

## 7<sup>th</sup> - The Mughal Empire II



**Jahangir 1605-1627:** Prince Salim, the Eldest son of Akbar, ascended the throne of Delhi as the fourth Mughal ruler amidst rebellion and potting by his own son Khusrau. He assumed the name of Jahangir. Military campaigns started by Akbar continued. The Sisodiya ruler of Mewar, Amar Singh, accepted Mughal service. Less successful campaigns against the Sikhs, the Ahoms and Ahmadnagar followed. Prince Khurram, the future emperor Shah Jahan, rebelled in the last years of his reign. The efforts of Shah Jahan, Jahangir's wife, to marginalize him were unsuccessful.

1 **NurJahan:** In 1611 CE, Jahangir married Mihrunnisa, the widow of Sher Afgan Jagirdar of Bengal. He made her his chief queen with the title of Nur Jahan ('light of the world'). She acquired tremendous power and influence over the king, exerted her authority in all matters of administration, appointed her relatives and favorites to high positions and even had royal firmans (orders) and coins issued in her name.

2 **Foreign influences and interactions:** During the reign of Jahangir, a number of Europeans, like the Portuguese, the British and the Dutch, had begun to make their presence felt in India and other countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

As their economic interests began to clash, the Portuguese started attacking Mughal ships. To retaliate and put a check on them, Jahangir began to support their rivals, the British and the Dutch. In 1608 CE, Captain William Hawkins arrived at Surat with a letter from King James I of Great Britain to the emperor requesting permission to trade. Hawkins, who could talk with Jahangir in Turki, earned his goodwill and stayed at his court for three years as a mansabdar. In 1614 CE, Sir Thomas Roe was sent by James I as the British ambassador to the court of Jahangir. He stayed on till 1618 CE. Though he did not succeed in getting a formal treaty signed, he received liberal trade concessions for the British. They were also allowed to set up a factory at Surat.

3 **The issue of coins:** Jahangir issued many silver and gold coins, some bearing images only of him, and many with images of his wife Nur Jahan on the other side.

**Shah Jahan 1627-1658:** Shah Jahan led successful military campaigns against Mewar, Kangra and the Deccan kingdoms. He sent his son Aurangzeb to subdue the ruler of Bundelkhand at Orchha. Shah Jahan then went to Bengal to put down the growing power of the Portuguese. The Portuguese were carrying out illegal trading activities and were believed to be forcibly converting people to Christianity. More than 10,000 Portuguese were killed and many imprisoned. There was an outbreak of famine and plague in the Deccan, Gujarat and Khandesh. Shah Jahan made extensive arrangements to help reduce the sufferings of the people.

Mughal campaigns continued in the Deccan under Shah Jahan. The Afghan noble Khan Jahan Lodi rebelled and was defeated. Campaigns were launched against Ahmadnagar. The Bundelkhand was defeated and Orchha seized. In 1632 Ahmadnagar was finally annexed and the Bijapur forces sued for peace. In 1657-1658, there was conflict over succession amongst Shah Jahan's sons. Including Dara Shukoh, were killed. Shah Jahan was imprisoned for the rest of his life in Agra.

**The Administration of Shah Jahan:** Shah Jahan restored the 'Mansabdari' system started by Akbar, which had fallen into disuse in Jahangir's time. He managed to cut the rates of pay of the mansabdars and insisted on a definite number of troops from them.

**The End of Shah Jahan's Rule:** In 1657 CE, Shah Jahan fell seriously ill. His four sons, Dara Shikoh, Shuja, Murad and Aurangzeb, battled for the right to succeed their father. Aurangzeb emerged the winner. The Agra Fort with all its treasures was surrendered to Aurangzeb, who made his father a prisoner for life. Shah Jahan died at the age of 74 in 1666 CE.

**Aurangzeb 1658-1707:**

**Aurangzeb's Empire**

Aurangzeb was almost always at war with one ruler or the other. Aurangzeb spent the first half of his 50 year reign (1658-1682 CE) in the northern territory and the second half (1682-



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1707CE) trying to annex the Deccan. Born in 1618 CE Aurangzeb was the third son of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal. The empire of Aurangzeb was the biggest anyone had ever in India. He ruled for (1658-1707CE) almost 50 years.

**Religious Policy:** Aurangzeb firmly believed that it was his duty to strengthen Islam in the empire. He discontinued the policy of religious tolerance followed by the earlier Mughal rulers. He reimposed the jaziya, the religion tax on non-Muslim that Akbar had abolished.

**Rajput Policy:** Aurangzeb tried to annex their kingdoms and waged several battles against them. As a result, he lost the loyalty and support of the Rajputs. He also lost money, time and many of his generals.

**Deccan Policy:** Aurangzeb spent 26 years of his life and religion in the Deccan, which he could neither control nor ignore. This brought him into direct confrontation with the rising power of the Marathas. Aurangzeb won the kingdoms of Bijapur in 1681 CE however; the victories came at a steep cost. Aurangzeb suffered heavy loss of soldiers and money.

**Aurangzeb and Sikhs:** The execution of the ninth Sikh guru, Guru Teg Bahadur by Aurangzeb made the peace-loving Sikhs take up arms. Under the 10th guru, Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikh fought bitterly against Aurangzeb.

**Mughal Tradition of Succession:** The Mughals did not believe in the rule of primogeniture where the eldest son inherited his father's estate. Instead they followed the Mughal and Timurid custom of coparcenary inheritance, or a division of the inheritance amongst all the sons.

**Mughal Relations with Other Rulers:** Mughal rulers campaigned constantly against rulers who refused to accept their authority. But as the Mughals became powerful many other rulers also joined them voluntarily. The Rajputs are a good example of this. Many of them married their daughters into Mughal families and received high positions. The Sisodia Rajputs refused to accept Mughal authority for a long time. Once defeated, however, they were honorably treated by the Mughals, given their lands back as assignments. The careful balance between defeating but not humiliating their opponents enabled the Mughals to extend their influence over many kings and chieftains.

**Mansabdars and Jagirdars:** As the empire expanded to encompass different regions the Mughals recruited diverse bodies of people. From a small nucleus of Turkish nobles they expanded to include Iranians, Indian Muslims, and Afghans, Rajputs, Marathas and other groups. Those who joined Mughal service were enrolled as mansabdars. The term mansabdar refers to an individual who holds a mansab, meaning a position or rank. It was a grading system used by the Mughals to fix (1) rank, (2) salary and (3) military responsibilities. Rank and salary were determined by a numerical value called zat. The higher the zat, the more prestigious was the noble's position in court and the larger his salary. The mansabdar's military responsibilities required him to maintain a specified number of sawar or cavalrymen. The mansabdar brought his cavalrymen for review, got them registered, and their horses branded and then received money to pay them as salary. Mansabdars received their salaries as revenue assignments called jagirs which were somewhat like iqtas.

**Zabt and Zamindars:** The main source of income available to Mughal rulers was tax on the produce of the peasantry. In most places, peasants paid taxes through the rural elites, that is, the headman or the local chieftain. The Mughals used one term - zamindars - to describe all intermediaries, whether they were local headmen of village or powerful chieftains. Akbar's revenue minister, Todar Mal, carried out a careful survey of crop yields, prices and areas cultivated for a 10-year period, 1570-1580. On the basis of this data, tax was fixed on each crop in cash. Each province was divided into revenue circles with its own schedule of revenue rates for individual crops. This revenue system was known as zabt.