the two, possibly due to contact or diffusion. According to this viewpoint, it is believed that leaders such as Kabir and other proponents of non-conformist monotheistic movements in North India were disciples of Ramananda, who himself is thought to have had connections with Ramanuja's philosophical lineage. Similarly, claims have been made suggesting that Chaitanya belonged to the philosophical school of Madhava. Moreover, the emphasis on Krishna Bhakti in this movement is believed to have connections with Nimbarka's school of thought. But in essence, the Bhakti movement cannot be seen as a singular movement, but rather as a broader doctrinal movement that emphasized bhakti (devotion) and advocated for religious equality. It is important to note that the movement displayed significant heterogeneity, with each regional manifestation having its own unique identity shaped by specific socio-historical and cultural contexts.

#### **4.2.5 Individual Bhakti Leaders**

##### **(i) Ramananda:**

Ramananda, a reformer in 15th-century Northern India, played a significant role in religious transformation. Educated in Hindu religious philosophy in Varanasi, he became a preacher in the school of Ramanuja. Ramananda established his own sect, emphasizing devotional worship. Unlike the Ramanuja sect, he focused on Rama and Sita as objects of devotion, used

the vernacular language, and held liberal views on social issues. Ramananda welcomed disciples from all castes and allowed them to share meals, breaking social barriers. Women, such as Padmavati and Sursari, were also his disciples. His philosophy emphasized love for God and human brotherhood, challenging insular social behaviour. Ramananda's synthesis of meditation and surrender enriched Indian spiritual life. He viewed God as a loving and merciful presence, differing from the eternal Brahman of Vedanta.

### **(ii) Kabir (1440 -1510)**

Kabir, a disciple of Ramananda, played a significant role in the Bhakti Movement in Northern India. His mission was to promote harmony between Hinduism and Islam. Despite limited information about his life, Kabir's teachings left a lasting impact. He held great respect for religious communities and bridged the gap between Hindus and Muslims. Rejecting the notion of Vedas and Quran as revealed scriptures, Kabir drew from diverse religious experiences. Born into a Muslim weaver family in Banaras, he advocated for a religion of love, emphasizing unity among people of all backgrounds. Kabir denounced rituals and stressed the importance of devotional worship, urging the liberation of the soul from negative qualities. His dohas, or couplets, resonated with the common people. After his passing, his followers, known as Kabirpanthis, continued his legacy. Kabir fearlessly critiqued superficial practices in both Hinduism and Islam, challenging caste distinctions and established schools of philosophy. He believed that true religion required devotion and dismissed asceticism, fasting, and alms-giving without genuine devotion. Kabir's satirical style exposed societal flaws, advocating for the marginalized. His teachings provided a code of ethics that condemned pride and prejudice.

### **(iii) Guru Nanak (1469-1539)**

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism and a prominent reformer, revitalized the monotheistic principles found in the Upanishads. Born in 1469 CE into a Khatri family in Talwandi, he showed early spiritual inclination, prioritizing worship of God over formal studies. From 1495 to 1530 CE, he embarked on extensive travels within India and beyond, including Ceylon, Mecca, Medina, and Tibet. During this time, he encountered followers from both Hindu and Muslim backgrounds. Guru Nanak's philosophy cantered on the unity of God, believing in a single Supreme Being beyond comparison. He also held beliefs in karma and the transmigration of souls. His teachings were

compiled in the 'Adi Granth' by the fifth Sikh guru, Arjun Das, with the Japji standing out as a remarkable religious poem. According to Nanak, the goal of humanity is to achieve union with God, with no binary notions of heaven and hell. Instead, those who fall short of spiritual excellence continue the cycle of birth and death. Nanak encouraged individuals to maintain purity amidst worldly impurities, promoting the ideal of universal brotherhood. He challenged the distinctions of Hindu and Muslim, asserting that every person is fundamentally human. Guru Nanak's social teachings emphasized ethical principles and human equality. He initiated Guru ka Langar, community kitchens that disregarded social restrictions on sharing meals. Nanak emphasized the inseparability of devotion and virtue, teaching that God resides within each individual. His message led to the establishment of Sikhism, and his eclectic approach embraced terminology from both Hindu and Muslim traditions.

#### **(iv) Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1534)**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, born in 1486 in Nodia, Bengal, was a prominent saint who played a significant role in advancing the Bhakti movement in the East. Renouncing worldly life at the age of 25, he embraced the Krishna cult and spent years in Mathura and Vrindavan, attracting numerous followers and spreading the idea of the oneness of God while criticizing unnecessary rituals. Believed to be an incarnation of Vishnu, Chaitanya laid the foundation of Vaishnavism in Bengal and preached the worship and love of Krishna. His emphasis on piety and humanity as essential qualities resonated with his followers. Chaitanya's teachings were elucidated by his disciples, and while he left no written record, biographers have provided insights into his philosophy. He rejected caste limitations in Bhakti practice and advocated for an emotional connection to God through love and recitation of holy names. Chaitanya's influence extended beyond his lifetime, with millions of people continuing to worship him as an incarnation of Krishna or Vishnu. His activities popularized Vaishnavism in Bengal and Orissa, and his followers formed the sect of Gaudiya Vaishnavism, establishing Mathura as the centre of the Krishna cult. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's legacy also includes the promotion of the Hare Krishna mantra.

#### **(V) Tulsidas**

Tulsidas, a renowned writer associated with the Rama cult, holds a prominent position among his contemporaries. Residing in Banaras, he

was not only an exceptional poet but also a spiritual guide for the people of Hindustan. Tulsidas, known for his masterpiece 'Ramcharit Manas,' was a highly esteemed poet and a devoted follower of Lord Rama. In his works, he portrays Rama as a divine incarnation, emphasizing that individuals can attain a connection with him solely through the practice of devotion or bhakti.

#### (vi) **Tukaram**

Tukaram, the most revered saint of Maharashtra, played a pivotal role in denouncing the caste system and fostering social unity within the region. Despite running a small grocery shop in a village, he showed little interest in worldly affairs. His profound thoughts and words were expressed through his abhangas, or devotional verses. Tukaram's verses emanated from a heart filled with love for God and a deep desire for the well-being of humanity. He embraced an ascetic lifestyle and dedicated himself to service. Tukaram rejected the significance of rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, pilgrimages, fasting, and other forms of austerity. Furthermore, he actively promoted Hindu-Muslim unity, seeking to bridge the divide between the two communities. His writings resonated with overpowering emotions and offered reassuring philosophies, delivered in the language of the common people. Even today, Tukaram's abhangas remain immensely popular. Among all the Marathi saints, he is regarded as the greatest in terms of popular acclaim and the broadness of his influence.

#### (vii) **Mirabai**

Mirabai, a celebrated follower of Krishna, was a notable proponent of Krishna Bhakti. She is renowned for her expression of "bridal mysticism," where the devotee perceives God as their beloved. Mirabai's greatest contribution lies in her composition of numerous devotional songs, which have garnered her widespread recognition. These heartfelt songs are dedicated to Krishna, vividly illustrating her profound devotion and unwavering love for him. Mirabai's poetic talents extended to various vernacular languages, as she crafted poems in Braja Bhasha, Rajasthani, and Gujarati, further showcasing her versatility and cultural impact.

### **4.2.6 Impact of the Bhakti Movement**

The Bhakti movement had several significant impacts:

- a) Revitalization of Hinduism: The Bhakti movement breathed new life into Hinduism by challenging the dominance of the Brahmin priesthood. This led to a permanent loss of influence for the Brahmins in the realm of Hindu religion.
- b) Mass Movement: The Bhakti movement transformed into a widespread mass movement, particularly towards the end of the fourteenth century, coinciding with the decline of the Delhi Sultanate. It encompassed people from all sections and castes of Hindu society, making it an indigenous movement.
- c) Restoration of Confidence: The Bhakti movement reinstated the confidence of the masses in their religious and socio-cultural heritage. It stemmed the widespread conversion to Islam and halted concessions made to it on a large scale.
- d) Mitigation of Caste Effects: While the Bhakti movement did not completely eradicate the negative effects of the caste system, it did minimize them to some extent. The development of harmonious relationships and increased social interaction between high-caste and low-caste Hindus contributed to this improvement.
- e) Enhancement of Moral Standards: Although certain social evils persisted, the Bhakti movement played a crucial role in exposing and diminishing them. By emphasizing the finer values of life, the movement elevated the overall moral tone of society.

#### **4.2.7 Let us Sum up**

The Bhakti Movement had its rise to oppose the orthodox practice in the Hindu religion. The movement was stressing on egalitarian principles and humanity. During the medieval period, the bhakti cult transformed into a reformatory movement. Numerous holy men and scholar saints took on the responsibility of initiating socio-religious reforms among the people across different regions of the country. These reformers advocated for change and sought to address societal issues through the medium of bhakti, emphasizing the importance of devotion to God as a means of promoting social and religious reform.

#### **4.2.8 Self- Assessment Questions**

1. Explain the meaning and origin of Bhakti
2. Describe the features of Bhakti Movement
3. Discuss the contribution of individuals to Bhakti Movement.



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## Lesson 4.3 - Architecture and Literature under the Mughals

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### Structure

- 4.3.1 Learning Objectives
- 4.3.2 Introduction
- 4.3.3 The Early Mughal Style
- 4.3.4 The Later Mughal Style
- 4.3.5 Mughal Paintings
- 4.3.6 Growth of Literature under the Mughals
- 4.3.7 Let us Sum up
- 4.3.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 4.3.9 References

#### 4.3.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- describe the development of architecture in the Mughal period
- explain the growth of literature under the Mughals

#### 4.3.2 Introduction

The Mughals were the natives of Central Asia and were great patrons of art and architecture, and their rule witnessed a flourishing of creativity. They built magnificent structures such as the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Red Fort in Delhi, and many other beautiful palaces, mosques, and gardens. The emergence of a unified Indian style of Islamic architecture occurred during the Mughal rule in India. While there were some regional variations, the Mughal monuments shared distinct features such as grand facades, four-centred arches, high alcoves with semi-domes, shouldered roofs, intersecting arch vaults, bulbous domes with narrow necks and inverted lotus pinnacles. These structures were adorned with stone or marble carvings, inlay work, pietra dura, gilding, and other decorative elements. Mughal miniature painting also reached great heights during this period, depicting themes of court life, religious stories, and nature. The Mughals were also great patrons of learning, Persian was their court language and lot of encouragement was given for literatures. They also had a translation department many Sanskrit works were translated into Persian and vice versa.

### 4.3.3 The Early Mughal Style (1556-1662)

Mughal architecture in India can be broadly divided into two phases: the Early Mughal period and the Late Mughal period, which also includes the reign of the later Mughal rulers. The first significant example of Mughal architecture in the true Mughal style is the tomb of Humayun, constructed in 1569 by his widow. This magnificent structure is considered one of the most remarkable Muslim buildings in Delhi and the first in the Indian subcontinent to exhibit the distinctive Timurid design. It is regarded as a milestone in the development of Mughal architecture in India, representing the initial concept of Mughal tomb-gardens. The tomb is located in the centre of a large walled garden enclosure, with impressive gateways positioned at the middle of three sides. The square platform on which the tomb stands is elevated and spacious, featuring small rooms with arched fronts along its sides. The architectural plan of the tomb bears strong influences from Central Asia and Persia. While it is square in shape, its corners are flattened, and each side has a semi-domed alcove or arched vault set back in the middle bay. The interior plan of the tomb also exhibits unique characteristics. Foreign influences can be seen in the design and shape of the central double dome, which sits on a circular base with an edge rim. Percy Brown says “Indigenous elements, such as elegant finials and Lodi-style corner kiosks supported by slender pillars, as well as the use of white and grey marble inlay in red sandstone and other decorative designs, are also visible in these Mughal monuments”. Similar in design to Humayun’s tomb is the tomb of Ataga Khan, Akbar’s foster father, constructed in 1566-67. Although smaller in size, this tomb surpasses Humayun’s tomb in the richness and finesse of its marble inlay work and the intricate low relief carvings on its facade.

#### Architecture under Akbar

Akbar, being a great patron of architecture himself, undertook numerous building projects in Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore, Allahabad, Rohtasgarh, and other locations. Most of his buildings were constructed using red sandstone with occasional use of white marble. With a broad-minded approach and diverse taste, Akbar supported both indigenous building traditions and foreign forms, resulting in an architectural style that harmoniously blended native and external influences. The predominant architectural feature of Akbar’s buildings was the trabeate system, although arcuate forms were also employed mainly for decorative purposes.

## Agra Fort

Situated on the banks of the Yamuna River, the Agra Fort was Akbar's first major building project. Its plan is irregular and semi-circular, with massive walls made of concrete and rubble, covered entirely with finely dressed red sandstone. The main entrance gate, known as the Delhi Gate, is an imposing structure comprising an arched gateway flanked by two enormous octagonal bastions, each crowned with an octagonal domed kiosk. Ziyauddin A. Desai says "The fort exhibits a charming façade, with arcaded terraces, domed pavilions, finials, and a rich array of ornamentation, including white marble inlay". Architecturally, it is a noble and dignified monument. Most of the extant buildings within the fort were constructed during the reign of Shahjahan. The only surviving building from Akbar's time within the fort is the Jahangiri Mahal, a large square palace made of red sandstone. It follows the typical palace plan of double-storeyed chambers enclosing an open courtyard and is predominantly constructed in the trabeate style, with only a few arches incorporated here and there.

## Fatehpur Sikri

It is located approximately 36 kilometers from Agra, witnessed the most spectacular building activities during Akbar's reign. From 1569 to 1571 AD, numerous impressive buildings were constructed in Fatehpur Sikri, which served as the capital city until 1585 when Akbar moved due to a campaign in Punjab. Eventually, the city was completely abandoned in 1610. All the buildings in Fatehpur Sikri, whether for residential, official, or religious purposes, were constructed using red sandstone. Among the residential buildings, significant structures include the Panch Mahal, the Palace of Jodh Bai, and the houses of Maryam, Turkish Sultana, and Birbal. Ebba Koch says "These palaces predominantly follow the trabeate style, with Lodi-type domes, intricately carved brackets of Gujarat and Rajasthan influence, occasional arches with bud-fringe, and remarkable surface carvings". The Palace of Jodh Bai exemplifies a complete and well-arranged royal residence, featuring a plain exterior contrasting with its famous richly carved pillars, balconies, stone-windows with intricate perforations, and ornamental niches within.

The houses of Maryam and Turkish Sultana, although smaller and simpler than Jodh Bai's palace, are notable for their high-quality craftsmanship. Maryam's house consists of a small block with a room

and veranda on three sides, while Turkish Sultana's house is a one-story building with captivating paved courts, watercourses, and extensively carved decorations. Fergusson regarded Turkish Sultana's house as the most opulent, beautiful, and characteristic of all of Akbar's buildings. Another remarkable structure is Birbal's house, a double-story building with a unique design on the upper floor, featuring two shoulder-roofed rooms alternating with open terraces placed diagonally. The Panch Mahal is famous for its distinctive plan and elevation. This five-story building showcases open pavilions arranged in a pyramidal fashion, with pillars of varying designs and carvings.

Among the official buildings in Fatehpur Sikri, the most distinguished one is the two-story Diwan-i-Khas or Hall of Private Audience. Despite its moderate size, it stands out for its unconventional interior design, consisting of a single chamber with overhanging galleries projecting from the sides. In the centre, there is an exquisitely carved single pillar of substantial size, with an expanding bracket capital supporting a circular stone platform connected to galleries at the four corners through narrow diagonal passages. Other notable buildings within the residential and official complex of Fatehpur Sikri include the Astrologer's kiosk, Diwan-i-Aam, and Daftar Khana.

One of the remarkable religious buildings in Sikri is the Jami Mosque (1571-72), featuring a lofty gateway called the Buland Darwaza and the marvellous tomb of Shaikh Salim Chisti within its open courtyard. The Jami Mosque combines elements of the arcuate and trabeate styles, belonging to the typical open courtyard mosque type. It showcases predominantly Persian architectural characteristics, with pendentives of intersecting arches in its semi-dome. The Buland Darwaza, constructed in the form of a semi-octagon projecting beyond the mosque's compound wall, is considered one of India's most remarkable architectural achievements.

