

HISTORY

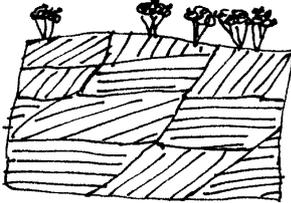
The Mughal Period



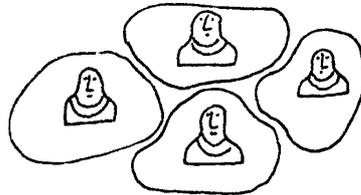
INTRODUCTION

The story so far

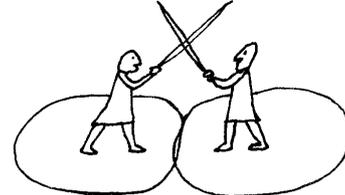
You have been reading stories about the Indian subcontinent from the earliest times.



You read about how people began practicing agriculture all around



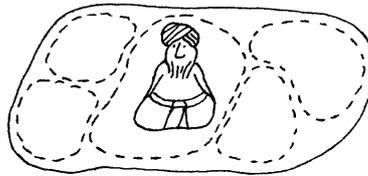
and how numerous little kingdoms started emerging in various places.



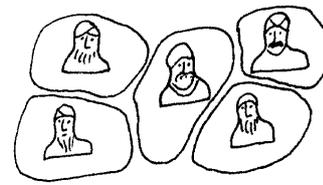
These kingdoms fought with each other in order to get bigger and more powerful.



You also read about the bhogpatis who were in charge of the villages and cities and could do whatever they felt like.



Then, after 1192, many of the kingdoms were conquered by Turkish sultans, who established a vast kingdom, or sultanate. The sultanate remained powerful for about 200 years.



However, around 1400 the sultanate got divided into several smaller kingdoms.

The story ahead

We will now see how the emperors of the Mughal Dynasty (~~mughal vaha~~ ^{mughal vaha}), who originally came from Afghanistan (~~Afgainstaa~~ ^{Afghanistan}), built a huge empire. Beginning in 1526, it lasted more than two centuries. The Mughals became one of the most important dynasties of the subcontinent. The splendour and luxury of the courts, the policies of the emperors, and the systems of administration and taxation that the Mughals established have had a deep impact. You will read about all this in the following chapters.

You will also read about how European traders came in the 17th century, and how this led to the establishment of British rule. For almost 200 years large parts of the Indian subcontinent were ruled by the British. The policies of the British rulers made very big changes in the lives of the people of India. During this period peasants, workers, adivasis, traders, and educated people of India struggled for a long time to free the country from British rule. You will read about the national movement and how independence was eventually won.

Akbar

the Mughal Emperor

(Ruling: 1556-1605)

The Beginning of Mughal Rule in India

This picture shows a Mughal army ready for battle. The soldiers have several new kinds of weapons that are not seen in the pictures of earlier times. Can you identify them?



Such was the army of the Mughal emperor Babar (baabar). Babar had been ruling in Afghanistan and he was trying to conquer more lands. At that time Delhi was being ruled by the Afghan king, Sultan Ibrahim Lodi. In 1526 the armies of Babar and Lodi had a battle at Panipat, north of Delhi. With

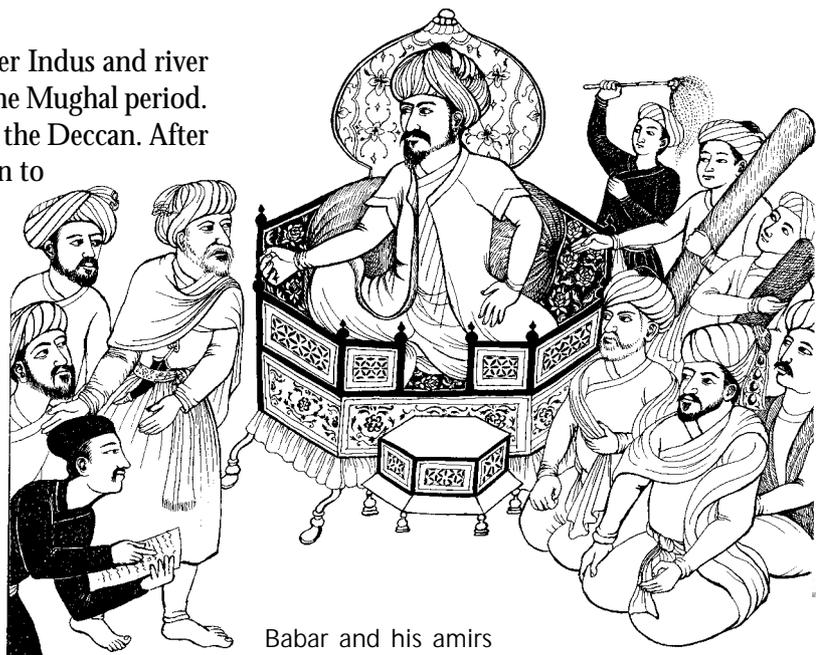
the help of their cannons and guns, Babar's army dealt a crushing defeat to the Delhi Sultan.

