

MEDIEVAL INDIA II

Mughals, Deccan Powers, and an Empire in Crisis

State, Society, Culture, and Political Change from 1526 to
the Eighteenth Century

Gaurav Tiwari

INDIAN HISTORY LIBRARY

Mughals, Deccan Powers, and an Empire in Crisis

State, Society, Culture, and Political Change from
1526 to the Eighteenth Century

Gaurav Tiwari

Indian History Library

Copyright © 2026 Gaurav Tiwari
All rights reserved.

First edition, 2026
Published by Gaurav Tiwari.

This book is an independently written educational synthesis. Historical claims and interpretations should be read with the source note and selected bibliography at the back of the book.

Dedication

For the reader who wants to understand an empire as a system,
not a procession of emperors.

Contents

Dedication	iv
Preface	vii
How to use this book	viii
I Mughal formation and imperial consolidation	1
1 Mughals and Afghans, c. 1526-1555	2
2 Akbar and the Architecture of Empire	17
II Mughal power, regional states, and society	33
3 The Deccan and South India to 1656	34
4 Mughal India in the Early Seventeenth Century	48
5 Economy and Society under Mughal Rule	63
6 Religious Thought, Culture, and Artistic Life	76
III Imperial expansion and regional transformation	87
7 Aurangzeb and the Pressures of Empire	88
8 From Imperial Crisis to Regional Power	105
9 What the Medieval Centuries Changed	123

Source note	131
Selected bibliography	132
About the author	133
Also in the Indian History Library	134

Preface

The Mughal Empire is easy to reduce to biography: Babur won, Humayun lost and returned, Akbar consolidated, Jahangir and Shah Jahan presided, Aurangzeb expanded, and the empire fragmented. That sequence is useful, but it does not explain how imperial authority reached the countryside, why cooperation held, where the system carried strain, or why regional power survived inside and beyond it.

This volume treats the empire as a set of relationships. Military service, rank, revenue, land assignment, court culture, religious policy, trade, regional elites, peasant production, and the Deccan acted on one another. A change in 1 part of that arrangement could travel far beyond the court.

The final chapters do not use decline as a magic word. They separate fiscal pressure, military overextension, succession conflict, noble competition, agrarian strain, regional assertion, and the arrival of new commercial and military powers. Fragmentation changed the scale of politics; it did not empty the subcontinent of institutions or initiative.

Read for the mechanism first. The chapter companions will take care of the dates and names once the structure is visible.

How to use this book

Read the main chapter before opening its companion. On the first pass, follow causation, institutions, and changes in political scale. On the second pass, close the narrative and rebuild the chronology, comparison, or map from memory. Use the answer key only after committing to an answer.

Names and dates are necessary, but they are not the book's organizing principle. Keep asking what changed, what caused it, who carried it, and what survived.

Part I

Mughal formation and imperial consolidation

Mughals and Afghans, c. 1526-1555

Babur's victory at Panipat removed Ibrahim Lodi. It did not settle north India. The early Mughal position depended on a small conquering force facing Afghan resistance, Rajput power, uncertain revenue, and commanders whose loyalty had to be maintained far from the Central Asian world many of them knew.

Humayun's reverses and Sher Shah's rise show how quickly conquest could unravel when territory, finance, military organization, and political alliances failed to reinforce one another. Afghan rule under Sher Shah also left administrative practices that later Mughal government could use. The period is therefore not an interruption between Babur and Akbar. It is the contest that defined what a durable north Indian empire would require.

Central Asia and Babur

Timurid world. After Mongol fragmentation, Timur united Iran and Turan in an empire from the lower Volga to the Indus, including Asia Minor, Iran, Trans-Oxiana, Afghanistan, and part of Punjab. Timur died in 1405; Shahrukh Mirza, who died in 1448, retained much territory and made Samarqand and Herat major cultural centers.

Three-power conflict. Timurid partition and princely warfare weakened the dynasty. Sunni Uzbeks entered Trans-Oxiana, Shi'ite Safavids dominated Iran and persecuted opponents of their tenets, and Ottomans sought eastern Europe, Iraq, and Iran. Po-

litical and sectarian conflict prepared the sixteenth-century contest among three powerful empires.

Babur displaced. Babur inherited Farghana in 1494 at twelve, took Samarqand twice, and quickly lost it both times. Uzbek chief Shaibani Khan defeated him and overran Timurid states, pushing Babur to capture Kabul in 1504. For fourteen years he still hoped to recover his homeland.

Final turn to India. Shah Ismail killed Shaibani near Merv in 1510 and helped Babur return to Samarqand, but Iranian generals treated him as a subordinate governor. Uzbeks recovered; Babur returned to Kabul. Ottoman defeat of Shah Ismail in 1514 left the Uzbeks masters of Trans-Oxiana and ended Babur's realistic western hopes.

Conquest of India

Motives. Babur claimed he had contemplated Hindustan since taking Kabul. India promised wealth; Timur's Punjab annexations supplied a dynastic claim. Abul Fazl says Badakhshan, Qandhar, and Kabul could not fund the army, administration, begs, and kinsmen. India also offered refuge and a base against possible Uzbek attack.

Political opening. Ibrahim Lodi succeeded Sikandar in 1517 and alarmed Afghan chiefs and Rajputs through centralization. Punjab governor Daulat Khan Lodi operated nearly independently while outwardly conciliating Ibrahim and trying to annex frontier tracts.

Early expeditions. Babur took Bhira in 1518-19 and requested former Turkish lands, but Daulat Khan detained his envoy and expelled his agents after Babur left. In 1520-21 Babur retook Bhira, Sialkot, and Lahore, then withdrew to suppress Qandhar's revolt, requiring an eighteen-month siege.

Invitation and Punjab conquest. Daulat Khan's son Dilawar invited Babur to replace the supposedly tyrannical and unsupported Ibrahim; Rana Sanga probably also sent a messenger. In 1525 Daulat switched again and raised a reported 30,000-

40,000 men, but his army dissolved as Babur approached. Within three weeks of crossing the Indus, Babur controlled Punjab.

The Battle of Panipat (20 April 1526)

Forces and defenses. Ibrahim's reported 100,000 men and 1,000 elephants included many servants, while Babur's 12,000 crossing force grew in Punjab but remained smaller. Babur anchored one side on Panipat's houses, protected the other with a branch-filled ditch, and chained carts across the front with firing breastworks between them.

Ottoman method and gunpowder. Babur called the cart defense a **Rumi** method and employed Ottoman master-gunners Ustad Ali and Mustafa. Gunpowder was already known in India; Babur said he first used it at Bhira, while artillery became common in north India after his arrival.

Battle. Ibrahim expected mobile Central Asian warfare and hesitated before Babur's fixed position. Babur's outer wings attacked flank and rear while gunners fired in front; Babur credited bowmen heavily, and Ibrahim apparently had little time to deploy elephants. The two- or three-hour battle killed Ibrahim, his last 5,000-6,000 companions, and over 15,000 men in the chapter's estimate.

Decisive but incomplete. Victory broke Lodi power, delivered Delhi, Agra, and Ibrahim's treasury, relieved Babur's finances, and opened land to Jaunpur. Yet Khanwa and eastern Afghan resistance still remained. Panipat's deepest importance was opening a new phase in north India's struggle for supremacy.

Decision to stay. Heat, distance, hostility, abandoned villages, and memory of Timur discouraged Babur's begs. Babur declared that Indian resources would sustain a real empire, allowed unwilling begs to return, and rejected Kabul's poverty. His permanence, however, made conflict with Rana Sanga unavoidable.

The Battle of Khanwa

Collision with Sanga. Rana Sanga's influence after defeating Mahmud Khalji of Malwa reached Piliya Khar near Agra. Babur accused him of breaking a promise to join against Ibrahim, but the exact agreement is unknown. Sanga may have expected long war or Babur's withdrawal after plunder; Babur's decision to remain transformed the situation.

Coalition and morale. Ibrahim's brother Mahmud Lodi, Hasan Khan Mewati, many Afghans, and almost all notable Rajput rulers joined Sanga. His reputation and success at Bayana demoralized Mughals. Babur proclaimed jihad, destroyed his wine, banned its trade, and abolished customs dues for Muslims to rally them.

Tactics and battle, 1527. At Khanwa, about forty km from Agra, Babur used chained wagons, trench, musketeer gaps, and wheeled tripods. Sanga's claimed 200,000-plus forces may be exaggerated but outnumbered Babur. Rajputs nearly broke his right; artillery, a central counterattack, advancing guns, and flank-rear attacks then encircled and defeated them.

Aftermath. Sanga escaped but was poisoned by nobles who opposed renewed war, ending the project of a united Rajasthan reaching Agra. Babur took Gwalior, Dholpur, much of Alwar, and Chanderi, where Medini Rai's defenders fought to death and women committed jauhar. Eastern Afghan activity then halted further Malwa campaigns.

The Afghans

Eastern Uttar Pradesh Afghan chiefs remained only nominally loyal and received support from Bengal's Nusrat Shah, Ibrahim Lodi's son-in-law. Mahmud Lodi supplied the popular leadership they had lacked and rallied them in Bihar.

In early 1529 Babur crossed the Ganga near Banaras and faced Afghans and Bengal at the Ghagra. He forced retreat but won no decisive victory. Illness and Central Asian anxiety led him to claim vague suzerainty while leaving most Bihar under Afghan

chiefs and making peace with Nusrat Shah.

- Babur died near Lahore shortly afterward while traveling toward Kabul.

Significance of Babur's Advent into India

Frontier, trade, and political balance. For the first time since Kushan decline, Kabul and Qandhar became parts of a north Indian empire, securing invasion routes for almost 200 years and connecting Indian trade with caravans to China and Mediterranean ports. Babur destroyed Lodi and Rana Sanga's confederacy, a major step toward an all-India empire though not its completion.

War and monarchy. Babur demonstrated the combined effect of cavalry and artillery, speeding gunpowder's adoption. Expensive artillery favored resource-rich rulers and ended the age of small states. Timurid descent from Chingiz and Timur and personal military success restored crown prestige that Afghan tribal equality had weakened.

Character and rule. Babur shared soldiers' hardship, as shown by trampling deep snow with them, cared for loyal begs, and combined companionship with strict discipline. He could also be cruel, making skull towers, which the author places within a harsh age. He was an orthodox Sunni but kept his court free of sectarian conflict; Khanwa's jihad and ghazi title were political. Few temple destructions are recorded, and no evidence proves Sambhal or Ayodhya mosques replaced temples.

Culture and state ideal. Learned in Persian and Arabic, Babur was a master Turkish prose writer. His memoir **Tuzuk-i-Baburi**, a masnavi, Sufi translation, detailed natural observations, literary-artistic contacts, and running-water gardens established cultural precedents. His state ideal joined strong crown, limited religious bigotry, and support for fine arts.

Humayun's Conquest of Gujarat and His Tussle with Sher Shah

Inheritance and brothers. Humayun succeeded in December 1530 at twenty-three to unconsolidated administration, weak finances, unsubdued Afghans, and Timurid partition pressure. Kamran held Kabul and Qandhar, then occupied Lahore and Multan. Humayun formally conceded them to avoid civil war; Kamran accepted suzerainty, freeing Humayun temporarily from western defense but encouraging fraternal ambition.

Chunar and Gujarat danger. Humayun defeated Afghans at Dadrah in 1532 and besieged Chunar, gateway between Agra and the east. After four months he let Sher Khan retain it in exchange for loyalty and a son as hostage because Bahadur Shah's expansion demanded attention. Bahadur had taken Malwa and threatened Chittor. The later Rani Karnavati rakhi story lacks contemporary support, although Humayun's move to Gwalior helped induce a treaty and indemnity.

Dinpanah and Bahadur. Humayun's eighteen months of building Dinpanah and holding festivities have been called wasteful or blamed on opium, but the chapter rejects addiction and sees the city as prestige and a possible second capital against Bahadur, who had taken Ajmer and eastern Rajasthan. Bahadur sheltered Mughal enemies and armed Tatar Khan for a 40,000-man Agra invasion; Humayun defeated and killed Tatar.

Conquest. Humayun drove Bahadur from Chittor through Mandsor, Mandu, Champaner, Ahmedabad, and Kathiawar. He personally became the forty-first man scaling Champaner's walls. Malwa, Gujarat, and their treasures fell.

Rapid loss but strategic gain. Humayun left inexperienced Askari in Gujarat amid pro-Gujarati sentiment, divided nobles, uprisings, and Bahadur's revival. Askari withdrew toward Agra, raising fears of usurpation; Humayun pursued and reconciled with him, abandoning both provinces. The campaign added no land but permanently removed Bahadur's threat, which ended fully when Bahadur drowned in a Portuguese shipboard clash.

Sher Khan

Growth during 1535-37. Sher Khan became Bihar's master, united Afghan recruits, professed Mughal loyalty while planning expulsion, and used Bahadur's subsidies to maintain an efficient force including 1,200 elephants. He defeated Bengal and exacted 1,300,000 gold dinars.

Chunar and Bengal. Humayun spent six months taking Chunar despite master-gunner Rumi Khan. Meanwhile Sher seized Rohtas by treachery for his family's safety and captured Bengal's capital Gaur. He offered Bihar plus ten lakh dinars annually if allowed Bengal; sincerity is uncertain. Humayun refused because Bengal was rich in gold, manufacture, and trade and its wounded king still urged resistance.

Isolation. Sher let Humayun enter Bengal, disrupted communications from south Bihar, and trapped him as Hindal attempted to seize Agra. After three to four months restoring order at Gaur, Humayun returned through monsoon, Afghan harassment, and noble discontent to Chausa without major loss, a real achievement. Kamran suppressed Hindal but sent no reinforcements.

Chausa and Kanauj. Misled by peace talks, Humayun crossed to the Karmnasa's eastern bank on bad ground and was surprised in March 1539. A water-carrier helped him escape; about 7,000 soldiers and major nobles died. Kamran refused his 10,000 veterans and withdrew to Lahore amid mutual distrust. Humayun's improvised army lost the bitter Kanauj battle in May 1540 despite Askari and Hindal's courage.

Exile and assessment. Humayun wandered Sindh for two and a half years without support from Sindh rulers or Maldeo; brothers threatened him, but he endured and obtained Iranian help to retake Qandhar and Kabul in 1545. The chapter attributes failure mainly to misunderstanding Afghan capacity to reunite, failure to win zamindars and local rulers, and Sher's superior generalship. Early fraternal conflict and Humayun's character flaws are often exaggerated; he remained competent until the Bengal campaign. Sur breakup enabled his Delhi recovery in 1555, but he soon died falling from his Delhi library. His wife's nearby mausoleum, with

a great marble dome, opened a new architectural phase.

Sher Shah and the Sur Empire (1540-55)

Rise. Born Farid to a small Jaunpur jagirdar, Sher Shah learned administration managing his father's estate. After Ibrahim Lodi's fall he rose among Afghan sardars, gained the title Sher Khan for killing a tiger or for service, and became Bihar's effective master before Babur died.

Empire and Malwa. At about fifty-four he ruled the strongest north Indian empire since Muhammad bin Tughlaq, from Bengal to the Indus excluding Kashmir, plus Malwa and almost all Rajasthan. His betrayal of Puran Mai and about 1,000 Rajputs with families after sworn safe conduct remains a blot; theologians justified it through religion and alleged oppression. The chapter first associates the episode with Chanderi and later names Raisen, so its own place labels differ.

Samel, 1544. Marwar ruler Maldeo had united western and northern Rajasthan, taken Ajmer with Bhati help and Bikaner after resistance, and alarmed Delhi through eastern Rajasthan competition, though no evidence shows designs on Delhi or Agra. At Samel, Maldeo sought a defensible retreat because Sher's camp and artillery were strong. Divided honor codes and Sher's forged-letter ruse led Maldeo to withdraw most troops. About 10,000 Rajputs attacked, confused Sher's center, but Afghan numbers and gunfire defeated them.

Final expansion and death. Sher took Ajmer and Jodhpur; Maldeo withdrew to Siwana and died later. Mewar surrendered Chittor's keys, and Afghan posts reached Mount Abu. Almost all Rajasthan fell in ten months. At Kalinjar a gun burst wounded Sher; he died in 1545 after hearing the fort had fallen.

Sur succession. Islam Shah, Sher's capable second son, ruled to 1553 but spent his energy on brothers, Afghan tribal feuds, and fear of Mughal return. Civil war after his death let Humayun defeat Afghans in two hard battles in 1555 and recover Delhi and Agra.

Contribution of Sher Shah

Order, roads, and sarais. Sur rule continued and culminated Delhi Sultanate institutions, with Babur-Humayun as an interregnum in this interpretation. Sher punished robbers and rebellious revenue-holding zamindars. He restored the Grand Trunk Road from Indus to Sonargaon, built Agra-Jodhpur-Chittor and Lahore-Multan roads, and reportedly erected 1,700 fortified sarais every two kos, about eight km. Separate Hindu-Muslim lodgings, Brahman service, government provisions by rank, watchmen under a shahna, supporting village lands, market-town growth, and dak-chowki stages made them the empire's arteries.

Trade and currency. Customs were collected only at Sikri-gali for eastern goods and at the Indus for western goods, then again upon sale, not at intermediate roads, ferries, or towns. Officials had to protect merchants and estates; muqaddams and zamindars were held responsible for road theft or murder, a barbarous but reportedly effective collective-liability rule. Uniform gold, silver, and copper replaced debased mixed coins; the silver rupee remained a standard for centuries, while standard weights helped commerce.

Administrative structure and its limit. Villages formed a **pargana** under a law-and-order **shiqdar** and revenue **munsif or amil**, with accounts in Persian and Hindavi. Above stood **shiq or sarkar**, under a **shiqdar-i-shiqdaran or faujdar** and **munsif-i-munsifan**. Provinces sometimes grouped sarkars, but their number and form are unclear; governors could be powerful and Bengal tribal chiefs retained real authority. Sher kept Sultanate central machinery, distrusted ministerial power, worked and toured constantly, but excessive personal centralization became a weakness after his death.

Land revenue. Sown land was measured rather than guessed or physically divided. A crop-rate schedule or **ray** set dues, convertible to cash at local market rates. Good, bad, and middling land yields were averaged; the state took one-third, with cash or kind allowed but cash preferred. A **patta** recorded area, crop, and liability; unauthorized extras were barred, measurement

fees fixed, and a famine cess of two and a half seers per bigha imposed. Sher warned that oppressed cultivators would desert and ruin the country.

Army and justice. Sher replaced tribal levies with directly recruited, verified soldiers; **chehra** rolls identified men and **dagh** branded horses, borrowing Alauddin Khalji’s system. Reported forces included 150,000 cavalry, 25,000 matchlock-or-bow infantry, 5,000 elephants, artillery, cantonments, and garrisons. Qazis, village panchayats, and zamindars dispensed justice, and Sher claimed not to spare nobles, tribesmen, or relatives. Islam Shah later codified law, curbed nobles, and tried cash military pay, but his rules died with him.

Culture, religion, and limits. Sher’s Sasaram tomb culminated an older architecture and anticipated a new one; his Yamuna city survives in Delhi’s Purana Qila and mosque. He patronized learning; the source names Malik Muhammad Jaisi’s **Pudmauat** among Hindi works completed then. He and Islam Shah respected but did not depend on ulama and were not presented as bigots, yet religious slogans justified Puran Mai’s murder, jizyah continued, and nobility remained almost entirely Afghan. The Sur state was still racial-tribal; fundamental change came only with Akbar.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1405	Timur died.	His empire survived partly under Shahrukh.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1448	Shahrukh died.	Timurid partition and decline accelerated.
1494	Babur inherited Farghana at twelve.	Start of his struggle for Samarqand.
1504	Babur conquered Kabul.	Created his durable base.
1510	Shah Ismail killed Shaibani near Merv.	Briefly reopened Samarqand to Babur.
1514	Ottomans defeated Shah Ismail.	Uzbeks remained masters of Trans-Oxiana.
1517	Ibrahim succeeded Sikandar Lodi.	Centralization split Afghan power.
1518-19	Babur took Bhira.	First firm Punjab claim and gunpowder use.
1520-21	Bhira, Sialkot, Lahore taken; Babur returned to Qandhar.	Gateways opened but western security intervened.
1525	Babur mastered Punjab.	Immediate prelude to Delhi conflict.
20 April 1526	First battle of Panipat.	Lodi power broken; Delhi and Agra opened.
1527	Battle of Khanwa.	Rajput-Afghan coalition defeated.
Early 1529	Ghagra campaign.	Eastern Afghans checked, not decisively conquered.
December 1530	Humayun succeeded Babur.	Inherited unstable finance, family, and Afghan problems.
1532	Dadrah victory and first Chunar siege.	Sher Khan retained the strategic fort.
February 1535-February 1537	Humayun's Malwa-Gujarat campaign.	Bahadur threat destroyed but provinces lost.
March 1539	Chausa.	Sher Khan destroyed a badly positioned Mughal army.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
May 1540	Kanauj.	Humayun lost his kingdom; Sur rule began.
1544	Battle of Samel.	Sher Shah defeated major Rajput resistance.
1545	Sher Shah died; Humayun retook Qandhar and Kabul.	Sur expansion stopped; Mughal recovery base restored.
1553	Islam Shah died.	Sur civil war followed.
1555	Humayun recovered Delhi and Agra.	Sur fragmentation enabled Mughal restoration.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Timurid, Uzbek, Safavid, and Ottoman	Babur was Timurid; Uzbeks displaced him; Safavids briefly aided him; Ottoman victory secured Uzbek Trans-Oxiana.
Panipat and Khanwa	Panipat broke Lodi rule in 1526; Khanwa defeated a broader Rajput-Afghan challenge in 1527.
Decisive battle and completed conquest	Panipat opened Delhi-Agra but did not remove Rana Sanga or eastern Afghans.
Gunpowder knowledge and effective combination	India knew gunpowder earlier; Babur popularized coordinated artillery, field defense, archery, and cavalry.
Rana Sanga invitation and proven agreement	Babur says Sanga invited him, but the exact promises and Sanga’s expectations remain unknown.
Jihad language and religious cause	Babur used jihad to rally troops; the chapter treats the conflict’s reasons as political.

Often confused	The distinction
Karnavati rakhi and contemporary evidence	Later legend says she sought Humayun's help; no contemporary author records it.
Winning Gujarat and holding Gujarat	Humayun's campaign was militarily brilliant but collapsed without local support and unified command.
Chausa and Kanauj	Chausa in 1539 exposed Humayun's bad positioning; Kanauj in 1540 ended his rule in India.
Humayun's brothers as original cause and later rupture	Brothers generally served early; serious breakdown followed Sher's victories and mutual distrust.
Chanderi and Raisen in Puran Mai episode	The source first associates Puran Mai with Chanderi but later names Raisen; do not silently collapse the inconsistency.
Sher Khan and Sher Shah	Sher Khan was Farid's title during his rise; Sher Shah was his sovereign title after taking Delhi.
Pargana and sarkar	Villages formed a pargana; several parganas formed a higher shiq or sarkar.
Shiqdar and munsif or amil	Shiqdar handled order and administration; munsif or amil collected revenue.
Ray and patta	Ray was the crop-rate schedule; patta recorded a cultivator's land, crop, and payment.
Chehra and dagh	Chehra recorded the soldier; dagh branded the horse.
Administrative achievement and liberal transformation	Sher improved government but retained jizyah, Afghan dominance, and political religious slogans.

