
Chapter – 4 History

The Mughal Empire

- In the middle age, a very powerful empire was that of the Mughals. From the latter half of the 16th century they expanded their kingdom from Agra and Delhi, until in the 17th century they controlled nearly all of the subcontinent.
 - The legacy left by them stands unparalleled.
 - **Who were the Mughals:** The Mughals were descendants of two great lineages of rulers. From their mother's side they were descendants of Genghis Khan and from the father's side they were the descendants of Timur.
 - **Mughal Military Campaigns:**
 - (i) Babur, the first Mughal emperor, captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the Battle of Panipat.
 - (ii) Humayun captured Delhi back in 1555.
 - (iii) Akbar captured Chittor (1568), Ranthambor (1569), Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Kashmir, Berar Khandesh, etc. (1585-1605).
 - (iv) Jahangir took campaign against Sikhs and Ahoms.
 - (v) Shah Jahan captured Ahmadnagar and Bijapur.
 - (vi) Aurangzeb waged a long battle in the Deccan.
 - **Mughal Traditions of Succession:**
 - (i) The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate.
 - (ii) They followed the custom of coparcenary inheritance, or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.
 - **Mughal Relations with other Rulers:**
 - (i) The Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority.
 - (ii) But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily. The Rajputs served the Mughals voluntarily.
 - (iii) Mughals gave mansab and jagirs which helped them to expand their territories.
 - (iv) The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry.
 - **Akbar's Policies:**
 - (i) Akbar's works are found in the book Akbarnama written by Abul Fazal.
 - (ii) Akbar divided his kingdom into provinces called subas governed by a Subedar.
 - (iii) Akbar's nobles commanded large armies and had access to large amounts of revenue.
 - (iv) While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri, he started discussion on religion with the ulemas, Brahmanas, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics and Zoroastrians.
 - (v) The discussions took place in the ibadat khana.
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- (vi) Akbar realized that religious scholars emphasized rituals and dogmas were often bigots.
 - (vii) It led Akbar to the idea of Sulh-ikul or universal peace.
 - (viii) Shah Jahan and Jhangir also followed this principle.

- **The Mughals empire in the 17th Century and After:**

- (i) The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to great economic and commercial prosperity.
- (ii) The Mughal emperors and their mansabdars spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods.
- (iii) The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this economic world.
- (iv) Primary producers, however, lived in poverty.
- (v) By 18th century several provinces started declaring independence though they continued to regard Mughals as their masters.