After taking a lot of riches from the treasuries of the Indian kings, Babar's soldiers wanted to return to Afghanistan. But Babar wanted to stay on and

establish his rule in Hindustan. The area between river Indus and river Narmada was called Hindustan in the Sultanate and the Mughal period. The territories South of the Narmada river were called the Deccan. After much persuasion Babur was finally able to get his men to stay on to conquer and rule Hindustan.

Babar fought many battles against powerful Afghan chiefs and Rajput kings. But in 1530, only four years after the battle of Panipat, Babar died.

His son, Humayun, became the emperor. He continued the efforts of his father, but he had to face serious challenges. In 1540 another Afghan sultan, Sher Shah Suri, defeated him and drove him out of Hindustan. However, in 1555 Humayun returned and began to re-establish his empire. But within a year he suddenly died in an accident. His 13 year old son, Akbar (Akbar), became the emperor.



Babar and his amirs

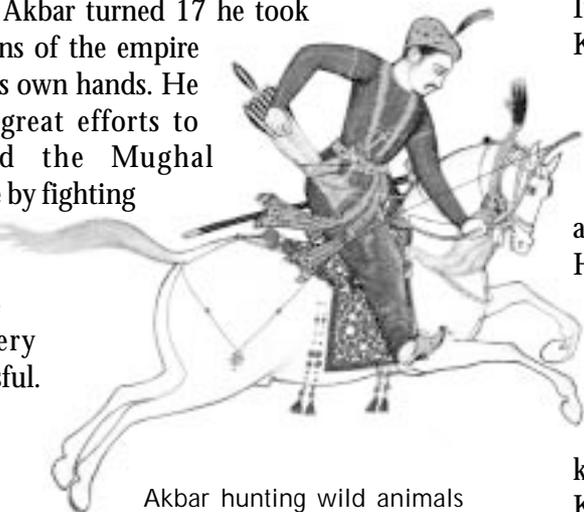
Emperor Akbar and his Amirs

Akbar Becomes the Emperor

In 1556 Mughal rule had still not taken a firm hold in Hindustan. All around them other kings and sultans were trying to drive the Mughals away. It was at this critical time that Akbar became the emperor.

Since Akbar was very young, Amir Bairam Khan acted as the regent, running the administration on behalf of the ruler. (In those times, high officials were called amirs.) Bairam Khan also arranged to have Akbar educated in the duties of an emperor.

When Akbar turned 17 he took the reins of the empire into his own hands. He made great efforts to expand the Mughal empire by fighting other kings, and he was very successful.



Akbar hunting wild animals

The Conquest of Malwa and Garha Katanga (गर्हा कटांगा)

In those days there were two major kingdoms in the area that we now call Madhya Pradesh. One was the kingdom of the Sultan of Malwa, Baaz Bahadur, with its capital at Mandu. Mandu is near the city of Indore. The other kingdom was Garha Katanga. Its capital was Chauragarh, which was near what is now Jabalpur. Garha Katanga was under Gond rulers, and during Akbar's time it was ruled by Rani Durgavati.

In 1561 Akbar sent his foster brother, Aadham Khan, to capture Malwa. Aadham Khan defeated Baaz Bahadur, the Sultan of Malwa. Though Baaz Bahadur fled Mandu, he kept trying to win back his kingdom for many years. In the end, however, he was unsuccessful and had to accept a position in the service of the Mughals. He was made a Mughal official.

