



INSTITUTE  
OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University



MAHIS-406

# History of India (1200-1707 AD) -II

MA HISTORY  
2nd Semester

Rajiv Gandhi University

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# **HISTORY OF INDIA**

## **(1200-1707)-II**

**MA [History]**

**Second Semester**

**MAHIS – 406**

**RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY**

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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## About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

## **About IDE**

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education, Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as "Institute of Distance Education (IDE)."

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14. The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

### **Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:**

#### (1) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

#### (ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

#### (iii) Contact and Counseling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

#### (iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

#### (v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

#### (vi) Subject/Counseling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counseling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University. The Counseling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counseling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

**SYLLABUS**  
**History of India (Early Times-1200 AD)-II**

**UNIT I: THE RULE OF THE MARATHAS**

- a) The Marathas: Shivaji-Shambhuji-Expansion

**UNIT II: ECONOMIC ASPECTS**

- a) Agricultural Production: Village Economy: Peasantry
- b) Industries
- c) Trade and Commerce: Internal Trade, European Trade

**UNIT III: SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT**

- a) The Sufis: Their Orders, Belief and Practices
- b) The Bhakto Movement: Chaitanya, Shankar deva
- c) The Sikh Movement-Nanak

**UNIT IV: SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE**

- a) Classification of Society
- b) Position of Women
- c) Development of Literature
- d) Art, Architecture and Painting

**UNIT V: ADMINISTRATION OF VARIOUS EMPIRES**

- a) Sher Shah's Administrative Reforms
- b) Mughal, Administration- Land Revenue, Mansabari
- c) Marathas Administration

## INTRODUCTION

The culture and history of India are undoubtedly dynamic, unique and intriguing. It is one of the first civilizations to have come into existence. Historical records trace the beginnings of this nation to the Indus Valley Civilization-one of the oldest known civilizations in the world and an architectural marvel.

India was plundered and invaded repeatedly by foreign rulers such as Timur and Mahmud Ghazni. These invasions laid the foundation for the establishment of Muslim rule in India by Qutub-din-Aibak. He was the first ruler of the Delhi Sultanate and also the founder of the Slave dynasty. Aibak was followed by Iltutmish, who was followed by Razia Sultan - the first female ruler of the Delhi Sultanate. However, she could not rule for long and the reigns ultimately went into the hands of Jalal-ud-din- Firuz Khilji. He established the Khilji Sultanate. After his death, the Delhi Sultanate was left without any leader. Any subsequent rulers were defeated by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. His victory led to the transfer in power of the Delhi Sultanate. Muhammad- bin-Tughlaq and Feroz Shah Tughlaq were the two famous rulers of this dynasty. This dynasty was followed by the Sayyid and Lodhi dynasties. However, none of them could hold on to power for long and eventually Babur-the first Mughal emperor of India-defeated and conquered them.

In AD 1526, Babur, a descendant of Timur, from Central Asia, swept across the Khyber Pass and established the Mughal Empire, which lasted for over 200 years. The Mughal Dynasty had taken hold of most of the Indian subcontinent by AD 1600. It went into a slow decline after AD 1707 and finally came to an end following defeat in the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

The Mughal period marked a vast social change in the subcontinent, as the Hindu majority was ruled over by the Mughal emperors. Some emperors showed religious tolerance, others liberally patronized Hindu culture, while some others destroyed the historical temples and imposed taxes on the non-Muslims. During the decline of the Mughal Empire-which at its peak occupied an area slightly larger than the ancient Mauryan Empire-several smaller empires rose to fill the power vacuum, and subsequently contributed to the decline of the Empire.

This book - History of India (1200-1707) - has been designed keeping in mind the self-instruction mode (SIM) format and follows a simple pattern, wherein each unit of the book begins with the Introduction followed by the Unit Objectives for the topic. The content is then presented in a simple and easy-to-understand manner, and is interspersed with Check Your Progress questions to reinforce the student's understanding of the topic. A list of Questions and Exercises is also provided at the end of each unit. The Summary, Key Terms, and Activity further act as useful tools for students and are meant for effective recapitulation of the text.

This book is divided into five units:

Unit 1: Explores the historical background of the Marathas and the causes and consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat.

Unit 2: Familiarizes you with the economic aspects of the Mughal period, with focus on agriculture, industry and trade.

Unit 3: Discusses the spread of Sufism in India, the development of the Bhakti movement and the Sikh movement, including the role of Guru Nanak.

Unit 4: Describes the classification of society in Mughal times, and traces the development of literature, art and architecture in the Mughal era.

Unit 5: Covers the administrative reforms and systems of Sher Shah Suri, the Mughal kings and Shivaji, the Maratha ruler.



# UNIT 1 THE RULE OF THE MARATHAS

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Rise of Shivaji
- 3 Reign of Shambhuji
- 4 Fall of the Marathas
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

The Mughal Empire which gave Indian history an era of splendid accomplishments disintegrated with the irreparable mistakes of emperors like Aurangzeb.

At the time of the Mughal Empire, a powerful group emerged in the Deccan known as the Marathas. They were great warriors. When the Bahmani Empire collapsed, many Hindu kingdoms rose to high positions; Marathas were also among them. They lived in the Deccan, in the region of present Maharashtra and north Karnataka. Shivaji and Peshwa Baji Rao were the prominent Maratha rulers and they challenged the supremacy of the Mughal Empire. But the Third Battle of Panipat shattered the dream of the Marathas to establish their supremacy on the whole of India and gave the opportunity to the East India Company to establish its rule in India.

In this unit, you will study about the historical background of the Marathas and the causes and consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat.

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Discuss the rise of Shivaji as a ruler
- Describe the reign of Shambhuji
- Trace the events that led to the fall of the Marathas

## 2 RISE OF SHIVAJI

At the beginning of the 17th century, most parts of Maharashtra were under the possession of Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar and Adil Shah of Bijapur. They took the help of local Marathi speaking people to run their administration. They recruited a large number of Maratha sardars and soldiers in their armies. The Mores, Ghatages, Nimbalkars, Jadhavs, Gorpades, Sawants and Bhonsales were sardar families who rose to fame during the 16th and 17th centuries. The Desphandes and Deshmukhs

traditionally performed the duty of collecting land revenue. They were granted tax-free land in return for their services. Such a land grant was called *watan*.

The Bhonsle family of Pune district acquired military and political prominence in the Ahmadnagar kingdom at the close of the 16th century. Shahji Bhonsle was the major ruler of this clan and he was married to Jijabai. He sought his fortune under the Sultan of Bijapur and had his *jagir* at Pune.

Shivaji was the son of Shahji Bhonsle. Shivaji was born in AD 1630 as the second son of Shahji and Jijabai. The early life of Shivaji was led in great simplicity and austerity, influenced by his mother's beliefs. Dadaji Kondadev was entrusted with the responsibility of being a guardian to Shivaji. He showed rather early signs of rebellion in opposition to the Muslim rule as he was highly resentful of the inequality that existed between the Mughal rulers and the Hindu subjects.

The early life of Shivaji was conditioned to a great extent by his mother, Jijabai. When he was fourteen years old, his father entrusted the administration of the Pune *jagir* to him. The peasants living in Shivaji's *jagir* had grown tired of the despotic rule of the *watandars*. Shivaji's administration responded to the aspirations of the masses. Shivaji realized that he could establish a welfare state for the benefit of his subjects only by controlling the neighbouring forts and building new ones.

Shivaji showed his mettle at the young age of eighteen, when he overran a number of hill forts near Pune-Rajgarh, Kondana and Torana in the years, AD 1645-1647. Shivaji began his real career of conquest in AD 1656, when he conquered Javli from the Maratha chief, Chandra Rao More. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur in AD 1657 saved Shivaji from Bijapuri reprisal. In AD 1659, Bijapur, free from the Mughal menace, sent in the army against Shivaji under Afzal Khan, whom he murdered treacherously. In AD 1660, the combined Mughal-Bijapuri campaign started against Shivaji. In AD 1663, Shivaji made a surprise night attack on Pune, wounded Shaista Khan (maternal uncle of Aurangzeb) and killed one of his sons. In AD 1665, the Purandhar Fort, at the centre of Shivaji's territory was besieged by Jai Singh and a treaty was signed between the two. Shivaji's visit to Agra and his escape from detention in AD 1666, proved to be the turning point of the Mughal relations with the Marathas.

The Treaty of Purandhar was signed in AD 1665, according to which Shivaji agreed to help the Mughals against Bijapur. Shivaji ceded 23 forts to the Mughals and agreed to visit the royal court of Aurangzeb. Shivaji reached Agra in AD 1666, and was admitted in the Hall of Public Audience. The Emperor gave him a cold reception by making him stand among the *mansabdars*. A humiliated and angry Shivaji walked out of the court. He was put under house arrest, along with his son. However, they tricked their guards and managed to escape in a basket of sweets which was to be sent as a gift to the Brahmins.

Shivaji reached Maharashtra in September, AD 1666. After consolidating his position and reorganizing his administration, Shivaji renewed his war with the Mughals and gradually recovered many of his forts. Shivaji declared himself the independent ruler of the Maratha kingdom and was crowned Chatrapati in AD 1674. Politically speaking, two factors contributed to the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji. These were as follows:

- (i) The comparatively advantageous position of the Marathas under the Deccan Sultanates
- (ii) The threat to Bijapur and Golkonda from the annexationist policy of the Mughal Empire

The poets and writers of Maharashtra played a significant role in provoking and sustaining the national spirit of the Marathas. Among the poets, special mention should be made of the following:

- Jnaneswar and Namdev (13th and 14th centuries)
- Eknath and Tukaram (15th and 16th centuries)
- Ramdas (17th century)

Apart from the above reasons, the Mughals' control over the Deccan had weakened. Also, the Marathas had worked out a revenue system by which they attained large revenue and could maintain strong armies.

Shivaji's coronation symbolized the rise of people to challenge the might of the Mughals. By coronating himself king under the title *Haindava Dharmodharak* of the new and independent state *Hindavi Swarajya*, Shivaji proclaimed to the world that he was not just a rebel son of a *sardar* in Bijapur court, but equal to any other ruler in India. Only a coronation could give Shivaji the legitimate right to collect revenue from the land and levy tax on the people. This source of income was necessary to sustain the treasury of the new kingdom.

### Shivaji's Relations with Aurangzeb

Shivaji's relations with the Mughals may be discussed under the following heads:

#### 1. Struggle against Shaista Khan

The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb became much worried upon seeing the growing Maratha power in the Deccan. He ordered his maternal uncle Shaista Khan (who was a newly appointed Mughal Subedar of Deccan) to invade Shivaji's territory and the Sultan of Bijapur was asked to cooperate with him. It is said that in accordance with the instructions of Aurangzeb, the Sultan of Bijapur at first sent his General Siddi Jauhar who besieged Shivaji in Panhala, but Shivaji managed to escape from there and the fort of Panhala was occupied by the Bijapur army.

After this, the ruler of Bijapur thought that he could use the Marathas as a shield in the struggle between the Mughals and Bijapur and he showed no interest in taking further any action against Shivaji. It is said that he entered into a secret understanding with Shivaji. On the other hand, the Mughal governor of the Deccan, Shaista Khan occupied Pune in AD 1600 and made it his headquarters. Shivaji was on the lookout for a suitable attack, his headquarters at Poona disguised as a marriage procession. Shivaji's army managed to kill one of Shaista Khan's sons and one of his generals and Shaista Khan himself was wounded badly.

Aurangzeb was so annoyed that he transferred Shaista Khan from the Deccan to the Bengal and did not even see Shaista Khan at the time of proceeding of the transfer as was the usual custom.

#### 2. Plunder of Surat

The success in Poona against Shaista Khan greatly increased the morale of Shivaji and the Maratha army. Immediately, he resorted to one more attacks and launched a terrible attack on the Mughal port of Surat. From 16 – 20 January, 1664 he plundered the rich city to his heart's content. Shivaji got enormous wealth from this first plunder of Surat City.

### 3. The campaigns of Muazzam and Jai Singh against Shivaji and the Treaty of Purandar

The earlier-mentioned activities of Shivaji made the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb very worried. He sent a vast army against Shivaji under the leadership of his principal advisor, Jai Singh of Amer and his own son, Prince Muazzam Rai. Jai Singh was given all the necessary military and administrative rights so that he did not have to depend upon the Mughal Governor of Deccan. He was also ordered to keep in direct contact with the Emperor himself. Jai Singh was an able and brave general and a far-sighted politician. He did not commit a mistake like his predecessors in assessing the military strength of Shivaji. He tried first to win over all the opponents of Marathas to his side and also managed to win over the Sultan of Bijapur to his side, then, with full military preparation attacked the main centre of Shivaji, viz. the fort of Purandar. Shivaji's treasury was there and he lived there, with his family. He besieged the fort of Purandar and appointed an army to plunder and terrorize the Maratha regions. Not seeing any help coming from anywhere, Shivaji thought it necessary to start negotiations for peace because in the fort of Purandar, families of the *amirs* also lived and Shivaji considered it his duty to protect their lives and honour. Shivaji met Jai Singh and settled the peace terms. This treaty is famous in history as the Treaty of Purandar (June 1665). The terms of this treaty were as follows:

- (i) Shivaji had to surrender to the Mughals twenty-three of his thirty-five forts yielding annual land revenue of 4 lakh Huns. Shivaji was left with just twelve forts of one lakh Huns of the annual land revenue.
- (ii) Shivaji promised to remain loyal to the Mughal Emperor.
- (iii) Shivaji's hold over the Konkan region yielding 4 lakh Huns annually was allowed to remain as before.
- (iv) Besides some regions in Balaghat yielding 5 lakh Huns annually which Shivaji had yet to conquer from Bijapur were allowed by Mughals to remain with him. In return, Shivaji had given to the Mughals 40 lakh Huns in installments.
- (v) Shivaji was granted the permission not to go personally to the Mughal court but his son Sambhaji was granted a *mansab* of 5000.
- (vi) Shivaji promised to help the Mughals against Bijapur.

As far as a critical assessment of the treaty of Purandar is concerned, it would have to be conceded that the treaty represented a great political and diplomatic success of Jai Singh against Shivaji. Within a short period of three months Jai Singh forced a rapidly rising Maratha leader and the rising power of Marathas, to accept Mughal sovereignty. With great cleverness he sowed the seeds of a conflict between Bijapur and Shivaji. But the success of the treaty's settlement depended on the extent to which the Mughals helped Shivaji to conquer the regions of Bijapur to enable him to pay the instalment of the war indemnity.

This plan could not come through. Aurangzeb was yet not assured about Shivaji and viewed suspiciously any prospect of a combined attack by the Mughals and Shivaji on Bijapur. Jai Singh wanted to take Shivaji to Agra so that he could enter into a permanent settlement with him. According to Jai Singh, for the conquest of the Deccan, friendship with Shivaji was essential for the Mughals. Shivaji was suspicious of Aurangzeb and he did not agree to go to Agra till Jai Singh assured him completely by putting the responsibility of his protection on his son Ram Singh. Probably, Shivaji

also wanted to go to the north to view the situation there and prepare a group of his supporters in the Mughal court. He also expected that by negotiating with Aurangzeb he would get Mughal help to conquer Janzira islands and thus safeguard his western-frontier. Jai Singh started on his first campaign against Bijapur in alliance with the Marathas. But it was not successful. Shivaji was given the task of conquering the fort of Panhala but even he did not succeed. Seeing his plans failing like this, Jai Singh persuaded Shivaji to come to Agra and meet the emperor and Shivaji reached Agra in AD 1666.

#### 4. Shivaji in Mughal court and his successful escape from prison

Shivaji came to the Mughal Court on 12 May, AD 1666 along with his son Sambhaji and 350 soldiers. Aurangzeb made him stand among 'Panch Hazaris' and did not even talk to him. Shivaji was very annoyed. Aurangzeb made him and his son prisoners, but after some time both effected their escape from the prison through a clever device and in the guise of Sadhus reached Raigarh on 22 September, AD 1666. Aurangzeb held his own carelessness responsible for this successful escape of Shivaji. After reaching the Deccan, Shivaji was quiet for about two years. Actually, Aurangzeb did not give much importance to the friendship with Shivaji because for him Shivaji was no more than a petty *Zamindar*.

But subsequent events showed that this disregard of Shivaji and the Maratha power by Aurangzeb proved very dangerous for the Mughals.

#### 5. Second plunder of Surat, conquest of other Mughal territories

Shivaji started his second campaign against the Mughals in AD 1666–1670. Though he had started his campaign against Bijapur a short while ago but he did not gain anything from Bijapur so he started his campaign against the Mughals again. He reconquered gradually all the 23 forts he had surrendered to the Mughals by the treaty of Purandar. Shivaji plundered Surat the second time on 6 October, AD 1670. In a plunder of three days he got about 66 lakh rupees.

According to J.N. Sarkar, 'This plunder of Surat affected trade quite adversely and the merchants of Surat stopped getting goods from the internal parts of the country.' After this Shivaji attacked Barar, Badlana and Khandesh and conquered the forts of Salher and Muler. So much was the terror of Marathas in the Deccan that they even exacted *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* from Mughal regions there. *Chauth* was one-fourth of the revenue of a province effected as tribute by Marathas as a tax of their protection against the Mughals and *sardeshmukhi* was an additional surcharge of one-tenth of the land revenue. In return, the Marathas protected these regions from the external attacks. Mughals were fighting the Afghans in the North-West at this time, therefore, they could not pay much attention towards Shivaji. Shivaji renewed his struggle against Bijapur also. Through bribery he occupied Panhala and Satara and also attacked the region of Canara.

#### Shivaji's Judicial System

Shivaji did not establish organized courts like the modern courts nor did he establish any law code. His judicial administration was based on the traditional ways only. At the centre, the eight ministers of the *Ashtapradhan*, viz. *Nyayadhish* decided both the civil and the criminal cases according to the Hindu Scriptures only. In the provinces,

the same function was performed by the provincial judges only. In the villages judicial work was performed by the Panchayats. Justice was impartial and the penal code was strict.

In brief, Shivaji was an able administrator and he laid the foundations of a powerful empire. Undoubtedly his kingdom was a regional kingdom but it was based on popular will. Shivaji adopted a secular policy in his empire. In the words of Dr. Ishwari Prasad, he organized an administrative system which in many respects was better than even that of the Mughals.

Although Shivaji was able to conquer land and gather enough power, he was not considered a ruler or a superior. This led Shivaji to organize a formal coronation.

### Coronation of Shivaji

Shivaji had conquered a large tract of land. He also started behaving like an independent ruler. Yet, the Sultan of Bijapur considered him no more than a rebel Jagirdar. The Mughal Emperor considered him as just a petty *Zamindar*. Many Maratha families looked upon him only as a *Nayab Amir* or *Zamindar* whose ancestors were just ordinary peasants. To prove his superiority among other Maratha families also Shivaji thought it advantageous to get his coronation done in a formal manner. On 15 June, AD 1674, Shivaji held his coronation with great pomp and show. On the auspicious occasion, Pandit Gang Bhatt who presided over the function proclaimed Shivaji to be a high ranking *Kshatriya*. To improve his social standing, Shivaji entered into matrimonial relations with traditional Maratha families like Mohite and Shirke. The coronation greatly enhanced Shivaji's political position. Now he could enter into the independent treaty relationship with the Sultans of the Deccan or the Mughal Emperor unlike previously when he was treated like a powerful dacoit or a rebel *Jagirdar*.

### DID YOU KNOW?

History of Shivaji provided great inspiration to Vietnamese troops who were fighting against the USA army in the 1970s. In fact, the Vietnamese army learnt many tactics of Guerilla warfare from the historical records from the times of Shivaji. In World War II, British forces were told many stories from the history of Shivaji narrated by historian Grant Duff. These lessons helped them in keeping their morale high.

## 3 REIGN OF SHAMBHUJI

### Conquests after Coronation and Death of Shivaji

In AD 1675, Shivaji again started encounters with the Mughals and acquired a lot of booty by defeating the Mughal commander Bahadur Khan. In AD 1676, he took an important step. With the help of the two brothers Madanna and Akhanna in Hyderabad he decided to attack Bijapuri Karnataka. Seeing the growing power and influence of Shivaji, Abul Hassan Qutubshah of Golkunda accorded a grand welcome to Shivaji in his capital and a peace treaty was signed between the two. Abul Hassan Qutubshah promised to pay Shivaji one lakh Huns annually and permitted him to reside at his

court. Shivaji took upon himself the responsibility of defending Golkunda from the foreign invasions. Shivaji and the Golkunda ruler also decided to divide among themselves the wealth of Karnataka and its conquered areas.

Abu Hassan Qutubshah gave to Shivaji his artillery and adequate money for the military expenditure. This treaty proved to be very advantageous for Shivaji. He seized Vellore and Zinji from the Bijapuri commanders and got enough money from the region of Karnataka. When Shivaji returned after the conquest, the ruler of Golkunda asked for his share. But Shivaji gave him neither territory nor money. This made Abul Hassan Qutubshah angry and he entered into an agreement with Bijapur to lessen Shivaji's power, but at that very time Mughal army under Diler Khan attacked Bijapur and the ruler of Bijapur instead of fighting against Shivaji requested his help against the Mughals.

Shivaji rendered him help immediately. Shivaji made Bijapur agree to many favourable terms for Velari. It is said that Adil Shah not only gave him the areas of Kopal and Belldibut, but also abandoned his claim over Tanjore and the Gagir of Shahaji Bhonsle. Shivaji also established his hold over many areas of his stepbrother Ekoji. Karnataka expedition was the last of Shivaji's important campaigns.

After establishing administrative arrangements in Karnataka, Shivaji came back to Maharashtra. In AD 1678, he and his stepbrother Ekoji entered into an agreement with each other and Shivaji returned him all his areas which he had conquered. But that very year his eldest son Sambhaji started behaving like an independent young man and he first went over to the Mughals and later to Bijapur.

Though he came back to Shivaji after remaining rebellious for about a year, yet Shivaji was very unhappy with his conduct and behaviour. With this very worry and after an illness of just twelve days he died on 12 April AD 1680, at the age of fifty-three. Shivaji had begun his life as a manager of his father's *jagir* at Pune and succeeded in establishing an independent kingdom due to his military ability and qualities of character. Maharashtra, Konkan and a large part of Karnataka were included in his empire. His kingdom had about 240 forts. He laid the foundation of a strong administrative system in his kingdom. He proved himself to be an able military commander and a capable politician. He kept check over the power of the Deshmukhs and laid the foundation of a powerful empire which lasted for a long time, even after his death.

## Successors of Shivaji and Mughal-Maratha Relations

### Shambhaji (AD1680-1689)

There was a dispute about succession between the two sons of Shivaji (Sambhaji and Rajaram) from his two different wives. Finally, after deposing Rajaram from the throne, Sambhaji or Sambhuji ascended the throne on 20 July 1680. For more than a year afterwards, however, his position continued to be insecure. As a matter of fact, his whole reign was disturbed by frequent conspiracies and desertions among his officers. Shambhaji, the eldest son of Shivaji, found a faithful adviser in a Kanauji Brahmin on whom he conferred the title of *Kavi Kalash*. Aurangzeb was determined to crush Shambhaji. In AD1689, Shambhaji and *Kavi Kalash* were captured by a Mughal general and put to death.

Rajaram was crowned by the Maratha ministers at Raigarh as Shambhaji's son Shahu was too young. Then Raigarh was captured by the Mughals. By the end of AD1689, Aurangzeb's Deccan policy appeared to have achieved complete success.

5 However, animated by the desire to avenge their wrongs, the Maratha bands spread over the Mughal territories harassing Mughal armies, destroying their outposts. The Mughals could not deal effectively with such raiders. When Aurangzeb died in AD 1707, he was aware that his efforts to crush the Marathas had failed.

### **Rajaram (AD1689–1700)**

At the time of Sambhaji's death, his son Sahu was only seven years old. Rajaram, the younger son of Shivaji and stepbrother of Sambhaji, who had been kept in prison by the latter, was proclaimed King by the Maratha Council of Ministers and crowned at Raigarh in February AD 1689. But soon thereafter, apprehending a Mughal attack, Rajaram left Raigarh and, moving from one place to another, ultimately reached Jinji (South Arcot district, Tamil Nadu). The Maratha Council of Ministers and other officials also joined him at Jinji which, till AD 1698, became the centre of Maratha activity against the Mughals.

Shortly after Rajaram's flight to Jinji, the Mughals under Zulfiqar Khan captured Raigarh in October 1689 and all members of Sambhaji's family, including his son Sahu, fell into Mughal hands. Although Sahu was given the title of Raja and granted a *mansab*, he virtually remained a prisoner in the hands of the Mughals till the death of Aurangzeb (AD1707). Thus, at the close of AD1689, the situation in the Maratha kingdom had completely changed. The royal family was virtually immobilized, the Maratha country no longer had a common head or a central government and the whole of the Deccan was divided into different spheres of influence under various Maratha commanders. With a nominal Maratha king living at a distance from the Maratha homeland, the resistance to the Mughals in the Deccan was organized by the Maratha leaders and commanders. This situation changed the basic character of the Mughal–Maratha struggle into a civil war or a war of independence.

### **Tarabai (1700–1707)**

After Rajaram's death, his minor son by his wife Tarabai, named Shivaji II, was placed on the throne. Tarabai's energy and ability made her the de facto ruler of the state. She saved the Maratha state during a period of grave crisis. The succession to the throne was in dispute. Personal jealousies divided the throne in dispute. It divided the Maratha leaders. Several thousands of *mavles* (Maratha hill infantry) were in the Mughal pay.

Aurangzeb, after the fall of Jinji, concentrated all his resources on the siege of successive Maratha forts. In this situation, Tarabai played a role which elicited high praise from the hostile Muslim historian Khafi Khan who says 'Under Tarabai's guidance, Maratha activities began to increase daily. She took into her own hands the control of all affairs, such as the appointment and change of generals, the cultivation of the country and the planning of raids into the Mughal territory. She made such arrangements for sending troops to ravage the 'six subas' of the Deccan and winning the heart of her officers to the extent that all the efforts of Aurangzeb against the Marathas down to the end of his reign failed.' Tarabai moved from place to place with a view to guiding the Maratha operations against the Mughals.

### **Sahu's release from Mughal captivity and the rise of the Peshwas**

Nearly three months after Aurangzeb's death, Sambhaji's son Sahu (born 18 May 1682) who had been in Mughal captivity since 3 November 1689 was liberated on 8 May 1707 by Aurangzeb's second son, who ascended the throne as Bahadur Shah I.



Sahu was recognized as the king of the Marathas and his right to the Maratha swaraj and to *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi* of the Deccani *subahs* of the Mughals was also probably recognized. The Mughal suzerainty was protected through the arrangement that he would rule as a vassal of the Empire. The intention of the Mughals was to end long-drawn wars in the Deccan or to create dissensions in the Maratha camp. Both situations were advantageous to the Mughals and they were not disappointed. Sahu's release was followed by a civil war between the forces of Tarabai and Sahu, which lasted up to AD1714.

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## 4 FALL OF THE MARATHAS

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The conquest and occupation of the Punjab by the Marathas brought them into conflict with Ahmad Shah Abdali. The Third Battle of Panipat took place on 14 January 1761, at Panipat (Haryana). The battle pitted the French-supplied artillery and cavalry of the Marathas against the heavy cavalry and mounted artillery of the Afghans led by Ahmad Shah Durrani, also known as Ahmad Shah Abdali. The battle is considered as one of the largest battles fought in the 18th century.

The battle lasted for several days and involved over 1, 25,000 men. Protracted skirmishes occurred, with losses and gains on both sides. The forces led by Ahmad Shah Durrani came out victorious after destroying several Maratha flanks. The extent of the losses on both sides was heavily disputed by historians, but it is believed that between 60,000 – 70,000 were killed in fighting, while the number of the injured and prisoners taken vary considerably. The result of the Battle saw the end of the Maratha advances in the North.