Self-test

1. How did Uzbek, Safavid, and Ottoman conflict redirect Babur toward India?
2. What economic, dynastic, strategic, and political motives drew Babur into Punjab?
3. Which field arrangements and combat arms produced Babur's Panipat victory?
4. Why was Panipat decisive yet insufficient for consolidation?
5. What made the Khanwa coalition dangerous, and how did Babur defeat it?
6. Identify four long-term consequences of Babur's advent beyond battlefield victory.
7. Why did Humayun win Gujarat and Malwa but fail to retain them?
8. How did Sher Khan use Chunar, Rohtas, Bengal, and communications to outmaneuver Humayun?
9. Why did Chausa and Kanauj end Mughal rule temporarily?
10. What happened at Samel, and how did it transform Rajasthan?
11. Explain the functions of the Grand Trunk Road, sarais, rupee, ray, patta, chehra, and dagh.
12. What achievements and limitations must be balanced in an assessment of Sher Shah?

Answer key

1. Uzbeks expelled Babur from Samarqand; Safavid aid briefly restored him, but Ottoman defeat of Shah Ismail left Uzbeks dominant and ended his western prospects.
2. India's wealth, Timurid Punjab claims, inadequate Kabul revenue, need to reward begs, Uzbek danger, Lodi-Afghan division, and invitations from Daulat Khan and probably Sanga all mattered.
3. Panipat's houses and ditch guarded flanks; chained carts and breastworks protected guns; Ottoman gunners fired frontally while bowmen and cavalry wings attacked flank and rear.
4. It destroyed Lodi power and opened Delhi-Agra, but Rana Sanga's coalition and eastern Afghans still required separate

campaigns.

5. Sanga united leading Rajputs with Afghans and threatened Babur's permanent empire; Babur restored morale, entrenched, and combined artillery, center attack, and encircling cavalry.
6. Any four: Kabul-Qandhar security, stronger trans-Asian trade, broken Lodi-Rajput balance, artillery-cavalry warfare, restored crown prestige, limited sectarianism, literary-naturalist culture, or garden tradition.
7. Askari was inexperienced, nobles divided, people remained attached to Gujarat, Bahadur revived, and Humayun abandoned the provinces to prevent fraternal usurpation.
8. Sher delayed Humayun at Chunar, secured Rohtas, took Gaur, let Humayun advance, controlled south Bihar, cut Agra communications, and harassed the return.
9. At Chausa Humayun chose bad ground and was surprised; afterward brotherly distrust denied him veteran troops, and Sher's stronger army won Kanauj.
10. Maldeo withdrew most troops after strategic caution, divided counsel, and Sher's letter ruse; remaining Rajputs were defeated by Afghan numbers and guns, opening almost all Rajasthan.
11. Roads and sarais carried trade, travelers, and news; rupee standardized exchange; ray fixed crop rates; patta recorded dues; chehra identified soldiers; dagh branded horses.
12. Balance order, roads, trade, currency, revenue, army, justice, architecture, and learning against betrayal, harsh collective liability, overcentralization, jizyah, and Afghan exclusiveness.

Closing perspective

Babur's conquest arose from Central Asian defeat as much as Indian opportunity. The loss of Samarqand, poverty of Kabul, Punjab claims, Uzbek fear, and Lodi division converged. Panipat and Khanwa demonstrate adaptation rather than single-weapon superiority: carts, terrain, trenches, artillery, archers, cavalry movement, and morale worked as one system.

Akbar and the Architecture of Empire

Akbar inherited a restored throne, not a finished empire. Consolidation required military expansion, control of the nobility, a revenue system that could support the state, relations with Rajput rulers and other regional elites, and a political language broad enough to hold a diverse ruling class together.

The achievement was architectural in the institutional sense. Mansab, jagir, revenue assessment, provincial government, court service, alliance, and imperial ideology formed a structure in which each part supported the others. That structure still carried conflict and exclusion, but it gave Mughal authority a reach that victory alone could not provide.

Opening frame: accession and Hemu

Akbar was born at Amarkot in 1542 after its rana sheltered Humayun. Captured as a child by uncle Kamran, he rejoined his parents after Qandhar's capture. Humayun's death found Akbar at Kalanaur commanding against Afghan rebels; he was crowned there in 1556.

His position was precarious: Sikandar Sur remained in the Siwaliks, Kabul was threatened, and Adil Shah dominated Chunar to Bengal. Bairam Khan became wakil and Khan-i-Khanan and treated Adil's brilliant wazir Hemu as the chief danger.

Hemu, former market superintendent under Islam Shah, reportedly won twenty-two battles, took Agra and Delhi and ad-

vanced with 50,000 cavalry, 500 elephants and artillery. At Panipat on 5 November 1556, after earlier artillery loss, his side was winning until an arrow blinded and incapacitated him; the leaderless army collapsed and Hemu was executed.

Early phase: contest with the nobility (1556-67)

Bairam's fall. For almost four years Bairam controlled nobles and expanded from Kabul to Jaunpur and Ajmer. Complaints that his Shia identity shaped appointments were not intrinsically serious because he was religiously liberal, but arrogance and friction persuaded Akbar to dismiss him by farman. Humiliation drove a six-month rebellion; after surrender Akbar offered service, outside office or Mecca. Bairam chose Mecca and was killed at Patan by an Afghan with a personal grudge.

Generosity after submission. Akbar married Bairam's widowed cousin and raised her child Abdur Rahim as his own; he later became Khan-i-Khanan. The episode exemplifies Akbar's combination of fixed resolve with generosity after defeat.

Court factions. Foster-mother Maham Anaga briefly entered politics. Her son Adham Khan, removed after independent behaviour in Malwa, murdered the acting wazir and was thrown from the fort parapet in 1561.

Uzbek-Mirza crisis. Uzbeks commanding eastern U.P., Bihar and Malwa rebelled repeatedly from 1561 to 1567; Timurid Mirzas disrupted the west, while half-brother Mirza Hakim besieged Lahore and was proclaimed by Uzbek rebels. Akbar forced Hakim back, crushed the Mirzas and surprised Uzbeks after a rainy-season Yamuna crossing in 1567, killing their leaders and securing noble obedience.

Early expansion of the empire (1560-76)

Malwa. Musical-poetic ruler Baz Bahadur neglected his army and lost to Adham Khan in 1561. Rupmati killed herself rather than enter his haram. Mughal cruelty enabled Baz to recover briefly, but a later expedition drove him out; he eventually joined Akbar as a mansabdar, traditionally reaching rank 2000.

Garh-Katanga. Sangram Shah had united Gond and Rajput principalities and allied by marriage to Chandels. Reported forces of 20,000 cavalry, large infantry and 1,000 elephants are explicitly uncertain. Widow Durgavati ruled for her minor son, fought neighbours and became famous as hunter and marksman.

Conquest and correction. Allahabad governor Asaf Khan invaded with 10,000 cavalry, encouraged by wealth and beauty stories. Semi-independent chiefs deserted Durgavati; she died by her own hand when capture threatened. Chauragarh's plunder was vast, but Asaf sent only 200 elephants and kept the rest. Akbar later forced restitution and restored Chandra Shah, retaining ten forts to round off Malwa.

Outcome. These campaigns combined imperial expansion with noble cupidity and uncontrolled violence, problems Akbar then had to discipline through stronger central institutions.

Rajasthan and Gujarat

Chittor and Rajput submission. Chittor controlled central Rajasthan and the short Agra-Gujarat route and symbolised resistance. After six months it fell in 1568; Udai Singh had withdrawn, leaving Jaimal and Patta. Peasant and warrior defenders, stated as 30,000, were massacred in Akbar's first and last such carnage. He nevertheless honoured Jaimal and Patta with elephant-mounted statues at Agra. Ranthambhor then fell; Jodhpur had already been taken, and most rajas submitted except Mewar.

Gujarat, 1572-73. Fertility, crafts, import-export trade, Humayun's former rule and rebel Mirza refuge made Gujarat vi-

tal. Ahmedabad surrendered in 1572. Akbar defeated Mirzas at Broach, Baroda and Surat, first saw the sea at Cambay and met Portuguese merchants. A small 200-man charge with Man Singh and Bhagwant Das routed the Mirzas.

Rapid return. Gujarat rebelled after Akbar left. He crossed Rajasthan from Agra in nine days and reached Ahmedabad on the eleventh, compared with a normal six weeks; only 3,000 soldiers kept pace, yet defeated a reported 20,000 in 1573.

Bengal-Bihar, 1576. Afghan ruler Daud Khan's independence gave Akbar cause to move with a boat flotilla. Reported Afghan numbers were 40,000 cavalry, 150,000 infantry, guns, elephants and war boats; leadership and organisation favoured Mughals. Patna secured communications, Munim Khan continued the campaign, and Daud was defeated and executed in 1576, ending the last northern Afghan kingdom.

Administration

From Sher Shah to dahsala. Sher Shah's measured crop rates and central prices burdened peasants because court prices exceeded countryside prices. Annual reports by qanungos also failed through concealment and instability. After 1573, karoris each collected one crore dams, stated as Rs 250,000, and checked data. In 1580 dahsala averaged ten years of output and local prices; one-third average produce became a cash demand per bigha.

Zabti and local adjustment. Parganas with similar productivity formed assessment circles; bamboo rods joined by iron rings measured sowing. Drought and flood brought remission. Zabti meant measurement-based assessment, while dahsala developed it; it applied from Lahore to Allahabad and in Malwa and Gujarat.

Alternative systems. Batai or ghalla-bakhshi physically divided crop after threshing, stacking or while standing; it was fair but required many honest officials. Peasants sometimes chose zabti or batai, especially after crop loss, and could pay batai in

cash or kind, though cotton, indigo, oilseed and sugarcane dues were cash. Nasaq or kankut is disputed: either calculation from past dues or rough crop-plus-experience appraisal of a village.

Land and cultivation. Polaj was regularly cultivated, parati fallow, chachar fallow two to three years and banjar longer. Concessional assessment brought chachar and banjar gradually to full polaj rate by the fifth or eighth year. Land was also good, middling or bad; actual demand varied by productivity and method.

Rights and limits. Amils were to act paternally, offer taccavi loans for seed, animals and implements, encourage superior crops and cooperate with zamindars. Zamindars had hereditary shares; paying peasants had hereditary cultivation rights. Dahsala was neither a ten-year nor permanent settlement. Todar Mal was one brilliant member of a revenue team, so calling it only his bandobast obscures collective work.

Mansabdari system and the army

Rank. Every officer held a mansab, initially 10 to 5,000 for nobles, with blood princes higher. Late in Akbar's reign 7,000 became the noble maximum for Man Singh and Aziz Koka. In 1594-95 rank split into zat, determining personal status and salary, and sawar, determining cavalry quota; three categories depended on whether sawar equalled zat, reached at least half, or fell below half.

Inspection and composition. Chehra recorded soldiers, dagh branded horses and contingents faced periodic inspection. Ideally ten cavalymen required twenty horses, since one-horse men counted as half sawars. Mixed Mughal, Pathan, Hindustani and Rajput contingents weakened tribalism, though exclusive Mughal and Rajput contingents were initially allowed.

Pay and jagir. A sawar averaged Rs 20 monthly and infantry about Rs 3; Iranis and Turanis received more than Rajputs and Hindustanis. Soldiers' cost entered the mansabdar's salary, usually met from jagir revenue but sometimes cash. A jagir transferred only state revenue, not hereditary ownership or existing

rights.

Hierarchy and mobility. Below 500 zat were mansabdars, 500 to below 2,500 amirs, and 2,500-plus amir-i-umda; usage could call all mansabdars. Higher officers could command lower-ranking nobles. Promotion or demotion depended on merit and favour, and civilians and soldiers belonged to one service, opening careers to talent. Possible roots lay in Chinggis Khan's decimal organisation, Sultanate sadis and hazaras and Sur ranks, but no exact external parallel existed.

Military machine. A 5,000-zat noble owed 340 horses, 100 elephants, 400 camels, 100 mules and 160 carts. Salaries were exceptionally high: monthly Rs 30,000 at 5,000, Rs 17,000 at 3,000 and Rs 8,200 at 1,000; transport took about one-quarter. Ahadi gentleman troopers kept eight to ten horses and earned about Rs 800 monthly. Artillery ranged from detachable guns to oxen-hauled siege pieces; eastern war boats exceeded 30 metres and 350 tons. Whether Akbar planned a navy is unknown.

Organization of government

Local structure. Sarkar and pargana continued. Faujdar maintained order; amalguzar assessed and collected revenue. Khalisa income went to treasury, jagir revenue to nobles and royal family, and inam to learned or religious recipients. The amalguzar supervised uniform rules, while autonomous rajas retained traditional systems but were encouraged toward imperial norms.

Central checks. Akbar reduced wakil to a decorative post after Bairam's all-powerful example. Diwan or diwan-i-ala, preferred to wazir, controlled income, expenditure and all land categories but was not chief noble. Mir bakhshi headed nobility, mansab recommendations, intelligence barids and waqia-navis; diwan confirmed appointment finance and jagir, making the two offices mutual checks.

Household and justice. Mir saman managed palace supply, karkhanas, etiquette and bodyguard. Chief qazi headed justice and could combine chief sadr control of charitable-religious

grants. Abdun Nabi's corruption discredited this concentration.

Grant policy and access. Akbar separated inam from other land and made six grant circles. Inams went across religions, including Hindu maths, and half had to be cultivable waste to encourage expansion. Daily jharoka, diwan-i-am and ministerial meetings in the ghusal khana made petitions and consultation regular.

Provincial system. In 1580 the empire had twelve subas: Bengal, Bihar, Allahabad, Awadh, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Multan, Kabul, Ajmer, Malwa and Gujarat. Each had subedar, diwan, bakhshi, sadr, qazi and waqia-navis, extending checks and balances beyond the centre.

Relations with the Rajputs

Alliance model. Humayun had begun matrimonial conciliation; Akbar broadened it. Amber's Bhara Mal impressed him and in 1562 married daughter Harkha Bai to Akbar. Unlike many earlier alliances, she retained religious freedom and her family gained lasting honour: Bhara Mal became grandee, Bhagwant Das rank 5,000 and Man Singh 7,000. Yet marriage was never compulsory; Hadas, Sirohi and Banswara gained favour without it.

Mewar and Haldighati. Rana Pratap succeeded Udai Singh in 1572. Embassies by Man Singh, Bhagwant Das and Todar Mal failed over personal homage and Chittor, but the alleged insult to Man Singh is explicitly rejected. At Haldighati in 1576, Man Singh's 5,000 faced a stated 3,000 with Rajputs, Hakim Khan Sur's Afghans and Bhils. Initial Mughal disorder reversed with reinforcement; Pratap escaped and shifted from pitched battle to guerrilla war. Mixed forces disprove religious or nationalist framing.

Isolation and recovery. Mughal treaties detached Dungarpur, Banswara and Sirohi; Kumbhalgarh and Udaipur fell, but Bhils sustained Pratap. Eastern revolt after 1579 and Akbar's twelve-year Lahore stay from 1585 eased pressure. Pratap recovered much land and built Chavand but not Chittor; he died in 1597,

aged 51, from injury while drawing a bow.

Marwar and personal ties. After Maldeo's 1562 death, Chandrasen resisted direct Mughal rule and died in 1581. Akbar gave Jodhpur to brother Udai Singh; daughter Jagat Gosain or Jodha Bai married Salim with barat and Hindu rites. Bikaner and Bundi rulers also served; Akbar personally consoled Rai Singh in 1593 and stopped his widowed daughter from sati.

Results and continuation. Rajput service supplied loyal warriors, peace and governors for Lahore, Bihar, Bengal, Agra, Ajmer and Gujarat; rajas gained mansabs and jagirs while retaining kingdoms. Jahangir later settled Mewar: after campaigns and devastation, Karan Singh received 5,000 rank and 1,500 sawars, all territory including Chittor returned, Rana Amar Singh avoided personal homage, and Chittor fortifications remained unrepaired.

Rebellions and further expansion of the Mughal empire

Eastern revolt, 1580-81. Dagh enforcement, jagir income audits, resumed revenue-free grants, liberal religion and Afghan resentment combined with regional independence. Rebels took Bengal and most of Bihar, reached Jaunpur, proclaimed Mirza Hakim and secured a fatwa against Akbar.

Recovery. Todar Mal restored the east, while Man Singh and Bhagwant Das held Lahore against Hakim's 15,000 horses. Akbar approached with 50,000; Hakim withdrew. Akbar entered Kabul in 1581 and, when Hakim refused suzerainty, entrusted it to his sister, symbolising liberal breadth.

Northwest frontier. Abdullah Uzbek took Badakhshan in 1584; after Hakim died, Akbar moved to Attok and sent Man Singh to Kabul. Kashmir fell in 1586, including Ladakh and Baltistan or Tibet Khurd and Buzurg; Baluchistan and Khyber expeditions followed, and Birbal died against tribesmen. Sindh's 1590 conquest opened Indus trade; Akbar stayed at Lahore until Abdullah's death in 1598 removed the Uzbek danger.

Further integration. Man Singh conquered Afghan Orissa, Cooch-Bihar and east Bengal including Dacca; Aziz Koka took Kathiawar. Munim Khan and prince Murad moved into the Deccan, and by the century's turn Mughal power reached Ahmadnagar and first directly encountered Marathas. North India was politically integrated as Deccan penetration began.

Towards integration: state, religion and social reforms

Equal civic foundation. Earlier translations, liberal rulers and saints Kabir, Chaitanya and Nanak prepared the climate. Akbar abolished jizyah, pilgrim taxes at Prayag and Banaras and forced conversion of war prisoners, then recruited competent Hindus such as Todar Mal, Birbal and Rai Patr Das or Rai Bikramajit.

Sulh-kul and religious authority. Abul Fazl linked true sovereignty to divine illumination or farr-i-izadi, paternal love, attention to all ranks and prevention of sectarian strife. Akbar moved from deference to chief sadr Abdun Nabi toward mysticism and liberal companions Abul Fazl, Faizi and Birbal. Sulh-kul meant peace and equal regard for all.

Ibadat Khana and mahzar. Founded at Fatehpur Sikri in 1575, the prayer hall first exposed Muslim theologians' quarrels, then admitted Christians, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jains and atheists. Wider debate produced bitterness and rumours, not concord; Akbar ended it in 1582. Corrupt, tyrannical Abdun Nabi lost grant power and office. The mahzar let Akbar choose among conflicting qualified Quranic interpretations for public benefit; calling it a "Decree of Infallibility" is wrong.

Continuing inquiry. Purushottam and Devi explained Hinduism, Maharji Rana Zoroastrianism, Aquaviva and Monserrate Christianity, and Hira Vijaya Suri Jainism. Portuguese missionaries stayed almost three years but had no realistic prospect of converting Akbar. Dialogue with Sufis and yogis led him to see truth across religions.

Tauhid, translation and reform. Badayuni’s claim of a composite new religion is rejected. Tauhid-i-Ilahi was a voluntary Sufi-like order without scripture, priesthood or worship place; about eighteen trusted nobles were distinct from thousands of murids, and only Birbal among great Hindu nobles joined. Badayuni linked discipleship and pabos to flatterers calling Akbar the Perfect Man; tauhid died with Akbar, though Jahangir briefly continued murid initiation. Translation covered Singhasan Battisi, Atharva Veda, Bible, Mahabharata, Gita, Ramayana, Panchatantra, geography and Quran. Sati limits, widow remarriage, monogamy preference, ages 14 and 16, restricted alcohol and a moral, mathematical and secular curriculum had limited effects; patronage created the court’s celebrated navaratna.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1542	Akbar born at Amarkot.	Rajput shelter forms part of his early background.
1556	Crowned at Kalanaur, aged thirteen years four months.	Inherited a precarious, contested empire.
5 November 1556	Hemu defeated at second Panipat.	Effective Mughal reconquest.
AD 1556-67	Contest with nobility.	Akbar replaced regency with personal monarchy.
1561	Adham Khan killed; Baz Bahadur defeated in Malwa.	Court discipline and first major expansion.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
AD 1561-67	Repeated Uzbek rebellions.	Final defeat broke a powerful noble bloc.
1562	Bhara Mal alliance; Maldeo died.	Rajput integration and Marwar succession issue.
1564	Jizyah abolished.	Removed a major civic-religious distinction.
1567	Uzbek leaders routed after Akbar's Yamuna crossing.	Freed emperor for expansion.
1568	Chittor fell after six-month siege.	Key symbolic-strategic Rajput victory.
1572	Rana Pratap succeeded; Akbar entered Gujarat.	Mewar resistance and maritime expansion began together.
1573	Akbar's rapid Gujarat return; personal revenue reform attention.	Demonstrated mobility and began deeper fiscal reconstruction.
1575	Ibadat Khana founded.	Organised Akbar's interfaith inquiry.
1576	Haldighati; Daud Khan defeated and executed.	Isolated Mewar and ended last northern Afghan kingdom.
After 1579	Pressure on Rana Pratap relaxed due eastern crisis.	Enabled Mewar territorial recovery.
1580	Dahsala and twelve-subas arrangement; eastern rebellion began.	Administrative consolidation provoked resistance.
AD 1580-81	Bengal-Bihar rebellion.	Most serious test of Akbar's mature system.
1581	Akbar marched to Kabul.	Defeated Mirza Hakim's challenge.
1582	Ibadat Khana debates ended.	Formal debates had increased bitterness.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1584	Abdullah Uzbek conquered Badakhshan.	Renewed northwest danger.
1585-98	Akbar based at Lahore for twelve years.	Sustained northwest consolidation.
1586	Kashmir conquered.	Blocked approaches to Kabul and extended Himalayan control.
1590	Sindh conquered.	Opened Indus trade for Punjab.
1593	Akbar prevented Rai Singh's daughter from sati.	Concrete social-reform intervention.
AD 1594-95	Mansab split into zat and sawar.	Clarified status and military obligation.
1597	Rana Pratap died aged 51.	Ended his personal resistance, not Mewar dispute.
1598	Abdullah Uzbek died.	Removed northwest Uzbek threat.
By turn of century	Mughal control reached Ahmadnagar.	Began direct Mughal-Maratha contact.
1605 onward	Jahangir pursued Mewar settlement.	Continued Akbar's Rajput policy.
1613	Jahangir directed Mewar campaign from Ajmer.	Led toward honourable accommodation.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Inheritance and reconquest	Akbar inherited Humayun's claim but had to retake Delhi from Hemu.
Bairam's Shia identity and his dismissal	Sectarian complaints existed, but arrogance and adult Akbar's sovereignty drove the rupture.

Often confused	The distinction
Imperial conquest and commander's plunder	Garh-Katanga was conquered, but Akbar forced Asaf Khan to surrender illegal personal gains.
Zabti and dahsala	Zabti was measurement-based assessment; dahsala used ten-year average produce and prices as its developed form.
Batai and nasaq	Batai divided actual crop; nasaq was rough computation whose exact meaning remains debated.
Dahsala and ten-year settlement	Ten years supplied averages; the settlement itself was neither fixed for ten years nor permanent.
Zat and sawar	Zat fixed status and pay; sawar fixed cavalry quota.
Mansab and jagir	Mansab was rank and obligation; jagir was a transferable revenue assignment, not ownership.
Diwan and mir bakhshi	Diwan handled finance; mir bakhshi headed nobility, appointments and intelligence. They checked each other.
Rajput alliance and compulsory marriage	Marriage strengthened some ties but was not required for high service or favour.
Haldighati and communal war	Both armies included multiple religious and ethnic groups; the conflict concerned sovereignty.
Rana Pratap's tactical recovery and strategic outcome	He recovered much hill territory but never Chittor and did not reverse most Rajput acceptance of Akbar.
Mahzar and infallibility	It authorised selection among qualified conflicting interpretations, not unlimited religious authority.
Tauhid-i-Ilahi and a new religion	It lacked scripture, priests and worship place and was a voluntary Sufi-like order.

Often confused	The distinction
Trusted group and murids	About eighteen intimate adherents were distinct from thousands enrolled as personal disciples.

