

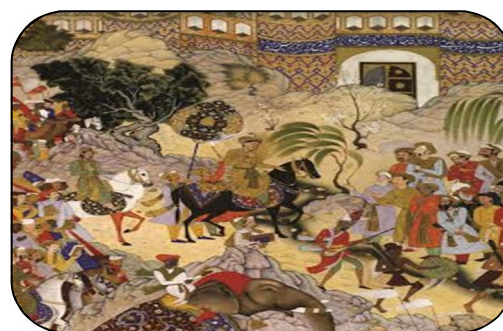


MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER AKBAR

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ABSTRACT

The administration of the Mughal Empire under Akbar represents an important phase in the development of centralized and systematic governance in medieval India. Akbar introduced several administrative reforms to strengthen imperial authority, maintain political stability, and improve revenue collection. His administrative system combined Persian-Islamic traditions with practices adapted to Indian conditions. The empire was organized into provinces known as Subas, which were further divided into Sarkars, Parganas, and villages. The Mansabdari system regulated the rank, duties, and remuneration of imperial officials and military commanders, while the Jagirdari system helped administer revenue assignments. Akbar also introduced important reforms in land revenue administration, particularly through the Zabt system associated with Raja Todar Mal. His policies toward different religious and social groups further contributed to political integration. This study examines the major features of Akbar's central, provincial, military, judicial, and revenue administration and assesses their significance in the consolidation of the Mughal Empire.



KEYWORDS: Akbar, Mughal Empire, Mughal Administration, Mansabdari System, Jagirdari System, Revenue Administration, Zabt System, Subah Administration, Raja Todar Mal, Central Administration, Provincial Administration.

INTRODUCTION

The Mughal Empire under Akbar witnessed significant political and administrative development. Akbar ascended the Mughal throne in 1556 at a time when the empire was still politically fragile and faced challenges from rival powers. During his long reign, he expanded Mughal territories and established administrative institutions that helped transform the empire into a large and comparatively well-organized state.

Akbar's approach to administration was based on the centralization of authority while allowing considerable flexibility in governing different regions and communities. The emperor occupied the highest position in the administrative structure, and important departments were placed under senior officials responsible for finance, military affairs, justice, and religious matters. The empire was divided into provinces, or *Subas*, which were administered by officials appointed by the emperor.

One of the most important features of Akbar's administration was the *Mansabdari* system. It provided a graded hierarchy of officials and military commanders and enabled the emperor to maintain control over the nobility and armed forces. The system also helped organize the imperial service according to rank and responsibility.

Revenue administration was another major area of reform. Akbar's administration attempted to establish a systematic method of assessing and collecting land revenue. The reforms associated with Raja Todar Mal, particularly the *Zabt* system, sought to measure cultivated land, classify agricultural production, and determine revenue demands. These measures provided the Mughal state with a more regular source of income.

Akbar also pursued policies aimed at incorporating diverse political and social groups into the imperial system. His relations with Rajput rulers and his policy of *Sulh-i Kul*, or universal peace, were significant aspects of his broader approach to governance. Thus, Akbar's administration was not limited to territorial expansion but also involved the creation of institutions capable of managing a vast and diverse empire.

The study of Mughal administration under Akbar is therefore important for understanding the political, military, economic, and social organization of the Mughal Empire. It also provides insight into how administrative institutions contributed to the consolidation and long-term development of Mughal rule in India.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this study is to examine the administrative system introduced and developed by Emperor Akbar during the Mughal period. The study focuses on the organization, functioning, and significance of his administration.

The objectives are:

- To study the nature and structure of Mughal administration under Akbar.
- To examine the central and provincial administrative systems established during his reign.
- To understand the **Mansabdari and Jagirdari systems** and their role in administration.
- To study Akbar's revenue administration, particularly the reforms associated with **Raja Todar Mal**.
- To examine the relationship between the Mughal central government and provincial administration.
- To understand the role of military and civil officials in the Mughal administrative system.
- To analyse the measures taken by Akbar to strengthen political stability and integrate different regions of his empire.
- To assess the major features and historical significance of Akbar's administrative reforms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The administration of Akbar has been studied extensively by historians and scholars of medieval Indian history. Contemporary Persian sources provide important information about the political and administrative structure of the Mughal Empire.

