



Mughal Empire

A new dynasty called Mughals began with the invasion of Babar in 1526 CE. They created an empire between 1550 CE and 1707 CE and expanded it from around Delhi to all over the entire subcontinent. Their administrative arrangements, ideas of governance and architecture continued to influence rulers long after their decline. Now, every year, the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation on Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort in Delhi which was once the residence of the Mughal emperors.



A Coin with the picture of Jahangir

Who were the Mughals?

The Mughals were from ruling families of Central Asian countries like Uzbekistan and Mongolia. Babur, the first Mughal emperor (1526 - 1530 CE), was forced to

leave his ancestral throne due to an invasion by another ruler. After years of wandering, he seized Kabul in 1504 CE. In 1526 CE, he defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi and captured Delhi and Agra.

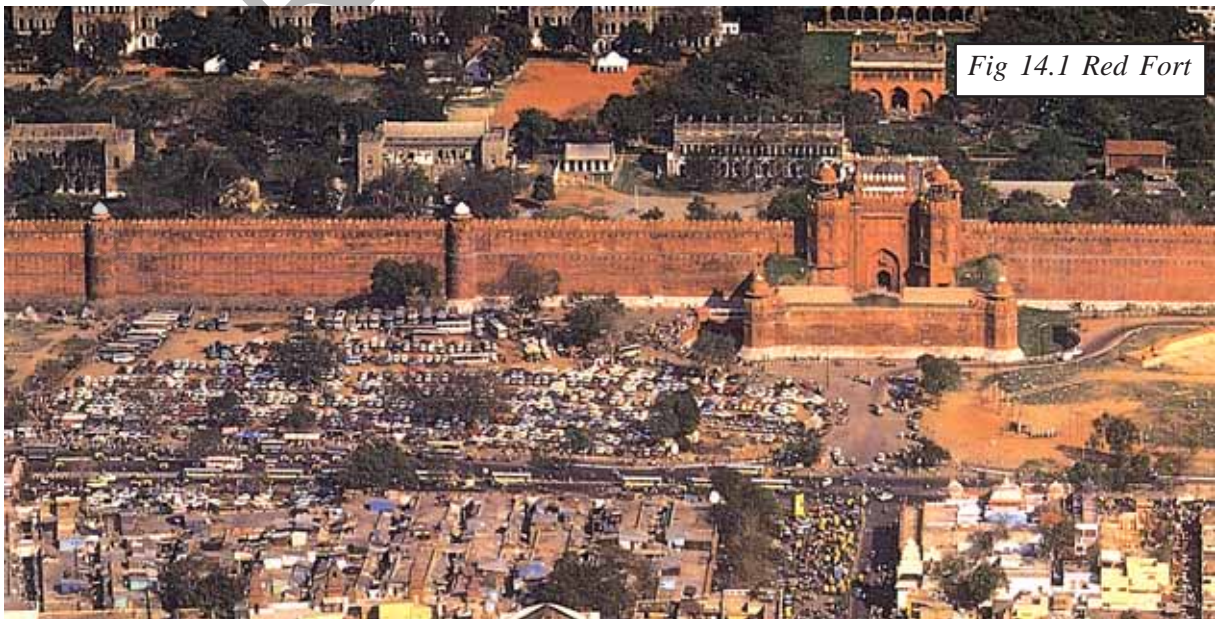


Fig 14.1 Red Fort

Important Mughal emperors - Major campaigns and events



Babur 1526-1530 CE (Left)

1526 CE – defeated Ibrahim Lodi and established control over Agra and Delhi.



(Right) Humayun 1530-1556 CE

Sher Khan defeated Humayun, forcing him to flee to Iran. In Iran, Humayun received help from the Safavid Shah. He recaptured Delhi in 1555 CE but died in an accident the following year.



Akbar 1556-1605 CE (Left)

Akbar was 13 years old when he became the emperor. He rapidly conquered Bengal, Central India, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Thereafter, he also conquered Afghanistan, Kashmir and portions of the Deccan. Look at his empire in Map 1.



Jahangir 1605-1627 CE (above)

Military campaigns started by Akbar continued. No major conquests.