Self-test

1. Why does the chapter describe Akbar as virtually reconquering his empire in 1556?
2. How did Akbar combine severity and conciliation in his struggle with nobles?
3. What did the Malwa and Garh-Katanga campaigns reveal about uncontrolled commanders?
4. Why were Chittor, Gujarat and Patna strategically important to early expansion?
5. Explain the relationship among dahsala, zabti, batai and nasaq.
6. How did land classification and taccavi connect revenue with agrarian growth?
7. How did zat, sawar, chehra and dagh make mansabdari accountable?
8. What checks prevented Akbar's central government from reverting to an all-powerful wazir?
9. Why was Akbar's Rajput alliance more durable than earlier matrimonial alliances?
10. Why should Haldighati not be treated as a communal or national war?
11. What caused the 1580-81 revolt, and why was its defeat significant?
12. Distinguish sulh-kul, the mahzar and tauhid-i-Ilahi.

Answer key

1. Afghan power survived Humayun, Hemu captured Agra and Delhi and the Mughals had lost a battle near Delhi. Panipat

defeated Hemu's army and restored Mughal control, making accession effectively a reconquest.

2. He dismissed Bairam firmly, killed Adham for murder and destroyed repeated Uzbek rebellion, yet pardoned submission, offered Bairam honourable choices and raised Bairam's family. Severity enforced sovereignty; conciliation converted defeated opponents.
3. Adham's cruelty helped Baz recover Malwa, while Asaf Khan retained most Garh plunder. Akbar had to replace or discipline commanders and restore Chandra Shah, showing conquest required central accountability to become stable rule.
4. Chittor symbolised resistance and controlled the Agra-Gujarat route; Gujarat supplied trade, crafts and sea access and sheltered Mirzas; Patna secured Mughal communication in Bihar before the Bengal campaign.
5. Zabti assessed measured cultivation; dahsala developed it with ten-year average output and prices. Batai divided actual crop, while nasaq or kankut estimated dues from past payments or appraisal. Conditions determined use.
6. Lower rates gradually returned chachar and banjar to full polaj cultivation. Taccavi loans financed seed, animals and implements, while protected peasant cultivation rights and zamindar cooperation supported expansion.
7. Zat set personal rank and salary; sawar set cavalry requirement. Chehra identified soldiers and dagh branded horses, while inspection verified that mansabdars maintained the quality and number claimed.
8. Wakil became decorative; diwan controlled finance, mir bakhshi appointments and intelligence, mir saman household, and qazi-sadr justice and grants. Appointment and jagir steps required cooperation, producing mutual checks.
9. Hindu wives kept religion and family ties; relatives received honoured mansabs and commands; marriage was not compulsory; rajas retained autonomy and hereditary kingdoms while gaining jagirs and imperial careers.
10. Pratap's force included Hakim Khan Sur's Afghans and Bhils, while the Mughal side included Rajput leaders. The issue was

Mewar's submission, personal homage and Chittor, not religion or foreign nationality.

11. Dagh, jagir audits, resumed grants, religious opposition, Afghan resentment and regional autonomy drove rebellion. Todar Mal and Rajput commanders defeated it, proving the new administrative-military structure could survive coordinated resistance.
12. Sulh-kul was equal peace and respect as state policy. The mahzar let Akbar choose among conflicting qualified interpretations for public benefit. Tauhid-i-Ilahi was a small voluntary Sufi-like ethical order, not a new state religion.

Closing perspective

Akbar's consolidation moved through three linked stages: personal control over nobles, territorial expansion and institutional regularisation. Each stage created the conditions for the next. Revenue policy sought predictability rather than a single method. Local prices, crop failure, different land histories and peasant choice explain why dahsala, zabti, batai and nasaq coexisted.

Part II

Mughal power, regional states, and society

The Deccan and South India to 1656

The Deccan joined north and south without belonging wholly to either political field. Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda, Vijayanagara's successors, local chiefs, Maratha families, and the Mughal state competed across a region shaped by forts, plateaus, fertile tracts, ports, and mobile military service.

For the Mughals, Deccan expansion promised revenue and prestige while stretching command, supply, and political negotiation. For Deccan states, factional conflict and alliance could be as important as formal borders. The chapter works best when the region is treated as a system of overlapping powers, not a southern extension of a story centered in Delhi or Agra.

Deccani States and the Marathas

Rival expansion. Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda cooperated at Bannihatti in 1565 but then disputed Sholapur, Bidar, Naldurg, Berar, Konkan, and Vijayanagara's nayakhoods. Gujarat defended the balance by supporting Berar and opposing Ahmadnagar.

Changed setting after 1572. Mughal conquest of Gujarat did not bring immediate southern intervention because Akbar was occupied elsewhere. Ahmadnagar annexed Berar, while Bijapur and Golconda expanded against fragmented Vijayanagara territory.

Maratha base. Bargirs had served the Bahmanis, Deccani Brahmans managed local revenue, and More, Nimbalkar, Ghatge, Bhonsale-Ghorpade, Dafle-Chavan, and other families held mansabs, jagirs, zamindari, or deshmukhi rights.

Comparison and mobility. Marathas formed the Deccan's landed-aristocratic backbone like Rajputs in the north, but the chapter says they lacked independent kingdoms and clan bases and often shifted loyalty as military adventurers.

State policy. Ibrahim Adil Shah, ruling from 1535, reportedly maintained 30,000 Maratha auxiliaries and is said to have introduced Marathi revenue accounts. Ahmadnagar used Brahman Peshwas such as Kankoji Narsi; all three states deliberately recruited local landed-warrior groups.

Mughal Advance towards the Deccan

Connectivity. The Vindhyas did not isolate north and south. Travellers, trade, pilgrimage, saints, Tughlaq communications, Sufi migration, and interventions by Gujarat, Malwa, and Orissa bound the regions politically and culturally.

First pressure. After Malwa and Gujarat fell, Mughal aloofness became unlikely. A 1576 invasion made Khandesh submit, but Akbar then spent 1586-1598 at Lahore watching the northwest.

Factional weakness. Deccani, afaqi or gharib, Habshi, and Afghan factions competed as kingmakers. Limited Maratha assimilation and elite distance from local society weakened loyalty.

Sectarian context. Safavid Shiism encouraged persecution and migration; Shia parties gained strength in Golconda, Bijapur, and Ahmadnagar. Saiyid Muhammad's Mahdawi dairas also spread, while orthodox opponents attacked both movements. Akbar feared the conflicts would cross northward and answered with sulh-kul.

Portuguese factor. Portuguese interference with Mecca pilgrims, proselytization, mainland expansion, and an attempt on Surat alarmed Akbar. The chapter presents coordinated Dec-

cani resources under Mughal supervision as a possible check on this danger.

Conquest of Berar, Ahmadnagar and Khandesh

Diplomacy to war. Akbar claimed all-India suzerainty. His 1591 embassies failed except in exposed Khandesh; Burhan Nizam Shah was openly hostile. Burhan's 1595 death created four claimants, allowing a Deccani faction to invite Mughal intervention.

Chand Bibi and 1596. Chand Bibi defended minor Bahadur through a four-month Ahmadnagar siege against Prince Murad and Khan-i-Khanan. Berar was ceded and Mughal suzerainty acknowledged in return for Bahadur's recognition.

Renewed coalition. Bijapur, Golconda, and Ahmadnagar resisted Mughal possession of Berar. In 1597 the Mughals defeated a Deccani force said to be three times larger; allies withdrew, nobles violated the treaty, and Chand Bibi was murdered as a supposed traitor while negotiating.

Akbar's gains. Mughals captured Ahmadnagar and Bahadur in 1600 and added Balaghat. Akbar besieged Asirgarh after alleged disrespect to Daniyal; pestilence preceded surrender in 1601, and Khandesh entered the empire.

Incomplete settlement. Daniyal recognized Murtaza Nizam Shah II over remaining lands in exchange for Ahmadnagar, Balaghat, part of Telengana, and loyalty. Daniyal's 1602 Bijapur marriage and sudden death ended one route to agreement; Mughal commander rivalry and lack of a Bijapur accord kept the result uncertain.

Rise of Malik Ambar and Frustration of Mughal Attempt at Consolidation

Uncertain ascent. Malik Ambar was Ethiopian and Abyssinian; his early life is poorly known, though the source says he seems to have been sold at Baghdad and brought to the Deccan. He rose under Changez Khan, joined the Habshi faction, installed Murtaza II, and became Peshwa.

Maratha method. Ambar recruited bargirs skilled in rapid movement, plunder, and supply-cutting, tactics unfamiliar to Mughals. After Khan-i-Khanan defeated him at Nander in 1601, both briefly cultivated cooperation for stability and internal advantage.

Recovery through alliance. After Akbar's death, Mughal disputes gave Ambar room. Ibrahim Adil Shah supplied Qandahar fort and 10,000 horsemen, and a 1609 marriage sealed the alliance; Maratha aid helped erase Akbar's gains by 1610 and forced Parvez into an unfavorable peace.

Reversal and renewed struggle. Ambar's growing arrogance alienated allies. Khan-i-Khanan won Maratha and Habshi nobles and defeated the combined states in 1616, burning Khirki. Khurram forced submission in 1618; the chapter explicitly interprets Jahangir's limited demands as deliberate moderation, not weakness. A second defeat required restored territory, another fourteen kos, and Rs 500,000.

Legacy and ambiguity. Ambar later attacked Bijapur, burned Naurasapur, replaced peasant-damaging ijara with Todar Mai's zabti, and recovered territory after 1622. The chapter calls his military skill remarkable but says his achievements were short-lived because of an inability or unwillingness to settle with the Mughals; it treats his long-term benefit to Ahmadnagar as doubtful, while recognizing that he gave Marathas confidence for later independence.

Extinction of Ahmadnagar, and Acceptance of Mughal Suzerainty by Bijapur and Golconda

New objective. Shah Jahan, experienced in Deccan affairs, treated Khan-i-Jahan Lodi's rebellion and Nizam Shahi defiance over Berar-Balaghat as proof that Ahmadnagar had to disappear, a decisive break from Akbar-Jahangir policy. He offered Bijapur one-third of Ahmadnagar and recruited Maratha sardars.

Shifting coalitions. Bijapur first cooperated because of Sholapur and Naurasapur grievances, and Shahji received a Mughal mansab of 5,000 and Poona jagirs. Mughal failure to transfer promised land and Ahmadnagar's appeal brought Bijapur back; meanwhile Fath Khan secretly negotiated, killed the Nizam Shah at Shah Jahan's alleged instance, installed a puppet, and entered Mughal service in 1632, prompting Shahji's defection.

Dynastic end, resistance continues. Mahabat Khan took Daulatabad in 1633 and sent the Nizam Shah to Gwaliyar, ending the dynasty. Shahji raised another prince with Bijapur support and a force reaching 20,000 horse, so Mughal victory over the ruling house did not immediately pacify its territory.

Treaties of 1636. Mughal pressure and negotiation made Bijapur recognize suzerainty, pay Rs 2,000,000, accept Mughal arbitration and Golconda protection, and cooperate against Shahji; it received Ahmadnagar territory worth about twenty lakh huns annually. Golconda replaced Bijapur's four-lakh-hun tribute with two lakhs to the Mughals and named Shah Jahan rather than Iran's emperor in the khutba.

Assessment and consequences. The chapter calls the treaties statesmanlike and says they fulfilled Akbar's objective. Bijapur and Golconda then divided Karnataka conquest two-thirds to one-third and more than doubled, but rapid expansion weakened cohesion and empowered Shahji, Shivaji, and Mir Jumla. The counterfactual claim that consolidation could have brought long peace is the author's assessment; crisis returned in 1656.

Cultural Contribution of the Deccan States

Bijapur's broad patronage. Ali Adil Shah discussed religion with Hindu-Muslim saints, invited Catholic missionaries, maintained a library under Waman Pandit, and supported Sanskrit and Marathi. Ibrahim Adil Shah II, called Abla Baba and Jagat Guru, wrote *Kitab-i-Nauras*, founded musical Naurasapur, invoked Saraswati, and granted Hindu saints, temples, and Pandharpur.

Inclusive government. Qutb Shahs used Hindus and Muslims in military, diplomatic, and administrative roles. Murahari Rao became Peshwa under Ibrahim Qutb Shah; Nayakwaris remained influential. The source also looks beyond 1656 to Madanna and Akkanna's dominance from 1672 to 1687.

Dakhini literature. Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah wrote a large diwan in Dakhini Urdu, Persian, and Telugu and introduced secular subjects such as nature, love, and social life. Dakhini drew on Persian, Hindi, and Telugu; Bijapur's Nusrati wrote the romance of Manohar and Madhu Malati, and Urdu later moved north.

Architecture and painting. Char Minar, completed in 1591-92 at Hyderabad's centre, has four directional arches and four 48-metre, four-storeyed minarets. Ibrahim Rauza and Gol Gumbaz represent Bijapur; the source includes the 1660 Gol Gumbaz beyond its cutoff and calls its dome the largest single one ever built. Painting peaked under Ibrahim II.

Larger verdict. The chapter argues that Deccani states overcame sixteenth-century sectarian violence, maintained communal harmony, and achieved high standards in music, literature, architecture, and painting.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1535	Ibrahim Adil Shah ascends at Bijapur and promotes Maratha service.	Early deliberate alliance with local landed-warrior groups.
1565	Deccani coalition defeats Vijayanagara at Bannihatti near Talikota.	Removes a common enemy, after which old rivalries resume.
1572	Akbar conquers Gujarat.	Opens a new strategic approach to the Deccan.
1576	Mughal army compels Khandesh to submit.	First direct Mughal pressure in the region.
1580	Ali Adil Shah and Ibrahim Qutb Shah die; Ibrahim Adil Shah II's reign begins.	Transition to a major era of cultural patronage.
1586-1598	Akbar resides at Lahore.	Northwestern concerns delay sustained Deccan intervention.
1591	Akbar sends suzerainty embassies; Char Minar construction is completed in 1591-92.	Diplomatic offensive coincides with Hyderabad's cultural landmark.
1595	Burhan Nizam Shah dies.	Four-way succession struggle invites Mughal intervention.
1596	Chand Bibi's treaty cedes Berar and recognizes Mughal suzerainty for Bahadur's recognition.	Gives Mughals a permanent Deccan foothold.
1597	Mughals defeat the combined Deccani force in Berar.	Coalition withdraws and Ahmadnagar becomes isolated.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1600	Chand Bibi is killed; Mughals capture Ahmadnagar, Bahadur, and Balaghat.	Fort and dynasty's child ruler fall under Mughal power.
1601	Asirgarh surrenders; Khandesh is annexed; Murtaza II settlement is made; Ambar is defeated at Nander.	Major but still unstable Mughal consolidation.
1602	Daniyal marries Ibrahim Adil Shah II's daughter and soon dies.	Proposed Bijapur-Mughal accommodation remains nebulous.
1609	Marriage alliance links Malik Ambar's family with Bijapur's Ethiopian nobility.	Seals military and political cooperation.
1610	Malik Ambar recovers Akbar's Deccan gains.	Demonstrates the power of Maratha-supported resistance.
1616	Khan-i-Khanan defeats Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, and Golconda and burns Khirki.	Shakes the united Deccani front.
1618	Khurram's campaign forces Ambar to submit under a moderate Mughal treaty.	Jahangir limits commitments by policy, in the chapter's interpretation.
Two years after 1618	Deccani coalition is defeated again and pays territory plus Rs 500,000.	Finally breaks the united anti-Mughal front.
After 1622	Khurram's rebellion lets Ambar recover ceded territories.	Frustrates Jahangir's consolidation again.
1626	Malik Ambar dies aged eighty.	Ends the central career of Nizam Shahi resistance.
1628-1629	Shah Jahan becomes emperor and sends major armies against Ahmadnagar.	Begins the policy of extinction.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1632	Fath Khan kills the Nizam Shah, installs a puppet, and enters Mughal service.	Internal betrayal turns Ahmadnagar further toward collapse.
1633	Daulatabad falls and Nizam Shahi dynasty ends.	Formal extinction of Ahmadnagar's ruling house.
1636	Bijapur and Golconda accept Mughal suzerainty through treaties.	Establishes a new all-Deccan balance under Mughal supremacy.
Decade after 1636	Bijapur and Golconda conquer Karnataka to Tanjore and beyond.	Their territory and prosperity more than double.
1656	Muhammad Adil Shah dies and Aurangzeb arrives as viceroy.	Expansion's contradictions come to a head.
1660	Gol Gumbaz is built, according to the source.	Cultural section deliberately extends beyond the chapter cutoff.
1672-1687	Madanna and Akkanna dominate Golconda until Mughal absorption.	Another explicit post-1656 cultural-administrative reference.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Deccani cooperation and unity	States united against Vijayanagara or Mughals temporarily but retained disputes over Sholapur, Bidar, Naldurg, Berar, and expansion.
Marathas and Rajputs	Both were landed-warrior elites; the chapter says Marathas lacked comparable independent kingdoms and clan leadership and shifted service more readily.

Often confused	The distinction
Deccanis, afaqis or gharibs, Habshis, and Afghans	Deccanis opposed newcomers; Habshis and Afghans also formed distinct factions within the broader political society.
Shiism and Mahdawism	Shiism became Safavid Iran's state creed; Mahdawism expected a justice-restoring Mahdi and organized dairas. Orthodox groups opposed both.
Akbar's suzerainty and annexation	Akbar sought acknowledgment and strategic territory, not immediate conquest of every Deccan state.
1596 and 1601 settlements	1596 exchanged Berar for Bahadur's recognition; 1601 confirmed remaining Nizam Shahi land to Murtaza II after further Mughal gains.
Chand Bibi and rival Deccani nobles	Chand Bibi supported treaty compliance and Bahadur; hostile factions invited Mughals, harassed them, and later killed her.
Malik Ambar's origin as fact and tradition	Ethiopian-Abyssinian origin is stated; sale by poor parents at Baghdad is explicitly tentative because his early life is unknown.
Maratha guerrilla method and Mughal warfare	Bargirs emphasized speed, plunder, and supply disruption, whereas Mughal forces initially were unused to it.
Jahangir's moderation and weakness	The chapter rejects weakness as the reason for limited 1618 demands and interprets them as deliberate avoidance of overextension.
Ambar's immediate and long-term achievement	He recovered territory and raised Maratha confidence, but the chapter calls his gains short-lived and reopening war strategically doubtful.

Often confused	The distinction
Akbar-Jahangir and Shah Jahan policy	Earlier emperors preserved a reduced Ahmadnagar; Shah Jahan decided that independent Nizam Shahi rule itself had to end.
End of dynasty and end of resistance	Daulatabad's 1633 fall ended the dynasty, but Shahji raised another prince and continued war.
Bijapur's alliance and opposition	Bijapur first accepted partition, then aided Ahmadnagar when Mughals withheld land, and finally accepted the 1636 treaty under pressure.
Bijapur and Golconda treaty burdens	Bijapur paid rupee indemnity and accepted arbitration; Golconda redirected khutba and paid annual hun tribute for protection.
Expansion and consolidation	Post-1636 conquest doubled territory, but failure to consolidate weakened cohesion; predicted long peace is a counterfactual author judgment.
Chapter cutoff and later cultural evidence	The title ends in 1656, but the source itself includes Gol Gumbaz in 1660, Madanna-Akkanna in 1672-1687, and Urdu's eighteenth-century move north.

Self-test

1. Why did the Deccani states fail to remain united after the 1565 victory?
2. How did Maratha service under Deccani rulers prepare later political autonomy?
3. Which political, sectarian, and maritime factors drew Akbar into Deccan affairs?
4. Trace events from the 1591 embassies to Ahmadnagar's capture in 1600.
5. Why did Akbar's territorial gains fail to create a stable settle-

ment?

6. How did Malik Ambar combine military, diplomatic, and administrative methods?
7. Which judgments about Malik Ambar does the chapter qualify or leave uncertain?
8. Why did Shah Jahan decide to extinguish Ahmadnagar, and how did coalitions shift?
9. What ended the Nizam Shahi dynasty, and why did resistance continue afterward?
10. Compare the Bijapur and Golconda treaties of 1636 and explain their larger result.
11. Why did post-1636 expansion strengthen and weaken Bijapur and Golconda at once?
12. Organize the Deccani states' contributions to tolerance, administration, literature, music, architecture, and painting.

Answer key

1. Old claims over Sholapur, Bidar, Naldurg, Berar, Konkan, and southern expansion returned after the common Vijayanagara threat disappeared; factional and sectarian divisions further blocked durable cooperation.
2. Bargir warfare, mansabs, jagirs, deshmukhi power, Brahman revenue work, diplomacy, shifting service, and campaigns under Malik Ambar gave Maratha families resources, skill, confidence, and political leverage.
3. North-south connectivity, conquest of Malwa-Gujarat, Khandesh, Deccani factionalism, Shia-Sunni-Mahdawi conflict, Akbar's suzerainty idea, Portuguese pilgrim interference, proselytization, and pressure on Surat all mattered.
4. Deccani states rejected embassies except Khandesh; Burhan's death created rival claimants; a faction invited Mughals; Chand Bibi secured the 1596 Berar treaty; coalition resistance resumed; she was killed, and Ahmadnagar fell in 1600.
5. No authoritative Nizam Shahi negotiator remained, Mughal commanders quarreled, Mughals would not conquer everything, and no durable Bijapur agreement survived Daniyal's

death.

6. He installed Murtaza II, recruited Maratha bargirs, cut supplies, allied with Bijapur through fort, troops, territory, and marriage, exploited Mughal divisions, and replaced *ijara* with *zabti*.
7. His sale at Baghdad is tentative; Jahangir's moderation is interpreted as policy, not weakness; Ambar's failure to settle is framed as inability or unwillingness; and the long-term benefit of renewed war is called doubtful.
8. Nizam Shahi refusal over Berar-Balaghat and asylum to Khan-i-Jahan Lodi convinced him peace was impossible. Bijapur first joined partition, reversed when Mughals withheld land, and later accepted settlement under pressure.
9. Mahabat Khan captured Daulatabad in 1633 and imprisoned the Nizam Shah. Shahji then installed another prince, drew Nizam Shahi soldiers and Bijapur cavalry, and controlled large areas.
10. Bijapur accepted suzerainty, indemnity, arbitration, Golconda protection, and anti-Shahji cooperation for Ahmadnagar land. Golconda redirected *khutba* and tribute to the Mughals. Together they established formal Mughal supremacy.
11. Karnataka conquest more than doubled territory and wealth, but rapid expansion reduced cohesion, encouraged Shahji, Shivaji, and Mir Jumla to build personal spheres, and upset the balance by 1656.
12. Inclusive appointments and tolerance supported communal harmony; Ibrahim II fostered music and *bhakti*; Muhammad Quli developed multilingual Dakhini poetry and Char Minar; Bijapur produced Ibrahim Rauza and Gol Gumbaz; painting flourished under Ibrahim II.

Closing perspective

Mughal expansion was not an inevitable north-south collision alone; older mobility, western and eastern state involvement, factional invitations, sectarian tension, Portuguese pressure,

and all-India sovereignty claims converged. Deccani weakness lay less in lack of military resources than in recurring rivalry, king-making factions, shallow elite integration, and inability to sustain coalitions after short-term threats passed.

Mughal India in the Early Seventeenth Century

The first half of the seventeenth century is often pictured through imperial confidence: a wealthy court, monumental architecture, expanding trade, and an empire that seemed secure. Yet succession, noble competition, regional campaigns, court influence, and the cost of maintaining rank and revenue assignments kept pressure inside the system.

Jahangir and Shah Jahan ruled through institutions inherited from Akbar, but inheritance did not remove choice. The distribution of favor, the management of princes, relations with regional powers, and the balance between display and finance all mattered. Stability was an active achievement, not a quiet interval between more dramatic reigns.

Political and Administrative Developments in India

Achievement and limitation. Jahangir and Shah Jahan consolidated Akbar's administration, Rajput alliance, and a wider political base including Afghans and Marathas. Mughal, Bijapur, and Golconda stability encouraged cultural growth, monumental capitals, handicrafts, commerce, Asian diplomacy, and European trade concessions. Yet elite prosperity did not reach peasants and workers; western science and technology were neglected, and uncertain succession repeatedly destabilized

the system.

