

The Mughals (16th to 17th Century)

Introduction

In the Middle Ages, the Mughal Empire became a powerful force. Starting from cities like Agra and Delhi in the 16th century, it grew to control much of the Indian subcontinent by the 17th century. The Mughals left a strong political legacy, including effective administrative systems and ideas about governance, which greatly influenced the rulers who came after them. Their impact is still seen in the region's history and government today.

Who were the Mughals?

- Mughals descended from Genghis Khan (mother's side) and Timur (father's side).
- Genghis Khan ruled parts of China and Central Asia.
- Timur governed Iran, Iraq, and modern-day Turkey.



Who were the Mughals?

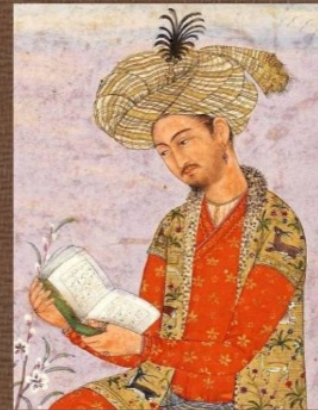


- Mughals avoided the terms "Mughal" or "Mongol" due to Genghis Khan's association with massacres and competition with the Uzbeks.
- Instead, they took pride in their Timurid ancestry, as their ancestor had captured Delhi in 1398.

Mughal Military Campaigns

Babur's Early Life and Challenges:

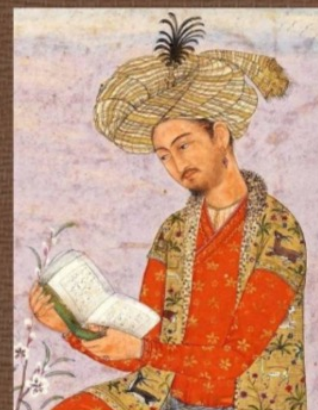
- Babur became the ruler of Ferghana at just 12 years old in 1494.
- He was forced to leave his throne due to an invasion by the Uzbeks, another Mongol group.
- After years of wandering, he seized Kabul in 1504.



Mughal Military Campaigns

Foundation of the Mughal Empire:

- In 1526, Babur defeated the Sultan of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, at the Battle of Panipat.
- This victory allowed him to capture Delhi and Agra, establishing the Mughal Empire.



Mughal Traditions of Succession

- The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited his father's estate.
- They followed the custom of coparcenary inheritance or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.



Mughal Relations with Other Rulers

- Mughal rulers waged campaigns against resistant rulers, while others voluntarily joined.
- Rajputs served the Mughals voluntarily.
- Mughals granted mansab and jagirs, aiding territorial expansion.
- Main income source for Mughals: taxation on peasant produce.

Mansabdars and Jagirdars

- Mansabdars hold positions ranked by zat, determining salary and military responsibilities.
- Salary and rank determined by numerical value; higher zat means higher prestige and salary.
- Mansabdars responsible for maintaining specific cavalry numbers.
- Salaries paid through jagirs, revenue assignments.
- Mansabdars often didn't administer jagirs themselves, instead, they were collected by servants.



Mansabdars and Jagirdars

- During Akbar's reign, jagirs' revenues matched the mansabdars' salaries, but this changed under Aurangzeb.
- Actual revenues often fell short of granted sums during Aurangzeb's rule.
- Increase in the number of mansabdars led to a shortage of jagirs, causing delays in allocation.
- Jagirdars aimed to maximize revenue during their tenure, often to the detriment of the peasantry. Aurangzeb's inability to control these issues led to suffering among the peasantry toward the end of his reign.

Zabt and Zamindars

The main income for Mughal rulers was taxation on peasant produce, often collected by Zamindars. Todar Mal, Akbar's revenue minister, surveyed crop yields and prices from 1570 to 1580 to establish cash taxes on each crop. This led to the zabt revenue system, with provinces divided into revenue circles and specific crop rates. However, this system was impractical in provinces like Gujarat and Bengal.

Zabt and Zamindars

In certain areas, powerful Zamindars could rebel against Mughal exploitation, sometimes joined by peasants of the same caste. These peasant uprisings, especially in the late 17th century, challenged Mughal stability.



A Closer Look: Akbar's Policies

- Brahmanas were Jesuit priests practicing Roman Catholicism and Zoroastrianism.
- Akbar's life is chronicled in the Akbarnama by Abul Fazal.
- Discussions on religion at Fatehpur Sikri led to the concept of Sulh-i kul or universal peace, followed by Shah Jahan and Jahangir.



The Mughal Empire in the 17th Century and After

- Mughal Empire's efficiency led to economic prosperity.
- Emperors and mansabdars allocated income to salaries and goods.
- Wealthier groups like peasantry, artisans, merchants, and bankers benefited.
- Primary producers lived in poverty.
- By the 18th century, some provinces declared independence while recognizing Mughal authority.



Important Dates

- 1237: Genghis Khan died.
- 1404: Jimur died.
- 1526–1530: Reign of Babur. He captured Delhi in 1526 by defeating Ibrahim Lodi and laid the foundation of the Mughal Empire.
- 1539: Sher Shah defeated Humayun at Chausa.
- 1540: Sher Shah again defeated Humayun, this time at Kanauj.
- 1555: Humayun recaptured Delhi1556: Akbar became the Mughal Emperor at the age of 12.

Important Dates

- 1568: Akbar seized Sisodiya capital of Chittor
- 1569: Akbar seized Ranthambhore
- 1605–1627: Jahangir ruled over Delhi as the Mughal emperor
- 1627–1658: Shah Jahan reigned over Delhi.
- 1632: Ahmadnagar was annexed by Shah Jahan
- 1658–1707: Aurangzeb reigned over Delhi.

Important Dates

- 1685: Aurangzeb annexed Bijapur
- 1687: Aurangzeb annexed Golconda
- 1698: Aurangzeb campaigned in the Deccan against the Marathas.