The tomb of Shaikh Salim Chisti, though smaller in size compared to the Buland Darwaza, is a beautiful building made of white marble. It stands on a white marble platform and is surrounded by a veranda adorned with intricately carved marble jali work (tracery). This feature, inspired by Gujarat's tombs, is not part of the North Indian tradition. The tomb's deep cornice is supported by serpentine convoluted brackets of rare design and exquisite carving.

In addition to North India, the early imperial Mughal style began to influence the local architectural styles in newly annexed provincial territories such as Bengal (including Bihar), Gujarat, and Rajasthan,

but this influence became more prominent after the consolidation of Mughal rule in the late 16th century. Examples of this robust architectural manifestation can be seen in the palace complex at Rohtasgarh in Shahabad district of Bihar and the Chhoti Dargah or tomb of Makhdum Shah Daulat at Maner near Patna in Bihar, along with its impressive gateway. Another noteworthy structure is Akbar's massive palace in Ajmer, Rajasthan, locally known as the Magazine, which features a rectangular structure with four imposing octagonal corner towers of architectural merit.

During Jahangir's reign, the style of architecture remained similar to that of Akbar, although it appeared to have lost some of the strength and vigour seen in Akbar's style. The first notable monuments constructed during Jahangir's reign were the tomb of Akbar (1612-13) at Sikandra near Agra and the tomb of Itimadud-Daula (1626) in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.

The tomb of Akbar is particularly remarkable for its unique form and design. Situated in the centre of an elaborately laid out Charbagh garden, the tomb is accessed through an impressive southern gateway. This gateway, with its pleasing proportions, intricate inlay work, and four graceful white marble minarets, stands out architecturally. The tomb itself is a five-story structure shaped like a truncated pyramid. The ground floor features a massive terrace with shallow arches on each side, except for the middle section where a vaulted archway is set within a rectangular frame topped by a marble kiosk. The upper floors contain red sandstone kiosks arranged in order, while the fifth floor consists of an open court surrounded by a flat-roofed arcaded gallery adorned with delicately perforated white marble screens and tall corner kiosks. Although some consider the tomb architecturally imperfect, its originality in conception and decoration, which includes exquisite carvings, artistic paintings in gold and colours, tile decoration, and pleasing geometric and floral inlay work, create a superb overall effect. The tomb of Abdur-Rahim Khan-i-Khanan is interesting as it serves as a significant link between the tomb of Humayun and the Taj Mahal. Although now devoid of its white marble facing, it bears resemblance to the former, although the angles of its large single chamber, both internally and externally, are not flattened.

Another notable monument from this period is the mausoleum of Jahangir himself at Shahdara near Lahore. Situated in the centre of a large garden, the square single-story structure stands on a low plinth. Each side of the mausoleum features eleven arches, with tall and handsome

octagonal minarets rising at the four corners. The disappearance of the marble pavilion that once adorned the central portion of its roof terrace has affected the composition's symmetry. The mausoleum's main ornamental features include rich surface decorations of marble inlay, glazed tiles, and paintings.

#### **4.3.4 The Later Mughal Style (1628-1858)**

The reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) marked the pinnacle of the Mughal style, as he was a prolific builder who adorned the cities of Agra and Delhi with splendid palaces and magnificent monuments. He also commissioned elegant buildings in Ajmer, Lahore, Srinagar, and other locations. As a result, the Late Mughal style is often referred to as Shah Jahan's style. The transition from the forceful and robust early Mughal style of Akbar to the pretty and elegant Late Mughal style of Shah Jahan is sudden and evident. Shah Jahan's era is characterized by the extensive use of marble in construction. This change in building material influenced the technique of surface decoration, which now involved artistic inlay of semi-precious and multi-colored stones in marble, forming intricate designs resembling petals and curving tendrils of flowers. Additionally, there was a notable advancement in the decorative relief carvings on both sandstone and marble surfaces.

Structurally, there were also significant changes. The arches took on a multifoil shape, typically consisting of nine foils or cusps, while the pillars featured foliated bases, tapering or many-sided shafts, and voluted bracket capitals. Double columns were also frequently employed. The traditional squinch-arch pendentives and flat roofs were replaced by vaults constructed using the intersecting-arch vaulting system or shouldered roofs. The domes, positioned on high drums with constricted necks, adopted a bulbous shape. In fact, the domes of Shah Jahan's buildings are renowned for their exceptionally pleasing contours.

Shah Jahan's early architectural endeavors involved replacing or remodeling existing structures in the forts of Lahore and Agra. In Lahore, he built structures such as Diwan-i-Aam, Khwabgah, Shish Mahal, and Muthammam Burj, some of which have undergone restorations. In Agra Fort, he constructed the Diwan-i-Khas, Khas Mahal, Shish Mahal, Nagina Masjid, Muthamman Burj, and Moti Masjid, all characterized by refined taste and exquisite execution. The Moti Masjid, built in typical Shah Jahan style, stands out as the most impressive among these marble buildings.



It features an elevated red sandstone basement, an open courtyard surrounded by arched corridors, and a prayer hall with beautiful domes and octagonal kiosks.

However, Shah Jahan's architectural projects were not limited to replacements alone. He also undertook new building projects, including the grand Red Fort and the magnificent Jami Mosque in his new capital, Shahjahanabad (now Delhi). The Red Fort, completed in 1648, showcases palaces, halls, pavilions, and gardens, providing insight into the internal layout of a royal residence. The fort itself is an imposing structure with massive encircling walls, bastions topped by domed kiosks, and two main gateways, the Delhi Gate and the Lahori Gate. Notable buildings within the fort include Diwan-i-Am, Mumtaz Mahal, Rang Mahal, Diwan-i-Khas, Khwabgah, Hammam, and Muthammam Burj. These palace buildings exhibit symmetrical planning along an ornamental marble water canal, featuring exquisite Late Mughal style and opulent decorations in pietra dura, marble carvings, and gold embellishments.

The Diwan-i-Khas, in particular, stands out for its lavish ornamentation. The fort also houses the magnificent Throne-Seat, a white marble canopied pavilion-like structure, richly inlaid with precious stones. The Jami Masjid of Delhi, completed a little later in 1656, ranks among the most impressive mosques in India. It follows the typical style of an open courtyard and arched cloisters. Raised over a lofty basement with majestic staircases leading to imposing gateways, the mosque features twelve-sided kiosks with marble domes at its corners. The prayer hall, built with red sandstone and white marble, showcases eleven engrailed arches, a central rectangular frame, two minarets, and three elegant white marble domes adorned with black marble strips. Sarasi Kumar Saraswati says "The Jami Masjid stands out for its architectural and decorative balance, combining various elements in a harmonious composition". Another notable mosque of this period is the Jami Mosque in Agra, constructed by Jahanara, Shah Jahan's eldest daughter, in 1648. While it boasts pleasing proportions, elegant arch arrangements on the facade, and beautiful kiosks on the parapet, it is not as artistic and imposing as its counterpart in Delhi, lacking elaborate ornamentation and minarets.

During this period, several other notable buildings were constructed. These include Wazir Khan's Mosque in Lahore (1634), Shah Jahan Mosque of white marble (1637) and two lovely pavilions on the bank of the Anasagar

Lake in Ajmer, Chini-Ka-Rauza in Agra, Azam Khan's caravanserai in Ahmadabad, Lukochuri Gateway in Gaur, Sangi Dalan in Rajmahal, and Pari Bibi's tomb in Dacca (Bangladesh), among others.

### **Taj Mahal**

The greatest architectural achievement of this Mughal era, and perhaps of the entire Indo-Islamic architecture, is the Taj Mahal (1647-48) in Agra. Apart from its romantic allure, the Taj stands as a masterpiece in architectural style, conception, treatment, and execution. It follows the garden tomb design, situated on the banks of the Yamuna River and enclosed on three sides. The solid foundations and substructure of the Taj's terrace showcase remarkable engineering skills. The grand entrance gateway itself is a monument, featuring a lofty arched recess, alcoves, turrets, and intricate inlay work of white marble and precious stones on the red sandstone surface. The Taj is located at the center of a marble terrace flanked by a mosque on the west and its replica (Jawab) on the east, maintaining symmetry. Four white marble minarets with shapely domes enhance the dignity of the entire complex. The mausoleum exemplifies the tomb-architecture tradition seen in Humayun's Tomb and Khan-i-Khanan's Tomb, showcasing perfect balance and architectural finesse. The dome, placed on a lofty drum, is elegant and Persian in character, complemented by graceful Indian-style cupolas on the roof's corners. The Taj's astounding beauty stems from the use of pure white marble, delicate surface decorations, pietra dura ornamentation, marble carvings, traceries, and finely executed inscriptions. Amidst the splendor of the Taj Mahal, a lesser-known yet architecturally impressive mosque called Fatehpuri Masjid (circa 1648) stands just outside its main enclosure. This mosque features a prayer hall with engrailed arched openings, a central bulbous dome, and side chambers with shouldered roofs. It is set on a lofty basement with arched cells and surrounded by an ornamental galleried balcony supported on brackets. The mosque's fine proportions, balanced composition, corner turrets, and unique elevational aspect make it a remarkable monument in the late Mughal style. Overall, Shah Jahan's architectural legacy encompasses a range of structures, showcasing his passion for refinement, tastefulness, and elaborate embellishments. The Taj Mahal, in particular, remains an unparalleled architectural marvel and symbol of love. The golden era of Mughal architecture came to an end during Shah Jahan's reign, which was characterized by extensive building activities.

With the accession of Aurangzeb to the throne in 1658, a decline in architectural art occurred. This setback can be attributed to both natural phenomena typical in the history of fine arts and Aurangzeb's disinterest in the arts and his continuous political engagements. The architectural style of this later Mughal period exhibited a degeneration of forms, deterioration of taste, lack of proportion and balance, and other shortcomings. There are only a few noteworthy buildings from Aurangzeb's reign. The most significant example of the Later Mughal style is the tomb of Rabia-ud-Daurani, Aurangzeb's wife, built around 1661 in Aurangabad, Deccan. This tomb, intended as a replica of the Taj Mahal, illustrates the rapid deterioration of the brilliant late Mughal style. While it holds some architectural appeal, it falls short in comparison to its model in terms of architectural beauty, featuring thin engrailed arches, less perfect bulbous domes, cramped skyline with inadequate room for corner chhatris, slender guldastas, and disproportionately heavy minarets. Despite these shortcomings, the tomb's stucco work is of high quality, and its well-planned garden and scenic setting against the Satpura hills contribute to its appeal. Another notable building from this period is the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, completed in 1674. It showcases vigorous composition and treatment reminiscent of Shah Jahan's buildings. With a broad courtyard, tall minarets at the corners, a red sandstone arcaded facade for the prayer hall crowned by elegant white marble domes, this mosque holds considerable architectural merit. Aurangzeb also constructed the Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) within the Red Fort in 1659-60. Made entirely of polished white marble, this small mosque retains the delicacy of earlier craftsmanship. It consists of a small courtyard in front of the prayer hall, and the interior showcases restrained and artistic marble ornamentation. Although the current shape of the domes is not ideal and the finials appear disproportionate, it should be noted that the mosque suffered damage during the Mutiny, and the present domes do not represent their original form. Similar mosques, made of stone and following the same pattern, were built in Aurangabad and Ellichpur.

With Aurangzeb's death, Mughal authority rapidly declined, and architectural decadence became almost complete. Despite a few noteworthy structures, the Mughal style suffered from a degeneration of forms, a loss of architectural beauty, and a general decline in taste. The tomb of Rabia-ud-Daurani, the Badshahi Mosque, the Moti Masjid, the mosque and tomb of Sardar Khan, and the tomb of Safdar Jang represent some of the notable

buildings after Aurangzeb period. Catherine B. Asher who has worked on Mughal architecture remarks “Mughal architecture blended Persian, Islamic, and Indian elements, resulting in a unique style characterized by intricate designs, domes, minarets, and ornate ornamentation”.

#### 4.3.5 Mughal Paintings

An important turning point in Indian painting history is thought to have occurred with the founding of the Mughal School of Painting. Akbar, who was deeply engaged in both building and painting, founded the Mughal School of Painting during his reign in 1560 CE. In the beginning of his rule a studio of painting was established under the supervision of two Persian masters, Mir Sayyed Ali and Abdul Samad Khan, who were originally employed by his father Humayun. A large number of Indian artists from all over India were recruited to work under the Persian masters.

The indigenous Indian painting style and the Safavid school of Persian painting came together to create the Mughal style. It is mostly aristocratic and secular and is characterized by fluid naturalism based on careful observation of nature and graceful sketching. Aside from the two Persian masters already mentioned, some of the well-known painters at Akbar's court are Dasvanth, Miskina, Nanha, Kanha, Basawan, Manohar, Doulat, Mansur, Kesu, Bhim Gujarati, etc. Jahangir enjoyed painting portraits of flowers, animals, and birds because he was enthralled with the natural world. Ayar-i-Danish, an animal story book, and Anwar-i-sunavli, another fable book, are two significant manuscripts that he illustrated. Famous Jahangiri painters include Aqa Riza, Abul Hasan, Mansur, and Bishan Das, Manohar, Goverdhan, Balchand, Daulat, Mukhlis, Bhim and Inayat.

The portrait of Jahangir is a typical example of miniature executed during the period of Jahangir. A series of the Razm-nama dated 1616 CE, a series of the Rasikapriya (1610-1615) and a series of the Ramayana of circa 1610 CE are some other notable examples of the Mughal School. In addition to portraiture, during his reign, a number of illustrated manuscripts and paintings depicting groups of ascetics and mystics were also completed. Shah Jahan period also saw production of painting but he was more into buildings. Aurangzeb period witnessed a decline in patronising so a large number of court painters migrated to the provincial courts.

### 4.3.6 Growth of Literature under Mughals

The Mughal emperors, from Babur to Aurangzeb were enthusiastic patrons of the Persian language and literature, actively promoting its development and nurturing its growth. Persian was the official language of the Mughal court, administration, and elite society. It was also the language of literature, poetry, and intellectual discourse. However, the Mughal rulers showed interest in the local languages as well, and under their patronage, regional languages like Urdu, Braj Bhasha, and Punjabi developed and thrived. Literary works in these languages gained popularity among the common people.

#### Babur

Babur, the founder and first ruler of the Mughal Empire, possessed not only great leadership skills but also considerable literary talent. He wrote *Tuzuk-i-Babri*, an autobiography, in the Turkish language. This book was later translated into Persian with the efforts of Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan, the son of Bairam Khan, a trusted companion of Akbar. *BaburNama* is a primary source for the Mughal period. It literally means the “Book of Babur” or “Letters of Babur”, is the personal diary of Babur written in Chagatai Turkish. It is “one of the longest examples of sustained prose in the language”. Babur had used very fine language so he called as Prince of Auto-biographers. Babur is frank and open, but tends to describe actions rather than motivations. He acknowledges weaknesses and uncertainty as to certain actions (or, for example, shyness in his relationship with his wife when he first weds at a young age). It consist of the history of the decline and fall of the Timurid power in central Asia, the description of life and culture in India, the course of campaigns he led against his rivals in eastern India. He included detailed biographies of the men and women who formed his circle of kin and compatriots. Babur includes descriptions of many of the places he visits he explains the place, their climate, flora and fauna too. When describing a region, he dutifully mentions everything that grows in it- the fruits and their tastes, the flowers and their smell and colour and also the animals and birds. He also records the techniques of hunting, fishing, and agriculture. He also describes the geography of Fergana, Transoxiana, and the area around Kabul, as well as a twenty-page description of Hindustan.

#### Humayun

After the death of Babur, his son Humayun took over the throne of Delhi in 1530 A.D. Humayun, a king, learned individual, and formidable

warrior, continued his father's legacy. He ruled for 16 years until his death in 1556 A.D. One of Humayun's notable characteristics was his deep love for and patronage of Persian literature. He possessed excellent writing skills in Persian and actively encouraged writers to produce works in the language. Several distinguished writers emerged in his court during his reign.