### Causes of Third Battle of Panipat

The causes of the Third Battle of Panipat were many. Some of them were as follows:

- **Invasions by Nadir Shah:** Nadir Shah defeated the Mughal troops near Karnal. Then he marched to Delhi, where he stayed for 57 days. He took away the accumulated wealth of 348 years and the famous Peacock Throne from Delhi. The invasion of Nadir Shah exposed the weakness of the Mughal Empire. It encouraged the Afghans to invade India.
- **Ambitions of Ahmad Shah Abdali:** He was an ambitious ruler and a gallant soldier. He dreamt to be the ruler of India and was not satisfied by merely conducting plundering raids.
- **Attack of Maratha army on Punjab:** Maratha army attacked those regions which belonged to the heirs of Nadir Shah. Ahmad Shah Abdali wanted to teach a lesson to the Marathas and break their power.
- **Internal disputes:** The internal disputes were also responsible for foreign invasion. Ahmad Shah Abdali took full advantage of the internal disputes. The Mughals, Rajputs, Rohillas and the Marathas did not come together to face their common enemy. Had they combined together it would have been not so easy for Abdali to crush Marathas.

The Marathas had interfered in the internal affairs of the Rajputana states (present-day Rajasthan) and levied heavy taxes and huge fines on them. They had also made huge territorial and monetary claims upon Awadh. Their raids in the Jat territory had resulted in the loss of trust of Jat chiefs like Suraj Mal. They had, therefore, to fight

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their enemies alone. The main reason for the failure of Marathas was that they went to war without good allies.

- **Distance of Punjab from South:** Though Marathas had conquered portions of Punjab but it was difficult to rule Punjab from the south because Marathas did not want to be away from their homes in the south. It made the task of recapturing the lost territories by Ahmad Shah easier. The Marathas did not care to defend the northern frontier properly. Had the Marathas settled in Punjab, Abdali's success would have been doubtful.
- **Maratha relation with Ruhelas:** Marathas did not have good relations with Ruhelas because the Mughals had gained support from Scindia and Holker against Ruhelas. Under these circumstances, the Ruhelas invited Ahamad Shah Abdali to invade India.
- **Strong position of Afghans:** After the murder of Nadir Shah, Abdali ascended the throne and strengthened his power. In a short period of one year, he was strong enough to invade India again and again.
- **Dream of the Marathas to establish a Hindu state:** Knowing the weaknesses of the Mughals, they thought it is practicable to establish a Hindu state on the ruins of the Mughal Empire. But Abdali never wanted that their dreams should be materialized.

### **Third Battle of Panipat (AD1761)**

At Panipat the two rival armies stood entrenched, face to face, for more than two months.

There were skirmishes and minor battles. The Afghan cavalry patrols dominated the environs of the Maratha camp and cut off its communications and also food supply. Gradually, despair and terror seized the straying Marathas.

They decided to launch a direct attack on the Afghans when there was no food for men and no grass for horses, and when filth and stench 'made the confines of the entrenchment a living hell.

The Bhau's army marched out to battle on 15 January 1761. The battle actually began about four hours after daybreak. Vishwas Ruo was shot dead at quarter past two. Soon after, the Bhau was also killed. Among the leading chiefs who met death were Jankoji Scindia, Tukoji Scindia and Ibrahim Khan Gardi. Mahadji Scindia received wounds, which made him lame for life. 'It was a nationwide disaster. An entire generation of leaders was cut off at one stroke. Apart from those who fell on the field, many fugitives lost their lives during their long flight without food or rest. About 50,000 men and women were saved by the kindness and hospitality of Suraj Mal.

The crushing defeat of the Marathas was easily explained. Numerically, the Afghans had considerable superiority. Against 60,000 Afghans and their Indian allies actually present in the field, supported by 80,000 behind the fighting line, the Bhau had 45,000 troops in the field and 15,000 Pindaris in the rear. The Afghan army had better training and discipline, and it was better organized. Moreover, a famished army on less than half-dead country mares met the finest Afghan cavalry. Abdali had superiority in artillery; he employed 'the most efficient mobile artillery known in that age'. Although the field guns of the Marathas were of larger caliber than those of the Afghans, they could not be dragged forward with the advancing troops and became useless as the battle developed. The Bhau had no worthy and dependable lieutenants

as compared to Abdali's front-rank officers. Malhar Rao Holkar did not exchange fire till after the contest at the centre had been decided in Abdali's favour; and at the last stage he fled away. Abdali was a far greater military leader and strategist than the Bhau. The defeat became virtually inevitable after the Bhau's postponement of the battle for two-and-a-half months. He kept his army on the defensive in a besieged camp until starvation compelled him to make the last desperate effort for escape.

From the political point of view the defeat was largely due to the alienation of the Rajputs and the Jats and the failure to neutralize Shuja-ud-daula and Najib-ud-daula. While half of Abdali's army was composed of troops furnished by his Indian allies, the valiant Rajputs and the Jats did not fight on the Maratha side. The clue to this situation lies in 'the total diplomatic failure on the part of the Peshwa who dictated, and the Bhau who carried out, his North Indian policy'.

### **Consequences of Third Battle of Panipat**

Some modern Maratha writers argue that although the Marathas suffered terrible losses in manpower at Panipat, the battle did not destroy the Maratha power in North India nor did it essentially shake the Maratha Empire as a whole. Abdali made several unsuccessful efforts to conclude peace with the Peshwa and Surajmal, and in the following years he failed to crush the Sikhs in the Punjab.

There was a revival of the Maratha power in North India under Peshwa Madhav Rao I (AD 1761-1772). After the death of Najib-ud-daula (AD 1770) who 'administered Delhi as Abdali's agent after Panipat, the Marathas restored the exiled Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II to the capital of his ancestors (AD 1772).

Mahadji Scindia occupied Delhi in AD 1788 and it was from his successor Daulat Rao Scindia that the English wrested the imperial capital in 1803. In South India the Marathas secured victories against Haider Ali and the Nizam. S.G. Sardesai maintains that 'the disaster at Panipat was indeed like a natural visitation destroying life, but leading to no decisive political consequences'. But the views of Sardesai and the others were too simplistic. Undoubtedly the disaster at Panipat was the greatest loss to the Marathas in both manpower and personal prestige.

The Maratha dream of being a successor to the great Mughals was lost forever. Certainly, Panipat paved the way for the rise of the British power, which became a paramount power in India by the close of the 18th century. Peshwa Balaji Bajirao could not bear the shock of the awful catastrophe at Panipat and died six months after the battle (June AD 1761). During the post-Panipat era, the links of the Peshwa with the Maratha Confederacy also grew very loose. In the words of Kashiraj Pandit, who was an eyewitness to the Third Battle of Panipat, 'It was virtually the doomsday for the Maratha people'.

### **Peshwa Madhav Rao I (1761-1772)**

After the death of Balaji Bajirao, his younger son Madhav Rao was placed on the Peshwa's *gaddi*. Since the new Peshwa was only seventeen years old, his uncle Raghunath Rao, the eldest surviving member of the Peshwa's family, became his regent and the de facto ruler of the state.

During this period, serious differences broke out between the Peshwa and his uncle, leading to a war between the two in AD 1762, in which Peshwa's army was

defeated. For some time a reconciliation was arrived at between the Peshwa and his uncle, but soon serious differences erupted again. In AD1765, Raghunath Rao demanded the partition of the Maratha state between himself and the Peshwa.

Mysore war involved Haider Ali in a greater crisis. During this period, the Marathas tried to restore their lost position in North India. In January 1771, Mahadji Scindia occupied Delhi and succeeded in exacting money from the leading Rajput princes; but the premature death of Madhav Rao in November 1772 placed the Maratha dominion in a deep crisis. Madhav Rao was the last great Peshwa, had he survived longer, the Maratha Empire could have been saved from disaster.

After Madhav Rao's death the fortunes of the Maratha Kingdom and the prestige of the Peshwas under Narayan Rao (AD1772-1774), Madhav Rao Narayan (AD1774-95) and Bajirao rapidly declined, owing to their internal feuds and prolonged wars with the English. The last Peshwa surrendered to the English and the Peshwaship was abolished.

### **The Third Battle of Panipat: Effects and Importance**

The effects and the importance of the Third Battle of Panipat were as follows:

- **Loss of wealth and human power:** The Third Battle of Panipat decided the fate of India. In this battle the loss of money and life was enormous. It was a nationwide disaster. It was stated that two pearls had been dissolved, twenty-seven gold *mohars* had been lost and the loss of silver and copper could not be reckoned.
- **End of Maratha confederacy:** The decisive battle of Panipat completely destroyed the Maratha Confederacy. It destroyed the central organization of the Marathas. After this battle Maratha's central power became weak.
- **Decentralization of Maratha power:** The Third Battle of Panipat also brought about the decentralization of the Maratha power. The Marathas were scattered and divided. Maratha leaders established their independent kingdoms. Scindias were wounded in the battlefield. They established their independent kingdom and made Gwalior the centre of their kingdom.
- **Downfall of Mughal Empire:** The Third Battle of Panipat was the last and final blow to the staggering Mughal power. It hastened its decline and paved the way for British supremacy.
- **Freedom of Rajputs:** After the Battle of Panipat, the Marathas lost their hold over the Rajputana. The Rajputs regained their freedom. They did not support Marathas either against Ahmad Shah Abdali or the Britishers.

### **Causes of the Failure of Marathas in Panipat**

The causes that led to the failure of Marathas in Panipat were as follows:

- The main reason for the failure of the Marathas was Abdali's superior strategy and novel tactics and superiority of arms and ammunitions. Though Sadashiv Rao was a brave and capable leader, he lacked the maturity and experience of Abdali. The Marathas had made Jats and Rajputs their enemy while Abdali was supported by Ruhelas and others. It was the total diplomatic failure on the part of the Peshwa who dictated, and the Bhau who carried out, his North Indian policy.

- Marathas had neither adequate force nor a good supply of quality horses or seasonal troops.
- The Marathas had terrible want of food and adequate clothing. Starved and barebacked in the bitter cold of January many of them fell sick or even died.
- The absence of Duttaji from this fateful fight was a serious handicap to the Marathas.
- Marathas had used guerrilla warfare in North India. Though their infantry was based on the European style contingent and had some of the best French made guns of the times, their artillery was static and lacked mobility against the fast moving Afghan forces.

### ACTIVITY

Prepare a chart giving a comparative account of the three battles of Panipat.

## 5 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Shivaji's father was a high military official at the court of the Sultan of Bijapur and a powerful Maratha leader. His mother Jijabai was an intelligent and a religious lady of high ideals.
- Shivaji gave an evidence of his bravery by conquering the forts of Rajgarh near Poona, Konkan and Toran, from AD 1645–1647.
- Shivaji began his real military campaigns in AD 1655 when he seized Javali from the Maratha Chief Chandra Rao More. The kingdom of Javali and the treasure of More in it was very important for Shivaji and he occupied it by intrigue.
- The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb ordered his maternal uncle Shaista Khan to invade Shivaji's territory and the Sultan of Bijapur was asked to cooperate with him.
- The success in Pune against Shaista Khan greatly increased the morale of Shivaji and the Maratha army. Immediately, he launched a terrible attack on the Mughal port of Surat. From 16 – 20 January, AD 1664 he plundered the rich city to his heart's content. Shivaji got enormous wealth from this first plunder of Surat City.
- On 15 June, 1674, Shivaji held his coronation with great pomp and show, during which event Shivaji was proclaimed to be a high ranking Kshatriya.
- Shivaji is famous in Indian history not only as a brave daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire but also as a great administrator and a ruler having the well wishes of his subjects at heart. He laid the foundation of a strong administrative system.
- Shivaji was a despotic and an autocratic ruler who commanded that all the powers of the state were vested in him. He was the supreme judge, administrative head, law giver and general.

- The Marathas reigned supreme till they were decisively defeated in the Third Battle of Panipat in AD 1761.
- The defeat of the Marathas in the Third Battle of Panipat was due to the alienation of the Rajputs and Jats and the failure to neutralize Shuja-ud-daula and Najib-ud-daula.

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## 6 KEY TERMS

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- **Peshwas:** The Peshwas were the Brahmin prime ministers to the Marathas who began commanding Maratha armies and later became the de facto rulers of the Maratha Empire
- **Third Battle of Panipat:** Was fought between the Afghans and the Marathas in AD 1761 in which the Marathas were defeated
- **Treaty of Purandar:** Signed by Shivaji and the Mughals in AD 1665. By this Treaty, Shivaji had to surrender to the Mughals 23 of his 35 forts and had to remain loyal to the Mughals

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## 7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. (a) AD 1630; (b) fourteen; (c) Chandra Rao More; (d) Purandhar
2. Shivaji II was placed on the throne.
3. Madanna and Akhanna were the two brothers who attacked Bijapur with Shivaji.
4. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False
5. (a) 14 January 1761; (b) Ahmad Shah Abdali; (c) Rajputs

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## 8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Trace the events that led to the coronation and later the death of Shivaji.
2. Discuss the events that led to the Third Battle of Panipat.
3. Discuss the factors that led to the rise of the Maratha power.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the early career and conquests of Shivaji. Add a note on Shivaji's relations with Aurangzeb.
2. List the successors of Shivaji. What role did they play in the Mughal-Maratha relations?
3. What were the consequences of the Third Battle of Panipat?

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## 9 FURTHER READING

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# UNIT 2 ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF THE PERIOD

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Agricultural Economy: Villages and Peasantry
- 3 Industries
- 4 Trade and Commerce: Internal and European
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

The economy during the Mughal rule was largely supported by agriculture. Apart from agriculture, handicrafts, silk weaving and trade also formed an integral part of the economy in the Mughal kingdom. According to historians, agriculture formed the main source of economy, because, since time immemorial agriculture has always been the backbone of the economy of the country. Similarly, in the Mughal era also, agriculture was the biggest source of income. Additionally, it was also one of the main sources of livelihood of the people in the country. The major crops that were cultivated during the Mughal period included millets, oilseeds, cereals, hemp, chilly, sugarcane, cotton, indigo, betel and other cash crops. Indigo cultivation was popular at that time in various places like Agra and Gujarat. On the other hand, Ajmer was well known for the production of the best quality sugarcane.

In this unit, you will learn about the economic aspects of the Mughal period, with focus on agriculture, industry and trade.

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify the importance of agriculture in the Mughal times
- Trace the growth of industries in Mughal period
- Discuss the internal and European trade carried out during Mughal era

## 2 AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY: VILLAGES AND PEASANTRY

The enhancements in transportation and communication services helped boost the economy in the era of the Mughal royal leaders. The demand for cash crops, such as silk and cotton, was also on the rise due to the advancement of the textile industry during this period.

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like Akbar also made attempts to reform the society. According to historians, one of the most notable shortcomings of the Mughal rulers was that they did not do enough to change the social conditions of the agrarian community. Not only did they fail to take any steps to increase the total area under cultivation; no innovative methods were introduced to increase the productivity of the cultivable land. Hence, the Mughal Era was plagued by periods of famines some of which were the worst in the history of India. The famines had a detrimental effect on the economy. Economy in the Mughal epoch started to deteriorate subsequent to Aurangzeb's death.

### 3 INDUSTRIES

As you already know, agriculture was always a major part of the Indian economy, even in the Mughal era. However, the types of crops being grown and the agricultural techniques have been largely the same. Irrigation was not always possible in all areas but some regions did have easy access to canals. There was variety in crops grown such that there were cash crops as well as food crops. Since there was a boom in the textile industry, cotton and silk, which were cash crops, were highly in demand. Also, tobacco had emerged as an important cash crop since early 1600s. A major flaw of the Mughal rulers in general was that they did not pay much attention to growth of agriculture and this resulted in frequent large-scale famines. Public had no way to recover because the rulers did not extend any help to them. Ultimately, people moved away in large groups from famine-hit areas to other places, sometimes even outside the country. Frequent famines caused a severe blow to the Indian economy on the whole.

Industry in India had been developing even before the Mughal rulers came in but by the Mughal era, it had diversified to a great extent. A substantial number of people were involved in industry and produced a large number of goods in considerable volumes. The large volumes helped in promoting international trade. For instance, cotton fabric was a high-in-demand export product in India and cotton manufacturing units were present throughout the country. The state of Bengal was especially known for its good quality cotton and silk. In fact, it was believed that Bengal alone produces more cloth than all of India and Europe put together. Along with the cotton production industry, related enterprises like dyeing and weaving also prospered. Shawl and carpet weaving was a major industry, especially during Akbar's reign.

Besides textile, another important industry was the shipbuilding industry, despite the fact that India had fewer ports than many other countries. While the state did encourage industry, it did not provide any financial aid to bolster it, and this job was undertaken by middlemen, who gradually started to exploit merchants and industrialists. Industrialists also suffered at the hands of corrupt senior officials and noblemen who forced industrialists to sell them goods at much lower rates than the market. While officials and noblemen exploited the industrialists on the one hand, on the other hand, it was these same noblemen and officials who raised demands for the commodities and in the process managed to extract high-quality workmanship.

A large variety of industry was built around the needs of agriculture and practices connected with it. The knowledge, as one can interpret from the written records, was acquired through experience and was empirical in nature.

In the case of fruits, special practices and techniques appeared to have been evolved to meet special requirements of size, texture, seed size or its absence, juice, flavour and aroma. A wide variety of oil seeds were cultivated and used for the purpose

of cooking, pickling, medicine and cosmetics. Besides, *sarson* (mustard), til, coconut, almond and other oils were used for these purposes. Ox driven and wooden cum stone press was used for crushing seeds for extracting oil.

At this time, India excelled in the skill of perfume making so much so that many Europeans came here to learn this art of making perfume from natural flowers. Even today, we can discover fragranced hair oils and body oils that are made by using natural flowers.

A number of industries of substantial significance grew during the medieval period. The most significant ones were as follows:

- Textiles
- Metal work
- Stone work
- Sugar
- Indigo
- Paper

Indian textiles were very famous. Indian metallurgy also enjoyed global reputation.

The following arts and crafts reached their peak during this period:

- Stone carving
- Temple architecture
- Carpet making
- Utensils made of brass, copper and bronze

The state liberally gave grants to merchants and industries. The state also set up royal Karkhanas (workshops) to work according to the needs of the Sultan and his family. It is said that in Muhammad Tughlaq's Karkhanas located in Delhi, there were 4,000 silk workers who used to weave and embroider various kinds of cloth for robes of honour. These karkhanas practically supplied every article of royal use such as caps, curtains, tapestry, waistbands, sashes, shoes, etc. Therefore, the karkhana industry offered jobs to a large number of workers.

### ACTIVITY

Compare the agricultural practices that were prevalent across the world during the Mughal Era. What systems could have been adopted in India by the Mughals?

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## 7.4 TRADE AND COMMERCE: INTERNAL AND EUROPEAN

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Indian trade in the Mughal times was varied and moderately developed and involved huge numbers of people. The products manufactured in Indian industries were of a diverse nature and in huge numbers and had the capacity to match domestic as well as foreign requirements.

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Indian cotton was massively popular, within the country as well as outside. The improved transportation systems ensured that the superior cotton weaved in the Indian cloth making industry could be carried to most parts of the world. Also, cotton production was not restricted to any one part of the country but was spread all over, and was more than sufficient to meet the growing demand challenges.

For the duration of the Mughal rule, the Indian currency also flourished. The Mughals had trade relations with many countries all over the world and foreign trade featured prominently in the economy of the time. A few main Indian imports during that era were gold, ivory, raw silks, perfumes, horses and precious stones. Other chief Indian exports were spices, opium, textiles and indigo. Since transport on land was not very smooth or convenient, sea and river transport were preferred modes. The customs duties were low—about 3.5 per cent—on all exports and imports.

Pepper was the major commodity of trade along the western coast. Different communities formed the dominated trade in different portions of the country. For example, merchants from Punjab and Multan dominated in northern India, while the Bhats ruled the trade field in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Since the government made a concerted effort to set up trade, it flourished all over the country. Indian exports were much more voluminous at the time than Indian imports. Trading was carried out actively on and along the Ganga River and Yamuna River up to the city of Agra. The trade in Agra was mostly focused on importing raw silk and sugar from Bengal and Patna, along with importing butter, rice and wheat from the eastern regions. The rivers also helped carry salt to Bengal besides carrying wheat, sugar and Bengal silk to Gujarat from Agra. Above and beyond the advancements in transport system, trade in India during Mughal era was also impacted by other things. For example, European traders are believed to have played an important part in Indian trade at least for the duration of the Mughal epoch. A significant number of them set up warehouses as well as allocation points in Mughal India. However, historians say that nearly every one of the European commodities was affordable only for the rich people, because they included scented oils, perfumes, dry fruits, rare stones, wines, corals and velvets.

You have learnt already that the Mughal reign can be safely counted as the golden age of peace and prosperity, which was also conducive to profitable trade and business. The expansion in foreign trade gave rise to marketplaces in towns as well as villages. Handicrafts were produced in greater amounts than before in order to meet the trade demands. In the Mughal period, the chief urban centers were Agra, Delhi, Thatta, Lahore, Multan and Srinagar in northern region. In the western part, trade centers included Ahmedabad, Khambat, Surat and Ujjain. The booming trade centres in the eastern region were Patna, Chitgaon, Dhaka, Hooghly and Murshidabad.

### **Foreign Trade**

India had trade relations with the outside world from the ancient times. During the Mughal period, both the internal and the external trade were in progress. As the bulk of the population lived in the villages, and the bulk of their needs for goods and services were satisfied through production, the network of reciprocal obligation exchanges accounted for a relatively small proportion of the economic activity. Yet the exchange of goods was found at virtually every level and sphere of economic life. The accounts of the foreign travellers and other contemporary literary sources throw light on the great volume of inland trade in Mughal India. Each village had a tiny market. Besides, the annual and seasonal fairs attracted a large number of people and traders from the neighbouring towns and villages, and a brisk trade was carried on.

The merchants also went about in Kafilas or Karwans, which afforded greatest security and protection.

According to the descriptions given by the foreign travellers, a number of important towns and big cities existed along the main highways and rivers. In the markets of these towns and cities, goods of necessity, comfort and luxury were available in abundance. The intra-local trade of the towns and the cities was necessarily more complex and varied than that of the countryside. To quote Tavernier, 'It is the custom in India, when they build a public edifice' they surround it with a large market place'. As a result, major towns had several markets, one of which was the chief or great bazaar. For example, at Surat, Hughli, Delhi, Goa, Agra, Banaras, Lahore and at Multan, there were very big markets.

The Sarrafs (shroff) specialized in changing money, keeping deposits or lending money, or transmitting it from the one part of the country to the other by the means of Hundi. The Hundi was a letter of credit payable after a certain period. The use of Hundis made it easier to move goods or to transmit money from one part of the country to another. The Hundis were cashed at a discount, which sometimes included insurance so that the cost of goods lost or destroyed in the transit could be recovered.

During the Mughal period, our foreign trade also flourished. India had external trade with Central Asia, Burma, China, Persia, Sri Lanka, England, Portugal, France and Holland. The foreign trade was carried both by the land and the sea routes. From Central Asia and Afghanistan, as noted by the French traveller Burnier (AD 1656-1658), India imported large quantities of dried and fresh fruits. Babur refers to a brisk trade between India and Kabul. Horses, silk, velvet, decorative goods, guns and gun powder, slaves, etc., were imported in the country. For the army use and other purpose, horses from Iraq and Arab countries were imported in big number. Scents, China pottery, African slaves and wine were also imported from the other countries. The state used to charge customs on the imported goods. India used to export many goods to the different countries. Indian exports included cloth, indigo, spices, sugar, rugs, medicinal herbs and fruits. India developed trade relations with many European companies during this period. Mooreland in his book 'India at the death of Akbar', calculates the Indian shipping to different European countries as being 6000 tonnes, African as 1000 tonnes, to Red Sea as 10,000 tonnes and to Persia a little less. Through Hundis, the Indian merchants could easily ship goods to the courtiers of West Asia as well, where there were Indian banking houses.

The balance of the trade on the whole was in India's favour. Merchants from all countries frequented Indian ports, and paid gold and silver in exchange for the goods.

### Did You Know?

After the decline of the Mughal power, the next main rulers of India were the British. As you know, India conducted brilliant trade with many countries and India's exports were always considerably larger than imports and as a result, the state coffers were always stacked with gold and silver. However, the rise of the British power in the mid 18th century dealt a fatal blow to the prosperity of the country. The British imposed heavy duties on both imports and exports in order to disrupt the foreign trade relations of India with the other countries. The result was that by the time India gained Independence from the British in 1947, the economy was entirely geared to only trade. There were hardly any manufacturing facilities to fulfill the needs of the growing Indian population.

## Commerce

Like trade, commerce also expanded in India during the Mughal period. The use of Hundis not only made it easier to move goods from one part of the country to another but also from India to the other countries, especially West Asia as there were Indian banking houses. English and Dutch traders who came to Gujarat during the 17th century, found the India financial system to be highly developed, and the Indian merchants to be active and alert. Not only roads, but the major rivers of the country were used for the exchange of goods in the Mughal period. The Mughal emperors could well built one of the finest coin currencies in the contemporary world, a tri-metallic currency of great uniformity and purity with the silver rupee as the basic coin. The basic coin, the rupaya (rupee) weighed 178 grains troy in which the alloy was never allowed to rise above 4 per cent. The Mughals issued their coin from a large number of mints throughout their empire. The mints worked on the basis of free coinage. Theoretically, the value of a coin should have equalled its weight in bullion plus the minting charges and seignior age. In large transactions, coinage was supplemented to a considerable extent by credit money.

In brief, we can say that the trade and commerce expanded in India during the Mughal period. The historians and scholars have given the following reasons or factors for the progress of the trade and commerce during the period:

- (i) **The political integration of the country:** Dr Satish Chandra says, 'Perhaps the most important factor was the political integration of the country under the Mughal rule and the establishment of conditions of law and order over extensive areas.' From Akbar onwards and up to Aurangzeb, all the Mughal emperors tried to give India a political unity. They issued the same coins and weight, and equal tax system was levied throughout the country. Definitely, this led to an increase to the internal trade of the country.
- (ii) **Cash revenue system:** The Mughal emperors gave peasants the freedom to pay the land revenue in cash or kind. But most of the emperors preferred the mode of cash payment. No doubt, the payment of land revenue in cash helped a lot in the growth of trade and commerce.
- (iii) **Goods administration:** Most of the Mughal emperors were efficient administrators. They made their best efforts to maintain law and order for the public. The Mughals paid attention to the roads and *sarais*, which made communication and movement easier. The Mughal minted silver rupees of high purity, which became a standard coin in the country and abroad and thus helped the Indian trade.
- (iv) **Cash salaries to officials and employees:** During Mughal period, nobles, mansabdars, soldiers, officials and other officials used to spend lavishly. This also increased the internal as well as the external trade.
- (v) **Growth of new cities:** During the Mughal period, some new towns and cities were developed. Not only this, some of the old cities also rapidly extended. Prominent towns and cities of the Mughal period were Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Patna, Dhaka, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Surat, Goa, etc. According to Dr Satish Chandra, 'The demand for all types of luxury goods by nobles led to the expansion of handicrafts production and to the growth of towns'. A study of Agra shows that it doubled in area during the 17th century. According to Ralph Fitch who came to India during Akbar's reign, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri were

each larger than London. Montserrat says that Lahore was second to none of the cities in Europe or Asia. Similarly, Burnier says that Delhi was not much less than Paris.

- (vi) **Advent of Europeans:** Another factor which helped Indian's trade and commerce was the arrival of the Europeans. No doubt, the Portuguese came before the Mughals but during the Mughal period their trade activities increased considerably. The Dutch and the English traders arrived in India towards the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Indian traders welcomed these foreign traders to break the Portuguese monopoly of the sea trade, and in due course of time, helped to establish a direct link between the Indian and the European markets. Indian textiles became a large import of England by the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

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## 7 5 SUMMARY

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In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The economy during the Mughal rule was largely supported by agriculture. Apart from agriculture, handicrafts, silk weaving and trade also formed an integral part of the economy in the Mughal kingdom.
- Improved transport and communication facilities helped the development of economy during the reign of Mughal royal leaders. There was tremendous demand for cash crops like silk and cotton as because the textile industry was flourishing during the Mughal period.
- The artistic lifestyle of the Mughal rulers also encouraged art and architecture, handicrafts and trade in the country. During that era, the merchants and traders were powerful classes. Trade—both inside the country and outside—grew tremendously.
- Urbanization and fixed markets also helped in expanding the economy in Mughal Empire. Initially, the weekly market concept was popular. Eventually, several trade centres were formed in prosperous cities with the growth of the economy.
- Majority of the people earned their livelihood through agriculture. Different types of food and cash crops were cultivated. Agriculture in Mughal India remained the most important source of economy.
- Wheat was cultivated mostly in the northern and central regions of India. Further, millets were also cultivated in wheat dominant areas and other drier districts. Apart from the food crops, the development of a number of cash crops also formed an integral part of agriculture.
- Agriculture for the duration of the Mughal period also included vegetables and fruits. They were mostly cultivated in the cities. During the Mughal rule, Indian economy was considered as the second largest in the world. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the net domestic production of India was estimated to be around 24.5 per cent of the total world economy.
- Industry in India had been developing even before the Mughal rulers came in but by the Mughal era, it had diversified to a great extent. A substantial number of people were involved in industry and produced a large number of goods in considerable volumes. The large volumes helped in promoting international trade.

