

15. India during Mughal period

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The period of Delhi Sultanate was the first phase of Islamic rule in India. We have studied this phase in lesson 14. Ibrahim Lodi was the last Sultan of Delhi. He died while fighting with Babur. After that the Delhi Sultanate came to an end and the Mughal rule was established. After the decline of the Sultanate, the Mughal rule dominated the political scene during 1526 C.E. to 1707 C.E. During this period most of north and central India and some parts of the Deccan were under their control. The Mughal period was prosperous as far as the development in the fields of art and literature, administrative system, foreign relations, trade etc. are concerned.

15.1 Mughal rule in India

In the beginning of the 16th century, the political condition in India was somewhat disturbed. The Sultanate rule had begun to decline after Muhammad Tughluq. The Delhi Sultanate broke down completely and many new independent kingdoms emerged in the North, Central and South India. The Bahamani kingdom got divided into five branches. The prosperous Vijaynagar empire was destroyed by the five Islamic ruling houses in the South. During the same period Portuguese began to settle on the western coast of India. The traditional military system of the Indian rulers in the mediaeval period was not

capable of facing the onslaught of new challenges. The Indians were not familiar with modern weaponry. Taking advantage of all this, the Mughals established their rule in India.

For Additional Information:

‘Mughal’ or ‘Mogal’ are the corrupted forms of the Persian word ‘Mongol’. The Mughals had come from Central Asia. They were the descendants of Mongol ruler Genghis Khan and Turkish ruler Taimurlang. The Mughals held great pride in their ancestry. The stories of Taimur’s attack on India inspired Babur to carry out expedition in India. Babur was born in Uzbekistan. He was the king of Farghana province in Central Asia. He defeated the Lodi Afghans of North India and established the Mughal rule in India. The Mughals ruled over India for more than three centuries.

The grand army of Ibrahim Lodi could not survive in front of Babur in the battle of Panipat. Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi on the strength of configuration skills, strong artillery, system of secret intelligence and strong leadership. Babur established his rule in Delhi. The Rajput kings came together under the leadership of Mewar King Rana Sangha to counter him. Babur defeated the Rajputs in the Battle of Khanwa. After Babur, his elder son Humayun ascended the throne. But Humayun was deprived from the kingdom due to the defeat at the hands of Shershah Sur of Bihar.

Shershah Sur made some reforms in the



administrative set up. He brought together the Afghan sardars scattered in North India and established the Afghan rule. The descendants of Shershah were not efficient. Hence after the death of Shershah, Humayun regained his lost kingdom.

After Humayun, his son Akbar ascended the throne. He proved to be the greatest Mughal Emperor because of his qualities such as high intelligence, tolerance, firmness and courage. The kingdom established by Babur was transformed into a great empire by Akbar. He established his rule from Kabul to Bengal and Kashmir to Varhad-Khandesh. During this period, Rana Pratap, the ruler of Mewar, put up a strong resistance against Akbar. Akbar could never win a war with Rana Pratap. Hence for the expansion of the empire, he adopted the strategy of persuasion with the Rajputs. Akbar had realized that if

the Mughal rule has to be strengthened in India then he had to adopt non-offensive policies, which would be popular.

After Akbar, Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb ruled efficiently. Aurangzeb attempted to expand his empire in the Deccan with prolonged campaigns. Aurangzeb reign is notable for his wars in frontier provinces, his political policies in North and south India, staunch religious policies, and the Mughal-Maratha conflict. This period is marked by the expansion of Maratha kingdom, interference by the Europeans in the political affairs of India and the decline of Mughal power. Finally, the aftermath of the struggle of Independence in 1857 C.E., saw the end of the Mughal rule under Bahadur Shah.