### **Akbar**

During the ruling period of Akbar, these poets made significant contributions to the literary landscape in his court. Through their unique styles and poetic mastery, they enriched the Persian literary tradition and left a lasting impact on the cultural legacy of the Mughal Empire. These individuals made valuable contributions to literature, medicine, and spirituality during their time at the court of Akbar. Their works and accomplishments added to the rich cultural and intellectual milieu of the Mughal Empire. Akbar's Aunt Gulbadan Begum, was an accomplished writer. She wrote a historical account titled "Humayun Nama," which detailed the life and reign of Humayun. This work provides valuable insights into the events of her time. The most important work of this period is Akbar Nama written by Abul Fazal. The Akbar Nama is one of the main sources to know about the Mughal Period. It took 13 years for Abul Fazl from 1589 to complete this work. This work was repeatedly revised 5 times. This work was based on reports of waqai, official documents and oral testimonies. This was written in the Indo-Persian style of rhythm format for loud reading. The aim of the work is to show Akbar as an ideal man. It has three volumes. The first volume deals from Babur to Humayun. The second volume deals about the regal years of Akbar up to 46th regnal year. The third volume is *Ain-i Akbari* which is an encyclopaedia on imperial rules and an official gazetteer completed in the 42nd regnal year. It gives a complete picture on the organisation of the Mughal court, the Mughal administration system and army under Akbar. It provides information on the extend of the empire and the names of the Subhas and the amount of revenue from each subhas. The numerical data's were reproduced in words so as to minimise the chances of transcriptional errors. It deals with the literary, cultural and religious tradition of the people.

### **Jahangir**

After the death of Emperor Akbar, his son Salim ascended to the throne and took the title of Jahangir (reigned 1605-1627). Jahangir was known for his love of the arts, literature, and Persian language. He had



a refined taste in drawing, painting, architecture, and music, and was a generous patron of artists. While some European scholars portrayed him as a pleasure-loving ruler, many Indian historians regarded him as just and kind. His literary inclination is evident in his autobiography, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*. Several renowned writers flourished in his court.

### **Shah Jahan**

Shah Jahan had a deep appreciation for grandeur and luxury, earning him the title of the “prince of builders.” His reign is considered the pinnacle of Mughal emperors, often referred to as the Golden Age of Mughal India. During this period, several renowned poets and prose writers emerged in Shah Jahan’s court. Muhammad Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan, was a literary talent and a prince dedicated to learning and knowledge. His significant contributions to Indo-Persian literature include works such as “Sirr-i-Akbar,” a translation of the Upanishads, “Safinat-ul-Auliya,” “Sakinat-ul-Auliya,” “Hasanat-ul-Arifin,” and “Risalah-i-Huq-Namah. Muhammad Haidar, a learned scholar during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, authored the book “Shuja-i-Haidari.” Abdul Hamid Lahori was an esteemed poet in the court of Shah Jahan. His significant work, “Padshah Nama,” holds great importance in the history of Indo-Persian literature.

### **Aurangzeb**

During the reign of Shah Jahan, his son Aurangzeb imprisoned his father and assumed the throne of Delhi. Aurangzeb, ruling from 1658 to 1707, held the longest tenure among the Mughal kings, spanning 50 years. He was known for his religious zeal and strict rule. Despite his reputation, Aurangzeb had a deep appreciation for language and literature, fostering the growth of Persian in his court. Numerous renowned poets and writers contributed to the Persian language and literature during his reign. Here are some notable figures: Zaibun-Nissa, Aurangzeb’s daughter, was a talented Persian poet in his court, writing under the pen-name of Mukhfi. Bhimsen, associated with Rao Dalpat Bandela, a military officer of Aurangzeb, contributed to Persian literature with works such as “Nuskhah-i-Dilkusha” and “Munshaat-i-Rangin.”

The promotion of Persian language and literature by the Mughals in India was driven by various social, political, and economic factors. Persian language and literature served as a common medium of communication

and facilitated effective collaboration among the diverse groups within the Mughal administration. In addition, the promotion of Persian language helped the Mughals establish their superiority over rival kingdoms, such as the Deccan Sultanates and Iran.

Urdu language and literature also made progress during the later Mughal period. Urdu, which had its beginnings during the Delhi Sultanate, gained prominence as a literary language in the Deccan. Muhammad Shah, one of the Mughal rulers, was the first to invite and honor the Deccani poet Shamsuddin Wali. Urdu gradually became the medium of social communication in northern India. Notable Urdu poets such as Mir, Sauda, and Nazir emerged during this period. Regional languages also flourished, with lyrical poetry reaching its pinnacle. Bengali, Oriya, Rajasthani, and Gujarati poetry often focused on the dalliance of Krishna and Radha, as well as stories from the Bhagavad Gita. Many devotional hymns from the Ramayana and Mahabharata were translated into regional languages. Punjabi literature was enriched by the compositions of Adi Granth by Guru Arjun and Vachitra Natak by Guru Govind Singh. Marathi reached its zenith with the works of Eknath and Tukaram. Overall, the Mughal period witnessed a flourishing literary tradition in Persian, Urdu, Hindi, and regional languages, which continued to shape intellectual thought in subsequent eras.

#### **4.3.7 Let us Sum up**

The Mughal period is known for its cultural grandeur. The rulers had very refined taste. They themselves were poets, writers, scholars, painters, musicians, etc., They accepted Persian language and culture as theirs. C. A. Storey in his “Persian Literature – A Bio-bibliographical Survey” remarks there were 475 items on India as against 299 items covering Persia, Central Asia and countries other than India. Among the 475 items on India majority of the works deals with the Mughals. They wanted to dominate the central Asian politics through culture. The Mughals also patronized painting and a new style emerged known as the Mughal miniature painting. The Mughal period saw a fine blending of Indo-Islamic synthesis in art and architecture. Many buildings, forts and cities were constructed by them.

**4.3.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Describe the developments in the field of architecture under the Mughals
2. Write a note on the Mughal school of Painting
3. Discuss the growth of literature during the Mughal Period.

**4.3.9 References**

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## UNIT-V

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### Lesson 5.1 - Sikhism: Religion and as a Military Force

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#### Structure

- 5.1.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.1.2 Introduction
- 5.1.3 Guru Nanak and his Teachings
- 5.1.4 Mughals-Sikh Relations
- 5.1.5 Guru Arjan Dev and his reforms
- 5.1.6 Mughal-Sikh Conflict
- 5.1.7 Guru Gobind Singh and Khalsa
- 5.1.8 Let us Sum up
- 5.1.9 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.1.10 References

#### 5.1.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- know the origin of Sikhism
- understand the teachings of Guru Nanak
- describe the Mughal-Sikh Rivalry
- summarize the role of Khalsa

#### 5.1.2 Introduction

The medieval period saw the emergence of Bhakthi Movement in the Hindu religion and sufi movement in Islam. These two movements were stressing on universal brotherhood, love, service to humanity and simple devotion devoid of rituals. There was also a fusion of principles of Hinduism and Islam which led to emergence of new faith; Sikhism. It had a unique identity with a focus on morality, purity of heart, and love for mankind. Gurur Nanak was the founder of Sikhism. The birth of Guru Nanak and Sikhism coincided with a broader religious and social awakening in Hindustan. Guru Nanak's social and religious philosophy provided a timely and fitting response to the evolving milieu in Medieval India.

### 5.1.3 Guru Nanak and his Teachings

The term 'Sikh' originates from the Sanskrit word 'Shishya,' denoting 'disciple.' Those who embraced Guru Nanak's teachings, the founder of Sikhism, came to be known as Sikhs. Central to the Sikh faith is utmost reverence for the Guru, and adherence to their teachings is considered a sacred duty. The history of Sikhism unveils the step-by-step formation and evolution of a community under the guidance of a series of leaders known as Gurus.

Guru Nanak (1469–1539 CE) was born in a village called Talwandi, about 40 miles from Lahore in what today is Pakistan. He is said to have been from a merchant family. He married and had two sons. In his early twenties, Nanak moved to Sultanpur, an important town on the main road between Lahore and Delhi, where he worked as a clerk in the Lodi administration. When he was about thirty years old, he had an experience that he described as a revelation—a direct encounter with God that shaped the rest of his life. He preached his message in the form of beautiful hymns called shabads. According to tradition, he was accompanied by Mardana, a musician and a Muslim by birth. Guru Nanak sang of the oneness of God, the equality of all people, the futility of empty ritualism.

A fervent advocate of unwavering monotheism, Guru Nanak referred to the Divine as Ikk (one). This foundational principle, eloquently expressed in Japji Sahib, encapsulates Guru Nanak's theological perspective on God. His teachings vehemently upheld monotheism, rejecting the veneration of any human teacher or deity. In stark contrast to the prevalent medieval Indian practice of renouncing worldly life for spiritual pursuits, Guru Nanak championed the intrinsic value of life in the material world.

Guru Nanak's teachings can be distilled into three straightforward Punjabi principles: Naam Japna, Kirti Kami, and Vand Chakna. In English, these principles signify "constantly remembering God, earning a livelihood through honest means, and sharing the fruits of one's labor with others." To actualize his principles of equality, Guru Nanak encouraged adherence to these three principles. In instituting the practices of Sangat (Congregation) and Pangat (consuming food in community Kitchen), he emphasized that all individuals should sit together in a congregation and should have food in a community langar (Community kitchen), people should sit in a single line, devoid of distinctions based on social status, wealth, or any other hierarchy. He institutionalized the Sufi practice of langar and envisioned

a society liberated from caste and religious distinctions, aligning with the worldview shared by contemporary monotheistic saints like Kabir.

### **Sikh proliferation**

The four immediate successors of the Guru played a key role in spreading Sikhism across the subcontinent, primarily in the plains of Punjab, Sindh, and the Gangetic plains. The first four Gurus maintained amicable relations with the Mughal state. The Sikh sources indicate that they founded new settlements in Kartarpur, Goindwal, and Ramdasapur (later known as Amritsar). The immediate successors of the Guru Nanak played a vital role in expanding the Nanakpanth throughout the subcontinent, particularly in the plains of Punjab, Sindh, and the Gangetic plains. Guru Angad succeeded Guru Nanak. He captured the teachings of his Master, documenting them in a unique script known as Gurmukhi. This marked the initiation of the formation of a core Sikh scripture, providing clear guidance for the disciple's about the Sikhism..

#### **5.1.4 Mughals-Sikh Relations**

Guru Nanak witnessed the rule of three Lodhi monarchs: Bahlul Lodhi, Sikandar Lodhi, and Ibrahim Lodhi. Concurrently, he observed the rise of the Mughal Empire under Babar, succeeded by his son Humayun. He was a witness to Babur's invasion of Delhi. Guru Nanak expressed his disapproval in his Bab Bani, condemning both the failure of the Lodhi state to protect and Babur's mass slaughter, which ultimately led to the devastation of Punjab. The first four Gurus maintained amicable relations with the Mughal state.

#### **Akbar and Sikh Gurus**

Akbar maintained a cordial relationship with the Sikh Guru Amar Das. He visited Guru Amar Das at Goindwal and extended an offer to provide a grant for the upkeep of the Langar, the community kitchen. Nevertheless, the Guru turned down the offer. Akbar's visit to Goindwal might be seen as an effort to mitigate the risk of peasant uprisings in central Punjab, given the region's importance to Mughal revenue and administrative control. Mughal patronage for Sufi and Sikh sacred centers could also be seen as attempts to form social and political alliances. In doing so, the early Mughals embraced prevailing concepts of sovereignty, thereby legitimizing their rule over Punjab. Every visitor, whether Hindu



or Muslim, had to partake in a communal meal before meeting the Guru. This practice applied to Akbar and the Raja of Haripur, who were also required to follow the same protocol of sitting in a line and dining together.

The structural formation of Sikhism started during the time of Guru Amar Das. The “**Manji system**” denotes the organizational framework implemented by Guru Amardas, the third Sikh Guru, during his leadership. The term “**Manji**” can be interpreted as a *small cot or seat*. The significant rise in the Sikh population made Guru Amar das to organize the dispersed Sangats or congregations into a systematic structure. Drawing inspiration from the administrative division of Akbar’s empire, he divided his entire spiritual domain into 22 provinces known as Manjis. Guru Amardas instituted a system wherein he designated trustworthy **Manjidars** to oversee various regions, each seated on a Manji , representing authority and responsibility. These regional leaders were tasked with disseminating the teachings of Sikhism, managing congregational affairs, and ensuring the welfare of the Sikh community in their respective areas. The Manji system played a pivotal role in the expansion and consolidation of the Sikh community under Guru’s guidance.

Guru Amar Das passed away on September 1, 1574, having appointed his son-in-law, Ram Das, as his successor. To avoid potential conflicts with the relatives of the previous Guru, Ram Das relocated to the current site of Amritsar. In 1577, he secured a grant for the site, along with 500 bighas of land, from Emperor Akbar, paying Rs. 700 Akbari to the zamindars of Tung, the landowners. The Guru excavated the Tank and laid the foundation of the city of Amritsar, initially known as Ramdaspora. The contemporary Darbar Sahib, also known as the Golden Temple, is situated on the land granted to Guru Ram Das by Emperor Akbar. Akbar, known for his open-minded approach, not only showed respect for various religions but also bestowed gifts and jagirs upon their followers. He welcomed individuals from 52 trades to settle there and establish businesses in the Guru’s market, still recognized as **Guru ka bazar**. Over time, the city evolved into the largest trade center in the north.

### The Masand System

The Masand System which was established by the early Sikh Gurus, particularly Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjan, served as an administrative and revenue-collection mechanism to organize and finance the Sikh community. The term “masand” is derived from the Persian word

“masnad,” which translates to an elevated seat, and is synonymous with the term “Gaddi.” As the Sikh preachers, serving as representatives of the Gurus, were provided with elevated seats or Gaddis during congregations, they came to be known as masnads or masands. Despite its initial positive objectives, the system encountered criticisms and challenges over time. The primary aim of the Masand system was to collect Dasvand (donation), a voluntary donation comprising one-tenth of a Sikh’s income, dedicated to community welfare, supporting religious institutions, and propagating Sikhism. Initially, Masands played a crucial role in disseminating Sikh teachings and maintaining communication between the central leadership and local congregations. However, as time passed, certain Masands faced accusations of corruption and mismanagement of funds, allegedly prioritizing personal gain over serving the community.

#### **5.1.5 Guru Arjan Dev and his reforms:**

Guru Ram Das passed away in September 1581, leaving behind three sons. The youngest among them, Arjun, succeeded him as the Guru. Arjun had been a cherished figure of his maternal grandfather, Amar Das, who affectionately referred to him as the ‘ferry-boat of scriptures.’ Arjun had actively participated in his father’s work. Upon assuming the Guruship, Arjun established his residence at Ramdaspur. While Sikhs extended both manual and material assistance, monetary contributions from distant places often faced obstacles, primarily due to interference from his brother Prithi also known as Prithi Chand. The Sikh population had grown significantly, with Sikhs found in nearly every city in Punjab and beyond. It became customary for Sikhs to make offerings to their spiritual guide, sending them through individuals visiting the Guru. To streamline this process, Guru Arjun instituted a crucial change. He mandated that every Sikh set aside Dasvandh, or one-tenth of their income, for the Guru’s fund. This contribution was to be remitted through an accredited Masand, a prominent missionary entrusted with collecting offerings. These Masands were required to visit the Guru annually along with his Sangat and present their collections in person. The revenue was used for the construction of large tanks and holy buildings.

#### **Compilation of Guru Granth sahib**

The compilation of the Adi Granth took place in 1604 at Amritsar by the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev. The title “Guru” was bestowed by the compiler himself and later affirmed ceremonially by the last Guru, Guru Gobind Singh, in 1708. Serving as the primary scripture in the Sikh

religion, the Adi Granth, also known as Guru Granth Sahib, encompasses the poems of the first five Gurus. Guru Gobind Singh, incorporating 115 hymns from his father Tegh Bahadur, finalized the scripture in its present form in 1704. The Adi Granth, consisting of around 6,000 hymns in 1430 pages and thirty-one sections, uses the Gurmukhi language. Emphasizing salvation, it underscores the fundamental unity between God and the human soul, advocating right living through truth, contentment, and meditation. In Sikh daily life and worship, the Guru Granth Sahib holds a significant role. During the preparation of the book, adversaries of the Guru informed Akbar that it contained disparaging remarks about Muslim and Hindu prophets. However, when the Emperor visited the Guru in Goindwal in late 1598 and heard passages, he found nothing objectionable and appreciated it. Akbar even granted relief to zamindars, addressing their hardships highlighted by the Guru. While Akbar was alive, he safeguarded the Guru, but challenges arose under his successor, Jahangir, after Akbar's death in 1605.