Abul Fazl's Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari are among the most important sources for understanding Akbar's administration. The *Ain-i-Akbari* provides detailed information about the organization of the empire, revenue system, military administration, mansabdars, provinces, officials, and various aspects of governance.

Badauni's Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh provides another contemporary account of Akbar's reign. Although Badauni's views sometimes differ from those of Abul Fazl, his work is useful for obtaining a

broader understanding of the examined different aspects of the Mughal administrative system. Their works discuss subjects such as the Mansabdari system, land existing literature shows that Akbar's administration was characterized by a strong central authority combined with an organized system of provincial governance, military ranking, and revenue collection. This study draws upon both contemporary sources and modern historical scholarship. The Empire under Akbar developed a complex administrative structure that enabled the emperor to govern a large and diverse territory. However, the functioning and effectiveness of this system depended upon several institutions, including the central bureaucracy, provincial administration, Mansabdari system, Jagirdari system, and revenue arrangements. The major features of Akbar's administration, the roles of different officials and institutions, the methods of revenue collection, and political and religious developments of the period.

Modern historians such as **Satish Chandra, Irfan Habib, R.P. Tripathi, and A.L. Srivastava** have examined different aspects of the Mughal administrative system. Their works discuss subjects such as the Mansabdari system, land revenue, the Jagirdari system, provincial administration, and the relationship between the state and its subjects.

The existing literature shows that Akbar's administration was characterized by a strong central authority combined with an organized system of provincial governance, military ranking, and revenue collection. This study draws upon both contemporary sources and modern historical scholarship to examine these features.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study follows a **historical and analytical research methodology**. It is primarily based on the study and interpretation of both primary and secondary sources.

Primary Sources

- Abul Fazl's *Akbarnama*
- Abul Fazl's *Ain-i-Akbari*
- Badauni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*
- Other contemporary Persian chronicles and administrative records where relevant

Secondary Sources

- Books written by modern historians on Mughal India
- Research articles and academic publications
- University-level history textbooks and reference works
- Scholarly studies on Mughal administration, revenue, and military organization

The research will involve **collection, classification, comparison, and interpretation of historical information**. Particular attention will be given to the central administration, provincial administration, Mansabdari system, Jagirdari system, and revenue administration. The study will also compare the interpretations of different historians in order to develop a balanced understanding of Akbar's administrative system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Mughal Empire under Akbar developed a complex administrative structure that enabled the emperor to govern a large and diverse territory. However, the functioning and effectiveness of this system

depended upon several institutions, including the central bureaucracy, provincial administration, Mansabdari system, Jagirdari system, and revenue arrangements.

The problem addressed by this study is to understand **how Akbar organized and administered his expanding empire and how his administrative institutions contributed to the consolidation of Mughal authority**. It also seeks to examine the relationship between administrative reforms and the political, military, and economic needs of the empire.

The study therefore investigates the major features of Akbar's administration, the roles of different officials and institutions, the methods of revenue collection, and the challenges involved in governing a vast and culturally diverse empire.

NEED OF STUDY -

Need of the development of administrative institutions in medieval India. Akbar ruled over a large and diverse empire and introduced several administrative understanding how Akbar attempted to establish effective relations between the central authority and different regions and communities regional study of Mughal administration in areas such as Bengal, Gujarat, the Deccan, and Raj participation and position of different social and ethnic groups within sources may reflect the perspectives and interests of their authors and therefore to earlier or later Mughal rulers may be made where necessary to explain the development or influence of Akbar's administrative policies Study

The study of **Mughal Administration under Akbar** is important for understanding the development of administrative institutions in medieval India. Akbar ruled over a large and diverse empire and introduced several administrative measures to strengthen the central government and maintain political stability.