Shah Jahan 1627-1658 CE

(Left Below) Mughal campaigns continued in the Deccan. He faced many

revolts by nobles and chiefs of his empire. In 1657-1658 CE, there was a conflict over succession amongst Shah Jahan's sons. Aurangzeb was victorious and his three brothers were killed. Shah Jahan was imprisoned for the rest of his life in Agra.



(Right) Aurangzeb 1658-1707 CE

Tried to conquer Assam but faced a large number of revolts all over his kingdom from Afghanistan, Assam, Rajasthan, Punjab, Deccan, etc. Guru Tej Bahadur, Govind Singh, Shivaji and his own son, Akbar revolted against him. Shivaji succeeded in establishing an independent Maratha kingdom. Aurangzeb conquered Bijapur in 1685 CE and Golconda in 1687 CE. His death was followed by a succession conflict amongst his sons.



Relationship of the Mughals with other Rulers

Around the time when Mughals came to India, there were several kings and chiefs in all parts of the country. The Mughals sought to bring them under their control. They allowed the older rulers and chiefs to continue to rule over large parts of their old kingdoms and collected revenues from them. But these rulers could not wage wars against each other and had to keep an army ready for the use of the Emperor.

Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority. But, as the Mughals became powerful, many other rulers had to surrender their sovereignty. Some Rajput kings also entered into matrimonial alliances with them. But many resisted as well. The Sisodiya Rajputs of Chittor

refused to accept Mughal authority for a long time. Once defeated, however, they were given their lands back as assignments. Mughals also employed the method of not removing their opponents after defeating. This helped them to extend their influence over many kings and chieftains. As a political strategy Mughals married princesses of the local rulers. Jahangir's mother was the daughter of the Rajput ruler of Amber (modern Jaipur). Shah Jahan's mother was the daughter of the Rajput ruler of Jodhpur.

Mansabdars and Jagirdars

As the empire expanded to encompass different regions, the Mughals recruited diverse kinds of people. From a small nucleus of Turkish nobles, they expanded to include Iranians, Indian Muslims, Afghans, Rajputs, Marathas and other