### **Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev**

Jahangir seized the awaited opportunity during Prince Khusrau's rebellion, spurred by reports that Guru Arjun had blessed the fleeing prince. The alleged saffron mark on Khusrau's forehead was seen as a supportive gesture, leading to the Guru's immediate arrest without inquiry or trial. Jahangir, claiming knowledge of the Guru's "heresies," ordered his presence, transferring his possessions to Murtaza Khan, confiscating his property, and prescribing a torturous death. Despite Jahangir's journey from Agra to Lahore, punishing those associated with Khusrau on the way, there were no complaints about the Guru's involvement until Khusrau's capture and punishment in Lahore. This situation warrants scrutiny. Jahangir pursued his rebel son from Agra to Lahore, penalizing those associated with Khusrau along the way. It's perplexing that, despite passing through Majha, including Goindwal where the Guru supposedly resided, no complaints about the Guru's involvement reached Jahangir until after Khusrau's capture and punishment. It seems the story emerged later, perhaps concocted by the Guru's detractors to avoid inquiry. From his Jahangirnama, it's evident that Jahangir harbored a bias against the Sikh movement. Regarding Guru Arjun, he expressed his prejudice, stating that

'So many of the simple-minded Hindus, nay. many foolish

Muslims too, had been fascinated by his ways and teachings. He was known as a religious and worldly leader. They called him Guru, and from all directions crowds of fools would come to him and express great devotion to him. This busy traffic had been carried on for three or four generations. For years the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this false traffic, or he should be brought into the fold of Islam.'

Other tales surfaced, asserting the Guru prayed for Khusrau's success and provided him funds, but these seem unlikely and are absent from Jahangir's Memoirs. The Guru, uninterested in claimants to the throne, likely had a casual encounter with Khusrau, seeking solace. Handed over to Chandu Shah, who had a personal grudge against the Guru, tortured Guru Arjan Dev to death. Finally, his blistered body was thrown into the cold waters of the Ravi on May 30, 1606.

There exists a significant disagreement among historians regarding the primary instigator of the incident in question. Initially, Sikh historians pointed to Chandu Lal as the main conspirator behind the assassination of Guru Arjun. However, this perspective underwent a complete transformation after the publication of *Tuzki Jahangir*. The revised viewpoint emphasized the crucial roles played by both Jahangir and Printhia in the murder of Guru Arjun. Guru Arjun, revered as the first martyred Guru in Sikh history, dedicated himself to defending his beliefs and fighting for what he deemed right. His demise is predominantly ascribed to the actions of Jahangir.

The assassination marked the initial clash between the Sikh and Mughals, with Sikhs interpreting the sacrifice as a dedication to truth and sincerity. The repercussions of Guru Arjun's death were profound, transforming Sikhs into a formidable force and reshaping the course of the Hindustan's history, particularly in Punjab. This pivotal event is recognized as a turning point, signifying the shift from a pacifist sacred tradition to a militant one. J S Grewal, citing Bhai Gurdas, supports the introduction of militant measures by Guru Hargobind, comparing it to the protective hedge of hardy and thorny kikar trees around an orchard. This incorporation of militancy in Sikh tradition, aimed at countering Mughal violence, accelerated the martyrdom of subsequent Gurus.

### 5.1.6 Mughal - Sikh Conflict

Historians frequently observe a notable transformation in the concept of Guruship during this period in Sikh history. The Guru, previously characterized as a fakir, now assumed the role of a saccha padshah (true king). The religious institution underwent a metamorphosis into a theocracy, with masands and the tithe collection resembling a system of mandatory taxation directed towards a central treasury. The entire movement shifted from being a peaceful and spiritual entity to appearing as a predominantly military encampment.

Several unpleasant incidents and conflicts unfolded between Mughals and Sikhs, further widening the gap between the two communities. Additional events heightened tensions, ultimately leading to the arrest and imprisonment of Guru Hargobind in the Gwalior Fort. Although he was later released on the advice of Mian Mir, a renowned Sufi saint and a friend of Guru Arjun, the hostility and distrust between the communities continued to escalate. A continuous series of unfortunate incidents worsened the situation, eroding the once-shared faith and mutual sentiments between Sikhs and Mughals. This unfortunate incident became a pivotal turning point in the history of their relationship, prompting the Sikh community to pivot towards political and military preparations. The sixth Guru established a Sikh army to avenge his father and protect the sanctity of the Sikh religion, signifying the transfer of sovereignty ideals from the saint-emperor to the later Sikh Gurus.

The succession to Guruship from the fourth Guru Ram Das onwards became confined within the Sodhi Khatri, consolidating the economic, political, and military significance of the Sikh Gurus. The gradual support of peasants, particularly Jats in central Punjab, further enhanced the political and religious role of the Sikh Gurus, shaping a distinct Sikh identity crucial for envisioning an alternative sovereignty compared to Mughal rule. While Mughal-Sikh conflicts persisted, a schism over succession also endured. W. H. McLeod previously argued that the influx of Jats into Sikhism transformed the religion into a martial community.

#### Ascension of Guru Hargobind

Upon his accession, the sixth Guru donned two swords symbolizing spiritual and temporal interests, encouraging Sikhs to contribute arms and horses. He fortified Amritsar with Lohgarh and established the Akal Takht,

where discussions on community welfare took place alongside prayers and preaching. A bodyguard of 52 Sikhs formed the core of the Guru's future army. Guru Hargobind ascended to the gaddi of his martyred father at the tender age of eleven. He had been meticulously trained for this significant role, which, given the changed circumstances, held both great honor and considerable danger. Recognizing the challenges, his father had entrusted him to Bhai Buddha, a seasoned warrior who shaped the Guru into a soldier-saint. Under Bhai Buddha's guidance, Guru Hargobind received instruction in sacred teachings, acquired skills in offensive and defensive weaponry, and engaged in various manly activities such as riding, hunting, and wrestling. This comprehensive training resulted in his development as a well-rounded individual—physically robust, saintly, and enlightened.

Upon his accession, Guru Hargobind symbolized both spiritual and temporal interests by wearing two swords. He issued a circular letter to his Masands, instructing Sikhs to include arms and horses as part of their offerings. Additionally, he fortified the city of Amritsar with the construction of a small fortification named Lohgarh. In 1609, he established a meeting place for Sikhs known as the Akal Takht or the Throne of the Almighty. This space served not only for prayers and preaching but also for discussions on matters affecting the community's well-being. Guru Hargobind formed a bodyguard comprising 52 robust Sikhs, laying the foundation for his future army.

The emperor, alarmed by these preparations, summoned the Guru to his presence. Guru Hargobind complied and was subsequently imprisoned in the fort of Gwalior. Despite his sufferings, the Guru's followers, deeply respecting him, journeyed to Gwalior in groups. Kissing the fort's walls from outside, they returned to their homes. Some compassionate Muslims also voiced sympathy, prompting the emperor to release the Guru. However, Guru Hargobind only accepted the offer when all 52 princes imprisoned with him were allowed to come out, each holding a part of his garment. This act earned him the title "Bandichhor" or Deliverer.

Jahangir continued to live for several years after this period, but he did not pose any further challenges to Guru Hargobind. Instead, he endeavored to befriend the Guru, recognizing that he might have been misled in handling the case of Guru Arjun. Jahangir would often go hunting with the Guru, cherishing his company. He even visited Amritsar and offered to fund the completion of the Akal Takht. However, the Guru declined the offer, expressing a desire for the Sikhs to contribute to the



construction symbolizing their service and sacrifice rather than being a monument to royal generosity. After Guru Nanak, Guru Hargobind was the first Guru to venture outside Punjab to spread Sikhism. He traveled extensively, reaching places like Kashmir in the north and Nanakmata, near Pilibhit, in the east. In 1628, during Shah Jahan's hunting expedition near Amritsar, a conflict arose when one of his hawks fell into the hands of Sikh hunters. The altercation escalated, resulting in the Sikh party beating the royal party. Subsequently, a detachment of troops under Mukhlis Khan was sent to arrest the Guru, marking the beginning of a conflict. The attack caught the Guru off guard, as he was busy preparing for his daughter's marriage, lacking proper war munitions. Improvising, even a gun had to be created from the hollow trunk of a fallen tree. The skirmish took place at the present site of Khalsa College. Although the Guru's belongings were plundered, the Mughal troops retreated discomfited after Mukhlis Khan's death in the melee. The Guru then moved to Jhabal, about eight miles southwest, where he conducted his daughter's marriage. To avoid further trouble, Guru Hargobind shifted his residence to Kartarpur, where he rebuilt his resources and expanded and improved Sri Gobindpur, his father's town, renamed Sri Hargobindpur. To accommodate his Muslim troops and residents, he built a mosque at his own expense. However, this drew anger of a bigoted Hindu named Bhagwan Dass, who picked a quarrel with the Guru in 1630 and was killed in the ensuing conflict. His son sought help from Abdulla Khan, the Faujdar of Jullundur, leading to a battle where the Jullundur forces were defeated.

The Guru continued preaching his religion and making converts, but conflicts with imperial forces persisted. In the following year, a skirmish erupted over the possession of two horses brought by a Masand from Kabul for the Guru. Bhai Bidhi Chand, a resourceful Sikh, recovered the horses in a daring and humorous campaign, resulting in a war with the imperial forces. In another engagement, Guru Hargobind faced a powerful army led by Lalla Beg and Qamar Beg in the Malwa region, resulting in casualties on both sides. To commemorate his victory, the Guru built a tank called Gurusar.

In 1632, the Guru stayed in Kartarpur for some time. Painde Khan, a Pathan captain who had once been a favorite of the Guru, showed signs of disaffection. Dismissed for a misdemeanor, he joined forces with the emperor, leading to the dispatch of a strong force against the Guru, including Kale Khan and Qutab Khan, the Faujdar of Jullundur. The Guru spent the last ten years of his life at Kiratpur in meditation and

prayer. Compelled to groom a successor for the future Guruship, the Guru designated Har Rai as his heir. He himself passed away on March 3, 1644. Guru Har Rai, although maintaining a formidable force of 2200 horsemen, was committed to a policy of peace. Despite external pressures, such as the conflict among Shah Jahan's sons for the throne of Delhi, the Guru carefully avoided shedding blood. During this period, Dara Shikoh, an admirer of Sikhism and a Sufi like many others, sought refuge in Goindwal, where the Guru had once saved his life by providing a rare medicine. Subsequently, Aurangzeb ascended the throne and summoned the Guru to his court. However, the Guru, instead of going himself, sent his son Ram Rai to represent him. Aurangzeb aimed to ascertain whether there were any elements against Islam in Sikhism. In the court, Ram Rai faced numerous questions from the emperor. When asked about the perceived abuse of Muslims in the Sikh holy book, Ram Rai altered the wording of the line, asserting that the term "Mussalman" was a misquotation and should be "be-iman" or faithless. Pleased with this response, Aurangzeb granted him a jagir in the Doon valley. However, upon learning of his son's compromise on truth and courage, the Guru was deeply pained. Considering Ram Rai unsuitable for the Guruship, he resolved to appoint his younger son, Har Krishan, instead.

### **Guru Teg Bahadur**

At the age of forty-four, Guru Tegh Bahadur assumed the mantle of Guruship. He succeeded Gaddi as the ninth Guru. His disciplined spiritual practices and mastery over desires bestowed upon him a profound peace of mind, impervious to pain or pleasure. On one occasion, Dhir Mal, burning with rage at the Guru's success, sent one of his Masands to assassinate him. The Masand wounded Guru Tegh Bahadur, seized all his belongings, and fled. Remarkably, the Guru, though injured, displayed no anger. Responding to this act, Sikhs led by Makhan Shah retaliated by raiding Dhir Mal's house, recovering the Guru's belongings, and capturing the Masand. Despite the Masand's transgressions, the Guru forgave him and directed the Sikhs to return all seized property to Dhir Mal, including the original copy of the Granth prepared by Guru Arjun. While Sikhs readily relinquished most items, they hesitated to return the Holy Book, asserting its status as belonging to the institution of Guruship rather than any individual. The Sikhs concealed the Holy Book until the Guru discovered its location while crossing the Beas on his way to Kiratpur. He left the Book in a secure spot in the dry riverbed, instructing Dhir

Mal to retrieve it. Since then, the Book has remained with the family of Dhir Mal at Kartarpur. Guru Tegh Bahadur was universally accepted by all Sikh congregations. However, some temple custodians resisted, fearing submission to central control and holding onto their greed. For instance, when the Guru visited Amritsar to pay respects to his ancestors' shrine, its doors were closed upon him. Similar experiences occurred in Kiratpur, where Dhir Mal's party expressed jealousy.

During two years of extensive travels, the Guru moved with a sizable following, changing in size based on local Sikh populations. He received homage from the people along with various offerings. These activities, customary for every Guru, were misconstrued by local newswriters as 'forcible exactions.' Concerns arose that the Guru might amass enough strength to pose a threat to the state. Consequently, the Emperor ordered the Guru's arrest, and he was found in Agra and brought to Delhi. Thrown into prison and closely guarded, Guru Tegh Bahadur was pressured to embrace Islam, which he steadfastly refused.

In the face of persecution, the Guru and his companions endured torture and martyrdom. Bhai Mati Das, one of his companions, was sawn alive, while three others managed to escape. Sikh chronicles state that the Guru's arrest was prompted by his advocacy for persecuted Kashmiri Hindus under Aurangzeb's rule. However, alternate historical accounts, relying on dubious translations, falsely accused the Guru of living on plunder and making common cause with a Muslim zealot named Hafiz Adam. The Guru's steadfast refusal to perform miracles to appease his persecutors reflected his commitment to his principles. In November 1675, another imperial order arrived, leading to the public beheading of Guru Tegh Bahadur in the Chandni Chowk of Delhi. Guru Gobind Singh documented the event of his father's death in his Vichitra Natak. The relationship between the two religions became increasingly tense due to unfortunate incidents, notably the murder of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, in Delhi and the ensuing battle between the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, and the Mughals, resulting in the deaths of Guru Gobind Singh and his sons.

The responsibility for Tegh Bahadur's murder was primarily attributed to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, known for his orthodox Muslim rule. Aurangzeb summoned Guru Tegh Bahadur to Delhi and demanded a miracle or conversion to Islam. The Guru, steadfast in his beliefs, refused, leading to the emperor ordering his execution, resulting in the beheading of Tegh Bahadur. Another reported reason behind the murder of Guru

Tegh Bahadur was the plight of Hindus in Kashmir, who sought refuge in Anandpur, claiming forceful conversions by Aurangzeb. The Hindu priests, utilizing the innocence of the Guru's nine-year-old son, urged Tegh Bahadur to sacrifice his life for the cause of piety and goodness. Moved by the pleas and his son's sentiments, Guru Tegh Bahadur made the courageous decision to face the Mughal Emperor and sacrifice his life. Another reason presented by Gregor is that the son of the seventh Guru, Har Rai, who was present in the court of Aurangzeb, had previously filed a complaint against Guru Tegh Bahadur. The complaint alleged that Guru Tegh Bahadur had unjustly taken away his right to be the Guru. In response to this accusation, Guru Tegh Bahadur was summoned to the Mughal Darbar on more than three occasions. Contrary to popular belief, it was not the emperor himself who insisted that Guru Tegh Bahadur perform a miracle; rather, it was Ram Rai, the son of Guru Har Rai, who claimed to be the rightful Guru and asserted that he could demonstrate a miracle. Yielding to Ram Rai's insistence, Guru Tegh Bahadur tied a paper around his neck and requested the emperor to command someone to cut the paper with a sword. As a result, his neck was severed, and his head fell to the ground. Gregor also references a poem written by the last Guru, describing the death of his father. According to this account, the incident occurred due to the complaint lodged by Ram Rai, and the murder transpired in the presence of the Mughal Emperor.

### **5.1.7 Guru Gobind Singh and Khalsa**

#### **Guru Gobind Singh**

Guru Gobind Singh was a mere nine years old when his father martyred in Delhi. The impact of this tragic event was initially overwhelming. To prepare himself for the challenges ahead, Guru Gobind Singh engaged in various forms of physical exercise, including riding, hunting, swimming, archery, and sword-play. He fearlessly confronted the hill chiefs, engaging in battles when necessary. However, his growing influence stirred jealousy and fear among the hill chiefs, leading to an attack led by Bhim Chand of Kahlur. The hill chiefs, backed by over 500 Pathans and some Udasis, sought to challenge the Guru. Facing desertions and betrayals, Guru Gobind Singh found support in Sayyed Budhu Shah of Sadhaura, who joined forces with him, bringing along 700 disciples. The Guru, bolstered by this reinforcement, preempted his enemies by marching to Bhangani, approximately six miles from Paonta, where a decisive battle took place

at the end of February 1686. Despite emerging victorious, the Guru did not leverage his military success for political gains. Instead, he returned to Anandpur and constructed four forts—Anandgarh, Lohgarh, Keshgarh, and Fatehgarh—to exert control over the hill states.

