

SYLLABUS
SEMESTER – III
HISDSC201T

HISTORY OF INDIA FROM 1526 TO 1707 CE

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1. Sources of Mughal Indian History
2. Political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion.
3. 1st Battle of Panipat: Causes and its significance.
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UNIT – 1

ONE MARK:

1. Who was the founder of the Mughal Empire in India?

→ Babur.

2. In which year did the First Battle of Panipat take place?

→ 1526 A.D.

3. Who defeated Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat?

→ Babur.

4. Which dynasty did Babur belong to?

→ The Timurid dynasty.

5. From where did Babur invade India?

→ From Kabul.

6. Name the last ruler of the Lodi dynasty.

→ Ibrahim Lodi.

7. What was the main source of Mughal history?

→ Official court chronicles and memoirs.

8. Who wrote the *Baburnama*?

→ Babur himself.

9. What is *Baburnama* written in?

→ It was written in the Turkish (Chagatai) language.

10. Who translated *Baburnama* into Persian?

→ Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanan.

11. What was the main cause of Babur's invasion of India?

→ Political instability in North India and Babur's ambition to expand his empire.

12. Who was the ruler of Delhi when Babur invaded India?

→ Ibrahim Lodi.

13. What weapon gave Babur a major advantage in the First Battle of Panipat?

→ Use of artillery (gunpowder and cannons).

14. Name one contemporary historian of Babur.

→ Khwandamir.

15. What was the result of the First Battle of Panipat?

→ End of the Delhi Sultanate and the beginning of Mughal rule in India.

16. Who was the Afghan ruler who challenged Mughal supremacy after Babur?

→ Sher Shah Suri.

17. What is the meaning of the word “Mughal”?

→ It refers to “Mongol,” the descendants of Timur and Genghis Khan.

18. Name one foreign traveler who visited the Mughal court.

→ Abdur Razzaq (early period), though major travelers came later.

19. Who was the ruler of Bengal during Babur’s invasion?

→ Nusrat Shah.

20. What was the political condition of India before Babur’s invasion?

→ India was divided into many small, weak kingdoms.

21. Which battle laid the foundation of Mughal rule in India?

→ The First Battle of Panipat (1526).

22. Name the Afghan ruler who revived Afghan power after Babur.

→ Sher Shah Suri.

23. Who established the Sur Empire in India?

→ Sher Shah Suri.

24. What was Babur’s main rival in North India?

→ The Afghan rulers led by Ibrahim Lodi.

25. Name one important Persian source of Mughal history.

→ *Akbarnama* by Abul Fazl.

26. What was the duration of Babur's rule in India?

→ 1526–1530 A.D.

27. What was the immediate cause of the First Battle of Panipat?

→ Babur's attack on Delhi due to conflict with Ibrahim Lodi.

28. What marked the end of Afghan rule in North India?

→ The defeat of Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat.

29. Who was the successor of Babur?

→ Humayun.

30. Which Mughal-Afghan conflict ended with the rise of the Sur Empire?

→ The conflict between Humayun and Sher Shah Suri.

TWO MARK:

1. What are the main sources of Mughal Indian history?

The main sources of Mughal history are court chronicles, royal memoirs, letters, inscriptions, coins, and foreign accounts. Works like *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Ain-i-Akbari*, and *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* give detailed information about Mughal politics, society, and administration.

2. What is the importance of the *Baburnama* in Mughal history?

Baburnama, written by Babur in Turkish, is his personal memoir. It gives a vivid description of Babur's early life, conquests, and political events in India. It is the first autobiography written by a ruler in Asia and an authentic source of Mughal history.

3. What was the political condition of India before Babur's invasion?

Before Babur's invasion, India was politically divided. The Delhi Sultanate had weakened under Ibrahim Lodi, while regional powers like Bengal, Gujarat, and Malwa acted independently. There was no unity among rulers, which made India vulnerable to foreign invasions.

4. Who was Babur and what was his background?

Babur was the founder of the Mughal Empire in India. He was a descendant of Timur on his father's side and Genghis Khan on his mother's side. Originally the ruler of Kabul, Babur invaded India and defeated Ibrahim Lodi in 1526.

5. What were the main causes of Babur's invasion of India?

Babur invaded India due to political instability in North India, invitations from Indian nobles like Daulat Khan Lodi, his ambition to expand power, and the desire for wealth and fertile land. India's internal weakness made it an easy target for him.

6. Who were Babur's main opponents in India?

Babur's main opponents were the Afghan rulers, especially Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi. Other rivals included Afghan nobles of Bihar and Bengal and Rajput rulers like Rana Sanga of Mewar, who opposed Mughal expansion after Panipat.

7. Describe the causes of the First Battle of Panipat.

The main causes were Babur's ambition to conquer India and the rivalry between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi. Discontent among Afghan nobles and internal weaknesses of the Delhi Sultanate also encouraged Babur's invasion in 1526.

8. What were the results of the First Battle of Panipat (1526)?

The First Battle of Panipat ended the rule of the Delhi Sultanate and

established Mughal rule in India. Ibrahim Lodi was killed, and Babur became the ruler of Delhi and Agra, laying the foundation of the Mughal Empire.

9. What was the significance of the First Battle of Panipat?

The battle marked the beginning of a new era in Indian history. It introduced artillery and gunpowder warfare, established the Mughal Empire, and ended Afghan dominance in North India. It also shifted power from Afghans to Mughals.

10. What role did artillery play in Babur's victory at Panipat?

Babur's use of artillery and firearms was a key factor in his success. The Afghan army, relying on traditional cavalry and elephants, could not face the destructive power of cannons. The psychological fear of gunfire also broke their morale.

11. What is meant by the Mughal–Afghan contest for supremacy?

The Mughal–Afghan contest refers to the struggle between the Mughal rulers and Afghan chiefs for political control over North India. It began with Babur's invasion and continued through Humayun's conflict with Sher Shah Suri, who briefly overthrew the Mughals.

12. Who was Sher Shah Suri?

Sher Shah Suri was an Afghan ruler who defeated Humayun and established the Sur Empire in North India (1540–1545). He was an able administrator known for reforms in land revenue, administration, and the introduction of the *Rupiya* currency.

13. What were the main achievements of Sher Shah Suri?

Sher Shah reorganized land revenue, built the Grand Trunk Road,

improved postal systems, and established an efficient administration. His reforms influenced later Mughal rulers, especially Akbar, and laid the foundation of a strong administrative system.

14. What was Babur's contribution to the Mughal Empire?

Babur established a strong foundation for the Mughal Empire. He introduced new military techniques, maintained discipline among troops, and unified large parts of North India under a central authority.

15. Who was Ibrahim Lodi?

Ibrahim Lodi was the last ruler of the Delhi Sultanate and the Lodi dynasty. His harsh rule and conflict with Afghan nobles weakened the sultanate, leading to its downfall after his defeat by Babur at Panipat in 1526.

16. What is the historical importance of Babur's victory at Panipat?

Babur's victory at Panipat changed India's political landscape. It ended the medieval period of the Delhi Sultanate and began the modern age under Mughal rule, marked by new culture, art, and administration.

17. How did Babur consolidate his rule after Panipat?

Babur reorganized the administration, distributed jagirs among loyal soldiers, and defeated remaining Afghan and Rajput rivals. His victories at Khanwa (1527) and Ghagra (1529) ensured Mughal control over North India.

18. What was the Battle of Khanwa and its importance?

The Battle of Khanwa (1527) was fought between Babur and Rana

Sanga of Mewar. Babur's victory ended Rajput resistance and strengthened Mughal authority in India after Panipat.

19. Mention two important foreign accounts on Mughal India.

Important foreign accounts include those of Abdur Razzaq, Niccolao Manucci, and Francois Bernier. These travelers recorded valuable observations about Mughal politics, economy, and society, serving as authentic historical sources.

20. What is the significance of *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari*?

Written by Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* give detailed descriptions of Akbar's reign, administration, economy, and culture. They are among the most authentic records of Mughal history.

21. What were the weaknesses of the Afghan rulers before Babur's invasion?

The Afghan rulers suffered from internal disunity, rivalry among nobles, weak central authority, and lack of coordination between regional states. These weaknesses made India politically unstable and open to foreign attacks.

22. What was Babur's military strategy at Panipat?

Babur used the "Tulughma" and "Araba" systems—dividing the army into wings and placing carts tied with ropes and cannons in front. This modern strategy helped him defeat the large Afghan army.

23. What was the immediate outcome of Babur's conquest of Delhi and Agra?

Babur captured Delhi and Agra after Panipat, gaining control over North India's political center. This established the first phase of Mughal authority in India, marking the beginning of a new empire.

24. How did Babur describe India in his memoirs?

In *Baburnama*, Babur described India as a wealthy but disorganized country. He admired its rich resources and fertile land but criticized its lack of good governance and proper social discipline.

25. What was the impact of the Mughal–Afghan conflict on Indian history?

The Mughal–Afghan conflict shaped the political future of India. It led to the fall of Afghan dominance, temporary rise of the Sur Empire, and finally the consolidation of Mughal power under Akbar, establishing a stable empire.

BROAD ANSWER:

Q1. Discuss the main sources of Mughal Indian history. Explain how they help in understanding the political and cultural developments of the Mughal period.

Ans: The Mughal period (1526–1857) is one of the most important and well-documented phases in Indian history. The sources of Mughal Indian history are rich, varied, and diverse, offering detailed information about the political, administrative, social, and cultural life of the time. Historians have classified these sources into different categories such as official chronicles, autobiographies, administrative documents, inscriptions, coins, foreign travelers' accounts, and literary works. Together, these sources help us understand how the Mughal Empire developed, ruled, and influenced Indian society.

The **first and most important category** is the **official court chronicles** written by historians under royal patronage. Every Mughal emperor appointed court historians who recorded the events of their reign. Among them, *Baburnama* written by Babur himself is the earliest and one of the most authentic records. Written in the Turkish language, it provides an autobiographical account of Babur's early

struggles, his political ambitions, and his invasion of India. It helps historians understand the political condition of India during the early 16th century. Another significant chronicle is the *Akbarnama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* written by Abul Fazl during Akbar's reign. The *Akbarnama* records the history of the Mughals up to Akbar's time, while the *Ain-i-Akbari* provides detailed information on Akbar's administration, land revenue system, army, economy, art, and culture. Similarly, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* (autobiography of Jahangir), *Shahjahannama*, and *Alamgirnama* are valuable official sources for the later Mughal rulers.

The **second category** of sources includes **memoirs and biographies** written by nobles, scholars, and courtiers. For example, *Humayun-nama* written by Gulbadan Begum, the sister of Humayun, gives personal insights into the Mughal royal family and the challenges Humayun faced. *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* by Saqi Mustaid Khan and *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* by Khafi Khan provide detailed descriptions of Aurangzeb's administration and his policies. These writings help historians trace the changing nature of Mughal politics, administration, and society.

The **third category** is **administrative documents and official records** such as farmans (royal orders), sanads (grants), and revenue papers. They reveal the economic conditions, land distribution, and administrative structure of the Mughal Empire. The land revenue records maintained by officials like Todar Mal give us a clear picture of the Mughal revenue system and rural economy.

Epigraphic and numismatic evidence (inscriptions and coins) are also important sources. Inscriptions engraved on forts, mosques, and public buildings record royal achievements, religious tolerance, and architectural developments. Mughal coins, which often bore the emperor's name, regnal year, and titles, help historians determine chronology and economic history. The coins of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan also reflect their artistic taste and religious policy.

Equally valuable are the **accounts of foreign travelers** who visited the Mughal court. European visitors like Ralph Fitch, Niccolao

Manucci, Francois Bernier, and Sir Thomas Roe wrote detailed observations about the Mughal Empire. Their writings give an outsider's perspective on Indian administration, trade, society, and culture. For example, Bernier's accounts highlight social inequality and describe the luxurious life of Mughal nobles, while Thomas Roe's letters provide valuable information on Jahangir's court and diplomacy.

The **literary and cultural sources** also shed light on Mughal India. Persian poetry, miniature paintings, and architectural monuments like the Taj Mahal, Red Fort, and Fatehpur Sikri reveal the rich cultural and artistic achievements of the period. These sources together portray the Mughals not only as conquerors but also as great patrons of art, architecture, and literature.

Q2. Describe the political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion. What were the major factors that made India vulnerable to foreign attacks?

Ans: The political condition of India on the eve of Babur's invasion in 1526 was extremely weak and fragmented. The once-powerful Delhi Sultanate, which had controlled a major part of North India for nearly three centuries, had lost its strength and unity. By the early sixteenth century, the Indian subcontinent was divided into several small and independent kingdoms, constantly engaged in mutual conflicts and power struggles. This political disunity, combined with weak leadership and internal rivalries, made India an easy target for foreign invaders like Babur.

The last ruling dynasty of the Delhi Sultanate was the **Lodi dynasty** (1451–1526). The ruler at that time, **Ibrahim Lodi**, had inherited a vast but unstable empire. Unlike his father Sikandar Lodi, Ibrahim lacked diplomatic skill and administrative efficiency. His relations with the Afghan nobles and governors were strained. The Afghan nobility, which formed the backbone of the Lodi administration, became dissatisfied with Ibrahim's autocratic rule. Several governors,

such as **Daulat Khan Lodi of Punjab** and **Ala-ud-din Lodi**, revolted against him. This internal discontent weakened the central authority of Delhi, creating a favorable situation for Babur to invade India.

In addition to the weak central rule, **India was politically divided among many regional powers**. The most powerful among them were the **Rajput kingdoms**, the **Sultanates of Bengal, Gujarat, and Malwa**, and the **Deccan states** in South India. The **Rajputs**, led by **Rana Sanga of Mewar**, were brave and independent but could not unite under a common leadership. Though Rana Sanga aimed to establish Rajput supremacy in North India, he was more interested in personal expansion than collective defense. This lack of unity among the Rajputs was one of the main reasons for India's vulnerability.

The **eastern part of India** was ruled by **Nusrat Shah of Bengal**, who had little influence beyond his own province. Bengal was prosperous but isolated from the political affairs of North India. Similarly, the **Sultanate of Gujarat**, under **Muzaffar Shah II**, and the **Malwa Sultanate**, under **Mahmud Shah II**, were rich in trade and culture but constantly fighting with each other for regional dominance. The **Bahmani Kingdom** in the Deccan had already broken into five smaller states—Bijapur, Ahmadnagar, Golconda, Bidar, and Berar—each struggling for power. Thus, there was no strong empire in India capable of resisting a well-organized foreign army.

The **Afghan nobles**, once united under the Delhi Sultanate, had become self-centered and rebellious. Their loyalty was more towards personal gain than national unity. Many Afghan nobles invited Babur to invade India to overthrow Ibrahim Lodi. Notably, Daulat Khan Lodi and Alam Khan, both Afghan nobles, sent invitations to Babur promising him support if he attacked Delhi. This betrayal from within shows how weak and divided the political structure of India had become.

Another major factor behind India's vulnerability was the **absence of military modernization**. The Indian armies relied mainly on traditional weapons like swords, spears, elephants, and cavalry. In

contrast, Babur's forces were trained in the use of **gunpowder, artillery, and firearms**, which were new to Indian warfare. Babur also employed superior battle strategies such as the "Tulughma" and "Araba" formations, which were unknown to Indian rulers. Hence, even though Babur's army was numerically smaller, it was far more disciplined and effective.

The **economic wealth of India** was another attraction for foreign invaders. India was known for its fertile land, rich resources, and flourishing trade centers like Delhi, Agra, and Lahore. The political chaos made it easier for invaders to target these wealthy regions without facing united resistance.

In summary, the political condition of India before Babur's invasion was one of **complete disunity, weak leadership, and regional rivalry**. The Delhi Sultanate was decaying, the Rajputs were divided, and the Afghan nobles were disloyal. Regional sultans pursued their own ambitions, ignoring the need for a united defense. The absence of military innovation and internal conspiracies further weakened India's ability to resist a foreign invasion. All these factors combined created a perfect opportunity for Babur to invade and establish the Mughal Empire after his victory at the **First Battle of Panipat in 1526**.

Q3. Explain the causes, events, and significance of the First Battle of Panipat (1526).

Ans: The **First Battle of Panipat**, fought on **April 21, 1526**, between **Babur**, the founder of the Mughal Empire, and **Ibrahim Lodi**, the last ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, is considered one of the most decisive battles in Indian history. It marked the end of the Delhi Sultanate and the beginning of Mughal rule in India. The battle was not just a clash between two armies but a turning point that reshaped India's political and military landscape forever.

Causes of the Battle

The first and foremost cause of the battle was **Babur's ambition** to expand his territory and establish a permanent empire in India. After consolidating his power in Kabul, Babur looked towards India, a wealthy and divided region. He had already made several small invasions into India before 1526 and was encouraged by the internal weakness of the Lodi dynasty.

The **second major cause** was the **political disunity and weakness of the Delhi Sultanate** under Ibrahim Lodi. He was an unpopular ruler who failed to maintain harmony with his Afghan nobles and governors. Many of them rebelled against his authority, and some, like **Daulat Khan Lodi** and **Ala-ud-din Lodi**, invited Babur to invade India to overthrow Ibrahim. This internal betrayal paved the way for foreign intervention.

Another significant cause was the **superior military organization and strategy of Babur**. He possessed a well-trained army, modern artillery, and innovative tactics, whereas Ibrahim Lodi relied on outdated warfare methods based on elephants and cavalry. The attraction of India's vast wealth and fertile plains was also a motivating factor for Babur's campaign.

Events of the Battle

Babur marched into India with around **12,000 soldiers**, including skilled cavalry and artillery experts. In contrast, Ibrahim Lodi's army was massive, with about **1,00,000 soldiers and 1,000 war elephants**. Despite the numerical disadvantage, Babur used brilliant strategy and modern weapons that changed the outcome of the battle.

The battle took place at **Panipat**, a plain in present-day Haryana. Babur arranged his troops in the **Tulughma** formation—dividing his army into center, left, and right wings. He placed carts tied with ropes in front, behind which cannons were mounted, forming the **Araba system**. This defensive setup effectively blocked the enemy's advance.

When Ibrahim Lodi's forces attacked, they were met with intense artillery fire. The loud noise of the cannons frightened the elephants and caused chaos in the Afghan army. Babur's cavalry then launched swift attacks from both sides, completely surrounding the enemy. The Afghan soldiers were disorganized and suffered heavy losses. By the end of the battle, **Ibrahim Lodi was killed**, and his army was destroyed.

Babur's superior discipline, planning, and technology ensured a decisive victory despite being heavily outnumbered. On April 21, 1526, Babur emerged as the ruler of Delhi and Agra, laying the foundation of the **Mughal Empire in India**.

Significance of the Battle

The First Battle of Panipat holds immense historical importance. It **ended the rule of the Delhi Sultanate** and **established the Mughal Empire**, which would dominate India for nearly three centuries. The victory introduced **gunpowder, artillery, and modern warfare** to India, marking a shift from medieval to early modern military practices.

Politically, the battle brought **a new centralized empire** that replaced the fragmented rule of regional sultanates. The Mughals introduced a stable and organized administration that later reached its height under Akbar. The battle also highlighted the **importance of leadership and military innovation**, as Babur's smaller but disciplined army defeated a much larger traditional force.

