

ASSIGNMENT No. 2

Q. 1 Why Akbar's reign considered as the glorious period of Muslim rule in India? Give the reason of his success.

Akbar, the great was one of the most eminent rulers of Indian history. He was one of the two greatest and of course the most controversial personality along with Aurangzeb. Both are variously held responsible for the downfall of the Mughal Empire.

Akbar came to the throne in 1556 after the sudden death of his father, Humayun. The news of Humayun's death was kept secret for 17 days. When he came to power he was a child of hardly 14. The first aim of Akbar was to bring all India under one ruler and to accomplish this task in a great measure by enlisting in its favor several races which he desired to bring within his fold.

Hemu, Commander of Adil Shah occupied Agra and Delhi and Tardi Beg, Mughal Commander fled away. For this he was awarded death punishment and Bairam Khan became Commander of the Mughal Army.

Second Battle of Panipat

Hemu occupied Delhi and Agra. He proclaimed himself king under the title of Vikrama Jit. When the news of the fall of Delhi and Agra reached Akbar, he ordered an immediate march towards Sirhind. At Sirhind Tardi Beg joined with remnant of his forces. In the mean time Hemu was setting his troops in order, and when he heard of the arrival of Akbar at Sirhind, he marched from Delhi, sending his artillery in advance to Panipat. From Sirhind Akbar moved towards Panipat, on November 5, 1556, the fight began at the battle field of Panipat.

Hemu succeeded in overthrowing the right and left wing of the Mughal forces and was attempting to crush the centre by his elephants, but suddenly an arrow pierced through his eyes which made him unconscious. On seeing their leader fall, the army of Hemu fled away and the Mughals came out victorious.

The second Battle of Panipat proved to be of far-reaching importance. The Mughals gained a decisive victory over the Afghans.

Akbar's Rajput Policy

Akbar probably was the first Muslim ruler of India who adopted liberal policy of conciliation toward Rajputs and his other non Muslim subjects. The Rajput chiefs not only offered submission to the Mughal Emperor but fought for him along with

Mughal soldiers in the expansion of the Mughal Empire as well as in the subjugation of the Rajput rulers and rebels. He secured Rajput friendship by matrimonial alliances with them as well as by granting posts of trust and responsibility to the Hindus within the civil and military administration. Apart from that the first step towards the friendship with them was that he removed the religious restrictions imposed by the Delhi Sultans over the Hindus. Akbar abolished the pilgrim tax imposed on the Hindus and also remitted jizya or the poll tax on the non Muslims.

The Promulgation of Din-i-Illahi

The third or the final stage in the evolution of his religious views was reached in 1582 when he promulgated a new religion, the Din-i-Ilahi or Divine Religion. He opened the Ibadat Khana to the people of different faiths towards the end of the year 1578. Although discussions in the Ibadat Khana continued on, yet Akbar arranged private meetings with the scholars and holy men of different faiths. He lost faith in Sunni orthodoxy, then he turned to Shia scholars, but yet he got no mental satisfaction from Shia faith, then he turned to Sufism but in vain. Now he attempted to see consolation in other religions by freely mixing with Hindus Sanyasis, Christian missionaries, Zoroastrian priests and Hindu philosophers. After long enquiries about all the religions he came to the conclusion that there were sensible men in all religions. So he decided to establish a common religion which was acceptable to all the faiths, by including all the good points taken from all the religions, investigated by him. The basic principles of the new religious faith were:

- (a) The principle of toleration.
- (b) Grant of liberty of conscience and worship to all.
- (c) Removal of all distinctions between the two communities.

The effects of toleration pursued toward the Hindus endeared the latter to him so strongly that they became so loyal and faithful supporters in all the matters of the state. The danger from the Rajputs and Hindus was also over now. They were later on used by him as a valuable weapon against his enemies – the Uzbeks and other rebellious officers.

In 1556 when Akbar came to power, he had no territory, but when he died in 1605, he left a very long powerful and consolidated empire.