Understanding that political reform required a prior religious awakening and societal renaissance, Guru Gobind Singh aimed to break old societal norms and reorganize society based on shared beliefs and aspirations. His approach remained consistent with the principles taught by his predecessors, building upon the foundations laid by them. Guru Gobind Singh's mission was seen as the culmination of the collective mission of all Sikh Gurus. He emphasized the oneness of their objectives, acknowledging any apparent differences as products of local and occasional circumstances rather than deviations from the original design.

### **Formation of Khalsa**

From Guru Nanak to the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur, the initiation process for followers involved giving them Charan-amrit (water touched by the Guru's toe) to drink. However, Guru Gobind Singh, the Tenth and last Guru, introduced a change to Khande-da-Pahul (water stirred with a double-edged sword) during the baptism of the five beloved ones (Panj Piare) on Baisakhi in 1699 at Anandpur Sahib. Baptism usually occurs when boys and girls reach puberty and understand the obligations of their religion. While the baptismal ritual can take place at any time, Baisakhi is considered especially appropriate, and it involves an assembled congregation.

During the ceremony, five baptized Sikhs initiate the new converts, and Amrit (nectar) is prepared by mixing sugar in water, stirred with a Khanda (double-edged sword), accompanied by recitations from selected scriptures, including Guru Gobind Singh's compositions. The initiates then take vows of the Khalsa faith, with each vow read aloud before the Guru Granth Sahib. Amrit is splashed in the faces of the newly initiated Khalsas with the Sikh salutation of "Bole so Nihal" and "Siri Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa, Siri Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh." Baptized Sikhs, both male and female, adhere strictly to symbols such as

- Kesh (unshaven hair),
- Kangha (wooden comb)
- Kara (wrist-band or iron bangle),

- Kirpan (sword),
- Kachha (drawer-underwear)

each symbolizing specific values and codes of conduct within Sikhism. Approximately 80,000 individuals underwent baptism within a few days under Guru Gobind Singh's command. He also mandated that all those identifying as Sikhs should undergo the new baptism to be confirmed. They were to adopt the common name Singh, meaning lion, signifying bravery as an integral aspect of their religion alongside peace and purity. Guru Gobind Singh employed self-respect and human dignity as powerful tools in uplifting his people, liberating them from the influence of the Masands who had become mere parasites. He abolished their order, and the initiation ceremony was modified to involve stirring water with a double-edged dagger. Changes were made to the salutation method, shifting from touching feet to folding hands and hailing each other as "the Purified Ones of the wonderful Lord who is always victorious."

Guru Gobind Singh aimed to build a nation of the Purified Ones, free from the evils of religion and society. However, the rulers of the time perceived his actions as organizing a force to attack and destroy them. Anandpur, situated in the land of Kahlur, faced opposition from Hindu Rajas who considered the Guru's activities a threat to their religion and power. War ensued as the hill chiefs, fearing the influence of the Guru, sought help from Aurangzeb. The Sikhs valiantly defended Anandpur for three years, but with supplies cut off, they faced hardships. Some Sikhs expressed discontent, and the Guru, moved by their suffering, decided to leave Anandpur in 1704. However, as he exited, a large force attacked him on the banks of the Sarsa. While on the move, Guru Gobind Singh composed the Zafarnama, an Epistle of Victory, in Persian verse, addressing Aurangzeb and highlighting his ill-treatment. The Guru's unwavering spirit impressed the aged monarch, who eventually invited him for a meeting. As time passed, Aurangzeb expressed his desire to personally meet Guru Gobind Singh. He issued orders to lift all restrictions against the Guru, ensuring a comfortable journey. Additionally, he dispatched Sheikh Muhammad Yar Mansabdar and Muhammad Beg Gurzbardar to convey his respect to the Guru. Traveling through Rajasthan on his way to Ahmednagar, where Aurangzeb was encamped, the Guru received news of Aurangzeb's death in March 1707. Subsequently, he decided to return to Punjab via Shahjahanabad, as Aurangzeb's son Muazzam ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah.



When Aurangzeb died, the Guru returned to Delhi and supported Bahadur Shah in the war of succession. The turn of events then led him to the Deccan, where he encountered a tragic end at Nander.

Despite the challenges faced, Guru Gobind Singh's teachings and vision laid the foundation for the Sikh community. The Panth, the organized Sikh community, was to guide itself by the teachings of the Gurus found in the Holy Granth and the collective sense of the community, as there would be no personal Guru in the future. During the succession war, Bahadur Shah sought the blessings of the Guru, who not only provided his blessings but actively fought for the emperor. The meeting between Guru Gobind Singh and Bahadur Shah occurred in Agra on July 23, 1707. The Guru received an honorable welcome, being titled 'Hind Ka Pir' and bestowed with a royal robe, a jeweled scarf, and 50,000 in cash. Expensive clothes, jewelry, and ornaments were sent to Mata Sundari. The Guru stayed in Agra with the Emperor until November 1707, making Dholpur a center for preaching activities and traveling the local areas before proceeding to Deccan. The Mughal Emperor appointed Guru Gobind Singh as a military commander and granted him a piece of land where later the Guru's shrine was built. However, the Guru remained cautious of Bahadur Shah's relations with Wazir Khan of Sirhind, suspecting the emperor of falling prey to Wazir Khan's evil propaganda and planning a war against him. In response, the Guru appointed Banda Singh as the commander of the Khalsa army, instructing him to march towards Punjab.

In the meantime, Guru Gobind Singh faced an attack by a Pathan named Gul Khan, whose father had been killed by the Guru. The attackers were killed, one by the Guru's own hand and the other by the Sikhs who rushed to the Guru's camp upon hearing the commotion. It is also reported that the Guru had bought horses from Gul Khan's father and did not pay him. Bahadur Shah sent a European surgeon Mr. Cole to stitch the Guru's wounds, but the wounds reopened, causing significant bleeding after a few days. Anticipating his fate, Guru Gobind Singh declared the Granth Sahib as the next Guru of the Sikhs.

#### **5.1.8 Let us Sum up**

Sikhism as faith sprang up during the medieval period. Guru Nank was the founder of the religion. The religion is a homogeneous mixture of Hindu and Islamic faith. Sikhism focused on morality, purity of heart, and love for mankind. Till up to Akbar's period there was a harmony in the Mughal-Sikh

relations after which slowly it declined with the assassination of 5<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, Guru Arjun Dev and 9<sup>th</sup> Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur. The 10 Sikh Guru turned the Sikh as a martial community with the formation of Khalsa. After the death of Aurangzeb there was an improvement in the Mughal-Sikh Relations.

#### **5.1.9 Self- Assessment Question**

1. Describe the life and the teachings of Guru Nanak
2. Examine the Mughal- Sikh relations after Akbar's period
3. Write a note on Khalsa

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## Lesson 5.2 - Rise of Maratha Power

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### Structure

- 5.2.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.2.2 Introduction
- 5.2.3 Factors for the rise of Marathas
- 5.2.4 Personality of Shivaji
- 5.2.5 Mughal-Maratha Relation
- 5.2.6 Let us Sum up
- 5.2.7 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.2.8 References

#### 5.2.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- understand the factors for the rise of Marathas
- explain the personality of Shivaji in rise of Maratha Power
- describe the Mughal- Maratha Relations
- summarize the role of Khalsa

#### 5.2.2 Introduction

The Mughal history is incomplete without acknowledging the rise of the Marathas, led by the remarkable Shivaji and his successors, who significantly contributed to the Mughal empire's downfall. The religious revival by the reformers in Maharashtra provided the spirit for the rise of Marathas. The personality of Shivaji was the driving force which united the Marathas to come as one unit. The rise of Maratha power resulted in rivalry with the Mughals. Shivaji was successful in opposing the Mughals and established an independent Maratha State.

#### 5.2.3 Factors for the rise of Marathas

Maratha dynasty was one of the most impactful forces that emerged in the 17th century. Historian Grant Duff opines that the Marathas came out of the Sahayadri mountains like wild fire. Many historians believe that several situations and circumstances propelled the Marathas into action.

According to many historians, Chatrapati Shivaji was a great organizer, who created a great Maratha confederacy and organization which unitedly led to action of empire building. The following are the factors for the rise of Maratha power:

### **1. Role of Socio-religious leaders**

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Maharashtra experienced a religious movement marked by the emergence of various teachers, some hailing from lower castes, who interacted with the highest echelons of society. These educators propagated the Bhakti cult, highlighting the fundamental equality of all, regardless of caste or economic status. They diligently worked to nurture a sense of Hindu unity. The most famous of these reformers were: Tuka Ram, Ram Das, Vaman Pandit and Eknath. Guru Ram Das exercised a tremendous influence by underlying the

philosophy of 'Karma' (action) in his famous book 'Das Bodh. Swami Ram Das's message to the Marathas was, "Mother and mother country are dearer than heaven itself. Gods and cows, Brahmans and the faith, these are to be protected. Therefore, God has raised you up; when faith is dead, death is better than life: why live when religion has vanished? Gather ye, therefore, the Marathas together; make the dharma live again! For otherwise our forefathers will laugh at us from heaven.". Eknath taught the Marathas to take pride in their mother tongue which helped in bringing about a sense of commonness and unity among the Marathas. As remarked by J.N. Sarkar, "A remarkable community of language, creed and life was attained in Maharashtra in the 17<sup>th</sup> century even before political unity was conferred by Shivaji". Maharashtra Dharma call given by the socio-religious leaders of Maratha region facilitated the consolidation of Marathas as a cultural identity, promoting social upward movement. Revival of religion communicated in simple form by these bhakti saints brought about Hindu consciousness amongst the Marathas. The growth of Maratha unity based on religion coupled with good organizational leadership led to the ultimate success of the Marathas. The role and significance of the bhakti movement in social and political mobilization played a visible role in the emergence of Maratha power.

### **2. Advantage of Geographical Location**

The region of Maharashtra naturally comprised mostly of mountains and rocky undulations. The Sahyadri mountain range lie in the north to south region and Satpuras – Vindhyas range is located in the east to west

directions. According to Ranade, the small peaks, undulated rocky terrains and the rivers Godavari and Krishna provide a special geographical characteristic to this region. It also makes the forts of the region largely impregnable and difficult to penetrate. In times of attacks, the Marathas found defensive cover in these forts. They were excellent horse riders and the natural surroundings made them hard working, courageous and goal oriented. The large part of Maratha land is a plateau where the Marathas had to struggle hard for their existence. This made the Marathas courageous and hard working. So, the geography had a great impact on the character and the life of the Maratha people.

### **3. Economic equality**

The Marathas did not suffer much from economic inequality, as there were not many people to be accepted as rich. There was no class of economic exploiters. This gave the Marathas a spirit of self-respect and unity.

### **4. No Strong Power in South India**

During 17th century, many important Southern states had declined with the Mughal annexation. But two very important Muslim states – Bijapur and Golkunda still existed. But they were also in the state of anarchy. Their administrative decline and internal strife was an important factor in the rise of Shivaji in the region.

### **5. Training in the art of administration**

Even prior to the rise of Shivaji, the Marathas had acquired experience and training in the art of administration. There were a number of Marathas employed in various departments and especially in the revenue department of the Muslim rulers of the Deccan. The Maratha Jagirdars were playing an important role in the political affairs of the states of Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Berar and Golkunda etc. Several departments were virtually controlled by Maratha statesmen and warrior. The Marathas in the Deccan controlled the hill-forts in the Deccani states. They were frequently honored with titles like Raja, Nik, and Rao. Under the rule of Ibrahim Adil Shah of Bijapur, natives of Maharashtra were employed as bargirs and often used against the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmednagar. Brahmins and Marathas were even recruited into the accounts department.

## **6. Guerilla warfare**

The mountainous areas made it possible for the Marathas to adopt guerilla warfare very successfully. The scattered areas in the villages provided provision for soldiers. The invaders were prone to sudden attacks from forts located on the tops of hills. Means of communications for the large armies to move freely were not easily available. This obstructed the deployment of large armies by the outside rulers.

## **7. Energetic Personality of Shivaji**

In spite of the above factors the personality of Chatrapati Shivaji was a binding force behind the rise of Maratha power in medieval India. He was a great organizer who built a great Maratha coalition in the face of disparate groups that had been divided throughout the medieval ages. His strong personality was instrumental in creating a strong and well-trained army of the Marathas which eventually created an independent empire. J.N. Sarkar has described the influence of Shivaji in the rise of the Marathas in these words, "Before his rise, the Maratha race was scattered like atoms through many Deccan kingdoms. He welded them into a mighty nation and he achieved this in the teeth of the opposition of four mighty powers like Mughal Empire, Bijapur, Portuguese India and the Abyssinians of Janjira. No other Hindu has shown such capacity in modern times. He was not only the maker of the Maratha nation, but also the greatest constructive genius of medieval India and the memory of a true hero as king like Shivaji remains imperishable historical legacy for the human race."

### **5.2.4 Personality of Shivaji**

The Marathas held important positions in the administrative and military systems of Deccan Sultanates of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar. But the credit of establishing a powerful Maratha state goes to Shahji Bhonsle and his son Shivaji. The political unity was rendered by Shivaji. The 17th century marked a period of expansion and consolidation for the Marathas, influencing their approach to warfare. The decline of the Ahmednagar and Bijapur kingdoms, coupled with the turmoil in the region and the lack of peace and security, led Shivaji to embark on a path of adventure. Driven by the ambition to attain independent sovereignty, he began capturing forts around Poona at an early age. Whether he initially envisioned himself as a liberator of Hindus from Muslim rule remains uncertain, but his actions set him on a trajectory towards establishing his own rule. Fort-based warfare



dominated as they vied for territory, commercial, and economic gains. The Maratha army, resembling a moving city, included artillery, infantry, cavalry, horses, oxen, and a camp bazaar. Swift and mobility became their hallmark, and Shivaji's implementation of guerrilla tactics proved effective in challenging the Mughal army within the Maratha geo-strategic territory. With the rise of the Marathas, a distinctive style of warfare emerged known as "gamin kava" or guerrilla tactics. The military culture showcased a diverse array of weapons, including matchlocks, flintlocks, and various artillery. Shivaji demonstrated diplomatic acumen by recognizing the need for Deccan integration. His clear goals involved founding the Maratha state and establishing swarajya. The "Deccan for the Deccanis" policy aimed at unifying Maratha chiefs and forging alliances with Deccan kingdoms like Bijapur and Golconda. Diplomatic negotiations extended to Tanjore, Siddis of Janjira, Sher Khan of Walikondapuram, Nizam of Hyderabad, Mysore, and European powers such as the Portuguese, Dutch, and French.

Shivaji focused on consolidating and expanding towards the South, undertaking the grand Karanatak expedition. His diplomatic skill aimed at animating people for a common purpose and sanctifying a devotion to the country, encapsulated in the idea "Maharashtra Dharma" by Ram Das. Shivaji's goal of establishing swarajya was rooted in preserving the ancient religion and culture of all people residing in Maharashtra, reflecting a response to the pressing needs of the times. Shivaji's emphasis on cultivating and improving land also resonated with the peasantry, fostering their support. Shivaji's ability to rally different sections of Maratha society, including agriculturalists, the fighting class, and tribal groups, contributed to his military success. The upsurge of Shivaji was based on a broader mobilization seeking improved social status and resentment against economic exploitation by the traditional elite.

### 5.2.5 Mughal- Maratha Relations:

The Mughal Maratha relationship can be divided into four phases:

- First phase (1640-1663)
- Second phase (1664-1667)
- Third phase (1668-1679)
- Fourth phase (1680-1707)

### **5.2.5.1 First Phase (1640-1663)**

The Mughals, as early as Jahangir's reign, recognized the significance of Maratha chieftains in Deccan politics. Jahangir successfully persuaded some Maratha chieftains to defect to his side in 1615, leading to the Mughals defeating the combined armies of Deccani Sultanate in 1616. In 1629, Shah Jahan attempted to win over the Maratha sardars, and Shahji, Shivaji's father, initially joined the Mughals but later defected and conspired against them with Murari Pandit and other anti-Mughal factions in Bijapur.