Aadham Khan acquired many valuable treasures from Malwa. But he did not hand over all these spoils to Akbar. Instead, he tried to keep as much as possible for himself. When Akbar came to know of this he was furious. He forced Aadham Khan to part with what he had withheld.

Aadham Khan was not the only official to try to cheat the emperor. At around the same time another amir, Aasaf Khan, attacked the kingdom of Garha Katanga and defeated Rani Durgavati. Though wounded in battle, the queen fought with great valour. But upon seeing her army losing, she killed herself.

Aasaf Khan looted diamonds, other gems, priceless objects of gold and silver and many other things from Garha Katanga. But out of these vast treasures he sent only 200 elephants to Akbar. Once again

Akbar took harsh steps against the disloyalty and dishonesty of an amir.

He forced Aasaf Khan to yield the entire treasure.

Akbar realised that such actions by his amirs might some day become a big problem for him. He did not want to give them free rein. He thought that if he allowed the amirs to do as they pleased he would not be able to make the Mughal empire as strong as he wanted it to be.

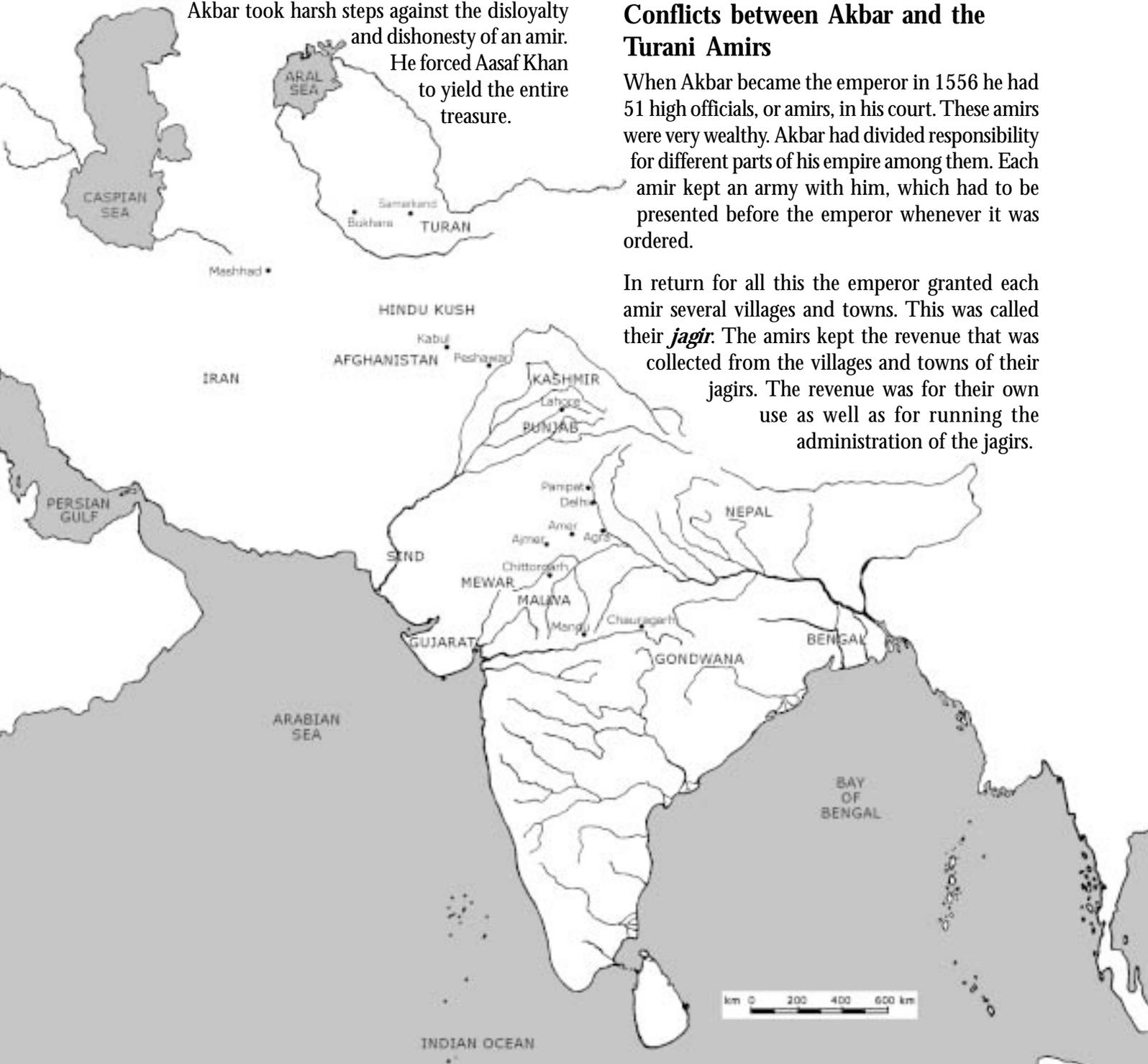
Which kingdoms did Akbar's amirs conquer?

