

CHAPTER 4 THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

KEY WORDS

1. **Mughal:** descendents of Ghenhgis Khan, the ruler of Mongolian tribe of China, on their mother's side, and descendents of Timur, ruler of Turkey, Iran and Iraq, on their father's side. Timur had captured Delhi in 1398.
2. **Mansab:** was a title, position or rank, given to an individual Iranian, Afghan, Indian Muslim, Rajput, Maratha, and other regional rulers, who joined Mughal service. They were called 'mansabdars'.
3. **Jagir:** was a revenue assignment given to a 'mansabdar' as part of his salary.
4. **Zat :** was the numerical value that determined the rank, salary, and military responsibility of a noble in the Mughal Court.
5. **Sawar:** was a horseman, trained for battle, by a mansabdar. A sawar had to be registered with the Mughal Court, as part of the cavalry, in the Mughal Army.
6. **Sulh-i-kul :** was the principle of "universal peace" followed by Akbar.
7. **Primogeniture:** is the inheritance rule, under which the first born inherited the entire estate of his father. His younger brothers received nothingⁱ.
8. **Coparcenary :** is the inheritance rule under which a father property is divided amongst all the sons.ⁱⁱ
9. **Zabt :** was the revenue system under which a tax on the produce of crop, was fixed in cash.
10. **Zamindar :** was the term used to describe the local chieftain or the headman of a village, who served as an intermediary between the noble and the peasants, for collection of taxes.

Q 1. Match the following :

Answer

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| a) <i>Mansab</i> | - governor |
| b) Mongol | - Uzbeg |
| c) Sisodiya Rajput | -Mewar (Jaipur) |
| d) Rathor Rajput | - Marwar (Jodhpur) |
| e) Nur Jahan | - Jahangir |
| f) <i>Subadar</i> | - rank |

Q. 2 Fill in the blanks

Answer.

- a) The capital of Mirza Hakim, Akbar's half brother , was **Qandahar**.
- b) The five Deccan Sultanates were Berar, Khandesh, Ahmadnagar, **Golkonda**, and **Bijapur**.
- c) If *zat* determined a *mansabdar's* rank, the salaried *sawar* indicated his **salary**.
- d) Abul Fazl, Akbar's friend and counsellor, helped him frame the idea of **governance around 'sulh-i-kul'**, so that he could govern a society composed of many religions , cultures, and castes.

Q. 3. What were the central provinces , under the control of the Mughals?

Answer. The Central provinces under the control of the Mughals were **Malwa, Gondwana, Mewar, Bundelkhand, Marwar** .

Q 4 . What was the relationship between the *mansabdar* and the *jagir* ?

Answer. The *mansabdar* was a rank for the nobility with **political and military responsibilities**. The *jagir* involved **revenue responsibilities** of **collection of taxes** through the zamindar, and **maintaining accurate records** of taxes.

Q 5. What was the role of the *zamindar* in Mughal administration?

Answer. The zamindar in Mughal administration was the local intermediary , who could be a chieftain or a village head. He had the revenue responsibility of

Q 6. How were the debates with religious scholars important in the formation of Akbar's ideas on governance?

Answer. Akbar was deeply influenced by the Sufi philosophy of the Sufi Saint of Ajmer. Sufis emphasized universal compassion, the oneness of the Almighty, and tolerance of all religious views. He held regular discussions with religious leaders of different faiths. Akbar realized that the religious leaders emphasized on rituals and dogma, for maintaining the different identity and control over followers. This led him to propagate the idea of 'universal peace', tolerance, and ethics in behaviour. Truth, honesty, justice, and peace are part of Ethics.

Q7. Why did the Mughals emphasise their Timurid and not their Mongol descent?

Answer: The Mughals were descendents of Timur (died 1404) ruler of present day Iran, Iraq and Turkey on their father's side. On their mother's side they were descendents of Genghis Khan (died 1227) who ruled the Mongol tribes in China and Central Asia. Genghis Khan had become infamous due to his cruelty and massacre. The Mughals did not want people to remember the cruelties of their Mongolian ancestors. Therefore, they emphasized their Timurid descent.

Q8. How important was the income from the land revenue to the stability of the Mughal Empire ?

Answer. The stability of the Mughal Empire was critically linked to the regular flow of income from land revenue. This is because the Mughals had to maintain a large standing army and pay salaries to the 'sawars' on a regular basis. The army was needed to defend the borders from the Mongols in the North west, and from various regional provinces in the Deccan. The regional kingdoms defeated and made part of the Mughal Empire, tried to break away and needed to be controlled. The zamindars often revolted in provinces such as Gujarat,

Q9. Why was it important for the Mughals to recruit mansabdars from diverse backgrounds and not just Turanis and Iranis?

Answer. Firstly, the number of Turanis and Iranis was very few. Secondly, after defeating the provincial kings to extend the Mughal Empire, trustworthy regional mansabdars were needed to ensure flow of revenue. The Mughals under Akbar, followed the policy of returning the kingdom as jagir, and reinstating the defeated kings as their mansabdars. They had the additional

military responsibility of training and registering ‘sawars’ for the cavalry of the Mughal army. Thus, by appointing mansabdars from diverse backgrounds , the Mughals were able to secure their revenue income and internal peace.

ⁱ This rule was followed in England since the 14th century, and therefore, the country still has large estates inherited through generations. The property was never allowed to be divided. If a lord did not have any son, the estate would lapse to the King. The second son joined the Church to become a priest, while the third son joined the army. If he had other younger brothers, they migrated initially to the British America, and later on to Australia and other British colonies in Asia and Africa.

ⁱⁱ Daughters did not inherit anything, but were given a part of the wealth at the time of their marriage.