Culturally, the Mughal victory opened a new era of Indo-Persian art, architecture, and culture that blended Indian and Central Asian traditions. The Mughal Empire went on to shape India's history, politics, and identity for centuries.

Q4. Analyze the Mughal–Afghan contest for supremacy during the 16th century. How did Sher Shah Suri challenge Mughal power?

Ans: The 16th century in India was marked by intense political

instability and constant warfare between the Mughals and the Afghans. The death of Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat (1526) led to the decline of the Afghan dynasty, but the Afghans did not accept Mughal dominance easily. They continued their struggle against Babur and later against his son Humayun. The conflict between the Mughals and the Afghans was essentially a contest for supremacy over northern India. It was during this struggle that Sher Shah Suri, an Afghan leader of remarkable talent and vision, emerged as a powerful rival who temporarily overthrew Mughal rule and established the Sur Empire.

The Background of the Conflict

After Babur's victory at Panipat, the Mughals established their rule in parts of North India, but they faced constant resistance from Afghan chiefs and Rajput rulers. The Afghan nobles, who had earlier served under the Lodis, refused to submit to the new Mughal authority. They formed alliances to restore Afghan rule. Babur faced repeated revolts, especially from Afghan leaders in Bihar and Eastern India. The Battle of Ghagra in 1529 was fought between Babur and the Afghan forces, marking the continuation of the Mughal–Afghan rivalry. Though Babur won the battle, the Afghans were not completely subdued.

The Rise of Sher Shah Suri

Sher Shah Suri, originally named **Farid Khan**, was one of the most capable Afghan leaders who rose to prominence during Humayun's reign. He was born in Sasaram, Bihar, and began his career under Afghan chiefs. Through his administrative skill, bravery, and political intelligence, he gained control over Bihar and Bengal. He defeated the Mughal governor in Bihar and gradually strengthened his position. Sher Shah realized that to establish Afghan supremacy, he had to defeat the Mughals completely.

Conflict Between Humayun and Sher Shah Suri

The conflict between Sher Shah and Humayun began when Humayun attempted to capture Chunar and Bengal, both of which were under Sher Shah's control. Initially, Humayun laid siege to Chunar but could not achieve much success. Taking advantage of Humayun's delay, Sher Shah strengthened his power in Bengal and built a disciplined army.

The decisive confrontation came in **1539** at the **Battle of Chausa**, where Sher Shah inflicted a severe defeat on Humayun. Humayun barely escaped with his life by swimming across the Ganga River. Sher Shah assumed the royal title "Sultan" after this victory. The following year, in **1540**, the **Battle of Kannauj (Bilgram)** took place, in which Sher Shah once again defeated Humayun decisively. As a result, Humayun fled to Persia, and the Mughal rule in India came to an end for nearly fifteen years.

Sher Shah's Rule and Achievements

After his victory, Sher Shah established the **Sur Empire (1540–1545)**. His reign marked a period of strong central administration and remarkable reforms. He reorganized the army, improved revenue collection, introduced a uniform currency called the **Rupiya**, and built an efficient road system, including the famous **Grand Trunk Road** from Bengal to the Punjab. His administration was based on justice, discipline, and welfare. Sher Shah's policies laid the foundation for good governance, which was later adopted and refined by the Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar.

Sher Shah Suri ruled for only five years, but his reforms left a lasting legacy. His efficient revenue system, postal arrangements, and road network strengthened the empire's economy and improved communication. Even though his empire ended soon after his death in 1545, his administrative principles influenced Mughal governance for generations.

Restoration of the Mughal Empire

After Sher Shah's death, his successors were weak and inefficient. The Sur Empire gradually declined due to internal conflicts. Taking advantage of this situation, Humayun returned to India in 1555 with Persian support and re-established the Mughal Empire. However, Humayun died the following year, and his son **Akbar** succeeded him. The return of the Mughals marked the final victory of the Mughals over the Afghans.

Q5. Evaluate Babur's achievements as the founder of the Mughal Empire. How did he lay the foundation for future Mughal rulers?

Ans: The establishment of the Mughal Empire in India marks one of the most significant events in Indian history. **Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur**, the founder of the Mughal Empire, was not only a conqueror but also a visionary ruler who laid the foundation for one of the greatest empires in medieval India. Though his reign in India was short (1526–1530), his political foresight, military skill, and administrative policies provided a strong base upon which his successors—Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb—built a vast and enduring empire.

Early Life and Background

Babur was born in 1483 in the town of Andijan, in the Fergana Valley (present-day Uzbekistan). He was a descendant of **Timur** on his father's side and **Chengiz Khan** on his mother's side, which gave him both prestige and ambition. After losing his small kingdom in Central Asia, Babur set his eyes on India, which he considered a land of great wealth and opportunities. He made several attempts to invade India, and in **1526**, he finally succeeded in establishing Mughal rule after defeating Ibrahim Lodi in the First Battle of Panipat.

Military Achievements

Babur's greatest achievement was his success as a military leader. His victory at the **First Battle of Panipat (1526)** was a turning point in Indian history. He introduced new military techniques, especially the use of **gunpowder, artillery, and field tactics**, which were unknown in India at that time. His disciplined army and effective use of cavalry and cannon gave him a decisive advantage over the traditional Indian armies that relied on elephants and outdated warfare methods.

After Panipat, Babur defeated **Rana Sanga of Mewar** in the **Battle of Khanwa (1527)**, a powerful Rajput leader who aimed to drive him out of India. This victory established Babur's supremacy in northern India. He also defeated the Afghan chiefs in the **Battle of Ghagra (1529)**, thus consolidating his control over a large part of the Indo-Gangetic plain. Through these conquests, Babur laid the political and military foundation of the Mughal Empire.

Administrative and Political Reforms

Although Babur's reign in India was short, he took important steps to organize the administration. He distributed land among his nobles (amirs) and maintained discipline within his army. He followed a system of central authority headed by the king, which later evolved under Akbar into a well-structured bureaucracy. Babur also encouraged loyalty and merit among his followers, creating a foundation of capable officers who played key roles in strengthening Mughal rule.

He emphasized justice, discipline, and order within the empire. Unlike the Delhi Sultans, who were often viewed as foreign rulers, Babur tried to adapt himself to the Indian environment. He respected local customs and sought to integrate his empire by maintaining harmony between different communities.

Cultural and Literary Contributions

Babur was not only a warrior but also a man of culture and refinement. He had a deep appreciation for art, literature, and nature. His autobiography, the “**Tuzuk-i-Baburi**” (**Baburnama**), written in the Turkish language, is one of the most remarkable works of the medieval period. It provides valuable insights into his personality, his campaigns, and the political and cultural conditions of India and Central Asia. The Baburnama also reveals his sensitivity toward nature and his love for gardens and architecture.

Babur introduced the **Persian-Timurid cultural traditions** to India, which later became an integral part of Mughal civilization. His taste for Persian art, architecture, and administration set the tone for the cultural synthesis that characterized the Mughal Empire.

Foundation for Future Mughal Rulers

Though Babur ruled for only four years after his conquest, his achievements formed the bedrock of the Mughal Empire. His military organization, use of artillery, and system of centralized authority provided a strong foundation for his successors. Babur’s vision of a powerful, unified empire in India inspired his grandson **Akbar**, who carried forward his legacy by consolidating and expanding the empire.

Babur’s emphasis on discipline, merit, and cultural integration helped the Mughals establish a long-lasting dynasty that ruled India for more than three centuries. His descendants refined and expanded his policies, leading to the golden age of Mughal rule under Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan.

Q6. Examine the significance of Babur’s invasion in Indian history. How did it mark the end of medieval rule and the beginning of a new era?

Ans: The invasion of India by **Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur** in 1526 stands as one of the most defining moments in Indian history. Babur's victory in the **First Battle of Panipat** not only ended the rule of the Delhi Sultanate but also laid the foundation for a new imperial power—the Mughal Empire—which would dominate the Indian subcontinent for over three centuries. His invasion is not merely remembered as a military conquest but as a **turning point that marked the transition from medieval to early modern India**.

Background of Babur's Invasion

Before Babur's arrival, India was politically fragmented and weak. The **Delhi Sultanate under the Lodis** had lost its strength due to internal rivalries, corruption, and the disloyalty of its Afghan nobles. Regional kingdoms like Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, and Mewar had become powerful and independent, but none possessed the vision or unity to establish a strong centralized empire. This political disunity created a favorable opportunity for Babur, who had long dreamed of conquering India to establish a stable and enduring kingdom.

Encouraged by the Afghan and Mughal nobles who were dissatisfied with Ibrahim Lodi's rule, Babur invaded India in 1526. His army, though smaller in number, was better organized and equipped with modern artillery. The **First Battle of Panipat (1526)** between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi ended with a decisive Mughal victory, paving the way for a new political order in India.

End of the Medieval Era

Babur's invasion brought about the **end of the medieval political structure** in India. The Delhi Sultanate, which had ruled since the 13th century, was based on feudal military control, weak administration, and frequent changes in dynasties. Its system of governance was unstable and lacked efficient central authority. The

defeat of Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 destroyed the last stronghold of Afghan rule in North India.

Babur introduced new military technology, including **gunpowder and field artillery**, which revolutionized warfare in India. The traditional Indian armies that relied heavily on war elephants and outdated tactics were no match for Babur's modern, disciplined forces. This marked the beginning of **modern warfare** in India and demonstrated the superiority of organization and strategy over numbers.

Beginning of a New Era: The Foundation of the Mughal Empire

Babur's conquest initiated a **new era of centralized imperial governance**. Unlike the Delhi Sultans, Babur aimed to build a stable, hereditary empire based on the principles of strong administration, cultural integration, and efficient military control. He established the foundation of Mughal authority by introducing discipline within the army and ensuring loyalty among his nobles.

Babur also laid the groundwork for an empire that would later blend **Persian, Central Asian, and Indian traditions**. This synthesis of cultures gave rise to the **Mughal civilization**, which became known for its excellence in art, architecture, literature, and administration. Babur's successors, particularly **Akbar**, expanded and institutionalized these foundations, leading to one of the most prosperous periods in Indian history.

Cultural and Economic Impact

Babur's invasion opened India to **new cultural and economic influences** from Central Asia. He introduced the Timurid administrative and architectural traditions, which transformed Indian court culture. The Mughal garden style, Persian language, miniature paintings, and the promotion of learning all had their roots in the traditions Babur brought with him.

Economically, the establishment of a vast and stable empire encouraged **trade, agriculture, and revenue reforms**. Though these were fully developed under Akbar, Babur's conquests created the political stability necessary for economic growth.

Historical Significance

The invasion of Babur holds immense historical importance. It marked the **end of the Delhi Sultanate and the rise of the Mughal Empire**, signaling the transition from the medieval to the early modern period in Indian history. Babur's success demonstrated the need for centralized authority, efficient administration, and the use of advanced military technology. His victory also redefined India's political geography, integrating it into a broader empire that combined both Central Asian and Indian traditions.

Moreover, Babur's establishment of a hereditary empire ensured political continuity, which had been absent during the Sultanate period. His successors built upon his vision, creating a legacy of strong governance, cultural richness, and architectural grandeur that became synonymous with the Mughal name.

UNIT – 2

ONE MARK:

☐ **Q:** Who was Sher Shah Suri?

A: Sher Shah Suri, originally named Farid Khan, was an Afghan ruler who founded the Sur Empire in India (1540–1545).

☐ **Q:** Where was Sher Shah Suri born?

A: He was born in Sasaram, Bihar.

☐ **Q:** Which empire did Sher Shah Suri overthrow to establish his rule?

A: He overthrew the Mughal ruler Humayun and established the Sur Empire.

☐ **Q:** Name one major battle won by Sher Shah Suri against Humayun.

A: The Battle of Chausa (1539).

☐ **Q:** Which battle in 1540 gave Sher Shah complete control over North India?

A: The Battle of Kannauj (Bilgram).

☐ **Q:** Who succeeded Sher Shah Suri after his death?

A: Islam Shah Suri, his son, succeeded him.

☐ **Q:** What administrative system is Sher Shah Suri famous for?

A: His efficient centralized administration and revenue system.

☐ **Q:** Name the land revenue system introduced by Sher Shah Suri.

A: The **Zabt system** of land revenue assessment.

☐ **Q:** What was the basis of Sher Shah's revenue system?

A: Assessment of land revenue according to soil fertility and crop production.

☐ **Q:** How did Sher Shah divide his empire administratively?

A: He divided it into **provinces (subahs), districts (sarkars), and villages (parganas).**

- ☐ **Q:** What was the unit of administration at the village level?
A: The **pargana**, headed by officials called **amil** or **shiqdar**.
- ☐ **Q:** Name the currency introduced by Sher Shah Suri.
A: The **Rupiya**, a silver coin.
- ☐ **Q:** Which famous road did Sher Shah Suri build to improve communication?
A: The **Grand Trunk Road**.
- ☐ **Q:** How did Sher Shah ensure safety on roads?
A: By building **sarais (inns)** and posting **dak bungalows** at regular intervals.
- ☐ **Q:** Who was Hemu Vikramaditya?
A: Hemu Vikramaditya was a Hindu general and chief minister who temporarily seized Delhi during Humayun's absence.
- ☐ **Q:** How did Hemu become ruler of Delhi?
A: He declared himself king after defeating Afghan and Mughal forces and took the title **Vikramaditya**.
- ☐ **Q:** Which battle led to the defeat of Hemu by the Mughals?
A: The **Second Battle of Panipat (1556)**.
- ☐ **Q:** Who defeated Hemu at the Second Battle of Panipat?
A: **Akbar**, under the guidance of Bairam Khan.
- ☐ **Q:** Who was Rana Pratap?
A: Rana Pratap Singh was the king of Mewar, a Rajput ruler known for resisting Mughal expansion.
- ☐ **Q:** Which battle is famous for Rana Pratap's resistance against the Mughals?
A: The **Battle of Haldighati (1576)**.
- ☐ **Q:** Which Afghan ruler reorganized the military after defeating Humayun?
A: **Sher Shah Suri**.

- ☐ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri maintain law and order?
A: Through a strict administration, appointed governors, and a well-organized army.
- ☐ **Q:** Name one innovation of Sher Shah in postal communication.
A: The **postal system (dak)** with relay stations.
- ☐ **Q:** Which famous chronicler wrote about Sher Shah Suri's reign?
A: **Abdul Qadir Badayuni** and **Abu'l Fazl** mention him in later chronicles.
- ☐ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri contribute to trade and economy?
A: He built roads, improved markets, and standardized currency.
- ☐ **Q:** What was the significance of the Zabt system?
A: It created a fair and efficient land revenue system based on actual agricultural output.
- ☐ **Q:** Name one fortress built or strengthened by Sher Shah Suri.
A: The **Rohtas Fort** in present-day Pakistan.
- ☐ **Q:** Who helped Akbar re-establish Mughal rule after the Sur Empire's decline?
A: **Bairam Khan**, Akbar's regent, led the Mughal army.
- ☐ **Q:** Why is Sher Shah Suri considered an able administrator despite his short reign?
A: Because he established strong central authority, efficient revenue, and law and order systems.
- ☐ **Q:** How long did Sher Shah Suri rule India?
A: From **1540 to 1545 (five years)**.

TWO MARK:

- ☐ **Q:** Who was Sher Shah Suri, and why is he important in Indian history?
A: Sher Shah Suri, originally Farid Khan, was an Afghan ruler who defeated Humayun and established the Sur Empire (1540–1545). He

is important for his administrative reforms, revenue system, and introduction of modern coins and roads, which laid the foundation for effective governance in India.

□ **Q:** Describe the significance of the Battle of Chausa.

A: The Battle of Chausa (1539) was fought between Sher Shah Suri and Humayun. Sher Shah's decisive victory demonstrated his military skill, forced Humayun to flee, and enabled Sher Shah to consolidate power in Bihar and Bengal, paving the way for his eventual establishment of the Sur Empire.

□ **Q:** What happened at the Battle of Kannauj (Bilgram)?

A: In 1540, Sher Shah Suri defeated Humayun decisively at the Battle of Kannauj (Bilgram). This victory ended Mughal rule temporarily, allowed Sher Shah to occupy Delhi, and established him as the dominant power in North India, marking the beginning of the Sur Empire.

□ **Q:** What was the Zabt system of revenue?

A: The Zabt system was Sher Shah Suri's land revenue policy, where land was measured, classified according to fertility, and taxed at a fixed rate. It ensured fair collection, reduced exploitation of peasants, and became a model for revenue administration later adopted by the Mughal Empire under Akbar.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri improve road communication in India?

A: Sher Shah constructed the **Grand Trunk Road**, connecting Bengal to Punjab. He built sarais, rest houses, and postal stations along it, ensuring safer and faster trade and communication. This infrastructure strengthened administration, encouraged commerce, and connected the empire efficiently.

□ **Q:** Explain the role of Hemu Vikramaditya in the Mughal period.

A: Hemu, a Hindu general and minister under the Sur dynasty, temporarily captured Delhi and declared himself king (Vikramaditya) after defeating Mughal and Afghan forces. His rule, though short,

represented resistance to Mughal authority until he was defeated at the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri organize his army?

A: Sher Shah Suri's army was disciplined and well-structured, with cavalry, infantry, and artillery. He appointed governors to maintain law and order and ensured loyalty through strict supervision and rewards. His military organization helped him defeat Humayun and maintain stability in his empire.

□ **Q:** What administrative divisions did Sher Shah Suri introduce?

A: Sher Shah divided his empire into **subahs (provinces), sarkars (districts), and parganas (villages)**. Each unit had appointed officials for revenue collection, law enforcement, and administration. This hierarchical structure created an efficient governance system that influenced later Mughal administration.

□ **Q:** Describe the significance of Sher Shah Suri's currency reforms.

A: Sher Shah introduced the **Rupiya**, a silver coin, standardizing currency across the empire. This facilitated trade, ensured uniform taxation, and strengthened the economy. The Rupiya remained a model for Mughal and later Indian monetary systems.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri maintain law and order?

A: Sher Shah appointed governors, military officers, and police officials to oversee districts. He imposed strict justice, punished rebels, and maintained roads and postal systems. His administrative vigilance ensured peace, reduced crime, and strengthened central authority in the Sur Empire.

□ **Q:** Explain Sher Shah Suri's contribution to trade.

A: By constructing roads, sarais, and markets, Sher Shah facilitated safe and efficient trade. Standardized coins and revenue collection encouraged commerce, while his infrastructure connected distant regions, fostering economic prosperity and integration of the empire.

□ **Q:** What role did geography play in Sher Shah Suri's conquests?

A: Sher Shah strategically utilized rivers, plains, and forts to

strengthen his army and administration. Controlling fertile regions like Bihar and Bengal allowed him to mobilize resources effectively and challenge Mughal power, ultimately establishing the Sur Empire in North India.

□ **Q:** Who was Rana Pratap, and what was his significance?

A: Rana Pratap Singh was the Rajput king of Mewar who resisted Mughal expansion under Akbar. His bravery, especially at the Battle of Haldighati (1576), symbolizes Rajput valor and the persistence of local resistance against foreign domination.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri ensure efficient revenue collection?