What did these amirs do that made Akbar angry?

Conflicts between Akbar and the Turani Amirs

When Akbar became the emperor in 1556 he had 51 high officials, or amirs, in his court. These amirs were very wealthy. Akbar had divided responsibility for different parts of his empire among them. Each amir kept an army with him, which had to be presented before the emperor whenever it was ordered.

In return for all this the emperor granted each amir several villages and towns. This was called their *jagir*. The amirs kept the revenue that was collected from the villages and towns of their jagirs. The revenue was for their own use as well as for running the administration of the jagirs.



Akbar tried to run his kingdom with the support of the amirs. But he was not able to get their full backing. Let's find out why.....

Among Akbar's amirs, some were from Iran and were known as Irani amirs. But the majority of the amirs had come from an area known as Turan, which is in Turkestan. The ancestors of the Mughal emperors had also come from Turan. Many Turani amirs were in fact related to Akbar.

For this reason the Turani amirs considered themselves to be equals of Akbar and had no desire to be under his control. They wanted the freedom to administer their jagirs as they pleased. In fact they even wanted to be able to tell the emperor what to do.

But Akbar did not approve of this at all. He did not want anyone else in the empire to be equal to the emperor. He wanted everyone to be under his control. He wanted to be the one to decide who would become an amir and he wanted to make all the appointments to both high and low posts. He wanted all the amirs to follow his rules and to carry out his orders without any questions.

In the above section, underline the four sentences that you think are the most important.

The Turani amirs could not tolerate these policies of Akbar. From 1562 to 1567 many Turani amirs rebelled against Akbar and they ordered their armies to attack his.

What was Akbar to do?

Akbar found a solution to the problem. He promoted the interests of the Irani amirs by encouraging them and giving them new positions. The Irani amirs were happy with this and so they supported Akbar wholeheartedly. With their help Akbar was able to suppress the revolts of the Turani amirs.

Complete the following sentences:

The Turani amirs revolted because.....

To suppress these revolts, Akbar.....

Akbar Attempts to Recruit Indian Muslims (Sheikhzadas) as Amirs

A major obstacle in strengthening the empire was that the amirs looked upon themselves as equal to the emperor and did not want to be under his control.

In addition to this, Akbar faced another problem that had slowly become very serious. He himself had come from Kabul, and his amirs were from Iran and Turan. Those who had come from outside had difficulty establishing a strong rule in new places because the powerful local people would oppose them. Akbar realised that so long as the powerful Hindustanis did not accept his authority, Mughal rule would never be secure.

In those days two kinds of people were very powerful in Hindustan: Rajput kings, and Muslim families who had been staying in India for centuries and had acquired land and wealth. These Muslims were known as Sheikhzadas.

Akbar wanted both of these kinds of powerful Hindustani families to be on his side. To win them over he gave many Sheikhzadas positions in his court and made them his amirs. He also showed great respect towards their religious practices.



A Sheikhzada



Akbar offering respects at the dargah of the Sufi Saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer.

Identify Akbar in the above picture. Who do you think the other people are?

What do you think Akbar might be thinking?

What do you think the others might be thinking about Akbar?

Attempts to Make the Rajputs Amirs

As for the Rajputs, Akbar found that they had no great desire to be his amirs. What they wanted was to remain free and rule their own kingdoms.

