

Explanation of some important terms

1. **Mansab/Mansabdari system:** The term literally means a rank or a position. A holder of such a rank under the Mughals was known as a mansabdar. The mansabdars, as per their rank, were required to perform either civil or military or both civil and military duties, but irrespective of their nature of duties (military or civil) they were all placed on military payroll. The origin of this system went back to Chengis Khan, who organised his army on a decimal basis (multiples of 10; the lowest unit of command being consisted of 10 and the highest of 10000 troopers). Mansabs were assigned usually on the basis of merit and the actual number of troopers that were maintained by the mansabdars. However, mansabs above 5000 troopers were generally reserved for the princes. Besides, in certain cases mansabdars were also paid in cash in lieu of assignment of territory (jagir). According to the Ain-i Akbari, there were 33 mansabs, which had been established during Akbar's time. There was a threefold hierarchical division among the persons who held these mansabs depending upon their zat and sawar ranks. A person, who maintained as many sawars as his zat rank, belonged to the first category; the person, who maintained half or more sawars in relation to his zat rank, belonged to the second category; and, the person, who maintained less than half of the number of sawars in relation to his zat rank, belonged to the third category. With the gradual expansion of the Mughal empire several discrepancies entered into the mansabdari system making it one of the factors responsible for the decline of the empire during the late 17th and early 18th centuries.
2. **Suba:** The term was used to refer to provinces into which the the Mughal Empire was divided. During Akbar's time the empire had 12 *subas*, namely, Kabul, Multan, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Awadh, Bihar, Bengal, Ajmer, Malwa and Gujarat. This list increased to 15 with the conquests of Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar. Usually the governor of a province under the Mughals was called a *sipahsalar* (military commander). However, titles of *subadar* and *Nazim-i suba* were also used to describe a provincial governor during this period. A *Subadar* (governor) was the supreme officer of the *suba*.
3. **Diwani:** The term refers to the rights of revenue collection granted by the Mughal emperor Shah Alam II to the English East India Company by virtue of the treaty of Allahabad (1765) after his defeat in the battle of Buxar in 1764. As per the provisions of this treaty the English East India Company became the *Diwan* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and hence could collect the revenues from these provinces. This grant of *Diwani* marked the beginning of the long process of colonial exploitation of India by the British.

Source: NCERT (2017) *Dictionary of History for School Children (Trilingual)*, National Council of Educational Research & Training, New Delhi.