#### **Capture of Javli and Purandar:**

In 1648, Shivaji employed a clever stratagem to capture the seemingly impregnable Purandar fort from Nilkanth, whose father had gained independence from Bijapur. Moving ahead to 1656, Shivaji successfully conquered Javli and erected the Raigarh fort. The estate of Javli, held by Maratha nobleman Chandra Rao, posed a challenge due to his anti-Shivaji coalition with the Bijapuri governor. To overcome this, Shivaji orchestrated a plot resulting in Chandra Rao's assassination, enabling him to swiftly seize Javli and its fort. The capture of Javli marked a pivotal moment in Shivaji's journey, serving as a gateway to expanding his realm into new territories to the south and west. Not only did this conquest enhance the might of his military, incorporating numerous Mavle infantry from the Mores into his service, but it also bestowed control over the strategic Maval region. This area, now under Shivaji's rule, became a valuable source for recruiting troops, further solidifying his military prowess and territorial influence.

#### **Conquest of Konkan**

Following Aurangzeb's departure for northern India in pursuit of the throne, Shivaji seized the opportunity to expand his territories. In August 1657, he dispatched an army to confront the Sidis of Janjira, although the endeavor proved unsuccessful. Undeterred, towards the year's end, Shivaji turned his attention to northern Konkan, encompassing present-day Thana and Kolaba districts. Effortlessly capturing Kalyau and Bhivandi, he transformed them into naval bases, solidifying his control over northern Konkan and instituting a systematic administration in the newly acquired region. In early 1657, Shivaji confronted the Mughals for the first-time during Aurangzeb's invasion of Bijapur, where the prince was subduing key Bijapur nobles and officers. Seizing the opportunity, Shivaji proposed

his allegiance under the condition that he be acknowledged as the rightful commander of the conquered Bijapur forces and territories. Additionally, he sought recognition for his control over the recently annexed fort of Dabhol and its associated territories.

Realizing the emerging threat of the Marathas, Shah Jahan opted for a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against them. He suggested employing Shahji but keeping him at a distance from Mughal territory in Karnataka through Treaty. Aurangzeb seemed to continue this policy, advising Adil Shah to do the same before leaving for the North on the eve of the war of succession. However, Aurangzeb's desire for a Bijapur-Mughal alliance against Shivaji became problematic, as he had nothing substantial to offer, unlike Shah Jahan's offer of 2/3 of the Nizam Shahi territory in 1636. This contradiction persisted until Aurangzeb occupied Bijapur in 1687. Aurangzeb's attempts to align with Shivaji in 1657 failed when Shivaji demanded Dabhol and the Adil Shahi Konkan, a fertile and rich region crucial for foreign trade. Shivaji then shifted allegiance to Bijapur and raided Mughal Deccan, taking advantage of Aurangzeb's exit during the war of succession.

### **Death of Afzal Khan**

The Bijapur government, having suffered significant territorial losses to Shivaji, finally summoned the courage to address the situation. They appointed Abdulla Bhatari, known as Afzal Khan, a distinguished noble and general, to quell Shivaji's rising influence. However, within the Maratha court, there was a division regarding the strategy to adopt against Afzal Khan. While Shivaji's officers advised submission, he disregarded their counsel and determined to confront the invader head-on. Shivaji, having discerned Afzal Khan's deceitful intentions through Krishnaji Bhaskar, agreed to a meeting with Afzal Khan under the condition that the latter provided a solemn assurance of safety. Shivaji concealed a set of baghnakh ( steel claws) in his left hand and a small sharp dagger, referred to as a scorpion or bichhwa, in his right sleeve. During the meeting, Afzal Khan approached, embraced Shivaji, and, taking advantage of the height difference, attempted to tighten his grasp with the intention of strangling him. Simultaneously, Afzal Khan struck a blow at Shivaji's side. However, Shivaji, protected by armor beneath his coat, emerged unharmed. Seizing the opportunity, Shivaji swiftly used the steel claws to tear open Afzal Khan's bowels and plunged the bichhwa into Afzal Khan's side. Emboldened by this victory, Shivaji extended his influence by sending his troops into South

Konkan and the Kolhapur district. He successfully captured the Panhala fort, defeating another Bijapuri army led by Rustam Zaman and Fazl Khan, Afzal Khan's son. Additional forts in the vicinity, including Vasantgarh, Khelna, and Pangna, also fell under Shivaji's control. By the end of January 1660, Shivaji triumphantly returned to Raigarh with a substantial booty, marking another significant chapter in his military exploits.

### **A night attack on Shayista Khan**

After successfully emerging from the war of succession, the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb took measures to quell the rising Maratha power. To accomplish this, he appointed his maternal uncle, Shayista Khan, as the governor of Deccan, with explicit instructions to eradicate the newly established Maratha influence. In a strategic move, before launching his campaign, Shayista Khan encouraged the Bijapuris to launch an attack on the Maratha territories in the south, intending to crush Shivaji by orchestrating simultaneous invasions from two fronts. Responding to this threat, Shivaji devised a plan to execute a night attack on Shayista Khan, who had returned to Poona in August 1660. Shayista Khan had captured Chakan and taken residence in the very house where Shivaji had spent his childhood. Accompanied by 400 elite troops, Shivaji left Singhgarh and reached Poona, orchestrating a successful night ambush that took Shayista Khan by surprise. Upon entering the limits of Shayista Khan's camp, questioned by Mughal guards, Shivaji claimed that his group comprised Maratha soldiers of the imperial army proceeding to their designated positions. The party reached Shayista Khan's quarters at midnight, gaining entry by breaking open a small door sealed with bricks and mud. Failing to engage in the ambush, Shayista Khan fled the scene. The outcome of the night attack was decisive. Shayista Khan lost one of his sons, 40 attendants, 6 wives, and slave-girls, with 2 other sons and 8 women among the wounded. This significant event occurred on April 15, 1663, elevating Shivaji's prestige while Shayista Khan experienced a profound sense of humiliation. Enraged by the turn of events, Aurangzeb punished Shayista Khan by transferring him to Bengal. The final blow to Mughal prestige occurred on April 5, 1663, in Poona, when Shivaji attacks Shaista Khan in the heart of the Mughal camp, surprising everyone and seriously wounding the Mughal viceroy. This event was followed by the first Maratha sack of Surat.

### 5.2.5.2 The Second Phase (1664-1667)

The second phase involves Mughals aggressively countering the growing threat from Shivaji by forming alliances with Deccan rulers. The escalating threat posed by Shivaji, the assassination of Afzal Khan, the seizure of Panhala and south Konkan, and the ineffectiveness of Shayista Khan compelled the Mughals to reassess the entire situation. Following the setbacks of Shayista Khan's failure and the plunder of Surat, Aurangzeb decided to entrust the formidable task of defeating Shivaji to his bravest general, Raja Jai Singh of Amber. In response to this mandate, Aurangzeb appointed Mirza Raja Jai Singh as the viceroy of Deccan.

Jai Singh, known for his strategic acumen, devised an extensive plan for the comprehensive conquest of Deccan, departing from the Mughal tradition of cautious advances. The mounting threat posed by Shivaji, the assassination of Afzal Khan, the loss of Panhala and south Konkan, and the ineffectiveness of Shayista Khan prompted the Mughals to reevaluate their approach. Crossing the Narmada in 1665, Jai Singh swiftly entered Poona and assumed control. To weaken Shivaji, he orchestrated attacks by the Portuguese of Goa and the Sidi of Janjira, while also successfully winning the support of numerous zamindars in Maharashtra and Karnataka through generous offers.

Jai Singh's masterplan involved applying pressure on Bijapur by forming an alliance with Shivaji, granting him concessions that would come at the expense of Bijapur. Simultaneously, he aimed to relocate Shivaji's jagir to less sensitive areas, away from the Mughal Deccan. This strategic move sought to capitalize on the grievances harbored by those who opposed Shivaji, including the Mores expelled from Javli, Fazl Khan (son of Afzal Khan), and the ousted rajas of the Koli region north of Kalyan, all of whom rallied behind Jai Singh. The initial step in this plan was to defeat Bijapur, with Jai Singh foreseeing that this victory would pave the way for the subsequent suppression of Shivaji.

#### **Siege of Purandar:**

Jai Singh consistently applied pressure on Shivaji from the beginning of his tenure in Deccan. Initiating his campaign, Jai Singh dispatched a detachment to pillage Maratha villages southwest of the town. Subsequently, he besieged Shivaji in Purandar and launched an assault on Vajragarh, a sister fort situated on a ridge east of Purandar. Vajragarh was thoroughly

surrounded, and siege operations, including the setup of batteries and bombardment, commenced. Despite Maratha attempts to lift the siege, the capture of Vajragarh compelled Jai Singh to advance along the connecting ridge and lay siege to the lower fort of Purandar. After two months of siege and intense fighting, Jai Singh successfully captured five towers and one stockade of the lower fort. It became evident that the main fort of Purandar could not resist for much longer. Faced with unprecedented setbacks in the siege of Purandar and raids deep into his dominion, Shivaji found himself compelled to consider making peace by offering submission.

Having engaged in diplomatic exchanges with Jai Singh, Shivaji decided to meet the Rajput chief personally to propose terms. If rejected, Shivaji intended to align with the sultan of Bijapur and persist in the war against the Mughals. Jai Singh, insisting on Shivaji's unconditional surrender, promised safe conduct for the meeting. On the morning of June 24, 1665, Shivaji proceeded to Jai Singh's camp, where he was greeted by Jai Singh who advanced and embraced Shivaji, and seated him by his side.

#### **Treaty of Purandar:**

The victory in the siege led to the treaty of Purandar, Jai Singh proposed a Mughal-Maratha alliance, leading to the Treaty of Purandar in 1665) where Shivaji surrendered 23 out of 35 forts, and Shivaji's son was enlisted as a mansabdar of 5000 zat. This aligned with Jai Singh's plan to keep Shivaji away from the sensitive Mughal frontier while sowing the seeds of confrontation between Shivaji and Bijapur rulers. As per the terms of the treaty, Shivaji was granted an exemption from personal attendance at the Mughal court. Instead, his son Shambhuji was obligated to serve the emperor with a contingent of 5,000 horsemen, and in return, he would be rewarded with a jagir. This particular clause significantly favored the Mughals, not only securing a substantial sum of two crores of rupees but also ensuring a perpetual enmity between Shivaji and the sultan of Bijapur. The Mughals strategically used this arrangement to divert Shivaji's focus towards conquering mountainous regions, keeping him occupied and minimizing potential trouble for the Mughals in the Deccan. In return for this concession, Shivaji committed to assisting the Mughals in the invasion of Bijapur. This assistance would include deploying 2,000 Cavalry from Shambhuji's mansab and leading 7,000 skilled Infantry under his own command. Although Jai Singh presented this proposal to Aurangzeb, the Emperor hesitated, perceiving the issues with Bijapur and the Marathas as



distinct matters requiring separate attention. Despite the initial hesitation, Aurangzeb eventually approved the Treaty of Purandar and the subsequent agreement. To formalize this approval, he dispatched a farman and a robe of honor for Shivaji, solidifying the terms of the treaty.

### **Shivaji's visit to Agra**

Jai Singh achieved success by defeating Shivaji at Purandar in 1665. Jai Singh invaded Bijapur with the object of capturing the capital of the Adil Shahi kingdom by a sudden coup. Subsequently, Aurangzeb reluctantly accepted the attack on Bijapur in principle but without additional military reinforcements. The situation worsened with the Bijapur-Golconda alliance in 1666, hindering Jai Singh's chances of success due to the absence of fresh reinforcements from Aurangzeb and the presence of anti-Shivaji factions within the Mughal camp in Deccan led by Diler Khan.

Amidst these challenges, Jai Singh, attempting to win over the Marathas, suggested Shivaji's visit to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in Agra. However, Shivaji's perceived insult at the Mughal court and his subsequent enraged behavior resulted in his imprisonment in Agra. Aurangzeb's unwillingness and Shivaji's imprisonment disrupted Jai Singh's plan significantly. Jai Singh, recognizing the need for the Emperor's presence in Deccan to address factionalism among Mughal nobles, requested Aurangzeb's intervention. Still, Aurangzeb's engagements in the north-west and with Persia, coupled with Shivaji's escape from Agra in 1666, ultimately dashed the hopes of success for Jai Singh's plan. Consequently, Jai Singh was directed to proceed to Kabul, and he was replaced by Prince Muazzam as the Mughal viceroy of Deccan in May 1667. Jai Singh faced multiple challenges, including his failure against Bijapur and the defection of Netaji. Fearing that Shivaji might align with Bijapur and turn against the Mughals, Jai Singh persuaded Shivaji to visit the emperor at Agra. Although Shivaji accepted the offer after much hesitation, he did so only when Jai Singh and his son Ram Singh pledged their word for his safety. Shivaji's visit to Agra was marred by improper treatment from Aurangzeb. Shivaji, placed in a row with 5,000 rank Mansabdars, created chaos when he refused to meet Aurangzeb and was subsequently arrested. To secure his release, Shivaji bribed the Mughal wazir and other high officials, submitting a petition seeking pardon for his past conduct. While the emperor did not grant forgiveness, he revoked the order to send Shivaji to Afghanistan.

In a subsequent offer, Shivaji proposed to pay two crores of rupees, seek permission to return home, and have all his forts restored, promising to fight against Bijapur. However, Aurangzeb disregarded the proposal and stationed a large army with artillery under Sidi Faulad, the police kotwal of Agra, outside Shivaji's residence, while Ram Singh's men closely monitored him inside. As a result, Shivaji became a prisoner in his own right. Left to his own devices, Shivaji devised a secret plan to escape from Agra, successfully executing it despite Aurangzeb's disbelief. The emperor, suspecting collusion with Ram Singh, forbade him from the court and ultimately dismissed him from his post. Jai Singh, stationed in the Deccan, felt immense anxiety as he believed all his efforts had been undone, jeopardizing his reputation. During Shivaji's captivity, Jai Singh's primary concern was Shivaji's safety, a pledge he had given. As events unfolded, he became increasingly worried about his own and his son's future. In response, Aurangzeb removed Jai Singh from the Deccan, transferring control to Prince Muazzam. Jai Singh passed away on September 7, 1667, at Burhanpur while returning to Agra, marking the end of his tumultuous chapter in the Deccan. Following his successful escape, Shivaji reached out to Aurangzeb, expressing his willingness to fight for the empire. Simultaneously, he contacted Jaswant Singh, assuring him that Shambhuji would serve Prince Muazzam if Aurangzeb granted him pardon. Responding to Prince Muazzam's recommendation for peace, Aurangzeb not only pardoned Shivaji but also recognized his title as 'Raja.' Seizing the opportunity, Shivaji dedicated the following years to consolidating his kingdom through internal reforms. He undertook a comprehensive reorganization of his administration and implemented a series of astute regulations. These reforms not only strengthened his government but also prioritized the welfare of his people, showcasing Shivaji's commitment to the efficient and just governance of his realm.

### **The Third Phase (1668-1679)**

The third phase sees the further consolidation of Maratha power with Shivaji's coronation. After escaping from Agra, Shivaji opted not to immediately confront the Mughals. Instead, he aimed to establish friendly relations. Prince Muazzam, in a pleasing gesture, granted Shivaji's son Sambhaji a mansab of 5000 zat and a jagir in Berar. This friendship raised alarms for Aurangzeb, fearing rebellion. Consequently, he instructed Prince Muazzam to arrest Maratha agent Pratap Rao in Aurangabad.

Simultaneously, the Mughals attacked a portion of Shivaji's jagir in Berar to recover funds advanced for his Agra visit.

In response, Shivaji initiated attacks on forts ceded to the Mughals by the Treaty of Purandar (1665), including Kalyan, Bhiwandi, Purandar, Mahali, and Nander in 1670. Internal strife emerged between Prince Muazzam and Diler Khan, further weakening the Mughal army. Aurangzeb withdrew Jaswant Singh, a key figure supporting Prince Muazzam, and stationed him at Burhanpur. Exploiting the situation, Shivaji sacked Surat for the second time in October 1670, followed by successful Maratha campaigns in Berar and Baglana capturing several forts. Building on his previous success, Shivaji launched a sudden incursion into Berar, Baglan, and Khandesh. In December 1670, he raided Khandesh, capturing forts in the Baglan district. Under the leadership of his commander-in-chief, Pratap Rao Gujar, the Marathas plundered Bahadurpur and looted the city of Karanja in Berar. This marked the beginning of Shivaji imposing chauth, a tax, on the Mughal territories through which he passed. Asserting his claim, Shivaji declared that Maharashtra belonged to him, not the Mughals.