A: Sher Shah measured land carefully, assessed fertility, maintained detailed records, and collected tax directly from peasants. This minimized corruption, ensured consistent income, and reduced exploitation, creating a transparent and efficient revenue system.

□ **Q:** What innovations did Sher Shah Suri introduce in postal services?

A: He established a **dak system** with relay stations for fast communication across the empire. This allowed government orders and military messages to travel efficiently, improving administrative control and coordination.

□ **Q:** Describe Hemu's defeat at the Second Battle of Panipat.

A: In 1556, Hemu was defeated by **Akbar's forces**, led by Bairam Khan, at the Second Battle of Panipat. Hemu was wounded, captured, and executed. His defeat re-established Mughal authority in Delhi and marked the end of temporary Afghan-Hindu rule.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri strengthen frontier security?

A: He built forts, maintained a disciplined army, and appointed officials to oversee border regions. His measures prevented invasions, suppressed rebellions, and ensured stability across the empire.

□ **Q:** Why is Sher Shah Suri called a visionary ruler?

A: Despite a short reign, Sher Shah implemented long-lasting reforms in revenue, currency, military, trade, and infrastructure. His policies

strengthened governance, economy, and administration, leaving a model followed by future Mughal rulers.

□ **Q:** What was the significance of the Grand Trunk Road?

A: The road connected Bengal to Punjab, facilitating trade, administration, and military movement. It strengthened unity, encouraged economic growth, and improved communication across the empire, remaining an essential infrastructure for centuries.

□ **Q:** How did Hemu rise to power?

A: Hemu, initially a minister and general under the Sur dynasty, took advantage of Mughal weakness during Humayun's absence, defeated Afghan and Mughal forces, and declared himself king, showing administrative skill and military prowess.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah Suri impact Mughal administration?

A: His administrative, revenue, and military reforms were later adopted and refined by Akbar, providing a model for centralized governance and efficient administration in the Mughal Empire.

□ **Q:** What was the role of sarais in Sher Shah's empire?

A: Sarais were rest houses along roads where travelers and merchants could rest safely. They promoted trade, ensured security, and facilitated smooth movement of goods and officials.

□ **Q:** How did Sher Shah's land revenue system reduce peasant exploitation?

A: By measuring land, classifying soil, and fixing tax rates, peasants were charged fairly according to production, reducing arbitrary taxation and exploitation by officials.

□ **Q:** Name two provinces under Sher Shah Suri's control.

A: **Bihar** and **Bengal** were key provinces governed directly by Sher Shah Suri, providing strategic and economic strength.

□ **Q:** How did the defeat of Hemu help the Mughals?

A: Hemu's defeat at the Second Battle of Panipat re-established Mughal rule in Delhi under Akbar, ending Afghan-Hindu temporary

dominance and ensuring the consolidation of the Mughal Empire in northern India.

BROAD ANSWER:

Q1: Discuss the major conquests of Sher Shah Suri. How did these victories establish his authority over North India?

Ans: **Sher Shah Suri**, originally named **Farid Khan**, was one of the most capable rulers of medieval India. His rise to power in the 16th century marked a critical phase in Indian history, as he challenged the Mughal authority of **Humayun** and established the **Sur Empire** in North India. His conquests were not only military triumphs but also strategically significant in consolidating Afghan power and bringing political stability to the region.

Early Conquests and Rise to Power

Sher Shah Suri began his career as a minor noble under the Afghan rulers of Bihar. Through intelligence, bravery, and political acumen, he gradually expanded his influence. His first major victory came in **Bihar**, where he defeated rival Afghan chiefs, thereby consolidating his hold over eastern India. This early success demonstrated his ability to combine military skill with diplomacy, gaining the loyalty of key nobles and soldiers.

After securing Bihar, Sher Shah turned his attention towards Bengal, another strategically and economically important region. By defeating the local rulers and Afghan chieftains, he captured Bengal, gaining control over its vast resources, revenue, and manpower. His victories in Bihar and Bengal laid the groundwork for a larger campaign against the Mughals.

Confrontation with Humayun

The most significant phase of Sher Shah's conquests was his confrontation with the Mughal emperor Humayun. Humayun, who had inherited the Mughal throne after Babur's death, sought to consolidate his power over the northern plains of India. However, Sher Shah's military genius and popular support among Afghans posed a serious threat.

In **1539**, the **Battle of Chausa** was fought, where Sher Shah decisively defeated Humayun. Despite being outnumbered, Sher Shah used superior tactics, disciplined cavalry, and the element of surprise to rout the Mughal forces. Humayun narrowly escaped across the Ganga River. This victory marked the first major Mughal setback in India and significantly enhanced Sher Shah's reputation as a capable military leader.

The following year, in **1540**, Sher Shah faced Humayun again at the **Battle of Kannauj (Bilgram)**. Once more, Sher Shah's strategic planning and organized army led to a decisive victory. Humayun was forced to flee to Persia, leaving the Mughals temporarily dethroned. With Delhi, Agra, and the surrounding territories under his control, Sher Shah Suri became the undisputed ruler of North India.

Significance of Sher Shah's Conquests

Sher Shah Suri's victories had far-reaching implications for North India. Firstly, they **established Afghan supremacy** over the region, temporarily ending Mughal authority. His conquests brought **political stability** after years of turmoil caused by weak rulers and regional conflicts. Secondly, by controlling key territories like Bihar, Bengal, and Delhi, Sher Shah secured access to **fertile lands, strategic trade routes, and economic resources**, enabling him to implement effective administration and revenue reforms.

Furthermore, Sher Shah's conquests demonstrated his **military and administrative genius**. Unlike many rulers who relied on brute force, he combined diplomacy, discipline, and strategy. He secured the

loyalty of nobles, reorganized the army, and laid the foundation for a **centralized administration**. His success also paved the way for the later consolidation of Mughal authority, as Akbar inherited a region already shaped by Sher Shah's governance and military organization.

Q2: Examine Sher Shah Suri's administrative system. How did his division of provinces, districts, and villages ensure efficient governance?

Ans: **Sher Shah Suri**, who ruled North India from 1540 to 1545, is remembered as one of the most capable administrators of medieval India. His brief but impactful reign was marked by innovations in governance, law, and administration, which laid the foundation for future rulers, especially the Mughals. One of his most important contributions was the **systematic division of the empire into provinces, districts, and villages**, which ensured efficient administration, law enforcement, and revenue collection.

Administrative Divisions

Sher Shah divided his empire into three hierarchical administrative units: **Subahs (provinces), Sarkars (districts), and Parganas (villages)**. At the top level, the **Subah** was governed by a provincial governor or **Subahdar**, who was responsible for maintaining law and order, collecting revenue, supervising the military, and ensuring the welfare of the people. The governor acted as the central authority's representative and was accountable for the proper functioning of his province.

Each Subah was further divided into **Sarkars or districts**, administered by officers called **Shiqdars**. These officials maintained law and order, supervised local officers, and ensured that taxes were collected according to the rules set by the central administration. The Sarkar level acted as a vital link between the provincial and village

administration, making the governance system cohesive and well-organized.

At the lowest level, Sher Shah introduced the **Pargana system**, which formed the basic unit of revenue administration. Each Pargana comprised a cluster of villages, managed by officials known as **Amils** or revenue officers. These officers were responsible for measuring land, assessing crop productivity, collecting taxes, and maintaining detailed records. This three-tier system created a **structured administrative network**, enabling Sher Shah to exercise control over a vast and diverse empire.

Efficiency and Accountability

Sher Shah Suri's administrative divisions ensured **efficiency and accountability** in several ways. Firstly, by clearly defining the responsibilities of governors, district officers, and village officials, he prevented overlaps and administrative confusion. Each officer had a specific jurisdiction, which minimized corruption and delays. Secondly, regular inspection and reporting systems were established, ensuring that officers were accountable to the central government. This created a **disciplined and responsible bureaucracy**, which maintained stability across the empire.

The division also helped in maintaining **law and order**. Governors and Shiqdars acted promptly to suppress rebellions or unrest, while local officials maintained peace at the village level. The structured system allowed the central authority to **respond quickly to emergencies**, enforce justice, and ensure uniformity in governance throughout the empire.

Impact on Revenue Collection and Administration

The administrative divisions were closely linked to Sher Shah's **revenue system**, especially the **Zabt system**. By dividing the empire

into provinces, districts, and villages, officials could measure land accurately, assess its productivity, and collect taxes fairly. Pargana officers maintained detailed records of crops and landholdings, reducing exploitation of peasants and ensuring a steady revenue flow to the state. The structured hierarchy also facilitated smooth communication between the central government and local officials, allowing for **efficient governance and resource management**.

Legacy of Sher Shah's Administrative System

Sher Shah Suri's administrative framework was remarkable for its clarity, organization, and practicality. His system influenced **later Mughal rulers**, particularly Akbar, who adopted and refined it to manage a much larger empire. The division of territories into Subahs, Sarkars, and Parganas became a **standard model of governance in India**, providing centralized control while allowing local administration to function effectively. This balance between central authority and local responsibility ensured political stability, efficient tax collection, and social order.

Q3: Explain the Zabt system of land revenue introduced by Sher Shah Suri. How did it benefit both the state and the peasants?

Ans: The **Zabt system** of land revenue, introduced by **Sher Shah Suri** during his reign (1540–1545), was one of the most significant administrative innovations in medieval India. This system revolutionized revenue collection and laid the foundation for later Mughal fiscal policies under Akbar. Sher Shah's focus on fairness, efficiency, and sustainability made the Zabt system highly effective, benefiting both the state and the peasantry.

Introduction to the Zabt System

Before Sher Shah, revenue collection in India was often arbitrary, inefficient, and exploitative. Local officials and landlords frequently imposed heavy taxes on peasants, leading to widespread resentment and instability. Sher Shah sought to create a **fair and systematic method of land revenue assessment** that would ensure regular income for the state while protecting peasants from exploitation. The Zabt system became a **centralized and standardized approach** to revenue collection, ensuring both administrative efficiency and social justice.

Structure and Features of the Zabt System

Under the Zabt system, land revenue was assessed based on **land measurement, fertility, and average produce**. The empire was divided into provinces (Subahs), districts (Sarkars), and villages (Parganas), with revenue officers assigned at each level. The process involved the following key features:

1. **Land Measurement:** Each plot of land was measured accurately using standardized units. This eliminated arbitrary estimations and provided a clear basis for tax assessment.
2. **Classification of Soil and Crops:** Lands were classified according to soil fertility, crop type, and expected yield. This allowed for proportional taxation, where fertile lands were taxed more than less productive lands.
3. **Fixed Revenue Assessment:** Taxes were fixed as a portion of the produce, usually one-third of the agricultural output. This created predictability for both peasants and the state.
4. **Detailed Record-Keeping:** Revenue officials maintained detailed records of landholdings, crop patterns, and taxation rates. This ensured transparency, reduced corruption, and facilitated efficient collection.

5. **Direct Collection from Peasants:** Taxes were collected directly from cultivators rather than through intermediaries. This minimized exploitation by landlords and local officials.
-

Benefits to the State

The Zabt system greatly strengthened the **state's financial stability**. By standardizing revenue collection, Sher Shah ensured a **regular and predictable flow of income** to the treasury. This allowed the state to maintain a strong army, build roads, forts, and infrastructure, and manage administrative expenses efficiently. The system also reduced corruption among officials, as records were maintained meticulously, and accountability was enforced. Furthermore, by linking revenue to actual crop production, the state could adapt to variations in agricultural yield, ensuring sustainable governance.

Benefits to the Peasants

The Zabt system was equally beneficial for the peasants. By assessing taxes based on the **fertility of land and crop yield**, it prevented excessive taxation and exploitation. Fixed tax rates gave farmers security and encouraged them to cultivate more land productively. Direct collection eliminated the burden of multiple intermediaries who often imposed arbitrary levies. Additionally, the fair and transparent system fostered a sense of trust between the peasantry and the state, contributing to political stability and social harmony.

Impact and Legacy

Sher Shah Suri's Zabt system had a **lasting impact on Indian administration**. It provided a model of fair, efficient, and scientific revenue collection that was later **refined and adopted by Akbar**, forming the basis of Mughal fiscal policy. The system demonstrated how governance could balance state needs with the welfare of the

cultivators, ensuring both economic prosperity and social stability. Its emphasis on measurement, classification, and accountability was ahead of its time and influenced revenue systems in India for centuries.

Q4: Analyze Sher Shah Suri's contributions to infrastructure, trade, and communication in India. How did his road and postal systems strengthen the empire?

Ans: **Sher Shah Suri**, who ruled India from 1540 to 1545, is renowned not only for his administrative and military capabilities but also for his visionary contributions to **infrastructure, trade, and communication**. Despite his short reign, Sher Shah implemented projects that transformed the economic and administrative landscape of North India. His road and postal systems played a pivotal role in strengthening the empire, improving governance, and facilitating commerce.

Infrastructure Development

Sher Shah Suri recognized that a strong empire required robust infrastructure. One of his most notable achievements was the construction and improvement of **roads and highways** to connect distant parts of his empire. The most famous of these was the **Grand Trunk Road (G.T. Road)**, which stretched from Bengal in the east to Punjab in the west. This road was built with careful planning, connecting important cities, trade centers, and military posts.

Along these roads, Sher Shah established **sarais (inns)** and **rest houses** at regular intervals for travelers, merchants, and officials. These facilities ensured safe and convenient travel, promoted trade, and provided security against banditry. By maintaining roads and resting facilities, Sher Shah created a reliable network that facilitated **movement of armies, goods, and officials** efficiently across the empire.

Trade Promotion

Sher Shah's infrastructure improvements had a direct impact on trade. By connecting key economic regions such as Bengal, Bihar, Delhi, and Punjab, he created a **stable environment for commerce**.

Merchants could transport goods safely, and trade routes became predictable and reliable. The **standardization of currency**, including the introduction of the silver **Rupiya**, further facilitated trade by providing uniformity in transactions.

Markets along the roads and towns at junctions of major routes flourished under Sher Shah's initiatives. His policies encouraged the exchange of agricultural produce, handicrafts, and luxury goods. The enhanced connectivity and trade networks strengthened the **economic foundation of the empire**, providing revenue for administration and resources for military campaigns.

Postal System (Dak System)

Another major contribution of Sher Shah was the establishment of a **state-sponsored postal system**, often referred to as the **Dak system**. He set up relay stations along major roads where messengers could change horses, ensuring the fast delivery of official orders and intelligence. This system allowed the central authority to **communicate efficiently with provincial and district officials**, reducing delays and enhancing administrative control.

The postal system also supported military operations by enabling rapid transmission of strategic information. Sher Shah's use of relay stations ensured that messages could travel long distances quickly, maintaining **coordination between the capital and frontier regions**. This innovation contributed to political stability and effective governance.

Impact on Empire Strength and Administration

Sher Shah Suri's contributions to infrastructure and communication strengthened his empire in multiple ways. Firstly, they enabled **efficient governance**, as officials could move freely and communicate effectively across provinces. Secondly, trade and commerce flourished, providing **economic stability** that supported military and administrative functions. Thirdly, the safety and convenience of travel reduced local rebellions and encouraged loyalty among subjects.

By combining infrastructure, trade promotion, and an efficient postal system, Sher Shah **integrated the empire economically, politically, and militarily**. These measures not only enhanced the immediate strength of his rule but also **left a lasting legacy**. His road and postal networks were maintained by subsequent Mughal rulers and remained vital for trade, communication, and administration for centuries.

Q5: Describe the re-establishment of Mughal rule in India after the Sur dynasty. How did Akbar and Bairam Khan consolidate Mughal authority?

Ans: The period following the death of **Sher Shah Suri** (1545) and the decline of the **Sur dynasty** marked a critical phase in Indian history, as the Mughals sought to reclaim their lost empire. The temporary Afghan dominance under Sher Shah's successors was weak due to internal conflicts and succession disputes. This created an opportunity for the **Mughal prince Akbar**, under the guidance of his regent **Bairam Khan**, to re-establish Mughal authority in northern India, thereby laying the foundation for one of the most powerful empires in Indian history.

Decline of the Sur Dynasty

After Sher Shah Suri's death, his son **Islam Shah Suri** succeeded him but ruled for only five years. Following Islam Shah's death, the Sur Empire faced a **succession crisis**, as various Afghan nobles vied for power. The lack of strong leadership weakened central authority, causing rebellions and disunity among regional chieftains. This political instability provided the Mughal forces a strategic opening to regain control over key territories, including Delhi and Agra.

Akbar's Ascension and Bairam Khan's Role

Akbar, the grandson of Babur, ascended the Mughal throne in 1556 at the age of thirteen. Due to his youth, effective administration and military leadership were provided by **Bairam Khan**, a loyal and experienced general who served as regent. Bairam Khan's strategic acumen and guidance were instrumental in restoring Mughal authority. He reorganized the Mughal army, strengthened administration, and led campaigns against regional rulers who resisted Mughal supremacy.

Battle of Panipat (1556)

A major milestone in the re-establishment of Mughal rule was the **Second Battle of Panipat**, fought in November 1556 between **Hemu Vikramaditya** and the Mughal forces under Bairam Khan and Akbar. Hemu, a Hindu general and former chief minister under the Sur dynasty, had captured Delhi and declared himself king. Despite being outnumbered initially, the disciplined Mughal forces achieved a decisive victory. Hemu was wounded and later executed, and Delhi was restored to Mughal control. This battle marked the formal **re-establishment of Mughal authority** in northern India.

Consolidation of Mughal Authority

After reclaiming Delhi, Akbar and Bairam Khan focused on consolidating power across northern India. They secured loyalty from Afghan nobles through a combination of diplomacy, military action, and strategic marriages. Provinces previously under the Sur dynasty were reorganized, and effective administrative systems were put in place, building on models introduced by Sher Shah Suri. Bairam Khan's guidance ensured that the Mughal state-maintained **law and order**, collected revenue efficiently, and quelled rebellions promptly.

Additionally, the Mughals reformed their military by combining cavalry, artillery, and infantry in a disciplined structure. They also strengthened frontier defenses and established networks for communication and intelligence. These measures not only stabilized the empire but also created conditions for Akbar to expand his authority further in subsequent years.

Significance of Re-establishment

The re-establishment of Mughal rule after the Sur dynasty was crucial for India's political and administrative history. It marked the **transition from a period of Afghan dominance and instability to a centralized and organized Mughal administration**. Bairam Khan's guidance and Akbar's leadership ensured continuity in governance, military efficiency, and revenue collection. This period also laid the groundwork for Akbar's later policies of **expansion, administrative innovation, and religious integration**, which transformed the Mughal Empire into one of the most powerful empires in the Indian subcontinent.

Q6: Examine the role of Hemu Vikramaditya and Rana Pratap in resisting Mughal authority. How did their struggles influence the political scenario of 16th-century India?