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- Besides textile, another important industry was the shipbuilding industry, despite the fact that India had fewer ports than many other countries.
- The state liberally gave grants to merchants and industries. The state also set up royal Karkhanas (workshops) to work according to the needs of the Sultan and his family.
- Trade in Mughal India was diversified and moderately developed. The vast assortment and volume of products that were man-made in industries catered to both large domestic as well as worldwide demands. Trade in Mughal India involved huge numbers of people.
- The Mughal period was considered as the age of relative peace and in this period trade and business flourished enormously. The growing foreign trade led towards the establishment of marketplaces in towns and also in villages.
- According to the description of the foreign travellers, a number of important towns and big cities existed along the main highways and rivers. In the markets of these towns and cities, goods of necessity, comfort and luxury were available in abundance.
- During the Mughal period, our foreign trade also flourished. India had external trade with Central Asia, Burma, China, Persia, Sri Lanka, England, Portugal, France and Holland. The foreign trade was carried out both by the land and the sea routes.

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## 6 KEY TERMS

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- **Sati:** an ancient Indian tradition of the immolation of a widow on her husband's funeral pyre
- **Hundi:** These were legal financial instruments that evolved on the Indian sub-continent. These were used in trade and credit transactions; they were used as remittance instruments for the purpose of transfer of funds from one place to another

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## 7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. (a) False; (b) True; (c) False
2. (a) Agra, Gujarat; (b) Ajmer; (c) Portuguese; (d) Wheat
3. Textiles and metal work were the two significant Mughal industries.
4. It was believed that Bengal alone produces more cloth than all of India and Europe put together.
5. (a) Transport; (b) Pepper; (c) Tri-metallic; (d) 17th

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## 8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the economic condition of the people under the Mughals.
2. Discuss the social condition of the people under the Mughals.
3. Describe the foreign trade that flourished under Mughal rule.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Highlight the measures implemented by the Mughal Emperors for the development of trade and commerce.
2. Describe the industries that existed in the Mughal period.

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## 9 FURTHER READING

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# UNIT 3 SOCIO-RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Sufis: Orders, Beliefs and Practices
- 3 Bhakti Movement: Chaitanya and Shankaradeva
- 4 Sikh Movement: Guru Nanak
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

The previous unit discussed the socio-economic conditions of the Mughal Empire. You learned that the central feature of the agrarian system under the Mughals was the alienation of the peasant from his surplus produce in the form of land revenue which was the main source of the state's income. Three classes of people existed during the Mughal Period—the upper class who led a luxurious life, the middle class and the lower class. You also learned that the Period saw improvements in education as well as literature, especially Persian and Hindi. Both internal and international trade developed due to better roads and other amenities, especially during the time of Aurangzeb.

This unit discusses the spread of Sufism in India, the development of the Bhakti movement and the Sikh movement, including the role of Guru Nanak.

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Describe the order, beliefs and practices of the Sufis
- Discuss the Bhakti movement, focusing on the main proponents
- Trace the Sikh movement, highlighting the role of Guru Nanak

## 2 SUFIS: ORDERS, BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

Sufism is defined as the inner mystical dimension of Islam and whoever adheres to the principles of Sufism is called a Sufi.

Sufism, more often than not, is referred to as a way of life, and encompasses mysticism within it. Being a Sufi is all about being a true human being, free from all bondages and possessing a clear conscience. Sufism is based on comprehending how to be a complete person; to exist in total synchronization with the environment, after surrendering to the will of God and to amalgamate one's distinctiveness with that of

God. Sufism is consequently a matter of conduct. It concerns personal conduct and can be achieved with practice. It is difficult to put 'Sufism' in plain words. It needs to be understood.

Questions regarding the exact period and the place of its origin remain unanswered till date. Scholars also differ in their opinion regarding the origin of the word 'sufi'; The majority of them agree that the word was derived from 'Suf' which is the Arabic term for wool. They base their theory on the fact that the early Sufis wore coarse woollen garments as an act of austerity, and hence the name 'Sufis'. The minor group holds the view that sufi is derived from 'safh' which means cleanliness or purity as the Sufis laid great stress on the wholesomeness of mind, body and behaviour.

Close to the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, most Muslim rulers lead a luxurious life; courtesy the vast empires formed as a result of annexation and plundering the wealth of the defeated kingdoms. This heightened the need of a more sober way of life based on values and not just the desire for materialistic contentment. It was believed that Sufism had originated in the midst of Muslims near Basra in modern Iraq, and mostly all traditional Sufi schools owe their existence to the Prophet Muhammad via his cousin and son-in-law Imam Ali Ibn Abi Talib. In the midst of this, the Naqshbandi Order is a notable exception to this rule, as it traces its origin to Caliph Abu Bakr. The spread of Sufism, or to be more precise, Sufism as a movement took place between 1200 and 1500 CE. In fact, this period is acknowledged as the conventional phase of Sufism. The Sufi movement was propagated from Baghdad's major Shia areas like Khorasa, Iraq, then Persia, the Indian, African subcontinents and Muslim Spain.

### **Philosophy of Sufism**

The fundamental nature of Sufism is the search and achievement of unconditional non-existence, a condition that needs no affirmation other than the Almighty. The notion of a cherished spiritual union of the soul with the Divine Entity is essential to being a Sufi. When a person becomes a Sufi, they are in a way, spiritually activated and their soul grows in harmony with God. A Sufi evolves ultimately (as per the Sufi ideal) into an absolute through his own understanding and spiritual growth.

Sufis embrace that God has created man in his own image and although man is God's greatest creation who has been blessed with individuality, awareness and sense of bliss, man is far from perfect. Since God is said to have create man in His own image, man is definitely capable of achieving that same perfection but this perfection only comes after tremendous and unerring spiritual efforts, dedication to the pursuit and a lifetime of devotion. But God Himself is perfect, and so, the desire to accomplish perfection is mirrored in human beings.

Man has passed through various stages of evolution to reach the evolved state of a human being. This evolution is reflected in his capacity to be spiritually advanced. All good and bad characteristics of the universe can be seen reflected in a human being's nature. A person is born with these characteristic qualities of the universe, but in equilibrium. It is later that the good or the evil in each man comes forth. While no human being is perfect, each one has been blessed with the ability to discern between good and bad and to transform the bad into good in oneself. God has given man all that is required to make spiritual progress—mind, wisdom, conscience, and so on, and His Divine energy, which is called 'Mercy'.

By God's grace, each man has been given the power to distinguish between the correct and the wrong path. Some human beings ignore their sense of the right and are lead into sin such as worldly materialism, substance abuse, violence and so on. This shows an inherent imbalance in one's nature and forgetting of one's original goal—union with the Divine through spiritual progress. At any point of time, a misled individual may use his or her discretion to come back to the right path through true and honest repentance and prayer for forgiveness. The real meaning of Sufism lies in following the right path and achieving perfection.

### **Leaders of the Sufi Movement**

In the 13th century the major leaders of the Sufi movement were four friends popularly referred to as 'Chaar Yaar'— Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj of Pakpattan Jalaluddin Bukhari of Uch Bahawalpur (AD1196– 1294) Bahauddin Zakaria of Multan (AD1170–1267) and Lal Shahbaz Qalandar of Sehwan (AD1177–1274). The Sufi who left a permanent mark both on India and on the times gone by of Sufism was Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Usman al-Hujwiri, acknowledged as Daata Ganj Bakhsh, who came to Lahore in AD 1035. The religion of the Chistis, founded by Khawaja Abdal Chisti was introduced in India by Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti.

### **Teachings of Sufism**

The key tenet of Sufism is Wahdat-al-Wujud, or the 'oneness of being'. This is a direct derivation from the Shahada in Islam religion which can be loosely translated as not only 'there is no God but God', but also as 'there is no reality except Reality'. One of the names of God, indeed, is al-Haqq, which means 'Reality' or 'Truth'. The Sufis believe that the relative has no reality other than in the Absolute, and the finite has no reality other than in the Infinite. In Islam, man's access to the Absolute and the Infinite is considered to be the Holy Quran, which is God's word to his followers, and also the Prophet's word, who, in this human world, is in God's own image.

The basic philosophy of Sufism is that a human being can reach god only after the ego is fully extinguished because ego has no place in God's presence. However, this is not to say that the eternal essence of the soul has to be extinguished. In fact, what a human being must let go of is the chaos of the mind, the earthly passions and longings, which tend to limit one's consciousness to merely temporary appearances. When a person succeeds in lifting the veil of selfishness from the Soul hidden from view, it is only then that true Reality becomes visible and God can be felt with His all-embracing Presence.

As per Sufi tenets, God resides not in the brain, but in the heart. Also, the heart is the seat, not of sentiments, but of the Intellect or Spirit (ar-Ruh), which can go deep to find Reality and surpass mental notions. Man's consciousness is said to be located in a dream-like state of forgetfulness acknowledged as Ghafla. Therefore, man must be brought back to or reminded of the Truth that he has forgotten. The practice of 'Dhikr' which the Sufi must practice in a large variety of ways accomplishes this. In essence, Dhikr includes the concepts of recollection, mindfulness, contemplation and invocation.

The philosophy is not restricted to Islam and can in fact be considered a kind of universal faith which professes liberal teaching and great tolerance as shown by the conduct of most Sufis. The Sufi expression is not restricted to just the mental dimensions, but can also be expressed through poetry and the visual arts. It has found

immense popularity because it conveys its message not just to the highly intellectual or learned individuals or Islam believers, but also to the common man.

## History of Sufism

History of Sufism reveals that it has followed a long period of evolution since the time of its inception. In fact, Sufism was in existence even before the time of Prophet Muhammad, despite the fact it gained recognition and popularity as a dogma only after the coming of the Prophet.

According to Qushayri (988 AD) and some other scholars like Shahabuddin Suhrawardi, the term 'Sufi' was first used at the end of second century *Hijri* i.e. in the early ninth century AD. The term Sufi did not find a mention either in the *Sihah-i-Sittah* compiled in the 9th and 10th century AD or in the Arabic dictionary, the *Qamus* compiled in the early 15th century AD.

In its early days, Islam was a religion that professed reconciliation and harmony with people in a gentle way rather than by using coercion. However, the undutiful rule of the Umayyad immediately following the first four caliphs created such political and social conditions that many Muslims chose asceticism and a secluded life which they felt would bring them peace of the soul. Close to the end of the 1st century *Hijri*, a number of Muslims moved off the lifestyle of seclusion and ascetics towards contemplation, visions and ecstasy. While a life lived in austere conditions and poverty had been previously considered necessary for gaining access to heaven, such a life was now considered to be an expression of devotion to God. Besides this, slowly the focus on material wealth was replaced by the lack of desire for possession. In other words, complete detachment from all worldly possessions. However, most Muslims were conservative in their beliefs and customs. Indeed, they did not understand the difference between spirituality and religion and were entirely devoted to the teachings of the Holy Quran and other Muslim traditions.

Immediately after the period following the times of the Prophet Mohammed, the Sufis used to spend their lives in fasting and living according to Sharia (the Islamic code of conduct). This means that they gave up earthly pleasures, such as pursuit of wealth, fame, feasts and women. Instead, they liked to be alone and hermit-like, away from the society—anonymous, hungry and celibate. They ate very little and put on only the most basic clothing. Their main concerns were the punishments and rewards reserved for the non-believers and the believers, respectively, in the after-life.

The caliphs in early times were owners of large tracts of land, were very wealthy and played significant roles politically. As a result, many ancient centers of learning and especially the traditional schools of mystical learning fell under their monopoly. By that time, Buddhism had taken firm roots in Central Asia, which was ruled by Muslims, along with northwest India. Sufis were considerably influenced by these external factors, in terms of the practices. They took up and developed a number of practices (seemingly different from the ritual prayers) to magnify their spiritual visions and to reach the state of ecstasy.

This progression of Sufi thinking was deeply affected by many things such as the appearance of Mutazilis—a rationalist group within Islam, Batinis—an esoteric group, Bisheriya—an antinomian group, Christological sects like the Gnostics and Manicheans and the mystical groups like the Hermetics and Neo-Platonists. Sufi mystics are reported to have visited Christian monasteries, to study their devotional literature and discuss spiritual aspects with them.

A number of Sufis profess that their teachings existed even before Islam. They state that these were handed down from ancient times through various saints and prophets in the form of knowledge conveyed from heart to heart.

By the time the 8<sup>th</sup> century drew to a close, Sufism had grown to a large degree as a non-traditional method of realizing the Truth. A few early great Sufis were Hasan of Basra, Wasil Ibn Ata, Abdullah Ibn Maymun, Ibrahim Ibn Adham, Rabia of Basra, Maruf Karkhi, Khabit, Abu Sulaiman Darani, Ahmad Ibn Harith al Muhasibi, Dhul Nun Misri, Abu Yazid Bistami, Hussain Mansoor Hallaj, Abu Said, Omar Khayyam, Sanai, Ibn Arabi, Maulana Rumi and Hafiz. The period from AD 8 –9 marked the emergence and growth of theosophical and Gnostic movements, besides Sufism. In this same period, the works of Greek philosophers such as Plato, Pythagoras and Aristotle were translated and studied. This era saw a rationalistic movement, which led Sufism to take a new form and inculcate the attributes of theosophy, Gnosticism and Pantheism.

A well-known personality, Dhul Nun Misri was a learned individual, for whom it was common to experience states of ecstasy. For him, devotional music was equal to a divine influence, which could bring one closer to God. He is considered by Jami in *Nafhat-ul-Uns* to be the first to preach the doctrine of Sufism. Another learned man, Abu Yazid al Bistami was one of the greatest Sufi Masters of the 9th century, who was the first to talk about the concept of 'Fana,' i.e., obliteration or merger of one's own identity entirely with God. The pantheistic traits of Sufism can be credited to Bayazid. So, it is in the 9th century that the Sufis are believed to have realized that spiritual progress is not possible by simply following Sharia. While Sharia is recommended and indeed necessary for Muslims, it is not sufficient. After this, they started taking up various spiritual practices beyond Sharia, known as Tariqat (the path). They believed that following Shariat and Tariqat was necessary to attain the Haqiqat (the Truth).

The Sufi saints were mystics who came from Persia in the 11th century AD. They believed that there is only one God and all people are his children. They too, like the *Bhakti* saints, believed in equality and love for the fellow being and discarded feasts, fasts and rituals. They also emphasized that one can come near God through love and devotion. A form of devotional music (*qawwali*) emerged. They mixed freely with the Hindus, and preached religious tolerance. The *Sufis* were organized into twelve orders or *Silsilahs*.

### **Muin-ud-din Chisti**

Khwaja Muin-ud-din Chisti was a Sufi saint who came to India in AD 1192. After living in Lahore and Delhi for some time, he shifted to Ajmer. His fame spread far and wide. He died in AD 1235. His *dargah* at Ajmer is a place of pilgrimage for thousands who come every year from all over the country and beyond.

### **Baba Farid**

Baba Shaikh Farid was one of the founding fathers of Chisti Sufi order. He became a disciple of Khwaja Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, who was a disciple of Sheikh Muin-uddin Chisti. He preached in Haryana and Punjab. He insisted that the only way to love God was through the love of his people. Some of his verses are included in the *Adi Granth* and his followers included both Hindus and Muslims.

## Nizamuddin Auliya and Salim Chisti

Hazrat Khwaja Nizamuddin Auliya of Nasiruddin Chirag of Delhi and Salim Chisti of Sikri were the other Sufi saints of fame. They preached that *Ishwar* and *Allah* are the two different names of the same Superior Being. Nizamuddin Auliya lived in Delhi during the reign of Alauddin Khalji and preached religious tolerance and love for humanity.

In the later centuries, Sufism was also greatly influenced by the broadmindedness of the Kashmiris, a composite of Hindu-Muslim culture, in particular in the 15th century. It was for the period of this time that Sufism came to be influenced by other religious beliefs as well. The ideal of life was considered to purify the soul, have love, regard and trust in the humanity and to achieve a perfect harmony of co-existence. There appeared a close resemblance between the lifestyles of Sufis and Hindu saints as well as Buddhist monks.

It is consequently evident from the ongoing discussions on Sufism that the Sufis have been in existence since ancient times and Sufism is much older than Islam. The advent of Islam, with the proclamation of Prophet Muhammad of the unity of the Supreme Being, i.e. there is one God, had the greatest influence on the Sufis of post-Islamic period.

### Principles of Sufism

Principles of Sufism were tabulated by Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani one of the greatest Sufi saints of the Naqshbandi order. These principles essentially comprise the various basic requirements and objectives of Sufism and the best way to practice the same. To the list of principles that he compiled, three more were added later by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband.

The basic principles of Sufism were propounded by Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani, who was one of the greatest Sufi Masters of the Naqshbandi Order of Sufis. Till about the 6th century Hijri, the Sufis practised loud Dhikr (Jikr, Japa or remembrance), i.e. they used to recite the name of the Almighty loudly. It was Shaikh Gujdawani who introduced and propounded the system of silent Dhikr. He was the first one in the Sufi orders to use silent Dhikr and was later considered the master of silent Dhikr. He coined the following phrases to which three more principles were added later by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband after whom the order acquired its name.

In his book *Faslul Kitab*, Shaikh Muhammad Parsa, a friend and biographer of Shah Naqshband, said that the method of Shaikh Khwaja Abdul Khaliq al Ghujdawani in Dhikr and the teachings enunciated in his Eight Principles were embraced and hailed by all the forty Tariqats (Sufi Orders) as the way of Truth and loyalty.

The principles of Sufism laid down by him are as follows:

- **Hosh dar Dam (Conscious Breathing):** This tenet says that the real seeker is always aware that he does not take even one breath which does not have God's thoughts in it. With every breath, he must try to remain in God's presence. Each breath that is taken with consciousness of God is life and each breath taken recklessly is to be considered a loss. However, even a seeker may falter and breathe recklessly. When that happens, the seeker must ask for god's forgiveness for that breath and God will purify it and prepare them for the real

God, who is everywhere. With each breath one should make sure that the/she is not committing a sin or doing a wrong to someone.

- **Nazar bar Kadam:** A seeker should take every step with deliberation and consciousness that he or she is not doing anything which may be against spiritual progress towards God or may drag him/her down. The tenet also means that the seeker should not look about idly as this may fill their mind with needless images that make the mind vulnerable to corruption. The seeker should look down at their feet while walking because the purer their mind is after becoming a Sufi, the more likely it is to be corrupted. The simile one can consider is that of a spot on an otherwise clean white sheet, which would be more noticeable than a spot on a dirty sheet. While the first glance may be innocent and harmless, the second glance would mean interest and deliberate intention. Therefore, every step forward should be taken with Him in mind. Just like it is said that one's goal should always be in one's focus.
- **Safar dar Watan (Journey Homeward):** This tenet asks the seeker to move from the creation (the world) to the Creator (God). In other words, it means to shift focus from worldly desires and passions and human weaknesses to move towards acquiring godly traits. The Naqshbandi Sufi Order has divided this journey into two phases—first, where the seeker desires and searches for the Master (external journey), and second where the Master blesses and graces the seeker (internal journey). In the second phase, the seeker's heart becomes pure and qualifies the seeker for Divine grace.
- **Khilawat dar Anjuman (Solitude in the Crowd):** Khilawat refers to seclusion, which should be external as well as internal. External seclusion means that the seeker should stay away from people and spend time on his own, contemplating God. This will help to gain control over the senses and lead to internal seclusion ultimately. In the state of internal seclusion, a seeker should constantly focus on God, even while walking amongst a crowd or doing anything else. This fixed state is one that Sufis must adopt so that they are forever with the Almighty, undisturbed by worldly goings-on.
- **Yad Kard (Essential Remembrance):** 'Yad' means remembrance and 'Kard' means essence of remembrance. To keep oneself continuously engaged in reciting the 'Japa' (the internal practice as directed by the Master) and in such a manner that the seeker starts feeling the presence of the Master or the Almighty in his heart is the Essential Remembrance.
- **Baj Gasht (Returning):** The literal meaning of 'Baj Gasht' is to return back to the origin. In its true sense, however, it refers to developments for the period of internal practice when the seeker may come across different experiences such as sighting of light, activation of the mystique centres, acquiring miraculous powers, and so on. However, these experiences may often result in the downfall of the seeker as they may arouse the ego.

Consequently, the great masters of this order have recommended the seekers to keep on praying to the Almighty at regular intervals affirming that He alone is the objective of the seeker. The seeker should beg the Almighty for his love and knowledge and to give him strength in whatever condition he finds himself.

- **Nigah Dasht (Attentiveness):** The seeker of God should always keep an eye on his internal condition so that no doubt or ill ever arises despite the fact that

he constantly keeps on remembering the Almighty. If ever such a doubt arises, one should immediately clear the doubt as otherwise it will become difficult to do so later. Sufism is to protect one's heart from bad thoughts and from worldly inclinations.

- **Yad Dasht (Recollection):** This term refers to continuous remembrance. Through continual practice, a seeker becomes so adept in the remembrance of God that it becomes effortless for him and not a conscious exercise. The following are the three principles supplemented by Muhammad Bahauddin Shah Naqshband.
- **Wakoof Zamani (Awareness of Time):** It is the duty of the seeker to ensure that he or she spends all the time in the contemplation of God. This will also lead him or her on the path to spirituality. Besides this, the seeker must be aware of the wrongdoings and unfit actions and ask God's forgiveness for the same.
- **Wakoof Adadi (Awareness of Numbers):** There can be two meanings of the term. As per one meaning, a seeker should while holding the breath take the name of God, reinforcing His Presence in the heart. The other meaning seems to be that there is only one God and He alone should be remembered.
- **Wakoof Kulbi (Awareness of the Heart):** As per this tenet, one eye of the seeker should be forever trained on his Kulb (heart) so that his attention is always focused on Divine Presence and is not distracted from this ultimate goal.

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### 3 BHAKTI MOVEMENT: CHAITANYA AND SHANKARADEVA

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The *Bhakti* movement was a reform movement within Hinduism. 'Bhakti' means personal devotion to God. It stressed the union of the individual with God. Shankaracharya, who preached the *advaita* philosophy, was one of the most prominent religious teachers and revivalists of his time (8th century AD). His philosophy advocated that knowledge was necessary for worship.

Shankaracharya established four *maths* at Badrinath, Puri, Dwarka and Sringeri. Ramanuja and Madhava were the great philosophers who flourished during the Cholas. Unlike Shankaracharya, they preached devotion to God through love and not through knowledge. Ramanuja condemned the caste system and believed in equality of all men.

Many saints and devotional preachers led the Bhakti movement in different parts of the country. In South, the sixty-three *Nayanars* or Shaivite devotees of Lord Shiva organized and led the movement. They believed in the fact that true knowledge can be achieved only through selfless devotion and worship of the Supreme Power. The Bhakti movement of the Vaishnavaites and that of the Shaivaites were simultaneous and started almost together.

#### Characteristics of Bhakti Movement

The Bhakti Movement which originated in south India gained momentum during the latter half of the Indian medieval period between AD 800–1700 and over the period



of time it gradually spread to North India. The basic principle which the movement instilled in the people of India was absolute devotion to God.

A devotee could worship God by love and devotion. One characteristic of the Bhakti movement was that they downplayed the need to worship idols or to perform elaborate rituals for seeking His grace. Another feature on which the Bhakti saints laid stress was the equality of all castes. There was no distinction of high or low castes as far as the devotion to God was concerned. Moreover the propounders of the Bhakti movement favoured Hindu-Muslim unity. According to these saints, all men, irrespective of their religion are equal in the eyes of God.

The saints preached in the language of the common people. They did not use Sanskrit, which was the language of the cultured few. These saints laid stress on purity of heart and practice of virtues like truth, honesty, kindness and charity. According to these saints, only a virtuous man could realize God. These saints considered God as omnipresent and omnipotent. Even a householder could realize God by love and devotion. Some saints regarded God as formless or *Nirguna* at the same time as others considered him as having different forms or *Saguna*.

Many rites and rituals associated with the worship of God like *Kirtan* at a Hindu Temple, *Qawaali* at a Dargah (by Muslims), and singing of *Gurbani* at a Gurdwara are all derived from the Bhakti movement.

### **Factors that helped the development of the Bhakti movement**

There were a number of factors, which contributed to the rise, and growth of the Bhakti movement during the period of the medieval period.

- (i) Destruction and desecration of Hindu temples by the Muslim invaders. They destroyed idols of Hindu gods and goddesses. The Hindus lost faith in the dependability of their religious rites and, consequently, chose the path of love and devotion.
- (ii) Persecution of the Hindus by the Muslim rulers, who tried to convert them to Islam and imposed *jaziya* if they were not prepared to become followers of Islam.
- (iii) Ill-treatment of the lower classes in the Hindu society by the upper castes. The people of the lower castes had to suffer injustice and cruelties.

### **Preachers of the Bhakti Movement**

There were numerous socio-religious reformers who went about preaching the Bhakti movement.

#### **Ramanuja**

The first great exponent of Bhakti was Ramanuja. He lived in the 11th century. He asked his followers to worship Vishnu. He did not believe in Adi Sankara's Advaita doctrine according to which the universal soul and the individual soul are one. According to Ramanuja, the individual souls exhale from him, but are not essentially one with the Supreme Reality.

#### **Ramananda**

Ramananda propounded the Bhakti Movement in North India in the 14th century. He entirely discarded the theory of caste system by birth. He preached the worship of

Rama and Sita. Persons of all castes became his disciples. Among his chief disciples there was a barber, a *chamar* (leather worker) and a weaver. He preached in Hindi, which was the language of the common man in northern India.

### **Vallabhacharya**

Vallabhacharya was a Tailang Brahmin. He preached the worship of Vishnu in the form of Krishna. He was born in AD1479 in the Telugu country. He visited Mathura, Vrindavan and many other sacred places and finally settled at Varanasi.

### **Chaitanya**

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a *Bhakti* saint from Bengal, rejected the caste system and preached the importance of devotion for the attainment of God. He was a devotee of Lord Krishna and a Vaishnavite. He went about singing and dancing to the beating of the drum, accompanied by a large number of followers, both Hindus and Muslims. He did not care for rituals or caste distinctions. He travelled widely throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. He helped the old and the needy. People sing his hymns even today.

### **Kabir**

Kabir probably lived in the 15th century, and was a disciple of Ramananda. He was a weaver by trade. His *dohes* are sung all over the country even today. Kabir promoted brotherhood among the people and was against discrimination based on caste or religion. He preached that, 'God is one; some call him Ram and some call him Rahim; he is not found in any temple or mosque but dwells in the heart of man.' Kabir tried to bridge the gap between Hinduism and Islam and people of both the religions were his followers. The followers of Kabir were called *Kabirpanthi*.

### **Mira Bai**

Mira Bai was a Rajput princess who was married into the ruling family of Mewar. She was a passionate devotee of Lord Krishna. Her songs or hymns are famous and sung all over India even today. Mira made no caste distinction and her doors were open to people of all castes.

### **Sant Jnaneshwar**

The greatest saint of Maharashtra was Jnaneshwar, who preached in the 13th century. He wrote the Bhagavad Gita in Marathi. He worshipped Vishnu and spread his message of love throughout western India.

### **Shankaradev**

When the Bhakti movement was sweeping over all of India, Shankardev was its messenger for Assam. He is responsible for adding culture to the Assamese society through songs, musical instruments, dances, literature, festivals, monasteries, ethical movement and concept of non-violence. Shankaradev is considered the most-remembered and most influential religious leader in Assam, who singlehandedly ignited a sense of consciousness through his philosophy and saintly ways. His most well-known disciple was Madhavdev, who later was pivotal in laying the foundation for a spiritual order.

The unique strength of Shankardev was that he introduced Vaishnav ideals into a mixed society of assorted ethnic and cultural races, which were previously notorious for such practices as tantrism, animism, sorcery and human and animal sacrifice. Shankardev, through his teachings, opened up the Assamese society to the rest of the

world. In the words of Bani Kanta Kakati, 'the land was infested with itinerant teachers of the Vamacara tantric schools with the insistence on the philosophy of sex and the palate. Tantric brand of sakta Hindu faith came to be overloaded by occult primitive practices and thereby was degenerated'.