Akbar as an Administrator

Akbar was not only the founder of the Mughal Empire in India, but he was also a great administrator. He laid the foundation of a splendid system of administration which continued for a period of two centuries. Salient features of his administration were as follow:

The Central Ministers:

For their assistance in the administration of the country, the Mughal Emperors had appointed ministers under them. The following ministers had been appointed.

- (a) The Prime Minister (vakil)
- (b) The Finance Minister (diwan or Wazir)

Provincial Government

Akbar had divided his empire into well- defined provinces in which he set up a well established and uniform system of administration. In each of such province or suba there was a Governor, styled as Sipah Salar, Commander_in_chief, the Diwan, a Bakhshi, a Faujdar, a kotwal, the Qazi, the Sadar, the Amil, the Bitikchi, the Potdar and other officers of the revenue department.

Aprt from that Akbar established an efficient Mansabdari system in 1570, to regulate the Imperial services. All the gazzetted Imperial officers of the state were styled as Mansabdars. To begin with they were classified into

sixty-six grades, from the mansab of ten to ten thousands. Thus it was Akbar who organized the mansabs of his Imperial officers in a very systematic form that it became associated with his name.

Q. 2 Analyze Shah Jehan's interest in architecture and the measures taken by him for the patronage of Mughals architecture.

Shah Jahan has been variously called as 'Prince among builders' and 'Engineer King' on account of his love for architecture.

Important features of Shah Jahan's buildings are:

1. Shah Jahan's buildings are unmatched in exquisite beauty of form.
2. Shah Jahan's buildings have no parallel in symmetry of design.
3. Shah Jahan's buildings are unsurpassed in grandeur.
4. Shah Jahan's buildings have great strength.
5. Shah Jahan's buildings have beautiful balance among different parts.
6. Shah Jahan's buildings have a great variety—cities, forts, gardens, mosques and palaces etc.
7. Shah Jahan's buildings are located at different places like Agra, Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Delhi, Lahore, Kabul and Kashmir etc.
8. Shah Jahan's buildings display a synthesis of Indian and foreign architectural style.
9. Shah Jahan's buildings are mostly built with white marble in place of red stone..

Taj Mahal (Agra):

Chief features:

"By its perfect proportions, luminous beauty, milk- white texture assuming different tones at different times, delicacy and variety of ornamentation, flawless execution of structure and by its picturesque setting, the Taj Mahal stands as a creation of superb beauty and magnificence in Indian architecture."

Rabindranath Tagore has described the Taj as "a tear drop on the cheek of time."

Taj Mahal has been usually described as "a dream in marble, designed by fairies and finished by jewellers."

A view of the whole structure in a moonlight night ("Chandni rat") and its reflection in the calm Jamuna adds the supernatural beauty to the whole structure. This is the only magnificent monument in the world which reflects the eternal love of a king for his queen.

S.K. Saraswati has remarked:

"By its stately and perfect proportions, the delicacy and purity of its lineaments, its milk-white texture assuming different hues and tones at different times and under different conditions, the flawless execution of the structure and of its varied ornaments, and, lastly, by its picturesque setting aided by the ingenuity of man, the Taj Mahal at Agra stands as a creation of superb beauty and magnificence, not only in Mughal architecture but in Indian architecture as a whole."

Why was the Taj Mahal built:

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The charming Mausoleum, built in pure and white marble, was erected by the emperor Shah Jahan in the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Probably it is the only memorial in the world to reflect the eternal love of a king for his queen.

Construction of the Taj Mahal:

According to Tavernier about 20,000 men took about 22 years to complete it and it cost about three crores of rupees.

About twenty varieties of precious stones were imported from within and outside India to decorate it.

Shah Jahan used 'pietra dura' a method of decoration on a large scale—inlaid work of jewels.

An important feature of the building is the massive dome and the four slender minarets linking the platform to the main building.

The building stands in the midst of a formal garden.

From all available evidence it is concluded that the principal architect was Ustad Isha (Persian/Turk) who was assisted by a number of Hindu architects. There is also the possibility that for the decoration of the exterior, European artists were consulted.