Ans: The 16th century in India was marked by **intense political turbulence**, as the **Mughal Empire** was in its early stages and

regional powers sought to assert independence. Among the most notable figures who resisted Mughal authority were **Hemu Vikramaditya**, a Hindu general and minister under the Sur dynasty, and **Rana Pratap Singh**, the Rajput ruler of Mewar. Their struggles were significant in shaping the political landscape of North India, demonstrating both military valor and the challenges faced by the early Mughal rulers in consolidating power.

Hemu Vikramaditya and His Rise

Hemu, originally a tradesman named Hemu Pandit, rose to prominence under Sher Shah Suri and his successors. Through intelligence, administrative skill, and military acumen, he became the **Chief Minister and General** of the Sur Empire. During the **political instability following Islam Shah Suri's death**, Hemu seized the opportunity to expand his influence, defeating Afghan and Mughal forces and briefly capturing **Delhi** in 1556. He declared himself king and assumed the title **Vikramaditya**, symbolizing sovereignty and Hindu revivalism.

Hemu's resistance was notable for his **military successes**, including victories over Mughal forces in several engagements before the **Second Battle of Panipat**. His army's discipline and strategic maneuvers challenged the Mughal attempt to consolidate northern India, demonstrating that Mughal authority was not yet secure and highlighting the fragmented political structure of the period. However, Hemu's defeat at Panipat by **Akbar and Bairam Khan** ended his rule but did not erase his influence on the region's politics.

Rana Pratap Singh and the Rajput Resistance

While Hemu represented the transient resistance of a military leader, **Rana Pratap Singh**, the ruler of Mewar, embodied the enduring spirit of **Rajput defiance** against Mughal expansion. Rana Pratap fiercely opposed Akbar's attempts to subdue Rajputana, culminating in the

Battle of Haldighati (1576) against Mughal forces led by Man Singh of Amber. Despite being outnumbered and facing logistical disadvantages, Rana Pratap demonstrated extraordinary **valor and strategic skill**, using guerrilla tactics and knowledge of the terrain to resist Mughal domination.

Rana Pratap's struggle symbolized **regional autonomy, honor, and resistance to imperial control**. Even after losing the battle, he continued to wage campaigns from his strongholds, maintaining the independence of Mewar and inspiring other Rajput states to negotiate terms rather than succumb entirely to Mughal authority.

Impact on 16th-Century Political Scenario

The actions of Hemu and Rana Pratap significantly influenced the **political scenario of North India**. Firstly, Hemu's brief control of Delhi revealed the vulnerability of the early Mughal state and the continued relevance of regional powers, Afghan nobles, and independent military leaders. His rise and fall highlighted the importance of organized administration and a disciplined military in consolidating imperial authority.

Secondly, Rana Pratap's prolonged resistance established that **regional kingdoms could challenge imperial power**, compelling the Mughals to adopt a combination of diplomacy, strategic alliances, and military campaigns. This contributed to the **gradual integration of Rajput states into the Mughal Empire**, often through negotiation and marital alliances, rather than outright conquest.

Together, these resistances shaped Mughal policy, leading to **military reforms, administrative consolidation, and strategic incorporation of local rulers**, which strengthened the empire in the long run. Their struggles also **inspired local populations**, reinforcing notions of sovereignty, honor, and regional identity in a politically fragmented India.

UNIT – 3

ONE MARK:

1. **Q1:** Who was the regent during Akbar's early reign?
A1: Bairam Khan.
2. **Q2:** In which year did Akbar ascend the Mughal throne?
A2: 1556.
3. **Q3:** Name the capital established by Akbar.
A3: Fatehpur Sikri.
4. **Q4:** What was the central administrative council of Akbar called?
A4: Diwan-i-Khas.
5. **Q5:** Who assisted Akbar in finance and revenue matters?
A5: Todar Mal.
6. **Q6:** How many main departments were in Akbar's central administration?
A6: Four main departments – Finance, Military, Law, and Royal Household.
7. **Q7:** Name the provincial divisions under Akbar.
A7: Subahs (provinces).
8. **Q8:** Who administered a Subah in Akbar's empire?
A8: Subahdar.
9. **Q9:** What was the term for districts under a Subah?
A9: Sarkars.
10. **Q10:** Who collected revenue at the district level?
A10: Amil.
11. **Q11:** Which revenue system was introduced and perfected by Akbar?
A11: Zabti system (land revenue system).

12. **Q12:** Who assisted Akbar in standardizing the land revenue system?
 A12: Raja Todar Mal.
13. **Q13:** On what basis was land revenue assessed under Akbar?
 A13: Based on soil fertility and average crop production.
14. **Q14:** What was the Mansabdari system?
 A14: A military-administrative system linking rank, salary, and military service.
15. **Q15:** What did the term “Mansab” signify?
 A15: Rank or position of a Mughal officer.
16. **Q16:** Who was at the top of the Mughal hierarchy?
 A16: The Emperor (Akbar).
17. **Q17:** What determined a mansabdar’s salary?
 A17: The number of soldiers (Zat and Sawar) he maintained.
18. **Q18:** Name Akbar’s new religion founded in 1582.
 A18: Din-i-Ilahi.
19. **Q19:** What was the purpose of Din-i-Ilahi?
 A19: To promote religious tolerance and unity.
20. **Q20:** Which policy did Akbar adopt towards non-Muslims?
 A20: Sulh-i-Kul (Universal Peace).
21. **Q21:** Which taxes were abolished by Akbar for Hindus?
 A21: Jizya tax.
22. **Q22:** Who were the Rajputs in Akbar’s administration?
 A22: Rajput nobles integrated into the Mughal nobility.
23. **Q23:** Name a famous Rajput ruler allied with Akbar.
 A23: Raja Man Singh of Amber.

24. **Q24:** What was the main feature of Akbar's Rajput policy?
A24: Alliance through diplomacy, marriage, and military integration.
25. **Q25:** Which fort was built by Akbar for administrative purposes?
A25: Agra Fort.
26. **Q26:** How did Akbar control distant provinces?
A26: Through Subahdars and Mansabdars under a strict hierarchy.
27. **Q27:** Name the literary and artistic center established by Akbar.
A27: Fatehpur Sikri.
28. **Q28:** What was the main aim of Akbar's centralization policy?
A28: To consolidate Mughal authority and prevent rebellion.
29. **Q29:** How were military officials rewarded under the Mansabdari system?
A29: With salaries in cash or jagirs (land grants).
30. **Q30:** What was the significance of Akbar's administrative reforms?
A30: They strengthened centralized control, promoted stability, and ensured efficient governance.

TWO MARK:

Q1. What was the structure of Akbar's central administration?

A1. Akbar's central administration was headed by the emperor and assisted by a council of ministers. Key departments included revenue, military, justice, and foreign affairs. This structure ensured effective policy-making, coordination, and efficient governance, centralizing power while delegating responsibilities to specialized officials.

Q2. Who were the main officials in Akbar's central administration?

A2. Key officials included the Wazir (finance), Mir Bakshi (military), Diwan-i-Riyasat (provincial affairs), Qazi (justice), and Sadr (religious matters). They managed different domains under the emperor's supervision, ensuring accountability, smooth administration, and consolidation of Mughal authority across the empire.

Q3. How was Akbar's empire divided administratively at the provincial level?

A3. Akbar divided his empire into **Subahs** (provinces), each headed by a **Subahdar**. Provinces were further divided into **Sarkars** and **Parganas**. This hierarchy facilitated local governance, revenue collection, law enforcement, and defense while maintaining overall central control.

Q4. What were the main features of Akbar's provincial administration?

A4. Provincial administration was decentralized under Subahdars, who maintained law and order, collected revenue, and managed military forces. They were assisted by Diwans for finance, Faujdars for security, and Amils for revenue, ensuring efficiency while remaining accountable to the emperor.

Q5. What was the purpose of Akbar's land revenue system?

A5. Akbar's land revenue system aimed to maximize state revenue, ensure fairness to peasants, and stabilize the economy. Revenue was based on land productivity and assessment of crops, minimizing exploitation and promoting agricultural growth, which strengthened Mughal control and enhanced imperial finances.

Q6. Who was Todar Mal and what reforms did he introduce?

A6. Todar Mal, Akbar's finance minister, introduced systematic revenue reforms, including land measurement, classification of soil, and fixed tax rates. These reforms improved fairness, efficiency, and transparency in revenue collection, forming the foundation for a stable financial administration.

Q7. What is the Mansabdari system?

A7. The Mansabdari system was a bureaucratic and military ranking system, assigning officers (Mansabdars) a rank determining their salary, military responsibility, and administrative duties. It ensured loyalty, integrated military and civil functions, and maintained a disciplined and organized imperial army.

Q8. How did the Mansabdari system integrate military and administrative duties?

A8. Mansabdars were responsible for maintaining a specified number of soldiers and horses, collecting revenue, and administering assigned territories. This dual role linked military preparedness with governance, ensuring efficient control over the empire and coordination between civil and military administration.

Q9. What was Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-Kul?

A9. Sulh-i-Kul, meaning "universal tolerance," promoted religious harmony by allowing freedom of worship and encouraging dialogue among different faiths. Akbar included Hindus, Muslims, and others in administration, reducing sectarian conflict and fostering loyalty among diverse populations.

Q10. What was Din-i-Ilahi?

A10. Din-i-Ilahi was a syncretic faith founded by Akbar in 1582, blending elements of Hinduism, Islam, and other religions. It emphasized ethics, devotion, and tolerance rather than rituals. Although it had few followers, it reflected Akbar's efforts to promote unity and strengthen imperial cohesion.

Q11. How did Akbar promote religious tolerance in his administration?

A11. Akbar appointed Hindus and other non-Muslims to high positions, abolished the jizya tax in 1564, encouraged interfaith debates at the Ibadat Khana, and respected local customs. This inclusion fostered loyalty, reduced resistance, and stabilized his empire.

Q12. What were the main features of Akbar's Rajput policy?

A12. Akbar forged alliances with Rajput rulers through marriage, diplomacy, and appointments to high office. Rajputs retained autonomy in their territories while serving in Mughal administration and military. This policy ensured political stability and loyalty, preventing rebellion and integrating Rajputs into the empire.

Q13. How did Akbar use matrimonial alliances with Rajputs?

A13. Akbar married Rajput princesses and encouraged his nobles to do the same, establishing strong political bonds. These alliances secured loyalty, reduced resistance, and facilitated cooperation between Rajput states and the Mughal Empire.

Q14. How did Rajputs contribute to Mughal administration and military?

A14. Rajputs served as generals, governors, and officers, maintaining law, collecting revenue, and commanding armies. Their inclusion strengthened Mughal administration, expanded military capability, and ensured collaboration between central authority and regional powers.

Q15. What role did Subahdars play in Akbar's administration?

A15. Subahdars governed provinces, supervised revenue collection, maintained law and order, and commanded provincial troops. They acted as the emperor's representative, ensuring centralized control while allowing localized administrative efficiency.

Q16. What were Faujdar's responsibilities?

A16. Faujdar maintained law and order, commanded troops, suppressed rebellion, and ensured the security of towns and trade routes. They were subordinate to Subahdars but crucial for local military enforcement.

Q17. What were Amils responsible for?

A17. Amils were revenue officers responsible for assessing land, collecting taxes, maintaining accounts, and reporting to the Diwan. Their work ensured efficient and fair revenue administration in villages and towns.

Q18. How did Akbar's land revenue system benefit peasants?

A18. Peasants were protected from arbitrary taxation due to fixed rates based on land productivity. Accurate measurement of land and classification of crops ensured fairness, reduced exploitation, and encouraged agricultural growth, contributing to economic stability.

Q19. How did the Mansabdari system maintain loyalty among nobles?

A19. By granting ranks, salaries, and jagirs, the system tied nobles' wealth and status to imperial service. Their obligations to maintain troops ensured loyalty and minimized rebellion, strengthening the Mughal state.

Q20. How did Akbar's administration integrate central and provincial governance?

A20. Central policies were executed locally through Subahdars, Faujdar, and Amils. Regular audits, supervision, and accountability ensured that imperial directives were implemented efficiently across provinces, maintaining uniformity and control.

Q21. What was the significance of Todar Mal's revenue reforms?

A21. Todar Mal's reforms standardized land measurement, introduced crop-based taxation, and ensured transparency. These measures increased state revenue, reduced corruption, and provided a model for subsequent Mughal rulers.

Q22. How did Akbar maintain religious harmony among his subjects?

A22. Through Sulh-i-Kul, appointment of diverse officials, abolition of jizya, and encouragement of interfaith dialogue, Akbar promoted tolerance and loyalty, preventing communal unrest and consolidating imperial authority.

Q23. What role did Rajput chiefs play in the Mughal army?

A23. Rajput chiefs commanded divisions of the imperial army, participated in campaigns, and provided strategic advice. Their inclusion enhanced military strength and ensured Rajput support for the empire.

Q24. How did Akbar's administration ensure justice?

A24. Through appointed Qazis and Nyayadhish, courts were established at provincial and local levels. Cases were adjudicated fairly, maintaining law, reducing disputes, and strengthening public trust in the administration.

Q25. What was the overall impact of Akbar's administrative and revenue systems?

A25. Akbar's systems ensured efficient governance, loyalty of nobles, fair revenue collection, and political stability. They laid the foundation for a strong, centralized Mughal Empire that combined military strength with administrative effectiveness, cultural tolerance, and regional integration.

BROAD ANSWER:

Q1. Discuss the structure of Akbar's **central and provincial administration**. How did his reforms strengthen the foundation of the Mughal Empire?

Ans: Akbar, the greatest ruler of the Mughal Empire, established a strong and efficient administrative system that ensured peace, stability, and prosperity throughout his reign. His administration was highly organized, systematic, and based on principles of merit, discipline, and central control. Akbar realized that a vast empire like India required a well-structured government with capable officials and uniform policies. Therefore, he developed a centralized system that extended from the emperor down to the village level, ensuring efficient governance and effective communication between the centre and provinces.

Central Administration

At the top of Akbar's administration stood the emperor himself. He was the supreme authority in all matters—political, military, judicial,

and religious. The emperor's word was final, but he was assisted by a council of ministers who helped him in various departments. The central administration was divided into several key branches, each headed by a high-ranking officer.

1. Wazir or Diwan-i-Ala (Finance Department):

The Wazir was responsible for maintaining the empire's revenue, expenditure, and budgeting. This office managed the assessment and collection of land revenue, which was the main source of income for the state. Raja Todar Mal, Akbar's famous finance minister, made remarkable reforms in revenue collection by introducing the *Zabti* system.

2. Mir Bakshi (Military Department):

The Mir Bakshi was in charge of recruiting, paying, and supervising soldiers and officers. He also maintained the records of Mansabdars (military officials) and ensured discipline in the army. The *Mansabdari System* linked each officer's rank and salary to the number of soldiers he maintained.

3. Mir Saman (Household and Supply Department):

This officer managed the royal household, palaces, and supplies. He ensured that the emperor's court and the army were provided with necessary materials and provisions.

4. Sadr-us-Sudur (Religious and Judicial Department):

The Sadr supervised charitable grants, religious institutions, and the appointment of judges (Qazis). Akbar, however, reduced the power of this office to promote religious tolerance and prevent misuse of authority.

5. Qazi-ul-Quzat (Chief Justice):

The Qazi was responsible for the interpretation of law and justice based on Islamic principles, but Akbar introduced secular elements to make the system more impartial.

Provincial Administration

Akbar divided his vast empire into **15 provinces or Subahs**. Each Subah was headed by a **Subahdar** (Governor), who represented the emperor and was responsible for maintaining law, order, and revenue collection in the province. The Subahdar was assisted by several officers such as:

- **Diwan:** In charge of revenue and finance in the province.
- **Bakshi:** Responsible for military matters.
- **Sadr:** Looked after religious and charitable activities.
- **Qazi:** Administered justice.

Each Subah was further divided into **Sarkars (districts)** and each Sarkar into **Parganas** and **Villages**. Local officials like the *Amil* (revenue collector) and *Qanungo* (record keeper) maintained order and collected taxes. This multi-tiered system ensured that the emperor's authority reached every corner of the empire.

Significance and Impact

Akbar's administrative reforms laid the foundation of one of the most stable empires in Indian history. His system balanced **central control with local flexibility**, ensuring efficiency and accountability. The integration of capable Hindu and Muslim officials created a spirit of cooperation and reduced rebellion. The introduction of a uniform revenue system and strong military structure brought financial and political stability.

Akbar's administration also promoted merit over heredity, which encouraged loyal and skilled officers to rise in ranks. His efficient bureaucracy, regular audits, and strict supervision made corruption difficult. Overall, Akbar's reforms created a model of governance that was far ahead of its time and became the foundation upon which later Mughal rulers built their empire.

Q2. Describe the main features of **Akbar's land revenue system**. How did Todar Mal's reforms improve the efficiency and fairness of revenue collection?

Ans: The land revenue system under Akbar was one of the most important administrative reforms in Mughal India. Since agriculture was the main source of income for the state, Akbar realized that a well-organized and just revenue policy was essential for the prosperity of both the empire and its people. The revenue system introduced during his reign, with the assistance of Raja Todar Mal, became one of the most scientific and efficient systems in Indian history. It ensured a stable income for the state while protecting the interests of the peasants.

Background and Need for Reform

Before Akbar's reign, the land revenue collection was unorganized and often exploitative. Different rulers followed different systems, which caused confusion and oppression of peasants. When Akbar ascended the throne, he found that revenue officers and jagirdars often abused their power, leading to corruption and instability. To bring uniformity and justice, Akbar appointed **Raja Todar Mal**, his finance minister, to reform and systematize the land revenue system.

Features of Akbar's Land Revenue System

The system established under Akbar was known as the **Zabti or Dahsala System**, which combined careful measurement, record keeping, and fixed rates for revenue assessment.

1. Measurement of Land (Ain-i-Dahsala):

Under Todar Mal's direction, all agricultural land was carefully measured using a standard unit called *Gaz-i-Ilahi* (imperial yard). Surveyors were appointed to record the area of each field accurately, and the quality of land was classified according to its fertility.

2. Classification of Land:

The land was divided into three categories based on productivity:

- *Polaj* – regularly cultivated land,
- *Parauti* – temporarily fallow land,
- *Banjar* – uncultivable wasteland.

This classification helped in determining the fair revenue demand from each piece of land.

3. Average Produce and Price Fixation:

The average produce of different crops for the past ten years was calculated, and the average price was determined. This average was used to assess the tax rate, ensuring stability and fairness in revenue collection.

4. Assessment of Revenue:

Normally, **one-third of the average produce** was fixed as the state's share. The revenue could be paid either in cash or kind, depending on the region and circumstances.

5. Maintenance of Records:

Akbar introduced systematic record keeping through officials known as *Qanungos* and *Patwaris*, who maintained detailed registers of land, crops, and revenue payments.

6. Revenue Officials:

The *Amil* or revenue officer collected the land tax and supervised the agricultural activities. He ensured that peasants were not overburdened and that the government received its due share on time.

7. Protection of Peasants:

One of the most humane features of Akbar's system was his concern for peasants' welfare. In years of famine, drought, or crop failure, the state provided remission or reduction of taxes.