The philosophy of Shankardev is based on the Bhakti cult propounded by the *Bhagavat Puraan*. It propounds the concept of complete surrender to the will of God, as stated in the *Gita*. Shankardev propounded the eka-sarana-nama, a liberal ideology acceptable to all, which prescribes the worship of one and only reality in the person of Narayana who according to Shankardev, represents the saguna aspect of the absolute reality. The Vaishnav saint forbade the worship of any deity other than Vishnu-Krishna-Narayana. He thus succeeded in establishing his motto of monotheism in place of the prevailing polytheism and animism.

### Namdeva

Namdeva, another saint from Maharashtra, was first a tailor, a bandit and later a Bhakti saint. He composed in Marathi, travelled far and wide and held discussions with the Sufi saints. He had a large number of followers belonging to all castes.

Guru Nanak, the first guru (divine teacher) of the Sikhs (disciples), was born at Talawandi in west Punjab in AD 1469. He preached that there is one God, who is the creator of the Universe, that God is truth. Guru Nanak, like the saints of his time, refuted the authority of the Brahmins and useless rites and rituals. He was against the caste system, which separated human beings from each other. In order to remove caste distinction and bring them closer to each other, he insisted that his followers must dine from a common kitchen or *langar*.

Nanak saw no distinction between Islam and Hinduism and tried to bring the followers of the two religions closer to each other. The teachings of Guru Nanak are written in the form of verses in the book *Adi Granth*. He died in AD 1539.

His chosen successor, Guru Angad, gave the community a greater cohesion and a sense of identity. He had recorded the sayings of Guru Nanak in a specially devised script called *Gurumukhi*, meaning from the Guru's mouth. The third guru found in Akbar a great patron. During his time more people converted to this faith. Sikhism believed in community eating. It did not believe in the *pardah* system or caste distinctions. Akbar's religious tolerance and generosity saw the fourth guru, Ram Das, the beneficiary of a piece of land on which now stands the sacred Golden Temple which was completed by Ram Das' son Arjan, the fifth guru. He named the city Amritsar (Pool of Immortal Nectar) as there stands the tank filled with sacred water. Arjan also compiled the Granth Sahib, the sacred book for the Sikhs, and had it kept safely in the Golden Temple.

Guru Nanak combined the Sufi and *Bhakti* ideas and had both Muslims and Hindus as followers. God, according to him, was *nirankara* (without form), *akal* (eternal) and *alakh* (one who could not be known). He used both Hindu and Muslim names for God, i.e., Allah, Ram, Khuda, Govinda.

### ACTIVITY

Prepare a list of prominent Sufi saints and Hindu religious leaders of the Mughal period.

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## 4 SIKH MOVEMENT: GURU NANAK

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Guru Nanak was born into a Bedi Hindu Kshatriya family in Talwandi (today known as Nankana Sahib, near Lahore, Pakistan) on 15 April 1469. His father, Mehta Kalyan Das Bedi was the *patwari* (accountant) for the village of Talwandi.

Guru Nanak's mother was Tripta Devi and Bibi Nanaki was his elder sister. Nanaki was married to Jai Ram, who was the steward (*modi*) to Daulat Khan Lodi, the eventual governor of Lahore. Guru Nanak was attached to his older sister and followed her to Sultanpur to live with her. Guru Nanak also found work with Daulat Khan, when he was around 16 years old.

Guru Nanak was an intelligent child. He was different from others. Since childhood, he had a deeply contemplative mind and all efforts to engage him in worldly pursuits had failed. At age seven, his father enrolled him at the village school. As a child Guru Nanak surprised his teacher by describing the implied symbolism of the first letter of the alphabet, resembling the mathematical version of one, as denoting the unity or oneness of God. Guru Nanak was a contemporary of following three Lodhi dynasty rulers:

- Babar Lodhi (1451–1489)
- Sikandar Lodhi (1489–1517)
- Ibrahim Lodhi (1517–1526)

Nanak got great satisfaction in serving the poor and needy. An important story of his childhood tells us that once his father gave him some money to start a business in the neighbouring town. On the way, Nanak saw some sadhus (hermits or sages) who had not eaten for many days. Nanak purchased food for them with the money given by his father and they had a good meal. When Nanak's father asked him what business venture he started with the money, he replied that he made a 'most profitable bargain'. On noticing that Nanak was not interested in business his father sent him to Sultanpur Lodhi, a town in Kapurthala district of Punjab. Here, Nanak was employed as a storekeeper by the local ruler. This duty was discharged by Nanak with great integrity.

It was during his stay at Sultanpur Lodhi that Nanak got his enlightenment. According to popular traditions, one morning when Nanak went for a dip in the river Beas flowing nearby, he was absorbed in the thoughts of God and was ushered into the divine presence. Blessed by the Almighty, Nanak came out of the river to preach the holy name of the God. The first words that Nanak uttered after his enlightenment were 'there is no Hindu and there is no Musalman'. At a time when the Hindus and the Muslims were engaged in sectarian conflicts, these words heralded Nanak's new mission of reconciliation of the two.

### Basic Elements of Sikhism

In this section, you will study basic concepts of Sikhism.

#### Concept of *Ishwar*

The basic belief of Sikhism is that God exists as a real entity and not just as an idea or a design. The Gurus have described God in numerous ways in their hymns that are included in the Guru Granth Sahib. These hymns emphasize on the unity of the deity.

The best definition that any Sikh can give to the concept of God in Sikhism is by quoting the *Mulmantra*—the fundamental creed of Sikhism, which occurs at the beginning of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. It is mentioned in the first verse of the Guru Granth Sahib as follows:

There exists but one God, who is called The True, The Creator, Free from fear and hate, Immortal, Not begotten, Self-Existent, Great and Compassionate.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion and it urges its followers to practice strict monotheism. It believes in only one supreme God who, in the unmanifest form, is called Ek Omkara. In the manifest form, God is called Omkara and he has the following several attributes:

- Kartar (The Creator)
- Akal (The Eternal)
- Sattanama (The Holy Name)
- Sahib (The Lord)
- Parvardigar (The Cherisher)
- Rahim (The Merciful)
- Karim (The Benevolent)

He is also called as *Wahe Guru*—the one true God. Sikhism also does not believe in *Avataravada*, i.e., the doctrine of incarnation. It says that the Almighty God does not incarnate Himself in various *Avataras*. Sikhism is strongly against idol worship.

Sikhism assumes that God is *Karta Purakh*, the maker being. He created the whole spatial universe not from some pre-existing forcible elements, but from his own self. So, the universe is his emission. It is not a *maya* or illusion but it is real. As Guru Arjan Singh said, 'True is He and true is His creation because all have exhaled from God himself.' But God is not identical with the universe. Rather, the universe is contained within him. Sikhism also believes that God is *Akal Murat* (eternal being) and *Nirbhay* (fearless). Thus, in Sikhism, God has been described in three different aspects, i.e., God in Himself, God's relation to creation and God's relation to man. God by himself is *nirguna* (without attributes). He is timeless, formless and boundless. Whenever it suits Him, he becomes *saguna* (with attributes) and sees himself in conception.

God's relation with man is unique as the latter is his most precious creation. He is the only species which has the ability to think and understand. It has been said by Guru Arjan that once the soul has been born as a human being, its endeavour should be to unite with God. For this, the human being should have a craving for the Lord. Sikhism assigns the following characteristics to God:

- Worship and meditation are only meant for God.
- He is the creator, upholder and also the destroyer.
- God is kind.
- God is wise.
- With His grace, he comes to stay in our mind and body.
- He is the ultimate protector of all living things.
- Only God's will can ensure that poverty, pain and disease are eradicated.
- God is everywhere.

## Concept of *Bhakti*

Hinduism has been the religion of India for ages. The Vedas demonstrate this point. With the advent of Buddhism and Jainism, Hinduism became slightly sidelined as people began exploring these other two religions. However, by the 7th century AD, Hinduism had regained its lost glory and had become the most important religious faith of the country.

The Bhakti movement in Medieval India is chiefly responsible for the many rites and rituals that are linked with the reverence of God by Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The word Bhakti has been derived from the term *Bhakta*, which means to serve, revere, adore, love and honour. In the religious context, Bhakti describes a fervent devotion to God and it is defined as 'that particular affection for God which is mothered by the knowledge of the attributes of the adorable one.'

The Bhakti movement spread into numerous movements all over North and South India. In North India, the movement cannot be distinguished from the Sufi movement of the Shia Muslims of Chishti fame. The first Punjabi Sufi saint who emerged from the sufi saints belonging to the Chishti order was Baba Sheikh Farid Shakarganj. He paved the way for Punjabi patriotism and even brought peace among the Hindus and Muslims.

In North India, the Bhakti cult basically consisted of Vaisnavas. Rather than concentrating on Vishnu, it chose to concentrate on Vishnu's human embodiments – Rama and Krishna, the two incarnations of Vishnu who were central to the two epics the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Those who followed the Bhakti movement, for them, Rama and Krishna were the direct objects of devotion. In the twelfth and thirteenth century, the followers of the movement admitted saints such as Bhagat Namdev and Kabir. These saints insisted on the devotional singing of praises of the Lord through their own compositions.

Since the Bhakti movement started before Guru Nanak many historians have said that Sikhism was nothing more than a Bhakti movement of Punjab. It is completely wrong and is against the basic Sikh virtues of equality of humans and worship of one God. The ultimate Guru of a Sikh is the Guru Granth Sahib, which includes only about 10 per cent of the verses of the Bhakti saints.

As a famous Sikh author says, 'Sikhism undoubtedly accepted some of the aspects of the Bhakti movement and admitted some of its practices into its ordained set. It did lay down spiritual love as the way to the deity, but the deity to be worshipped was neither Shiva nor Vishnu. Further, it could not be any of the incarnations of Shiva or Vishnu or any other God of the Hindu pantheon. It was the one and only God, the Lord of the Universe who was at once transcendent (Nirguna) and immanent (Sarguna). Renunciation of the world as a spiritual pursuit thus stood rejected and celibacy was also no more countenanced under Sikhism. Instead, full participation in life in a spirit of detachment was prescribed.'

Sikhism lays huge stress on equality between male and female, good work ethic and leading a righteous married life. Sikhism enunciated thus 'of all the religious rules and observances, *grihasthya* (the homestead) is supreme. It is from here that everything else is blessed.'

## Concept of *Shabad*

*Shabad* means hymn. In Sikhism, a *shabad* is a sacred song that is selected from Sikhism's scripture Guru Granth Sahib. *Shabad* is connected with *surti*, which has to

be attuned to the melody of *shabad* to realize God. In this process, it becomes the Guru and *surti*, absorbed in its melody, is its follower. For achieving union of *surti* with *shabad*, one has to continuously remember God and try to mould one's life to truthful living. It is not a simple affair.

The *shabads* or hymns of Guru Granth Sahib are known as *Gurbani* or the Guru's word, and are written in the *Gurmukhi* script and composed in *raag* (musical score). The main focus of any Sikh worship service is *kirtan* (singing of the sacred *shabads* of *Gurbani*). *Shabads* may be sung by *kirtanis* (individual singers) or *ragis* (professional singers well versed in *Gurbani*) accompanied by *sangat* (members of the Sikh congregation).

### Concept of Guru

Almost all the great religions of the world highlight the need of a preceptor or Guru or holy man for the achievement of salvation. The Vedas list the qualities of a religious guide. Even Guru Nanak has highlighted that bliss can be attained only through a Guru. Sikhism does not identify any chosen prophets. Guru Nanak Sahib did not insist on a human or physical Guru. Rather, his Guru was God Himself.

The importance of the Guru in Sikhism can hardly be overemphasized. What is important in Sikhism is not the person but the word. It is said in Sikhism, 'The word is the Guru. The Guru is the word. If the devotee follows what the word says, surely the Guru will save him.' This is the reason why Guru Gobind Singh installed the Granth Sahib as the Guru of all times. He had observed that Sikhs do not need any man as their Guru as the word is now with them. Guru Arjan Sahib had said, 'Without a Guru, liberation cannot be won. The Guru is my boat, which will ferry me across the rough ocean of existence.'

Guru Ramdas Sahib had said, 'The Guru is the Sikh and the Sikh who practices the Guru's word is equal to the Guru.' Guru Gobind Singh Sahib had said, 'I live and have my being in the Khalsa.' The Guru lives in the form of the *Panth* (Group) and resides in the *Sangat* (Collective). All the Gurus are identical with Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh passed on the corporal succession to the *Panth*, which is regarded as the embodiment of the Guru. The *Panth* represents the Guru and is progressing well with the passage of time. It is a dynamic and corporate personality with authority to make decisions that are binding on the Sikhs. Thus, we see that there is a two-fold concept of the Guru—one permanent and the other progressive. The word is the embodiment of eternal and changeless truth, while the *Panth* is the progressive, collective personality of the Guru among the Sikhs.

Guru Granth Sahib is the living embodiment of the ten Gurus of the Sikhs. It is the living flame of the name, which lights the lamp of the disciple. There is no place for a living Guru in the Sikh religion because *Gurbani* is Guru and Guru is *Gurbani*. This is the permanent Guru concept of Sikhism. When a Sikh is in doubt about any principle of Sikhism, he refers the matter to the *Panth* for a decision or clarification. This is the progressive Guru concept of Sikhism.

### Sikhism in India

Founded in India, Sikhism has had a profound impact on Indian society. It had a calming influence on the warring Hindus and Muslims through its message of unity of God and brotherhood of mankind. Sikhism managed to dent the strong hold of the caste system in Indian society by strongly condemning it. As visualized by Guru

Nanak, Sikhism actually turned into a religion that played the role of a reconciler between Hinduism and Islam. It drew from both the religions and their followers and achieved some kind of a synthesis. It preached equality of all religions and included several hymns of the Hindu *Bhaktis* or *Bhaktas* and Muslim saints in the *Granth Sahib*.

The Sikh Gurus gave a positive direction to the Indian society by emphasizing upon transcendental humanism and other spiritual values. Realizing that Indian society was bereft of love and understanding at that point in time (fifteenth and sixteenth century), the Sikh Gurus preached the philosophy of love and compassion of the God.

Sikhs in India have been peace-loving people and have been very industrious. They are hard working and have migrated to other countries in search of a better livelihood. However, things took an ugly turn in the 1980s and 1990s when militant and aggressive Sikh groups tried to create a new country of Khalistan from out of the existing State of Punjab. Terrorist acts resulted in many killings and the Hindus in Punjab were unlawfully targeted. Many Hindus were murdered in cold blood.

Things neared normalcy towards the mid-1990s but the fair name of Sikhism was tarnished by the acts of the militant Sikhs. However, Sikhism continues to evoke love and respect from Hindus and Muslims because of the universal brotherhood preached by it. Sikhism symbolizes the great plurality of modern India as it happily co-exists with so many other religious faiths.

### Did you know?

There are multiple legends associated with the birth and death of Kabir (1440–1518). Some people say that he was born in a Muslim weaver's family, while others say that he was born to a Brahmin widow. It is said that when he passed away, tussle took place between the Hindus and Muslims over the issue of performance of the last rites. Eventually, in the memory of the great Kabir, his tomb as well as a Samadhi Mandir, both were constructed, which are still standing next to each other.

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## 5 SUMMARY

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In this unit, you have learnt that:

- The most important attributes that have contributed to the wide acceptance of Sufism is their philosophy of love for humanity, purity of mind and perfection in conduct.
- History of Sufism reveals that it has followed a long period of evolution since the time of its inception. In fact, Sufism had existed even before the time of Prophet Muhammad.
- According to Sufism, since God Himself is perfect, the desire to accomplish perfection is reflected overwhelmingly in the human beings.
- The central doctrine of Sufism is *Wahdat-al-Wujud*, or the 'oneness of being'.
- The Bhakti Movement which originated some time in AD 800 – 1700 brought about many social reforms in the people of India.



- The movement propounded seeking God with complete devotion and did not favour idol worship. It also proclaimed that in the eyes of the Almighty, there are no high or low castes. The Movement helped strengthen Hindu– Muslim relations among the people. The chief belief of Sikhism is faith in *Wahe Guru*. The Sikhs call their God as *Wahe Guru*, which means that God is great.
- Sikhism is one of the youngest of all religions in the world. Its history goes back to the year 1469 AD.
- The basic belief of Sikhism is that God exists as a real entity and not just as an idea or a design.
- Sikhism lays huge emphasis on equality between male and female, good work ethics and leading a righteous married life.
- The Sikh Gurus gave a positive direction to the Indian society by emphasizing upon transcendental humanism and other spiritual values.

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## 6 KEY TERMS

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- **Sufism:** Defined as the inner mystical dimension of Islam and whoever adheres to the principles of Sufism is called a Sufi
- **Dhikr:** The practice of reciting the name of the Almighty loudly
- **Nayanmars:** The sixty-three saintly devotees of Shiva are known as Nayanmars (Nayanars)
- **Khalsa:** A group of baptized Sikhs
- **Panth:** The entire Sikh community
- **Pantheon:** All the Gods of a particular religion
- **Sangat:** The collective body of Sikhs, who are members of a congregation

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## 7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. (a) Dhul Nun Misri; (b) *Haqiqat*; (c) AD 1200 –1500; (d) Man; (e) Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti; (f) World of Creator; (g) Return to the origin
2. (a) True; (b) False
3. (a) Ramanuja; (b) Ramananda
4. (a) *Wahe Guru*; (b) Sikhism
5. (a) True; (b) True

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## 8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. What is Sufism? Add a note on the philosophy of Sufism.
2. Who was Guru Nanak? What message did he give to humanism?
3. Discuss the origin of the Bhakti Movement in India.
4. Discuss the concepts of God, Bhakti and Guru in Sikhism.

## Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse the teachings of Sufism.
2. Discuss the emergence of Sufism in India.
3. Analyse the various principles of Sufism.
4. Analyse the teachings of the various propounders of the Bhakti Movement and the socio-cultural reforms that occurred in India.
5. Write briefly about the impact that Sikhism had on India.

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## 9 FURTHER READING

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Hasnain, N.; *Indian Society and Culture: Continuity and Change*, Jawahar Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2004.

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# UNIT 4 SOCIAL AND CULTURAL LIFE

## Structure

- 1 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Classification of Society
  - 2.1 Position of Women
- 3 Development of Literature
- 4 Art, Architecture and Painting
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

## 0 INTRODUCTION

The emperor was supreme in the society of the Mughal times and under him was a feudal system. The emperor had a matchless status and ruled as the final authority in every way. After him came the rank of nobility, which included the zamindars and the chieftains. The only way to be a part of the aristocratic class was through the clan or family links.

The Mughals promoted art and architecture in every way and as a result, both flourished. Another reason for this development was that new ideas had been successfully adopted from the Sultanate and the insecurity of the Sultanate period was not there to disrupt the growth of culture. With the backing of the authoritative Mughal rulers, remarkable works in art and architecture were begun in all regions of the kingdom. Besides architecture, painting was a well-liked and accepted expression of art in those times. Due to this reason, a Mughal school of painting developed, which was distinct from all other styles of painting.

However, after Jahangir passed away, Mughal art declined gradually because Shah Jahan was not much fond of art and did not have any knowledge regarding art. After him, even Aurangzeb was not a patron of art, and as a result the Mughal painters moved on to other autonomous states in Rajasthan and other countries where they could work with artistic freedom as they wanted. As far as monuments are concerned, all Mughal kings had a fine eye, except Aurangzeb who felt that great buildings were only indulgences and did not believe in spending state money on their construction and maintenance.

In this unit, you will learn about the classification of society in Mughal times, and trace the development of literature, art and architecture in the Mughal era.

## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the classification of society in Mughal times
- Discuss the position of women in society

- Trace the development of literature in the Mughal era
- Identify the development in art, architecture and literature in the Mughal period

## 2 CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIETY

### Common Men

During the Mughal period, majority of the society belonged to the class of the commoners. Among the common men in Mughal times could be included the peasants, labourers, artisans, etc. The people of this class led a comparatively hard life. The food of the people of this class was very ordinary. The normal food of the commoners was boiled rice, chapatti, pulses, *saag* and some other vegetables with salt, although the most universal and popular was Khichari, which was prepared in an ordinary way, and was taken without ghee and butter. The diet of an ordinary Muslim was simple like that of Hindu. This normal meal consisted of wheat bread, fried bread and chicken. The people of this class could not afford good and costly clothes. Their clothing was generally insufficient, and they could not afford to use woollen garments. Babur was struck by the scanty clothes worn by the common people. He observed that 'peasants and people of the low standing go about naked'. He described the langota or decency cloth worn by men and the Sari worn by women. His impression has been corroborated by later travellers. Ralph Fitch, who came to India towards the end of the 16th century, says that 'at Banaras, the people go naked save a little cloth bound about their middle'.

Writing about the people of the common class between Lahore and Agra, Sal Bank says, 'The plebeian is so poor that a great part of them go naked'. Abul Fazal, the court historian of Akbar, writes that men and women of Bengal for the most part go naked wearing only a cloth about their loins, and this appears to have been true for a bulk of India's teeming millions. De Laet wrote that 'the labourers had insufficient clothing to keep themselves warm and cosy during winter'. However, Fitch observed, 'In the winter which is our May, the men wear quilted gowns of cotton, and quilted caps'. But their accounts do not appear to be completely true.

Because the accounts of many contemporary historians prove that the Indians used clothes in an abundant skepticism. In fact, the remarks of the foreign travellers need to be treated with some skepticism. Coming from a colder climate and not familiar with the climate and traditions of India, the impression of nakedness which they gained was natural. The overall impression remains one of insufficient clothing rather than nakedness. According to Padshahanama of Lahauri, the people used lungis (loincloth) in private. When and where the climate was cold, the people covered themselves more fully. Generally, the Hindu of this class wore dhoti and kurta, and the women wore sari, blouse along with some inner garments. The usual dress of an average Muslim appears to have been a payjamah (ijar), an ordinary shirt, and a cap on his shaven head. The women of this community used to wear salwar, shirt or long kurta along with burkha.

As far as the housing and furniture was concerned, little needs to be said. Most of the people of this class used to live in houses made of mud. They had hardly any furniture except cots and bamboo mats, and earthen utensils, which were made by the local potter. Copper and bell, metal plates, and utensils were expensive, and were generally not used by commoners. The poor people of the village often came to cities

in search of jobs and worked there as porters, domestic servants and artisans. This was partly due to the natural growth of the population, and partly due to their abandoning their cultivation due to the famine or other unfavourable circumstances, such as over-assessment. As far as the cities and the towns were concerned, the largest class consisted of the poor artisans, the servants and slaves, the soldiers, pet. shopkeepers, etc.

The salary of the lowest grade of servant, according to European travellers, was less than ₹2 per month. The bulk of the means and foot soldiers began at less than ₹2 per month. But because the costs of the things were less, these people did not have to suffer much, in spite of the fact that their pay was very low.

### The Middle Classes

According to historians like Mooreland, in this age, middle class or the intelligentsia was almost non-existent. This is partly true because even at that time there were Vakils, Hakims, Vaidyas, and scholarly Pandits and Ulemas throughout the country, though their number was very low as compared to the population of the country. According to the well-known historian, Dr Satish Chandra, 'The middle class in medieval India consisted mainly of merchants, professional classes, such as Vaidyas and Hakims, and officials'. The people of this class lived a frugal life, free from luxury. The merchants lived simple and temperate lives. As Bernier observed, they would always try to conceal their wealth and deliberately lived in a state of studied indigence because they were afraid lest they should be robbed of their wealth by the provincial governors who were at once covetous and corrupt. In fact, there was a high degree of professionalism among the Indian merchants. Some specialized in wholesale trade and others in retail trade, the former being called Seth or Bohra and the latter Beoparis or Banik.

In south India, the Chettis formed the trading community. There was a special class, banjaras, who specialized in the 'carrying' trade. The banjaras used to move from place to place, overladen with salt, ghee, food grains, haldi, etc. The majority of the Pandits and the Ulemas were dependent on charity and were servants of the states. Therefore, this class could not undertake the intellectual leadership of the society and used to think of augmenting comforts by making the upper classes happy.

In religious matters, the Pandits and the *Ulemas* had great effect on ordinary people but they did not have the capacity to provide moral leadership to the country and free them from any social evils. The middle class people were often depressed because they wanted to live like the people of high class in a luxurious manner, but because of their lesser income, they could not do so. There was a lot of use of wine in this class. They also gave great attention towards cosmetics, etc.; their standard was not as high as that of nobility but their financial condition was better. The middle classes managed to have their meals thrice daily. On the occasions of marriage and festivity, they indulged in extravagances beyond their means.

### Higher Classes

In this division came the people of three categories. Firstly, in this class came the Emperor, very high officials, Mansabdars and Zamindars. Second came the provincial rulers— Mansabdars and other nobles. Thirdly, the Gazirdars or the land-owners, etc., were also the part of the high class.

The ruling class used to enjoy the highest standard in the society, both socially and economically; the Mughal nobility formed a privileged class. Theoretically, the

door of the Mughal nobility was open to everyone. In practice, persons belonging to the aristocratic families, whether they were Indian or foreigners, had a decided advantage. To begin with, the bulk of the Mughal nobles were drawn from the homeland of the Mughal, Turan, and from its neighbouring areas, Tajakistan, Khursana, Iran, etc. The Mughal rulers never followed a narrow racialist policy, recruiting their nobles. Along with the Mughals, highest nobles were appointed from the Afghans, the Hindustani Muslims, the Rajputs and other Hindus also. The nobles tried to live up to the standard of the Emperor, and had the same vices and virtues.

Mughal court habits were carried to the Rajputana by the Rajput Rajas. The nobles of this period lived in a great style and most of the European travellers testify that their standard of living was much higher than that of the European monarchs. The Mughal nobles received extremely high salaries but their expenses were also very high. Each noble maintained a large train of servants and attendants and a large stable of horses, elephants and transport of all types. Many of them maintained a large harem of women, which was considered normal for a man of a status during Mughal period. They used to spend lavishly on clothes, food and ornaments. Their life was luxurious. Because of their spendthrift nature and not saving enough money, many nobles used to be in debt at the time of their deaths. Some nobles used to invest in trade. Some purchased land, bought gardens and got markets constructed, and some people from this class made fruits of new kinds popular. Many nobles extended patronage to musicians, poets, scholars and painters. They also encouraged many artisans.

From the writing of Abul Fazal and other contemporary scholars, it is clear that the personal ownership of land was very old in India. The right of the ownership in land depended mainly upon succession. But new rights of ownership were being created all the time. The tradition was that anyone who first brought land under cultivation was considered its owner. In addition to owning the lands they cultivated, a considerable section of Zamindars had the hereditary right of collecting the land revenue from a number of villages. They used to get a share of the land revenue. The Zamindars had their own armed forces and they generally lived in forts or garhis, which was both a place of refuge and a status symbol. In the whole of India, Zamindars were called by different names like Sri Deshmukh, Patil, Naik, etc.

In addition to the Zamindars, there was a large class of religious leaders and scholars also whom the Emperor granted land due to their qualities and services to the Mughal empire. Such grants were given for their maintenance and were called milk or Madad-i-Massh. Although these grants were to be renewed by every ruler, they often became hereditary in practice. We have little idea of the living standard of this particular section of high class. But this can be said definitely that their living standard was far better than the people of middle and lower classes.

### **Family Life during the Mughal Period**

Majority of the people lived in a joint family. There was no place for private property within the joint family but all members had a right to spend from the joint income of the family. This family system on the one hand kept the people under the feeling of mutual cooperation, while on the other hand, it hindered the development of the feeling of self-dependence and the cultivation of individual personality traits. In a joint family, generally all the members were supposed to follow the orders of the oldest male member. The system of joint family was popular among the Hindus as well as among the Muslims during the Mughal period. The well known historian K.M. Ahsraf writes

about the joint family of the medieval period. 'In rural countries the family is the major institution of domestic life; it ranks even above the church and the state. The Indians in this respect are still a family community.'

## Caste System

Even during the Mughal period, the caste system and the feeling of inequality in the Hindu society remained rooted. The Hindu society was divided into many castes and the feeling of untouchability and inequality was more prevalent among the Hindu people of the rural India than the urban one. The descriptions of some historians testify the existence of the caste system. As Mooreland points out in his book 'India at the death of Akbar' that the Hindu caste system existed in full vigour, as it does today, though the English documents of the period do not as a rule differentiate between the various types of castes and classes.