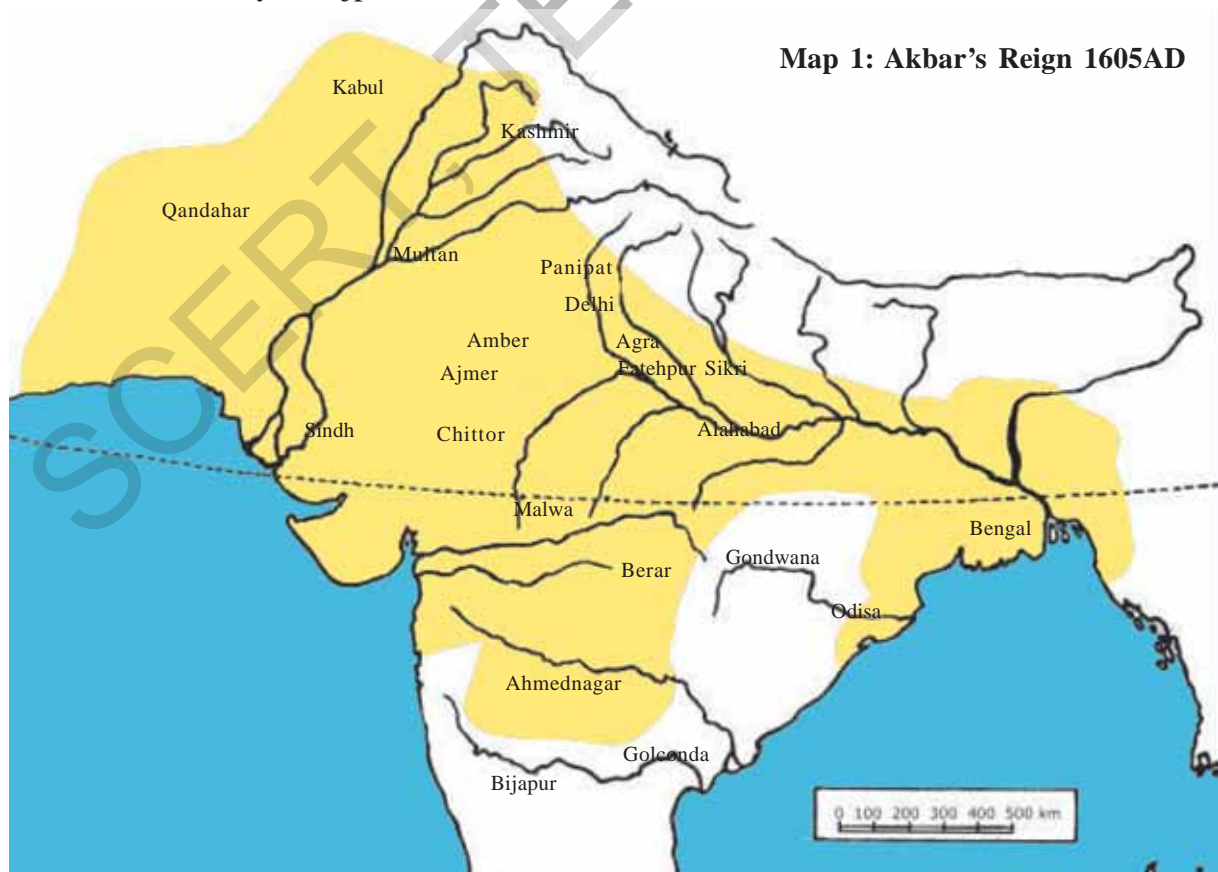




Fig 14.2 A mansabdar on march with his sawars (A miniature painting)

groups. Those who joined the Mughal service were enrolled as *mansabdars* (or rank holder). They worked directly under the control of the emperor, who could allocate any work for them to do – like guarding his palace, governing a province, conquering a new kingdom or suppressing a rebellion.

The Mughals designed a political system in which the *mansabdars* could not act independently but had to follow the orders of the emperor. You may remember that the Nayakas in Vijayanagara empire could become independent and powerful enough to declare themselves the kings. The Mughals prevented this by constantly transferring the *mansabdars* from one place to another every two or three years. Thus, a *mansabdar* could not get settled and powerful in any one place.

The *mansabdar's* military responsibilities required him to maintain a specified number of horse riders or cavalrymen. The *mansabdar* brought his cavalrymen for review, got them registered, their horses

branded and then received money to pay them as salary.

A *mansabdar's* son could not become a *mansabdar* automatically. That is the transfer of power was not hereditary. The emperor decided whether to appoint the son as a *mansabdar* or not. In fact, he even took over all the property of the *mansabdar* on his death.

Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called *jagirs*, which were somewhat like Vijayangara Amaranayakas. But unlike the *Amaranayakas*, most *mansabdars* did not actually reside in or administer their *jagirs*. They could only collect the revenue due from their *jagir* villages and send them to the emperor. This was collected for them by their servants while the *mansabdars* themselves served in some other part of the country. The *jagir* was administered by other officials directly under the emperor. These officials tried to ensure that the *jagirdars'* agents did not collect more from the farmers than permitted. The *jagirs* too were constantly transferred every two or three years.

In Akbar's reign, these *jagirs* were carefully assessed so that their revenues were roughly equal to the salary of the *mansabdar*. By Aurangzeb's reign, there was a huge increase in the number of *mansabdars*, which meant a long wait before they received a *jagir*. These and other factors created a shortage in the number of *jagirs*. As a result, many *jagirdars* tried to extract as much revenue as possible while they had a *jagir*. Aurangzeb was unable to control these developments in the last years of his reign and the farmers, therefore, suffered tremendously.

Zabt and Zamindars

The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was taxes on the produce of the peasantry. Akbar's revenue minister, Todar Mal, carried out a careful survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a period of ten-years, 1570-1580 CE. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed in cash for each crop. Each province was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was known as *zabt*. It was prevalent in those areas where Mughal administrators could survey the land and keep very careful accounts. This was not possible in provinces such as Gujarat and Bengal.

In most places, peasants paid taxes through the rural elite i.e., the headman or the local chieftain. The Mughals used one term – *zamindars* – to describe all the intermediaries, whether they were local headmen of villages or powerful chieftains. The *zamindars* were not appointed by the Mughal Emperors but existed on hereditary



Fig 14.3 Details in a miniature from Shah Jahan's reign showing corruption during his father's administration 1. A corrupt officer receives a bribe and 2. A tax collector punishes poor peasants

basis, that is, sons succeeded when the fathers died. They too had contingents of armed followers. They received a share of the revenue collected by the *jagirdars* from the area and also some dues from the farmers and others. They often acted as representatives of the local people in dealing with the Mughal officials.