Role of Raja Todar Mal and His Reforms

Raja Todar Mal, an efficient and honest administrator, implemented these reforms with great care and precision. His scientific approach to land measurement and fair assessment eliminated corruption among local officials. His insistence on proper record keeping reduced disputes between the peasants and the government. The introduction of the Dahsala system (ten-year average) ensured stability and predictability in revenue collection.

Todar Mal's reforms also helped in the economic growth of the empire. Peasants were encouraged to cultivate more land because they were assured of fair treatment and fixed rates. The stability of revenue collection increased the empire's financial strength and allowed Akbar to maintain a large standing army and a magnificent court without burdening the people.

Significance of the System

The land revenue system of Akbar became a model for future Mughal rulers and even influenced British revenue policies like the Permanent Settlement. It created a balance between state interests and peasant welfare. The fairness and transparency of the system strengthened the bond between the emperor and his subjects, which contributed to the political stability of the Mughal Empire.

Q3. Explain the **Mansabdari system** introduced by Akbar. How did this system combine military and administrative responsibilities to maintain imperial control?

Ans: The **Mansabdari system** was one of the most important administrative innovations introduced by Emperor Akbar. It was a unique system that combined both **civil and military administration**, enabling the Mughal Empire to maintain a strong, centralized control over its vast territories. The system not only determined the rank, salary, and responsibilities of officers but also ensured loyalty and discipline among nobles. Through this system, Akbar succeeded in

building an efficient bureaucracy and a powerful army, which became the foundation of Mughal stability and expansion.

Origin and Meaning of the Mansabdari System

The term “*Mansab*” means **rank** or **position** in Persian. Hence, a *Mansabdar* was an official who held a certain rank or post under the Mughal administration. The Mansabdari system was not entirely new—it had some roots in earlier Islamic and Mongol traditions—but Akbar organized it in a systematic and scientific manner. It became the backbone of his administration and military structure.

Every officer in the Mughal Empire, whether civil or military, was assigned a *Mansab* that determined his **status, salary, and duties**. The Mansabdars were directly appointed, promoted, or dismissed by the emperor himself, which ensured their complete loyalty to the crown.

Structure and Features of the System

1. Rank Classification (Zat and Sawar):

Each Mansabdar had two ranks — *Zat* and *Sawar*.

- The *Zat* rank indicated the personal status of the officer in the imperial hierarchy and determined his salary.
- The *Sawar* rank denoted the number of cavalymen the Mansabdar had to maintain for military service. This dual ranking system ensured that both civil and military responsibilities were clearly defined.

2. Hierarchy of Mansabdars:

The Mansabdars were ranked from 10 to 10,000 based on their position and responsibilities. Higher ranks were given to nobles and trusted officers, while lower ranks were assigned to junior officials.

3. Appointment and Promotion:

All appointments, promotions, and transfers were made by the emperor. Merit, loyalty, and efficiency were the main criteria for

advancement, though noble birth also played a role. This practice helped Akbar build a loyal and competent administrative class.

4. **Payment and Salary System:**

Mansabdars were paid salaries either in cash or through *jagirs* (land assignments). The *jagir* holders were responsible for collecting revenue from their lands but had no hereditary rights over them. This prevented them from becoming too powerful and ensured that ultimate authority rested with the emperor.

5. **Maintenance of Soldiers and Horses:**

Each Mansabdar was required to maintain a fixed number of soldiers, horses, and equipment according to his *Sawar* rank. Strict inspection ensured that the soldiers and horses were genuine and ready for service.

6. **Transfer and Rotation:**

To prevent misuse of power, Mansabdars were frequently transferred from one region to another. This rotation policy prevented the formation of local loyalties and rebellions.

Importance and Objectives of the System

Akbar's Mansabdari system had several important objectives. It helped him maintain a **large standing army** without direct state expenditure, as each Mansabdar was responsible for his troops. It also served as an **instrument of control**, since Mansabdars were directly dependent on the emperor for their position, income, and prestige.

By combining **civil administration and military service**, Akbar ensured that his officers were both efficient administrators and capable soldiers. The system created a disciplined ruling class that acted as the backbone of the empire. It also promoted **unity among diverse groups**, as both Muslims and Hindus were appointed as Mansabdars purely on merit.

Impact and Legacy

The Mansabdari system proved highly successful during Akbar's reign. It ensured administrative efficiency, military strength, and political stability. It allowed the emperor to govern a vast empire through loyal officers while keeping them under his direct control. Later rulers like Jahangir and Shah Jahan continued the system, though it became corrupt under Aurangzeb due to over-expansion and financial strain.

Q4. Examine Akbar's religious policy. How did his ideas of Sulh-i-Kul and the Din-i-Ilahi contribute to religious harmony in the Mughal Empire?

Ans: During the reign of Emperor Akbar (1556–1605), the Mughal Empire witnessed one of the most remarkable phases of religious tolerance and cultural synthesis in Indian history. Akbar's religious policy reflected his broad-mindedness, vision of unity, and deep concern for maintaining peace in a vast and diverse empire. His ideas of **Sulh-i-Kul** (peace with all) and the establishment of **Din-i-Ilahi** marked a new chapter in the evolution of religious harmony in medieval India. These principles helped create a stable and inclusive political structure where people of all faiths could coexist under one rule.

Akbar realized that the Mughal Empire consisted of people belonging to various religions—Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, and Christians—and maintaining peace among them was essential for political stability. Initially, Akbar followed orthodox Islamic practices, but as he matured as a ruler, he developed an independent outlook. His experience as an emperor made him aware that rigid religious intolerance could weaken his empire. Hence, Akbar gradually adopted a **policy of religious tolerance and inclusion**, which became the cornerstone of his governance.

One of Akbar's major initiatives was to promote **inter-religious dialogue**. In 1575, he built the **Ibadat Khana (House of Worship)** at Fatehpur Sikri, where scholars from different religions—Islam,

Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism—were invited to discuss theological and philosophical ideas. These discussions made Akbar realize the futility of religious fanaticism and the value of universal ethics. This realization gave birth to his principle of **Sulh-i-Kul**, which means “peace with all.” It was not merely a political slogan but a guiding philosophy of his administration.

Under **Sulh-i-Kul**, Akbar abolished discriminatory practices such as the **Jizya tax** (a tax on non-Muslims) and **pilgrimage tax**. He appointed people of all religions to high administrative positions based on merit rather than faith. Rajput nobles, who were once considered enemies, became trusted allies in his administration. Akbar also married Hindu princesses, such as Jodha Bai of Amber, and allowed them to maintain their religious practices freely. This policy not only improved Hindu-Muslim relations but also helped Akbar in consolidating his empire by winning the loyalty of diverse groups.

The idea of **Din-i-Ilahi** (The Religion of God) emerged as the next step in Akbar’s quest for religious unity. Founded around 1582, Din-i-Ilahi was not a new religion in the strict sense but a **spiritual and ethical code** combining the best moral principles from various faiths. It emphasized values such as truth, kindness, tolerance, justice, and devotion to God. Akbar discouraged rituals, idol worship, and sectarian divisions, promoting instead the idea that all paths lead to the same divine truth. The followers of Din-i-Ilahi were called “**Chela**” (disciples), and although their number remained small, the concept symbolized Akbar’s effort to transcend religious boundaries.

Akbar’s policy of **religious tolerance** also extended to his interactions with foreign missionaries. He welcomed Jesuit priests from Goa and engaged them in discussions about Christianity. Similarly, he showed respect towards Jain monks, Buddhist scholars, and Hindu saints like Tulsidas. He issued farmans (royal decrees) protecting temples and forbidding the forced conversion of people. By ensuring that every community enjoyed freedom of worship, Akbar created a sense of unity among his subjects.

The impact of Akbar's religious policy was profound and long-lasting. It promoted **social harmony, reduced communal conflicts**, and strengthened the foundation of the Mughal Empire. His ideas of **Sulh-i-Kul** and **Din-i-Ilahi** inspired later rulers and thinkers to adopt a spirit of tolerance. Although Din-i-Ilahi disappeared after Akbar's death, the essence of his religious philosophy lived on as a symbol of India's pluralism.

Q5. Evaluate Akbar's **Rajput policy**. How did his relations with the Rajputs help in consolidating Mughal rule in India?

Ans: Akbar's **Rajput policy** stands as one of the most remarkable and farsighted aspects of his statesmanship. It was not just a political strategy but a deliberate and visionary effort to unite the Indian subcontinent under one strong, stable, and inclusive empire. By adopting a policy based on tolerance, diplomacy, and mutual respect, Akbar succeeded in transforming the Rajputs—once the staunchest enemies of the Mughals—into the most loyal and dependable allies of the Mughal throne. This alliance played a key role in consolidating Mughal rule, ensuring political stability, and establishing the foundation for a vast and enduring empire.

When Akbar ascended the throne in 1556, the Mughal Empire was still in its formative stage. The Rajputs, known for their martial valor, honor, and independence, ruled several powerful kingdoms in Rajasthan and Central India. Earlier, the Mughal rulers, especially Babur and Humayun, had adopted a hostile approach toward them, which resulted in continuous wars and resistance. Akbar, however, realized that military force alone could not bring lasting peace. Therefore, he adopted a **policy of friendship and alliance** instead of enmity and conquest. His Rajput policy combined military strength with diplomacy, which ultimately became one of the cornerstones of his empire's success.

The first step in Akbar's Rajput policy was to offer the Rajput rulers **honorable terms of alliance**. Those who accepted Mughal suzerainty were allowed to retain their territories, enjoy internal autonomy, and receive high ranks and positions in the imperial administration. Akbar respected their customs and did not interfere in their internal affairs. This approach helped him win their trust and loyalty. Among the earliest Rajput states to join Akbar were **Amber (Jaipur)**, whose ruler Raja Bharmal married his daughter, **Jodha Bai**, to Akbar in 1562. This marriage marked a turning point, symbolizing the beginning of mutual respect and cooperation between the Mughals and Rajputs.

After Amber, several other Rajput states such as **Bikaner, Jodhpur, and Bundi** accepted Akbar's suzerainty. Akbar treated these rulers as equals and appointed them to high administrative and military posts in his empire. Notable Rajput nobles like **Raja Man Singh, Raja Bhagwan Das, and Raja Todar Mal** served the Mughal Empire with loyalty and distinction. Raja Man Singh, for instance, became one of Akbar's most trusted generals and played a key role in the conquest of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa.

However, not all Rajput rulers accepted Akbar's authority. The most famous resistance came from **Rana Pratap Singh of Mewar**, who refused to submit and continued to fight for Rajput independence. The **Battle of Haldighati (1576)** between Rana Pratap and the Mughal forces under Raja Man Singh became a symbol of Rajput valor. Although Rana Pratap was defeated, Akbar's policy towards him remained generous and conciliatory. Instead of seeking revenge, Akbar respected Rana Pratap's bravery, which reflected his magnanimity and statesmanship.

Akbar's Rajput policy was not limited to political alliances but extended to **religious tolerance and cultural integration**. He abolished the **Jizya tax** on non-Muslims and allowed Rajput princesses in the Mughal harem to freely practice their religion. Hindu festivals such as **Diwali and Holi** were celebrated at the Mughal court, reflecting a spirit of inclusiveness. Akbar's principle of "**Sulh-**

i-Kul” (peace with all) further strengthened this relationship by ensuring equality and respect for all faiths.

The impact of Akbar’s Rajput policy was far-reaching. By securing the loyalty of the Rajputs, Akbar created a **strong political alliance** that became the backbone of his empire. Rajput chiefs provided not only military support but also administrative stability in the newly conquered provinces. Their integration into the Mughal nobility ensured unity among diverse regional powers and helped prevent rebellions. This alliance also strengthened the Mughal army, as the Rajputs were known for their exceptional bravery and leadership.

Q6. Analyze the significance of Akbar’s administrative and religious reforms in shaping the Mughal Empire. In what ways did his policies set the foundation for a stable and secular governance?

Ans: Emperor Akbar, one of the greatest rulers in Indian history, stands out for his far-reaching administrative and religious reforms that transformed the Mughal Empire into a powerful, stable, and inclusive state. His policies not only consolidated Mughal authority but also laid the groundwork for a **secular and centralized system of governance** that endured long after his death. Akbar’s vision combined efficiency in administration with tolerance in religion, making his reign a model of good governance and harmonious coexistence among diverse communities in India.

Akbar’s **administrative reforms** were designed to create a well-organized and efficient empire. Realizing the limitations of a feudal setup, he replaced arbitrary rule with a systematic and accountable bureaucracy. At the top of the administration stood the emperor himself, assisted by an efficient council of ministers known as the “**Diwan-i-Khas**” (private council). The most important ministers included the **Wazir (Prime Minister)**, **Diwan-i-Ala (Finance Minister)**, **Mir Bakshi (Military Head)**, **Sadr-us-Sudur (Chief**

Religious Officer), and **Qazi-ul-Quzzat (Chief Justice)**. Each department was clearly defined, and officials were appointed on the basis of merit, loyalty, and efficiency.

To ensure effective control over vast territories, Akbar introduced a **provincial administration** dividing the empire into **Subas (provinces)**, which were further divided into **Sarkars (districts)** and **Parganas (groups of villages)**. Each Suba was headed by a **Subadar (Governor)**, who supervised both civil and military affairs. The **Diwan** of each province managed revenue collection, while **Qazis** and **Kotwals** maintained law and order. This structure brought uniformity and discipline to governance and ensured direct imperial control over the local administration.

Akbar's most notable contribution to administrative efficiency was the **revenue system**, designed by his trusted officer **Raja Todar Mal**. The system, known as **Zabt or Dahsala**, assessed land revenue based on the average produce and prices of the last ten years. This ensured fairness to peasants while providing a steady income to the state. Land was carefully surveyed and measured using standardized units, reducing corruption and exploitation by local officials. This revenue model became the foundation of Mughal economic stability and was later adopted by the British during their rule.

Another key feature of Akbar's administrative reform was the **Mansabdari system**, which served as both a military and civil framework. Under this system, every officer, known as a **Mansabdar**, was ranked according to his position and the number of troops he maintained. The system created a sense of discipline, ensured loyalty to the emperor, and provided a well-structured hierarchy that balanced power and responsibility.

Alongside administrative reforms, Akbar's **religious policies** reflected his vision of unity and tolerance. In a deeply divided society, he sought to build harmony among people of different faiths—Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Christians. He abolished discriminatory taxes like the **Jizya** and **Pilgrimage Tax**, which had alienated non-Muslims in

earlier regimes. Akbar's principle of "**Sulh-i-Kul**" (peace with all) became the cornerstone of his secular policy, promoting respect, equality, and coexistence among all religions.

To encourage intellectual exchange, Akbar established the **Ibadat Khana (House of Worship)** at Fatehpur Sikri, where scholars and theologians from various faiths debated philosophical and spiritual ideas. Through these discussions, Akbar realized the importance of rationality and moral conduct over dogmatic religious practices. This realization inspired him to found the **Din-i-Ilahi (Divine Faith)** in 1582—a syncretic religion blending the best moral principles of all religions. Though Din-i-Ilahi did not gain many followers, it symbolized Akbar's desire to promote unity and spiritual harmony.

Akbar's religious tolerance extended to his personal life as well. His court included people of diverse backgrounds—Hindu nobles like **Raja Man Singh** and **Todar Mal**, Jain monks like **Hiravijaya Suri**, and Christian priests from Goa. He married Rajput princesses and allowed them to practice their faith freely, further strengthening Hindu-Muslim relations. His patronage of art, literature, and architecture reflected the same inclusiveness—blending Persian, Indian, and Central Asian styles to create a distinct Mughal culture.

The impact of Akbar's administrative and religious reforms was profound and long-lasting. His efficient bureaucracy, fair revenue policies, and secular approach created political stability and prosperity across the empire. The Mughal state under Akbar became a symbol of justice, tolerance, and cultural brilliance. More importantly, his model of governance provided India with an early vision of **secularism and inclusivity**, where diversity was embraced as a source of strength.

UNIT – 4

ONE MARK:

1. Who succeeded Akbar as the Mughal Emperor?

Answer: Jahangir succeeded Akbar in 1605.

2. What was Jahangir's real name?

Answer: Jahangir's real name was Nur-ud-din Muhammad Salim.

3. Which title did Jahangir assume after ascending the throne?

Answer: Jahangir assumed the title *Nur-ud-din Muhammad Jahangir Badshah Ghazi*.

4. Who was the wife of Jahangir known for her political influence?

Answer: Nur Jahan was Jahangir's wife known for her great political influence.

5. In which year did Jahangir ascend the throne?

Answer: Jahangir ascended the Mughal throne in 1605.

6. Name the British ambassador who came to Jahangir's court.

Answer: Sir Thomas Roe visited Jahangir's court in 1615.

7. What was the main objective of Sir Thomas Roe's visit to India?

Answer: His main objective was to secure trading privileges for the English East India Company.

8. Name the famous painting tradition that flourished under Jahangir.

Answer: The Mughal miniature painting reached its peak under Jahangir.

9. What was Shah Jahan's real name?

Answer: Shah Jahan's real name was Prince Khurram.

10. During whose reign was the Taj Mahal built?

Answer: The Taj Mahal was built during the reign of Shah Jahan.

11. In memory of whom was the Taj Mahal constructed?

Answer: It was constructed in memory of Shah Jahan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

12. What was the capital city founded by Shah Jahan?

Answer: Shah Jahan founded the city of Shahjahanabad (modern Delhi).

13. What is the Red Fort of Delhi famous for?

Answer: It was Shah Jahan's imperial palace and symbol of Mughal architectural glory.

14. When did Aurangzeb ascend the Mughal throne?

Answer: Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1658.

15. What was Aurangzeb's full title?

Answer: Alamgir I was the imperial title adopted by Aurangzeb.

16. What was Aurangzeb's policy towards non-Muslims called?

Answer: His policy was known for religious orthodoxy and intolerance.

17. Which tax did Aurangzeb reimpose on non-Muslims?

Answer: Aurangzeb reimposed the *Jizya* tax in 1679.

18. Name the Deccan kingdoms annexed by Aurangzeb.

Answer: Bijapur and Golconda were annexed by Aurangzeb.

19. Who led the Maratha resistance against Aurangzeb?

Answer: Chhatrapati Shivaji led the Maratha resistance.

20. Where did Aurangzeb die and in which year?

Answer: Aurangzeb died in 1707 at Ahmednagar.

21. What was the main reason for the Mughal Empire's decline after Aurangzeb?

Answer: Continuous wars and weak successors led to the decline.

22. Which war drained the Mughal treasury during Aurangzeb's reign?

Answer: The prolonged Deccan wars drained the Mughal treasury.

23. Name any two later Mughal emperors after Aurangzeb.

Answer: Bahadur Shah I and Farrukhsiyar were later Mughal emperors.

24. Which European powers gained advantage from the Mughal decline?

Answer: The British and French gained advantage from the Mughal decline.

25. In which year did the Mughal Empire effectively collapse?

Answer: The Mughal Empire effectively collapsed in 1857 after the Revolt.

TWO MARK:

1. *Who was Jahangir and when did he ascend the throne?*

Jahangir, son of Akbar, ascended the Mughal throne in 1605. His reign continued the empire's consolidation and cultural growth. Jahangir was known for his justice, artistic taste, and stability in administration, marking a peaceful phase in Mughal history after Akbar's dynamic rule.