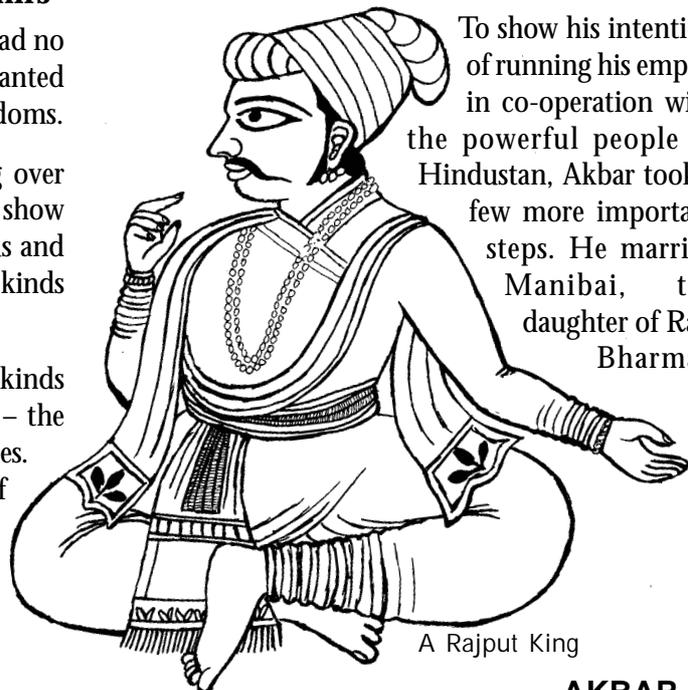
Akbar thought that if he wanted to bring over Rajput kings to his court he would have to show that he did not discriminate against Hindus and that he really wanted to carry all the different kinds of people of Hindustan along with him.

In those days Hindus had to pay two special kinds of taxes that Muslims did not have to pay – the *jeziya* tax and a tax on pilgrimages to holy places. Only those Hindus who were employees of the king or who were orphans did not have to pay the *jeziya*. In 1562 Akbar abolished the pilgrimage tax and in 1564 he stopped collecting *jeziya* from Hindus.

Some Rajput kings were swayed by these acts and came into the service of Akbar. One of them was Raja Bharmal. He was the king of Amer, which is a place near Jaipur. Akbar made Raja Bharmal his amir. (Later on Bharmal's son Bhagwandas and grandson Mansingh were also made amirs of the Mughal empire.)

In return for Bharmal's support, Akbar granted him many concessions. He returned the kingdom of Amer to Bharmal and declared that Amer would never be taken away from him or his descendants.

Akbar made a proposal to the Rajput kings: if they agreed to serve under him, he would restore their kingdoms to them. They would be made amirs of the Mughal Empire. They would also be sent to conquer distant lands and to rule them on behalf of the Mughal emperor. In return for all this they would be given jagirs in other parts of the empire as well. Akbar hoped that the Rajput kings would find these offers so attractive that they would stop opposing him, and they might even agree to serve under him.



To show his intention of running his empire in co-operation with the powerful people of Hindustan, Akbar took a few more important steps. He married Manibai, the daughter of Raja Bharmal.

A Rajput King



A Hindu queen gives birth in Akbar's palace. The child may be Prince Salim, who became Emperor Jahangir.

After the wedding, he allowed her to continue openly practicing Hinduism. Usually the bride has to accept the traditions of her husband's family. Before Akbar's time, whenever a Hindu bride married a sultan, she was not given the freedom to follow her original religion. But Akbar was more willing to accept the religious freedom of his Hindu queens. In addition to Manibai, Akbar married several other Rajput women.

What steps did Akbar take to remove religious discrimination against the Hindus?

What special benefits did Akbar offer Rajput kings? Make a list.

In your view, why did Akbar make these efforts?

Now let's see how successful Akbar's efforts were.

Akbar Wages War against the Rajputs

Most of the Rajput kings were not attracted by Akbar's offers. They wanted to rule as independent kings rather than to accept Mughal suzerainty (overlordship). They struggled till the end to retain their independence. They did see certain advantages in becoming Mughal amirs, but these could not outweigh the advantages of ruling on their own.

Seeing this attitude of the Rajput kings, Akbar decided to resort to the use of arms to make them bend to his will. He decided to defeat the major Rajput kings in battle, one by one.

In 1568 Akbar laid siege to Chittorgarh, which was the strong fort and famous capital of Mewar, and he was victorious. Though defeated in battle, the king of Mewar, Udaysingh, did not want to bow down before the Mughals. He escaped and started preparing to regain his kingdom.