Khusrau and earlier fronts. Jahangir succeeded smoothly because his brothers had died, but his eldest son Khusrau soon rebelled, lost near Lahore, and was imprisoned. Jahangir also ended the long Mewar struggle and forced a settlement on Malik Ambar in the Deccan.

Bengal pacification. Afghan chiefs in east Bengal allied with Hindu rajas such as Jessore, Kamrup, and Cachar after Man Singh's recall. Jahangir sent Islam Khan in 1608. He won zamindars, based himself strategically at Dacca, transferred the capital from Rajmahal, captured Musa Khan's Sonargaon after three years, defeated Usman Khan, annexed Jessore and Kamrup, and broke Afghan resistance.

Conciliation after conquest. Jahangir sought durable goodwill, releasing princes and zamindars, restoring Musa Khan's estates, and inducting more Afghans into the nobility. Khan-i-Jahan Lodi became the leading Afghan noble. By 1622 Mewar, Bengal, and Malik Ambar had been contained, but Persian seizure of Qandhar and Jahangir's failing health reopened succession and noble rivalry.

Nur Jahan

Family rise without murder conspiracy. Nur Jahan married Jahangir in 1611, four years after her first husband Sher Afgan died in a clash with Bengal's governor. Sober historians cited by the chapter do not hold Jahangir responsible. Her father Itimaduddaula had already served as joint diwan, briefly suffered because a son joined Khusrau, then became chief diwan and remained capable and loyal. Her brother Asaf Khan became khan-i-saman and married his daughter to Khurram.

The "junta" debate. Some modern historians argue that Nur Jahan, Itimaduddaula, Asaf Khan, and Khurram formed a career-controlling junta, divided the court, and later drove Shah Jahan to rebellion when Nur Jahan's ambition threatened him. Other historians reject this: Jahangir's autobiography indicates that he

made major decisions until his health failed in 1622. Her precise role before then remains uncertain.

Undoubted influence. Coins bore her name; she became Badshah Begum, received noble appeals, dominated the household, shaped Persian fashion, and increased Persian cultural prestige. A skilled rider and shot, she accompanied Jahangir and could intercede continually.

Limits of her authority. No earlier Mughal woman had held comparable status, but non-favorites still received promotion and Jahangir was not demonstrably dependent on her. Shah Jahan's ascent owed more to ability and achievement than her support. The deeper cause of conflict was structural: no emperor could safely allow a prince or noble to become a rival center.

Shah Jahan's Rebellion

Immediate trigger. Shah Jahan refused to relieve Persian-besieged Qandhar, fearing a long absence and court intrigue. He demanded full control of the army and Deccan veterans, Punjab, and major forts. Jahangir read these demands as preparation for rebellion and responded harshly, worsening the breach.

Initial strength and defeat. From Mandu, Shah Jahan rushed toward Agra's treasury with the Deccan army, Gujarat, Malwa, Asaf Khan, and court supporters behind him. Mahabat Khan defeated him near Delhi, although Mewar troops prevented complete destruction; another imperial force recovered Gujarat.

Eastern reversal. Driven into the Deccan, Shah Jahan crossed into Orissa, surprised its governor, and gained Bengal and Bihar. Mahabat Khan forced him back, where he allied with Malik Ambar, again at war with the Mughals.

Settlement, 1626. Shah Jahan apologized; Jahangir chose conciliation with his ablest son. Dara and Aurangzeb went to court as hostages, and Shah Jahan received a Deccan tract for expenses.

Mahabat Khan

Systemic crisis. Four years of rebellion helped lose Qandhar and let Deccanis recover surrendered lands. It exposed how a successful prince could rival the emperor when supreme authority seemed weak. Shah Jahan's claim that Nur Jahan held all power is difficult to accept because Asaf Khan was diwan and Jahangir remained mentally alert.

Seizure at the Jhelum. Mahabat, resenting attempts to reduce his power and summoned to account, arrived with trusted Rajputs and seized Jahangir while the royal camp crossed the Jhelum toward Kabul. Nur Jahan escaped, failed in an armed rescue, then surrendered voluntarily to stay close to the emperor.

Nur Jahan's victory. Within six months she exploited Mahabat's mistakes, his weakness as diplomat-administrator, and the unpopularity of his Rajputs to win nobles away. Mahabat abandoned Jahangir and later joined Shah Jahan in the Deccan.

Succession and precedent. Jahangir died near Lahore in 1627. Asaf Khan, now wakil, confined Nur Jahan, summoned Shah Jahan, and used the diwan, nobles, and army to enthrone him. Shah Jahan had imprisoned brothers and cousins killed, reinforcing the destructive precedents of filial rebellion and violent succession. Nur Jahan received a settlement, retired for eighteen years, and was buried at Lahore.

Foreign Policy of the Mughals

Asian balance. Uzbeks in Trans-Oxiana had expelled Babur's Timurids and competed with Safavid Iran for Khurasan, the bridge for China-India trade. Sunni Uzbeks tried to exploit Mughal-Safavid sectarian differences and stirred Afghan and Baluch tribes between Peshawar and Kabul, but the Sunni Mughals refused narrow anti-Shia politics.

Ottoman factor. Ottoman or Usmanli power, named after Usman, had taken Asia Minor, eastern Europe, Syria, Egypt, and Arabia and claimed Sultan of Rum and later Padshah-i-Islam.

Ottoman-Safavid conflict involved Shiism, Baghdad, Erivan, Arabian coasts, and Portuguese sea power.

Why friendship with Iran. Iran faced Ottomans west and Uzbeks east, while Mughals needed a counterweight to Uzbeks. The Mughals rejected a proposed Ottoman-Mughal-Uzbek anti-Persian bloc because destroying Iran would isolate them before Uzbek power. Iranian friendship also protected Central Asian commerce.

Equality and naval constraint. A stronger Mughal navy might have encouraged Turkish partnership against European fleets, but the Mughals rejected Ottoman claims to caliphal superiority. Defense, equilibrium, commerce, and sovereign equality therefore structured policy.

Akbar and the Uzbeks

Safavid friendship and Uzbek expansion. Shah Ismail's 1510 help to Babur and Shah Tahmasp's later refuge for Humayun established Mughal-Safavid friendship. Under Abdullah Khan Uzbek, Uzbeks took Balkh in 1572-73 and proposed in 1577 that Akbar partition disordered Iran after Shah Tahmasp's death, justifying conquest against Shias. Akbar replied that religious-law differences did not justify conquest and that strong Iran checked Uzbeks.

Frontier pressure. Akbar sheltered displaced Timurid Mirza Sulaiman, improved the Khyber Pass for wheeled traffic, and moved to Attock when Abdullah's fanatic agent Jalal stirred tribes; Raja Birbal died in Khyber fighting. Abdullah took Badakhshan in 1585, and Mirza Sulaiman and his grandson entered Mughal service. Mirza Hakim's death the same year let Akbar annex Kabul, directly joining Uzbek and Mughal frontiers.

Implied settlement. Akbar and Abdullah apparently accepted the Hindu Kush as boundary. Mughals implicitly abandoned Balkh and Badakhshan while Uzbeks refrained from claiming Kabul and Qandhar, though neither formally renounced claims. This gave Akbar a defensible line.

Completion. Akbar stayed in Lahore from 1586, acquired Qandhar in 1595, and returned to Agra only after Abdullah died in 1598. Uzbek fragmentation then reduced the threat.

Relations with Iran and the Question of Qandhar

Strategic-commercial value. Qandhar was a strong, watered fort at the Kabul-Herat junction, dominating southern Afghanistan and helping control Afghan-Baluch tribes. The Kabul-Ghazni-Qandhar line supplied a logical defense, while routes through Qandhar, Multan, and the Indus connected India with Central Asia and the sea when Iranian roads were disturbed. It was a vital Mughal bastion but more an Iranian outpost.

Early transfers. Qandhar, formerly Timurid, came to Babur in 1522. Shah Tahmasp took it amid confusion after Humayun's death. Akbar waited until Uzbek conquest isolated it from Iran, then acquired it in 1595 to build a defensible line, not, as some historians claim, as part of an Uzbek agreement to partition Persia.

Jahangir and Shah Abbas. Shah Abbas I exchanged embassies and gifts with Jahangir, developed Deccan contacts without Mughal objection, and appeared with him in an imaginary embracing portrait. Nur Jahan helped cultural closeness. Yet friendship benefited Abbas more: Jahangir neglected Uzbek relations and became diplomatically isolated.

Loss and recovery. Abbas politely requested Qandhar in 1620, attacked while Jahangir was unprepared, and took it in 1622 when Shah Jahan imposed impossible conditions for marching. A lavish Persian embassy could not restore old cordiality. After Abbas died in 1629, Shah Jahan exploited Iranian disorder and induced governor Ali Mardan Khan to defect with Qandhar in 1638.

Shah Jahan's Balkh Campaign

Objective and opening. Qandhar's recovery was meant to secure Kabul against Uzbek raids and Afghan intrigue. Nazr Muhammad ruled Bokhara and Balkh; his son Abdul Aziz attacked toward Kabul-Ghazni, then rebelled, leaving his father in Balkh. Nazr appealed to Shah Jahan, who sent Murad in 1646 with 50,000 horse, 10,000 infantry, musketeers, rocketeers, gunners, and Rajputs.

Murad's error. Shah Jahan ordered respectful restoration of Balkh and possible assistance to recover Samarqand and Bokhara. Murad entered Balkh without waiting, alarming Nazr into flight. Mughals inherited a hostile city while Abdul Aziz gathered a claimed 120,000 Uzbeks beyond the fordable Oxus. Homesick Murad was replaced by Aurangzeb.

Victory and withdrawal. Aurangzeb's mobile defense defeated Abdul Aziz outside Balkh in 1647. Shah Jahan chose to restore Nazr, but demanding personal apology and submission to Aurangzeb humiliated him. He did not appear. With winter and supply shortage approaching, Mughals withdrew in October; Uzbek harassment caused severe losses, though Aurangzeb prevented rout.

Contested interpretation. The campaign did not aim to fix the frontier at the indefensible Oxus or seriously recover Farghana-Samarqand. Its probable goal was a friendly Balkh-Badakhshan buffer controlling approaches and Afghan unrest. It was militarily successful and a first significant Indian victory there, but local hostility, Persian unease, distance, and cost erased political gain.

Limited consequence. Keeping Akbar's Kabul-Ghazni-Qandhar line might have saved money and lives. Still, Nazr remained friendly afterward and the expedition helped prevent a unified Uzbek state threatening Kabul.

Mughal-Persian Relations: The Last Phase

Qandhar lost again. Balkh withdrawal revived Uzbek and tribal pressure and encouraged Persia to take Qandhar in 1649. Aurangzeb attacked with 50,000, defeated Persians outside, but failed against the fort; a second attempt three years later also failed. Dara's grand 1653 siege could neither starve it nor breach it with two enormous imperial guns.

Meaning of failure. The result did not prove general Mughal artillery weakness. It demonstrated Qandhar's fortifications and medieval artillery's limited ability against determined defense, also seen in the Deccan. Shah Jahan's attachment may have become sentimental because weakening Uzbeks and Safavids had reduced strategic need.

Prestige qualified. Repeated failure hurt prestige more than the territorial loss, but should not be exaggerated: Mughal power peaked under Aurangzeb, and the Ottoman sultan sought his support in 1680.

Later diplomacy and synthesis. Aurangzeb ended futile war and resumed Iranian relations. Shah Abbas II insulted an envoy and threatened invasion in 1668, but died before action; weak successors removed danger until Nadir Shah over fifty years later. Overall, Mughals defended a Hindu Kush frontier, used Persian friendship, treated homeland recovery as a diplomatic claim, insisted on equality with Safavids and Ottomans, and promoted trade through Kabul-Qandhar.

Growth of Administration: Mansabdari System and the Mughal Army

Pay and mixed forces. Jahangir and Shah Jahan retained Akbar's system with changes. Average allowance per sawar fell from Akbar's Rs 240 yearly to Rs 200 under Jahangir, while mansabdars retained five percent for contingent costs. Mixed Irani, Turani, Afghan, and Rajput contingents reduced tribal-ethnic ex-

clusiveness, though exceptions allowed homogeneous Mughal or Rajput units.

Du-aspah sih-aspah and reduced quotas. Jahangir let selected nobles maintain double the troopers shown by sawar rank without raising *zat*. Thus 3,000 *zat* and 3,000 sawar *du-aspah sih-aspah* required 6,000 troopers; normally sawar did not exceed *zat*. Under Shah Jahan, actual duty fell to one-third or sometimes one-fourth of sawar: 3,000 sawar meant about 1,000 men, doubled to 2,000 with *du-aspah sih-aspah*.

Jagir and jama-dami. Salary was stated in rupees but usually assigned as *jagir*, preferred because cash was delayed and land conveyed status. Bureaucratic ranks could not remove feudal land attachment. Revenue officials recorded assessed income or **jama** in *dams* at forty *dams* per rupee; the document was **jama-dami**.

Month scale. Growing *mansab* numbers and fiscal pressure led to ten-, eight-, six-, five-, or lower-month scales, reducing horses and troopers without openly cutting status. A 3,000/3,000 noble maintaining 1,000 sawars would normally need 2,200 horses, but only 1,800 at ten months and 1,000 at five. Less than five or more than ten was rare. Marathas often received high nominal rank on five months or less.

Interpretation and performance. Month scale did not mean *jagir* income collapse because it applied to cash salaries too. Cultivation, cash crops, *jama*, and prices rose broadly together. Reduced remounts nevertheless harmed cavalry efficiency. The system depended on honest *dagh* and realistic *jama-dami*; failure caused fraud or noble disaffection. Under Shah Jahan, careful selection, discipline, rewards, and competent *wazirs* kept it broadly effective.

The Mughal Army

Cavalry and ahadis. *Mansabdars* supplied most cavalry. Directly recruited **ahadis** were trusted, highly paid gentleman-troopers with their own *muster-master* and up to five horses.

They also served as clerks, painters, workshop foremen, adjutants, couriers, musketeers, and archers. Shah Jahan had about 7,000. **Walashahis** and palace guards were cavalymen serving on foot in citadel and palace.

Infantry. Piyadgan included matchlock-bearers paid three to seven rupees monthly, plus porters, servants, runners, swordsmen, wrestlers, and slaves. Slaves were fed and clothed and could rarely rise to ahadi, but infantry generally had low status.

Artillery and elephants. Heavy guns attacked or defended forts but were clumsy, slow, prone to burst, and often made more noise than damage. Highly mobile light “artillery of the stirrup” impressed Bernier: fifty brass field pieces on carriages, each with ammunition boxes, two draught horses, and a reserve. Swivel guns sat on elephants and camels. Ottoman and Portuguese experts were initially recruited; by Aurangzeb improved Mughal artillery needed fewer foreigners.

Numbers and comparison. Shah Jahan’s army is estimated at about 200,000 cavalry plus district forces and 40,000 fighting infantry; cavalry rose to 240,000 under Aurangzeb. Bernier’s criticism chiefly fits undrilled, ill-led infantry. European flint-gun infantry became able to defeat cavalry in the seventeenth century, a change Indian powers felt in the eighteenth.

Overall capability. Balkh showed Mughal forces could defeat Uzbeks comparable to Persians, so they were not inferior to major Asian land armies. Asian powers still lagged Europe in infantry and artillery; Mughals partly caught Asian artillery standards by Aurangzeb but not European sea power. Except Turkey and Oman, Asian states were weak in naval war. Mughal cavalry efficiency ultimately depended on mansab, jagir, and feudal land relations.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1514	Ottomans defeated Safavid Iran.	Intensified Ottoman-Safavid rivalry.
1572-73	Abdullah Uzbek seized Balkh.	Removed a buffer north of Mughal lands.
1577	Uzbek embassy proposed partitioning Iran.	Akbar rejected sectarian conquest.
1585	Uzbeks took Badakhshan; Akbar annexed Kabul.	Mughal-Uzbek frontiers met.
1586-1598	Akbar stayed at Lahore.	Monitored and secured the northwest.
1595	Akbar acquired Qandhar.	Completed defensive Kabul-Ghazni-Qandhar line.
1605-1627	Jahangir's reign.	Administrative consolidation and succession tensions.
1608	Islam Khan posted to Bengal.	Began decisive eastern pacification.
1611	Jahangir married Nur Jahan.	Start of her exceptional court role.
1622	Persia took Qandhar; Jahangir's health declined.	Prestige shock and succession crisis.
1622-1626	Shah Jahan rebelled.	Four-year test of imperial cohesion.
1626	Shah Jahan reconciled; Mahabat seized Jahangir.	Prince settled while noble challenge emerged.
1627	Jahangir died.	Asaf Khan secured Shah Jahan's succession.
1628-1658	Shah Jahan's reign.	High point of activity, diplomacy, and administration.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1638	Ali Mardan delivered Qandhar to Mughals.	Recovered the outer bastion.
1646-1647	Balkh campaign.	Military success but political withdrawal.
1649	Persia retook Qandhar.	Triggered three failed Mughal sieges.
Three years after first attack	Aurangzeb's second attempt failed.	Fort remained beyond Mughal siege power.
1653	Dara's Qandhar siege failed.	Last grand Shah Jahan attempt.
1668	Shah Abbas II threatened Aurangzeb, then died.	Persian frontier danger receded.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Nur Jahan's influence and total control	Coins, title, access, and intercession prove influence; they do not prove Jahangir surrendered all decisions.
Junta thesis and source conclusion	Some historians posit a career-controlling faction; others cite Jahangir's autobiography against it.
Shah Jahan's Qandhar refusal and religious conflict	He feared political intrigue and demanded power; the dispute was princely-imperial, not sectarian.
Mahabat's military success and governing capacity	He was an able commander but lacked diplomacy and administration, allowing Nur Jahan to isolate him.
Safavid friendship and absence of rivalry	Iran was the essential Uzbek counterweight, but Qandhar remained a recurring strategic-prestige dispute.

Often confused	The distinction
Qandhar and Balkh	Qandhar was a defensible trade bastion; Balkh was intended as a friendly buffer beyond the core line.
Hindu Kush and Oxus frontier	The chapter considers Hindu Kush defensible; the fordable Oxus was not Shah Jahan's intended permanent line.
Balkh military and political outcomes	Mughals won battles but could not sustain legitimate, supplied control.
Qandhar siege failure and army collapse	Strong fortification defeated medieval siege methods; Mughal power remained high afterward.
Zat and sawar	Zat set personal rank and salary status; sawar indicated cavalry obligation before scaling.
Du-aspah sih-aspah and month scale	First doubled designated sawars; second reduced actual obligations according to a fraction of the year.
Jama and jama-dami	Jama was assessed income; jama-dami recorded it in dams at forty per rupee.
Mansab rank and actual field strength	One-third, one-fourth, and month scales made nominal figures much higher than effective contingents.
Heavy and light artillery	Heavy guns served forts but moved poorly; light artillery was mobile and well organized.
Mughal Asian parity and European parity	Mughals could defeat Uzbeks but lagged European infantry, artillery trends, and naval warfare.

Self-test

1. What achievements and negative trends defined the first half of the seventeenth century?
2. How did Islam Khan conquer Bengal, and how did Jahangir

consolidate the result?

3. What evidence supports and limits the Nur Jahan junta thesis?
4. Why did Shah Jahan rebel, and how was the conflict settled?
5. How did Nur Jahan defeat Mahabat Khan without an immediate military victory?
6. Why did the Mughals prefer Safavid friendship to an anti-Iran alliance with Uzbeks and Ottomans?
7. How did Akbar construct a defensible northwest frontier?
8. Why was Qandhar more important to the Mughals than to Iran?
9. What was Shah Jahan trying to achieve at Balkh, and why did the occupation end?
10. Why do the failed Qandhar sieges not prove general Mughal artillery weakness?
11. Distinguish zat, sawar, du-aspah sih-aspah, one-third quota, month scale, jagir, and jama-dami.
12. Where was the Mughal army strong and where did it lag?

Answer key

1. Administration, alliances, culture, building, Asian diplomacy, and trade grew; peasants remained poor, western science was ignored, and succession conflict threatened stability.
2. He won zamindars, used Dacca, captured Sonargaon, and defeated Afghans; Jahangir released leaders, restored estates, and recruited Afghans into nobility.
3. Her coins, title, household control, access, and interventions prove influence; continuing promotion of non-favorites and Jahangir's own decisions before 1622 argue against total control.
4. He feared intrigue during Qandhar service, demanded extraordinary authority, and reacted to Jahangir's punishment; in 1626 he apologized, sent sons as hostages, and received a Deccan tract.
5. She surrendered to remain near Jahangir, exploited Mahabat's political errors and Rajput unpopularity, and gradually won nobles back.

6. Iran checked Uzbek power, protected trade balance, and prevented Mughal isolation; sectarian differences did not outweigh strategic need.
7. He annexed Kabul, accepted Hindu Kush as the practical Uzbek boundary, stayed at Lahore, controlled Khyber approaches, and acquired Qandhar in 1595.
8. It defended Kabul, controlled southern Afghan routes and tribes, and linked Central Asian trade through Multan and the Indus; for Iran it was mainly an outpost.
9. He sought a friendly Balkh-Badakhshan buffer, not the Oxus or homelands; Murad alienated Nazr, locals were hostile, winter and supplies failed, and submission demands blocked restoration.
10. Qandhar was exceptionally strong and medieval siege artillery was generally ineffective against determined forts; Mughals still remained a leading Asian military power.
11. Zat was personal rank; sawar nominal cavalry duty; du-aspah doubled it; one-third reduced actual men; month scale reduced yearly obligation; jagir paid salary in land revenue; jama-dami recorded assessed income in dams.
12. Cavalry, ahadis, and light artillery competed well in Asia; infantry lacked European drill and flint-gun progress, heavy artillery was cumbersome, and naval warfare was weak.

Closing perspective

The era's progress was real but uneven: centralized administration, urban culture, diplomacy, and commerce expanded while rural hardship and technological indifference persisted. Bengal demonstrates the Mughal formula of force followed by incorporation. Islam Khan won strategically; Jahangir made the result durable through restoration and Afghan recruitment.

Economy and Society under Mughal Rule

Mughal wealth began in the countryside. Peasant production, land revenue, local rights, zamindari power, markets, crafts, merchant networks, transport, and overseas trade connected village labor to imperial finance and urban consumption. The connection was productive and unequal at the same time.

A large revenue demand did not tell every region's story. Crop patterns, irrigation, local intermediaries, bargaining power, market access, and political disruption changed what assessment meant on the ground. The chapter therefore moves between scale levels: household, village, region, city, court, and oceanic trade. The economy becomes visible only when those levels are allowed to interact.

Economic and social conditions

- The Mughal empire reached its territorial zenith by the end of the seventeenth century, while facing political and administrative problems. For economic and social analysis, the chapter treats the period from Akbar's advent to the century's end as one broad era: important developments occurred, but no fundamental structural transformation divided it.

Standard of living: pattern of village life and the masses

Material life and food. Babur, Ralph Fitch, De Laet and Nikitin stress scant clothing and bare feet, though Fitch also saw quilted winter garments. Moreland linked absent footwear north of the Narmada, except Bengal, to leather cost. Villagers lived in mud houses with cots, bamboo mats and earthenware; metal utensils were costly. Rice, millet, pulses, fish, meat, chapatis and vegetables varied regionally. Ghee and oil were cheap, salt and sugar dear, and abundant grazing probably increased milk availability.

Rural hierarchy. Cash barely entered many village transactions, and artisans received customary commodity shares. Khudkasht resident cultivators owned ploughs and bullocks and paid customary revenue; poorer muzarian tenants usually paid higher rates. Landless labourers and many village menials, often called untouchables or kamin, lived most precariously and suffered worst in frequent famines. Dominant original-settler castes controlled villages but could themselves be exploited by zamindars.