Just as they refer to all the Hindus under the generic title of 'Gentus', i.e., Gentities, so they apply the term 'Moor' to all classes of the Mohammadans. The Mohammadans of India at this date were roughly divided into those of the north-western region and those of the coast. Though the Hindus did not like to mix up with the Muslims in the beginning and hesitated to take their foods, later on both the communities started participating in each other's festivals.

As a result of the integration of the two cultures, a new culture had arisen, which later on came to be known as the Indo-Muslim culture. Many Hindus and Sufi saints raised their voice against the caste system and discrimination among the human beings on the basis of caste. There is no doubt that they could not eliminate altogether this evil from Indian society but it cannot be said their efforts were altogether useless. To quite an extent, there was a feeling of unity among the Mughals, Pathans, Turks, Rajputs, Jats and other Hindu sects. Now Akbar's secular state has taken place of the Sultanate period's religion predominating state. The concept of *sulahkul* of Akbar consolidated the feeling of co-operation, mutual understanding and goodwill between the people of different caste and communities.

## Food and Drink

The daily food of the Hindus and the Muslims was essentially the same except that meat was a popular dish of the Muslims. The dishes in Mughal age included different varieties and their quality depended upon the socio-economic status of different classes amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. People of higher strata used high quality wheat, rice, vegetables, fruits, sweets, etc. Most of the nobles, Zamindars and members of the royal family used to purchase dry and imported fruits. As Jahangir has written in his book *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, 'During that period, foreign fruits were easily available in the market'. Ice, scents, rose water, meat and wine, etc., were occasionally used even by the common people in those days.

The Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar, took keen interest in the bakery and had bought the best material for his kitchen. The food of the upper class was also very costly. Puri and luchis were quite popular among the people of this class. Hindus in general being vegetarians, confined themselves to pulses, curd, butter, oil and milk, and its several preparations. Abul Fazal gives a detailed list of various vegetables, meat and sweet dishes in the *Ain-e-Akbari*. The favourite dishes of the upper class Muslims were meat, fish, keema-pulao, dum biryani, halwa, etc. The common people, both Hindus and Muslim, could ill-afford the expenditure on rich and dainty dishes,

and contented themselves with simple food. Khichri was the most popular dish of this class.

The Gujaratis preferred rice and curd. Rice formed the chief food of the people of the South. The middle classes managed to have their meals thrice daily.

The utensils used in the Hindu kitchens were all made of bronze or brass while those of the Muslims were of copper or earthen ware. The Mughal emperors used silver or gold utensils and were very fond of precious China and glassware. Wine, opium, bhaang and tobacco were the most common intoxicants abused in the Mughal period. Tea and coffee were not taken as beverages in those days but as intoxicants. Babur and Jahangir were renowned drinkers. Humayun was fonder of opium more than alcohol. Akbar and Shah Jahan never passed the limit of decency whenever they took wine but Aurangzeb totally abstained from wine. Some superior kinds of wine were also imported from foreign countries like Portugal and Iran. Betel leaf was in common use among all the classes of the Indians.

### **Means of Amusement**

The Mughal period has been called the age of joy and pleasure on the account of the organizing of the different kinds of games, sports, fairs, festivals, and other various sources of recreation and amusement. People used to have recreation through several types of sports, such as archery and Polo, hunting, catching fish, wrestling, boxing, kiting, animal race, animal fighting, walking and touring, boating and swimming, horse riding, etc. Apart from this, there were many festivals for amusement. The Hindu festivals were like that of present day, like Diwali, Holi, Raksha Bandhan, Bhaiya Duj, Durga Puja, Basant Panchami, Ram Navami, Krishna Janmashtami, Shivratri, etc. The Muslims had Shab-e-Barat, Eid ul-Fitr, Id-ul-Zuha, Barah Wafat, etc. Among royal festivals were Aab-i-Peshan, Meena Bazar, birthday celebration, etc.

Some indoor games were used as the means of recreation. The important and popular indoor games of the Mughal period were chess, playing cards, chopar, chandal mandal and dice roll gambling. In those days, theatrical performances were also a source of recreation for the people. Smooth faced boys were dressed up as women to take part in the drama. The theatre, dance and music had their prescribed hours. We also find that poetic recitations were frequently organized. Gulbadan Begum writes that 'renounced poets were called upon and guests were invited'.

Gardening was also a very notable means of recreation for the royal individuals and nobles. Babur laid out symmetrical gardens and fitted them with fountains. Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb visited Kashmir to spend their summer and to enjoy the beauty of Kashmir. During the Mughal period, we find that fairs were held at numerous seats of Hindu pilgrimage. It also appears that there were many local fairs in every province held in the memory of some reverends. Most important Hindu fairs were held at Prayag, Haridwar, Gaya, Ayodhya, Mathura, Puri, Dwarka, Ujjain, Kanchipuram and Rameshwaram.

### **Dress, Ornaments and Cosmetics**

According to M.A. Ansari, 'dress is the mirror of the civilization'. Indian dress, throughout the ages had been determined mainly by the climate conditions as well as by the changing requirements of the socio-religious customs and the manners of our country. There is no doubt that the foreign influence also played an important part in its evolution. The Mughal emperors were very much interested in new fashions and



variety in dresses. Humayun invented several new brands of dresses, particularly the one called ulbagcha. It was a vast waist coat open in front and hanging down of the waist over the Qabaor Coat. Akbar employed skilled tailors to improve the style of costumes in his wardrobe. The Ain-i-Akbari describes eleven types of coats. The most important of them was the Takan Chiyah Peshwai coat with a round skirt tied on the right side, open in front and tied in the back, and Shah Ajidah, the royal fur coat. Shah Jahan was fond of fashionable dresses which were profusely adorned with costly pearls, diamonds and rubies. Aurangzeb was, however, a man of modern taste and habits, and he, undoubtedly, made an attempt in simplicity in matters of dressing.

The people of the upper class spent lavishly on their dresses, and the wealthy Muslims wore both salwar and breeches or tight trousers. Over their shirts they wore narrow waist coats. The rich also carried coloured woollen shawls over their shoulders. The dress of the common people differed almost radically from that of the aristocracy. The common people generally went quite naked except for a piece of cloth round their waist which reached their knees. Babur writes in his memoirs, 'The Hindus wore one thing called langota, decent cloth which hangs to span below the navel'.

The remarks of the foreign travellers and some of the scholars need to be treated with caution. Coming from a colder climate and not familiar with the climate and traditions of India, the impression of nakedness which they gained was natural. The overall impression remains one of the insufficiency of clothing rather than their nakedness. It should be remembered that in those days cloth was comparatively more expensive than it is now, in comparison to food. Nakedness extended to shoes. Nikitan observes that the people of the Deccan went bare-foot. However, the contemporary English traveller Ralph Fitch, speaking of Patna says, 'Here the women are so bedecked with silver and copper that it is strange to see, they use no shoes by reason of the rings of silver and copper they wear in their toes'. In those days, most of the Brahmins used wooden slippers in summer. The middle class people used red leather shoes embroidered with gold, silver or silver flowers.

During the Mughal period, women were very anxious to adorn themselves with a variety of bulky ornaments. Abul Fazal enumerates 37 types of ornaments in his list given in Ain-i-Akbari. According to him, chaulk, mang, kot-bildzr, sekra and binduli were used for adorning the head and the forehead. Ears were adorned with bali, more-bhanwar, peepal patti, karan phool, etc. Natch and besar were used to adorn the nose. Necklaces of gold, pearl and other costly stones were used to adorn the neck. Rings were worn in toes and fingers, Bichua, ghungru and payal were also worn by women on their feet. As for men, the Muslims were usually against ornaments. Some of them, however, wore amulets. The Hindus on the other hand, adorned themselves with either ear and finger rings. All the Mughal emperors except Aurangzeb adorned themselves with all possible types of jewellery, especially during important festivals and events.

Many things were used as cosmetics by the men and women. Wasma and khizab for hair dyeing were prepared from indigo and other ingredients. Soaps, powders and creams had their substitutes in ghazul myrobalans, ubtan, (paste) and pounded sandal-wood. According to Ain-i-Akbari, different types of perfumes were used by the royal families and the nobles. Nur Jahan's mother prepared a new perfume from roses and named it Itr-i-Jahangiri. It is evident that women in general were more particular about their toilet than men. Abul Fazal describes in the Ain-e-Akbari the 16 items of a woman's toilet which includes bathing, anointing, braiding the hair, decking the crown of her head with jewels, eating pan, garlands of flowers and decorating herself with various ornaments.

## .2.1 Position of Women

The best way to understand the spirit of a civilization, and to appreciate and realize its excellence and limitations is to study the history of its womenfolk, the development and change in their status, and their position from time to time. The position of the Indian women during the Mughal period registered a further decline. Child marriage, polygamy, Sati and Pardha continued, and personal respect for the sex went down. Even a liberal emperor like Akbar had to issue strict order that if a young woman was found running about the streets and markets of the town, and while doing so did not veil herself or allowed herself to be unveiled, she was to go to the quarters of the prostitutes and take up the profession.

Barbosa, an early 16th century traveller, has referred to the strict observation of the Pardha by the women of Bengal. Eunuchs were freely employed as a means of communication between the male and female members of the royal family. Hindu ladies could move out of doors with little or no restrictions. Unlike Muslim women, they did not cover themselves from head to foot. The birth of a daughter was considered inauspicious. A Rajput was often heard to say 'accursed be the day, when a woman child is born to me'. A wife who unfortunately happened to give birth to girls in succession was despised and even sometimes divorced. Generally, polygamy was prevalent among the Muslims whereas Hindus practiced monogamy. Among the Hindus, the daughters were married at a very early age. Akbar tried to stop the evil of early marriage but he did not succeed.

According to Abul Fazl, Akbar issued instructions that a boy of less than 21 years and a girl of less than 16 years could not be married. Among the Hindus, widow remarriage was prohibited, except among the lower caste people. The custom of Sati was prevalent. Even betrothed girls had to commit Sati on the funeral pyres of their would-be husbands. Those widows who would not burn themselves with the dead body of their husbands were harshly treated by the society. They were not allowed to wear ornaments or to braid their long hair. But the position of Muslim women was better in this aspect. Muslim women could remarry.

So far as rights over property were concerned, the position of Muslim women was much better as compared to their Hindu counterparts. They had equal share in their father's property. Generally, no attention was paid towards the education of women in the lower and middle classes. Only the women of high classes got education; that is why many ladies of a high class did remarkable works in the field of literature, politics, etc. For example, Humayun's sister Gulbadan Begum wrote, Humayunama and translated Tuzk-i-Bauri in Persian. Nur Jahan played a very active role in the Mughal court. Meera Bai became a popular poetess of that time. Similarly, Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar and Tara Bai of Maratha state played very active roles in politics. About Tara Bai, the well known historian J.N. Sarkar rightly observed, 'Her administrative genius and strength of character saved the nation in that awful crisis'. Thus, we reach the conclusion that women were not given equal opportunities in all fields; or they could have played an important role in the society.

### Social Customs and Faiths

Among the Hindus, many important family and social customs began with the birth of a child and continued throughout life among them. These six were birth celebration, naming ceremony, Sagai or engagement, marriage ceremony, sacred thread wearing, and Mundan ceremony. Some Hindus used to celebrate the first day of school going

of the child by distributing sweets and gifts. The Muslims also celebrated the birth of a child with a ceremony called Aqiqah. Naming ceremony was also celebrated among them, which was called Bismillah. Other important customs among the Muslims were circumcision and the school going ceremony.

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### 3 DEVELOPMENT OF LITERATURE

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During the Mughal period, education was given special emphasis, especially by Akbar. Akbar, himself a scholar in Turkish and Persian, emphasized the need for the right education. A reformed coordination of instruction took place in the Mughal times. Primary school curriculum comprised learning. Thus, under the guidance of his finance minister, Fathullah Shirazi, a systematized educational set-up was implemented. Accordingly, special sections of the Holy Quran were read out and explained to the students. The curriculum emphasized the practice of reading and writing the alphabet and other lessons on wooden boards.

In the secondary institutions, the art of administration, arithmetic, algebra, sciences, accounts, economics, history, law, morals, literature and philosophy were taught. The aim of education was to bring out the latent faculties of the students, to inculcate authority, to mould character, prepare for life and equip them for the various professions. Religious conviction was at the root of all studies. Teachers were held in high esteem. Universities were of the residential type. Monitorial system was in vogue, education was free and scholarships were granted. Most of the Islamic schools were attached to mosques and were called *Makhtabs*. There were Hindu institutions also, called *pathshalas*, especially during Akbar's reign. Some of the prominent centres of learning during the Mughal Era were Delhi, Lahore, Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Multan, Sialkot, Lucknow, Ajmer and Murshidabad. Scholars from Central Asia and the East served in these institutions. While the students received free education, the scholars were well rewarded from the treasury.

Literature during the Mughal period witnessed tremendous development as there was a return of a stable and prosperous empire. Persian, Sanskrit, Hindi and Urdu languages saw tremendous creative activity as did many vernacular languages. The emperors extended their patronage profusely to this activity. For the duration of the Mughal period Urdu developed more in the Deccan than in Hindustan where its expansion began only during the reign of Aurangzeb. The social content of the literature was inadequate. Themes are over and over again taken from outside India. Such literature was a necessary outcome of medieval feudalism and aristocratic life. Major art works of the era point to the huge influence of the Muslims in the growth and development of the historical writing and prose narration.

Literature in the Mughal period developed during Akbar's reign. Different branches of literature such as translations, histories, letters and verse developed during the Mughal Era especially during Akbar's reign. The return of a stable government also helped in the development of literature. Since Persian was the language of the Mughal Court, most works of art were in Persian. The literature of the Mughal Period has a special place in world history as they are the main source of information about the life and times of the people of that era. Besides Akbar, Shah Jahan was also a great patron of arts. As mentioned in an earlier unit, Shah Jahan's reign was referred to as the Golden Period. Some of the most famous works of art of this period are listed below:

Ta'rikh-Ialfi	Mulla Daud
Ain-i-Akbari, Akbarnamah	Abul Fazal
Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh	Badauni
Tabaqat-i-akbari	Nizam-ud-din Ahmad
Ma'asir-i-Rohini	Abdul Baqi

The most accomplished writer was Abul Fazl. He was a poet, an essayist, a critic and a historian. Abul Fazl wrote the *Akbarnamah* which is in three volumes and talks in detail about the Mughal Emperors and their reign. Poetry was at its zenith during the Mughal reign. Babur and Humayun were poets and this tradition was continued by Akbar. Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Fateh, Ghizali, Mohammad Husain Naziri and Sayyid Jamaluddin Urfi of Shiraj were the prominent poets of that period.

Jahangir possessed an excellent literary taste. His autobiography is second only to that of Babur as far as content and style is concerned. His court was adorned by literary gems like Ghiyas Beg, Naqib Khan, Mutamid Khan, Niamatullah and Abdul Haqq Dihlawi. Some historical works like the *Ma'asir-i-Jahangiri*, *Padshah-namah* by Abdul Hamid Lahori, *Shah-jahannamah* by Inayat Khan and *Amal-i-Salih* by Muhammad Salih Shah were composed during this period. Two distinct schools of writers had come into existence during this period, the Indo-Persian school and the purely Persian discipline. Abul Fazl was an exceptional representative of the Indo-Persian discipline. Abdul Hamid Lahauri, Md. Waris, Chandra Bhan and Md. Salih were the representatives of this school. This school absorbed Indian ideas. The poets wrote *ghazals*, *Qasida*, *masnavi* and poems of adulation. Gilani, Kalim, Qudsi, Rafi, Munir, Haziq, Khyali and Mahir were the some of the popular poets. There were prose writings of other types for occurrence dictionaries, medicinal books, astronomy, mathematics and translations from Sanskrit.

Records from the pages of history say that Aurangzeb in the earlier days of his reign wrote many poems and other works of art. But he gave up this amusement in accordance with Islamic injunctions. Works of art during Aurangzeb's reign were composed in secret and kept away from the public. Some of the famous works from this period were *Alamgirnamah* by Mirza Muhammad Kazim, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* of Khafi Khan, *Khulasat-ut-Tawa-rikh* of Sujan Rai Khatri and *Fatuh-i-Alamgiri* of Ishwar Das.

Provincial languages developed in leaps and bounds during the Mughal Period. This age may be called the classical age of Hindustani literature. Hindi owed its greatest development to a number of saints and poets. This period saw some of the greatest Hindi and Persian writers such as Tulsidas, Kabir, Surdas, Sundar Das, Chintamani, Kavindra Acharya, Keshava Das, Matiram, Bhushan, Bihari, Deva, Padmakar, Alam, and Ghananand, among others. Religion, heroism, human love and praise of the king were some of the themes explored by these writers.

### ACTIVITY

Compare the features of the modern-day residential schools to those that were prevalent in the Mughal period. Are there any similarities?

Mughal art and structural design refers to the Indo-Islamic-Persian approach that flourished during the reign of the Mughals who ruled India between AD 1526 and 1857. The characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture is the symmetry and designs in their building/monuments and tombs. Prior to the Mughal dynasty which started with Babur, the Delhi Sultanate (AD 1192–1398) laid down the foundation of Mughal art in India. The Qutub Minar which was erected by Qutub-ud-din-Aibak in AD 1193 remains a prominent characteristic of Delhi's skyline.

The earliest Islamic monuments in India were time and again built over the Jain and Hindu monuments which were plundered and destroyed by the Muslim invaders. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhopra of Ajmer and the Qutab Minar, both dating back to the 12th century were built over the ruins of a Jain monastery/ temple. The Adhai-Din-Ka Jhopra of Ajmer was a centre of Sanskrit learning patronized by the rulers of the Chauhan period.

Later, with the passage of time, the Mughal architecture was introduced in Bengal too. The Sultans who were predecessors to the Mughals had constructed several mosques in the regions of the old capitals of Pandua and Gaur during the period between the 14th and 15th centuries. The Adina Mosque of Pandua and the Eklahi mosque were also built on the vandalized remains of Hindu temples, apparent from the intricate carvings on their structures. The art work on the Adina Mosque shares a striking resemblance with the Kakatiya ruins of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh.

In the central Gangetic Plain, the Sharqis who ruled from Jaunpur during the 14th and 15th century patronized the construction of mosques with fine *jaali* work which influenced the monuments built by Sher Shah Suri. In Gujarat too, the mosques rested on fine intricate carvings of ancient Jain and Hindu temples, evident from the display of Hindu motifs like the Chakra, the Kalpa-Lata or Kalpa-Vriksha, the Purna Kalash, the lotus symbol, and the lamp of acquaintance on their mosques.

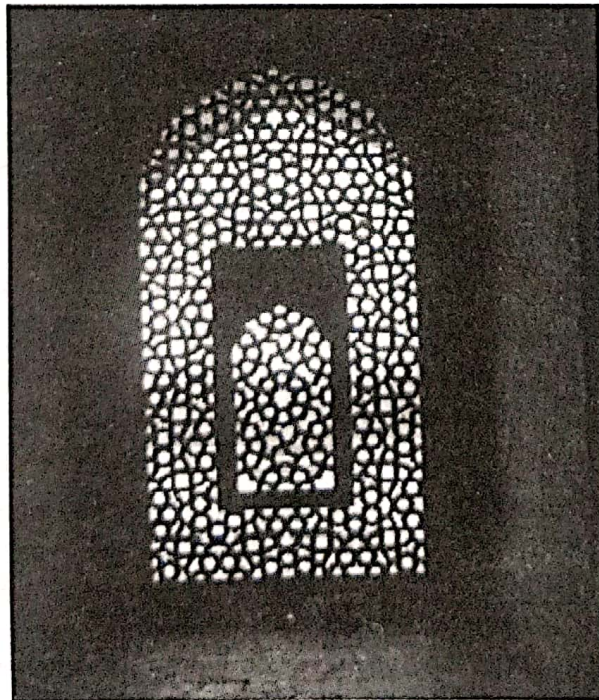


Fig. 9.1 Jaali Work at Humayun's Tomb, Delhi

Works of Mughal structural design have been seen in Chanderi, Hissar and Jhansi as well.

It was Akbar who initiated the erection of monuments on Indian soil, with a burial chamber in honour of his father Humayun in AD 1560. Built under the supervision of Persian originator Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, this wonderful structure with an elaborate arrangement of octagonal chambers flanked by cupolas, kiosks and minarets amidst rectangular shaped lawns remains a landmark gravestone in Delhi.

After Akbar consolidated his kingdom, he established his capital at Agra. This led to the construction of many imposing buildings that used red sandstone as the principal building material and white sandstone was used for the inlay work on the exteriors. The interiors were lavishly adorned with paintings. In AD1573, Akbar moved his capital to Fatehpur Sikri to commemorate the birth of his son, Jahangir and to honour Sheikh Salim of the Chisti order, where he built a new capital city which showcased typical Mughal architecture. The reign of Jahangir saw the transition from sandstone to marble in the construction of the few monuments that he had built. Later, his son Shah Jahan used white marble extensively in his monuments, especially the Taj Mahal.

### **Development of Architecture under the Mughals**

Babur is credited with not only establishing the Mughal Empire in India, but also heralding in an era that saw the introduction and development of a plethora of architectural styles in India. Though much of the time during his short period of reign (five years) in India was spent in annexing kingdoms, Babur left behind him some of the most marvelous Mughal structures in India. These include the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, Kabuli Bagh at Panipat and Jami Masjid at Sambhal, near Delhi. Even though most of them were destroyed over the centuries, some of them such as the Babri Masjid have withstood the vagaries of nature and time.

The history of Mughal architecture actually begins with Akbar. It is a blend of Persian and Hindu styles. Most of Akbar's buildings are made in red sandstone and one of the earliest buildings built by him was the tomb of Humayun in Delhi. In AD 1565 Akbar started the construction of the massive Agra Fort, but his most magnificent construction was the new capital at Fatehpur Sikri. Built in AD1571, it took fifteen years to complete a ceremonial capital including elaborate palaces, formal courtyards, reflecting pools, tombs and a mosque. Unfortunately, this massive city had to be abandoned because besides other reasons, it lacked adequate water supply. It consisted of a number of fine buildings like the Jami Mosque, the Tomb of Salim Chisti (its chambers are surrounded by a corridor with a lace-work marble screen) and the Buland Darwaza, constructed to commemorate his Gujarat conquest.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

It is reported that no less than 5,000 women lived in Akbar's palace, of whom, as per historians, 'only' about 300 were his wives or concubines. It is also well documented, that the ladies in the imperial palace were quite influential and active in society. Many mosques, madrasas and other monuments of the Mughal era have in fact been commissioned by women!

Jodha Bai's Palace and the Panch Mahal are also unique. The construction of Akbar's tomb at Sikandra, near Agra, was started by Akbar but completed by his son Jahangir. Jahangir constructed the tomb of Itmadud- Daulah (father of Nur Jahan) in white marble. He was fond of gardens and laid two beautiful gardens in Kashmir—the Nishat Bagh and the Shalimar Bagh.

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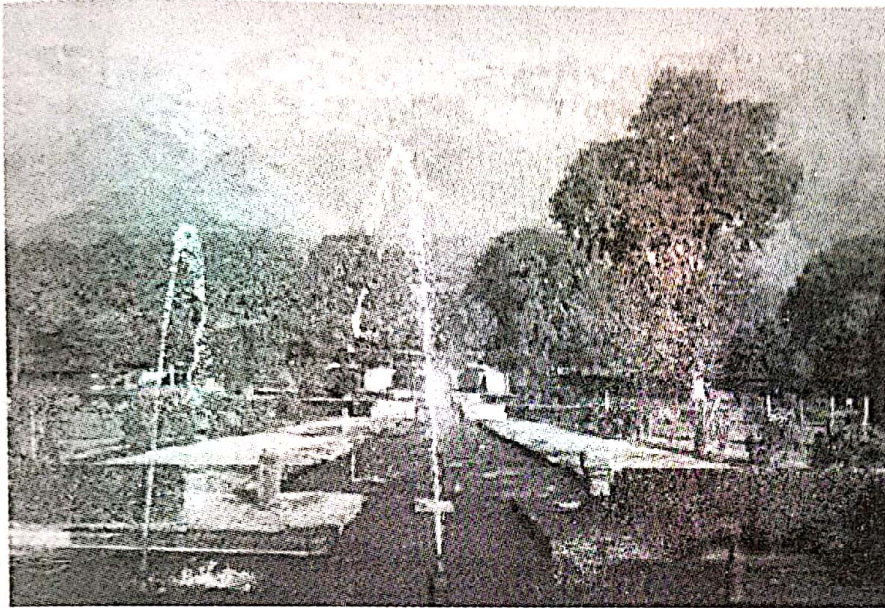


Fig. 9.2 Shalimar Gardens at Kashmir

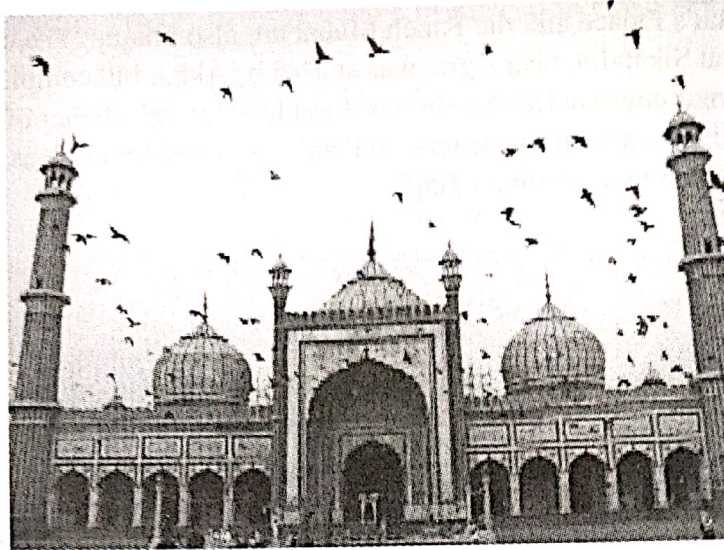
The reign of Shah Jahan is known in history as the Golden Era of Mughal architecture. As peace and prosperity prevailed throughout the Empire, he devoted himself to architecture.

Mughal art reached its nadir during the reign of Shah Jahan, who is known for his passion for architecture. He almost re-built the Agra Fort, adding marble to the existing sandstone structure, and went on to build his new capital in Shahjahanabad or the Red Fort, the Pearl Mosque and the Taj Mahal among numerous other monuments. Lapidary and fine *pietra dura* were new trends set by Shah Jahan.

He built the Taj Mahal at Agra as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jahan also constructed the Moti Masjid in Agra Fort and the Jama Masjid in Delhi. After the death of his beloved wife Mumtaz, Shah Jahan shifted the capital to Delhi and started the construction of a new city called Shahjahanabad. He built the Jami Masjid at Agra in honour of his daughter Jahanara. He also built the Red Fort, which has many beautiful buildings like the *Diwan-i-Khas*, *Diwan-i-Aam*, and the celebrated Peacock Throne, which was made of gold and studded with precious stones. This throne was carried away by Nadir Shah, a Persian invader, in AD 1739. Shah Jahan also gave liberal aid to artists. He also built a number of palaces and gardens in places like Lahore, Kashmir and Kabul.

Jahanara, daughter of Shah Jahan, was also a generous patron of structural design and showed an eclectic taste in building spacious gardens, mosques, *madrasas* and *serais*. At Delhi, she built the prominent Begum Ka Bagh and Begum Serai. She also built her own tomb near the shrine of the *dargah* of Hazrat Nizamuddin.

Se  
Ma



*Fig. 9.3: Jama Masjid at Delhi*

Aurangzeb's contributions to architecture are few in comparison to his predecessors. He constructed the Moti Masjid in the Red Fort at Delhi and a tomb for his queen at Aurangabad.

The Mughal Empire reached the zenith of its glory during this period. It has often been described as the Age of Magnificence. There was peace and prosperity throughout the Empire. Rulers devoted themselves to the construction of majestic buildings, using marble and red sandstone. There was great pomp and show and the splendour of the court dazzled European travellers like Francis Bernier.