Moti Masjid:

Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque at Agra is regarded as "the purest and novelist house of prayer." The mosque was built at a cost of Rs. 30 lakhs. According to one writer, "It suggests the struggle of the soul above worldly entanglements."

Jama Masjid:

Jama Masjid built at Delhi was constructed with red stone for the use of the royal family. High towers and domes are its special characteristics.

Red Fort and some important buildings in it:

In the fort among the important buildings are 'Diwan-Khas', the 'Rang Mahal, Nahar Bahishit' and Diwan-i-am'. The famous Persian poet Firdausi has said about the beauty of 'Diwan- i-khas'.

"Gar Firdaus Barooey Zamin Ast, Hamin Asto—Hamin Asto, Hamin Asto"

(If there is heaven anywhere on the earth, it is here, it is here, and it is here,")

'Takhat-i-Tahus'. (Peacock Throne):

This throne, a celebrated work of art was used for sitting in the court by Shah Jahan. The throne had an enamelled canopy supported by 12 pillars, each of which bore two peacocks inlaid with gems. A tree covered with diamonds, rubies and pearls etc. stood between the birds of each pair. It took seven years to complete at a cost of a one crore of rupees. In 1739, Nadir Shah who invaded India, carried it away with him to Persia.

Gardens:

Shah Jahan was equally interested in gardens. Some of the famous gardens laid out by him are the Wazir Bagh in Kashmir, Shalimar Gardens near Lahore, the Talkatora Bagh and Shalimar Gardens at Delhi.

Summing up:

Shah Jahan's buildings combine firmness and vastness with beauty and delicacy. They possess the lustre of a gem and light of the moon.

Q. 3 Analyze the working of judicial and military system under the Mughals.

Classification of the court during the Mughal empire

At the capital seat in provinces, districts, praganahs, and villages, a systematic classification and gradation of the courts existed. The significant courts that operated during this period were as follows:

Court systems at capital

India's capital city Delhi had its courts divided into three. They were as follows:

The Emperor's Court

The Emperor's court, which was controlled by the emperor, was the court of the empire's highest order. The said court has jurisdiction over the case civil as well as criminal cases. The Emperor was supported by Daroga-e-Adalat, Mir Adil & Mufti when hearing the cases as a court of first instance. The Emperor presided over a bench consisting of the Chief Justice (Qazi-ul-Quzat) and other chief justice court Qazis while hearing the appeal.

The Chief Justice's Court

It was the capital's second significant courtroom. The said court was controlled over by the Chief Justice which was supported by two highly essential Qazies who were appointed as puine judges who were working in this court. It had jurisdiction and the discretion to hear civil, original as well as criminal cases and hear provincial court appeals as well. These also had supervisory authority over the operation of the Provincial tribunals.

The Chief Revenue Court

It was the third relevant court of appeal to entertain those cases involving revenue. The four officials, namely Daroga-e-Adalat, Mir Adil, Mufti and Muhtasib have also supported this court. In addition to these three important courts, Delhi already had two courts. Qazi-e-Askar court was a court that was especially where military matters were determined. The court travelled with troops from place to place.

Provincial Courts

The provinces that were present in the Mughal period were divided into smaller units called Subahs. Each Subah had its own court. These courts in the subahs were divided into three types:

The Governor's Court (Adalat-e-Nasim-e-Subah)

The Governor or Nazim control and handle this court and presides over all the cases which deal in matters relating to Province, which is known as his original jurisdiction. This court also had the authority to hear lower court appeals. Further appeal from this court rested with the court of the Emperor. At this court were attached one Mufti and a Daroga-e-adalat.

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The Provincial Chief Appeal Court (Qazi-i-Subah's court)

This tribunal heard appeals from the district Qazis' decisions. Qazi-i-Subah's forces coexisted with those of the Governors. This court also had original jurisdiction in civil and criminal matters. Mufti, Muhtasib, Daroga-e-Adalat-e-Subah, Mir Adil, Pandit, Sawaneh Nawis and Waque Nigar were the officers attached to this court.