After the victory over Chittorgarh, the Mughals also conquered and annexed the Rajput kingdoms of Jodhpur and Ranthambhor.

Look at this picture of the attack on the Ranthambhor fort. It looks as if three cannons were not enough and a fourth was urgently needed on the hilltop. Describe how the cannon is being brought up the hill.



This picture shows the king of Ranthambhor, Raja Sujan Singh, accepting the suzerainty of Akbar.

At last the Rajput kings realised that they would not be able to win against the Mughals. On the other hand Akbar was still offering them many special privileges in return for being part of his empire. Thus, many Rajput kings started coming into the service of the Mughals, and became Mughal amirs.

Although these Rajputs had retained their kingdoms and they were now safe from Mughal attacks, in two respects they were not free. One, they could not strengthen their forts or increase their armies without permission from the Mughal emperor. Two, they could not attack or make pacts with other kingdoms.

But despite these restrictions, their kingdoms were safe and secure, with the might of the Mughals behind them. The Rajput kings also had the opportunity to rise to high positions in Mughal service.



Rana Pratap

Rana Pratap, the son of Rana Uday Singh of Mewar also refused to accept the overlordship of Akbar. He fought valiantly in many battles such as the one in Haldighati. At Haldighati the Mughal forces were led by the Rajput prince Man Singh.

However Rana Pratap was ultimately defeated and lost control of most of his kingdom. Yet he continued to fight the Mughals from the jungles of Mewar. It was his son who finally accepted the overlordship of Akbar's son Jahangir, though he refused to become a Mughal official.

Name some Rajput kingdoms that came under the suzerainty of the Mughal empire.

How did Akbar treat the Rajput kings whom he defeated in battle?

Discontent among the Turani and Irani Amirs

Over a period of time several Sheikhzadas and Rajputs became Akbar's amirs. In addition to Rajputs, other Hindus also joined his court. For instance, Todarmal (whom Akbar granted the title of Raja) and Birbal were famous Hindu courtiers. You must have heard stories about them.

As more and more Hindustanis became amirs, a feeling of discontent grew among the Irani and Turani amirs. In the beginning most of the amirs in Akbar's court had been Irani and Turani. Whatever the emperor wanted to do he could do only with their support. But now the situation had changed. Even if the Irani and Turani amirs opposed him, the emperor could still do what he wished – for now he had the support of the Hindustani amirs. For this reason, dissatisfaction was increasing among the Irani and Turani amirs. They felt that because of the Rajputs their power was being taken away from them and they were no longer as important as they used to be.

Akbar Re-imposes the Jeziya in 1575

Akbar now began to look for ways to appease the Irani and Turani amirs. But he did not want to weaken the position of the Rajputs. Nor did he want to restore the strength of the Irani and Turani amirs to its earlier level. He felt that if he took some steps against Hindus it would pacify the Irani and Turani amirs. So beginning in 1575 he started speaking out against Hindus. He imposed the jeziya on them again. He also ordered some of his officers to stop Hindus from worshipping idols.

Discuss with each other the changes in Akbar's religious policies.



This dagger was made during the times of Emperor Akbar, and is now on display in a museum in England.

The 1580 Revolt of the Irani and Turani Amirs

Akbar had taken steps against the Hindus, but all this had no effect on the Irani and Turani amirs. In 1580 they rebelled against him with great strength. The revolt broke out on two sides – in Kabul as well as in Bengal.

In your opinion, what could Akbar have done to satisfy the Irani and Turani amirs?

This time it was with the help of the Hindustani amirs that Akbar suppressed the revolt of the Irani and Turani amirs. Raja Mansingh and Bhagwandas subdued the revolt in Kabul, while Todarmal crushed the rebel Irani and Turani amirs in Bengal. After this, Akbar faced no other challenge to his power.

In 1575 Akbar re-imposed the jeziya. Even so, the Rajput amirs continued to give him their support. Why were they not unhappy with Akbar?

Thus, making Rajputs and Sheikhzadas amirs along with Iranis and Turanis proved to be of great benefit to the Mughal Empire. When the Irani and Turani amirs rebelled against Akbar, he put down the revolt with the help of Rajputs and Hindustani Muslims.