Aurangzeb's daughters Zeb-un-nissa and Zinat-unnisa Begum also contributed in a small way in carrying forward the Mughal legacy of patronizing art and architecture. Zinat-unnisa Begum built the Zinat-ul-Masjid at Daryaganj in Old Delhi in AD 1711, while Zeb-un-nissa built her own garden and tomb at Nawankot near Lahore. Qudsiya Begum, the wife of a later Mughal ruler, Ahmad Shah, built the Sunheri Masjid in AD 1751 opposite the west gate of the Red Fort. The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar's favourite wife Zinat Mahal built the *Zinat Mahal* in the Lal Kuan bazaar in Delhi. The only monument worth mentioning built in the post-Aurangzeb time in Delhi was the *Safdar Jung's Tomb* built by Mirza Mansoor Khan in AD 1753.

### **Mughal Architecture under Aurangzeb**

Mughal architecture during Aurangzeb stood apart from that of both his predecessors and successors in that the Empire had the largest area under the Mughal reign, which extended to even parts of south India. Moreover, Aurangzeb ruled over India for a considerable period of time, the first twenty years of which he devoted to expanding the Empire. During the second part of his reign, he adopted the policy of Islamization, which saw the transformation of many of the Hindu and Jain structures of his period.

Contemplating his contribution in the field of architecture, one becomes aware that except a few monuments, especially tombs, there was hardly any buildings that were constructed by Aurangzeb. But, he went about his Islamization policy, whereby he partially or completely destroyed the Hindu and Jain temples and built mosques over the ruins.

Historians have explained elaborately the repair works undertaken by Aurangzeb; some even credit him with repairing the most number of mosques of not



only the Mughal Period, but also those mosques built by the Tughlaq, Lodi and Deccani sultans as well.

Aurangzeb projected a weak mirror image of his predecessors. Early during Aurangzeb's reign, the harmonious balance of the Shah Jahan-period architecture is thoroughly rejected in favour of an increased sense of spatial tension with an emphasis on height. Stucco and other less-expensive materials emulating the marble and inlaid stone of earlier periods cover built surfaces. Immediately after Aurangzeb's accession, the use of forms and motifs such as the baluster column and the bangala canopy, earlier reserved for the ruler alone, are found on non-imperially patronaged monuments.

Shortly after his accession, Aurangzeb is known to have ordered a small marble chapel, today acknowledged as the Moti or Pearl Masjid, to be constructed inside the Shahjahanabad fort (the present-day Red Fort). Shah Jahan had built no mosque inside this fort, using instead the large Jami masjid nearby for congregational prayers.

Aurangzeb, however, wanted a mosque close to his private quarters. Five years under construction, his exquisite mosque was completed in 1662-63, at considerable personal expense. It is enclosed by red sandstone walls, which vary in thickness to compensate for the mosque's angle, necessary to orient the building toward Mecca, and at the same time to align it with the other palace buildings. Entered on the east, the compound of the Moti Masjid consists of a courtyard with a deep-set pool and the mosque building itself.

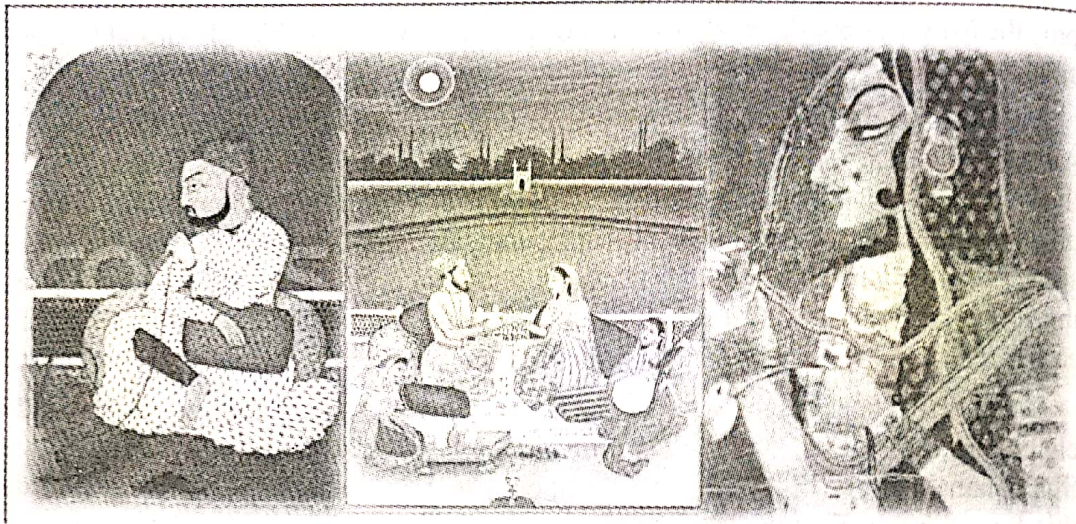
### **Development of Painting under the Mughals**

The Mughal Period also saw development in the field of painting. The art of miniature painting continued. As the use of paper became common, painters started illustrating books with pictures. Portrait painting became popular as painters started making portraits of kings and members of the royal family and the nobility.

The Mughal rulers were great patrons of painting. One of Akbar's most significant contributions was the creation of the Mughal school of painting. He set up a group of about 100 artists, mostly Hindu, who worked under the guidance of the two Persian masters brought to India by Humayun. At the time of Akbar's death in AD 1605, his library contained some 24,000 illustrated manuscripts.

Two of the greatest Persian painters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad, flourished during the rule of Humayun. When Humayun was forced to exile to Persia at the court of Shah Tahmasp Sajavi, he was impressed by the art of miniature painting and resolved to take Persian artists back to India. This is how the two Persian masters Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdus Samad were brought to India and became founders of the new school of Mughal miniature painting. Another renowned painter was Daswant. Some of the finest paintings are found in the *Akbarnama*.

Portraits, buildings, birds and animals, landscapes are vivid and life-like. Mansur was a painter of renown at his court. Jahangir was himself a good painter and a connoisseur of painting who could recognize the work of different artists at a glance. Under him painting received great impetus. However, under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb painting began to decline. Artists migrated to other regions. Rajasthan, Kangra and the Deccan became the centres of art. The Rajput style of miniature painting got its inspiration from the miniature style painting of the Persians. These paintings made beautiful covers for books. Portraits of kings were also painted. Scenes from the court, Hindu mythology, life of Lord Krishna, birds and animals were the themes of the paintings.



*Fig. 9.4: Paintings from the Mughal Era*

### **Paintings during Jahangir's Time**

Jahangir was an immense patron of painting and showed a keen interest in it while he was still young. He patronized numerous great painters of the time; some of the painters who were appreciated by him included Mansoor, Abul Hasan, Daswant and Basawan. He congratulated himself for the keen eye he had for paintings and was of the impression that he could identify the works of all great painters of his time. He also stated that if there was a picture containing numerous portraits drawn by artists who were poles apart stylistically, he was able to recognize each from the stroke of the brushes. Once, British Ambassador Thomas Roe arrived in the court of Jahangir and the royal leader asked him to recognize the original European painting placed alongside five copies of it prepared by Indian artists. This completely foxed the Ambassador much to the delight of the royal leader highlighting the artistic merit of the Indian painters. Mughal or miniature paintings may perhaps be described as a variety of Islamic paintings practised in India during 16th and 17th century.

### **Jahangir, an Admirer**

Jahangir was a big aficionado of European art and craft. He reigned from AD 1605 – 1627. The Dutch, British and Portuguese who were trying to establish trade relations with Indian Mughals, after learning about Jahangir's interest in paintings, gifted numerous works of art to him. Mughal artists copied those paintings and adopted various versions. During the reign of Jahangir a different style emerged—the Mughal approach with fine European influence. Prominent Mughal artists like Abul Hasan combined two techniques—the Mughal and the European—and produced numerous admirable works, most of which were romantic in nature.

### **Ability of Jahangir's Painters**

Jahangir's painters were able to produce identical copies of work in his collection. In the art of portrait miniature, Jahangir's paintings occupy a distinct place. His passion for nature was unrestricted, as he was a keen observer of flowers, grass, plants, animals and birds. Moreover, he shared his fondness for music, poetry and travelling with his ancestors, more than even his grandfather, Babur. He had an artistic and aesthetic background and had been in contact with art throughout his life. The theme of most of

his works was dominated by court scenes, and local flora and fauna, especially that of his kingdom.

### **The Imperial Albums**

The imposing albums show paintings that depict Jahangir's interest in Sufis, Muslim rulers, princes, and visiting ascetics. His great affection for his pets—cheetah, carrier pigeons and the royal stud elephant was famous. He shifted the Imperial Library to Lahore from Agra. Lahore became the centre of artistic activity. When visited Lahore found his palace decorated with many paintings. His master artists painted good-looking, refined and high quality art and Mughal miniatures reached its highest peak. His wife Nur Jahan had strong personality with complete control over her husband. Outstanding to her influence female portraits began to appear. Under Jahangir the fusion of style—India, Persian and European gave force and individuality to Mughal painting.

### **Development of Music under the Mughals**

The Mughals cherished music. Babur is said to have composed songs. Akbar was a lover of music. His court was ornamented by well-known musicians like Tansen of Gwalior and Baz Bahadur of Malwa. Shah Jahan was fond of vocal and instrumental music. The two great Hindu musicians of his time were Jagannath and Janardhan Bhatta. Nevertheless Aurangzeb who was a puritan dismissed singing from his court. On the other hand, ironically, the largest numbers of books on classical music were written during his rule.

The form of music that was predominant in India during the Mughal period was the Dhrupad music. Dhrupad music was the result of an extended interaction between two cultures—the Hindu Indian and the Muslim Perso-Turkish cultures—over a long period of time. In the pre-medieval era, India was an essentially Hindu region with a religion and culture codified most completely in the extremely sophisticated Sanskrit language.

Music was an important part of a cultural network that included dance and drama as well, but because there was no notation of actual musical performances—only of the theoretical melodic and rhythmic structures called *ragas* and *talas*—we have no idea of what the music actually was. We do know, however, that music was integral to temple life and ritual, and that professional singers and dancers were usually involved in some sort of devotional activity related to the Hindu deities. Music was also a part of courtly life as well, but since in this context—as in most traditional societies—there was no distinction to be made between the sacred and the secular, and music was simply one part of a unified cultural-social-religious continuum.

With the coming of the Mughal emperors, who though Muslims, were very much attracted to the artistic and philosophical aspects of Hindu culture. The art of music in the North was brought from the Hindu temples into a Muslim courtly setting, with the result that the emphasis shifted from a devotional context to a more virtuoso performance style, with connoisseurship being an important part of the system of imperial patronage. This interaction reached its zenith in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar the Great under whose patronage the arts as practised by both Hindu and Muslim artists flourished; for example, the singer Tansen was considered one of the nine jewels of his court, though many other musicians as well are listed in contemporary texts as part of the imperial retinue.

Because the practice of Dhrupad music — and indeed of most Hindustani music — is propagated through the oral tradition, we cannot be certain that contemporary Dhrupad is the same as that of the Mughal era. But certain indicators—particularly in the identification of the composers of Dhrupad lyrics as stated in the composition itself—ensure that even with whatever changes have occurred over the centuries, the Dhrupad tradition at least represents a continuum with the music practised during the Mughal era.

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## 5 SUMMARY

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In this unit, you have learnt that:

- During the Mughal period, majority of the society belonged to the class of the commoners. Among the common men in Mughal times could be included the peasants, labourers, artisans, etc. The people of this class led a comparatively hard life.
- According to historians like Mooreland, in this age, middle class or the intelligentsia was almost non-existent. This is partly true because even at that time there were Vakils, Hakims, Vaidyas and scholarly Pandits and Ulemas throughout the country, though their number was very low as compared to the population of the country.
- The best way to understand the spirit of a civilization and to appreciate and realize its excellence and limitations is to study the history of its womenfolk, the development and change in their status and position from time to time.
- The daily food of the Hindus and the Muslims was essentially the same except that meat was a popular dish of the Muslims.
- The Mughal period has been called the age of joy and pleasure on the account of the organizations of the different kinds of games, sports, fairs, festivals, and other various sources of recreation and amusement.
- During the Mughal period, education was given special emphasis, especially by Akbar. The Mughal period promoted the residential type of schools; while the Muslim students pursued education in *makbats*, their Hindu brothers grew up in *pathsalas*.
- Scholars from other countries were invited to teach at the educational institutions, which were funded by endowments. Students received free education. Subjects such as science, maths, astronomy, algebra, accounts, economics, history and law were taught.
- A stable and prosperous economy during the Mughal period provided the climate suitable for the growth of literature, especially Persian. Since it was the court language and hence the most number of works of literature were in Persian.
- The Mughal rulers were visionaries who reflected in the all-round development of various arts, crafts, music, building and structural design.
- The characteristic feature of the Mughal architecture is the symmetry and designs in their building/monuments and tombs.
- The earliest Islamic monuments in India were time and again built over the Jain and Hindu monuments which were plundered and destroyed by the Muslim invaders.

- Humayun's tomb erected by Akbar in Delhi in AD 1560 marked the construction of monuments on Indian soil.
- The buildings till the time of Akbar used red sandstone as the construction material. The reign of Jahangir saw the transition to marble, while Shah Jahan used white marble for the Taj Mahal.
- Mughal architecture was at its zenith during the reign of Shah Jahan, while it started its decline during Aurangzeb's time.
- The Mughal Period also saw the development of painting. The paper became more popular during this period; thus portrait painting grew to new heights with the kings and Begums as the favourite subject of painting.
- Jahangir showed immense interest in painting and had a good eye to recognize and differentiate the works of popular artists of his time. He patronized art and was himself good at painting.
- Most works of Jahangir depicted nature and the flora and fauna of the surrounding places.
- Dhrupad was the form of music that was predominant in India during the Mughal period and can be best described as the result of interaction of two cultures – the Hindu culture and the Perso-Turkish culture.

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## 6 KEY TERMS

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- **Jaali work:** *Ajaali* is the term for a perforated stone or latticed screen, usually with an ornamental pattern constructed through the use of calligraphy and geometry. Early work was performed by carving into stone, while the later more elegant used by the Mughals employed the technique of inlay, using marble and semi-precious stones
- **Peacock throne:** The throne of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, was reportedly one of the most splendid thrones ever made. It was ascended by silver steps and stood on golden feet set with jewels; and it was backed by representations of two open peacocks' tails, gilded, enamelled, and inset with diamonds, rubies, and other stones. Persians in AD 1739 stole the throne from India
- **Dhrupad:** The form of music that was predominant in India during the Mughal period was the Dhrupad music. Dhrupad music was the result of an extended interaction between two cultures — the Hindu Indian and the Muslim Perso-Turkish cultures

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## 7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. The normal food of the commoners was boiled rice, chapatti, pulses, sag and some other vegetables with the salt; although the most universal and popular was Khichri, which was prepared in an ordinary way, and was taken without ghee and butter.
2. The Muslim ceremony celebration at the time of the birth of a child is called Aquiqah.

3. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False  
4. (a) *Pathsalas*, (b) Religious conviction; (c) Urdu  
5. (a) True; (b) False  
6. (a) Kakatiya ruins; (b) Sharqis; (c) Jahangir  
7. (a) False; (b) True  
8. (a) Jahangir; (b) marble; (c) *Safdar Jung's Tomb*  
9. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False  
10. (a) Portrait; (b) Jahangir's; (c) Dhruvad.

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## 8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Explain the condition of women in the Mughal times.
2. Describe the Mughal style of architecture.
3. Analyse the development of music under the Mughals.
4. Discuss the progress of education under the Mughals.
5. Discuss the contribution of Jahangir in the development of art.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Trace the development of art under the Mughals.
2. Discuss the contribution of Aurangzeb in developing Mughal architecture.
3. Write about the development of painting under the Mughals.
4. Analyse the development of Persian and Hindi literature during the Mughals.
5. Discuss in detail the social condition of people during Mughal era.

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## 9 FURTHER READING

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# UNIT 5 ADMINISTRATION OF VARIOUS EMPIRES

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## Structure

- 0 Introduction
- 1 Unit Objectives
- 2 Sher Shah Suri's Administrative Reforms
- 3 Mughal Administration, Land Revenue System and Mansabdari
- 4 Maratha Administration
- 5 Summary
- 6 Key Terms
- 7 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 8 Questions and Exercises
- 9 Further Reading

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## 0 INTRODUCTION

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Though Sher Shah had only the small period of five years to rule but within this short span of time he brought such important changes in the administrative system that he is considered as one of the best administrators. In fact, he managed his administration keeping before him a model idea. The early death of Sher Shah (AD 1545), and later, the Second Battle of Panipat (AD 1557), assured Mughal dominance. Their administration, known as the *mansbadri* system, was in essence a military one.

Similar to these great rulers, Shivaji is also famous in Indian history not only as a brave and daring person, a successful general and the founder of an empire, but also as a great administrator and a ruler who had the best interests of his subjects at heart.

In this unit, you will learn about the administrative reforms and systems of Sher Shah Suri, the Mughal kings and Shivaji, the Maratha ruler.

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## 1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain Sher Shah Suri's administrative reforms
- Describe the features of Mughal administration, land revenue system and mansabdari
- Discuss the main points of Maratha administration

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## 2 SHER SHAH SURI'S ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

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As you know, Sher Shah Suri managed his administration keeping before him a model idea. Leaving aside any religious discrimination, he gave equal opportunity to all his subjects to lead a comfortable life. According to him, the major aim of the state was public welfare.

*Self-In-  
Mater.*

He tried to make the frontiers of the country so strong and powerful that Humayun or any other power would not be able to bring about any instability in the country. He brought about many reforms and gave safety to the people against antisocial elements.

Acknowledging his administrative efficiency, English historian Keive wrote that none of the rulers, not even the English Government evinced so much wisdom as this Pathan Chief. The main features of his administrative system can be studied under the following heads:

### **Central administration**

Though Sher Shah tried to follow the Afghan tradition for running central administration, yet he tried to bring the office of the Sultan nearer to the Turkish ideal rather than the Afghan. To some extent, he continued the central administration present from the time of the Delhi Sultanate and established a despotic rule similar to that of Balban or Allauddin, but not before getting it endorsed by a committee of the Afghan chiefs. Thus, his despotism had a democratic base.

Looking at the outer structure of his administration, Dr. Qanungo remarked that Sher Shah Suri did not found any new administrative system but gave a new shape to the existing institutions. All the power of the state was centred in his hands. He was the highest official in the fields of administration, army, judiciary and law. There were four main ministers in his Central Government, viz., *Diwan-i-Wizarat* (kept control over the income and expenditure of the state), *Diwan-i-Ariz* (looked after military responsibilities), *Diwan-i-Rasalat* (looked after foreign affairs), and *Diwan-i-Qaza* (head of judicial department).

Sher Shah himself was so hard working and able that besides determining the general policy of all the departments, he also supervised over their everyday activities. During his reign he did not let any person or *Amir* emerge as an important figure. This might have been due to the fact that because of the importance given to any one individual, other *Amirs* would grow jealous of him and their dissatisfaction would lead them to organize revolts etc. against the ruler. Removing corruption, he offered a clean administration to the people.

### **Provincial administration**

The outline of the provincial administration under Sher Shah is somewhat dim. According to Dr. Qanungo, 'There were no provinces during Sher Shah's time and the empire was divided in Sarkars.' As against this, Dr. P. Saran holds that there were 12 provinces in Sher Shah's empire, each ruled by a military Governor. According to some historians, provinces did exist before Akbar's time but their shape and administrative system was not uniform. Even during Sher Shah's time there were many provinces or *Subas* which were called *Iqtas*.

Modern historians hold that during Sher Shah's time there was a definite provincial organization. According to them, Sher Shah brought about two new experiments in the provincial administration but they were not so successful as to be implemented in other provinces. His first experiment was in Bengal in AD 1541. When Khizr Khan after becoming its governor started behaving like a Sultan, Sher Shah got him imprisoned and after subdividing Bengal into many parts, appointed separate officials for each. An official was appointed so as to maintain peace and order in the province. Because they were appointed by the centre and their sphere of work was different, the possibility of any revolt was minimized.



Probably this system was implemented in Malwa, Punjab, Rajputana, etc. His other experiment was the appointment of deputy governors. He appointed two sub-deputy governors under Haibat Khan of Punjab. During his time, this scheme was probably implemented in Multan, Baluchistan, Sirhind, etc. During his time, the provincial governor was probably called *Hakim* or *Faujdar* or *Amin*. But their rights were not the same. The governor of Punjab, Haibat Khan was probably the most powerful. He had 30,000 soldiers under him, whereas less powerful governors had just about 5000 soldiers under them. Sher Shah kept a strict control over the provincial governors and from time to time supervised their military and administrative activities.

### **Administration of a *Sirkar***

Sher Shah Suri organized the local administration at the district, *paragana* and village level. The highest unit of the local administration was the district or the *sirkar*. According to Dr. Ishwari Prasad, 'Sher Shah had sub-divided his empire into 47 parts, each comprising of many *paraganas*. This part or unit was called a *sirkar*.' Each *sirkar* had two major officials—*Shiqdar-i-Shiqdaran* or Chief Shiqdar and *Munsif-i-Monsifan* or Chief *Munsif*, responsible respectively for the maintenance of peace and order in the *sirkar* and supervising the officials of the *paraganas* and dispensing mobile justice. Sher Shah brought about some important changes in the administration of the *sirkar*. First, he established a satisfactory judicial system. Second, he ordered the officials to always look for the convenience of the people. Third, he made the Chief Shikdar and the Chief *Munsif* respectively the highest but separate officials in the fields of army and finance. This minimized the possibility of revolt. Fourth, he kept with himself the right of appointing and dismissing the officials of the *sirkar* which strengthened the control of the centre over these units.

### **Administration of *Paragana***

Each *sirkar* or district was subdivided into many *paraganas*. Here, Shiqdar and *Munsif* were responsible for the maintenance of peace and order and the collection of revenues respectively. Besides these, there was one treasurer and two *Karkuns* or *Munsims*—one to keep the land records in Hindi and the other in Persian. The treasurer or *Fotdar* kept the cash of the *paragana*. The *Munsif* was responsible for the collection of the revenue of the whole *paragana* and also its land measurement.

### **Village administration**

The smallest unit of the empire was the village. In every village there was a *Mukhiya* or *Muqaddam*. The chief of village collected the revenue from the farmers and sent it to the treasurer of the *paragana*. *Muqadam* was responsible for maintaining peace and order in the village along with collecting the revenue. He arranged for night watchmen. If a theft was committed in his area, he had either to catch hold of the thief or suffer the punishment himself.

According to the contemporary historian Abbas, 'Because of this arrangement, the events of theft or 'dacoity' in the empire were totally nullified and even if an old woman travelled from one end of the empire to the other tossing gold, nobody dared to interfere with her.'

If any traveller or merchant died on the way the local people gave the information to the government officials and till the reaching of any instruction from the government, they kept watch themselves. This statement might be an exaggeration but it makes it clear that during Sher Shah's time, priority was given to the maintenance of peace

and order throughout the empire. He dealt very strictly with thieves, dacoits and with those landlords who refused either to pay the revenue or refuse to obey the government's instructions.

### **Revenue administration**

During Sher Shah's time there were seven main sources of state income—land revenue, *khams*, custom, *Jaziya*, *nazrana*, royal currency and sales tax. In his time, one-third of the produce was taken as the land revenue. The peasants paid in cash or in kind though the state preferred the cash payment. He effected many reforms in the sphere of land revenue administration. He evolved a system of land revenue rates called *Rai*, wherein there were separate rates of land revenue, different parts of the empire for different kind of produce. For payment in cash, a list was prepared according to the prices, prevalent in the area.

Besides the land revenue administration, he also imposed duties on the import and export of raw materials and finished products. A ruler like Sher Shah also did not abolish a tax like *Jazia*. This tax was levied on the non-Muslims and was an important source of governmental income. *Nazrana* or gifts were obtained almost from all tributary rulers, *Zamindars*, government officials etc. Royal mint was also a good source of the royal income. Salt tax also yielded considerable income to the state. Sometimes, unclaimed property also was an important source of income for the government.

### **Land revenue administration**

Sher Shah paid great attention towards land revenue system and land administration. Sher Shah was well acquainted with every level of land revenue system having managed for many years the *Jagir* of Sahasram of his father Hassan and then having worked as a guardian of Jalal Khan, the ruler of Bihar.

After becoming the emperor, he set the whole land revenue system right with the help of a few able administrators. A glance at the different aspects of his administration shows clearly that he managed the land revenue system with greatest ability and interest. Praising his land revenue administration Dr. Ishwari Prasad writes, 'He tried to fix the land revenue in accordance with the income of the people.'

### **Military system**

Sher Shah kept a strong army for defense of his vast empire. He knew very well the importance of the local army. According to the contemporary writer Abbas Sherwani, 'There were about 150000 infantry, 25000 cavalry, 5000 elephants and artillery in his army.' Sher Shah put an end to the practice of supplying a fixed number of soldiers to the state by the chieftains and started direct recruitment of the soldiers and fixed their pay according to their ability. The salary was paid in cash. Promotion was given to soldiers and officials on the basis of their ability and working capacity. The descriptive role of each soldier was recorded. His horse was also branded so that it could not be replaced by a horse of inferior quality.

Probably, these practices were adopted by Sher Shah following the example of Allauddin Khilji, who had first adopted these practices as part of his military reforms. He constructed many cantonments in different parts of his empire and kept a strong army contingent in each of them. In addition to a big artillery, Sher Shah made arrangements for supplying good quality guns to his soldiers. He maintained a strict discipline in his army. He also constructed a new fort near Peshawar.

## **Judicial system**

Sher Shah laid great emphasis on the dispensation of justice. He used to say, 'Doing justice is the greatest religious work which should be adopted alike by the state of *Kafirs* or *Momins*.' He never pardoned any criminal whether he was his close relative, big chief or any powerful person.

He established law courts in the whole of his empire. At the centre the Emperor himself was the highest judge and next to him was the *Qazi-ul-Qazt*, who was the highest official of the judicial department. Besides big cities, in provinces and their capitals also *Qazis* dispensed justice. In the village the work of the dispensation of justice was undertaken by the *Muqaddam* or *Mukhiya*. The civil cases were heard by the *Munsif*, *Amirs* and *Munsifi-Munsifan*. In fact, during Sher Shah's time not many changes were effected in the judicial system but he inspired all the officials to dispense justice impartially and fearlessly and did so himself as well.

## **Police arrangements**

Sher Shah Suri made separate police arrangements. Before him, this function was also discharged by the army. Because of the police arrangements, it became easier to trace the criminals. In the *sarkars* the Chief *Shiqdar*, in the *paragana* the *Shiqdar* and in the villages *Muqaddams* used to perform police duties and hand over the criminals to the law courts. Abbas Sherwani wrote, 'during the time of Sher Shah, travellers were free from the worry of keeping a check over their belongings. Even in the desert region they had no fear. They could camp freely in a locality or in the deserted regions. They could leave their belongings in the open place also. Cattle could be left to graze freely and the owners slept carefree as if they were in their own homes.'

## **Espionage system**

Sher Shah had spread a net of trusted and expert spies who kept on giving him information about the activities of the whole empire. Therefore, nobody dared to revolt against the emperor or shirk his duty. The daily report of the prices of commodities in the market used to reach the emperor. Messengers and spies were appointed in all the major cities and they had the orders to send any urgent message to the emperor at once.

## **Currency**

Sher Shah brought about many reforms in the currency system and got pure gold, silver and copper coins minted in the place of debased and mixed metal coins. His silver rupee was so authentic that even after centuries it continued to be used as a standard currency. Historian V.A. Smith wrote correctly, 'This rupee was the basis of the British currency system.' On the coins, the name of the emperor was inscribed in Devnagari as well as Persian scripts. The coins of Sher Shah were pure, beautiful and standard. He also issued small copper coins so that people may not have any difficulty in everyday transactions.

## **Public welfare activities of Sher Shah**

For the benefit of the peasants, Sher Shah Suri carried on many land reforms such as getting the land measured and fixing of the prices, keeping in view the cultivate of land, its productivity, the crops grown and the local prices prevalent.

## ACTIVITY

Do you see traces of Sher Shah's methods in the administration of modern India? Using the Internet for research, provide a detailed answer.