Provincial Chief Revenue Court

At the imperial capital, this court was taken over by the Diwan-e-Subah who possessed original as well as appellate jurisdiction. Peshker, Daroga, Treasurer and Cashier were four officers annexed to this court.

District Court

The districts in the Mughal Period were known as Sarkars. These Sarkars were divided into four courts. The courts were as follows:

District Qazi Court

Qazi-e-Sarkar presided over the district's chief civil and criminal court. This court had the authority to try both civil and criminal cases. The Qazi-e-Sarkar's appeal from this court was the district's chief judicial officer. Daroga-e-Adalat, Mufti, Mir Adil, Muhtasib, Pandit, and Vakil-e-Sharayat were appointed to this court with six officers.

Faujdaar Adalat

This particular court was usually presided over by a Faujdar who had the authority to prosecute riot and state security cases. From this court's rulings, an appeal lay before the court of the governor.

Kotwali trial

A Kotwal-e-Shahar presided over this court ruled on all minor criminal cases. That court's appeals lay with the Qazi-e-Sarkar.

Amalguzari Kachari

This court was chaired by an Amalguzar who decided revenue items. An appeal by this court lay with the Adalat of Diwan-e-Subah.

Important Officers in Mughal Empire for the administration of justice

The administration of justice was in the hands of a few officials who were held responsible for any injustice and providing aid to all the residents of the empire.

Vakil

The Vakil's office seems to have taken on prominence when Akbar was a minor and Bairam Khan served as a deputy on his behalf. The office lost significance after that. Though the title continued to exist, none were appointed to work for the emperor. It slowly lost its importance and faded completely during Shah Jahan's reign.

Mukhtasib

He was the public-moral censor. It was his duty to follow the Prophet's orders and to suppress all those un-Islamic activities. Also within the censor province lay the punishment of heretical opinions, especially against

the Prophet and the neglect by Muslims of the five daily prayers and observance of Ramzan. They were granted the task during Aurangzeb 's period to demolish newly-constructed temples. They were also asked to ensure the use of accurate weights and measurements.

Chief Qazi

Chief Qazi was the top judicial officer and was responsible for conducting justice effectively and efficiently. It was the Emperor's duty as the khalifa of the age to give justice to the people, but since he had no time, the work was given to the Qazi chief. He was the only Judge in religious suits and tried them by Muslim statute. He named the Qazis of the Cities, Districts, and Provinces. The muftis supported certain Qazis. The majority of the Qazis had been corrupt. According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, "All the Mughal era Qazis were infamous for taking bribes with a few honourable exceptions."

Kotwal

Kotwal's duties are set forth in the book Ain-i-Akbari. He was essentially a city police officer, but in some cases, he was responsible for maintaining law and order in the city, he enjoyed magisterial powers. He kept watch at night and patrolled the city. He kept a housing register and frequented buildings. He looked at weight and measurements and noticed robbers. He made a list of those who had no successor, and of the person who was dead and missing.

Q. 4 Evaluate the religious trends in the Indian society during the Mughal rule.

Religious Conditions:

Divergent views have been expressed by historians and scholars regarding the religious conditions.

On the one hand there are those who state there was a lot of religious harmony among the people of different faiths and on the other hand it is stated that seeds of the partition of the country were sown by emperors like Aurangzeb and others.

They point out that Hindu-Muslim discord is not the legacy of the British rule but some of the medieval narrow-minded rulers.

Division of society on the basis of religion:

The majority of the Indian society consisted of the Hindus. Traditionally they were divided into four classes. Caste system had become very rigid. There were hundreds of sub-castes. The Sudras were in the lowest cadre of society. The Muslims were divided into Sunnis, the Shias, the Bohras and the Khojas etc. The Sunnis were in majority and also belonged to the privileged class because the emperors were also Sunnis. The Shaikhs and Sayyids also commanded respect in the society.

The foreign Muslims like the Arabs, the Persians, the Turks, the Mongols, the Uzbeks, the Abyssinians and the Armenians regarded themselves socially superior to converted Indian Muslims. They occupied higher position in the society.