2. *What was Nur Jahan's role in Jahangir's reign?*

Nur Jahan, Jahangir's wife, played a dominant political role. She influenced imperial decisions, issued farmans, and introduced coins in her name. Her intelligence and administrative ability strengthened the Mughal court, though her growing influence later caused factionalism and weakened Jahangir's direct authority.

3. *Who was Sir Thomas Roe and why did he visit India?*

Sir Thomas Roe was an English ambassador sent by King James I to Jahangir's court in 1615. His primary mission was to obtain trading privileges for the English East India Company, which later laid the foundation for British trade and influence in India.

4. *What were the major achievements of Jahangir?*

Jahangir promoted justice, art, and architecture. His reign witnessed

flourishing Mughal painting and stability in administration. He also strengthened trade relations with European nations. Jahangir's personality combined military discipline with artistic sensibility, making his rule culturally rich and politically stable.

5. *What was the "Chain of Justice" introduced by Jahangir?*

Jahangir introduced the "Chain of Justice" outside his palace at Agra to allow citizens to directly appeal to the emperor against injustice. This symbolized his dedication to fairness and public welfare, showing his commitment to Akbar's ideal of a just and benevolent monarchy.

6. *What were Shah Jahan's major conquests?*

Shah Jahan expanded the Mughal Empire by capturing territories like Balkh, Kandahar, and parts of the Deccan. His reign marked political stability and prosperity. These conquests displayed his military capability, though his later conflicts with Persia over Kandahar weakened Mughal influence in the northwest.

7. *Describe Shah Jahan's contribution to architecture.*

Shah Jahan was called the "Engineer King" for his architectural patronage. He built the Taj Mahal, Red Fort, and Jama Masjid, symbolizing Mughal grandeur and aesthetic perfection. His architecture combined Persian elegance with Indian artistry, representing the zenith of Mughal architectural style.

8. *Why was Shah Jahan called the "Prince of Builders"?*

Shah Jahan earned the title "Prince of Builders" because he constructed magnificent monuments like the Taj Mahal and Red Fort. His reign reflected Mughal prosperity and artistic excellence,

blending marble craftsmanship, symmetry, and grandeur, which immortalized his love for beauty and refinement.

9. *What led to Shah Jahan's imprisonment?*

Shah Jahan's sons fought for succession, leading to a civil war. Aurangzeb emerged victorious, deposing his father in 1658. Shah Jahan was imprisoned in the Agra Fort, where he spent his last years gazing at the Taj Mahal, the mausoleum he had built for Mumtaz Mahal.

10. *When and how did Aurangzeb become emperor?*

Aurangzeb ascended the Mughal throne in 1658 after defeating his brothers in the War of Succession. His victory over Dara Shikoh and coronation as Alamgir I marked the beginning of an expansionist yet orthodox reign, focused on Islamic law and military discipline.

11. *What were Aurangzeb's main administrative policies?*

Aurangzeb maintained strict discipline in administration and enforced Sharia law. He banned practices like drinking and music at court, reflecting his conservative religious views. Despite his austerity, his efficient governance extended Mughal control across India, though his rigidity alienated many subjects.

12. *Explain Aurangzeb's religious policy.*

Aurangzeb's religious policy was orthodox and intolerant compared to Akbar's. He reimposed the Jizya tax on non-Muslims, destroyed some temples, and promoted Islamic laws. This created resentment among Hindus and Sikhs, weakening Mughal unity and contributing to revolts and decline.

13. *What was the Jizya tax and why was it controversial?*

The Jizya was a poll tax imposed on non-Muslims, reintroduced by Aurangzeb in 1679. It symbolized religious discrimination and reversed Akbar's tolerant policy. The tax provoked dissatisfaction among Hindus and widened the religious divide within the empire, undermining its unity.

14. *What were the Deccan campaigns of Aurangzeb?*

Aurangzeb waged prolonged campaigns in the Deccan to subdue Bijapur, Golconda, and the Marathas. Though he annexed these regions, the wars drained the imperial treasury, exhausted the army, and diverted attention from northern governance, hastening Mughal decline.

15. *Who was Shivaji and what was his role against Aurangzeb?*

Shivaji, founder of the Maratha Empire, led resistance against Mughal expansion in the Deccan. His guerrilla warfare and administrative reforms posed a strong challenge to Aurangzeb's authority, symbolizing regional independence and marking the rise of Hindu power in medieval India.

16. *What was Aurangzeb's relationship with the Rajputs?*

Aurangzeb's relationship with the Rajputs was strained. He attacked Mewar and Marwar, violating Akbar's policy of alliance. His actions alienated the Rajputs, who had been the Mughal Empire's strongest allies, leading to rebellions and weakening imperial unity.

17. *How did Aurangzeb deal with the Sikhs?*

Aurangzeb's strict policies provoked conflict with the Sikhs. He executed Guru Tegh Bahadur in 1675 for resisting conversion, which intensified Sikh militarization under Guru Gobind Singh. This

hostility sowed seeds of future Sikh resistance against Mughal authority.

18. *What were the main causes of the Mughal decline?*

The Mughal decline resulted from Aurangzeb's religious intolerance, continuous wars, weak successors, economic strain, and administrative inefficiency. The rise of regional powers and European traders further destabilized the empire after Aurangzeb's death in 1707.

19. *How did economic factors contribute to the Mughal decline?*

Continuous warfare, corruption, and extravagant spending exhausted the treasury. Declining trade revenues and inefficient tax collection weakened the financial base, making it difficult for later rulers to maintain the large army and administration established by Akbar and his successors.

20. *What was the impact of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy?*

Aurangzeb's prolonged Deccan wars consumed resources and manpower. Though he annexed Bijapur and Golconda, the empire was overextended. The wars caused economic collapse and internal unrest, accelerating the empire's downfall after his death.

21. *Who succeeded Aurangzeb and what challenges did he face?*

Aurangzeb was succeeded by Bahadur Shah I in 1707. He faced rebellions by Sikhs, Rajputs, and Marathas, along with administrative decay. Though he tried to restore tolerance, his short reign couldn't reverse the decline started under Aurangzeb.

22. *What role did the Marathas play in the Mughal decline?*

The Marathas under Shivaji and later Peshwas waged continuous wars

against the Mughals. Their guerrilla tactics drained imperial resources and eroded central authority. By the early 18th century, Marathas had become the dominant power in central India.

23. *How did the rise of European powers affect the Mughal Empire?*

European trading companies, especially the British and French, exploited Mughal weakness. They gained trading privileges and built military bases, gradually expanding political control. Their growing influence further undermined Mughal sovereignty and contributed to India's colonial subjugation.

24. *What was the cultural significance of Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reigns?*

Jahangir and Shah Jahan's reigns marked the golden age of Mughal art and architecture. Miniature painting flourished under Jahangir, while Shah Jahan's monuments reflected imperial grandeur. Their patronage made Mughal culture one of the richest in the world.

25. *When did the Mughal Empire finally collapse and why?*

The Mughal Empire collapsed in 1857 after the Revolt of 1857. Bahadur Shah II was deposed by the British, marking the end of the dynasty. The empire's downfall stemmed from long-term administrative decay, regional uprisings, and British domination.

BROAD ANSWER:

Q1. Discuss the territorial expansion of the Mughal Empire under Jahangir and Shah Jahan. How did their military and diplomatic strategies contribute to the growth of the empire?

Ans: When Jahangir ascended the throne in 1605, he inherited a well-organized and powerful empire from his father Akbar. Although Jahangir was more inclined towards art, culture, and justice, he did

not neglect imperial expansion. One of his significant early challenges was the **rebellion of his son Khusrau**, which was suppressed efficiently, ensuring political stability.

Jahangir's major military campaigns were directed toward the **North-Western and Southern regions** of India. The Mughal forces under his general **Khurram (later Shah Jahan)** successfully captured **Kangra Fort (1620)** in Punjab, which had long resisted Mughal control. This conquest was a major strategic victory, strengthening Mughal dominance in the northern hills.

In the Deccan region, Jahangir continued Akbar's policy of expansion. The Mughal army captured **Ahmadnagar**, and the powerful Ahmadnagar kingdom was annexed after the death of its ruler **Malik Ambar**, though complete control was not achieved during his reign. Jahangir also successfully maintained Mughal authority in Bengal, Gujarat, and Kashmir.

A notable aspect of Jahangir's rule was his **diplomatic relations with the Persian (Safavid) Empire**. The conflict over **Kandahar** marked a significant episode. Though the city was temporarily lost to Persia, Jahangir's diplomatic handling of the matter prevented a prolonged war. His reign also saw the arrival of the **English East India Company**, marking the beginning of a new phase in India's external relations. Jahangir welcomed English envoys like **Sir Thomas Roe**, establishing early trade and diplomatic links that had far-reaching consequences in the later period.

Territorial Expansion under Shah Jahan

Shah Jahan, who succeeded Jahangir, was a capable military leader and administrator. His reign marked the **zenith of Mughal power and prosperity**. He adopted both aggressive and diplomatic measures to expand and secure the empire's frontiers.

In the **Deccan**, Shah Jahan led successful campaigns against **Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda**, bringing these states under

Mughal suzerainty. Though he preferred peace through alliances and treaties, his military expeditions were marked by strategic planning and discipline. The annexation of Ahmadnagar finally completed the Mughal conquest of the Deccan, which had begun under Akbar.

In the **north-west**, Shah Jahan attempted to regain **Kandahar** from Persia, a city of great strategic importance for trade and defense. Despite three military campaigns, the efforts failed, largely due to the geographical challenges and the strength of Persian defenses. Nevertheless, his commitment to safeguarding the frontier demonstrated his vision of imperial integrity.

Shah Jahan also strengthened Mughal influence in **Central India and the Rajput states**. He maintained friendly relations with the Rajputs, who remained loyal allies of the empire. His reign also saw internal peace, which allowed for efficient administration and monumental cultural achievements.

Military and Diplomatic Strategies

Both Jahangir and Shah Jahan used **a combination of military strength and diplomacy** to expand and sustain the empire. Jahangir's approach leaned toward negotiation and alliances, ensuring political stability and reducing internal rebellions. Shah Jahan, on the other hand, emphasized strong central control, disciplined military administration, and architectural symbolism to project imperial authority.

Their reigns were characterized by **efficient use of the Mansabdari system**, which ensured a loyal and well-organized army. The Mughal navy was also developed to secure trade routes. Diplomatic missions to Persia, Central Asia, and European traders showcased their political maturity and vision for global interaction.

Q2. Explain the major achievements of Shah Jahan's reign. How did his architectural and administrative policies reflect the zenith of Mughal culture and power?

Ans: The reign of **Shah Jahan (1628–1658)** is often described as the “**Golden Age of the Mughal Empire**”, not only for its political stability and military strength but also for the unmatched cultural, architectural, and artistic achievements that flourished during his rule. Under Shah Jahan, the Mughal Empire reached its greatest territorial extent, its administration attained remarkable efficiency, and its cultural accomplishments represented the pinnacle of Indo-Islamic civilization. His reign stands as a symbol of imperial grandeur, architectural magnificence, and centralized governance.

1. Political and Territorial Achievements

When Shah Jahan ascended the throne in 1628, the Mughal Empire was already vast and prosperous, thanks to the legacy of Akbar and Jahangir. However, he further **expanded and consolidated the empire**, bringing peace and order to regions that had seen political instability. His most notable military successes were in the **Deccan region**, where he subdued Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda. These campaigns strengthened Mughal authority in southern India and increased imperial revenue.

In the **north-west**, Shah Jahan launched several campaigns to recover **Kandahar**, a vital city lost to Persia during Jahangir's reign. Although these campaigns were ultimately unsuccessful, they demonstrated his strategic understanding of the importance of frontier defense. His generals also suppressed revolts in Bundelkhand, Kashmir, and other parts of North India, maintaining the unity and integrity of the empire.

Shah Jahan maintained **peaceful relations with the Rajputs**, who continued to serve as loyal allies and high-ranking officers in the Mughal administration. This policy of cooperation ensured political

stability and minimized internal conflicts. Under his rule, the Mughal Empire stretched from Kandahar in the west to Bengal in the east, and from Kashmir in the north to the Deccan in the south—making it one of the largest and most prosperous empires of the early modern world.

2. Administrative Reforms

Shah Jahan was not only a conqueror but also a capable administrator. He continued the administrative framework established by Akbar but made it more refined and systematic. His government was based on the principles of **centralization and efficiency**, ensuring that power was effectively exercised through a well-organized bureaucracy.

The empire was divided into **provinces (subahs)**, each administered by a governor (**subahdar**) assisted by officials in charge of finance, military, and justice. The **Mansabdari system** continued to play a crucial role in administration, ensuring loyalty among nobles and maintaining a disciplined army.

Shah Jahan also improved the **revenue system** with the assistance of his able officials. The revenue was assessed based on productivity, and the collection process was made more transparent. This ensured a steady flow of income to the imperial treasury, which funded military campaigns, architectural projects, and welfare measures. His reign saw economic prosperity, flourishing trade, and stable governance that allowed arts and culture to thrive.

3. Architectural Achievements: The Peak of Mughal Art

The most remarkable aspect of Shah Jahan's reign was his **contribution to Mughal architecture**, which reached unparalleled heights under his patronage. His period is rightly called the “**Golden Age of Mughal Architecture**.”

The most iconic monument of his reign is the **Taj Mahal**, built in memory of his beloved wife **Mumtaz Mahal**. Completed in 1648 at

Agra, it stands as a symbol of eternal love and remains one of the world's greatest architectural masterpieces. Its perfect symmetry, white marble elegance, intricate inlay work, and serene garden layout represent the aesthetic perfection of Mughal art.

Shah Jahan also built the **Red Fort (Lal Qila)** in Delhi, which served as the new imperial capital. The fort's majestic walls, marble palaces, and audience halls symbolized the authority and grandeur of the Mughal Empire. The **Jama Masjid**, one of the largest mosques in the world, was also constructed under his supervision.

Other architectural achievements include the **Peacock Throne**, a magnificent symbol of imperial opulence adorned with precious gems and gold, and the **Shalimar Gardens** in Lahore and Kashmir. His architectural style blended Persian, Central Asian, and Indian influences, resulting in a unique synthesis of beauty, balance, and grandeur.

4. Cultural and Artistic Developments

Shah Jahan's court was a center of **art, music, literature, and learning**. Persian language and culture flourished, and the emperor himself was a patron of poets, painters, and scholars. Miniature painting and calligraphy achieved new levels of sophistication. The Mughal court became a symbol of luxury, refinement, and intellectual brilliance.

Trade and commerce also prospered during his reign. The empire had strong economic foundations supported by agriculture, internal trade, and international commerce. Ports like Surat became major centers for trade with Europe and the Middle East.

Q3. Examine Aurangzeb's religious policy. How did his orthodox measures and treatment of non-Muslims affect the unity of the Mughal Empire?

Ans: The reign of **Aurangzeb (1658–1707)** marked a turning point in the history of the Mughal Empire. Unlike his predecessors, particularly Akbar and Jahangir, who pursued policies of religious tolerance and harmony, Aurangzeb adopted a distinctly **orthodox and conservative religious policy**. His reign is often characterized by his deep commitment to Islam and his attempts to align the state's functioning strictly with **Islamic law (Sharia)**. Although he was a capable ruler and administrator, his religious intolerance and rigid orthodoxy eventually weakened the internal unity of the Mughal Empire and alienated several important social and political groups.

1. Aurangzeb's Religious Outlook and Ideology

Aurangzeb was personally pious and devout in his Islamic faith. He followed the **Sunni school of Islam** and aimed to make his administration conform to religious principles. His personal conduct reflected simplicity and devotion — he avoided luxury, copied the Quran by hand, and led a disciplined life.

However, his **religious orthodoxy** often translated into intolerance towards non-Muslims and even certain Muslim sects like the Shias. He believed it was his duty as a ruler to uphold Islamic laws and suppress practices that he considered un-Islamic. This outlook contrasted sharply with the **liberal and inclusive policies** of Akbar, who had sought to create a secular state based on mutual respect among all communities.

2. Enforcement of Islamic Laws (Sharia) and the Role of Ulema

Aurangzeb tried to implement the **Sharia** in state governance. He employed a large number of **Ulema (Islamic scholars)** to advise him

on legal and administrative matters based on religious law. A compilation of Islamic laws known as “**Fatawa-i-Alamgiri**” was prepared under his supervision, which served as a comprehensive code of Islamic jurisprudence.

He also **banned certain social practices** that he considered against Islam, such as drinking, gambling, and music in court. Court musicians were dismissed, and public celebrations of Hindu festivals were discouraged. Although these reforms reflected his religious sincerity, they created resentment among artists, nobles, and the general population who were used to the cultural openness of previous Mughal rulers.

3. Measures Against Non-Muslims

Aurangzeb’s treatment of non-Muslims was one of the most controversial aspects of his reign. He **reimposed the Jizya tax** in 1679, a tax that non-Muslims had to pay for the protection of their lives and property under Islamic rule. Akbar had abolished this tax to promote equality among his subjects, but Aurangzeb’s reimposition of it was seen as discriminatory and regressive.

He also imposed restrictions on **Hindu temples** — several temples were destroyed, and the construction of new ones was prohibited in certain regions. Notable among them was the destruction of the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** in Varanasi and the **Kesava Rai Temple** in Mathura. These acts deeply hurt the sentiments of the Hindu population and led to a decline in loyalty towards the emperor.

At the same time, Aurangzeb also appointed some Hindus to high administrative positions, such as **Raja Jaswant Singh** and **Raja Jai Singh**, showing that his policy was not entirely uniform or ruthless. However, the general perception remained that his rule favored Muslims over non-Muslims.

4. Conflict with the Rajputs, Sikhs, and Marathas

Aurangzeb's rigid religious stance led to serious **political conflicts** with several groups that had been loyal supporters of the Mughal Empire under previous emperors.

- **Rajputs:** Akbar had built strong alliances with Rajput rulers through diplomacy and intermarriage, but Aurangzeb's interference in Rajput succession disputes and his attack on Mewar and Marwar alienated them. The Rajputs, once pillars of the Mughal administration, revolted against him, weakening imperial unity.
- **Sikhs:** The execution of **Guru Tegh Bahadur**, the ninth Sikh Guru, in 1675 for refusing to convert to Islam, enraged the Sikh community. It transformed Sikhism from a peaceful religious movement into a militant force under **Guru Gobind Singh**, which became a significant resistance against Mughal authority.
- **Marathas:** The rise of the Marathas under **Shivaji** was another major challenge. Aurangzeb's inability to reconcile with them led to decades of warfare that drained the empire's resources and manpower.

These conflicts reflected how Aurangzeb's religious and political policies created deep divisions among his subjects, eroding the unity that his predecessors had carefully built.

5. Impact on the Unity and Decline of the Mughal Empire

Aurangzeb's orthodox measures and religious intolerance significantly contributed to the **decline of the Mughal Empire**. His long and costly military campaigns in the Deccan exhausted the imperial treasury, while revolts from Sikhs, Jats, and Rajputs fractured internal stability. His policies alienated the Hindu majority, turning loyal subjects into adversaries.

