

Class VII
Chapter 4 history
The Mughal Empire

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Key Objectives of the Chapter

It was after the end of the Sultanate, that a new power came to rise, and that was the Mughal Empire, a vast and a great empire that derived its ancestry both from Timurid and the Ghengis Khan.

1. The students will learn about the new kingdom that became the successor of the Delhi Sultanate.
2. The chapter elaborates the start of the Mughal era in India, that lasted for a very considerable amount of time.
3. They will learn about the administrative system and how they looked after their empire.
4. The students will get an insight into the diplomatic ideologies of the Mughals.

Expected Learning Outcomes

By the end of the chapter, the students will have an idea about the new kingdom in India, the Mughals who too were Mongols by their ancestry. They will also be enlightened with their diplomatic ideologies, a completely new concept for the children, and how they used it to win their hands all over India. The chapter's end will help the students understand the medieval administrative system under the Mughals.

FOCUS POINT

The major goal of the chapter is to give a detailed yet short description of the next and yet the most powerful dynasty, the Mughal dynasty.

Key terms

1. **Primogeniture:** The custom of the king's eldest son inheriting the throne.
2. **Manaab:** A designated position or rank in the Mughal empire. The grading system was used to rate an individual's rank, salary, and military responsibilities.
3. **Mansabdars:** people who have a manaab are called mansabdars.
4. **Jagir:** a piece of land under a zamindar
5. **Zamindars:** The local chieftain or the headman was called the zamindar.

- 6. Zabt:** Zabt is the revenue system where the kingdom is divided into smaller parts and each part has a designated revenue rate.

Things to answer after reading the context:

- a. Why did the Mughals deny their Genghis ancestry?
- b. What do you think is a massacre?
- c. Learn about the successors of the Mughals.

The Mughals: The Successors Of Genghis Khan and Timur

The Mughal dynasty was one of the most prosperous dynasties that ruled in India. In the late 16th century, the Mughals started expanding their kingdom from Delhi and Agra to the neighboring areas. They had a fierce army with few of the bravest warriors. As a result, they made successful conquests and by the 17th century, they controlled almost the whole of the country. They introduced excellent administration reforms and policies which were followed for generations of the empire. Their inclusion in the Indian history and Indian culture has led to many important events, and we will learn about them in this chapter.

In the previous chapter, we learned about Genghis Khan, the brave and the cruel king of Mongols. The Mughals were the successors of Genghis Khan and his wife Timur, the princess of Iraq. The name "Mughal" comes from "Mongol". However, the Mughals despised the name Mongol since Genghis Khan is associated with massacre and mishaps against the Uzbeks. They preferred Timurid, a name derived from their mother's ancestry, who were the ones to capture Delhi in 1398.

Setting Of The Stage: The Start An Era, The Mughal Empire

Babur was the first-ever Mughal king who succeeded Ferghana. He was crowned at the tender age of 12 as the king of Kabul in 1494. However, this rule was short-lived as a Mongol group of Uzbeks invaded Kabul and dethroned Babur. All Babur could do was flee to the subcontinent. The Mughals followed a peculiar fashion of inheritance. They did not follow primogeniture, they believed in equal distribution of the kingdom among all the sons of the king. It was in 1504 that Babur again took control over Kabul, and in 1526 he fought a war against Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the Delhi Sultans, and took control over Delhi and Agra.

- How were Mughal relations with other kings and communities of the subcontinent?
- How were the Mughals and the Delhi Sultans different from each other?

The Diplomatic Ideologies of The Mughals

The Mughals were fierce warriors and were all about dominance. They suppressed communities and kingdoms who did not accept their rule. As their military strength increased, they began to overpower several kings. A community that had mixed opinions about the Mughals was the Rajputs. Some Rajputs readily accepted the Mughal rule and even married off their daughters to Mughal kings anticipating a good post and wealth in return. However, some Rajputs revolted against the Mughal rule, for instance, the Sisodia Rajputs hailing from Mewar waged war against the Mughals. However after they were defeated, the Mughals treated them with dignity and returned their land to them, and made the watan jagirdars. The Mughals were so successful early on because of their modest behavior against their enemies upon being defeated.