Agricultural dynamism. An estimated population of 125 million around the early seventeenth century left cultivable land available. Food crops coexisted with higher-revenue cash or superior crops such as cotton, indigo, chay, sugarcane and oilseeds. Cultivators shifted with prices and adopted tobacco and maize in the seventeenth century; potato and red chillies came only in the eighteenth. Bengal's silk and tusser growth ended the need for Chinese silk imports.

Rights, burdens and investment. Paying peasants could not be dispossessed, could sell land subject to community objection and passed it to children. State dues could approach half the crop, limiting ordinary investment, but better-off khudkasht and zamindars financed extension. Taccavi state loans helped, yet local initiative mattered more. Seasonal work and custom included fairs, pilgrimages and ceremonies. Agriculture fed growing towns, exports and textile raw-material demand without major new techniques.

Urban poor and interpretation. Servants could earn under Rs 2 monthly and most workers or foot soldiers began below Rs 3; travellers calculated Rs 2 could feed a family. Moreland inferred little real-wage change and claimed British rule had not worsened conditions, but the chapter rejects that narrow comparison: Europe gained wealth and wages while Indian living standards under British rule stagnated or declined.

The ruling classes: the nobles and zamindars

Composite but aristocratic nobility. Entry was theoretically open, but aristocratic birth helped. Turanis, Tajiks, Khurasanis and Iranis initially dominated; Afghans, Hindustani Shaikhzadas, Rajputs, kayasthas and khatris entered gradually. Hindus formed an estimated 16 per cent in 1594, about 24 per cent under Shah Jahan and 33 per cent in Aurangzeb's later reign, with their number rising four-and-a-half times and Marathas forming over half of Hindu nobles then.

Assimilation and organisation. Bernier's claim that nobles were enticing foreigners is called fallacious by modern research: immigrants settled and assimilated while retaining traits. By Jahangir-Shah Jahan, most nobles were India-born, and mansab rules improved recruitment, promotion and discipline. Jahangir recognised Marathas as Deccan's "hub"; Shahji served Shah Jahan briefly, and Aurangzeb recruited Marathas and Deccani Muslims.

Consumption. High salaries supported servants, stables, transport, harems, gardens, fine clothing, imported fruit, year-round ice and jewellery. Akbar allegedly received forty dishes per meal; Jahangir popularised earrings for men. Twice-yearly gifts to the emperor were status-scaled and reciprocated. Spending predominated over hoarding, leaving many nobles indebted.

Investment and trade. Nobles bought land, developed orchards and mandis, lent at interest and traded through partners. Abul Fazl explicitly urged commercial speculation de-

spite Islamic condemnation of usury. Royal women and princes freighted goods and owned ships; Mir Jumla traded with Persia, Arabia and Southeast Asia, and even Aurangzeb's chief qazi concealed business interests. Abuse and monopoly occurred but did not dominate commerce.

Historical assessment. The nobility combined feudal land income, bureaucratic service, commercial outlook and composite cultural patronage. It did not block economic growth, though whether the economy could independently become capitalist remains doubtful and unresolved. Under Aurangzeb, numerical expansion, factional tension and jagirdari crisis damaged discipline.

Zamindars and the rural gentry

Land ownership was hereditary but continually created: first cultivators of wasteland could become owners, and abundant banjar allowed new villages. Zamindars often owned some land and held hereditary revenue-collection rights over a talluqa or zamindari, receiving up to 25 per cent in some regions.

A zamindar did not own every field in the zamindari; paying peasants retained hereditary rights. Above revenue-collecting zamindars stood rajas with greater autonomy, though Persian writers also called them zamindars to stress subordination.

Zamindars and chiefs maintained forts or garhis and armed forces. The Ain's aggregate of 384,558 cavalry, 4,277,057 infantry, 1,863 elephants and 4,260 cannon indicates scale but could never be fielded together because forces were dispersed.

- Caste, clan and tribal ties connected zamindars to peasants and supplied local knowledge. Known as desh mukh, patil, nayak and other names, they could not be safely ignored by central rule. Smaller zamindars may have lived like peasants, larger ones like petty rajas, together forming dispersed rural gentry. They exploited cultivators but also set standards, organised settlement and supplied capital for new villages and improved cultivation.

The middle strata

Bernier's claim that India had no "middle state," only extreme wealth and misery, is rejected. Rich merchants and shopkeepers had customary life-property rights, although unlike some European towns they lacked municipal governing rights.

Intermediate living standards included small mansabdars, petty shopkeepers, master craftsmen, hakims, musicians, artists, historians, scholars, qazis, theologians and the many petty officials who ran Mughal administration.

Petty officials received cash and often supplemented it through corruption. Scholars and divines commonly received maintenance land called madad-i-maash, or sasan in Rajasthan, from emperor, local rulers, zamindars or nobles.

Though formally renewable, grants often became hereditary, making recipients rural gentry and village-town links. These strata were not one class because profession, caste, religion and interest divided them.

Organization of trade and commerce

Merchant and transport specialisation. Seths, bohras and modis handled long-distance trade; beoparis or baniks retailed and bought village grain and cash crops through agents. Banjaras carried bulk grain, pulses, ghee and salt with thousands of oxen; camels, mules and carts carried valuables, while river and coastal boats moved bulk most cheaply.

Regional exchange. Bengal supplied rice, sugar, muslin and silk; Coromandel textiles moved to Gujarat; Gujarat imported foreign goods and exported patola toward Burhanpur and Agra; Malabar supplied pepper. North India exported indigo and food, Lahore distributed Kashmir shawls and carpets, and Punjab-Sindh goods moved by Indus between Kabul-Qandhar and Delhi-Agra. Trade therefore included necessities, not luxury alone.

Networks and finance. Gumashtas and dalals linked wholesalers to local markets. A hundi was discounted time-bound

credit, often with insurance priced by value, destination and land, river or sea risk. Sarrafs changed money, accepted deposits, lent and created credit. Virji Vohra's agency houses extended across India, West Asia and Southeast Asia.

Diverse and wealthy communities. Gujarat had Hindu, Jain and mostly Bohra Muslim merchants; Oswals, Maheshwaris and Agarwals became Marwaris; Multanis, Afghans and Khatris handled Central Asian routes; Chettis and Malabar Muslims dominated southern exchange. Virji Vohra, Abdul Ghafur Bohra, Malay Chetti, Kashi Viranna and Sunca Rama Chetti rivalled European merchant princes. Abdul Ghafur left Rs 55 lakh and seventeen ships in 1718.

Protection and commercialisation. Bernier's "filled sponges" claim is not fully accepted: inheritance protections, insurance, cheap transport and sarais at intervals printed as "5 kps" generally secured merchants, though officials harassed them. Nagarseths negotiated and hartals occurred. Integration, illegal rahdari, pure rupees, cash salaries and zabti marketed an estimated 20 per cent of rural produce, creating qasbas and manufacturing towns. Traveller comparisons made Agra-Fatehpur larger than London, Lahore peerless in Europe or Asia, Delhi no smaller than Paris, Ahmedabad London-sized and Patna's population two lakh; these remain source comparisons, not precise censuses.

Foreign trade and the European traders

Trade structure. India exported food and textiles from Aden to Achin and functioned as Asia's main manufactory outside China, although the English textile claim is slightly exaggerated. Imports were limited mainly to tin, copper, selected spices, war horses, ivory and luxuries; gold and silver met the favourable balance. Bernier's "sink" image exaggerates, but India and China retained bullion effectively because of economic scale and self-sufficiency.

European entry. Portuguese decline enabled Dutch settle-

ment at Masulipatam by Golconda farman in 1606 and spice predominance by 1610; Pulicat became their Coromandel textile base. English defeat of a Portuguese fleet enabled a Surat factory in 1612, confirmed by Jahangir's 1618 farman through Thomas Roe. With Persian help they took Ormuz in 1622. Portuguese retained Goa, Daman and Diu but lost sea monopoly.

Indian resilience. European companies never displaced Indian Asian traders and held only a fraction of exports. Indians knew markets and accepted 10-15 per cent profit, while Dutch overheads required 40-50 per cent. Europeans depended on Mughal and Indian cooperation and freighted Indian cargo. Surat-based Indian ships rose from about fifty mid-century to at least 112 by century's end.

New export zones. Indigo from Sarkhej and Bayana preceded European calico demand. Coromandel cloth exports equalled Gujarat in 1640 and tripled them by 1660, through Masulipatam and Fort St George. By 1650 English factories at Hoogly and Balasore exported silk, sugar, textiles and Bihar saltpetre. Eastern exports equalled Coromandel by century's end.

Consequences and limits. The 1701 English calico ban failed; white exports, rendered as about 9.5 lakh pieces in 1701, rose to 20 lakh in 1719. Asian trade remained more lucrative: only 14 per cent of spices went to Europe, while West Asian and East African textile trade grew and Yemeni coffee became a new item. Lahore-Multan routes supported a claimed 10,000 Indian traders in Iran and colonies toward Russia and China. Bullion nearly doubled prices in the first half-century; social effects remain uncertain. Limited monopolies encouraged territorial empire to finance imports, possible only after Indian political weakening.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
Akbar to end of seventeenth century	Broad analytical period of continuity.	Frames major development without fundamental structural break.
1594	Hindus estimated at 16 per cent of Akbar's nobility.	Baseline for later elite diversification.
Beginning of seventeenth century	Population estimated around 125 million.	Suggests cultivable land remained available.
Seventeenth century	Tobacco and maize adopted; silk expanded in Bengal.	Demonstrates responsive commercial agriculture.
1606	Dutch obtained Golconda farman at Masulipatam.	First secure Dutch Indian base named in chapter.
By 1610	Dutch predominated in Spice Islands trade.	Shift from Portuguese monopoly.
1612	English established Surat factory after naval victory.	Durable English entry into Indian commerce.
1614	English Surat factor wrote that "large and small are merchants."	Evidence of elite and common participation in trade.
1618	Jahangir confirmed English Surat rights through Thomas Roe.	Imperial authorisation of English trade.
1622	English and Persian forces captured Ormuz.	Broke a major Portuguese Gulf position.
First half of seventeenth century	Prices almost doubled.	Bullion inflow outpaced economic growth.
1640	Coromandel cloth exports equalled Gujarat exports.	Indicates shift in textile sourcing.
1650	English established at Hoogly and Balasore.	Eastern silk, sugar, textile and saltpetre trade expanded.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1651	Shah Jahan began building four to six seagoing ships yearly.	Direct government role in shipping.
1652	Six ships commissioned.	Immediate result of shipbuilding programme.
Mid-seventeenth century	About fifty Indian ships operated from Surat.	Baseline for late-century shipping growth.
1660	Coromandel cloth exports were three times Gujarat's.	Southern textile zone became dominant for Europe.
Under Shah Jahan	Hindus about 24 per cent of nobility.	Continued composite elite growth.
Later Aurangzeb reign	Hindus about 33 per cent; total Hindu nobles 4.5 times higher.	Marathas formed more than half of Hindu nobles.
By end of seventeenth century	At least 112 Indian ships at Surat; eastern exports equalled Coromandel.	Strong indigenous shipping and eastern trade.
1701	England banned painted, dyed, printed or stained Asian calicoes.	Protectionist response to Indian textile popularity.
1718	Abdul Ghafur Bohra died with Rs 55 lakh and seventeen ships.	Scale of Indian merchant wealth.
1719	White calico exports reached 20 lakh pieces.	Shows bans failed to stop demand.
Eighteenth century	Potato and red chillies adopted; Marwaris expanded east and south.	Developments explicitly placed after the core period.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Material poverty and nutritional poverty	Clothing, shoes and furniture were scarce, but cheap fats, milk and varied staples could sustain a better diet.
Khudkasht and muzarian	Khudkasht were resident land-holding cultivators; muzarian were poorer tenants generally paying higher rates.
Zamindar land and zamindari rights	A zamindar could own fields and collect revenue, but did not own every peasant holding.
Zamindar and raja	Persian writers could call both zamindar, but rajas enjoyed wider territory and autonomy.
Cash crop and subsistence crop	Cash or superior crops paid higher dues in money; food crops also entered large interregional markets.
Noble consumption and economic waste	Luxury absorbed income, but also stimulated crafts, markets, construction, credit and shipping.
Foreign-origin and foreign-resident nobles	Immigrants came from abroad but settled and assimilated; Bernier's permanent-foreigner picture is rejected.
Middle strata and unified middle class	Numerous intermediate groups existed but had no shared class identity or municipal authority.
Hundi and coin	Hundi transferred credit and insured risk; rupees remained standard metallic currency.
Wholesale and retail traders	Seths, bohras and modis handled long distance; beoparis or baniks retailed and collected locally.
European naval dominance and trade dominance	Europeans controlled shipping routes increasingly but retained only a fraction of Indian foreign trade.

Often confused	The distinction
European and Indian profit needs	Indians accepted roughly 10-15 per cent; Dutch companies expected 40-50 per cent to cover overheads.
European market and intra-Asian trade	Europe grew rapidly, but Asian trade remained more lucrative and consumed most spices and textiles.
Bullion sink and literal burial	Bernier's phrase signals favourable balance, but exaggerates because all states tried to retain precious metals.
Growth and capitalist transition	The chapter finds economic expansion but explicitly leaves an autonomous capitalist path doubtful.

Self-test

1. Why do traveller accounts not justify a simple conclusion that ordinary Mughal Indians were uniformly destitute?
2. Compare khudkasht, muzarian and landless labourers.
3. What evidence shows that Mughal agriculture was responsive to markets?
4. How did nobles combine feudal, bureaucratic and commercial characteristics?
5. Why is Bernier's description of the nobility as foreigners misleading?
6. Distinguish a zamindar's ownership rights from zamindari revenue rights.
7. Why does the chapter accept "middle strata" but not one unified middle class?
8. How did banjaras, gumashtas, dalals, hundis and sarrafs support internal trade?
9. What state policies encouraged commercialisation and urbanisation?
10. Why could Indian merchants withstand Dutch and English

competition?

11. Trace the shift in European export sourcing from Gujarat to Coromandel and Bengal.
12. How did foreign trade contribute both to Mughal growth and later European imperial ambition?

Answer key

1. Travellers saw sparse clothing, footwear and housing, but climate and seasonal garments mattered. Cheap ghee, oil and milk plus varied regional staples suggest better nutrition than appearance alone, while inequality meant groups experienced conditions differently.
2. Khudkasht were resident landholders with ploughs, bullocks and customary rates; muzarian were poorer tenants usually paying more; landless labourers and kamin depended on work, lacked productive assets and suffered most in famine.
3. Cultivators switched crops with prices, adopted tobacco and maize, expanded silk, grew cash crops and supplied towns, exports and textile production. Roughly 20 per cent of rural output was marketed despite no major new technique.
4. Land revenue and mansab service made nobles feudal-bureaucratic, while orchards, mandis, loans, partnerships and shipping made them commercial. Their luxury demand also supported construction and crafts.
5. Foreign talent entered service, but immigrants settled permanently and assimilated. By Jahangir and Shah Jahan most nobles were India-born, while Afghans, Hindustanis, Rajputs and Marathas formed growing shares.
6. First cultivation and heredity could create private field ownership. Zamindari was a separate hereditary right to collect state revenue over villages for a share, without dispossessing paying cultivators.
7. Merchants, craftsmen, professionals, scholars, small mansabdars and officials occupied intermediate standards of life. Their different occupations, grants, castes, religions and interests prevented common class organisation.

8. Banjaras carried bulk goods; gumashtas and dalals linked wholesale and local markets; hundis moved insured credit; sarrafs exchanged money, took deposits and lent. Together they reduced transport, information and financial risk.
9. Political order, roads, sarais, inheritance protection, standard high-purity rupees, rahdari prohibition, cash salaries and zabti revenue encouraged marketed production, qasbas, handicrafts and large towns.
10. They understood domestic and Asian markets, worked at lower 10-15 per cent margins, maintained agency networks and ships, and cooperated with Mughal authorities. European factories depended on Indian supply and merchants.
11. Gujarat first supplied indigo and calico. Coromandel equalled Gujarat cloth exports by 1640 and tripled them by 1660. By 1650 Hoogly-Balasore added eastern textiles, silk, sugar and Bihar saltpetre; east equalled Coromandel by century's end.
12. Exports brought bullion, monetisation, urban growth, shipping and manufacturing but also price inflation. European failure to monopolise Asian trade or avoid bullion payment encouraged the later search for territorial revenues, feasible only after Indian political weakening.

Closing perspective

Traveller descriptions must be read comparatively: elite spectacle sharpened their perception of mass poverty, but food prices, climate, custom and seasonal dress complicate a single living-standard verdict. Rural inequality did not mean absence of rights. Paying peasants possessed hereditary cultivation and sale rights, while zamindars held distinct collection and local-power claims.

Religious Thought, Culture, and Artistic Life

Mughal cultural life cannot be reduced to court splendor, and religious history cannot be reduced to an emperor's policy. Court patronage mattered, but so did regional languages, devotional communities, Sufi orders, temples, mosques, schools, workshops, performers, painters, poets, and local traditions that did not wait for imperial direction.

The important movement is between authority and expression. Translation could serve curiosity, governance, prestige, or theological debate. Architecture could display sovereignty and also employ regional forms. Devotional traditions could cross social boundaries while leaving others intact. The chapter keeps those mixed consequences in view.

Cultural Overview

Composite efflorescence. Mughal art, literature, architecture, and music became models for later generations by combining Indian traditions with Turko-Iranian culture inherited from the Timurid court at Samargand.

Necessary Indian base. Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century regional development supplied the rich forms without which, the chapter argues, Mughal cultural achievement would not have been possible.

Participation and assessment. People from many Indian regions, faiths, and racial backgrounds contributed. The chapter

therefore describes the result as tending toward a composite national culture and calls the age a second classical period after the Guptas in north India.

Babur's stance. Conscious of Timurid standards, Babur criticized several existing Indian forms and wanted to establish what he considered proper cultural norms.

Architecture

Gardens and transition. Mughals built forts, palaces, gates, mosques, baolis, public works, and formal gardens with running water. Babur laid gardens near Agra and Lahore; Nishat Bagh, Shalimar, and Pinjore exemplify the tradition. Sher Shah's Sasaram tomb and Old Fort mosque form, in the chapter's judgment, the climax of pre-Mughal and starting point of Mughal style.

Akbar's synthesis. Red-sandstone Agra Fort drew on Gwalior-Jodhpur fort traditions. Fatehpur Sikri, begun in 1572 and completed in eight years, combined Gujarat-Bengal eaves, balconies, kiosks, temple-derived Panch Mahal pillars, glazed blue tiles, and an Iranian half-dome portal at Buland Darwaza; the palace's attribution to a Rajput wife or wives is explicitly probable, not certain.

Marble and the Taj. Humayun's tomb introduced the massive marble and double dome that anticipated the Taj. Late Jahangir architecture moved toward complete marble and semi-precious floral pietra dura, expanded under Shah Jahan. The Taj combines a formal garden, huge outer dome, smaller inner dome, four minarets, screens, restrained inlay, and chhatris.

Shah Jahan and after. Red Fort marked the peak of fort building; marble Moti Masjid and red-sandstone Jama Masjid marked the peak of mosque building. Aurangzeb built less because of economy, but Hindu-Turko-Iranian forms continued into the nineteenth century and influenced local palaces, forts, and Amritsar's repeatedly rebuilt Harmandir.

Painting

Older base and revival. Ajanta, palm-leaf manuscripts, Jain illustration, and fifteenth-century Malwa-Gujarat patronage show an Indian tradition survived after apparent post-eighth-century decline. Humayun brought two Iranian masters, and Akbar placed an imperial workshop under their leadership.

Inclusive workshop. Artists came from many regions and lower castes; Hindus and Muslims worked together, with Daswant and Basawan prominent. Persian fables, the Persian *Mahabharata*, and *Akbar Nama* received illustrations.

Indianization and Europe. Indian scenes, landscapes, peacock blue, Indian red, and rounded brushwork replaced much Persian flatness with three-dimensional effects. Portuguese priests introduced European painting, and artists quietly adopted foreshortening and perspective.

Jahangir's climax. Jahangir claimed he could identify each artist's contribution even when face, body, and feet were painted separately. Portraiture, animals, court, hunt, and battle scenes advanced; Mansur was the leading animal painter.

Dispersal and regional growth. Shah Jahan continued the tradition, while Aurangzeb's lack of interest dispersed artists to Rajasthan and Punjab hills. Rajasthan painting combined Jain-western Indian and Mughal forms with Krishna-Radha, barah-masa, raga, hunt, and court themes; Pahari painting continued them, and later Mughal patrons revived the imperial school.

Language, Literature and Music

Link and record languages. Persian and Sanskrit remained all-India media of government and thought. By Akbar's time, Persian was widespread enough in north India to replace parallel Hindawi revenue records, while Deccani states retained local-language accounts until their late-seventeenth-century extinction.

Persian climax and translation. Abul Fazl's prose became a model; Faizi led poetry and supervised *Mahabharata* transla-

tion. Utbi, Naziri, Iranian migrants, Hindu writers, historians, and dictionary-makers turned the Mughal court into a major Islamic cultural centre.

Sanskrit continuity. South and east Indian rulers sponsored impressive output, Banaras drew scholars from across India, and Brahmins also worked in imperial translation departments.

Regional maturity. Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Rajasthani, and Gujarati lyric used Krishna, Radha, Rama, and *Bhagawat Puran* themes; epics and some Persian works were translated. Alaol wrote and translated in Bengali, while Jaisi's *Padmavat* made Alauddin's Chittor attack an allegory joining Sufi soul-God relations to Hindu maya.

Hindi and other vernaculars. Brij gained Mughal and Hindu patronage; Rahim blended Bhakti and Persian human relations. Tulsidas used eastern Hindi for universal Rama devotion and a quality-based modified caste ideal. Malayalam began an independent literary career, Eknath and Tukaram brought Marathi to an apogee, and Sikh gurus renewed Punjabi.

Music

Shared patronage. Akbar patronized Tansen of Gwalior, credited with new ragas; Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Mughal nobles followed.

Aurangzeb qualification. Popular stories claim he buried music, but the chapter cites recent research that he barred singing only from his court, not instruments. He played veena, while queens, princes, and nobles maintained musical patronage.

Textual evidence. The largest number of Persian books on classical Indian music were written during Aurangzeb's reign, contradicting a simple narrative of total suppression.

Later development. Major further changes came under the eighteenth-century patron Muhammad Shah, who reigned from 1719 to 1748.

Religious Ideas and Beliefs, and Problems of Integration

Sikh institution. The first four gurus emphasized quiet scholarship and meditation. Guru Arjun compiled *Adi-Granth*, adopted aristocratic symbols of spiritual-worldly leadership, and collected one-tenth of Sikh incomes. Akbar's visit to Amritsar is presented as reported rather than certain; Jahangir imprisoned and killed Arjun for alleged aid to rebel Khusrau.

Limited Sikh-Mughal conflicts. Har Govind was imprisoned, released, and reconciled with Jahangir, then clashed with Shah Jahan over a hawk, a Beas city, and seized horses before retiring to Punjab foothills. R.R. Tripathi calls these conflicts inconsequential and personal-political, not religious; the chapter likewise rejects an atmosphere of systematic Sikh-Mughal or Hindu persecution at this stage.

Liberal currents. Shah Jahan showed early orthodoxy and demolished some "new" temples, yet the chapter does not call him narrow and credits Dara's influence. Dara had the *Gita* translated and treated the Vedas as heavenly and Quran-compatible; Dadu preached an uncertainly located Rajasthan-based nipakji path, and Shudra-born Tukaram worshipped Vithoba directly at Pandharpur.

