

Chapter 4: The Mughal Empire

Intext Questions:

Question 1: Do you think this painting suggests that the Mughals claimed kingship as a Birthright?

Answer: Yes, As this painting portraits the hierarchy of the Mughal emperors right from Timur to Aurangzeb.

Question: How was Humayun's relationship with Safavid Iran different from Akbar's?

Answer:

1. Humayun took refuge in the court of Safavid Iran when he was dogged out of the subcontinent by Sher Shah Suri. Therefore, he had friendly relations with Iran.
2. On the other hand, Akbar seized Qandahar from Safavid Iranian rulers. Therefore, he was at war with them.

Question 2: Did the annexation of Golconda and Bijapur in Aurangzeb's reign end hostilities in the Deccan?

Answer: No, the uncertain situation still persisted and he had to personally manage the affairs of Deccan. He even had to face guerrilla warfare.

Question 3: Which do you think is a fairer division of inheritance: primogeniture or coparcenary ?

Answer: Both these traditions have their own positives and negatives.

Primogeniture: It can make the eldest son inherited his father's estate. Since all brothers have to listen to their eldest brother might make the empire so powerful as the unity is strength. But at the same time, it might anger the younger brothers and might lead to disintegration of the kingdom.

Coparcenary: According to this, Empire is divided equally amongst all sons of a king. It can bring peace in the kingdom since there are no wars of inheritance. But it weakens the kingdom by dividing a big one into pieces so can provoke enemies to attack and can lead to spoil the rich diversity of a big kingdom.

Question 4: Look at Table 1 again – note that Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji when he came to accept Mughal authority. What was the consequence of this insult?

Answer: Aurangzeb insulted Shivaji then he escaped from Agra, declared himself an independent king and resumed his campaigns against the Mughals.

Question 5: Nobles with a zat of 5,000 were ranked higher than those of 1,000. In Akbar's reign there were 29 mansabdars with a rank of 5,000 zat; by Aurangzeb's reign the number of mansabdars had increased to 79. Would this have meant more expenditure for the state?

Answer: Yes, this led to more expenditure on the Exchequer. By Aurangzeb's reign the actual revenue collected was often less than the granted sum. There was a huge increase in the number of mansabdars, which meant a long wait before they received a jagir. These and other factors created a shortage in the number of jagirs. As a result, many jagirdars tried to extract as much revenue as possible while they had a jagir.

Question 6: Can you identify the Jesuit priests in this picture?



Fig. 4.1. Akbar holding discussions with learned individuals of different faiths in the ibadat khana

Answer: The Jesuit priests in this picture are in black and long gowns.

Question 7: Find out more about Akbar’s other contemporaries—the ruler of England, Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603); the Safavid ruler of Iran, Shah Abbas (1588-1629); and the more controversial Russian ruler, Czar Ivan IV Vasilyevich, also called “Ivan the Terrible” (1530-1584).

Answer:

1. **Akbar:** Universal peace
2. **Queen Elizabeth:** Democratic attitude
3. **Shah Abbas:** Liberal
4. **Czar Ivan:** Ruthless dictator.

Imagine:

Question: You have inherited a kingdom. (Remember Babur and Akbar were about your age when they became rulers). How would you make your kingdom stable and prosperous?

Answer: We would make our kingdom stable and prosperous in the following manner:

- We shall appoint an advisory council to advise on the matters of ruling and administration.
- A foolproof tax system will be started at reasonable rates.
- Government enterprises will be set up to ensure regular income to the state.
- Joint venture undertakings would be set up at a minimum rate of profit to the state exchequer.

LET’S RECALL:

Question 1: Match the following:

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| 1)Mansab | a)Marwar |
| 2)Mongol | b)Governor |
| 3)Sisodiya Rajput | c)Uzbek |
| 4)Rathor Rajput | d)Mewar |
| 5)Nur Jahan | e)Rank |
| 6)Subadar | f)Jahangir |

Answer:

| | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 1) Mansab | a) Rank |
| 2) Mongol | b) Uzbek |
| 3) Sisodiya Rajput | c) Mewar |
| 4) Rathor Rajput | d) Marwar |
| 5) Nur Jahan | e) Jahangir |
| 6) Subadar | f) Governor |

Question 2: Fill in the blanks:

1. The capital of Mirza Hakim, Akbar's half-brother, was
2. The five Deccan Sultanates were Berar, Khandesh, Ahmadnagar,, and
3. If zat determined a mansabdar's rank and salary, sawar indicated his
4. Abul Fazl, Akbar's friend and counsellor, helped him frame the idea of so that he could govern a society composed of many religions, cultures, and castes.