The empire that Akbar had founded on principles of **tolerance, inclusion, and cooperation** was transformed into a rigid and divided state under Aurangzeb. After his death in 1707, the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate rapidly, with provinces declaring independence and regional powers gaining strength.

Q4. Describe the territorial expansion of the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb. What were the key regions he conquered, and what challenges did he face in maintaining control?

Ans: The reign of **Aurangzeb Alamgir (1658–1707)** marked the **largest territorial expansion** in the history of the Mughal Empire. By the end of his rule, the Mughal dominion stretched from **Kashmir in the north to the Tamil region in the south**, and from **Bengal in the east to Baluchistan in the west**. However, this vast expansion came at a high cost — continuous wars, administrative strain, and regional revolts weakened the empire internally. Although Aurangzeb succeeded in creating one of the largest empires in Indian history, his aggressive expansionist policies and inability to maintain harmony among different groups ultimately contributed to the decline of Mughal authority.

1. Early Expansion and Consolidation (1658–1680)

Aurangzeb ascended the throne in 1658 after a fierce **war of succession** against his brothers — Dara Shikoh, Murad, and Shuja. Once in power, his first priority was to **consolidate Mughal control in northern India**. He strengthened imperial authority in the Punjab, Rajputana, Bengal, and Gujarat regions.

In **Bengal**, Aurangzeb dealt with revolts and ensured the continuation of the revenue system established by his predecessors. He maintained

strict control over **Kashmir and Kabul**, crucial frontier regions that guarded India's northwestern borders.

In **Rajputana**, Aurangzeb faced challenges due to his interference in the succession disputes of Marwar and Mewar. His refusal to recognize the Hindu ruler Ajit Singh of Marwar and his annexation of Jodhpur provoked widespread Rajput resistance. The resulting **Rajput War (1679–1681)** consumed significant imperial resources and weakened Mughal prestige in the region.

2. Expansion in the Deccan (1680–1707)

The most ambitious and long-lasting phase of Aurangzeb's expansion came in the **Deccan region**. His Deccan campaigns aimed to bring the powerful southern kingdoms — the **Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur**, the **Qutb Shahi dynasty of Golconda**, and the **Marathas under Shivaji** — under Mughal control.

Aurangzeb's **Deccan policy** had two main objectives: to eliminate the independent Muslim states of Bijapur and Golconda, and to crush the growing Maratha power. In **1686**, after prolonged sieges, **Bijapur** was captured by the Mughals, marking a major victory. The following year, in **1687**, **Golconda** was also annexed after a fierce battle and betrayal within its ranks. These conquests brought enormous wealth to the Mughal treasury, especially from the **Golconda diamond mines** and Deccan trade routes.

However, the greatest challenge in the south came from the **Marathas**, led first by **Shivaji** and later by his successors **Sambhaji** and **Rajaram**. The Marathas adopted **guerrilla warfare**, striking quickly and retreating into the hills, making it difficult for the Mughals to subdue them. Despite years of fighting, Aurangzeb could not completely crush their resistance. His long stay in the Deccan — nearly **25 years** — drained the imperial treasury and exhausted his armies.

3. Expansion towards the Northwest and East

Aurangzeb also sought to maintain Mughal control over the **northwestern frontiers**, particularly **Kandahar, Kabul, and Baluchistan**. However, his efforts to recover **Kandahar** from Persian control failed, as the Safavid rulers had strengthened their defenses. Nonetheless, he managed to keep Kabul and the frontier regions under Mughal authority through strong garrisons.

In the **east**, Aurangzeb's forces maintained Mughal dominance over **Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa**. Bengal remained one of the richest provinces, contributing significantly to the empire's wealth. However, constant warfare elsewhere meant that Bengal's resources were often diverted to finance campaigns in the Deccan.

4. Administrative and Logistical Challenges

The massive territorial expansion of the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb brought serious **administrative and logistical challenges**. The empire had grown too large to be effectively governed from a single center. The Deccan campaigns, though successful militarily, stretched Mughal administration beyond its capacity.

Maintaining vast armies over long distances proved costly. Supplies, reinforcements, and communication were major difficulties. Corruption among officials increased, and local revolts became frequent as regional governors began asserting autonomy. The empire's revenue system, once efficient under Akbar and Shah Jahan, began to crumble due to overextension and constant warfare.

Aurangzeb's **religious intolerance** also alienated many local rulers. His harsh policies towards the **Rajputs, Sikhs, and Marathas** further weakened alliances that had been the backbone of Mughal strength for over a century. As a result, while the empire expanded geographically, it began losing its internal cohesion.

5. The Burden of Continuous Warfare and Its Consequences

Aurangzeb's expansionist ambitions kept the Mughal army engaged in warfare almost throughout his reign. The long Deccan wars not only exhausted the treasury but also led to the **decline of agriculture and trade** in many regions. The empire's population suffered under heavy taxation, and soldiers often went unpaid.

By the time of Aurangzeb's death in **1707**, the Mughal Empire had reached its greatest territorial extent, covering nearly the entire Indian subcontinent. Yet, it stood on **shaky foundations**. The emperor had conquered more lands than he could govern, and his policies had alienated many of his subjects. Within a few decades after his death, the empire began to disintegrate rapidly, with regional powers like the Marathas, Sikhs, and Nawabs asserting independence.

Q5. Analyze the causes of the downfall of the Mughal Empire. Discuss the political, economic, military, and religious factors that led to its decline.

Ans: The Mughal Empire, which reached its height under the rule of Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, began to decline rapidly after the late seventeenth century. The downfall of this mighty empire was not due to one single factor but was the result of a combination of political, economic, military, and religious issues that gradually weakened its foundation and control over the Indian subcontinent.

Political Factors:

One of the major causes of the Mughal decline was weak and inefficient successors after Aurangzeb. Unlike the early emperors who were capable and visionary, later rulers such as Bahadur Shah I, Farrukhsiyar, and Muhammad Shah were weak and pleasure-loving. They lacked political will and administrative efficiency. The nobility, once loyal to the emperor, became self-centered and engaged in factional rivalries, especially between the Irani, Turani, and Indian

nobles. This internal conflict within the Mughal court weakened the central authority. Moreover, the empire had grown too vast to be effectively governed from one center, making it difficult to maintain administrative unity.

Economic Factors:

The economic structure of the empire also declined significantly. The long wars under Aurangzeb, especially in the Deccan, drained the imperial treasury. The burden of heavy taxation and revenue collection fell on the peasantry, leading to widespread discontent and frequent revolts. Trade and commerce also suffered as law and order deteriorated. The Mughal administration failed to modernize its economy or adopt new systems of production, which made it vulnerable in comparison to emerging European powers who were advancing in trade and technology. The decline in the jagirdari system further contributed to economic instability, as many jagirdars became corrupt and exploitative.

Military Factors:

The Mughal army, which had once been the backbone of the empire, became outdated and inefficient. It relied heavily on traditional cavalry and artillery while ignoring technological advancements in warfare adopted by European powers. The empire's inability to maintain a modern and disciplined army led to frequent defeats against external invaders and internal rebellions. The repeated invasions of Nadir Shah in 1739 and Ahmad Shah Abdali in the mid-18th century exposed the empire's military weakness. These invasions not only caused immense loss of wealth and lives but also destroyed the confidence and prestige of the Mughal monarchy.

Religious Factors:

Religious intolerance under Aurangzeb further accelerated the empire's decline. His orthodox policies, such as the reimposition of the jizya tax on non-Muslims, the destruction of Hindu temples, and the dismissal of Hindu officials, alienated a large section of the population. This policy reversed Akbar's earlier spirit of religious tolerance and broke the sense of unity that once existed among

Hindus and Muslims. The Rajputs, Marathas, Sikhs, and Jats revolted against Mughal authority, leading to internal fragmentation. The Deccan wars against the Marathas, in particular, drained resources and destabilized Mughal control over southern India.

Administrative and External Factors:

The Mughal bureaucracy became increasingly corrupt and inefficient. Governors of provinces began asserting their independence, which led to the emergence of regional powers like the Nawabs of Bengal, Hyderabad, and Awadh. The Mughal emperors were unable to control them, leading to political disintegration. At the same time, the rise of European trading companies, particularly the British and French, added another layer of challenge. The British East India Company gradually took advantage of the empire's weakness, leading to the eventual British domination of India.

Q6. Evaluate the contrasting policies of Akbar and Aurangzeb in terms of religion and administration. How did their approaches differently shape the stability of the Mughal Empire?

Ans: The Mughal Empire witnessed two of its most significant rulers in Akbar and Aurangzeb—emperors who stood at opposite ends of religious and administrative philosophies. Akbar (1556–1605) is remembered for his liberal, inclusive, and reformist policies that emphasized religious tolerance, administrative efficiency, and cultural synthesis. In contrast, Aurangzeb (1658–1707) adopted a rigid, orthodox, and conservative approach to governance, heavily influenced by Islamic law. Their contrasting policies not only reflected their individual personalities but also had profound and lasting impacts on the stability and unity of the Mughal Empire.

Akbar's Religious Policy:

Akbar's reign marked the zenith of religious tolerance and cultural integration in the Mughal Empire. Recognizing the diversity of

India's population, he sought to establish a government based on the principle of *Sulh-i-Kul* (universal peace). He abolished the jizya tax on non-Muslims, removed pilgrimage taxes, and allowed people of all religions to participate freely in his administration. Akbar also married Rajput princesses and appointed many Rajputs to high administrative and military positions, fostering loyalty and unity among different communities. His most notable religious initiative was the establishment of the *Ibadat Khana* (House of Worship) at Fatehpur Sikri, where he encouraged open discussions among scholars of different faiths — Hindus, Muslims, Jains, and Christians. Eventually, he formulated his own syncretic faith, the *Din-i-Ilahi*, promoting moral and ethical values over sectarian beliefs. Akbar's liberal policies created an atmosphere of harmony, ensuring political stability and social cohesion across his vast empire.

Akbar's Administrative Policy:

Akbar introduced several administrative reforms that strengthened the empire's foundation. He restructured the mansabdari system to maintain a balance between civil and military officials, ensuring loyalty to the emperor. His revenue reforms, guided by Todar Mal, standardized land measurement and taxation, improving financial stability. Akbar also emphasized meritocracy, appointing officials based on ability rather than religion or birth. This efficient administrative structure enabled effective governance, reduced corruption, and enhanced the empire's prosperity. The combination of religious tolerance and sound administration under Akbar made the Mughal Empire one of the most powerful and unified states in the world.

Aurangzeb's Religious Policy:

Aurangzeb, on the other hand, reversed many of Akbar's liberal policies. A devout Sunni Muslim, Aurangzeb strictly adhered to Islamic law (Sharia) and considered it his duty to protect and promote Islam. He reimposed the jizya tax on non-Muslims, destroyed several Hindu temples, and banned the celebration of non-Islamic festivals in the court. His religious orthodoxy alienated large sections of his

subjects, particularly the Rajputs, Sikhs, Marathas, and Jats. Unlike Akbar, who saw religious diversity as a strength, Aurangzeb viewed it as a challenge to Islamic purity. His persecution of the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur and conflicts with the Marathas under Shivaji fueled widespread resentment. The unity that Akbar had built through tolerance and inclusion was weakened under Aurangzeb's reign due to his rigid and discriminatory religious stance.

Aurangzeb's Administrative Policy:

Administratively, Aurangzeb was disciplined, hardworking, and personally austere, but his policies were marked by rigidity and excessive centralization. His long Deccan campaigns drained the treasury and overextended the empire's resources. He failed to effectively delegate power, leading to inefficiency in provincial administration. His strict adherence to Islamic principles even affected court practices, as he banned music, painting, and other art forms that flourished under Akbar and Shah Jahan. While his personal integrity was unquestionable, his inflexibility prevented him from adapting to the complex social realities of India. Consequently, administrative efficiency declined, and rebellions broke out in various regions, weakening the empire's control.

Impact on the Stability of the Mughal Empire:

The contrasting approaches of Akbar and Aurangzeb had very different effects on the stability of the empire. Akbar's inclusive policies and broad-minded administration united diverse communities under a common political framework, ensuring peace and prosperity. He created a sense of belonging among non-Muslims, which helped maintain the loyalty of regional powers like the Rajputs. Aurangzeb's narrow religious outlook, however, eroded this unity. His orthodox measures alienated key allies, leading to internal revolts and growing resentment among the empire's subjects. His prolonged wars and religious intolerance created administrative chaos and financial exhaustion, ultimately accelerating the decline of the Mughal Empire.

UNIT – 5

ONE MARK:

1. Who was the ruler of Mewar who resisted Akbar's expansion?

Ans: *Maharana Pratap* was the ruler of Mewar who strongly resisted Akbar's expansion into Rajputana.

2. Which battle is famous for Maharana Pratap's resistance against Akbar?

Ans: The *Battle of Haldighati (1576)* is famous for Maharana Pratap's brave resistance against Akbar.

3. Who led the Mughal army in the Battle of Haldighati?

Ans: *Man Singh of Amber*, a Rajput general under Akbar, led the Mughal army.

4. What was the capital of Maharana Pratap?

Ans: *Chittor* was his ancestral capital, but after its fall, he ruled from *Kumbhalgarh* and *Udaipur*.

5. Who was the ruler of Marwar who resisted Mughal authority?

Ans: *Raja Jaswant Singh of Marwar* resisted Mughal control during Aurangzeb's reign.

6. Who founded the Maratha kingdom?

Ans: *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj* founded the Maratha kingdom in western India.

7. In which year was Shivaji crowned as the king?

Ans: Shivaji was crowned in *1674* at Raigad Fort.

8. What was the capital of Shivaji's kingdom?

Ans: *Raigad Fort* was the capital of Shivaji's Maratha kingdom.

9. What was Shivaji's policy towards religion?

Ans: Shivaji followed a policy of *religious tolerance* and respected all faiths.

10. Name the revenue officer in Shivaji's administration.

Ans: The *Amatya* or *Mazumdar* was the chief revenue officer in Shivaji's administration.

11. What was the Ashta Pradhan?

Ans: The *Ashta Pradhan* was the council of eight ministers assisting Shivaji in administration.

12. Who was Shivaji's Prime Minister?

Ans: *Peshwa Moropant Pingale* served as the Prime Minister (Peshwa) of Shivaji.

13. What was Shivaji's naval base called?

Ans: Shivaji's main naval base was *Sindhudurg Fort*.

14. Which title was given to Shivaji by his people?

Ans: He was given the title *Chhatrapati*, meaning "supreme sovereign".

15. Who was the spiritual guide of Shivaji?

Ans: *Samarth Ramdas Swami* was Shivaji's spiritual mentor.

16. Who founded the Sikh community?

Ans: The Sikh community was founded by *Guru Nanak Dev Ji*.

17. Which Sikh Guru organized the Sikhs into a military force?

Ans: *Guru Hargobind* organized the Sikhs into a military power.

18. Which Sikh Guru established the Khalsa?

Ans: *Guru Gobind Singh* founded the *Khalsa* in 1699.

19. Who was the Sikh Guru executed by Aurangzeb?

Ans: *Guru Tegh Bahadur* was executed by Aurangzeb in 1675.

20. Who led the Jat uprising against the Mughals?

Ans: *Gokula* and later *Churaman* led the Jat rebellion against Mughal authority.

21. What was the main cause of the Jat rebellion?

Ans: The main cause was *heavy taxation* and *religious oppression* under Aurangzeb's rule.

22. Who was the Bundela ruler who revolted against the Mughals?

Ans: *Chhatrasal Bundela* led the Bundela resistance against Mughal domination.

23. Which saintly sect started the Satnami rebellion?

Ans: The *Satnami sect*, a group of peasants and artisans near Narnaul, led the rebellion.

24. During whose reign did the Satnami rebellion occur?

Ans: The *Satnami rebellion* occurred during *Aurangzeb's reign* in 1672.

25. What was the outcome of these regional resistances?

Ans: These resistances *weakened Mughal authority* and paved the way for regional powers like the *Marathas and Sikhs* to rise.

TWO MARK:

1. *What was the significance of the Battle of Haldighati (1576)?*

Ans: The Battle of Haldighati (1576) was fought between Akbar's general Man Singh and Maharana Pratap. Though Maharana Pratap was defeated, his courage became legendary. It symbolized Rajput resistance against Mughal dominance and inspired later generations to defend regional independence.

2. *Why did Maharana Pratap continue to resist Akbar even after his defeat?*

Ans: Maharana Pratap refused to surrender his independence to the Mughal Empire. He viewed Akbar's suzerainty as a threat to Mewar's sovereignty. His determination to maintain Rajput honor and autonomy made him a symbol of patriotism in Indian history.

3. *What was the political condition of Marwar during Aurangzeb's reign?*

Ans: After Raja Jaswant Singh's death, Aurangzeb tried to annex

Marwar. This led to a revolt by Durgadas Rathore, who defended the rights of Jaswant Singh's infant son, Ajit Singh, against Mughal control, keeping Marwar's resistance alive.

4. *What were the main aims of the Maratha movement under Shivaji?*

Ans: Shivaji's movement aimed to establish a sovereign Hindu kingdom free from Mughal and Adil Shahi domination. His goal was to create a strong, independent state based on justice, efficient governance, and protection of the people.

5. *How did Shivaji lay the foundation of the Maratha Empire?*

Ans: Shivaji united various Maratha chiefs and used guerrilla warfare to conquer forts and territories. His administrative efficiency, military organization, and leadership helped him establish a powerful Maratha state, later expanded by his successors.

6. *Describe Shivaji's coronation at Raigad.*

Ans: Shivaji was crowned *Chhatrapati* at Raigad in 1674 by Pandit Gaga Bhatt of Varanasi. The ceremony marked his formal recognition as an independent ruler and the beginning of the Maratha Empire's golden age.

7. *What was the role of the Ashta Pradhan Council?*

Ans: The *Ashta Pradhan* was a council of eight ministers responsible for different administrative functions like finance, foreign affairs, defense, and justice. This collective system helped Shivaji maintain efficient governance and accountability.

8. *Who was the Peshwa, and what was his function?*

Ans: The *Peshwa* served as Shivaji's Prime Minister. He handled state correspondence, supervised administration, and coordinated

between the ruler and other ministers, ensuring smooth functioning of the Maratha government.

9. Explain the importance of Shivaji's navy.

Ans: Shivaji built a strong navy to protect the western coast from foreign invasions and piracy. Forts like Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg served as naval bases, showcasing his strategic foresight and emphasis on maritime defense.

10. What were Shivaji's military strategies?

Ans: Shivaji used *guerrilla warfare tactics* (Ganimi Kava) — surprise attacks, swift retreats, and fort-based defense. These helped him defeat stronger enemies like the Mughals and Adil Shahis. His local knowledge and discipline ensured success.

11. What was Shivaji's policy toward religion?

Ans: Shivaji practiced religious tolerance. He respected Muslims, employed them in his service, and protected mosques. He focused on governance rather than sectarianism, earning respect from diverse communities.

12. How did Shivaji's administration help the common people?

Ans: Shivaji's administration was people-oriented. He reduced unjust taxes, improved revenue collection, and ensured fair justice. His policies increased agricultural productivity and protected the livelihood of peasants.