The Sufi saints and the Bhakt Saints laid stress on religious harmony, equality in society and devotion to God. Emperor Akbar founded a new religion of 'Din-a-Ilahi' but it could not attract many followers and collapsed

with his death. A new faith of Sikhism among the Hindus emerged. Its followers were mostly confined to Punjab. In general, its followers and the Mughal rulers did not enjoy cordial relations.

Festivals, fairs and pilgrimages:

Important festivals of the Hindus were Basant, Diwali, Dussehra, Holi, Sankranti and Shivaratri. Sankranti and Purnimah were to be considered very auspicious days and a dip in some river on that day were considered to be a pious act. People went to places of pilgrimages such as Kashi, Kurukshetra, Prayag, Puri and Pushkar.

Millions of Hindus attended the Kumbh fair. The Hindus believed in the purity and sacredness of the water of the Ganges and that a dip in the Ganges would purify them of all their sins. The pilgrimage to Mecca was an annual event of great importance for the Muslims. The important festivals of the Muslims were Id-ul-Juha, Id-ul-Fitr, Shab-i-Barat, Muharram and Milad-ud-Nabi.

Q. 5 Evaluate the progress made in arts, education, literature and science during 1526–1707.

The Mughal Empire has intrigued Europeans for centuries and the huge attendance at the British Library's splendid Exhibition shows how it still holds our interest. The Mughal Emperors attained great power in India from 1526 to 1757. They lived surrounded by incredible opulence, created magnificent Architecture and developed Arts and Culture. They controlled all of what is now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The Empire survived in a diluted form, for another hundred years, until 1858 when there was a British presence and the Mughal Empire was absorbed into the Raj. The Exhibition made me see them as the embodiment of a true oxymoron, being warrior aesthetes, warlord artists, equally skilled with pen and sword. These Emperors were ruthless, yet, there was one among them who was capable of the passion for a lost love that inspired the creation of the Taj Mahal, a Mausoleum eternal in its ethereal beauty. The name, 'Mughal' is derived from the original homelands of the Timurids of the Central Asian Steppes, an area once conquered by Genghis Khan which was named 'Moghulistan' or 'Land of Mongols'. These people became Persianised and transferred Persian Culture to India. They also spread Islam. It must be remembered that in 1500 the Persian Empire was widespread and powerful. There was a flowering of Art, poetry and literature in their Courts. The Mughal Emperors encouraged Persian artists to visit and reside at their own courts.

Although the Mughals and their rulers hailed from murderous, invading ancestors such as Genhis Khan and Amir Timur (known in the West as Timberlaine) they made a love of Arts and aesthetic principles very important in their rule. It was a central part of their identity. Their glorious citadels were a symbol of prestige and power. Their patronage of Scholarship has left us with many priceless treasures. Milo Beach, the Historian, observed that it was probably the first time that wealth was used to commission the Arts. In India there was no shortage of wealth as there was an abundance of jewels, emeralds, sapphires, rubies and diamonds. He also commented on much international activity at the Court. The 'Grand Mughal' myth meant literally that, they were grand.

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The British Library has not been phased by Mughal wealth and opulence as it is the owner of much priceless art from this Empire. Only twenty exhibits are on loan, the other two hundred and fifteen on view are from their own collection, many being shown for the first time. The vaults contain plenty more treasures, as many as there were jewels in the vaults of the Mughal Emperors. Much was acquired from the Persian Library of the Red Fort at Agra after the uprising of 1857. There is also material from private collections, for example, that of the 18th century East India Company, merchant, Richard Johnson, who collected Mughal miniatures. Malina Roy, Curator, spent months selecting exhibits and they are displayed with artistry and imagination. We learn from the exhibits the formative stage of Mughal Art, how it evolved from Persian miniatures and the influences of Hindu, Buddhist and European art upon it. On view are miniatures, paintings, illustrated books and manuscripts, ink pots and armour.