### 3 MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION, LAND REVENUE AND MANSABDARI

In Mughal administration, every official was expected to enroll in the army. Each officer held a *mansab*—an office of rank as well as of profit—and was obliged to supply the Emperor with a number of troops. He was also required to maintain a given quota of horses, elephants and carriages. He was paid either in cash or gifted with a *jagir*—a tract of land which he did not own, but collected tax on it equivalent to his salary. The *jagir* was transferable from one *Mansabdar* to another; the office itself was not hereditary. The *Mansabdars* were directly recruited by the Emperor and were subject to his rule. The Emperor himself was an absolute ruler. Under him, there were several departments of the administration headed by the appointed officials such as the Imperial Household (*Khan-i-Saman*), the Exchequer (*Diwan*), Military Pay and Accounts (*Mir Bakshi*), the Judiciary (*Qazi*), Religious Endowments (*Sadr-us-Sudur*), and Censorship of Public Morals (*Muhtasib*). The village administration remained as it was traditionally under the headman and his subordinate watchman. In the cities, the police duties were given to the *Kotwals*, and at the district level there was the *Faujdar*. The judges followed the Quranic precepts, its previous interpretations (*fatwa*), and the ordinances of the Emperor (*qanun*). Justice was speedy and impartial, as it was meted out equally to all, including the officials.

#### Salient Features

- (a) **Import of foreign element in administration:** The Mughals imported certain foreign elements into their administrative system. They came to India from Central Asia where they had their own system of administration. In India, they modified the same according to the Indian traditions and setting. Thus, the Mughal administration presented a combination of India and extra-India elements. More correctly, it was a Perso-Arabic system in the Indian setting.
- (b) **Administration based on the military system:** In its formal configuration, the Mughal government was based on the military system. For instance, it was mandatory for government officers to enroll in the army. He was given a *mansab* as the nominal commander of a certain number of horsemen, and that determined his status and pay. They were also paid by the *bakshis* or the military paymasters.
- (c) **Despotic:** Being military in nature, the Mughal administrative system was based on centralized despotism. The king had unlimited powers and his word was the law.
- (d) **Mixture of religion and politics:** A strong blend of religion and politics existed in the system. The king was expected to rule according to the Islamic traditions and obey the commands of the *Ulemas*. Resultantly, as Jadunath Sarkar observes, 'a difference existed in the attitude of the emperor towards his Muslim and Hindu subjects. For the Muslims, he undertook socialistic functions but

towards his non-Muslim subjects, he followed the policy of minimum interference and thus confined himself to discharging the police and revenue functions'.

- (e) **Paper government:** The Mughal government, except in the actual conduct of campaigns, was a *kagazi raj*, i.e., paper government. Because of the large territory, slow means of transport and communications and no political initiative left to the people, there was a multiplication of the official correspondence and the growth of massive records.
- (f) **Police duties and revenue collection as the major function:** As regards the aims of the state, it contented itself with police duties and revenue collection. The state did not take any initiative in social progress or the economic welfare of the common man. Areas like education, health and promotion of art were largely left to private initiative. Except for Akbar, the policy of benevolent intervention and paternal guidance was not pursued by the Mughal emperors.
- (g) **State as an entrepreneur:** The concept of the state as an entrepreneur and the system of public corporations were firmly entrenched. The state maintained many *karkhanas* (factories) of its own in the principal cities of the Empire and produced several commodities.
- (h) **Administration of justice and maintenance of peace:** A striking feature characterized the Mughal administration's attitude towards law and order. While the administration of justice and maintenance of peace are considered as essential functions of the modern state, during the Mughal era, however, it was left to the initiative of the local administration. Policing in the vast rural areas was done by the local *chaukidars* who were maintained by the villagers themselves. No doubt, the *faujdar* acted as the agent of the government, but the area under him was so large that he could not supervise all the villages.
- (i) **'Parochial' self-government:** Though the administration was decentralized into the provincial and the local administrations, it would be more correct to say that the villages and small towns of the Mughal Empire enjoyed 'parochial' self-government rather than local autonomy. They had no political freedom as such and were in reality, only payers of taxes.

## The Emperor

In the Mughal system of governance, the emperor enjoyed real sovereignty which was indivisible and inalienable. Within this realm, he stood supreme as the symbol of unity and preserver of peace. He actively performed all major functions of the government. He was the head of the civil and military administrations, responsible for the appointment and removal of all high officials. No *farmans* could be issued without his seal. The exchequer was also not outside the royal authority and the king determined the expenditure and sources of revenue. He was in no formal way responsible or accountable to the people.

But, it may be said to the credit of the most Mughal<sup>1</sup> emperors that they did not abuse the powers vested in them. Actually, they covered their despotism with a thick veil of paternalistic benevolence. There are accounts of the king touring the country extensively to keep a finger on the pulse of the administration.

Consequently, the idea of a fixed capital did not possess much attraction for them. They carried their capital with them. It is wrong to think of the emperor's life as

one of 'elysian ease'. Akbar, for instance, dealt with all the administrative work in an open *darbar* called *Diwan-i-Aam*.

## The King's Council

Although the emperors had a few important officers to assist them, they, in no way, bore any resemblance to the modern-day council of ministers. These officials invariably included the *Wazir* and the *Diwan*, and the rest of the strength of the officials was determined exclusively by the emperor. These officials were mere delegates of the royal polity. Their primary function was to advise the sovereign but this advice was not binding. He heard them but did not always act according to them. They provided no checks on the royal will and, in no sense, were they his colleagues. Sarkar observes that they deserved to be called 'secretaries rather than ministers.' They could never influence his policy except by gentle persuasion and veiled warning. Little wonder, they never resigned if he rejected their counsels.

## Central Ministers and their Duties

### 1. *Wakil* or Prime Minister

The literal meaning of the term *Wakil* is representative. He was the representative of the state. The minister is called *Wakil* who could enjoy all the rights of the emperor on his behalf. This office continued in vogue in Akbar's, Jahangir's and Shah Jahan's reign. During their time, the Prime Minister was called *Wakil* or (*Wakil-i-Mutalak*). Some later emperors reviewed the office of *Wakil*, e.g., Jahandar Shah appointed Asad Khan as the *Wakil-i-Mutalak* and appointed his very son Zulfiqar Khan as *Wazir*.

During Akbar's time, till the fall of Bairam Khan, this office was very important because this office was in charge of the finance as well the civic administration. After the fall of Bairam Khan, Akbar let his new *Wakil* Munim Khan remain as the political prime or the chief adviser, and taking away the financial power from him, created a separate office of *Wazir* or chief *Diwan*, who became the head of the finance department. After Bairam Khan, the most powerful *Wakil* was Asaf Khan who was given a *mansab* of 9000 Jats and 9000 *Sawars* by Shah Jahan. Thus, the place of *Wakil* became higher than that of the *Diwan*.

### Rights and duties of *Wakil*

*Wakil* generally had these rights and duties:

- (i) To advise the emperor about the appointment and dismissal of *subedars*, *faujdar*s and *Diwan*.
- (ii) He advised the emperor on matters related to allocation of *jagirs*.
- (iii) Every evening he presented all the papers, etc., before the emperor.
- (iv) He used to have custody of the royal stamp.
- (v) He had the right to acquire one copy of all the information coming from the provinces. A copy of all the papers of the *Diwan* used to come to him.
- (vi) His stamp and signatures were needed on all the appointment letters. He had the right to have a band and move about in a palanquin.

### 2. The *Wazir* or *Diwan*

The *Wazir* or *Diwan* was the head of the revenue department. In case of non-appointment or the absence of *wakil*, all his tasks used to be performed by the *wazir*.

The office of the *wazir* got revenue papers, and returned dispatches from the provinces and the armies in the field. On many ceremonial occasions, he acted as the representative of the emperor. All orders of payments had to be signed by him and all the payments were made only through his department.

Under the directions of the emperor, he himself passed orders. All questions concerning the revenue were settled by him and he consulted the emperor only in important cases. He had two assistants known as the *Diwan-i-Aam* or the *Diwan* of salaries and the *Diwan-i-Khas* or the *Diwan* of the crown land. After the death of Aurangzeb, the *wazir* became virtually the ruler of the state.

### **Rights and duties of *wazir***

- (i) All the employees concerned with the raising of the revenue used to be under him, and either he used to advise the emperor in their appointment or sometimes himself made the appointment.
- (ii) He used to acquire the description of the income and expenditures from the provincial *diwan*. He distributed the income from the empire amongst various departments, and kept an account of the entire income and expenditure of the empire.
- (iii) He presented the account of land revenue and imports and exports, among other things.

### **3. *Mir Bakshi***

The *mir bakshi* was the chief military adviser. He worked as the inspector general of the *mansabdars* inculcating a high standard of military strength. When the review was complete, he issued a certificate which listed the *mansabdars* serving in the various capacities at the capital or outside, their ranks, the salaries including special awards, the way in which they drew their salaries, a complete record of their services as well as the result of the annual reviews of their troops and horses. He assigned the *mansabdars* present at the imperial camp of the capital to guard duty, though the list so prepared had to be sent to the *diwan* for the final sanction. As the chief of the state, he drew up the plans of campaigns of the various armies in consultation with the commanders and also with the emperor. He took part in all military expeditions and advised the emperor regarding reinforcements or when the smouldering jealousies of the rival commanders in an expedition rendered the recall or transfer of one of them necessary. Some of the other roles of a *mir bakshi* included the following:

- Advised the emperor to give away awards following a successful campaign and to increment the number of horses.
- Being the nerve centre of administration he sent out messages to news writers. The provincial *bakshi* was the news writer-in-chief for his province. His reports formed the pulse of the whole empire.
- At the capital, he had several departmental heads under him. The superintendents of the artillery, elephants and war boats were placed immediately under him.
- His position was sometimes eclipsed on account of the presence of the emperor at the head of an expedition. Even then, the *mir bakshi* accompanied the emperor on the battlefield and served as one of his chief advisers.

### **4. *Khan-i-Saman* or High Steward**

The *khan-i-saman* was a very important officer in the Mughal times, as he was the head of the emperor's household department, and accompanied him during all his

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journeys and campaigns. All the personal servants of the emperor were under his control. He also supervised the emperor's daily expenditure, food, tents, stories, etc. He enjoyed a great power and influence, and there are examples of the *wazirs* being appointed from among the *khan-i-samans*. He used to keep a list of the requirements of the emperor and the harems. He was to meet the requirements, and in order to do so, procured things from places where they were available. Most of the ordinary requirements were met by the imperial factories or *karkhanas*. The *khan-i-saman* was in charge of all the state-owned factories and state industries. He was to see that the court was properly furnished and decorated according to the tastes and instructions of the emperor.

He was to keep a ready stock of the 'robes of honour' or *Khutaba*, as at any time, the emperor may need one. He was also to make all purchases of the royal princes and princesses. He was also to arrange the royal parties on certain auspicious occasions.

### **5. Sadr-us-Sudur**

The *sadr-us-sudur* was the chief *sadar* of the Empire. He was also called by the names of the *sadr-i-khul* and *sadr-i-jahan*. *Sadr-us-sudur* was the connecting link between the emperor and the people. He was the guardian of the Islamic Law and the spokesman of the *Ulema*. According to Ibn Hasan, the function of the chief *sadar* seems 'to have been limited to the use of his power for the award of the state of stipends and *jagirs* to the *Ulema* and the needy'. It was his duty to look into and decide the cases related to grants. He was the Almoner of the Emperor. He distributed the money for charitable purposes. There was a *sadar* in every province. While sending the provincial *sadars* to their charges, the chief *sadar* acquainted them with the names of those who held rent-free lands. Each *sadar* was to obey the chief *sadar* and carry out his orders.

### **6. Muhatashib**

The *muhatashib* was appointed by the emperor to inspect the morals of the people. He used to perform both the religious and the secular duties. As a secular official, he ensured that the traders and grocers charged the right price for their commodities. Beside these roles, he also had to oversee the general cleanliness of the city. Thus, he inspected the markets and other places regularly. Moreover, he ensured that the people followed the principles of Islam as propounded by the Prophet. It was his duty to mete out punishments to those Muslims who had given up *namaz* and *roza*. During Aurangzeb's reign he had to oversee the desecration and demolition of newly built temples.

### **7. Qazi-ul-Quzat**

The *qazi-ul-quzat* was the highest judicial officer next to the emperor. He was responsible for the proper and an efficient administration of justice. The provincial *qazis* were appointed by him. In every province, district and city, there were *qazis* who decided the outcome of the cases. The duty of the chief *qazi* was to hear appeals from their courts and supervise their conduct.

### **8. Other ministers and officers**

Besides these ministers, mentioned above there were two other important ministers:



- (i) **Daroga-i-Dak-Chauki** – He was the superintendent of intelligence and posts. He became a departmental head during the later days of the Mughals. He was in charge of the posts of news writers, spies and news carriers who were posted throughout the Empire. They were to report regularly about the important happenings in their jurisdictions. There were provincial superintendents who worked under the orders of the royal *Daroga of Dak Chowki* and sent weekly abstracts of news to the capital.
- (ii) **Mir-i-Atish** – He was the superintendent of the artillery. He was originally a subordinate of the *mir bakshi*; but as artillery came to play a very important role in wars, the head of this department rose to the position of the minister. Under the later Mughals, the *mir-i-atish* had to make arrangements for the defence of the imperial palace-fort and sometimes even to reside inside it. He, therefore, came in touch with the emperor and rose to be an important minister. The complete range of weapons in the artillery, from the battering canon to the smaller units, was under his charge.

The other important officers of the Central government were: *Mir Barr* (superintendent of the forests) *Qur Begi* (lord standard bearer), *Mushrif* (chief admiral and the officer of harbours), *Mir Arz* (officer who presented petitions to the emperor), *Mir Bahri* (revenue secretary), *Mustaufi* (auditor-general), *Khawan Sadar* (superintendent of the royal kitchen), *Akht Begi* (superintendent of royal stud), *Nazir-i-Buyutad* (superintendent of the imperial workshops) and *Awarjah Newis* (Superintendent of the daily expenditure at courts).

### Chief Departments of Administration

The chief departments of the Mughal administration were:

- (i) **Exchequer and revenue:** The revenue department was headed by the *Diwan* or *Wazir*.
- (ii) **Imperial household:** The Department of Imperial Household was headed by the *Khan-i-Sama*. All the personal servants of the emperor were under this officer's control and he also supervised the emperor's daily expenditure, food, stores, etc. He enjoyed the trust of the emperor and there are examples of *wazirs* being appointed from among the *Khan-i-Samas*.
- (iii) **Military pay and accounts office:** The military pay and accounts office were under the *Mir Bakshi*. He was the paymaster of the central government. Since all the civil officers were part of the military, their salary also was released by the *Mir Bakshi*. He assisted the king in the appointment of *mansabdars*. His other duties included the recruitment of the army, the maintenance of the troops, determining the strength of troops, assisting the king in the conduct of foreign relations, leading the army or a section of it and accompanying the king on tours.
- (iv) **Canon law, both civil and criminal:** The department of law had the *Qazi* as its head. He was responsible for the administration of law in the land and, besides, was the chief judge in criminal suits which he tried according to the Muslim law.
- (v) **Religious endowments and charity:** The *Sadar* was the head of the department of religious affairs. He was the guardian of the Islamic law and the spokesman of the *Ulema*. He made religious grants and it was his duty to see that such

grants were applied to the right purpose. He was also a judge in some types of civil cases.

(vi) **Censorship of public morals:** The Department of Censorship of Public Morals, under the *Muhtasib*, was the censor of public morals. It regulated the behaviour of the people, curbed immorality and punished those who indulged in anti-religious acts.

(vii) **The artillery:** It was headed by the *Mir Atish* or *Daroga-i-Topkhana*.

(viii) **Intelligence and posts:** It was headed by the *Daroga of Dak Chouki*.

### Personnel Administration

The personnel in the departments mentioned earlier formed the Mughal bureaucracy. They were a heterogeneous group comprising Persians, Afghans, Mughals and a few Hindus. As already mentioned, the personnel administration under the Mughals was military in origin. All civil servants were enrolled in the army as *mansabdars*. They were given this designation because each one of them held a *mansab* or official appointment of rank and profit and was bound, theoretically, to supply a prescribed number of troops for the military service of the state. Under the Mughals, the word *mansab* was applied only to the higher rank of officials and, although it had a military connotation, it was a myth because no military obligations were always incumbent on a *mansabdar*. It became merely symbolic that the *mansabdar* (the holder of the mansab) performed military duties. The *mansabdars* also formed the official nobility of the country and this system was thus a combination of the army, the peerage and the civil administration – all rolled into one.

The appointment of all *mansabdars* was entirely in the king's hands. He granted *mansabs* or ranks to them and dismissed them at his free will. The orders of appointment were issued by the *High Diwan*. The king remained the source of all administrative authority and, by his powers of appointment and removal; he kept all-embracing control over the administrative machinery.

### Provincial Administration

It was Akbar who organized the provincial administration of the country and put it on a sound footing. He divided the empire into twelve divisions, later on increased to fifteen, calling each a *subah*. The administrative system in the provinces of the Mughal Empire was an exact miniature replica of the Central government.

The officer-in-charge of the *subah* was the *subedar*, also known as the *nazim*, in certain provinces. There was no regulation fixing the tenure of this office. The subedar was responsible for the general supervision, economic prosperity, law and order and defence of the province. Besides being responsible for the general administration, he also supervised the administration of justice, helped the *diwan* in collecting revenue, maintained the provincial forts and recommended appointments and promotions to important positions in the province. The provincial *diwan* was second in line, but interestingly, not subordinate to the subedar.

Rather, he was the latter's rival in the province. He too was directly appointed by the emperor on the recommendation of the *high diwan*. He acted directly on the orders of the high diwan, and was in constant correspondence with him. We see here a violation of the principle of the unity of command. By placing the *diwan* on an equal footing with the subedar, the Mughals created two parallel and mutually independent organizations in the province. They jealously watched each other's activities and

reported to the emperor. Though they were supposed to work in close collaboration, the records prove that the two quarrelled violently, leading to frequent transfers of one or the other.

## **Local Administration**

During the Mughal administration, each *subah* was divided into a number of units called the *sarkars*. Each *sarkar* was subdivided into *parganas* or *mahals*. At this level, people came in direct touch with officials. Below the *parganas*, there were villages called *mawdah* or *dih*. In the Mughal terminology, a village included the land surrounding it and, therefore, the boundary of each *mawdah* was clearly demarcated. In a *mawdah*, there were smaller hamlets called *naglah*.

Under Shahjahan, his *wazir* created another unit called the *chakla* between *sarkar* and *pargana* which included a number of *parganas*. The *sarkar* however continued to exist.

A brief mention of the officers at the *sarkar* may be made. The *faujdar* was the executive and the military head of a *sarkar* and, since he was the direct representative of the Mughal government at the local level, he too was appointed by the central government. The *faujdar* had military, police, judicial and executive authority rolled into one. He had a small army at his disposal to suppress the rebellious *zamindars*. Besides, he also helped the *amir* in revenue collection. The *amir* was responsible for the working of the entire revenue department of the subdivision and functioned under the direct control of the provincial *diwan*.

## **Pargana administration**

As noted above, each *sarkar* was divided into *parganas*. The *shiqdar* was the executive head of a *pargana* and responsible for the maintenance of law and order as well as criminal justice. He conducted census operations and helped the *amir* in the collection of land revenue. Below him was the *qanungo*, who dealt primarily with the survey, assessment and collection of the revenue. The *qanungo* was the head of the *patwaris* of a *pargana*.

## **Village administration**

Village administration, during the Mughal period, was in the hands of the village Panchayat. The organization of the village life and the observation of the accepted codes of conduct were maintained through the village Panchayat which acted as a social development agency, catering to the welfare of the people. It was also a judicial agency for disposing of cases involving disputes among the villagers. However, an appeal against the decision of the panchayats could be taken to the higher authorities of the government.

## **Revenue Administration**

The revenue administration under the Mughal rule was under the *wazir*. The nomenclature of the *diwan* and the *wazir* was used interchangeably by the various Mughal emperors. For instance, Akbar preferred the designation of *diwan* while Jahangir reversed it to *wazir*. All *diwans* were however not *wazirs* and we read of no Hindu *diwan* being given the high title of *wazir*. In both the cases, the *diwan* or *wazir* was the alter ego of the emperor. However, Akbar did not like the idea of the *diwan* becoming all powerful and he kept rotating this office amongst his ministers.

When the king was incompetent, a pleasure-seeker or a minor, the *wazir* assumed the charge of the army also. During Akbar's time, he had *Diwan-i-Tan* (diwan of salaries) and the *Diwana-i-Khalsa* (diwan of crown lands) to assist him. By the end of Jahangir's era, the number of such assistants of the emperor went up to four. Thus, besides the earlier two, there were *mushriff* (chief accountant) and *mustanfi* (chief auditor) who collectively acted as controllers of financial affairs.

The *wazir's* office received all the revenue papers and returned despatches from the provinces and field armies. All orders for the payment except for the small sums had to be signed by the *diwan* and the actual payments were made through his department only. All questions regarding the collection of revenue were decided by the *diwan* who functioned under the control or guidance of the emperor.

### **Judicial and Social Reforms**

The king and his *vakil* or the prime minister was primarily responsible for this task. At the provincial level, there was the *faujdar* whose duties have been described above. Below him was the *kotwal* who appointed a headman for each *mohalla* (ward) to look after the reports about the law and order situation.

However, Sarkar points out that the state almost neglected the law and order situation in the villages except when there was a violent crime. The policing of the vast rural areas was left to the locality. It was done by the local *chaukidars* who were servants of the village community and were maintained by the villagers themselves. They were not considered officers paid or supervised by the state.

It is noteworthy that, instead of the Mughal government undertaking the responsibility for rural peace and security, it made the villagers responsible for the safety of their own property and that of the travellers in the neighbouring roads. Akbar introduced various reforms in the administration of justice. Earlier to his period, all cases in the Mughal Empire were decided according to the Islamic law. But now, for the first time, Hindu law was administered in deciding the cases where the parties involved were Hindus, but Islamic law continued to function where the parties involved were Muslims. The king was the highest court of appeal. Capital punishment was given only in extreme cases and that too by the emperor alone.

### **Social Reforms**

Akbar had the welfare of his people always in his mind. He had taken several measures to improve the general condition of his subjects. In AD1563, the *Pilgrim Tax*, which was a great burden on the Hindus, was abolished. In AD1564, *Jaziya*, a tax which was imposed on non-Muslims, was also abolished. Akbar tried to stop the practice of Sati. Child marriage was discouraged and female-infanticide was forbidden. Widow-marriage was encouraged.

From the above account it is quite clear that Akbar was a great administrator and the administrative machinery that he set up continued to function throughout the Mughal period.

### **Mansabdari System**

The *Mansabdari* system during the Mughal administration is discussed under the following heads:

#### **Akbar and the Mansabdari System**

Akbar could not have been able to expand his empire and maintain his hold over it without a strong army. For this purpose, it was necessary for him to organize the

nobility as well as his army. To realize both these objectives, Akbar organized his army on the basis of the *Mansabdari* system in place of the *Jagirdari* system. He saw that the *Jagirdars* did not keep the horses or the horsemen or the soldiers in the required number and the prescribed breed of horses. On the contrary, they spent the government money on their own pleasure making. *Mansab* is a Persian word. It means an office or a status or an *Ohada*.

The person whom the Emperor gave a *mansab* was known as the *Mansabdar*. Akbar gave some *mansab* or the *ohada* (status) to each of his military and civil official. The lowest rank was ten, and the highest was 5000 for the nobles; towards the end of the reign, it was raised to 7000.

According to Badayuni, we can say that towards the end of his reign, Akbar increased the highest rank to 12,000. Princes of the blood received higher *mansab*. During the period of Akbar, Raja Man Singh, Mirza Aziz Koka and one or two other top ranking officials were promoted to the rank of 7000. Thereafter, the *mansab* of 8000 and above were meant for the royal family.

### Meaning of Zat and Sawar

The ranks of *Mansabdars* were divided into two groups – *Zat* and *Sawar*. The word *Zat* means personal. It fixed the personal status of a person, and also the salary due to him. The *Sawar* rank indicated the number of cavalymen (*sawars*) a person was required to maintain. Regarding the actual horsemen maintained by the *Mansabdar*, there was no definite view. This matter had been further complicated by the *Zat* and *Sawar* distinction introduced by Akbar in AD 1603-1604 on which the historians hold divergent views. According to Blachmann, *Zat* indicated the number of troops which a *Mansabdar* was expected to maintain, while the *Sawar* meant the actual number of horsemen that he maintained. On the other hand, Irvin holds that the *Zat* indicated the actual number of a cavalry, while the *Sawar* was an honour, and represented like the *Zat*, the actual number indicated by it. This view does not hold much water. Dr R.P. Tripathi holds still another view. He says that *Sawar* was simply an additional honour and it entitled the *Mansabdars* to some extra allowance. For the *Sawar* rank, he was not required to maintain any additional troops at all. C.S.K. Rao says that the *Zat* rank indicated infantry while *Sawar* indicated cavalry to be maintained by the *Mansabdar*. But Abdul Aziz says that it is impossible that the Mughals could have such a large number of infantry. He is of the opinion that *zat* rank imposed an obligation to maintain a fixed number of elephants, horses, beasts of burden and carts but no horse men of cavalry, whereas *Sawar* represented the actual number of cavalry under a *mansabdar*.

Both Abdul Aziz and Prof. S.R. Sharma hold that the *sawar* distinction determined whether a particular *Mansabdar* of the *Zat* rank belonged to the first or the second or the third class in that particular *mansab*. A person who was required to maintain as many *sawars* as his *zat* rank was placed in the first category of that rank; if he maintained half or more, then in the second category, and if he maintained less than half, then in the third category. Thus, a rate of 2 for every *sawar* was added to the *zat* salary. No one could have a higher quota of *sawars* than his *zat* rank. Although modifications were made from time to time, this remained the basic structure as long as the Empire was held together.

### Main Characteristics of *Mansabdari* System

#### Mansab was granted to the military as well as the civil officials

*Mansab* was granted not only to the military officials, but also to all Mughal officers in the revenue and judicial services. Even the scholars of the court were the holders of

*mansabs*. It is, therefore, that Irvin says, *mansabdari* meant nothing 'beyond the fact that the holder of *mansab* was the employee of the state'. R.P. Khosla in a way reiterates the same when he remarks, 'In the Mughal state the army, the peerage and the civil administration were all rolled into one'.

### **Categories or grades of *Mansabdars***

In AD 1573-1574, the *mansabdars* were classified into 33 grades ranking from commanders of ten to those of 12,000. Those who held command of ten to 400 were called *mansabdars*. Higher up, those who held the command of 500-2500 were styled as *amirs*, while the holders of 3000 and upward were known as *Amir-i-Azam* or *Umra*. The highest graded commanders from 8000-12,000 were reserved for the princes of the royal blood. A common official could not hold a *mansab* beyond 7000.

### **Appointment of the *Mansabdars***

The emperor used to appoint the *mansabdars* personally and they could retain the *mansab* so long as he desired. Generally, a *mansab* of 8000 was given to the members of royal family.

### **Pay and allowances of the *Mansabdars***

The *mansabdars* during Mughal period were very highly paid. They were generally given salary in cash. Sometimes, the revenue of a particular *jagir* was assigned to them as salary.

They had to manage their own horsemen and the expenditures of horses from their own salary. They were necessary for the transport of the army. Prof. Satish Chandra says regarding the pay of the Mughal *mansabdars*, 'the Mughal *mansabdars* were paid very handsomely; in fact, their salaries were probably the highest in the world, at that time'. A *mansabdar* of 5000 got from ₹ 28,000 – ₹ 30,000, out of which he would spend ₹16,000 to maintain the soldiers and the other obligations. A *mansabdar* of 1000 got nearly ₹8000 of which ₹3000 were spent to meet his obligations. Moreover, there was no income tax in those days.

The purchasing power of the rupee in those days has been calculated to be sixty times of what it was in 1966. Even though the nobles had to spend roughly half of their personal salary in the upkeep of the animals for transport and in the administration of their *jagirs*, they could lead lives of ostentation and luxury.

### **Duty of the *mansabdars***

*Mansabdars* could be sent to the battlefield on military campaigns as the military commanders or under some commander, who himself was a *mansabdar*. They could be called upon to quell a revolt, conquer a new area or perform non-military and administrative duties. Sometimes, they were allowed to recruit their own troops and to purchase their equipment.

### **Restrictions on *mansabdars***

Great care was taken to ensure that the *sawars* recruited by the *mansabdars* were experienced and well mounted. Akbar started the practice of keeping a record of the description (*huliya*) of each horseman under a *mansabdar* and of branding their horses (*dag*) to prevent the *mansabdars* from going as they pleased. Each horse bore two marks—the government mark on the right thigh and the *mansabdar*'s mark on the

left thigh. Every *mansabdar* had to bring his contingent for a periodic inspection before persons appointed by the emperor for the purpose. The horses were carefully inspected and only good quality horses of Arabic and Iraqi breeds were employed. For every ten cavalymen, the *mansabdar* had to maintain twenty horses. This was so because the horses had to be rested while on march, and replacements were necessarily in the times of war.