15.2 Reforms in revenue system

Akbar made further reforms in the revenue system implemented by Shershah

Sur. This brought a certain discipline in the Mughal revenue system. He graded the cultivable land based on systematic land survey. The land was classified into four types on the basis of annual yield, i.e. fertile (*supik*), infertile (*napik*), irrigated (*bagayat*) and dry crop (*jirayat*) land. Individual land holdings of farmers were registered. An average of the annual yield in the last ten years was calculated and one third of this average yield was fixed as the base for the tax to be paid. The tax, thus fixed, was applicable for the span of ten years. This offered considerable respite to farmers for a span of ten years. Documents known as ‘Kabulayat’ and ‘Patta’ were prepared from the farmers after the fixing of the tax rate. The tax was collected in cash or in kind. The farmers were sanctioned loans for tilling the land, which could be repaid in installments. Concessions were also granted to the farmers during times of calamities like famine, floods, and epidemics. These were the Welfare policies of Emperor Akbar. Todarmal in emperor Akbar’s court is known for his insights regarding the welfare of common people. His insights were instrumental for Akbar’s land reforms.

15.3 Art, architecture, literature

The reign of the three emperors, Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan was a period of peace, order and prosperity. A new era began in the field of art and architecture. The etched designs on the marble walls of Mosques, tombs and palaces are an evidence of the highly advanced styles of art and architecture. The carved designs on the tombs of Salim Chisti at Fatehpur Sikri and Taj Mahal are its paramount examples. During the period of Akbar and Jahangir the art of ivory carving received royal patronage. The Mughal paintings originated from the Persian styles of painting. There are miniature paintings of Persian style in the manuscript



Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri

of ‘Baburnama’. The art of painting received encouragement during the period of Akbar. He appointed skilled painters in his court. During the period of Jahangir, paintings were done based on the court and hunting scenes. The paintings of this period were done in a more realistic style, which is vibrant and attractive. These paintings, portray birds and animals, cloud formations, human figures, and natural scenery.



Mughal Painting

For Additional information : In 1758, the army of Afghan King Ahmadshah Abdali, was pushed back beyond the boundaries of Attock by Maratha army. After driving away Abdali, the Marathas camped at Shalimar garden in Lahore. Riyasatakar G.S.Sardesai in Marathi Riyasat Vol.4 states that, “Dadasaheb (Raghunathrao Peshwa) has captured Lahore. The old palace of the Emperor is located outside the city in Shalimar garden. Adina Beg made arrangements for the stay of Dadasaheb

here and arranged huge festival of lights in his honour, for which one lac rupees were spent. This occasion was arranged on the onset of the year known as ‘Bahudhanyasamvatsar’. This opened great future for Raghunath Rao.”

On 21 April 1758, the Maratha Sardar Hari Raghunath Bhide wrote a letter to the Peshwa in Pune regarding the Punjab campaign. He states, “the army of the Deccan had previously not marched up to Delhi, but now it has marched up to Chenab.”

During the Mughal period, the art of music seem to have received royal patronage. During the period of Akbar, the Persian, Kashmiri, Turkish musicians were given royal patronage. Tansen was a great singer in the court of Akbar. During this period the Hindustani music prospered. During the period of Jahangir and Shahajahan, music was encouraged as well. However under Aurangzeb’s rule art declined, since he had banned all art forms.

By the way : During the period of Aurangzeb, the royal patronage to the art of painting was withdrawn. The artists were forced to seek patronage elsewhere under various rulers in Rajasthan, Bundelkhand, Gujarat and the provinces of Himalayan ranges. New local styles of paintings emerged there, which are known as ‘Rajasthani’ and ‘Pahari’ paintings. The ‘Ragamala’, ‘Baramas’ paintings depict the different seasons in nature. The painters of Pahari style depicted various themes apart from daily life, such as religious, historic etc. Later, various styles such as ‘Basauli’, ‘Gadhwali’, and ‘Kangra’ emerged out of the Pahari style of painting.