Orthodox reaction. Raghunandan reserved scripture and preaching for Brahmans and reduced Kali-age society to Brahmans and Shudras; Ram Das asserted Brahman privilege through activism. Sirhindi's Naqshbandi revival opposed tauhid, sama, meditation, tomb visits, Hindu association, and liberal Akbar policy and demanded jizyah.

Impact and larger interpretation. Sirhindi's influence was limited: Jahangir imprisoned him for an exalted claim and released him after retraction, while Aurangzeb gave no special attention to his successor. The chapter frames the broader cycle as entrenched privilege versus mass egalitarian-humanistic aspirations; orthodoxy obstructed integration, but Akbar-like liberal policy revived in the eighteenth century.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
Fourteenth-fifteenth centuries	Regional Indian arts and culture develop richly.	Supplies the foundation for Mughal synthesis.
Fifteenth century	Malwa and Gujarat patronize painting.	Keeps manuscript and regional traditions active before Akbar.
1572	Akbar begins Fatehpur Sikri.	Large-scale architectural synthesis begins.
1572-1580	Fatehpur Sikri complex is completed over eight years.	Combines Indian regional and Iranian devices.
Under Akbar	Imperial painting karkhana, translation department, Persian prose-poetry, Tansen patronage, and regional-language court links flourish.	Establishes major composite institutions.
Toward end of Jahangir's reign	All-marble building and pietra dura begin to spread.	Prepares Shah Jahan's architectural style.
Under Jahangir	Portrait and animal painting reach a climax; Guru Arjun dies and Har Govind's relations with the court change.	Major artistic and religious-political developments.
Under Shah Jahan	Taj Mahal, Red Fort, Moti Masjid, and Jama Masjid mark architectural climax.	Consolidates mature Mughal synthesis.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
Under Aurangzeb	Court singing is banned, artists disperse, but instruments and private music continue.	Requires a qualified view of cultural restriction.
Last quarter of seventeenth century	Deccani states cease using local-language revenue records upon extinction.	Ends a distinctive administrative-language practice.
Eighteenth century	Mughal painting revives; Akbar-like liberal policy becomes the chapter's stated norm.	Shows continuity beyond imperial high point.
1719-1748	Muhammad Shah reigns and strongly patronizes music.	Important later phase of musical development.
Eighteenth-early nineteenth centuries	Mughal architecture continues influencing provincial and local buildings.	Long afterlife of the composite style.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Composite culture and absence of conflict	Cultural amalgamation grew through diverse participation, but orthodoxy, privilege, and political clashes remained.
Sher Shah and mature Mughal architecture	Sher Shah marks the pre-Mughal climax and transition; Akbar and Shah Jahan develop the imperial synthesis.
Half-dome and double dome	Half-dome creates a portal facade; double dome separates a large outer shell from a smaller inner ceiling.

Often confused	The distinction
Pietra dura and painted floral design	Pietra dura sets semi-precious stone into marble rather than merely painting a surface.
Persian and Indian painting effects	Persian style is described as flatter; Indian brush added rounded, three-dimensional form and local colours and landscapes.
Mughal and Rajasthan-Pahari painting	Mughal court forms stressed court, hunt, portrait, and animals; regional schools mixed them with Jain and Krishna-Radha traditions.
Persian and Hindawi revenue use	Akbar ended parallel Hindawi records in much of north India; Deccani states kept local-language accounts much longer.
Jaisi and Tulsidas	Jaisi used a historical romance for Sufi-Hindu allegory; Tulsidas taught Rama devotion and humanistic family ideals.
Aurangzeb's singing ban and burial of music	Research cited by the chapter supports a court singing ban, not an end to instruments, queens' patronage, music books, or all music.
Sikh worldly leadership and rebellion	Guru Arjun's wealth and title expressed spiritual eminence; the chapter does not treat them as proof of anti-state rebellion.
Guru Arjun and Guru Har Govind conflicts	Arjun died over alleged aid to Khusrau; Har Govind's clashes arose from specific hawk, city, and horse disputes.
Source narrative and R.R. Tripathi's judgment	The chapter follows Tripathi in calling early Sikh-Mughal conflicts inconsequential and personal-political; this is an attributed interpretation.

Often confused	The distinction
Shah Jahan's intolerance and overall outlook	The chapter notes early orthodoxy and temple demolition but judges that he was not fundamentally narrow, especially under Dara's influence.
Dadu's birthplace and residence	Gujarat birth is stated; Rajasthan residence is phrased tentatively in the source.
Tauhid and Sirhindi's orthodoxy	Tauhid joined God and created being in pantheistic unity; Sirhindi rejected this and Hindu-influenced practices as un-Islamic.
Liberal and orthodox social bases	The chapter says liberal thinkers appealed broadly, while orthodox figures relied on narrow circles and elite support.

Self-test

1. Why does the chapter describe Mughal culture as a composite second classical age?
2. Trace Mughal architecture from Sher Shah and Akbar to Shah Jahan and its provincial afterlife.
3. How did the imperial painting karkhana transform Persian models?
4. Why did Aurangzeb's policies disperse rather than destroy painting and music?
5. Compare the roles of Persian, Sanskrit, Hindawi, and regional languages.
6. How did Jaisi, Rahim, Tulsidas, Eknath, and Alaol represent literary interaction or vernacular confidence?
7. What does the chapter's evidence actually establish about Aurangzeb and music?
8. How did Guru Arjun change Sikh institutions, and why did Jhangir act against him?
9. Why are Guru Har Govind's clashes with Shah Jahan treated

as limited rather than religious war?

10. Compare the liberal ideas of Dara, Dadu, and Tukaram.
11. Compare Raghunandan, Ram Das, and Sirhindi as orthodox reactions.
12. What larger social explanation does the chapter give for cycles of liberalism and orthodoxy?

Answer key

1. Timurid Turko-Iranian heritage combined with rich Indian regional traditions through imperial support and contributions from many faiths, races, and regions; “second classical age” is the chapter’s evaluative label.
2. Sher Shah bridges pre-Mughal and Mughal forms; Akbar joins Indian forts and Gujarat-Bengal features to Iranian portals; marble, double domes, gardens, and pietra dura culminate under Shah Jahan and continue in local states and Harmandir.
3. Iranian masters led diverse Hindu-Muslim artists who illustrated Indian texts and scenes, used Indian colours and rounded form, and added European foreshortening to Persian manuscript technique.
4. Reduced imperial interest sent painters to Rajasthan and Punjab hills, creating regional schools. Aurangzeb barred court singing but played veena, allowed instruments, and did not stop queens, nobles, or authors from supporting music.
5. Persian became government and elite literary language; Sanskrit remained a scholarly link; Hindawi lost parallel northern revenue use under Akbar but local records survived in the Deccan; regional languages matured through bhakti and courts.
6. Jaisi combined Sufi and Hindu allegory; Rahim mixed Bhakti and Persian values; Tulsidas offered accessible Rama humanism; Eknath asserted Marathi equality; Alaol translated Persian material into Bengali.
7. Research cited says singing was banished from Aurangzeb’s court, not instrumental music or all patronage. His veena playing and the many Persian music books of his reign contradict total suppression.

8. Arjun compiled scripture, embodied worldly-spiritual guru-ship, built at Amritsar, and collected one-tenth offerings. Jahangir imprisoned and killed him on a charge of aiding rebel Khusrau with money and prayers.
9. Specific disputes over a hawk, city, and horses caused clashes; reconciliation, court mediation, and Tripathi's personal-political interpretation oppose a general persecution reading.
10. Dara translated and harmonized revelations, Dadu rejected Hindu-Muslim labels for indivisible Brahma, and Tukaram made direct Vithoba devotion available despite Shudra birth.
11. Raghunandan defended Brahman-only scripture, Ram Das asserted Brahman privilege through activism, and Sirhindi opposed pantheism and syncretic practices while demanding jizyah and separation.
12. It sees entrenched privilege and state-linked power confronting the mass aspiration for equality and humanism. Neither trend vanished; orthodoxy obstructed integration, while liberal policy repeatedly returned.

Closing perspective

Mughal cultural achievement depended on pre-existing Indian regional strength as much as Timurid inheritance; imperial patronage organized synthesis but did not create every component. Akbar's building and painting workshops show composite culture as a production system involving craftsmen, lower-caste artists, multiple faiths, translation, imported techniques, and local forms.

Part III

Imperial expansion and regional transformation

Aurangzeb and the Pressures of Empire

Aurangzeb ruled a larger Mughal Empire for longer than any of his predecessors, yet the same expansion that widened imperial reach intensified the cost of holding it. The Deccan wars, Maratha resistance, succession, noble competition, jagir pressure, regional rebellions, and political choices at court acted on one another over decades.

No single explanation can carry the result. Religious policy mattered, but it did not replace fiscal, military, administrative, and regional causes. Expansion brought resources and commitments together. As commitments accumulated, the empire had less room to absorb failure without shifting pressure elsewhere.

Problems of Succession

Structural problem. Muslim, Timurid, Hindu, and Rajput practice offered no universally accepted law of succession. Some Muslim thinkers accepted royal nomination, but it had not worked in Sultanat India; Timurid partition also failed. Tulsidas allowed a ruler to confer the *tika*, yet Rajput brothers could reject the choice, as Rana Sanga's struggle illustrated.

Crisis of 1657-58. Shah Jahan's illness produced rumours that Dara had hidden his death. Shuja in Bengal, Murad in Gujarat, and Aurangzeb in the Deccan prepared for war. Shah Jahan named Dara *wali-ahd*, raised his *mansab* from 40,000 *zat* to an unprecedented 60,000, seated him beside the throne, and

ordered noble obedience, but this confirmed the other princes' fear of partiality.

Dara's decisive errors. He underestimated his rivals and divided his best forces. Sulaiman Shikoh and Jai Singh defeated Shuja near Banaras in February 1658 but pursued him into Bihar; their treaty near Monghyr on 7 May came too late. Jaswant Singh chose an unequal battle at Dharmat on 15 April, and Dara failed to secure either him promptly or the rana of Udaipur, whom Aurangzeb won with rank, parganas, and promises of religious freedom.

Military outcome. At Samugarh on 29 May 1658, roughly equal armies of 50,000-60,000 met, but Aurangzeb's battle-hardened command defeated Dara's hastily assembled force. The Hada Rajputs and Barha Saiyids could not compensate for its weakness. Hindu and Muslim nobles were divided on both sides according to interests and personal associations, so the battle was not simply orthodoxy versus liberalism.

Aftermath and lesson. Aurangzeb confined Shah Jahan for eight years, imprisoned and later killed Murad, defeated Shuja at Khajwah in December 1658, and destroyed Dara's last major attempt at Deorai in March 1659. Dara's execution was given a juristic religious justification that the chapter interprets as a cloak for political necessity. The two-year war established force as the arbiter of succession, though later marriages and restored *mansabs* reunited the defeated princes' descendants with Aurangzeb's family in the third generation.

Aurangzeb's Reign: His Religious Policy

Ruler and believer. Aurangzeb ruled almost fifty years over an empire extending from Kashmir to Jinji and the Hindukush to Chittagong. He was hardworking, austere, disciplinarian, Hanafi, and reputed a *zindapir*. Yet he issued secular *zawabit*, collected in the *Zawabit-i-Alamgiri*, which supplemented and sometimes modified the *sharia* for Indian conditions. The chapter therefore places his orthodoxy inside social, economic, institutional, and

political constraints.

Moral and court regulations. He removed the *kalma* from coins, ended Nauroz, appointed provincial *muhtasibs* to police public intoxicants, brothels, gambling, weights, and measures, but not private life. In 1669 he pensioned court singers while retaining instrumental music and *naubat*; music survived under princes, nobles, and harem patrons, many Persian works on Indian music appeared, and Aurangzeb himself played the *veena*. He ended *jharoka darshan*, restricted imperial weighing, discouraged almanacs, silk, and display, and abolished official history-writing for economy, but some bans were ignored or modified.

Discrimination and practical reversals. Muslim traders initially received import-cess exemption, but abuse led to restoration at half the rate paid by others. His attempt to reserve *peshkar* and *karori* posts for Muslims was modified because of noble resistance and a shortage of qualified candidates. These reversals reveal the gap between preference and workable administration.

Temples. His formal opening rule permitted repair of long-standing temples but not new construction, as farmans for Banaras and Vrindavan indicate. In practice, local interpretation and imperial attitude mattered. Orders of 1665 targeted restored temples in Gujarat, apparently including Somnath; the 1669 action against teaching centres at Thatta, Multan, and Banaras led to the destruction of Vishwanath and Keshava Rai and the erection of mosques. Old temples were also destroyed in the 1679-80 war zones of Jodhpur and Udaipur. The chapter finds no corroboration for Mustaid Khan's claim of a general order to destroy all temples, notes grants to temples and *maths*, and says large-scale southern destruction is not heard of after 1679; nevertheless, policy created disquiet and marked a setback from earlier toleration.

Jizyah and overall judgement. Reimposed in 1679, *jizyah* was light and exempted women, children, disabled and indigent people, and government servants; it was neither an effective conversion device nor chiefly a fiscal response. Proceeds went to the *ulama*, and the measure was ideological and political,

intended to rally Muslims amid Rajput, Maratha, and Deccan conflict. Personal and sometimes humiliating collection caused hartals, corruption, and violence; it was suspended in 1705 and formally abolished in 1712. The chapter rejects both a systematic forced-conversion programme and a plan to turn India from *dar-ul-harb* into *dar-ul-Islam*. Hindus, including Marathas, rose to about one-third of the nobility, but conflict between Aurangzeb's beliefs and political needs produced damaging contradictions.

Political Developments: North India

The succession war allowed local zamindars and rajas to withhold revenue, plunder adjacent lands, and attack imperial high-ways. Aurangzeb's initial programme was therefore the restoration of imperial authority, prestige, revenue, and territories to which the Mughals believed they had a legal claim.

His policy was not uniformly expansionist. Bikaner faced an imperial army and submitted without annexation; in Palamau, by contrast, the ruler was dispossessed for alleged disloyalty and most of the state was annexed.

Champat Rai, the Bundela chief who had first allied with Aurangzeb and then turned to plunder, was relentlessly pursued, but Bundela lands were not annexed. The contrasting cases show consolidation, coercion, and selective absorption rather than an automatic forward policy.

Northeast and East India

Background. The decline of Kamata was followed by Kuch or Cooch Bihar power in north Bengal and western Assam. A seventeenth-century division invited Mughal intervention; in 1612 Mughal-Kuch forces reached the Bar Nadi, and a 1638 Ahom treaty made that river the boundary and placed Guwahati under the Mughals.

Mir Jumla's advance. As Bengal governor, he annexed Cooch Bihar after it rejected Mughal suzerainty, occupied the Ahom capital Garhgaon for six months, and forced the 1663 treaty. The Ahom ruler gave a daughter to the Mughal harem, paid indemnity and an annual twenty elephants, while the frontier moved from the Bar Nadi to the Bharali.

Limits of conquest. Mir Jumla died soon afterwards; the distant, relatively poor, mountainous region and warlike neighbours made enforcement impractical. In 1667 the Ahoms recovered their cessions and Guwahati, while Cooch Bihar had already expelled the Mughals. A decade and a half of warfare, much of it under Raja Ram Singh without adequate resources, ended with a boundary west of Guwahati. Ahom avoidance of pitched battles and use of guerrilla tactics exposed imperial limits, even though the invasion and war weakened the Ahom monarchy.

Shaista Khan's alternative. He abandoned Mir Jumla's forward policy, settled with Cooch Bihar, built a navy against Magh or Arakanese piracy, took Sondip, won over the Firingis, destroyed the Arakan fleet, and captured Chittagong early in 1666. Safer seas stimulated foreign trade and cultivation in east Bengal; the Pathan rebellion in Orissa was also suppressed and Balasore reopened.

Popular Revolts and Movements for Regional Independence: Jats, Afghans and Sikhs

Aurangzeb inherited or intensified multiple problems: Maratha independence in the Deccan, Jat and Rajput conflict in north India, and Afghan and Sikh resistance in the northwest. Their simultaneity should not obscure their different origins.

The chapter classifies the Rajput dispute as primarily succession-related, Maratha resistance as local independence, Jat conflict as peasant-agrarian, Sikh mobilization as the case where religion had the strongest role, and Afghan opposition as tribal but also

oriented toward a separate state.

Economic and social tensions, regional aspirations, and religion interacted. A movement against a predominantly Muslim centre could acquire Hindu symbols, while leaders could use religious language to expand support; this does not prove that every conflict was simply a Hindu reaction to religious persecution.

Long-term outcomes also differed: Jat and Sikh mobilization eventually contributed to independent regional states, whereas the chapter treats the Afghan rising mainly as a frontier and regional-freedom movement during this reign.

Jats and Satnamis

Agrarian setting. Jats on both sides of the Yamuna in the Agra-Delhi region were mainly cultivators, with only a few zamindars. Revenue disputes had caused conflict under Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Their difficult terrain and location astride the imperial road to the Deccan and western seaports made them both resilient and strategically important.

Gokla and the Satnamis. Gokla, a local zamindar, led the Mathura Jats in 1669; peasant levies reached about 20,000, but Aurangzeb personally defeated them and Gokla was executed. At Narnaul in 1672, a clash with a local official drew Satnami peasants, artisans, and low-caste groups into rebellion. Their strict egalitarian code rejected distinctions of caste, rank, and Hindu-Muslim identity; local Hindu and Rajput zamindars nevertheless sided with the Mughals.

Rajaram and zamindari conflict. Rajaram's 1685 rising used better organization, guerrilla warfare, and plunder. Aurangzeb appointed Bishan Singh of Amber as Mathura's *faujdar* and granted him the region in *zamindari*, sharpening conflict between mainly Jat cultivating proprietors or primary zamindars and Rajput intermediary revenue collectors.

Transformation. Rajaram and Churaman submitted by 1691, but continuing plunder made the Delhi-Agra road unsafe. In the eighteenth century, imperial weakness enabled Churaman to ex-

pel Rajput zamindars and create a Jat principality, transforming a peasant uprising into a state ruled by Jat chiefs.

The Afghans

Afghan tribes between Punjab and Kabul lived in a poor mountain zone. Caravan raiding and Mughal military service were major livelihoods; subsidies usually maintained a tacit peace, but demographic pressure, fierce autonomy, or ambitious leaders could break it.

In 1667 Yusufzai leader Bhagu proclaimed Muhammad Shah king and himself *wazir*. The ethical, pir-centred Raushanai movement supplied an intellectual and moral background. The rebels ravaged Hazara, Attock, and Peshawar and stopped Khyber traffic before Amir Khan, aided by Rajputs, broke their resistance; Jaswant Singh became *thanedar* of Jamrud in 1671.

In 1672 Afridi chief Akmal Khan proclaimed kingship, had the *khutba* read and coins struck in his name, and united tribes to close the Khyber. Amir Khan overextended in a defile: 10,000 men died and goods and cash worth two crores were lost. Khushhal Khan Khattak joined the widening movement.

Shujaat Khan was routed in 1674 but rescued by Jaswant Singh's Rathors. Aurangzeb stayed near Peshawar from mid-1674 to the end of 1675 and used both force and diplomacy to divide the united front and restore peace.

The rising disproves any idea that resistance was only Hindu. It reduced Mughal pressure on Shivaji and obstructed a forward Deccan policy until 1676, by which time Shivaji had crowned himself and allied with Bijapur and Golconda.

The Sikhs

Before 1675. Aurangzeb had no direct clash with the Sikhs before Tegh Bahadur's execution. Guru Har Rai rejected his elder son Ram Rai and chose the young Har Kishan; Tegh Bahadur be-

came guru in 1664. Aurangzeb gave Ram Rai land at Dehra Dun but did not settle the Sikh succession in his favour. Tegh Bahadur travelled east and served with Ram Singh in Assam until 1671.

Execution and disputed causes. Tegh Bahadur was brought to Delhi with five followers in 1675, refused to recant, and was beheaded. Guru Govind Singh's poetic account connects the sacrifice to defence of the Hindu faith after an appeal by Kashmiri Brahmans, but details are missing. A later Kashmir-persecution tradition conflicts with the named governors and local histories; the miracle-test story conflicts with Aurangzeb's absence from Delhi. A later Persian law-and-order account alleges extortion with Hafiz Adam but contains chronological and locational errors, while another Persian source portrays the guru as protecting peasants from collectors, jagirdars, and zamindars.

Chapter's assessment. The author infers that Aurangzeb probably viewed the case as public order, but the heightened atmosphere produced by sharia-centred policy and temple destruction enlarged its repercussions. The execution is judged unjustified and narrow regardless of motive.

Khalsa and hill conflict. The Sikhs withdrew toward the Punjab hills, and Guru Govind Singh founded the Khalsa in 1699 at Makhowwal or Anandpur. Local Hindu hill rajas first tried to use him in their rivalries, then attacked in 1704 and requested Mughal aid. Thus the ensuing struggle was not primarily religious; local political rivalry and the Sikh movement's growth were central.

Anandpur aftermath. Wazir Khan's forces joined the siege, allegedly violated safe conduct, and attacked at a swollen stream. Two of the guru's sons were beheaded at Sirhind for refusing Islam, and two others died in battle. The chapter doubts Aurangzeb ordered the sons' killing because he later sought conciliation and invited the guru to the Deccan. Guru Govind Singh did not establish a state, but he forged the organization and political-military tradition that could do so later.

Relations with the Rajputs: Breach with Marwar and Mewar

Alliance before the breach. Jahangir's 1613 settlement with Mewar continued under Shah Jahan, whose Rajput contingents served from the Deccan to Balkh and Qandhar. Although provincial governorships and new leading dynastic marriages ceased, Jaswant Singh and Jai Singh each held 7,000/7,000. Aurangzeb raised the Mewar ruler to 6,000/6,000, restored Jaswant after Dharmat and later defections, made him Gujarat governor, and retained Jai Singh as confidant until 1667.

Marwar succession. Jaswant died in late 1678 without a surviving son, though two sons were later born at Lahore. Mughal custom allowed temporary *khalisa* administration in disputed successions; debt and possible disorder supplied further reasons. Yet officials searched for treasure, occupied Marwar, and destroyed or closed old temples, behaving as conquerors. The chapter rejects Jadunath Sarkar's claim that Aurangzeb intended permanent annexation for the Delhi-Gujarat route.

Competing settlements. Aurangzeb gave the *tika* to Inder Singh for thirty-six lakh rupees, perhaps to correct Amar Singh's earlier exclusion or avoid minority rule. Contemporary evidence does not support the later claim that Ajit Singh was offered Jodhpur only if he converted. The *Hukumatri-Bahi* instead records an offered *mansab* and the Sojat and Jaitaran jagirs, implying division between family branches.

War with Marwar and Mewar. Durgadas and the Rathor sardars rejected compromise, escaped with Ajit, and crowned him. Aurangzeb removed the unpopular Inder but called Ajit a pretender, occupied Jodhpur, and drove Durgadas and Ajit into Mewar. Rana Raj Singh opposed Mughal interference, resented pressure on Dungarpur and Banswara, and feared Marwar's occupation. Mughal attack in November 1679 met hill guerrilla resistance and stalemate.