Shivaji's bold actions stirred Aurangzeb, prompting him to send Mahabat Khan to the Deccan, with instructions for Bahadur Khan of Gujarat to join the expedition. These Maratha victories caused concern in the Mughal court, leading to Mahabat Khan's appointment as the sole incharge of Deccan affairs in November 1670. However, he failed to achieve significant success and, along with Prince Muazzam, was removed in 1672. Bahadur Khan assumed control of Deccan in 1673, but Maratha successes persisted. Despite their efforts, these generals failed to dislodge Shivaji, leading to their recall by the emperor. Aurangzeb then appointed Bahadur Khan and Diler Khan to take charge of the Deccan expedition. Towards the end of 1672, a conflict arose between Shivaji and Bijapur. Despite Mughal attempts to thwart Shivaji's raids in Khandesh and Berar in December 1672, the Marathas continued to triumph. In 1673, Bahadur Khan managed to occupy Shivner, but it failed to deter Shivaji. Shivaji capitalized on the chaos following Ali Adil Shah's death in Bijapur in 1672, capturing Panhala, Parli, and Satara from Bijapur.

Shivaji sought control of the crucial Panhala fort for the security of the southern part of his domain, dispatching Anaji Datto for its capture. On the night of March 16, 1673, Anaji Datto, along with Kondaji Bavalekar, successfully assaulted Panhala. The Marathas scaled the walls using rope ladders, opened

the fort gate, and overwhelmed the guards. This victory led to a confrontation between Bahlol Khan and Sarza Khan, sent by Bijapur to reclaim territory, and Pratap Rao, who faced them near Garh-Hinglaj in the narrow pass of Nesari. In March 1674, Pratap Rao, accompanied by only six troopers, confronted Bahlol Khan in a narrow pass near the river. Despite being vastly outnumbered, Pratap Rao fought valiantly but succumbed to the overwhelming enemy force. Following his demise, Shivaji appointed Hansaji Mohite as his new commander-in-chief, replacing Pratap Rao.

### **Coronation of Shivaji:**

Even though Shivaji had established a vast kingdom and ruled it independently, the sultan of Bijapur viewed him as a rebel. Additionally, the leaders in Maharashtra, advocating for Hindu self-rule (Hindu Swaraj), desired its realization under a Hindu Chhatrapati. Consequently, Shivaji decided to undergo a formal coronation ceremony on a grand scale. However, there was an initial challenge. Shivaji, not being a Kshatriya, was not entitled to a traditional coronation according to ancient Hindu customs. Orthodox Brahmins in Maharashtra were reluctant to recognize him as a Kshatriya. In response, Shivaji approached Vishweshwar, also known as Gaga Bhatta, the highly learned and renowned Pandit from Banaras, to officiate the coronation ceremony.

In June 1674, on the eve of the coronation, Shivaji observed self-restraint and engaged in acts of penance. On this day, Gaga Bhatta received 5,000 huns, and other learned Brahmins were given a hundred gold pieces each. During the ceremony, Gaga Bhatta held the royal umbrella over Shivaji's enthroned head, proclaiming him as Shiva Chhatrapati. Gun salutes resonated from all the forts in Shivaji's kingdom at the exact time. Following the coronation, Shivaji generously distributed substantial sums of money to Brahmins, other individuals, and beggars. Once the formalities concluded, Shivaji issued orders and welcomed visitors. He accepted their offerings and bestowed royal honors upon them. Subsequently, he mounted his best horse, descended from the fort, and, seated on an elephant, paraded through the streets of the capital in a grand military procession, accompanied by his ministers and generals.

The plans for a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against Shivaji in October 1675 faltered due to internal conflicts and Aurangzeb's criticism of Bahadur Khan. Meanwhile, Diler Khan proposed a Mughal-Bijapur alliance against Golconda and Shivaji, but Madanna, Golconda's wazir,

and Akanna thwarted the plan in 1677. Instead, Madanna allied with Shivaji, paying an annual tribute for protection against the Mughals. As Shivaji broke promises to Golconda and attempted to capture Bijapur fort through bribery, conflicts escalated. Internal rifts over the Maratha court's succession issue emerged as Shivaji offered Des and Konkan to his younger son Rajaram and newly annexed Karnataka to the elder son Sambhaji. Diler Khan seized the opportunity in 1678, offering Sambhaji his assistance in recovering Des and Konkan. Sambhaji accepted, receiving a mansab of 7000 from the Mughals in December 1678. A proposal for a concerted effort by Golconda, Bijapur, and the Mughals against the Marathas in 1678 lost momentum due to Siddi Masaud's alliance with Shivaji in 1679. Diler Khan then aimed for an outright conquest of Bijapur in August 1679, but timely Maratha intervention averted the plan.

### **Sambhaji's surrender and escape**

Shivaji's eldest son, Shambhuji, despite receiving careful upbringing and military training, succumbed to the allure of sensual pleasures. In 1676, when parental admonitions failed to reform the prince, Shivaji took the drastic step of having him arrested and placed under surveillance in Shringarpur. Efforts were made to provide sound advice, and Shambhuji was introduced to the influential religious teacher Ram Das, but these attempts proved futile. In 1678, Shivaji decided to confine Shambhuji to Panhala. During his confinement, Shambhuji became a target for Mughal general Diler Khan's spies, who successfully persuaded him to join the Mughals. On the night of December 23, 1678, Shambhuji, along with his wife Yesu Bai, escaped from Panhala and headed towards the Mughal camp at Bahadurgarh. Teaming up with Diler Khan, they planned an invasion of Bijapur and attacked Bhupalgarh. Diler Khan captured Bhupalgarh on April 12, 1679, causing significant casualties among the inmates.

Following this, they proceeded towards Bijapur, prompting the regent, Sidi Masud, to seek help from Shivaji. Responding to the appeal, Shivaji attacked the Mughals who had besieged Bijapur. Shivaji provided assistance to Bijapur by supplying materials of war, forcing Diler Khan to lift the siege. However, due to the brutal atrocities committed by Diler Khan, especially at Tikota where Hindus were harassed, Shambhuji, approached by the inhabitants for protection from the Mughals, fled to Bijapur and sought refuge with Masud Khan. Diler Khan, eager to reclaim Shambhuji, sent agents to Masud Khan, offering a hefty bribe. Consequently, Shambhuji

had to leave Bijapur and return to Panhala. Upon hearing of the prince's return after a year, Shivaji visited Panhala and spent about a month in his company. Despite attempts to reform Shambhuji through advice and appeals to his sense of duty, the prince showed no remorse for his past conduct and failed to mend his ways. Although Shivaji initially treated him with kindness and affection, when no improvement was observed, he decided to confine Shambhuji at Panhala. Shivaji, seeking solace, then departed for Sajjangarh to be in the company of the saint Ram Das.

From Jai Singh's withdrawal in 1666 to Aurangzeb's forward policy of outright conquest in 1680, this third phase appeared as a period of complete chaos and confusion. The Mughals lacked a cohesive plan, acting without clear direction or purpose. They struggled to befriend the Marathas or the Deccani rulers, failing to topple them entirely.

#### **The Fourth Phase (1680-1707):**

The fourth phase sees Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb shifting his base to the Deccan to control the Marathas by annexing most of the Deccan kingdoms. The year 1680 holds significant importance in Deccan history. It witnessed the demise of Shivaji, marking a turning point.

#### **Death of Shivaji**

In Shivaji's final days, he faced deep anxiety, particularly due to Shambhuji's desertion, which struck him like a blow. The uncertainty about the future of his vast kingdom troubled him greatly. Shambhuji, the heir-apparent, had proven to be vicious, and Shivaji's second son, Raja Ram, was only a ten-year-old boy. Adding to the complexity, his chief queen, Soyra Bai, advocated for the suppression of Shambhuji and the recognition of her son Raja Ram as the rightful heir. The political landscape within the Maratha court further intensified as two key ministers, Moro Pant Pingle and Annaji Datto, found themselves at odds. Faced with these challenging circumstances, Shivaji harbored serious doubts about the destiny of the Maratha state. Seeking guidance, he discussed the matter with Guru Ram Das but found no immediate solution. Consequently, on February 14, 1680, he departed for Raigarh, where he celebrated Raja Ram's sacred thread ceremony and marriage. Shivaji's health took a downturn on April 2, 1680, and he ultimately passed away on April 13, 1680, leaving behind a kingdom with uncertain political dynamics and succession issues.



## Sambhaji's failures

Aurangzeb, recognizing the gravity of Deccan affairs, personally intervened, initiating a Mughal policy of complete conquest. The aftermath proved tumultuous for the Marathas. The succession dispute over Shivaji's kingdom among his sons fueled tensions among Maratha nobles. Jealousy between Moro Trimbak, the Peshwa, and Annaji Datto, the sachiv and viceroy, exacerbated the situation. Instead of supporting Sambhaji, the rightful heir, some nobles proclaimed Rajaram as king, triggering conflict. Sambhaji swiftly responded, imprisoning Rajaram and Annaji Datto in July 1680. Annaji Datto sought support from the rebel Mughal Prince Akbar, leading to heightened suppression by Sambhaji. Loyalists of Shivaji's reign faced consequences, and the chaos prompted some of the Shirkey family to seek asylum under the Mughals.

Sambhaji's focus on indulgence rather than stabilizing the situation weakened the Maratha kingdom. The discipline of Shivaji's army eroded, and the territory plunged into disorder. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb, during his initial Deccan years, struggled to subdue Maratha power. Despite constant pressure from 1680 to 1684, Mughal success remained elusive. By 1684, Aurangzeb shifted focus to Bijapur and Golconda, a decision possibly too late. The Marathas, growing more powerful, established a robust defense in Karnataka. Upon Shivaji's demise, his second son, Raja Ram, aged ten, was crowned at Raigarh by his mother, Soyra Bai, in April 1680. However, Shambhuji, confined in the Panhala fort, orchestrated the death of its commandant, seized control of the fort, and gained the allegiance of Hambir Rao Mohite, the commander-in-chief. Proceeding to Raigarh, he captured the stronghold, imprisoning Raja Ram and Soyra Bai. The formal coronation of Shambhuji took place on January 20, 1681. His vicious character led to unpopularity, and a plot against his life emerged. Upon discovering it, he executed many notable figures, including his stepmother, Soyra Bai.

As Shambhuji consolidated his rule, he learned of Prince Akbar's flight to the Deccan, seeking refuge and cooperation to overthrow Aurangzeb. Akbar proposed a joint attack on Aurangzeb or a bold dash through Gujarat into Rajputana. However, Shambhuji's precarious situation prevented such undertakings. The hesitation of the two princes allowed Aurangzeb to invade and annex Bijapur (1686) and Golkunda (1687) to the Mughal Empire. Subsequently, Aurangzeb directed his attention toward the Marathas. From 1684, Shambhuji found himself on the defensive, facing Mughal

armies sent by Aurangzeb. In 1689, Muqarrab Khan, a Mughal general, surprised Shambhuji at Sangameshwar, resulting in his capture. In captivity, Aurangzeb offered Shambhuji's life in exchange for surrendering all forts, revealing hidden treasures, and disclosing Mughal officers in league with him. Shambhuji, defiantly rejecting the offer, endured torture and ultimately perished under Aurangzeb's orders.

Shambhuji's reign, lasting less than nine years, revealed him as a valiant soldier but lacked the governance and statesmanship of his father. His death, however, achieved in uniting the Marathas and fueling their determination to resist and overcome the Mughal emperor. While Aurangzeb occupied Bijapur and Golconda, the Marathas retaliated, devastating Mughal territories. Prince Akbar fled to Iran in 1688, and large-scale defections in the Maratha camp ensued. Sambhaji's behavior led to widespread support for the Mughals. In February 1689, Sambhaji was imprisoned and later executed in March 1689, reshaping Maratha politics. Post Sambhaji's execution, Mughals faced resistance from local elements in the Deccan. The imposition of Mughal administrative practices created agrarian tensions. Factional fights and constant warfare strained the Mughal system, leading to jagir crises. Despite initial successes, Mughals encountered reversals after 1693, as the Marathas swiftly recovered lost territories. The Mughal army, demoralized, struggled against the resilient Marathas.

### **Regency of Tara Bai**

Following Raja Ram's demise, his widowed queen, Tara Bai, emerged as the de facto head of the government. She took charge, crowned her four-year-old son Shivaji II, and assumed the role of regent. Tara Bai, a spirited woman, didn't dwell on the fall of the new Maratha capital, Satara, which occurred within a month of Raja Ram's death. Instead, she injected vigor into her people, organizing a resilient opposition against Aurangzeb. Demonstrating remarkable organizational skills, Tara Bai inspired the Marathas with a deep sense of devotion to their national cause. Despite the emperor capturing several Maratha forts initially, under Tara Bai's leadership, Maratha power steadily grew stronger. This compelled Aurangzeb to shift to a defensive stance. In the last year of the aged emperor's reign, the Marathas expanded beyond Maharashtra, undertaking distant expeditions into Malva and Gujarat. They plundered affluent towns such as Burhanpur, Surat, Broach, and others along the western coast. Additionally, they established their rule over Southern Karnataka. Amidst these challenges, Aurangzeb passed away on March 2, 1707.

In summary, Aurangzeb's failure stemmed from his misunderstanding of the Maratha movement. Considering Shivaji a mere aggressor and imposing Mughal administrative practices proved counterproductive. The Marathas, with a popular base and local support, resisted suppression. Sambhaji's execution only intensified Maratha resilience, ultimately contributing to the decline of the Mughal empire in the Deccan. Although military of Marathas was numerically smaller compared to the Mughals and the Muhammadan rulers in the south, they endeavored to compensate by tactics and techniques, surpassing his counterparts in the north and south. To achieve his goals, he implemented strict discipline, appealed to the military and patriotic instincts of his soldiers, and succeeded to a significant extent. The later growth of Marathas as formidable foe of Mughals and under Baji Rao I reached Marathas reached their heights of ruling the most part of Hindustan.

### **Shivaji and Hindavi Swaraj**

Shivaji's spiritual guide was the renowned saint Ram Das, who served as a source of religious inspiration for him. However, it's emphasized that Ram Das did not exert any influence on Shivaji's governmental policies or administrative decisions. An anecdote suggests that upon witnessing Ram Das begging for alms daily, Shivaji, in a symbolic gesture, presented his entire kingdom as a gift to the saint. Despite accepting the gift, Ram Das returned the kingdom to Shivaji, with the condition that he would rule as a vicar. Ram Das advised Shivaji to acknowledge a higher authority and remain accountable for all his actions. Shivaji agreed to this arrangement and adopted the red ochre colour of Ram Das's robe for his royal flag, known as the Bhagwa Jhanda. This choice symbolized Shivaji's commitment to conducting his rule and warfare in alignment with the ascetic Lord Paramount, signifying his dedication to his spiritual duties and accountability to a higher power.

According to the historian Sardesai, Shivaji's aspirations extended beyond Maharashtra, aiming for the freedom of Hindus throughout the Indian subcontinent. Sardesai provides arguments to support this claim, stating that Shivaji's primary goal was religious freedom, not territorial expansion. In 1645, Shivaji communicated his vision of "Hindavi Swaraj" to Dadaji Naras Prabhu, expressing his desire for Hindu religious autonomy across India. However, these arguments lack substantial merit and are not very persuasive. The notion of achieving Hindu religious

autonomy within the Mughal empire appears impractical, as it would imply the establishment of a separate authority within an existing one, an idea unlikely to be accepted by rulers, especially Aurangzeb. While it's acknowledged that Shivaji's Swaraj had the potential to encompass the entire country, there's scepticism about whether he genuinely harboured such ambitions. Shivaji was pragmatic rather than visionary, and there's no concrete evidence to support the idea that he ever seriously entertained the ambition of securing religious freedom for Hindus throughout India.