13. Who were the Sikhs, and what was their main ideology?

Ans: The Sikhs, founded by Guru Nanak Dev Ji, followed monotheism, equality, and service to humanity. They opposed caste

discrimination and believed in devotion to one God, forming a spiritual and later political community.

14. *How did Guru Hargobind transform the Sikh community?*

Ans: Guru Hargobind introduced the concept of *Miri-Piri* (temporal and spiritual authority). He organized the Sikhs into a martial community and established the Akal Takht, combining religion with self-defense.

15. *Why was Guru Tegh Bahadur executed by Aurangzeb?*

Ans: Guru Tegh Bahadur was executed in 1675 for defending the religious freedom of Kashmiri Hindus against forced conversions. His martyrdom strengthened Sikh resistance against Mughal oppression.

16. *What was the significance of the Khalsa founded by Guru Gobind Singh?*

Ans: The *Khalsa*, established in 1699, transformed Sikhs into disciplined warrior-saints. It promoted unity, courage, and resistance against tyranny, laying the foundation for Sikh militarization and identity.

17. *Who were the Jats, and why did they revolt against the Mughals?*

Ans: The Jats were peasant farmers near Agra and Mathura. They revolted against heavy taxation, oppression, and Aurangzeb's religious policies. Leaders like Gokula and Churaman led the rebellion for independence.

18. *Who was Chhatrasal Bundela, and why is he important?*

Ans: Chhatrasal Bundela was a Bundela Rajput chief who revolted against Mughal authority. He established an independent kingdom in

Bundelkhand, reflecting the decline of Mughal control in central India.

19. *What led to the Satnami rebellion of 1672?*

Ans: The Satnamis, a sect of peasants and artisans near Narnaul, revolted against Mughal officers' corruption and religious persecution under Aurangzeb. Their uprising reflected rural discontent and anti-Mughal sentiment.

20. *How did the regional resistances affect Mughal authority?*

Ans: Continuous uprisings by Rajputs, Marathas, Jats, Sikhs, and others weakened the Mughal Empire. The inability to suppress these movements exposed administrative decay and reduced central control.

21. *What role did Durgadas Rathore play in Marwar's resistance?*

Ans: Durgadas Rathore bravely defended Marwar's independence after Jaswant Singh's death. He protected the infant Ajit Singh and resisted Aurangzeb's attempts to annex Marwar, symbolizing Rajput loyalty and valor.

22. *How did Shivaji's administration differ from the Mughal system?*

Ans: Shivaji's administration was decentralized and based on merit. Unlike the Mughals, he emphasized local self-governance, strict revenue control, and accountability, ensuring justice and efficiency.

23. *What was the impact of the Maratha rise on the Mughal Empire?*

Ans: The Maratha rise under Shivaji weakened Mughal authority in the Deccan. Their expansion disrupted Mughal control and ultimately led to the empire's fragmentation in the 18th century.

24. *How did religious intolerance under Aurangzeb affect regional politics?*

Ans: Aurangzeb's policies alienated Hindus, Sikhs, and regional chiefs. His temple destructions and jizya tax provoked rebellions, fostering unity among local powers against Mughal rule.

25. *What was the long-term outcome of these regional resistances?*

Ans: These movements led to the decline of centralized Mughal power and the emergence of regional kingdoms like the Marathas, Sikhs, and Rajputs, shaping India's transition to regional states in the 18th century.

BROAD ANSWER:

Q1. Discuss the resistance of Mewar under Maharana Pratap against the Mughal Empire. How did the Battle of Haldighati influence Rajput and Mughal relations?

Ans: The resistance of Mewar under Maharana Pratap stands as one of the most iconic examples of Rajput valor and determination against foreign domination. Maharana Pratap, the ruler of Mewar after the death of his father Udai Singh II in 1572, inherited a kingdom under constant threat from the expanding Mughal Empire. Akbar, who sought to consolidate his authority over northern India, aimed to bring Mewar under Mughal control, both because of its strategic location and its symbolic importance as a center of Rajput pride. However, Maharana Pratap firmly refused to submit to Mughal suzerainty, valuing the independence and sovereignty of his kingdom over temporary peace or alliance.

The conflict between Mewar and the Mughals culminated in the famous **Battle of Haldighati** in 1576. The battle was fought in the rugged terrain of the Aravalli Hills near Haldighati Pass, which Maharana Pratap utilized to counter the numerical superiority of the Mughal forces. Akbar's army, commanded by Man Singh of Amber,

was well-equipped with artillery, cavalry, and infantry, reflecting the advanced military organization of the Mughals. Maharana Pratap, although facing a technologically superior enemy, employed guerrilla tactics, taking advantage of the hilly landscape, local knowledge, and the bravery of his soldiers. Despite suffering a tactical defeat in the battle, Maharana Pratap avoided capture, retreated to the hills, and continued a prolonged resistance against Mughal forces.

The significance of Maharana Pratap's resistance and the Battle of Haldighati goes beyond the immediate military outcome. Politically, it demonstrated that the Mughals could not easily subjugate all Rajput states by force. The valor displayed by Pratap and his army inspired other Rajput rulers and regional powers to assert autonomy and resist Mughal dominance, creating a culture of defiance in northern India. While Akbar eventually established diplomatic relations with some Rajput kingdoms through marriage alliances and negotiations, Mewar remained largely independent during Maharana Pratap's lifetime, symbolizing the resilience of local sovereignty against imperial expansion.

Socially and culturally, Maharana Pratap's struggle reinforced the ideals of Rajput honor, loyalty, and self-respect. The Mewar ruler became a symbol of unwavering resistance, embodying the Rajput ethos of prioritizing honor and freedom over submission. The Battle of Haldighati, although a military loss, achieved a moral victory by preserving Mewar's autonomy and inspiring narratives of courage that endured in folklore, literature, and collective memory. The Mughal-Rajput relationship also evolved as a result: while Akbar pursued diplomacy and alliances with other Rajput rulers, he recognized that force alone could not ensure loyalty, highlighting the limits of Mughal imperial authority.

Q2. Examine the resistance of Marwar against Mughal authority during Aurangzeb's reign. What role did Durgadas Rathore play in protecting the Marwar kingdom?

Ans: The resistance of Marwar against Mughal authority during the reign of Aurangzeb represents a critical episode of Rajput defiance in the late seventeenth century. Marwar, located in present-day western Rajasthan, had been a prominent Rajput kingdom under the Rathore dynasty. Aurangzeb, known for his orthodox policies and ambition to consolidate Mughal control over the Indian subcontinent, sought to annex Marwar following the death of its ruler, **Raja Jaswant Singh**, in 1678. Jaswant Singh's death created a political vacuum, as his heir, Ajit Singh, was an infant, leaving the kingdom vulnerable to Mughal domination. Aurangzeb attempted to impose direct Mughal administration over Marwar, disregarding the Rajput tradition of hereditary succession, which provoked widespread resentment among the Rathores and their supporters.

The Mughal attempt to annex Marwar was met with strong resistance, spearheaded by **Durgadas Rathore**, a loyal noble of the Rathore family. Durgadas Rathore played a pivotal role in preserving the independence of Marwar. He organized the Rajput forces, secured the safety of the infant Ajit Singh, and led a prolonged guerrilla struggle against the Mughal forces. Demonstrating extraordinary strategic skill and courage, Durgadas executed several successful operations, including ambushes, raids, and defensive maneuvers, which prevented the Mughals from establishing full control over the region. He maintained the morale of the Rajput warriors, ensuring unity and loyalty among the local chieftains despite the Mughal threat.

The resistance of Marwar was not only a military struggle but also a symbolic assertion of Rajput honor and autonomy. Durgadas Rathore's leadership preserved the kingdom's sovereignty at a time when Mughal central authority appeared overwhelming. His ability to navigate the political complexities of the period, including negotiating temporary truces when necessary, allowed the Rathores to survive in exile and eventually reclaim their territory. By 1698, after persistent resistance and strategic alliances, Ajit Singh was restored to the throne of Marwar, marking a significant setback for Aurangzeb's expansionist ambitions. This successful preservation of Marwar

demonstrated that local leadership and valor could effectively challenge even the might of the Mughal Empire.

The struggle of Marwar also had broader implications for the Mughal-Rajput relations. Unlike Akbar, who had pursued diplomatic alliances with Rajputs, Aurangzeb's heavy-handed policies provoked rebellion and instability in Rajputana. The Marwar resistance inspired other Rajput states to assert their independence and resist Mughal interference, contributing to the gradual weakening of Mughal authority in northern and western India. It also highlighted the limitations of Mughal military power, showing that the empire could not rely solely on force to maintain loyalty and control over distant provinces.

Q3. Analyze the rise of Maratha power under Shivaji. How did his military strategies, guerrilla warfare, and fortifications contribute to the establishment of an independent Maratha state?

Ans: The rise of Maratha power under **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj** represents one of the most remarkable examples of regional resistance and state-building in seventeenth-century India. Born in 1630 in the hill-forts of the Western Ghats, Shivaji inherited a socio-political environment marked by the weakening of the Adil Shahi Sultanate of Bijapur and the declining Mughal authority in the Deccan.

Recognizing the opportunity to consolidate Maratha identity and assert political independence, Shivaji embarked on a mission to establish a sovereign state that combined military skill, administrative efficiency, and popular support. His success was rooted in a strategic understanding of the local geography, the implementation of guerrilla tactics, and the construction of a formidable network of forts.

Shivaji's military strategies were highly innovative for his time. He emphasized speed, mobility, and surprise attacks, employing **guerrilla warfare tactics (Ganimi Kava)** against larger, better-equipped enemies such as the Mughals and Adil Shahis. These tactics included sudden raids, ambushes, and quick retreats into the hilly and forested

terrain of the Western Ghats, which gave him a distinct advantage over conventional armies. Shivaji avoided open-field battles whenever possible, understanding that terrain and timing could offset numerical inferiority. His army was disciplined, locally recruited, and highly motivated by loyalty to Shivaji and the ideal of Maratha sovereignty.

Another critical element in Shivaji's rise was his extensive **fortification system**. He captured and built over 300 forts across Maharashtra and neighboring regions, which served as military, administrative, and logistic centers. These forts, such as *Raigad*, *Pratapgad*, and *Sindhudurg*, were strategically located on hilltops or along coasts, providing natural defense, surveillance, and control over trade routes. The forts allowed Shivaji to maintain secure bases for his guerrilla operations and protected the local population from enemy invasions. They also symbolized Maratha power and independence, projecting authority over conquered territories.

Shivaji's administrative reforms complemented his military successes. He established a disciplined **civil and military administration**, with the **Ashta Pradhan council** overseeing finance, foreign affairs, military organization, and justice. His revenue policies were efficient and fair, ensuring loyalty from peasants and local chieftains. By integrating governance with military preparedness, Shivaji created a resilient state structure capable of withstanding external pressures while promoting the welfare of his subjects.

The rise of Shivaji and the Maratha state challenged the prevailing powers of the Deccan and northern India. His victories over the Bijapur Sultanate and subsequent confrontations with the Mughal Empire demonstrated that regional powers could successfully resist imperial domination through strategic planning, local support, and innovative warfare. By the time of his coronation as **Chhatrapati in 1674 at Raigad**, Shivaji had established a stable, independent kingdom that became the foundation for the later expansion of the Maratha Empire across central and northern India.

Q4. Describe Shivaji's administrative system. How did the Ashta Pradhan Council, revenue policies, and military organization ensure efficient governance and the stability of the Maratha Empire?

Ans: Shivaji Maharaj's administrative system was a pioneering model of governance in seventeenth-century India, combining military efficiency with civil administration. Recognizing the challenges of ruling a newly consolidated and diverse territory in the Deccan, Shivaji established a structured administration that balanced centralized authority with delegated responsibilities. Central to his governance was the **Ashta Pradhan Council**, a group of eight ministers responsible for key areas of administration, ensuring efficient functioning of the state. Each minister had a specialized role: the *Peshwa* managed the affairs of the state and coordinated administration, the *Amatya* or *Mazumdar* oversaw revenue collection and finance, the *Senapati* commanded the army, the *Sumant* dealt with foreign relations, the *Nyayadhish* handled judicial matters, the *Panditrao* advised on religious affairs, the *Mantri* maintained records and correspondence, and the *Sachiv* supervised the day-to-day operations of governance. This division of responsibilities allowed Shivaji to maintain accountability and prevent administrative overload, promoting transparency and efficiency.

A cornerstone of Shivaji's governance was his **revenue system**, which was designed to be fair, practical, and sensitive to the conditions of the agrarian population. He implemented reforms that ensured tax collection was based on actual land productivity rather than arbitrary demands. Revenue officers were responsible for accurate measurement of land and assessment of crops, preventing exploitation of peasants. This not only increased state income but also fostered loyalty among the populace, ensuring the stability of the newly established Maratha state. By balancing the needs of the treasury with the welfare of the people, Shivaji created an administrative system that strengthened both governance and public trust.

Military organization was another critical aspect of Shivaji's administration. Understanding the constant threats from the Mughals and Deccan Sultanates, Shivaji built a disciplined and well-structured army, integrating **infantry, cavalry, and naval forces**. He emphasized mobility, training, and local recruitment, ensuring that the army was familiar with the terrain and capable of swift action. The **fortification system**, with over 300 strategically located forts, served both as defense centers and administrative hubs, allowing Shivaji to maintain control over vast territories. Military officers were accountable to the Senapati and ultimately to Shivaji, ensuring unity of command and effective defense management.

Shivaji's governance was also notable for its emphasis on **justice, law, and religious tolerance**. The Nyayadhish administered justice fairly, resolving disputes and maintaining order. Shivaji respected all religious communities, incorporating Muslims and Hindus into administration and military service, which strengthened internal cohesion and minimized resistance from diverse populations.

Q5. Evaluate the role of Sikh, Jat, Bundela, and Satnami resistances in challenging Mughal authority. How did these movements reflect regional discontent and weaken Mughal control?

Ans: The seventeenth century in India witnessed several regional resistances that collectively challenged the authority of the Mughal Empire, highlighting the growing discontent among local populations and the limitations of centralized control. Among these, the movements of the **Sikhs, Jats, Bundelas, and Satnamis** played significant roles in asserting local autonomy, defending religious and social rights, and exposing vulnerabilities in Mughal administration.

The **Sikhs**, under the leadership of successive Gurus, transformed from a spiritual community into a militarized force in response to Mughal oppression. Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom in 1606 and Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution in 1675 by Aurangzeb, for defending religious freedom, marked critical turning points. Guru Gobind Singh,

the tenth Sikh Guru, institutionalized the **Khalsa** in 1699, creating a disciplined martial order committed to resisting tyranny. Sikh resistance, particularly in Punjab, effectively contested Mughal authority, protected local communities, and established a base for the future Sikh Confederacy.

The **Jats**, primarily agrarian communities around Agra, Mathura, and western Uttar Pradesh, revolted against heavy taxation, economic exploitation, and religious persecution under Aurangzeb. Leaders like Gokula and Churaman organized rebellions that challenged Mughal troops, destabilizing the empire's control in the Doab region. Their persistent uprisings demonstrated peasant discontent and showcased the ability of local communities to resist imperial authority.

Similarly, the **Bundelas**, under leaders like Chhatrasal, resisted Mughal domination in central India. They capitalized on the weakening Mughal administration and the empire's preoccupation with Deccan campaigns to establish semi-independent principalities. Chhatrasal's rebellion and eventual establishment of an autonomous kingdom in Bundelkhand exemplified how regional powers exploited Mughal vulnerabilities to assert political control.

The **Satnamis**, a sect primarily of peasants and artisans, rose in rebellion near Narnaul in 1672. Facing oppression, corruption, and discriminatory practices by local Mughal officials, the Satnamis mobilized masses to protest against the exploitative administration. Although their uprising was suppressed, it reflected the widespread rural discontent and the socio-economic tensions within the empire.

Collectively, these regional resistances had profound implications for the Mughal Empire. They **weakened central authority**, disrupted revenue collection, and forced the empire to divert military resources across multiple fronts. These movements also inspired other local rulers and communities to assert autonomy, contributing to a gradual fragmentation of Mughal power. Importantly, they reflected **the limitations of Aurangzeb's orthodox policies**, which alienated both

Hindu and non-elite communities, and underscored the necessity of local alliances and religious tolerance for effective governance.

Q6. Compare and contrast the regional resistances in North and Western India during the 17th century. How did the rebellions of Rajputs, Marathas, Sikhs, and other groups collectively contribute to the decline of the Mughal Empire?

Ans: The 17th century in India was marked by a series of regional resistances that significantly challenged Mughal authority and contributed to the gradual decline of the empire. These rebellions emerged in both **North and Western India**, led by groups such as the Rajputs, Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Bundelas, and Satnamis. Although differing in their causes, strategies, and leadership, these movements collectively weakened Mughal control and demonstrated the limitations of imperial power under Aurangzeb and his successors.

In **North India**, the resistance was primarily driven by the Rajputs and other regional groups like the Jats, Bundelas, and Satnamis. Rajput resistance, exemplified by Maharana Pratap of Mewar and the Rathores of Marwar under Durgadas, was motivated by the defense of sovereignty, honor, and dynastic independence. They employed guerrilla tactics, fortified strongholds, and leveraged local terrain to resist Mughal military superiority. Similarly, the Jats, Bundelas, and Satnamis rose against excessive taxation, social oppression, and the rigid orthodox policies of Aurangzeb. These uprisings were often peasant-led, reflecting widespread rural discontent and socio-economic grievances. Collectively, they disrupted Mughal administration, diverted military resources, and exposed the empire's inability to maintain effective control over distant provinces.

In **Western India**, the Marathas, under the leadership of Shivaji Maharaj, represented a highly organized and strategically sophisticated resistance. Unlike the regional rebellions in the North, the Marathas combined administrative innovation with military efficiency to establish a sustainable state. Shivaji's use of guerrilla

warfare, fortified hill forts, and a disciplined army allowed the Marathas to expand territorial control, challenge Mughal forces directly, and inspire local populations to assert autonomy. The Marathas differed from Northern resistances in that they not only defended territory but also built a structured governance system, which ensured the long-term consolidation of power.

While these resistances varied in scale and strategy, their **impact on the Mughal Empire was cumulative and profound**. The continuous rebellions over decades forced the empire to fight on multiple fronts, depleting financial resources and weakening military efficiency. They also highlighted the failure of Aurangzeb's policies, particularly his religious orthodoxy and centralizing efforts, which alienated influential local powers and communities. The inability of the Mughals to reconcile with regional leaders or integrate diverse social groups effectively led to fragmentation of authority and loss of political cohesion.

Moreover, these movements fostered the rise of regional powers that could challenge imperial dominance. The Marathas eventually became the most formidable post-Mughal power, while Rajput and Sikh principalities maintained autonomous territories. Even suppressed movements, like those of the Jats and Satnamis, influenced the administrative strategies of the empire and inspired subsequent rebellions. Collectively, the regional resistances accelerated the decline of centralized Mughal power and marked a transition toward a more fragmented political landscape in 18th-century India.