Visitors to the Exhibition pass through a delicately pierced screen gateway, lit from the back, that casts geometric shapes on the walls and the scene is set with Indian music. The first room has on view, possibly the oldest surviving document from the Mughal Empire, a land grant issued by the first Emperor, Babur. The central area has portraits of the Emperors together with good biographical detail. The rest of the Exhibition is themed and the various subjects included are 'Life in Mughal India', 'The Art of Painting', 'Religion, Literature, Science', 'Medicine' and 'Decline of the Empire'. The last room has two superb scroll paintings of the procession of Akbar 11 through Delhi. There is also a sad photograph of Bahadur Shah 11, the last and then deposed Emperor. It was taken by Captain Robert Tytler. The Captain purchased the Emperor's gilt crown which is on display.

The first Mughal Emperor, Babur, came from Ferghana (now Uzbekistan). He marched into Northern India, defeated Shah Lodi in the fierce Battle of Panipat in 1526. The illustration of this decisive battle is rich in colour and action. His daughter wrote about his life and a copy of the manuscript survives from the 17th century. His diaries show realistic animals and plants. The Mughal Emperors wrote their memoirs, often illustrated with scenes of court life, hunting and battles.

Babur was succeeded by his son, Humayun, who started his reign in 1530. He was exiled for a time due to problems with the Afghan Suri dynasty. During his exile he was exposed to the Art of miniatures which he liked. On his return to India he bought two Persian artists with him, namely Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad. Humayun commissioned a Khamsa of Nizami with thirty six illuminated pages. It is on view open at the wonderful painting by Dharm Das, 'The man Carried Away By The Simurgh' Behold the glorious colouring. This Emperor welcomed Persian artists to this Court and is on record as having said,

"Artists are the delight of the World".

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Akbar The Great succeeded his father Humayun at the age of thirteen in 1556 and ruled until 1605. The Mughal Empire was at its most opulent and powerful during his reign. There was cultural and economic progress together with religious harmony. He commissioned the translations of the great Indian classics from Sanskrit into Persian. He was a free thinker who set up libraries and cultural institutions. He absorbed Hindu practices, sought peace among his peoples, presided over a multi ethnic state and filled his Court with intellectuals and artists, providing an atelier for the latter.

Akbar invited a group of Portuguese Jesuits from Goa to his Court and following the visit, displayed paintings of Christian subjects in his Court and on tombs. He had a nativity scene in his private chamber. The Jesuits failed to convert him to Christianity but tried.

There is a small printed book by Johannes de Laet published in Leiden in 1631 recording Akbar's wealth on his death in the Exhibition. His manuscripts were worth more than his weaponry. Unlike most Muslims he had no problem with the depiction of the human form saying,

".....for a painter sketching anything that has life.....must come to feel he cannot bestow individuality on his work and is thus forced to think of God, the Giver of Life."

Akbar The Great suffered the fate that his son, Jahangir, took power from him and ruled from 1605 to 1627 and he is famous for opening up relations with the British East India Company. He was very keen on art and brought about a golden age for his Empire. Look at that jade terrapin, a native of the Ganges, in the Exhibition. Jahangir encouraged single point perspective instead of flattened multi layers as seen in miniatures. He encouraged paintings of his own life and of flowers, birds and animals. This Emperor patronised Abu 'l Hasan and made him a great artist. It is possible that this artist painted 'Squirrels in a Plane Tree'. By the way, there were no squirrels in India , but they could have been seen in Jahangir's zoo.

There is a work, ' The Jahangirnama' which is a biography of the Emperor with illustrations of saints and tigers in sexual situations. Well?! There are also illustrations of spider fights. Now, that is unusual !

Jahangir was succeeded by his fifth son, Prince Khurram, who ruled 1627 to 1658. He commissioned the Red Fort at Agra and the Shalimar Gardens, the Jama Masjid of Delhi, the Lahore Fort. His name, 'Shah Jehan', means ' King of the World' A great honour never held before by an uncrowned Mughal Emperor. He commissioned the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum for his wife, Mumtaz. This was the immortalisation of the

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splendour of an era and of love. The name Mumtaz means ' The Chosen one of the palace ' The art of this period was a little rigid. There were love scenes and ascetics around fires.

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