Failure and consequence. Prince Akbar allied with Durgadas and marched toward Ajmer in January 1681, but delay and Aurangzeb's false letters dispersed the coalition. A treaty with Rana

Jagat Singh exchanged parganas for *jizyah*, granted a rank of 5,000, and required non-support of Ajit. Ajit was recognized only in 1698, while Jodhpur remained under Mughal control until Aurangzeb's death in 1707. Though fighting after 1681 was limited and other Rajputs stayed in service, the chapter judges the policy clumsy: it gained nothing, weakened a trusted alliance, damaged prestige, and created suspicion, but did not amount to a fixed programme against Hinduism.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1612-38	Mughal-Kuch forces reach Bar Nadi; a 1638 Ahom treaty fixes it as the frontier and gives the Mughals Guwahati	Establishes the frontier later reversed by Ahom recovery.
1613	Jahangir settles the long Mewar conflict	Foundation of the Mughal-Rajput alliance.
Late 1657	Shah Jahan becomes gravely ill; sons prepare for succession war	Exposes the absence of an accepted succession law.
February 1658	Sulaiman Shikoh defeats Shuja near Banaras	A Dara-aligned success that becomes strategically costly when pursuit delays return.
15 April 1658	Battle of Dharmat	Aurangzeb and Murad defeat Jaswant Singh and gain prestige.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
7 May 1658	Treaty with Shuja near Monghyr	Sulaiman begins returning too late for the central contest.
29 May 1658	Battle of Samugarh	Superior command gives Aurangzeb the decisive victory over Dara.
December 1658	Battle of Khajwah near Allahabad	Aurangzeb defeats Shuja.
March 1659	Battle of Deorai near Ajmer	Dara's final major battle; he is later captured in the Bolan Pass and executed.
April 1660	Shuja driven into Arakan	Eliminates another contender; Shuja and his family soon die there.
1663	Mir Jumla imposes treaty on the Ahoms	Mughal frontier advances to Bharali but cannot be held.
1664	Guru Tegh Bahadur succeeds as Sikh guru	Begins the leadership later drawn into confrontation.
1665-66	Renewed order against restored Gujarat temples; Shaista Khan captures Chittagong	Contrasts stricter religious enforcement with durable eastern expansion.
1667	Ahoms recover Guwahati; Bhagu's Yusufzai rising begins	Simultaneously reveals eastern retreat and northwestern unrest.
1669	Puritanical regulations, temple actions, and Gokla's Jat rebellion	Court reform, religious conflict, and agrarian revolt coincide.
1671	Jaswant Singh posted at Jamrud	Imperial attempt to supervise the Afghan frontier.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1672	Satnami revolt and Akmal Khan's Afridi uprising	Different social and tribal challenges erupt in the same year.
Mid-1674 to end-1675	Aurangzeb remains near Peshawar	Force and diplomacy break the Afghan united front.
1675	Guru Tegh Bahadur executed at Delhi	Major turning point in Sikh-Mughal relations.
Late 1678	Jaswant Singh dies	Opens the Marwar succession dispute.
1679	<i>Jizyah</i> reimposed; Mughal-Marwar breach widens	Religious-political assertion coincides with Rajput war.
November 1679	Aurangzeb attacks Mewar	Mewar enters the Marwar conflict; hill warfare produces stalemate.
January 1681	Prince Akbar and Durgadas march on Ajmer	A near-dangerous imperial rebellion collapses through delay and deception.
1685	Rajaram leads second Jat uprising	Guerrilla organization and zamindari conflict deepen resistance.
1691	Rajaram and Churaman compelled to submit	Military containment fails to remove Jat unrest.
1698	Ajit Singh recognized, but Jodhpur remains under Mughal control	Partial settlement leaves the Rajput grievance unresolved.
1699	Guru Govind Singh founds the Khalsa	Converts Sikh organization into a stronger military brotherhood.
1704	Hill rajas attack Anandpur and seek Mughal aid	The struggle combines local rivalry with fear of Sikh power.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1705	<i>Jizyah</i> suspended during the southern war	Political necessity overrides ideological commitment.
1707	Aurangzeb dies	Rajput settlement remains incomplete; wider imperial crisis continues.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Nomination, partition, and primogeniture	Nomination and Timurid partition were known but not accepted in practice; the chapter does not present primogeniture as the governing Mughal rule.
Dara versus Aurangzeb	Their contest was not simply liberalism versus orthodoxy; mixed Hindu-Muslim noble coalitions followed interests and personal ties.
<i>Sharia</i> and <i>zawabit</i>	<i>Sharia</i> supplied religious law; secular <i>zawabit</i> supplemented and sometimes modified it for Indian governing conditions.
Ban on new temples and general temple destruction	The formal rule protected long-standing sites and repair, while later punitive and political actions destroyed selected old and new sites; no general empire-wide order is established.
Temple policy and forced conversion	The chapter condemns discriminatory temple policy but finds no evidence of systematic, large-scale forced conversion.
<i>Jizyah</i> as fiscal tax and ideological measure	Its proceeds bypassed the treasury for the ulama; the chapter treats political-religious mobilization, not fiscal crisis, as central.

Often confused	The distinction
Mir Jumla and Shaista Khan	Mir Jumla pursued spectacular inland frontier expansion that collapsed; Shaista Khan used settlement and naval power for durable coastal gains.
Jats and Satnamis	Jat revolt centred on agrarian and zamindari relations; Satnamis were an egalitarian peasant-artisan religious body whose local clash became rebellion.
Jat and Afghan resistance	Jats fought in an agrarian corridor and later formed a principality; Afghans fought from a tribal mountain frontier around routes, subsidies, and sovereignty.
Tegh Bahadur traditions	Sikh, later Kashmiri, miracle, Persian official, and peasant-protection explanations conflict; the chapter retains uncertainty rather than claiming one proven cause.
Sikh-Mughal and Sikh-hill raja conflict	Religion mattered strongly to Sikh identity, but the 1704 conflict also arose from local Hindu hill rivalries and fear of growing Sikh power.
Temporary <i>khalisa</i> and permanent annexation	Direct administration during disputed succession was a Mughal convention; the chapter rejects the claim that Aurangzeb initially meant permanent strategic annexation of Marwar.
Rajput breach and total Rajput defection	Marwar and Mewar relations were gravely damaged, yet Hada, Kachhwaha, and other Rajput contingents continued imperial service.
Northern strain and the empire's main war	The chapter treats these conflicts as serious burdens but says the real conflict lay in the Deccan.

Self-test

1. Why did Shah Jahan's nomination of Dara fail to prevent the succession war, and which three factors most directly aided Aurangzeb?
2. Why does the chapter reject the description of Samugarh as a battle between religious orthodoxy and liberalism?
3. In what ways did *zawabit* and the reversals over trade cess and revenue appointments qualify the image of a purely sharia-governed state?
4. What evidence supports a selective rather than universal interpretation of Aurangzeb's temple destruction, and why does the chapter still judge the policy damaging?
5. Why was the 1679 *jizyah* neither mainly a conversion tax nor a fiscal emergency measure?
6. Compare Mir Jumla's Assam campaign with Shaista Khan's Chittagong campaign in strategy and result.
7. Distinguish the main social or political bases of the Jat, Sat-nami, Afghan, Sikh, and Rajput conflicts.
8. What competing explanations are given for Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution, and what conclusion does the chapter draw?
9. How did the Jat movement change between Gokla's rebellion and Churaman's eighteenth-century principality?
10. Why did the Marwar succession dispute expand into war with Mewar, and what were its most important imperial consequences?
11. How did geography and guerrilla warfare limit Mughal power in Assam, Mewar, and the Jat region?
12. What is the chapter's final balance between Mughal strength, northern strain, and the Deccan?

Answer key

1. No succession rule made nomination binding; Shah Jahan's preference strengthened rival resolve. Aurangzeb benefited from superior command and experienced troops, Dara's divided counsel and deployment errors, and successful manip-

- ulation of noble and Rajput alliances.
2. Hindu and Muslim nobles were present on both sides, and their choices followed personal associations and interests. The immediate decision came from leadership and military readiness, not a neat ideological division.
 3. *Zawabit* were secular decrees that could supplement or modify *sharia*. Cess privileges for Muslims were curtailed when abused, and Muslim-only revenue appointments were reversed because nobles resisted and qualified personnel were lacking.
 4. The formal rule protected longstanding temples and repair; extant farmans, continuing grants, the absence of a corroborated general order, and the decline of large-scale destruction after 1679 point to selection. Yet punitive destruction of major old temples and wartime sites marked a retreat from toleration and encouraged fear and opportunistic local action.
 5. Its burden was light and major vulnerable groups and government servants were exempt, so it did not cause significant conversion. At the same time Aurangzeb abolished other cesses and assigned *jizyah* income to the ulama rather than the treasury; political and ideological rallying was the main logic.
 6. Mir Jumla used deep territorial conquest, captured Garhgaon, and imposed the 1663 treaty, but distance and Ahom resistance erased the gains. Shaista Khan limited commitments, built a navy, isolated the Arakanese, and captured Chittagong, producing lasting commercial and agrarian benefits.
 7. Jats had a peasant-agrarian and zamindari base; Satnamis were egalitarian peasants and artisans; Afghans combined tribal economy, freedom, and regional sovereignty; Sikh mobilization gave religion the strongest organizing role but also reflected local politics; Rajput conflict grew from succession, autonomy, honour, and imperial interference.
 8. Explanations include defence of Hindu faith after a Kashmiri appeal, alleged Kashmir persecution, a failed miracle test, official claims of extortion and rebellion risk, and protection of peasants from officials. The evidence conflicts; the author

tentatively sees a law-and-order rationale but unequivocally judges the execution unjustified and consequential.

9. Gokla led a large but conventionally defeated peasant rising in 1669. Rajaram later added guerrilla warfare amid conflict between Jat primary and Rajput intermediary zamindars; Churaman eventually used imperial weakness to create a Jat-ruled principality.
10. Mewar opposed imperial interference, feared occupation of neighbouring Marwar, supported Ajit's claim, and had grievances over Dungarpur and Banswara. The war yielded no stable gain, hurt military prestige, weakened a trusted alliance, and made Mughal assurances appear unreliable.
11. Ahoms used riverine-distance advantages and avoided pitched battle; Mewar's hills frustrated Mughal penetration; Jat terrain aided recurring local resistance and control of a vital route. Imperial armies could punish but struggled to impose durable order in all three.
12. The empire remained territorially vast and capable of major victories, but succession violence, ideological contradiction, frontier overextension, local resistance, and alliance damage accumulated. These conflicts strained it, while the chapter reserves primary importance for the unresolved Deccan struggle.

Closing perspective

The succession war demonstrates an institutional weakness at the apex of Mughal rule: neither nomination nor partition constrained princes, so military victory destroyed political capital and made each succession potentially ruinous. Aurangzeb's religious policy is best analysed as a contradiction between a Hanafi ruler's desire to assert Islamic norms and an emperor's need to govern a Hindu-majority society through Hindu rajas, zamindars, officials, and nobles. Neither a wholly secular nor a uniformly theocratic label fits the chapter's evidence.

From Imperial Crisis to Regional Power

After Aurangzeb, Mughal authority weakened through succession struggles, noble conflict, fiscal strain, military challenge, and the growing independence of regional powers. The center lost control unevenly. Hyderabad, Bengal, Awadh, Maratha power, Sikh organization, Jat states, and other formations did not emerge from nothing; many used Mughal offices, revenue practices, military labor, and political language while redirecting them.

Disintegration therefore describes a loss of imperial coordination, not the disappearance of state capacity. The eighteenth century inherited institutions, markets, elites, conflicts, and regional ambitions from the Mughal order. That inheritance is the bridge between medieval and modern Indian history.

The Rise of the Marathas

Prior foundations. Marathas already occupied important civil and military positions under Ahmadnagar and Bijapur. Malik Ambar used large numbers as loose auxiliaries, while families such as the Mores, Ghatages and Nimbalkars exercised local authority. Unlike the Rajputs, however, they possessed no large, consolidated state.

Shahji's role. Shahji Bhonsale had acted as a kingmaker in Ahmadnagar and resisted the Mughals. Under the treaty of 1636 he surrendered the lands he dominated, entered Bijapur's service,

and turned toward Karnataka, where he tried to establish a semi-independent principality around Bangalore.

A frontier pattern. Shahji's project resembled Mir Jumla's attempt on the Coromandel coast and the semi-independent conduct of the Sidi or Abyssinian chiefs on the western coast. Weak central control and competing Deccani-Mughal claims encouraged ambitious service elites to territorialize their power.

Historical significance. This was the immediate background to Shivaji's effort around Poona. The chapter therefore presents Maratha state formation not as a sudden event but as the enlargement and consolidation of power already developing within the Deccani political system.

Early Career of Shivaji

Fort-based beginning. Shahji left the Poona jagir to Jija Bai and Shivaji. At about eighteen, Shivaji overran Rajgarh, Kondana and Torna in 1645–47; after Dadaji Kondadeo died in 1647, he gained full control.

Javli and the Maval base. In 1656 Shivaji acquired Javli and the More treasure by treachery. This made him master of the Mavala highlands, opened routes toward Satara and Konkan, supplied Mavali infantry, and enabled further seizure and strengthening of forts.

Flexible alignment. The Mughal invasion of Bijapur in 1657 protected him from Bijapuri retaliation. He negotiated with Aurangzeb, then raided Mughal territory, was pardoned when Aurangzeb turned north for the succession war, and resumed expansion against Bijapur when imperial pressure receded.

Afzal Khan and reputation. Sent with 10,000 men, Afzal Khan tried to bring Shivaji to an interview. The author stresses that treachery was common to both sides; convinced of a trap, Shivaji killed him in 1659, routed his army, took its artillery, seized Panhala and expanded through south Konkan and Kolhapur. Fame, including belief in magical powers, drew Maratha recruits and Afghan mercenaries.

Against Shaista Khan. Shaista Khan occupied Poona in 1660 and secured north Konkan. Shivaji's night attack in 1663 killed the Khan's son and a captain and wounded the Khan; Aurangzeb transferred the disgraced commander to Bengal. Shivaji then sacked Surat, the leading Mughal port, in 1664 and returned with major treasure.

Treaty of Purandar and Shivaji's Visit to Agra

Jai Singh's method. Given full authority and direct access to Aurangzeb, Jai Singh neither underestimated Shivaji nor relied on force alone. He tried to isolate him diplomatically, won over opponents, and besieged Purandar in 1665, where Shivaji had placed family and treasure.

Purandar terms. Shivaji surrendered 23 of 35 forts and territory yielding four lakh huns annually; he retained 12 forts yielding one lakh huns on condition of loyalty and service. He received his existing Bijapuri Konkan holding worth four lakh huns and the right to conquer Balaghat territory worth five lakh huns, but owed the Mughals forty lakh huns in instalments. His minor son Sambhaji received a mansab of 5,000 because Shivaji avoided regular personal service, though Shivaji promised to join Deccan campaigns.

The fatal flaw. Jai Singh intended the settlement to make Shivaji a Mughal partner in conquering Bijapur and then the wider Deccan. But Shivaji's compensation depended upon territory yet to be conquered, while Aurangzeb remained suspicious of him and hesitant about a joint Mughal-Maratha attack.

Campaign and Agra failure. The Bijapur expedition failed and Shivaji could not take Panhala. At Agra, he was placed among mansabdars of 5,000, the rank already given to his minor son, and Aurangzeb did not speak with him during the birthday ceremony. Shivaji angrily rejected service and escaped detention in 1666 before a final punishment decision.

Turning point. The author calls Agra a decisive political failure. Jai Singh valued Shivaji as an ally, but Aurangzeb treated him as a petty landholder; Shivaji's two quiet years did not repair the distrust.

Final Breach with Shivaji: Shivaji's Administration and Achievements

Renewed expansion and sovereignty. Aurangzeb's narrow reading of Purandar left Shivaji without Bijapuri compensation and, in the author's view, pushed him back to war. After 1670 he recovered forts, raided Berar and Khandesh, and gained Panhala and Satara. His 1674 Raigarh coronation, elite marriages and Kshatriya declaration raised him above rival chiefs and enabled sovereign treaties.

Karnataka expedition. In 1676 Madanna and Akhanna helped arrange an agreement with the Qutb Shah: an annual subsidy of one lakh huns, a resident Maratha ambassador, troops, artillery, campaign money, and sharing of territory and booty. Shivaji captured Jinji and Vellore and much of Ekoji's territory. Yet despite the title *Haindava-Dharmoddhara*, he plundered the Hindu population and refused Golconda its promised share, explicitly exposing the gap between religious title and political conduct.

Administrative structure. Shivaji borrowed from Deccani practice. The Ashtapradhan were individually responsible to him, not a cabinet: Peshwa (finance and general administration), sar-i-naubat or senapati (military honor), majumdar (accounts), wakenavis (intelligence and posts), surunavis or chitnis (correspondence), dabir (ceremony and foreign affairs), nyayadhish (justice) and panditrao (charity).

Army and forts. Regular troops normally received cash, though chiefs could receive saranjam. Strict discipline excluded women and dancing girls and required accounting for plunder. The paga contained roughly 30,000–40,000 cavalry, distinct from silahdar auxiliaries; salaried havaldars supervised it. Mavali

foot soldiers and gunners held forts, and three equal-ranking officers were reportedly placed in each fort to check treachery.

Revenue and assessment. Revenue practice followed Malik Ambar's pattern, with a new assessment by Annaji Datto in 1679. Shivaji did not abolish deshmukhi or jagirs, but tightly controlled hereditary mirasdars. Sabhasad later described such holders as underpaying the state, fortifying villages and maintaining armed men; Shivaji demolished their bastions and made them submit. Chauth, one-quarter of land revenue, supplemented income from neighboring Mughal lands.

Overall assessment. The author sees Shivaji as an able general, tactician, diplomat and state-builder. Plunder funded much of the army, but the polity should not be reduced to a mere war-state: its regional character, curbing of deshmukhs and popular base made it an assertion against Mughal encroachment. Jinji later provided Rajaram refuge; Shivaji died in 1680.

Aurangzeb and the Deccani States, 1658--87

Three phases. Up to 1668 the Mughals tried to recover former Ahmadnagar territories assigned to Bijapur in 1636. Up to 1684 they treated the Marathas as the main danger and pressured Bijapur and Golconda to cooperate, while also encroaching upon and subordinating them. In the last phase Aurangzeb concluded that both states had to be conquered before the Marathas could be destroyed.

Broken framework of 1636. Shah Jahan had promised not to conquer Bijapur or Golconda after rewarding their withdrawal of support from the Marathas, but in 1657–58 both were threatened with extinction. Golconda paid a large indemnity and Bijapur agreed to surrender former Nizam Shahi lands.

Imperial rationale and fiscal reality. Mughal claims of compensation rested on treating Deccani conquests in Karnataka as gains by imperial vassals under Mughal protection. The author

instead emphasizes the high cost of Deccan armies and insufficient local revenue, long supplemented from Malwa and Gujarat.

Long-term consequence. Limited Mughal advance destroyed treaty trust and, the chapter argues, made a later “union of hearts” against the Marathas psychologically impossible.

The First Phase, 1658--68

Two immediate problems. Aurangzeb faced Shivaji's rise and Bijapur's retention of lands ceded in 1636. Kalyani and Bidar had been secured in 1657, Parenda through bribery in 1660, but Sholapur remained.

Jai Singh's strategic insight. Aurangzeb initially ordered him to punish both Shivaji and Adil Shah, but Jai Singh warned against simultaneous war. He alone advocated a full forward Deccan policy and held that Bijapur's conquest was the preface to control of the entire Deccan and Karnataka, anticipating the policy Aurangzeb adopted about twenty years later.

Why Aurangzeb hesitated. The book labels the reasons conjectural: Iranian pressure, a long campaign requiring imperial command, danger in empowering a prince or noble, and Shah Jahan's continued life.

Failure at Bijapur. In 1665 Jai Singh lacked sufficient resources and siege guns. Golconda reinforced Bijapur, the Deccanis devastated the countryside and denied supplies, and the Mughal retreat was costly. Jai Singh gained no money or territory; Aurangzeb's censures contributed to the strain before his death in 1667. The Mughals obtained Sholapur by bribery in 1668.

The Second Phase, 1668--84

Tripartite project. From 1672 Madanna and Akhanna effectively directed Golconda and tried to align Golconda, Bijapur and Shivaji. Bijapuri factional struggles and Shivaji's ambition repeatedly

disturbed the arrangement, while Bijapur factions shifted between pro- and anti-Mughal positions according to immediate interest.

Mughal objective. Aurangzeb was alarmed by Maratha growth yet reluctant to expand fully. He repeatedly tried to install a Bijapuri faction willing to cooperate against Shivaji and resist Golconda's leadership.

Unintended result. Military and diplomatic intervention did not isolate Shivaji. It repeatedly reconstituted a united Deccani front against the Mughals.

Diler Khan's failure. In 1679–80 Diler Khan could not defeat the combined opposition. Prem Naik of Berar sent 30,000 matchlock-armed Karnataki infantry to Bijapur, and Shivaji sent relief forces while raiding Mughal lands. Diler Khan achieved little beyond exposing imperial territory and was recalled.

The Third Phase, 1684--87

From pressure to coercion. Aurangzeb reached the Deccan in 1681 pursuing Prince Akbar. He attacked Sambhaji and tried to detach Bijapur and Golconda, but both saw the Marathas as their shield.

Bijapur. Aurangzeb demanded provisions, free passage, 5,000–6,000 cavalry and the expulsion of anti-Mughal Sharza Khan. Adil Shah instead sought aid from Golconda and Sambhaji. Full imperial force prevailed only after an eighteen-month siege, and Bijapur fell in 1686, a duration the author uses to vindicate the earlier failures of Jai Singh and Diler Khan.

Golconda. Aurangzeb condemned Qutb Shah's empowerment of Madanna and Akhanna, his aid to Shivaji and his dispatch of 40,000 troops to Bijapur. After the Mughal occupation of Golconda in 1685, Qutb Shah accepted indemnity, territorial concessions and removal of the brothers; Madanna and Akhanna were murdered in 1686.

Costly triumph. Concessions did not save the state. A new siege began early in 1687, and the fort fell after more than six

months through treachery and bribery. The author treats annexation not as the completion of Aurangzeb's task but as the beginning of its hardest phase.

Aurangzeb, the Marathas and the Deccan: The Last Phase, 1687--1707

Sambhaji and dispersed resistance. Sambhaji was captured at Sangameshwar and executed in 1689 as rebel and infidel. The author calls this a major political error: it removed a recognized negotiator, gave the Marathas a new cause, and freed sardars to disperse, raid and reassemble. Rajaram was crowned and escaped to Jinji, spreading resistance to the east coast.

Overextension. Aurangzeb rejected advice to return north or preserve Deccani vassals in Karnataka and imprisoned Shah Alam for negotiating. Annexation lengthened vulnerable communications and weakened administration around Bijapur.

Fort war. Aurangzeb refused talks from 1690 to 1703. Jinji fell in 1698 but Rajaram escaped and returned toward Satara as Marathas retook forts. From 1700 to 1705 the aged emperor moved from siege to siege; floods, disease, mobile Maratha forces, disaffection and exhaustion eroded the army. Some jagirdars secretly paid chauth for protection.

Failed settlement with Shahu. In 1703 Aurangzeb considered releasing Sambhaji's captive son Shahu, who had been well treated and held the title raja with a mansab of 7,000/7,000. The proposed recognition included Shivaji's swarajya and sardeshmukhi in the Deccan; more than seventy Maratha sardars assembled, but Aurangzeb cancelled the arrangement because he distrusted their intentions.

End. By 1706 Aurangzeb accepted that all forts could not be subdued and retreated toward Aurangabad under Maratha pressure. He died there in 1707, leaving a distracted empire whose internal problems were converging.

Decline of the Mughal Empire: Responsibility of Aurangzeb

Problem and method. After 1707 noble factions, increasingly autonomous governors and Maratha raids weakened the empire; Nadir Shah's capture of the emperor and sack of Delhi in 1739 publicly demonstrated that weakness. The chapter asks how much came from Aurangzeb's policies and how much from later or deeper forces, warning that medieval economic and social processes remain incompletely understood.

Growth with limits. Trade, handicrafts, raw materials, zabti coverage and cultivation expanded, supported by detailed agrarian records, but not fast enough. Soil exhaustion lacked technical remedies, revenue was heavy and variable, and a population estimated at 125 million still included many landless Dalits despite cultivable land.