In some areas, the *zamindars* exercised a great deal of power. The exploitation by Mughal administrators could drive them to rebellion. Sometimes *zamindars* and peasants allied in rebelling against the Mughal authority. These *zamindar*-peasant revolts challenged the stability of the Mughal Empire from the end of the seventeenth century.

- ◆ What was the difference between a *mansabdar* and a *zamindar*?
- ◆ Who was under the greater control

of the emperor?

- ◆ Compare the position of a *Nayaka* and a *mansabdar*.

A Closer Look at Akbar's Policies

The broad features of administration were laid down by Akbar and were elaborately discussed by his friend and member of his court, Abul Fazl in his book the *Akbar Nama*.

While Akbar was at Fatehpur Sikri (near Agra) during the 1570s, he initiated important discussions on religion with the Muslim scholars, Hindu scholars, Jesuit priests who were Roman Catholics, and Zoroastrians. He was interested in the religion and social customs of different

people. Akbar wanted to bring together people of diverse faiths. This eventually gave Akbar the idea of *sulh-i kul* or “universal peace”. This idea of tolerance did not discriminate among people of different religions in his kingdom. Instead, it focused on a system of ethics – honesty, justice, peace – that was universally applicable. Abul Fazl helped Akbar in framing a vision of governance around this idea of *sulh-i kul*. The Emperor would work for the welfare of all subjects irrespective of their religion or social status. This principle of governance was followed by Jahangir and Shah Jahan as well. Aurangzeb deviated from this policy and tried to project himself as favouring only *Sunni* Muslims. People of other religions felt anguished by this policy of Aurangzeb.



Fig 14.4 Akbar holding discussions with learned individuals of different faiths in his ibadat khana

Sulh-i kul

Jahangir, Akbar's son, described his father's policy of *sulh-i kul* in the following words:

"As in the wide expanse of the divine compassion, there is room for all classes and the followers of all creeds, so... in his Imperial dominions, which on all sides were limited only by the sea, there was room for the professors of opposite religions, and for beliefs, good and bad, and the road to intolerance was closed. Sunnis and Shias met in one mosque and Christians and Jews in one church to pray. He consistently followed the principle of 'universal peace' (sulh-i kul)."

The Mughal Empire in the 17th Century and thereafter

The administrative and military efficiency of the Mughal Empire led to economic and commercial prosperity. International travellers described it as the fabled land of wealth. But the same visitors were also appalled at the state of poverty that existed in contrast to the greatest

wealth. The inequalities were glaring. Documents from the twentieth year of Shah Jahan's reign inform us that the highest ranking *mansabdars* were only 445 in number out of a total of 8,000. This small number – a mere 5.6 per cent of the total number of *mansabdars* – received 61.5 per cent of the total estimated revenue of the empire as salaries for themselves and their troopers.

Sardar Sarvai Papanna

Sarvai Papanna, who belongs to the Warangal district, fought against the Mughal rule in Telangana. He lived during the period of Aurangzeb. He supported the lives of many poor people who were backward and downtrodden.

Papanna occupied the telangana area from Mughal rule between 1687 to 1724 CE, and built a fort in Khilashapur which was also considered the capital city in Warangal district.

Having seen the oppressions and atrocities committed by Mughals during that time, he raised a small army and trained them in guerrilla attacks.



Papanna, controlled the forts at Bhuvanagiri, Kolanupaku of Nalgonda, Thatikonda, Cheriya of Warangal, Huzurabad, Husnabad of Karimnagar. He constructed his first fort in Sarvaipeta with the aim of expanding his rule. He constructed forts in Thatikonda, Vemulakonda and Shahpuram. Existing check Dam constructed during the rule of Papanna in Thatikonda shows that he was a development oriented king to develop the region under his control.

Papanna mostly raised the funds for war and army by guerrilla attacks on Subedar, Zamindars and landlords. Upon hearing the news of Papanna's popularity, Aurangzeb advised Rustum-dil-Khan to suppress Papanna. Rustum-dil-Khan then sent Khasim Khan first to Papanna and then to conquer shahpura fort. Having Khasim Khan defeated and slain by Papanna, Rustum-dil-Khan himself entered the war and it went on for almost three months. Rustum-dil-Khan finally fled from the war and Papanna lost his friend and close associate, Sarvanna in this war.