### **Pure and mixed troops of *mansabdars***

Generally, a provision was made that the contingents of the nobles should be mixed ones, and drawn from all the groups—Mughal, Pathan, Hindustani, Muslims, Rajputs, etc. Thus, Akbar tried to weaken the forces of tribalism and parochialism. The Mughal and Rajput nobles were allowed to have contingents exclusively of the Mughals or the Rajputs, but in course of time, mixed contingents became the general rule.

### **Recruitment, promotion and dismissal**

During the Mughal period, the recruitment, promotions and dismissals of *mansabdars* were in the hands of the emperor. A person desirous of joining the Mughal service may contact the emperor through a *mansabdar* or through *mir bakshi* to the emperor. It was up to the mood and satisfaction of the emperor to accept the recommendation of *mir bakshi* to assign a *mansab* to the concerned person. If he was granted a *mansab*, his whole record, known as '*hakikat*' was prepared. Promotions of the *mansabdars* were also in the hands of the emperor and were made generally on such occasions as:

- (i) before and after an expedition,
- (ii) at the time of vacancy and
- (iii) on some auspicious occasions or festivals.

A *mansabdar* could be dismissed at any time by the emperor if the latter felt that the former was disloyal or dishonest to him or had lost his utility for the empire.

### ***Mansabdari* System during the Reign of Akbar's Successors**

- (i) **Difference in the highest *mansab*:** In Akbar's time, the smallest *mansab* was of ten *sawars* and the highest of 10,000 even though, initially, *mansabs* higher than 5000 were given only to princes. Later on, Akbar increased the *mansab* of the princes to 12,000. He gave a *mansab* of 7000 only to three of his very famous *amirs*, namely Mirza Shah Rukh, Aziz Koka and Raja Man Singh. After Akbar's death, for ordinary *mansabdars*, the highest *mansab* remained that of 7000, but *mansab* of the princes was raised to 40,000 during Jahangir's time and 60,000 during Shah Jahan's time. Shah Jahan gave to his father-in-law a *mansab* of 9000 and Jahangir gave to Asaf Khan a *mansab* of 9000.
- (ii) **Rise of a new class of *sawars*:** The end of Jahangir's reign saw the rise of a new class of *sawars*. It was known as *do aspa sih aspa*, i.e., two-three horses. The *mansabdars* were to maintain additional horsemen and draw special allowance.
- (iii) **Reduction in the number of soldiers:** Shah Jahan reduced the number of soldiers kept by the *mansabdars* to one-third the original number. According to some historians, sometimes this number was even reduced to one-fourth or one-fifth of the original number. In other words, during the reign of Shah Jahan, a *mansabdar* of 6000 kept only 2000 soldiers. If any *mansabdar* was given the additional rank of *do aspa sih aspa*, he could keep 2000 soldiers.

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- (iv) **Difference in the categories of *Mansabdars*:** Adul Fazal in his book *Akbarnamah* had mentioned thirty-three categories of *mansabdars* during the period of Akbar. During the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan, this was reduced to eleven, and during Aurangzeb's time, their number was reduced to three.
- (v) **Relaxation in rules:** After the death of Akbar, the Mughal Emperors started relaxing the rules of muster and descriptive roles, and also became less watchful on their activities, which resulted in degeneration and an inefficiency in administration.

### Merits of the Mansabdari System

- **End of the main defects of the *Jagirdari* system:** The *mansabdari* system brought to an end many of the defects of the *Jagirdari* system. The *mansabdars* had to come to the emperor every month for their pay. The emperor could maintain direct contact with the *mansabdars* every month.
- **Increased military efficiency:** The *mansabdari* system was an improvement over the military establishment of the medieval period. It was a sort of a compromise between the tribal chieftainship and the feudal system of giving troops. It combined the advantages of both the systems. Moreover, it was designed to tap every source of fighting strength in the country. Various units were particularly suited to certain special kinds of military duties. For example, certain Rajput *mansabdars* were diplomatically used against certain Rajput chiefs with whom they were in a feud.
- **No more loss to royal treasury:** Under the *jagirdari* system, the *jagirdars* were assigned *jagirs* that covered huge areas of land, which resulted in a great loss to the royal treasury. In the *mansabdari* system, all the land became the state land. All the *mansabdars* were paid in cash on a fixed salary basis. This prevented extra revenues from going to the *jagirdars*, and the state treasury, thus, was enriched.
- **End of corruption:** According to some historians, the *mansabdari* system raised the moral standard of the military officials because after the death of a *mansabdar*, all his property used to be confiscated, and therefore, they did not indulge in dishonesty or show greed for hoarding more and more money.
- **Merit as the basis of selection:** All the ranks in this system were given keeping in view the ability of the officers. Moreover, incompetent officers were promptly removed from their positions. The son of a *mansabdar* did not inherit the *mansab* after the death of his father. With the appointment of efficient and able officials on different posts, all parts of the administrative machinery functioned smoothly.
- **Caste feeling and discrimination weakened:** People from different castes and religions formed the military group of *mansabdars*. This helped to weaken the feeling of caste and discrimination between the Hindus and the Muslims. Thus, this system helped to create an atmosphere of emotional integration in the country.

### Demerits of *Mansabdari* System

- (i) **Very expensive system:** The fat salaries paid to the *mansabdars* made the whole army system of the Mughals very expensive, and later on, in Aurangzeb's time, this proved to be one of the factors which brought about the downfall of the Mughal Empire.



- (ii) Within a *mansabdar's* division, there was no classification of the troops into regiments. All the troops were immediately under him and every soldier had personal relations with him. Nor was the numerical strength of each army regulated or fixed in a mansabdar's contingent.
- (iii) Each system was a great defect of the whole system. Hawkins, Bernier and Peter Mondy have referred to this in their accounts. Whenever a particular *mansabdar* died, his property was confiscated by the state. This made the nobles and the mansabdars lead a luxurious life, for they thought and very rightly too, that their savings could not be inherited by their children. Therefore, they spent whatever they possessed. This led to many corrupt practices in their private life. This generation of the nobility later on proved to be a potent cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire.
- (iv) Corruption in some form or the other was unavoidable in a system which left the duties of the recruitment and the administration of the army to the *mansabdars*, i.e., the commanding officers themselves.
- (v) Moral degradation – Dishonest officials and dishonest *mansabdars* used to tally together, and during inspection, used to borrow horses from the other *mansabdars* and used to maintain their full quota only on paper.
- (vi) The *mansabdars* drew the money from the king and paid the troops their salaries with the result that the troops were more loyal to the *mansabdars* than to the king.

### Land Revenue System of the Mughal Dynasty

The revenue system of the Mughal Dynasty went through many changes from the day of its inception by Babur till the reign of Aurangzeb. However, the system was quite an efficient one and helped in the prosperity of the Empire. The major income of the state was the revenue from land. Some of the major sources of income of the Mughal emperors were the following:

- Land revenue
- One-fifth part of the loot in the war
- Trade tax
- Mint
- Unclaimed property
- Income from industries run by the state
- Annual tribute and presents from feudatory kings and mansabdars

Babur and Humayun imposed *Jaziya* on the Hindus and *Zakat* on the Muslims. Akbar abolished these religious taxes; Aurangzeb revived them during his reign. Revenue from land was the biggest source of income of the state.

### The Ryotwari System

The Ryotwari system of land revenue was launched in AD 1582 by Raja Todar Mal (a Hindu), who was appointed by Akbar as the *Diwan-i-Ashraf*. Land was surveyed and measured carefully, and was classified into four categories based on the frequency of cultivation and productivity, each with an annual fixed rate of revenue. Only the area that was cultivated was assessed, and the state took a third of the actual produce. The actual cultivator of the land was responsible for the payment of tax. For purposes

of the revenue administration, the empire was divided into several *subahs*, with each *subah* subdivided into *sarkars*, and each *sarkar* into *paraganas*. A *paragana* consisted of several villages. There were several revenue officials appointed such as the *Amalguzar* (revenue collector), and the *Potdar* (treasurer) both at the district level, and the *Muqqaddam* (headman), and the *Patwari* (recorder) at the village level. Interestingly, the village officials did not function as servants of the state, but of the local community.

Babur distributed all land as *Jagirs* to his nobles. Humayun took no step to bring about any major change. Humayun, when he recaptured his empire, revived the old *Jagirdari* system. Akbar was, therefore, the first Mughal Emperor who established a sound revenue administration. During the early period of his rule, he made several experiments in this field, but did not succeed in implementing any innovative system. Ultimately, the system which he introduced with the help of Raja Todar Mal succeeded which was called the *Dahsala* system.

In AD 1580, the *Dahsala* system was introduced and it was stated as permanent. Raja Todar Mal was the *Diwan* at that time and his deputy was Khwaja Shah Mansur. Historians have expressed diverse opinions regarding this system. However, the most admired features of this system were that instead of a hempen rope, the land was measured by bamboos which were joined together by iron rings. One unit of land was called *bigha* and the land was divided into the following four categories:

- (i) Polaj-land: Cultivated every year
- (ii) Parauti-land: Sometimes left uncultivated for a year or two
- (iii) Chachar-land: Left uncultivated for three or four years
- (iv) Banjar-land: Left uncultivated for five years or more

The average yield per *bigha* of each type of land in respect of every crop was ascertained separately in every *Pargana* on the basis of the past ten years' produce. That average was regarded as the standard produce of that land and on its basis revenue was fixed with the cultivator for the following ten years.

The demand of the state was one third of the average produce of the land. The cultivators were asked to pay the revenue in cash. For this purpose, the prices of every cereal were fixed in different localities on the basis of local prices. The government officers, of course, maintained an annual account of the area and the quality of land in possession of a cultivator, its produce, type of produce and the prevailing prices of all cereals in every *dastur*. This was because such an account was essential to fix up revenue for the future. Moreover, both the revenue and the prices of cereals were not fixed yearly, but for a decade (ten years). The *Jagirdari* land was also brought under this system. It was managed by the officers of the state though its income went to the concerned *jagirdars*. The infliction of the permanent *dasturs* meant that the revenue rates were to be largely dissociated from the quality of the actual harvest in a particular year.

All those who possessed land, given to them in charity, of an area of five hundred *bighas* or more were asked to present themselves before the emperor. The lands of those who did not obey the orders were confiscated by the authority.

For future, the emperor himself took over the responsibility of granting land to the people in charity. He did it with the help of provincial *sadars*. Akbar introduced the Ryotwari system. He accepted the cultivators as owners of their lands and the

state kept direct contact with them for all purposes. The cultivators were given clear *pattas* by the state on which their quality and quantity of land and the revenue which they had to pay were recorded. The cultivators were given all promising encouragement for better production and were helped in case of emergencies. Like other organized system of taxation, the land-revenue arrangement of the Mughal administration comprised mainly of two stages – first, assessment and second, the actual collection of the revenues. The term '*Jama*' signified the amount assessed as opposed to the total amount collected.

Among the most used methods of assessment, the most compact one was known as *hast-o-bud*. In this method, the assessor inspected the village and after his observation made an estimate of the total produce on the basis of which he decided the revenue. Another popular method involved counting the ploughs and assessing the revenue by applying to them rates fixed according to localities.

The *Dahsala* system was not introduced throughout the entire empire. Other systems also continued in different parts of the empire that is the *Bantai* system remained in force in Kandhar, Kashmir and part of Sindh and Multan.

The *Nasq* or *Kankut* system was continued in Bengal, Gujarat and Kathiawar. The *Dahsala* system was followed in the provinces of Bihar, Allahabad, Malwa, Awadh, Agra, Delhi, Lahore and parts of Multan. *Patwaris* and *muqaddams* assessed and collected revenue and also maintained records. In return, they were paid a part of the revenue. Akbar abolished *Jizya* and *Zakat*. He also abolished taxes from the sale and purchase of animals, salt, sale and purchase of houses, house-tax, leather, blankets, etc., for lessening the burden of the cultivators. The system was continued by Jahangir as it existed during the reign of his father. However, there was leniency in its execution. During his reign, *Jagirdars* claimed more rights. Though it did not concern the peasants adversely, the income of the state was condensed. Shah Jahan increased the state demand.

The peasants were asked to pay between 33 per cent – 50 per cent of their produce as revenue. Besides, Shah Jahan gave the right of collecting the revenue to contractors. Aurangzeb continued the practices of the reign of Shah Jahan.

The *Jagirdari* system persisted; lands were given to contractors; revenue was fixed between one-half to two-thirds of the produce and the rest of the defects remained as before. The net result was that the cultivators suffered badly. The system broke down during the period of the later Mughals emperors. There remained nothing except that the lands were given to the contractors for the purpose of collection of revenue. The state increased its demand to the contractors and, in turn, the contractors, who in most of the cases enjoyed hereditary rights, taxed the cultivators heavily. It resulted in the poverty of the cultivators which, ultimately, broke down the economy of the Mughal Empire.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Aurangzeb's exchequer raised a record £100 million in annual revenue through various sources like taxes, customs and land revenue, *et al.* from 24 provinces.

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## 4 MARATHA ADMINISTRATION

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Shivaji laid the foundation for a strong administrative system. To some extent his administration was based on those of the Deccan administration system, but it had some original features of its own. A study of the various levels of his administration and the administration of its various departments can be made under the following heads.

### Central Administration

1. **The King:** Shivaji was a despotic and an autocratic ruler who enjoyed all sovereignty. All the powers of the state were vested in him. He was the supreme judge, administrative head, law giver and General. In spite of being autocratic, he never used his power for meeting his selfish ends. He used to run his administration with the help of a council of ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. It consisted of eight ministers who were responsible to Shivaji. Their continuation in office depended upon the wishes of Shivaji.
2. **Ashtapradhan:** To help Shivaji with the work of administration, there was a Council of eight ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. The ministers were as follows:
  - (a) *Peshwa or Mukhya pradhan:* The Prime Minister was known as the Peshwa or Mukhya pradhan. His main task was to look after the efficiency of administration. For the fulfilment of this duty he kept a control over all officials of the government. He acted on behalf of the king in his absence. In all governmental documents there was his stamp and signatures below those of the Chhatrapati. He had to follow the instructions of the Chhatrapati.
  - (b) *Sare-Naubat or Senapati:* He was responsible for the organization and supervision of the army, he used to command the army in the battlefield. He used to give an accurate account of the booty to the Chhatrapati. It was he who informed the Chhatrapati about the requests and requirements of the soldiers. His main duties were recruitment of soldiers, organization of army and maintenance of discipline.
  - (c) *Amatya or Finance Minister:* He was in charge of the income and expenditure of the state. He was not only the finance minister, but also had to perform active military service at the time of war. He had to acknowledge the orders of the 'Chhatrapati' in all the acts performed by him.
  - (d) *Sumant or Foreign Minister:* He used to perform all the functions connected with the foreign affairs. He used to look after the foreign ambassadors and deputies and acquired knowledge about the political activities of the other states through the spies. The king took his advice at the time of entering into peace treaties with the enemy rulers.
  - (e) *Sachiv or Shurunvish:* He was a sort of superintendent in the central ministry. His main duties were the arrangement for the official posts and to set the language and style of royal letters right.
  - (f) *Wakianavis or Mantri:* He kept an account of the daily activities of the king and the important events at the court. He also prepared a list of the

people desirous of visiting the king and kept a strict watch over the food, etc. prepared for the king.

(g) *Panditrao or Danadhyaksha*: Panditrao or Danadhyaksha was in charge of religious activities. His main function was the hospitality of the Brahmins on behalf of the king, to give them donation and prizes and to fix dates for religious activities, to arrange for the punishments for anti-religious or other perverse activities, to make the regulations for religious ceremonies, etc. and to give his decisions on the religious questions. It was his responsibility to reform the conduct of the people.

(h) *Nyayadhisha*: He was the highest official of judicial department. He heard both the civil and the criminal cases. He also decided about the land-right and chefship, etc. It was also his duty to implement the decisions of the Gram Panchayat. He also interpreted the law. Out of the above mentioned eight ministers, everybody had to perform military service at the time of necessity except Panditrao and Nyayadhisha. With the exception of Senapati and Wakianavis, very often all the members of the Ashtapradhan were Brahmins. No office was hereditary. On all official documents, firmans and peace documents, on the top there were the signatures of the king, then the Peshwa and at the bottom were those of Amatya, Wakianavis, Sachiv and Sumant.

### Provincial and Local Administration

Shivaji had divided his whole empire into four provinces:

1. **Northern provinces**: This part included Balaghat, Kori region, Southern Surat, Northern Konkan, Northern Bombay and Poona. It was under Peshwa Maro Trimbak Pingle.
2. **Southern provinces**: This part included Southern Bombay, Southern Konkan, Coastal regions, Samantvari regions, etc. This province was under Annaji Pant.
3. **South eastern province**: This province included the regions of Satara, Koljpur, Belgaon and Dharwad and Kopal. Its Sar-Karkun was Dattaju Trimbak.
4. **Four southern provinces**: These included districts from Kopal to Vellure like Zinzi, Velari, Chennai, Chittore and Arcot. This province was under the military officials.

These provinces were known as *Swarajya*. Every provincial ruler respected the wishes of the king. Like at the centre, there was a committee of eight ministers in every province. In order to maintain central hold over the Sar-i-Karkun or the Prantpati and the provincial ministers, Shivaji did not make their offices hereditary and to some extent kept central hold on their appointments under the Prantpati or the Sar-i-Karkun and the Subedars. Perhaps, Karkun was responsible for the maintenance of the empire and Subedars was in charge of the land yielding about ₹1 Lakh annual revenue. According to one estimate, Shivaji got the income of ₹3.5 crores annually barring the income from the *chauth*. On the basis of this account it can be maintained that there were about 350 subedars in his empire. The office of Subedar was generally given to the Brahmins.

In the local administration of Shivaji, forts played an important part. The responsibility for the defense of the neighbouring area of the fort was of the Havaladar. He made arrangements for all administration of the fort. Shivaji's empire included

about 240 forts. Thus, he had appointed about 240 Havalendars. The post of the Havaladar was generally given to a Maratha. He managed the entire administration of the fort. In every fort, besides the havaladar, there were two other officials of equal rank – first *Sari-Naubat* (who was generally a Maratha), who led and supervised the army stationed in the fort and the other equal ranking officer was *Sabnis*. He was generally a Brahmin. The financial arrangements of the fort and the neighbouring area, the correspondence and the management of the official stores were his responsibilities. *Karakhanis* (who were generally Kayasthaa) helped him. Shivaji paid all his provincial or local officials either in cash or ordered their salaries to be given out of the revenues of a particular area.

### **Military Administration/Army Organization**

The organization and discipline of Shivaji's army was worth emulating. He paid cash salaries to his soldiers. He adopted the practice of branding the horses and writing the descriptive rolls of the soldiers. Soldiers of his army did not carry their wives with them. Shivaji ordered his soldiers to carry a minimum burden or luggage so that the mobility of the army should be efficiently maintained. His army had the four branches of cavalry, infantry, artillery and navy.

Cavalry consisted of two parts. The horsemen who were provided horses and weapons on behalf of the state were called the *Bargirs* and the horsemen who arranged for their own horses and weapons were called *Siledars*. All cavalry was under *Sar-i-Naubat*. Infantrymen were good archers. Shivaji recruited the Mawalis in big numbers in his army. His army had 700 Pathan soldiers as well.

Shivaji's artillery consisted of only the mortar guns. It was managed by the Portuguese. Shivaji got gunpowder, etc. from the French of Bombay. The main purpose behind organizing the navy was to arrest the plunder of the Abyssinians.

The army remained in the cantonment only for the period of four months of rainy season. During the remaining eight months, it went out either to conquer fresh territory or to collect supplies from the enemy-land. Every article of every soldier was accounted before he left the cantonment and when he returned to it, so that no soldier will possibly hide his booty. Shivaji formed elaborate rules and regulations to maintain discipline in the army and all of them were rigorously enforced. Consequently, he succeeded in organizing a well-disciplined, strong and highly mobile army for the period of his own lifetime. The forts and their security occupied an important place in the army organization of Shivaji. Shivaji had as many as 250 forts which were important for him both for purposes of defence and offence. Consequently, he took all necessary measures for the security of his forts. There were three important officers, viz., a *havaladar*, a *sabnis* and a *sar-i-naubat* in every fort. All the three were jointly responsible for the safety of their fort. The *sar-i-naubat* and the *havaladar* were Marathas at the same time as the *sabnis* was a Brahmana by caste.

There was another officer called *kharkhana-navis* who was responsible for the maintenance of all sorts of supplies in the fort. He also kept an account of every income and expenditure incurred in the fort. The *havaladar* had to look after the working of his subordinates, the right to dismiss them, to receive and dispatch letters, to close the gates of the fort in the evening, to open the gates in the morning and to check the measures taken for the security of the fort. Shivaji maintained a navy as well.

Once he conquered the Konkan coast, it became necessary for him to safeguard his coastal territory from the invasion of the Sidis of Janjira. Shivaji had 400 ships of

different types in his navy. The navy was divided into two parts and each part was commanded by *daria nayak* and *mai nayak* respectively. The navy of Shivaji fought against the Dutch, the Portuguese and the English at several occasions.

### Land Revenue Administration

Shivaji organized his land revenue administration most probably after the pattern of that of Malik Amber, the minister of Ahmednagar. Four main sources of revenue in his kingdom were the land revenue, custom, *chauth* and *sardeshmukhi*. He brought the *jagir* system under control to some extent to make his land revenue system effective and successful. In AD 1679, Annaji Datta made a revenue survey of the cultivable land and fixed the land revenue according to the productivity of the soil. Initially, he fixed it 30 per cent of the produce but later on it was increased to 40 per cent. To protect the peasants, Shivaji exempted the revenue demands at the time of natural calamities and gave them Takvi loans to purchase seeds, etc. Takvi loans were taken back in easy instalments. According to some historians, Shivaji completely ended the Zamindari or Deshmukhi system but it does not appear to be correct from our point of view because he gave salary to many officials in the form of *jagir* though they were kept under control. During his time there was strict supervision over the officials who acquired a hereditary right over land. Shivaji did not permit them to keep soldiers or build forts in their *jagirs* and took from every *jagir* a fixed amount as the State's share. Besides revenue, a fixed percentage of the custom duty was charged on the import and export of the goods of businessmen. Shivaji augmented his income by exacting revenue from the neighbouring regions of the Mughals. This was one-fourth of the revenue imposed on the land and was called the *chauth*. Probably, it was a sort of military tax. It was levied on those regions where Marathas promised not to have any military raid. A similar type of tax was *sardeshmukhi* which was one-tenth of the state income. It was levied on those Maratha Deshmukhs who acknowledged Shivaji as their Sardeshmukh. By levying this tax, Shivaji proved that he was very farsighted and the builder of a strong empire. By means of the *sardeshmukhi* tax he achieved success in bringing the various Maratha Chiefs under one sovereign power and established a Maratha empire. Recent research has proved that the financial system of Shivaji was beneficial to the people.

### Judicial System

Shivaji did not establish organized courts like the modern courts nor did he establish any Law Code. His judicial administration was based on the traditional ways only. At the centre, the eight ministers of the *Ashtapradhan*, viz. *Nyayadhish* decided both the civil and the criminal cases according to the Hindu Scriptures only. In the provinces the same function was performed by the provincial judges only. In the villages judicial work was performed by the Panchayats. Justice was impartial and the penal code was strict.

In brief, Shivaji was an able administrator and he laid the foundations for a powerful empire. Undoubtedly his kingdom was a regional kingdom but it was based on popular will. Shivaji adopted a secular policy in his empire. In the words of Dr. Ishwari Prasad, he organized an administrative system which in many respects was better than even that of the Mughals.

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## 5 SUMMARY

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In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Sher Shah Suri was the first great national ruler. He ruled only for a short time but the subsequent history of India shows that this short rule of Sher Shah had the same significance as fifty years of Akbar's reign.
- Islam Shah was a worthy son of his father. He not only maintained the administrative setup of his father, but also strengthened it further. Sher Shah had constructed *Sarais* on every fourth mile. Islam Shah constructed *Sarais* on every second mile and arranged for free distribution of food in each of them.
- The early death of Sher Shah (AD 1545) and, later, the second battle of Panipat (AD 1557), assured the Mughal dominance.
- In the Mughal system of governance, the emperor enjoyed real sovereignty, which was indivisible and inalienable. Within this realm, he stood supreme as a symbol of unity and preserver of peace.
- It was Akbar who organized the provincial administration of the country and put it on a sound footing. He divided the empire into twelve divisions, later on increased to fifteen, and named them *subahs*.
- The administrative system in the provinces of the Mughal Empire was an exact replica of the Central government.
- During the Mughal administration, each subah was divided into a number of units called the *Sarkars*.
- The revenue administration under the Mughal rule was under the *wazir*. The nomenclature *diwan* and *wazir* were used interchangeably by the various Mughal emperors.
- The Ryotwari system of land revenue was launched in AD 1582 by Raja Todar Mal (a Hindu), who was appointed by Akbar as the *Diwan-i-Ashraf*.
- The Mughals, in the beginning, readily adopted the administrative system, which had been introduced by their Pathan predecessors.
- In theory, the Mughals like every other Muslim ruler were under the Holy Law. Though, he led the divine service and presided at the prayer, the emperor enjoyed no spiritual functions.
- The emperor was the pivot of the Mughal administrative power, and the supreme dispenser of justice. He was the despot and the source of all the authority. He was the head of the state, supreme commander of the military and the chief executive of the civil administration.
- To help Shivaji with the work of administration, there was a Council of eight Ministers called the *Ashtapradhan*. It was a committee of eight ministers in every province. In order to maintain central hold over the *Sari-Karkun* or the *Prantpati* and the provincial ministers, Shivaji did not make their offices hereditary and to some extent kept central hold on their appointments under the *Prantpati* or the *Sar-i-Karkun* and the *subedars*.
- Shivaji organized his land revenue administration most probably after the pattern of that of Malik Amber, the minister of Ahmednagar. Four main sources of revenue in his Kingdom were the land revenue, custom, *Chauth* and *Sardeshmukhi*.



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## 10.6 KEY TERMS

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- **Nazarana:** A gift offered especially to a prince to pay respect
- **Pargana:** A former administrative unit of the Indian subcontinent, used primarily, but not exclusively, by the Muslim kingdoms
- **Mansab:** An office of rank as well as of profit
- **Jagir:** A tract of land owned by a *jagir* which he did not own, but collected tax on it equivalent to his salary. The *jagir* was transferable from one *mansabdar* to another; the office itself was not hereditary
- **Muhtasib:** The Muhtasib looked after the moral development of the subjects.
- **Parochialism:** Being provincial and narrow in scope
- **Nyayadhisha:** He was the highest official of judicial department. He heard both the civil and the criminal cases

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## 10.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False; (d) True
2. (a) *Diwan-i-Rasalat*; (b) Chief *Munsif* and Chief *Shiqdar*; (c) *Village*; (d) One-third
3. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False
4. (a) *Langar*; (b) *Sikandari Gaz*; (c) *Patta*
5. (a) False; (b) True; (c) False; (d) True
6. (a) 'Badshaah'; (b) Omrahs; (c) Jahanbani, Jahangiri; (d) Diwan
7. (a) True; (b) False; (c) True
8. (a) *Amirs*; (b) 2000; (c) *Jagirdari*
9. (a) True; (b) True; (c) False; (d) False
10. (a) land; (b) *Jagirs*; (c) Akbar; (d) *bigha*
11. (a) Peshwa, Mukhya pradhan, (b) *Nyayadhisha*; (c) *Sar-i-Naubat*; (d) seeds

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## 10.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Analyse the land reforms brought about by Sher Shah.
2. Discuss the important features of the land revenue system of the Mughal Dynasty.
3. Highlight the important features of Shivaji's administration.
4. Describe the characteristic features of the central administration of Mughals.

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Describe the administrative setup introduced by Sher Shah.
2. Analyse the features of the provincial administration and local administration during the Mughal Dynasty.

3. Analyse the judicial and social reforms brought about by Akbar during his reign.
4. Discuss the important features of the mansabdari system. Add a note on its merits and demerits.
5. Analyse the military organization adopted by Shivaji.

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## 9 FURTHER READING

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