The influence of Persian style of architecture was more prominent till Akbar’s period. In the later period it evolved by absorbing Indian elements, which came to be known as ‘Indo-Islamic’ style of architecture. The architectural style during Sultanate period had great implements on strength and simplicity. But during the Mughal period, the focus shifted to aesthetics. During the period of Babur the Kabulbag mosque at Panipat and Jama Masjid at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh were built in Persian style. The memorial built during the period of Shershah Sur at Sahastram (Bihar) is an excellent example of Indo-Islamic style of architecture. The Purana Qila was built by Shershah at Delhi. The city of Fatehpur Sikri was set up during Akbar’s period. Later the buildings like Jama Masjid, Buland Darwaza were built in Fatehpur-Sikri. Akbar built the important forts like Agra fort, Lahore fort, Allahabad fort, and Attock fort. The use of Red stone and marble, huge domes, arches were the salient features of the architecture of this period.

The Mughal Emperors were nature lovers. They created huge gardens. Among them the Shalimar garden at Lahore, Shalimar garden and Nishat garden in Kashmir are popular even today.



Shalimar Bagh, Lahore

The period of Shahajahan was the most glorious period of Mughal architecture. 'Diwan-i-Aam' and 'Diwan-i-Khaas' in Red fort, 'Jama masjid', 'Moti Masjid', were built during his period. The 'Taj Mahal' of Agra built by him is incomparable and immortal. Later, the Mughal architecture began to decline.



Taj Mahal

During the Mughal period excellent literature was created in Persian language. Babur himself knew Persian and Turkish languages. His autobiography known as 'Baburnama' is well-known. Another important text is 'Tarikh-i-Rashidi' by Mirza Hyder written during the period of Humayun. Akbar got many Sanskrit texts translated in

Persian which include 'Rajatarangini', 'Lilavati', 'Ramayana', 'Mahabharata', 'Harivamsh' and 'Panchatantra'. Abul Fazal wrote the famous 'Akbarnama' and 'Ain-i-Akbari'. Dara Shukoh, the son of Shahjahan, was a sanskrit scholar. He translated text of several Upanishada texts in Persian language from Sanskrit. During the Mughal period, number of biographical, historical texts were written. Among them Khafi Khan's 'Tarikh-i-Khafikhan' is well-known.

During the Mughal period, a number of literary works of high quality were created in local north Indian dialects. To mention a few, 'Ramacharitamamas' written by Goswami Tulsidas, the compositions of Surdas and Meerabai, Padmavat composed by Malik Muhammad Jaysi, dohas of Saint Kabir.

15.4 Trade, industries, social life

During the Mughal period, the transportation of goods within the empire had become speedy. New highways were built for internal trade. Highways were built from Agra to Kabul, Kandahar, Khambayat, Burhanpur and Bengal. The foreign trade via sea route was mainly carried out from the ports on western coast such as Khambayat, Bharuch, Surat, Dabhol and Calicut.

The Indian merchants traded with merchants from Arabia, Iran, China, Armenia and some countries of European continent. Silk, carpets, indigo, leather items, sugar, ginger, asafoetida, precious stones and many such items were exported to foreign countries from India. The goods imported to India included gold, silver, horses, China silk etc.

During the Mughal period, the Indian textile industry flourished. Indian cotton cloth had great demand in the regions of Arabia, East coast of Africa, Egypt, Myanmar, Malacca etc. The dyes for textiles were made at Agra. Colours were mainly prepared from indigo, turmeric, lac, Kusumba (dried flowers of safflower) etc. Weapons and farming

For Additional information :

The foreign trade flourished to a great extent during the Mughal period. Exports from India were larger than the imports. Many commodities including silk cloth, precious stones, spices etc. were exported from India while the imported goods mainly included luxury items. The foreign traders had to pay for the Indian goods in the form of silver. Hence India received silver every year in large quantities. Edward Terry, an European states, “Just as rivers meet the sea and stay there similarly the tide of silver from all over the world comes to India and does not return.”

equipments were the main products of casting industry. The copper and brass vessels were in demand on large scale. The province of Bihar was famous for paper production. Paper was produced from silk. Siyalkot was famous for white paper. Salt and sugar production were important industries of this period.