Social barriers. Cultivating castes and zamindars often preferred to retain Dalits as dependent labor rather than help them establish villages and gain land rights. Poor cultivators lacked capital and organization, while the state depended on caste-interested zamindars and muqaddams. Thus surplus land did not automatically produce broad agrarian expansion.

Expanding elite demand. Mansabdars increased from 2,069 in 1605 to 8,000 in 1637 and 11,456 in the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, far faster than resources. Magnificent consumption and rising prices increased pressure to extract more from peasants and zamindars, although migrant pahis or uparis could seek better terms where cultivators were scarce.

Jagirdari crisis. Paper assessments increasingly exceeded collection. Peasant discontent, zamindar-led uprisings, local state formation and noble factionalism followed. In disturbed Deccan jagirs, Bhim Sen reported that some mansabdars collected almost nothing and privately paid Marathas a quarter share. Aurangzeb retained the best annexed lands as khalisa for war, Karnataka assignments yielded little, and bribery or transfer burdened small jagirdars.

Mansab pressure. Shah Jahan had already reduced actual

troop obligations by treating annual pay as effectively five or six months' salary. Later scarcity worsened as Aurangzeb also tried to accommodate former Deccani officers and Marathas. A virtual recruitment ban disappointed noble families; Khafi Khan compared a jagir grant to one pomegranate shared among a hundred sick people.

What the chapter rejects. It dismisses racist claims that declining Central Asian immigration or India's climate weakened nobles; most were India-born. It also rejects calling a diverse nobility "anti-national": modern nationalism did not exist, but salt-loyalty, dynastic allegiance and Indo-Mughal culture did.

Administrative and military constraints. Mughal checks and balances worked under a competent ruler, but the highly centralized system deteriorated under weak successors; individual failure and systemic breakdown reinforced one another. A stronger flintlock infantry and mobile field artillery might have improved Deccan warfare, but required resources and threatened the prestige of cavalry-centered nobles.

Aurangzeb's political errors. He misunderstood the Maratha movement, ignored Jai Singh's advice to befriend Shivaji, executed Sambhaji, and distrusted Shahu despite near-agreement. Although Marathas received many high mansabs, they were not given trusted offices comparable to Rajputs and were never integrated. The source explicitly rejects the later claim that Aurangzeb offered Shahu a kingdom only if he converted, noting that contemporary records do not support it.

Qualified Deccan judgment. A willing alliance with Bijapur and Golconda had become psychologically unlikely once the 1636 promise was abandoned under Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb delayed annexation and was pressured by Maratha expansion, Golconda's support for Shivaji, fear of Maratha dominance over Bijapur, and Sambhaji's sheltering of Prince Akbar. Still, full annexation overextended administration and communications; Shah Alam's proposed partial annexation and continued vassal rule in Karnataka may have been wiser.

Limits of the war explanation. Deccan war damaged prestige, finance and morale but was not immediately fatal. Mughal

artillery still dominated open ground, northern trade expanded, district administration endured and the dynasty retained legitimacy.

Rajput and religious policies. The Marwar breach resulted from a failed effort to divide it between rival claimants, not a general project to deprive Hindus of leadership; it harmed moral standing but had limited military effect after 1681 and the Rajput demands were met within about six years after Aurangzeb’s death. Temple destruction and restored jizya alienated some Hindus without uniting Muslims, yet their reversal after his death did not halt decline. Religion mattered politically but was not a sufficient explanation.

Final interpretation. Economic, social, political, institutional and intellectual weaknesses interacted, including neglect of modern science and technology. Akbar had temporarily restrained but could not transform structural forces. Aurangzeb lacked the foresight to reform or reconcile competing elements, so the chapter’s balanced verdict is that he was both shaped by and helped create the crisis.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1636	Shahji yields his territories, joins Bijapur and turns to Karnataka; Mughal settlements promise security to Bijapur and Golconda.	Establishes both the frontier setting of Shivaji’s rise and the treaty framework later abandoned.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1645–47	Shivaji takes Rajgarh, Kondana and Torna; Dadaji Kondadeo dies in 1647.	Marks the transfer of the Poona jagir into Shivaji's independent control.
1656	Shivaji conquers Javli.	Secures treasure, Mavala, infantry and routes toward Satara and Konkan.
1657–58	Mughals pressure Bijapur and Golconda; Kalyani and Bidar are secured.	Reopens Deccan expansion and undermines confidence in the 1636 settlement.
1659	Shivaji kills Afzal Khan and defeats his army.	Transforms his military reputation and accelerates territorial expansion.
1660	Shaista Khan occupies Poona; Parenda is gained by bribery.	Shows simultaneous Mughal pressure on Shivaji and Bijapur.
1663–64	Shivaji attacks Shaista Khan, then sacks Surat.	Restores his prestige and provides treasure after Mughal advances.
1665	Purandar treaty; joint Mughal-Maratha Bijapur expedition fails.	Creates an alliance whose compensation mechanism and strategic assumptions soon collapse.
1666	Agra confrontation and Shivaji's escape.	Becomes a turning point in Mughal-Maratha relations.
1667–68	Jai Singh dies; Sholapur is obtained by bribery.	Ends the first phase of Aurangzeb's Deccan policy.
1670	Shivaji sacks Surat again and begins major recovery.	Opens the final breach and restoration of lost forts.
From 1672	Madanna and Akhanna dominate Golconda.	Promotes the tripartite Deccani-Maratha alignment.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1674	Shivaji's coronation at Raigarh.	Formalizes sovereignty, social rank and equality with Deccani rulers.
1676	Karnataka expedition begins.	Extends Maratha power to Jinji and Vellore with Golconda's aid.
1679	Annaji Datto's revenue assessment.	Consolidates Shivaji's administrative foundations.
1679–80	Diler Khan fails at Bijapur; Shivaji sends relief.	Demonstrates the strength of a united Deccani front.
1680	Shivaji dies.	Leaves the state and its Deccan conflict to successors.
1681	Aurangzeb reaches the Deccan pursuing Prince Akbar.	Begins the emperor's long personal involvement in the southern war.
1684–87	Third phase of Deccan policy.	Shifts from failed cooperation to direct annexation.
1686	Bijapur falls; Madanna and Akhanna are murdered.	Removes one sultanate and weakens Golconda's leadership.
1687	Golconda falls after siege, bribery and treachery.	Completes annexation but exposes the empire to harder Maratha warfare.
1689	Sambhaji is captured and executed; Rajaram continues from Jinji.	Removes a negotiator and disperses resistance across the Deccan.
1690–1703	Aurangzeb refuses negotiation while pursuing annexation and fort war.	Overextension, communication insecurity and Maratha recovery intensify.

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
1698	Jinji falls, but Rajaram escapes.	Mughal siege success fails to eliminate Maratha leadership.
1700–05	Aurangzeb personally campaigns from fort to fort.	Exhausts men, money and morale without durable control.
1703	Negotiations with Shahu almost produce a settlement.	A last-minute withdrawal of trust preserves the unresolved Maratha problem.
1706–07	Aurangzeb retreats to Aurangabad and dies there in 1707.	Leaves accumulated structural and political crises unresolved.
1739	Nadir Shah captures the emperor and sacks Delhi.	Publicly reveals the extent of post-Aurangzeb imperial weakness.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Maratha local authority vs Maratha state	Mores, Ghatages and Nimbalkars held local power; Shahji and especially Shivaji created a large territorial state.
Treachery as a one-sided charge	The source says both Afzal Khan and Shivaji used treachery; it describes Shivaji's act as cunning and daring rather than uniquely abnormal.
Purandar's cession vs compensation	Shivaji surrendered existing Mughal-claimed forts immediately, but much of his compensation depended on future conquest from Bijapur.
Jai Singh vs Aurangzeb on Shivaji	Jai Singh saw a strategic ally for Deccan conquest; Aurangzeb saw a petty landholder and distrusted integration.

Often confused	The distinction
Ashtapradhan vs cabinet	The eight ministers were individually answerable to Shivaji, not a collective policy council.
Paga vs silahdars	Paga was the regular salaried cavalry; silahdars were looser auxiliaries.
Deshmukhi or jagir reform vs abolition	Shivaji supervised and curbed hereditary power but did not abolish deshmukhi, jagirs or mokasa.
Chauth vs ordinary land assessment	Chauth was a quarter contribution from outside or protected territory, while regular revenue derived from assessed lands within the state.
First, second and third Deccan phases	Recovery of former Ahmadnagar lands; attempted anti-Maratha cooperation and limited pressure; direct conquest of the sultanates.
Conquest of sultanates vs conquest of Marathas	Bijapur and Golconda were fixed states vulnerable to siege; dispersed Maratha bands and forts persisted after their fall.
Military victory vs administrative control	Mughal artillery and sieges could win places, but communications, collection and retention failed under mobile attacks.
Growth vs adequate growth	Trade, cultivation and manufacture expanded, but not quickly enough to meet population and sharply rising elite demands.
State demand under Akbar vs total claim	Akbar's standard state rate was one-third of average produce, excluding local shares; by the mid-seventeenth century the combined claim often approached half.
Jagir paper income vs realization	Official assignment value could far exceed what a noble could actually collect, especially in the disturbed Deccan.

Often confused	The distinction
Nobility's diversity vs disloyalty	The chapter rejects modern nationalist judgment; diverse nobles shared service loyalty and Indo-Mughal values until institutions broke down.
Rajput breach vs a general anti-Hindu design	The source attributes Marwar's rupture to a succession miscalculation, though the resulting war harmed Mughal moral standing.
Religious policy vs sole cause of decline	Temple destruction and jizya alienated people, but later reversal did not stop decline; structural factors were more extensive.
Aurangzeb as sole cause vs no responsibility	The chapter assigns him serious political errors while locating decline in older economic, social and institutional strains.

Self-test

1. What earlier Deccani developments prepared the ground for Shivaji's state?
2. Why was the conquest of Javli a turning point in Shivaji's early career?
3. What were the principal terms and the central weakness of the Treaty of Purandar?
4. Why does the author treat Shivaji's Agra visit as a political turning point?
5. How did Shivaji combine sovereign symbolism with administrative consolidation?
6. Distinguish the three phases of Aurangzeb's policy toward the Deccani states.
7. Why did the annexation of Bijapur and Golconda fail to solve the Maratha problem?
8. What were the political consequences of Sambhaji's execution?

9. How did the mansab-jagir crisis connect revenue weakness to military and political decline?
10. Why did available cultivable land not produce faster agrarian expansion?
11. Which single-cause explanations of Mughal decline does the chapter reject or qualify?
12. Explain the statement that Aurangzeb was both a victim and a creator of circumstances.

Answer key

1. Maratha service under Ahmadnagar and Bijapur, local family authority, Mughal-Deccani competition, Malik Ambar's auxiliaries and Shahji's semi-independent project created military networks and political space.
2. Javli gave Shivaji treasure, mastery of Mavala, access toward Satara and Konkan, Mavali infantry and a base for further fort conquest.
3. He ceded 23 forts, retained 12, received claims in Bijapuri Konkan and Balaghat, owed forty lakh huns and placed Sambhaji in Mughal service; compensation depended on a Bijapur conquest that lacked firm imperial backing.
4. Shivaji felt humiliated by his rank and neglect, escaped detention, and learned that Aurangzeb did not value him as Jai Singh did, making later trust unlikely.
5. His coronation, Kshatriya declaration and equal diplomacy asserted sovereignty, while ministers, cash-paid troops, fort checks, revenue assessment, supervision of mirasdars and chauth gave it working institutions.
6. First came recovery of former Ahmadnagar lands to 1668; second, pressure for Deccani cooperation against Marathas to 1684; third, conquest of Bijapur and Golconda in 1686–87.
7. Annexation removed political buffers, stretched administration and communications, and left the Mughals facing dispersed mobile sardars and many forts rather than two fixed states.
8. It eliminated a recognized negotiator, created a new Maratha

cause, freed sardars to wage decentralized war and pushed Rajaram's resistance to Jinji.

9. Mansabdars multiplied faster than revenue; paper jagir values exceeded collections, best lands became khalisa, troop quotas fell, corruption and factionalism grew, and some jagirdars paid chauth privately.
10. Landless Dalits lacked capital and organization, dominant cultivating and zamindar groups wanted dependent labor, and the state relied on local elites whose caste interests limited settlement.
11. It rejects racial-climatic decline and anti-national nobility, and qualifies religion, Rajput estrangement, military obsolescence, overextension and Aurangzeb's personality as partial rather than sufficient causes.
12. Structural economic, social and institutional pressures predated or constrained him, but his distrust, failed Maratha integration, executions, annexations and missed settlements intensified the crisis he inherited.

Closing perspective

State formation was cumulative: Shivaji's achievement rested on Deccani military service, local Maratha authority, Shahji's experiments and a contested frontier, but he transformed these fragments through forts, disciplined mobility, revenue organization and sovereign symbolism. **Purandar demonstrates why treaty design matters:** Jai Singh's settlement was tactically successful but strategically fragile because it imposed immediate Maratha concessions while making compensation depend on a Mughal campaign that Aurangzeb did not fully support.

What the Medieval Centuries Changed

A period review should do more than repeat which dynasty followed which. Across the medieval centuries, agrarian expansion, regional state formation, military labor, revenue institutions, trade, urbanization, language, architecture, devotional practice, and elite circulation changed the scale and texture of power. Continuity survived beside those changes.

The most useful conclusion is not a verdict on whether the period was unified, fragmented, tolerant, intolerant, prosperous, or declining. Each label captures a part and hides another. The stronger question is conditional: unified for whom, fragmented at what level, prosperous in which region, and changing through which institution? That is the habit this final chapter is meant to leave behind.

Assessment and Review

Social continuity and adaptation. Caste remained dominant despite Islamic challenge and Rajput loss of political authority as defenders of varnashrama-dharma. Nath Panthi Jogis and Bhakti saints attacked caste but barely dented secular practice. A tacit compromise emerged: most saints limited radical criticism in daily life, while Brahmans accepted devotion as a path to salvation for all castes, especially Shudras, yet retained exclusive claims to preaching and education. Tribal absorption, new professions, and regional identities created subgroups;

economic-political power raised or lowered status, as with Rajputs, Marathas, and Khattris.

Religion and gender. Mira, Surdas, and other saints opened Bhakti to women and allowed devotion to transcend exclusive service to husbands. Bhakti and Sufi saints emphasized shared Hindu-Islamic fundamentals, true faith, tolerance, and regional-language literature; narrow forces still sometimes shaped state policy, though the author calls such occasions limited. Excessive concentration on spiritual questions, however, is judged to have hindered rational science and technology. Women's overall position worsened: purdah spread, Hindu women lacked remarriage and paternal-property rights available in principle to Muslim women, and even Muslim women's rights were increasingly denied.

Political economy and the ruling class. Turkish integration, later consolidated by Mughals, indirectly influenced regions beyond northern administration. Silver currency, roads, sarais, cities, trade, and handicrafts culminated in seventeenth-century expansion. Mughals deliberately combined Hindu and Muslim elites, but opportunity from lower classes remained narrow and the ruling class strongly aristocratic and northern. Aurangzeb integrated many Deccanis but not Marathas; the chapter cautiously suggests regional, religious, and social prejudice because Maratha sardars lacked prior ruling status and accepted kshatriya rank. Mughal bureaucracy depended on monarch, land revenue from peasant proprietors, military power, and zamindars whose privileges the state defended, supporting the interpretation of an essentially feudal state.

Frontier, Europe, and technological divergence. Turks resisted Mongols in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries; Mughals then secured the Kabul-Ghazni-Hindu Kush frontier for about two centuries while monitoring Central-West Asia. European demand for Indian spices and textiles encouraged direct trade, government backing, and attempts to enter internal commerce. Lacking attractive goods besides American silver and gold, Europeans sought Asian territorial income, as Dutch control in the East Indies illustrated. Strong Mughals blocked this; eighteenth-

century Mughal decline, Nadir Shah, Afghan incursions, and rapid European economic growth enabled domination. Mughal elites understood foreign trade but not naval power. India did not produce the mechanical clock, acknowledged European artillery superiority, copied some ships without sustained innovation, and failed to convert craft skill into machine production. Traditional deference to Brahmans and mullahs frustrated Akbar's secular-science syllabus; abundant artisans reduced pressure for machines. The caste system's role in insularity and conservatism remains debated, not settled.

Integrated culture, uneven growth, and counterfactual. Political integration paralleled a unified culture across race, religion, and language, producing a seventeenth-century "second classical age." Chola traditions continued through Vijayanagara; Bahmani and successor cultures and fifteenth-century regional achievements fed Mughal forms. Religious dogmatists and competing elite interests pressured this synthesis, but its survival to the mid-nineteenth century is credited to saints, scholars, and enlightened rulers. Trade, manufacture, and cultivation grew unevenly, especially in the Ganga valley, Gujarat, Coromandel, and Bengal. The source asks whether Mughal survival could have produced an Indian industrial revolution but does not answer yes. Eighteenth-century manufacture still used simple tools, small units, low productivity, little artisan capital, a narrow domestic market, and increasingly merchant-controlled **dadni** or putting-out. These structures helped Britain turn the former eastern manufactory into a raw-material colony.

Chapter companion

Use this section after reading the chapter. Reconstruct the sequence or comparison before checking the page.

Chronology

Date or period	Event or development	Why it matters
Early eighth-late seventeenth centuries	Millennium assessed by the chapter.	Political, economic, and cultural change exceeded social change.
Thirteenth-fourteenth centuries	Turks defended India against Mongol attacks.	Major contribution to territorial security.
Fifteenth century	Regional kingdoms generated rich cultural forms.	Supplied traditions later integrated under Mughals.
About 200 years under Mughals	Northwest protected on Kabul-Ghazni-Hindu Kush line.	Reduced foreign invasion and required active Asian diplomacy.
Seventeenth century	Trade and handicrafts reached a climax; culture entered a second classical age.	Peak of integrated political-cultural and commercial development.
Seventeenth century	India failed to produce the mechanical clock and lagged European artillery and innovation.	Symbol of widening technological divergence.
Seventeenth-eighteenth centuries	Dadni or putting-out expanded.	Output rose while artisans became merchant-dependent.
Eighteenth century	Mughal decline, Nadir Shah, Afghans, and European growth altered power.	Opened the way to European territorial domination.
Mid-nineteenth century	Integrated culture still broadly survived.	Demonstrates the durability of the medieval synthesis.
Post-independence era, in the author's comparison	Gujarat, Coromandel-related south, and Bengal remain economically prominent.	Suggested long continuity of regional dynamism, not a causal proof.

Comparisons that prevent confusion

Often confused	The distinction
Religious criticism of caste and abolition of caste	Saints criticized hierarchy, but everyday secular caste practice largely survived.
Open salvation and equal social rights	Bhakti included Shudras spiritually while Brahmins retained preaching and education privileges.
Women's devotional agency and overall emancipation	Female saints widened religious paths, but purdah and legal-social restrictions worsened.
Hindu-Muslim synthesis and disappearance of intolerance	Mutual understanding grew, but entrenched narrow forces sometimes shaped state policy.
Bureaucratic nobility and non-feudal state	Nobles depended on monarchy administratively but on land, peasants, arms, and zamindars economically.
Political integration and equal opportunity	A mixed ruling class formed, yet lower-class entry remained limited and northern elites dominated.
Economic expansion and broad prosperity	Trade and manufacture grew, but distribution was extremely uneven and the domestic market narrow.
Skilled craftsmanship and high productivity	Artisans were highly skilled but simple tools and little machinery limited output per worker.
Copying technology and sustained innovation	Indian craftsmen could reproduce ships, but the chapter sees little continued technical invention.
Dadni growth and artisan independence	Putting-out increased production while deepening dependence on merchants.
European trade demand and peaceful commerce alone	European states sought internal markets and territories to finance Asian purchases.
Mughal survival and inevitable industrial revolution	The counterfactual is unresolved; structural constraints persisted even when eighteenth-century output grew.

Often confused	The distinction
Unified culture and cultural uniformity	Shared forms emerged across difference without erasing race, religion, language, or regional traditions.

Self-test

1. Why does the chapter describe political, economic, and cultural change as greater than social change?
2. What tacit accommodation developed between Bhakti critics and Brahmanical caste authority?
3. How did Bhakti and Sufi traditions promote both harmony and regional literature?
4. Why is the period's effect on women assessed negatively overall?
5. Which Turk-Mughal institutions promoted economic integration?
6. Why do some historians call the medieval Indian state feudal despite its bureaucracy?
7. Why did Aurangzeb integrate Deccanis more successfully than Marathas according to the chapter's tentative explanation?
8. How did European trade interests become territorial ambitions?
9. What explanations does the chapter offer for India's scientific and technological lag?
10. Why is seventeenth-century culture called a second classical age?
11. How did the dadni system affect production and artisans?
12. Why must the industrial-revolution counterfactual remain unresolved?

Answer key

1. Empires, administration, commerce, cultivation, manufacture, and culture changed substantially, while caste hierarchy and

- social privilege remained resilient.
2. Saints generally did not carry caste criticism fully into secular life; Brahmans accepted devotion as a path to salvation for all castes while retaining institutional privilege.
 3. They emphasized shared fundamentals, faith over ritual, tolerance, and devotional expression in regional languages, though intolerant forces survived.
 4. Purdah spread, Hindu women lacked remarriage and paternal-property rights, and even Muslim women's formal rights were increasingly denied despite female Bhakti agency.
 5. Political unity, silver currency, roads, sarais, urban preference, frontier security, and a mixed ruling class supported trade and handicrafts.
 6. Nobles depended on the monarch bureaucratically but drew income from peasant land revenue and relied on military followings and protected zamindars.
 7. Deccanis had established elite status; Maratha sardars came from groups without earlier ruling-class power or accepted kshatriya standing, with regional, religious, and social prejudice possibly involved.
 8. Europeans lacked enough desirable exports beyond American bullion, so governments and companies sought internal Asian commerce and territorial revenues to purchase Asian goods.
 9. Land-focused elites, naval neglect, deference to inherited authority, defeated curricular reform, abundant craft labor, weak mechanization, little capital, and possibly caste conservatism all mattered.
 10. Regional, southern, Deccan, Bhakti-Sufi, and Mughal forms combined into a creative integrated culture across race, religion, and language.
 11. Merchant advances expanded output but reduced artisan independence and increased control by Indian or foreign merchants.
 12. Eighteenth-century trade and manufacture still expanded, yet small-scale tools, low productivity, weak entrepreneurship, limited capital, and a narrow market remained; continuity

alone proves no industrial outcome.

Closing perspective

The chapter's overall verdict is balanced: medieval India achieved political, commercial, and cultural integration, but social hierarchy and scientific-technological stagnation limited transformation. Bhakti-Sufi change was deepest in religious access, ethics, language, and tolerance, not in the institutional abolition of caste or patriarchy.

Source note

The Medieval India volumes were developed from a chapter-by-chapter revision project based primarily on Satish Chandra's *History of Medieval India* (Orient Blackswan), then reorganized and independently edited for narrative continuity, comparison, and retrieval. The book preserves the distinction between source claims, later interpretation, and editorial synthesis. It does not present the source textbook's language as the author's original research.

Selected bibliography

- Chandra, Satish. *History of Medieval India*. Orient Blackswan.
- Eaton, Richard M. *India in the Persianate Age, 1000-1765*. Allen Lane.
- Jackson, Peter. *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, John F. *The Mughal Empire*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stein, Burton. *Vijayanagara*. Cambridge University Press.

About the author

Gaurav Tiwari is an educator, WordPress developer, and the founder of Gatilab. His teaching work focuses on making difficult material easier to understand without flattening its debates, uncertainties, or consequences.

Also in the Indian History Library

- *Connected Worlds, Kingdoms, and the Delhi Sultanate*
- *Mughals, Deccan Powers, and an Empire in Crisis*
- *Company Rule and the Colonial State*
- *Mass Nationalism, Competing Futures, and Partition*
- *The Republic of India*
- *Modern India Reference Companion*