In the context of Aurangzeb's 26-year presence in the Deccan, his attempts to subdue the Marathas not only proved unsuccessful but also inflicted severe damage on his empire. The financial state of the Mughals was dire, especially in the prosperous Deccan region, which, ravaged by war, could only yield a fraction of its expected tax revenues by the conflict's conclusion. Across the rest of the empire, only Bengal consistently generated significant revenues, aiding in replenishing the Mughal treasury amid destabilization caused by other wars in the north, stemming from Aurangzeb's religious policies. The military costs incurred during the period from 1680 to 1707 were substantial, with an annual consumption of 100,000 soldiers and three times that number in horses, elephants, and other beasts of burden. These wars left the Mughal Empire significantly weakened. In his final years until his death in 1707, Aurangzeb reflected on his life through poignant letters, acknowledging the devastating consequences of his reign. Historian Jadunath Sarker aptly described the impact of the Maratha Wars, likening it to Napoleon I attributing his downfall to the "Spanish Ulcer." The Deccan ulcer, as Sarker termed it, not only ruined Aurangzeb but also his empire. Subsequently, in the following years, given the weakened state of the Mughals, the Marathas, along with other powers, expanded their dominions at the expense of the once-mighty empire.

#### **Fortified Deccan:**

Shivaji meticulously trained his men, the Mavalis, into a formidable infantry and transformed bare rocks and mountains into impregnable forts, strategically restricting external powers from entering his country. With a total of two hundred and forty forts, Shivaji's fortified strongholds covered the extensive range of mountains along the western shore of India. The forts, deemed the lifeblood of the Maratha kingdom, were a testament to Shivaji's reputation for fortification, acknowledged by Lokhitwadi. Each

fort, naturally impregnable, typically had around five hundred soldiers for defense, with the responsibility distributed among three officers: Hawaldar, Sabnis, and Sarnobat. These officers collectively managed the fort's administration and were accountable for its defense. Karkhanis oversaw specific sections of the fort, managing the storage of grains and maintaining financial records.

Shivaji implemented thorough arrangements for fort defense, appointing seven to eight Tat Sarnobats for extensive forts. He meticulously assessed the bravery, background, ability, and intelligence of officers and soldiers during appointments. A team of ten persons, led by a Naik, worked collectively in the defense of the fort. The primary committee, comprising Hawaldar, Sabnis, and Karkhanis, maintained a cohesive working relationship and mutual oversight. The Hawaldar, heading the committee, held the keys of the fort and ensured the proper locking of gates, especially the main gate during the night. Shivaji personally tested the reliability and efficiency of fort officers on multiple occasions, emphasizing their commitment and firmness.

### **5.2.6 Let us Sum up**

The Marathas form an interesting chapter in the history of India. They came into prominence by the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of Maharashtra Dharma and the personality of Shivaji were the prominent factors for the rise of Marathas. The ambitions of Shivaji went against the Mughals which resulted in Mughal Deccan campaigns. Aurangzeb spent close to 25 years in Deccan mainly to deal with the Marathas. After the death of Aurangzeb, the Marathas became a formidable force and were controlling India for over one century.

### **5.2.7 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Enumerate the factors for the rise of Marathas
2. Describe the Mughal-Maratha Conflicts
3. Trace the rise of Shivaji to power.

### **5.2.8 References**

1. Gordon, Stewart. The New Cambridge History of India II.4, The Marathas, 1600-1818, New Delhi: CUP, 1993.
2. Jadunath Sarkar, Shivaji and His Times, Hyderabad: Orient Longman Ltd, Reprint, 1997.

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## Lesson 5.3 - Maratha Administration

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### Structure

- 5.3.1 Learning Objectives
- 5.3.2 Introduction
- 5.3.3 Central Administration
- 5.3.4 Provincial Administration
- 5.3.5 Revenue Administration
- 5.3.6 Military Administration
- 5.3.7 Let us Sum up
- 5.3.8 Self-Assessment Questions
- 5.3.9 References

### 5.3.1 Learning Objectives

*The main objectives of this lesson are to*

- describe the central and provincial administration of the Marathas
- know about the revenue administration of the Marathas
- estimate the role of Military administration in the consolidation of the Maratha power

### 5.3.2 Introduction

The Marathas as a ruling power was established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by Shivaji. Prior to the independent state the Marathas were part of the administration of Bijapur, Ahmednagar and Golconda. This gave them the necessary training once the independent state was formed. The administrative systems of Marathas helped them to consolidate their power and territory.

### 5.3.3 Central Administration of Marathas

The monarch of the Maratha kingdom served not only as the ruler but also as the head of the administration. Assisting the king was the Council of Eight Ministers, commonly known as the Ashta Pradhan Mandal.



**Peshwa or Prime Minister:**

The Peshwa held the position of Prime Minister, overseeing both civil and military affairs. Second only to the king in both realms, the Peshwa occupied the seat to the right, just below the throne. Responsibilities included organizing the preservation and governance of districts under Maratha control and executing the king's orders with precision.

**Senapati or Commander-in-Chief:**

The Senapati took charge of the military administration and occupied the seat to the left below the throne. Responsibilities included safeguarding newly acquired territories, managing spoils, and acting in accordance with the Mazumdar's directives.

**Mazumdar or auditor:**

Mazumdar oversaw the financial aspects of the state, managing the income and expenditure of the entire kingdom. The Daftardar and the Fadnis were under his supervision, accountable for all financial records. Mazumdar inspected and approved all accounts submitted to him.

**Wokins or The Mantri:**

He was to conduct all diplomatic and political affairs of the kingdom very carefully. The departments like invitation and intelligence were under his direct superintendence. He was to help the administration in maintaining the newly acquired districts and perform his military duties as and when required. He was to put his sign and seal on all the official documents as his approval.

**Dabir or The Sumant:**

Responsible for all foreign affairs, the Dabir entertained political agents and representatives from various kingdoms. He served as the foreign secretary.

**Surnis or Sachiv (Superintendent):**

Handled official correspondences, executed military duties, and assisted in managing newly annexed districts. Signed and stamped official letters to signify approval for execution

**Pandit Rao or Royal Priest:**

Exercised jurisdiction over religious matters in the kingdom. Had the authority to judge religious offenses, administer punishments per the king's orders, and sign papers related to customs, conduct, and penance. Performed necessary religious functions on various occasions.

**Nyayadhish or Chief Justice:**

Held jurisdiction over all suits in the kingdom, ensuring righteous trials, determining right and wrong, and administering punishments as per the king's directives. Signed judgment papers upon delivery.

MM.G. Ranade asserts that Chhatrapati Shivaji's council of ministers closely resembled the British Viceroy's Executive Council. However, S.N. Sen points out that while there were similarities between Shivaji's Ashta Pradhan Council and the Viceroy's Executive Council, the underlying principles differed. The Viceroy's council operated as a bureaucratic structure with a clear division of duties, whereas Shivaji's Ashta Pradhan Council functioned as an autocratic organization focused on the welfare of his subjects. Shivaji, being a practical statesman, operated as a benevolent despot. His ministers were loyal servants dedicated to executing his instructions for the benefit of the people. Unlike the Viceroy's council, there was no distinct division of duties within Shivaji's council of ministers. Six out of the eight members were tasked with military responsibilities as needed, and all eight ministers were required to attend Hazir Majalasi to hear appeals in both civil and criminal cases.

**Chitnis or secretary:**

Following the Ashta Pradhan Council, the subsequent administrative tier comprised the Secretary or Chitnis. The king's Secretary held significant power and wielded substantial influence within the administration, efficiently managing various complex duties. As one of the king's most trusted individuals, the Secretary undertook delicate tasks for the kingdom, ensuring their completion within specified periods. Such proficiency led to an offer of a seat in the Ashta Pradhan Council by the king. The Secretary's responsibilities included drafting all diplomatic letters for the kingdom, encompassing sanads, deeds of grants, and orders issued to district officers. For letters of special importance, the Secretary obtained the king's seal or signature, while ordinary correspondences were signed and sealed

solely by the Secretary. Fadnis exclusively handled the issuance of deeds and royal grants, whereas Chitnis were responsible for composing letters to district and provincial officers. Gadnis handled responses to letters from officers and fort commanders, Dabir managed correspondences with foreign courts, and Parasnis maintained communication with the Emperor of Delhi and other Muslim rulers. To fulfill departmental duties, each Pradhan of the Council was supported by eight clerks serving as official staff. These roles included Dewan, Mazumdar or Auditor and Accountant, Fadnis or Deputy Auditor, Sabnis or the Daftardar, Karkhanis or Commissary, Chitnis or correspondence clerk, Jamdar or Treasurer, and Potnis or cash-keeper.

### **5.3.4 Provincial Administration**

Shivaji divided entire territory into three provinces, each under a viceroy. He further divided the provinces into Prants then Pargana and Tarafs. The lowest unit was the village which was headed by its headman or Patel. The Maratha country was divided into mauzas, tarfs and prants. All these units were already existing under the Deccani rulers and were not the innovation of Shivaji. But he reorganised and renamed them. -Mauza was the lowest unit. Then were the tarfs headed by a havaldar, karkunoa paripatyagar. The provinces were known as prants under subedar, karkun (or mukhya desbadhikari). Over a number of prants there was the sarsubedar to control and supervise the work of subedars. Each subedar had eight subordinate officers: diwan, mazumdar, fadnis, sabnis, karkhanis, chitnis, jamadar and potnis. Under Shivaji none of the officers was permanent and hereditary. All officers were liable to frequent transfers. But under the peshwas, the office of kamavisdar and mamlatdars became permanent.

### **5.3.5 Revenue Administration**

The primary revenue sources in his kingdom included land revenue, customs duties, chaauth, and sardeshmukhi. Shivaji abolished the Jagirdari System and replaced with Ryotwari System. The revenue system was patterned on the Kathi system of Malik Amber. According to this system, every piece of land was measured by Rod or Kathi. Deshmukhs and Deshpandes served as district officers or incharge of parganas even before the establishment of the Maratha Raj by Chhatrapati Shivaji. These officials, also known as zamindars, were inclined to oppress the rayat or cultivators on various grounds. In response, Shivaji decided to strip Deshmukhs

and Deshpandes of their power as district officers, understanding the implications of their removal. While their authority was withdrawn, Shivaji allowed them to retain customary dues, appointing government officers to replace them. The Peshwas maintained this administrative setup during their tenure, proving beneficial to both the government and the rayat. According to Elphinstone, the relief of the cultivators from Deshmukhs and Deshpandes yielded positive outcomes. Over time, these officers became allies of the rayat, aiding the government in curbing the authority of non-hereditary officers over the people. Shivaji strictly supervised the Mirasdars who had hereditary rights in land. Shivaji granted jagirs in the form of salaries to various officials, albeit with stringent controls. He prohibited these officials from maintaining soldiers or constructing forts in their jagirs, extracting a fixed amount as the State's share. In addition to land revenue, a predetermined percentage of customs duty applied to the import and export activities of merchants. Shivaji augmented his revenue by imposing the chauth, equivalent to one-fourth of the revenue on the land, particularly in regions where Marathas pledged to refrain from military raids. The sardeshmukhi tax, amounting to one-tenth of the state income, was levied on Maratha Deshmukhs acknowledging Shivaji as their Sardeshmukh. This taxation strategy showcased Shivaji's foresight and his ability to unify various Maratha chiefs under a central authority, laying the foundation for the Maratha empire.

### **5.3.6 Military Administration**

Shivaji, a military strategist, recognized the importance of light infantry and cavalry in the guerrilla warfare specific to the mountainous terrain of Maharashtra. His young Mavalas became highly esteemed warriors in the military history of the country, particularly for guerrilla campaigns in the Maratha territory. Shivaji personally selected his infantry based not on formal training but on their performance on actual battlefields. The king kept his soldiers engaged in various warfare, primarily employing guerrilla tactics against formidable Muslim powers in the South and the North, consistently enhancing their efficiency.

Chhatrapati Shivaji possessed exceptional organizational capabilities, meticulously segmenting and grouping his infantry to align with the geographical requirements of the kingdom. The smallest unit comprised ten members, with one commanding officer called the Naik. The second segment, led by the Hawaldar, consisted of five units. The following

division, under the Jumledar, included two to three Havalgars. The one Hazari officer commanded ten Jumlas, while the Sarnobat oversaw seven Hazari officers. These officers received varying salaries, with Jumledar earning one hundred hons per year, and his assistant sabnis receiving forty hons annually. The one Hazari officer was paid five hundred hons yearly, and the assistant sabnis received between one hundred and one hundred twenty-five hons. On special occasions like marriages or ceremonies, the Government provided appropriate financial assistance.

### **Cavalry**

Shivaji's cavalry consisted of bargirs and siledars, with bargir troopers supplied horses and arms by the state, while the siledars had to provide their own. Each group of 25 bargirs had a Maratha havalgar overseeing them, forming jumlas and hazaris in a hierarchical structure. Sarnobat commanded the hazaris and oversaw the siledars, with a water-carrier and farrier for every 25 horses. During the peshwas' era, the pindaris, acknowledged as robbers and plunderers, were allowed to join the army and entitled to collect palpatti, equal to 25% of the war booty. Shivaji's army benefited from an efficient intelligence department led by Bahirji Naik Jadav. He organized regiments of bodyguards in various sizes, and in times of need, watandars were called upon to supply forces, although Shivaji primarily paid his soldiers in cash. Wounded soldiers received special allowances, and widows were granted state pensions. Under the peshwas, the country was divided into military tenures, leaning more towards feudal levies. The peshwas established a separate artillery department with factories for manufacturing cannons and cannonballs. The strength of the cavalry increased under the peshwas, maintaining their troops called khasgi paga. They attempted to create disciplined battalions on European lines known as kampus, but corruption and plundering became prevalent. Shivaji prioritized swift mobilization and strict discipline in his military, contrasting with the peshwas' approach. The Maratha armies under the peshwas indulged in luxuries, possessing expensive tents and splendid equipment. Wine and women became integral to the contingent, diverging from Shivaji's time when women, female slaves, or dancing girls were not allowed to accompany the army. Under the peshwas, even ordinary horsemen were accompanied by their womenfolk, dancing girls, jugglers, and fakirs. The peshwa's army received payment in the form of jagirs, indicating a decline in the military strength of the Marathas under the

peshwas. Shivaji preferred recruiting men of his own race in the army, while the navy included many Muslims. In contrast, the peshwas recruited men from diverse religions and ethnic groups, such as Rajputs, Sikhs, Rohillas, Sindhis, Gosains, Karnatakis, Arabs, Telirgas, Bidars, and Christians.

## **Navy**

After the conquest of Konkan Shivaji built a strong navy as well. His fleet was equipped with ghurabs (gunboats) and gallivats (row boats with 2 masts and 40-50 oars). His fleet was mainly manned by the Koli sea-faring tribe of Malabar coast. He established two squadrons of 200 vessels each. But in all probability the number of vessels stated is exaggerated. Robert Orme mentions just 57 fleets of Shivaji under the command of Admiral Dariya Sarang and Mai Naik Bhandari. Daulat Khan was another admiral of Shivaji's navy.

Shivaji used his naval power to harass both the indigenous and European traders / powers. But Shivaji could hardly succeed in checking the Siddi menace. The Peshwas also realized fully the importance of a strong navy: they maintained a strong fleet to defend the western coast. But the Maratha naval power reached distinction under the Angiras, practically independent from the peshwas.

## **Judiciary Administration**

The Marathas failed to develop any organised judicial department. At the village level, civil cases were heard by the village elders (panchayat) in patil's office or in the village temple. Criminal cases were decided by the Patil. Hazir majalis was the highest court for civil and criminal cases. The sabhanaik (judge president) and mahprashnika (chief interrogator) gradually faded away under the Peshwas whose duty was to examine and cross-examine the plaintiffs

### **5.3.7 Let us Sum up**

The Marathas triumphant success against the formidable Mughal Empire can be attributed to a myriad of factors and one of the important factors is the administrative system introduced by them. The King was all powerful and was assisted by Ashta Pradhan. Made elaborate arrangement for collection of taxes. Chauth, and Sardeshmukhi are the two major taxes collected by the Marathas. The Marathas had a well-established Military administration and Navy was also part of their military.



### **5.3.8 Self-Assessment Questions**

1. Describe the central administration of the Marathas
2. Enumerate the revenue administration of the Marathas
3. Discuss the military administration of the Marathas.

### **5.3.9 References**

1. Gordon, Stewart. The New Cambridge History of India II.4, The Marathas, 1600-1818, New Delhi: CUP, 1993.
2. Jadunath Sarkar, Sfhivaji and His Times, Hyderabad: Orient Longman Ltd, Reprint, 1997.