During the Mughal period, most of the population stayed in villages. Every village was self-sufficient. The law and order was managed and the daily needs were met at the village level. During this period, there were no major changes in the social organisation which was based on caste system.

During the Mughal period, the purdah system was rooted in the elite class of both Muslim and Hindu community. The education system of Sultanate period had continued till the rule of Akbar. However Akbar made important reforms in this system. Along with education of Islamic religion, he also included new subjects in the syllabi such as Indian

philosophy, agriculture, politics, and astronomy. During the Mughal period, a number of Madarasas were established at Sambhal (Uttar Pradesh), Ahmedabad (Gujarat) etc. In South India cities like Ahmednagar, Gulbarga, Burhanpur, Bijapur, Golconda, and Hyderabad had also become famous as learning centres. There was a Madarasa established at Ahmednagar by Saint Tahir. The libraries in Madarasas used to have a special staff appointed for its maintenance.

15.5 Mughal Empire and Deccan

During the rule of Babur and Humayun boundaries of the Mughal empire had not extended beyond North India. The main ruling powers to the South of river Narmada were Sultan of Khandesh, Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar, Adilshahi of Bijapur and Qutubshahi of Golconda. Akbar led a campaign against Nizamshahi.

In 1595 C.E. Akbar seized the fort of Ahmednagar. During that time, Chand Sultana (Chandbibibi), the daughter of Nizamshah, successfully resisted the attack with courage and intelligent strategies. After her death the Mughals conquered Ahmednagar, the capital of Nizamshahi. Akbar personally came down to South and divided the conquered province into three Subhas namely- Ahmednagar, Varhad and Khandesh. While Akbar was engaged in the southern campaign, Prince Salim rebelled against him and Akbar had to wind up his campaign hastily. During the period of Shahjahan, the Nizamshahi kingdom declined. However, the Adilshahi and Qutubshahi kingdoms managed to survive.

Later, Aurangzeb was successful in uprooting them completely. The Maratha power in the Deccan put up a strong resistance to Aurangzeb's advent. We will study the history of this part in the next lesson.

Exercise

Q.1 (A) Choose the correct alternative and complete the sentence.

- (1) Mughal Emperor Babur was born at in
(a) Baluchistan (b) Kazakhstan
(c) Uzbekistan (d) Afghanistan
- (2) Mughal Emperor Humayun was defeated by
(a) Ibrahim Lodi
(b) Shershah Sur (c) Babur
(d) Akbar
- (3) Akbarnama was written by
(a) Mohammad Qasim
(b) Abul Fazl (c) Mirza Hyder
(d) Badauni

(B) Find the incorrect pair and write the correct ones.

- (1) Khafi Khan – Akbarnama
- (2) Malik Muhammad Jayasi – Padmavat
- (3) Sant Kabir – Doha
- (4) Mirza Hyder – Tarikh-i-Rashidi

(C) Write the names.

- (1) He defeated Ibrahim Lodi
- (2) She successfully resisted the attack of Akbar and saved the Nizamshahi kingdom

Q.2 Explain the statements with reasons.

- (1) The Rajput rulers united against Babur.
- (2) Shershah Sur was well-known for his ideal administration.
- (3) Emperor Akbar strengthened the foundation of his rule in India.
- (4) Mughal art declined during the period of Aurangzeb.

Q.3 Write short notes

- (1) Mughal Art
- (2) Mughal literature

Q.4 Answer the following questions in detail.

- (1) During the Mughal period what were the changes made in the revenue system?
- (2) Elaborate the features of Mughal architecture.

Activity

Collect information about the expansion of Mughal rule by Emperor Akbar and the contemporary cities.