After the death of Aurangzeb, in 1707 C.E., the then Deccan Subedar Kambaksh Khan started losing the control of Deccan. Having seen the weak administration of Kambaksh Khan, Papanna attacked Warangal for on April 1 in 1708 C.E. However in a long battle at Thatikonda later at Khilashapur he escaped. He was caught and beheaded in 1712 C.E.

The Mughal emperors and their *mansabdars* spent a great deal of their income on salaries and goods. The scale of revenue collection left very little for money for investment in the hands of the primary producers – the peasant and the artisans. The poorest amongst them had barely enough resources for existence and could hardly invest in tools and supplies to increase productivity.

The wealthier peasantry and artisanal groups, the merchants and bankers profited in this period.

The enormous wealth and resources commanded by the Mughal nobility made them an extremely powerful group of people in the late seventeenth century. As the authority of the Mughal emperor slowly declined, his subordinates emerged as powerful centres of power in the regions. They constituted new dynasties and held command of provinces like Hyderabad and Awadh. Although they continued to recognise the Mughal emperor in Delhi as their master, by the eighteenth century the provinces of the empire had consolidated their independent political identities.

Asaf Jahis of Hyderabad

1724-1948

Asaf Jahis - Timeline

Nizam-ul-Mulk - 1 st Nizam	(1724-1748)
Nasar Jung -	(1748-1751)
Muzafar Jung -	(1751-1751)
Salabat Jung -	(1751-1762)
Nizam Ali Khan - 2 nd Nizam	(1762-1803)
Sikandar Jah - 3 rd Nizam	(1803-1829)
Nasir-ud-Dowla - 4 th Nizam	(1829-1857)
Afzal-ud-Dowla - 5 th Nizam	(1857-1869)
Meer Mahaboob Ali Khan	(1869-1911)
- 6 th Nizam	
Mir Osman Ali Khan	(1911-1948)
- 7 th Nizam	

After the weakening of the Mughal Empire in 1720s, the Mughal Governors asserted their independence. One of them was the Subedar of the Deccan, Chin Qulich Khan, also known as the Nizam-Ul- Mulk. He was the founder of the Asaf Jahi dynasty of the Hyderabad State in 1724. Nizam-Ul- Mulk ruled for 24 years (1724-1748). The Asaf Jahi rulers were ten kings, who ruled from 1724 to 1948. Among them seven kings got the title 'Nizam' from the Moghals. Nazar Jung, Muzafar Jung and Sabath Jung were not received the title 'Nizam'. The Nizams constantly fought the Marathas and the rulers of Mysore to carve the independent state of Hyderabad. Due to these reasons, they became dependent on the British and lost their independent status.

They undertook the colonial modernisation under the influence of the British Officials. The British loved the Hyderabad culture. During late 19th Century Hyderabad embarked on



Salar Jung

development. Salar Jung was the Prime Minister of the Nizams between 1853 and 1883, who imbibed colonial development schemes. (You will read more about him in the next lesson).

The sixth Nizam, Mir MahabubAli Khan's period marked with a number of reforms. The Asafia Library, Victoria Memorial Orphanage, Mahabubia Girls School were established. During the Musi floods in 1908 he personally supervised the relief operations, offered prayers to the god and provided shelter to the victims.

However, the VII Nizam determined to protect the feudal power structure despite the popular movement for liberal administrative reforms. (About his achievements you will read more in class-8).

Keywords :

- 1. *Mansabdar* 2. *Jagirdar* 3. *Zabt*
- 4. *Elite* 5. *Zamindar* 6. *Sulh-i-kul*

Improve your learning

1. What was the relationship between the *mansabdar* and his *jagir*?
2. What was the role of the *zamindar* in Mughal administration?
3. How were the debates with religious scholars important in the formation of Akbar’s ideas on governance?
4. Why did the Mughals allow the earlier rulers to continue in their old kingdoms as before?
5. Why was the policy of *sulh-i kul* important for the Mughals to control their vast empire?
6. Read the first para under the title ‘*Zabt and Zamindars*’ on page 130 and comment on it.
7. Collect and fill in the table with the particulars of the Moghal emperors.



S.No.	Name of the emperor	Ruling period	Important features
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			