The Marathas never looked upon the Mughals honourably. What do you think might have happened? Do a small research and write it down in your notebook about what you learn.

- How did the Mughal military become so strong?
- How were the troops managed?
- What was the administration under the Mughals like?

THE MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

a. Mansabdars and Jagirdars

The Mughal empire soon expanded its reach and covered a huge chunk of the subcontinent. As they expanded, they hired people from different communities such as the Turks, Marathas, Afghans, Indian Muslims to become mansabdars. A mansabdar must own a designated number of "sawars" or cavalrymen. Mansabdars received their salary in the form of revenue collected, the revenue was collected from their jagirs. This can be compared to the iqta system of the Delhi sultanate, however, the mansabdars did not administer their jagir like the Mukhtis administered their iqta.

b. Zamindars

The primary source of income for the Mughal king was the revenue collected from peasants. These taxes reached the emperor via the rural elites called the zamindars. Todar Mal was the competent revenue minister of Akbar's court, analyzed the yield and their prices over a period of 10 years, and fixed a specific amount of tax that a peasant had to pay. Each region of the empire was divided into smaller revenue circles, each circle had a designated revenue rate. This kind of individual crop revenue system was called zabt. If you had to finish 10 pages of work in a day, wouldn't it be difficult? The work would become much simpler if you could divide the work among 3 of your friends and yourself. For this reason, these revenue circles were made and each circle was administered by the zamindars who collected taxes. However, with time the zamindars became too powerful and exploited the peasants. Sometimes when the peasants and zamindars belonged to the same caste, they teamed up to revolt against the king. Hence the zamindar system caused chaos sometimes and as such unrest challenged the stability of the empire occasionally.

- Who was Akbar?
- Why was the kingdom prosperous under Akbar?

Akbar: The Great

The administration under Akbar was one of the best. It is elaborately discussed in the book Akbarnama written by the famous critic, Abu Fazl. Under him, the empire was divided into several provinces called Suba. Each province had its own subedar. Like at school, a class has several sections and each section has its own class teacher.

Similarly each suba was governed by a subedar. The subedar was responsible for the political stability and security of his suba. Each subedar had a diwan under him who looked after the finances of the province. Other important officers were instrumental in the successful administration as well. The military paymaster (Bakshi), the minister in charge of religious affairs (Sadr), military commanders (faujdar), and the police commissioner (kotwal). The army was granted lots of money for expenses to prevent the tranquility of the empire. Akbar often interacted with people from different religions. After many interactions, he started to believe that discrimination based on religion led to unrest and disharmony. He came up with the ideology of "Sulh-i-kul", which means "universal peace". He believed in treating all people equally irrespective of religion. A similar way of administration was followed by Jahangir and Shahjahan.

- How did the Mughal empire decline?
- Why did it fall despite being so prosperous?
- Learn more about Akbar's administration through a small research. What are the other aspects of the Mughal administration that you liked?

The Decline Of The Mughal Empire

Under Shahjahan's and Jahangir's rule, the empire was thriving. However, the expenditure was earlier made to benefit the peasants. During the 17th century, the focus shifted to building monuments, trade, and military. Resultantly, the peasants became poorer and suffered. By the 17th century, the Mughal empire was no longer prosperous and their authority was fading. Regions like Awadh and Hyderabad had new dynasties which opposed the Mughals. Soon, the Mughal empire fell and the British era began.

The Mughal empire was one of the most prominent and prosperous empires Of India. The administration under Akbar was a role model And even today, few of the ideas from Akbar's administration methods are followed! It was after the Mughals, that the British raj started setting its roots in India. You see, India has come a long way from being one of the finest civilizations to be looted and plundered by the Mongols and then being ruled by the Sultans, the Mughlas and then by the British. The land has seen culture, blood and civilizations again.