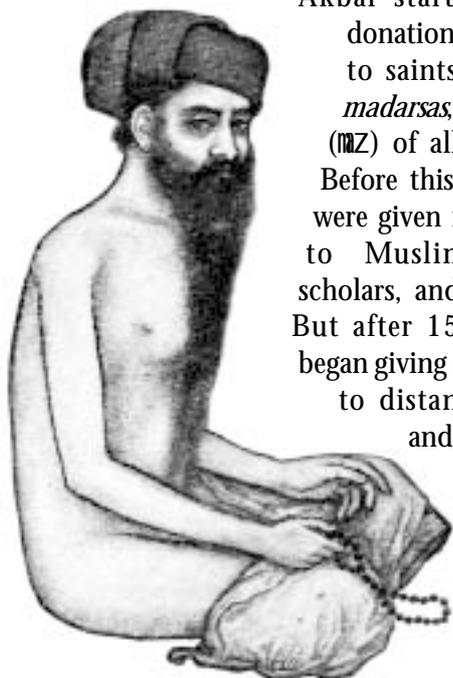
Why do you think Akbar did not completely remove the Iranis and Turanis from his court?

The Sulah Kul Policy after the 1580 Revolt

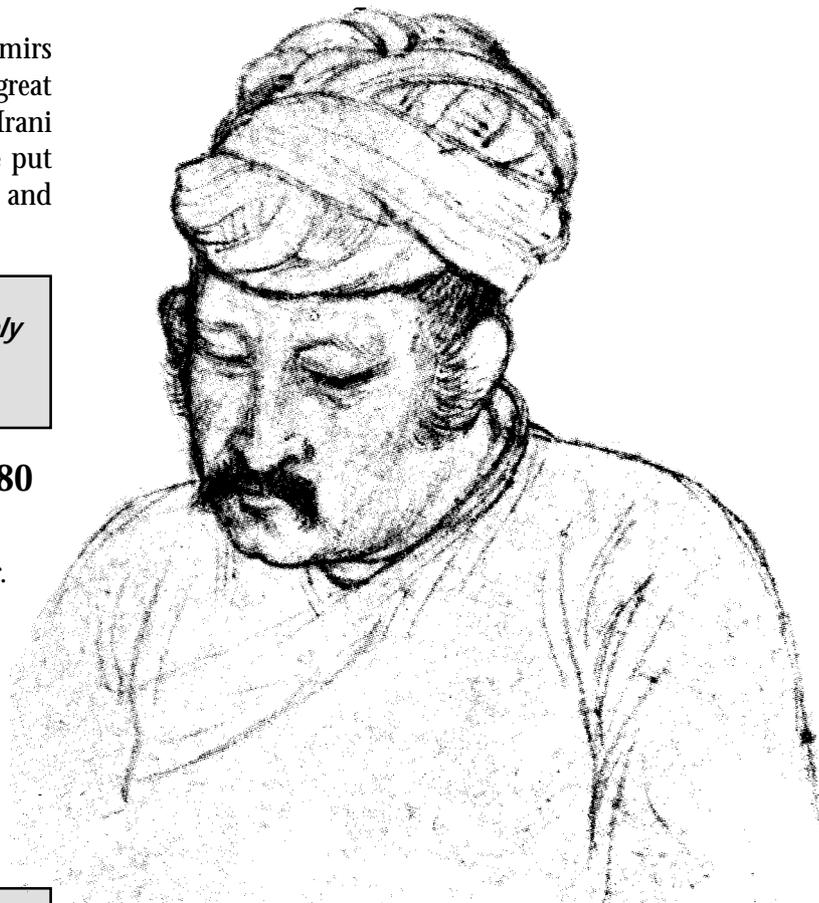
The 1580 revolt left a deep impact on Akbar. He felt that his order to re-impose the *jeziya* had failed to please the Irani and Turani amirs and had needlessly hurt the Hindus.

Once more there was a great change in Akbar's religious policy. In 1580 itself he again abolished the *jeziya*.

Why did Akbar re-impose the jeziya in 1575? And why did he remove it in 1580?



Akbar started giving donations and alms to saints, temples, *madarsas*, and *maths* (मठ) of all religions. Before this donations were given mostly just to Muslim saints, scholars, and mosques. But after 1580 Akbar began giving grants even to distant temples and *maths*.