Answer:

1. Kabul.
2. Bijapur, Golconda.
3. Cavalrymen.
4. Sulh-i-kul

Question 3: What were the central provinces under the control of the Mughals?

Answer: The central provinces under the control of the Mughals were Delhi, Sindh, Kabul, Mewar, Marwar, Gujarat, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Deccan.

Question 4: What was the relationship between the man Sardar and the jagir?

Answer:

1. Mansabdar were the nobles or the rank holders. They were not paid salaries. Instead they were given the right to collect revenue from the land granted to them. These lands were called jagirs.
2. Often mansabdars had to serve outside their jagirs therefore the revenue from their jagir was collected by their servants.

LET'S UNDERSTAND:

Question 5: What was the role of the zamindar in the Mughal administration?

Answer: Role of the Zamindar in Mughal administration:

1. Zamindars were described as all types of intermediary whether they were local headmen of the villages or the powerful chieftains.
2. They collected taxes from peasants and deposited the same with the treasury of the empire.

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

Answer: Debates with religious scholars helped Akbar in framing the idea of sulh-ikul that means universal peace. Akbar was interested in the religion and social customs of different people. Akbar's interaction with people of different faiths made him realise that religious scholars who emphasised ritual and dogma were often bigots. Their teachings created divisions and disharmony amongst his subjects. This led Akbar to the idea of sulh-ikul. This idea of tolerance did not discriminate between people of different religions in his realm. By using such a policy of tolerance Akbar was able to formulate governance guidelines which were based on a system of ethics – honesty, justice and peace

Question 7: Why did the Mughals emphasise their Timurid and not their Mongol descent?

Answer: From their mother's side, the Mughals were descendants of Genghis Khan, the ruler of Mongol. From their father's side, they were the successors of Timur the ruler of Iran, Iraq and modern-day Turkey. However, the Mughals did not like to be called Mughal or Mongol because Genghis Khan's memory was associated with the massacre of a large number of people. But the Mughals were proud of their Timurid ancestry because their great ancestor, Timur had captured Delhi in 1398.

LET'S DISCUSS:

Question 8: How important was the income from land revenue to the stability of the Mughal Empire?

Answer: Land revenue was the backbone of the Mughal Empire. Without it nothing could be done. The king could not pay the salary of his soldiers. Neither could he do any welfare work. The administrative expenditure was so vast and this could be met with this revenue only. Hence, revenue was important to strengthen the empire.

Question 9: Why was it important for the Mughals to recruit mansabdars from diverse backgrounds and not just Turanis and Iranis?

Answer: It was important for the Mughals to recruit mansabdars from diverse backgrounds and not just Turanis and Iranis because of the following reasons:

- It had a positive effect on the emotions of the people of India (Hindustan—the subcontinent).
- The people of the subcontinent were more conversant with the status of land and taxes to be imposed on it.
- They needed to respect the diversity of the country in order to have a control over it.
- Mughal also didn't want to take the risk of a rebellion by the people on the recruitment of the officials from the same background that could be seen as a privilege to Turanis and Iranis.

Question 10: Like the Mughal Empire, India today is also made up of many social and cultural units. Does this pose a challenge to national integration?

Answer: No. This does not pose any challenge to national integration. Unity in diversity is the special feature of India. Indians may belong to different regions, cultures, castes and creed. But this does not mean that they are different people. They are one and are proud of being born in India.

Sometimes social conflicts arise no doubt but they are solved in an amicable way. Whenever there is an external threat, all Indians come together. The Kargil war is worth mentioning here. India fought and won the war in the last. That was the time when everyone was filled with patriotic feelings. There was only one goal, i.e. to win the war and that India did with the help of her brave heroes.

Question 11: Peasants were vital for the economy of the Mughal Empire. Do you think that they are as important today? Has the gap in the income between the rich and the poor in India changed a great deal from the period of the Mughals?

Answer: Peasants are still very important as they are the producers of food and the agrarian industrial raw material:

1. Peasants pay the land revenue increasing the government revenue.
2. There is a change in the gap between the rich and the poor today as compared to the Mughal period mainly because of change in the social, economic situation of the country.
3. Now the country is one political entity with rights and duties for all the citizens and the government working for the welfare of the citizens.

LET'S DO:

Question 12: The Mughal Empire left its impact on the different regions of the subcontinent in a variety of ways. Find out if it had any impact in the city, village, or region in which you live.

Answer: I live in Delhi. It was the capital of the Mughal Empire. The Empire changed the face of the city. We see the Red Fort, Chandni Chowk, Jama Masjid, Humayun's tomb, the Mughal garden, etc. in the city. These were the contributions of the Mughal emperors who made the city so rich and colourful.

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