Akbar was keenly interested in other religions. It is said that at times he would sink into religious thoughts for whole nights. He would hold discussions with whichever religious person came his way.

He got an *Ibadat Khanah* (a prayer room) made in the mosque near his palace. There he held discussions with important scholars of Islam, or maulvis. He told the maulvis, "I have but one objective – to find the truth – to bring forth the true principles of religion."

Akbar found that the maulvis fought too much among themselves and kept hurling accusations at each other. He soon grew tired of this. In 1580 he began inviting saints and scholars of other religions to the *Ibadat Khana*. Hindu pundits, Sufi saints, Jain munis of Gujarat, Parsi scholars, and Christian padres – on Akbar's invitation all came there to take part in discussions. The Christian padres were those who used to come with traders from Portugal.



Akbar holding a discussion in his Ibadat Khanah

All these discussions had a great effect on Akbar's thinking. The thoughts and opinions of Abul Fazl, a minister in his court, also influenced him a lot. Abu al Fazl wrote a book on Akbar's rule called *Akbar Nama*, and from this we get to know a lot about those times.

A new kind of thought and understanding of religion emerged in Akbar's mind. Badayuni, a historian of the time, wrote, "As a result of these discussions a rock-like conviction grew in the emperor's mind, that in all religions there are good people. If true knowledge can be attained in all religions, then it is not correct to say that there is truth in only one religion and that other religions are false."

Inspired by such thoughts, Akbar adopted a new policy – Sulah Kul. This was a policy of **amity** between all – a total peace between all religions and communities.

Following this policy, Akbar banned the slaughter of cows. In his own life he started observing some of the rituals of Hindus, Parsis, and others. He had the main religious books or scriptures of different religions translated into Persian (the official language). The Gita, Mahabharata, Atharvaveda, Bible, Panchtantra, Singhasan Battisi, as well as many science books, were translated into Persian so that Persian-speaking Muslims could read and understand them.



Akbar had his artists paint this scene from the Mahabharat showing Krishna's combat with Indra. Who can you recognise in this painting?

At the same time, Akbar dropped many aspects of Islam that he felt were not correct.

Akbar's policy of Sulah Kul was important because the Mughal empire contained people of many religions. His amirs followed different religions and they all had to work together to administer the empire. There were lakhs of Muslims in his realm, but most of the minor officials were Hindus. The great majority of the peasants, craftsmen, and zamindars were Hindus. Members of the trading classes followed the Hindu, Jain, or Parsi religions.

In such a vast empire it was necessary to be accepted and have support from all these kinds of people. Only then could the administration of the state run smoothly and peacefully. With the policy of Sulah Kul, the minds of all kinds of people could be inclined in favour of the emperor. This policy was also continued by the Mughal emperors who came after Akbar.



Exercises

- 1 *When Akbar first became the emperor who were his high officials (amirs)? Who became his amirs during his reign?*
- 2 *Which of the following did the Turani amirs want and which did Akbar want?*
 - (a) *That the amirs should have the same rights as the emperor.*
 - (b) *That the amirs should run their jagirs in accordance with the wishes of the emperor.*
 - (c) *That the emperor should act according to the wishes of the amirs.*
 - (d) *That all power should remain with the emperor.*
- 3 *What concessions did Akbar offer the Rajput kings in order to get them to be his amirs?*
- 4 *Mark true or false:*
 - (a) *Impressed by Akbar's concessions, the Rajputs immediately agreed to be his amirs.*
 - (b) *Despite Akbar's concessions, most of the Rajput kings were not ready to be his amirs, because they wanted to be free and rule their own kingdoms.*
- 5 *Why did the Irani and Turani amirs become unhappy when Rajputs and Indian Muslims became amirs? Explain in your own words.*
- 6 *Discuss each of the following:*
 - (a) *Why did Akbar abolish the jeziya in 1563?*
 - (b) *Why did Akbar re-impose the jeziya in 1575?*
 - (c) *Why did Akbar abolish the jeziya once again in 1580?*
- 7 *What conclusions did Akbar draw from religious discussions?*
- 8 *What steps did Akbar take under the policy of Sulah Kul? Why were these steps necessary for the empire?*

The Mughal Empire in 1605

(shaded dark grey)