This study is needed to understand the organization and functioning of the Mughal state, particularly the **Mansabdari system, Jagirdari system, provincial administration, military organization, and revenue administration**. It also helps in understanding how Akbar attempted to establish effective relations between the central authority and different regions and communities of the empire.

The study is also significant because Akbar's administrative policies influenced the subsequent Mughal rulers and became an important part of the political and economic history of medieval India.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Further research on Mughal administration under Akbar can explore the following areas:

- A comparative study of Akbar's administration with that of **Babur, Humayun, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan**.
- A detailed study of the **Mansabdari system** and its development during Akbar's reign.
- The functioning of the **Jagirdari system** and its impact on Mughal administration.
- A regional study of Mughal administration in areas such as Bengal, Gujarat, the Deccan, and Rajputana.
- The role of **Raja Todar Mal** in the development of the Mughal revenue system.
- The relationship between Mughal administrative policies and the rural economy.
- The participation and position of different social and ethnic groups within the Mughal bureaucracy.
- A study of Akbar's administrative policies in comparison with other contemporary empires.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

Scope

The study covers the major administrative institutions and policies of Akbar's reign, with particular emphasis on:

- Central administration and important officials.
- Provincial and local administration.
- Mansabdari and Jagirdari systems.
- Military administration.
- Revenue administration and land-revenue reforms.
- The role of administrative officials.
- Akbar's policies for maintaining political integration within the empire.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations:

- It is mainly based on available historical and secondary sources.
- Contemporary sources may reflect the perspectives and interests of their authors and therefore need to be critically examined.
- The study focuses primarily on **Akbar's reign (1556–1605)** and does not provide an exhaustive account of the entire Mughal period.
- Due to the large geographical extent of the Mughal Empire, all regional variations in administration cannot be examined in equal detail.
- Limited time and availability of sources may restrict detailed analysis of certain administrative institutions.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on the **administrative system of the Mughal Empire during Akbar's reign**. It examines how the emperor organized the central government and provincial administration and how various institutions helped in governing the empire.

The study particularly covers the **central administration, provincial administration, Mansabdari system, Jagirdari system, military organization, and revenue administration**. It also considers the contribution of administrative reforms to the consolidation and functioning of the Mughal Empire.

The study is primarily concerned with the period **1556–1605**, while references to earlier or later Mughal rulers may be made where necessary to explain the development or influence of Akbar's administrative policies.

FINDINGS

- Akbar established a **centralized and efficient administrative system** over a large part of the Mughal Empire.
- The empire was divided into **Subahs (provinces)**, which were further divided into **Sarkars, Parganas, and villages**.
- The **Mansabdari system** organized military and civil officials according to ranks and responsibilities.
- The **Jagirdari system** helped the state assign revenue-producing territories to officials in return for their services.

- Akbar introduced important **land-revenue reforms**, particularly with the help of Raja Todar Mal. The system known as **Zabt** assessed land and revenue systematically.
- Akbar followed a policy of **religious tolerance** and included people from different communities, including Rajputs, in the administration.
- The emperor maintained strong control over officials through inspections, records, and a system of checks and balances.

DISCUSSION

Akbar's administration combined **central authority with organized provincial and local government**. The emperor was the highest authority, while various ministers assisted him in managing finance, the military, justice, and religious affairs.

The Mansabdari system was an important feature of Akbar's administration. Mansabdars were given ranks that determined their status and military obligations. This enabled Akbar to maintain a large army while keeping powerful nobles under imperial control.

The land-revenue system was another major achievement. Land was measured and revenue was assessed according to productivity and past yields. This provided the government with a more regular source of income and helped strengthen the imperial treasury.

Akbar also developed a policy of **Sulh-i Kul**, generally understood as universal peace or tolerance. His inclusion of Rajputs and other groups in the ruling structure helped integrate diverse populations into the empire.

CONCLUSION

Akbar's administrative system played a significant role in strengthening and expanding the Mughal Empire. His reforms in **revenue collection, military organization, provincial administration, and religious policy** created a relatively systematic structure of governance. Many of these institutions continued to influence Mughal administration after his reign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The study of Akbar's administration should consider both its **achievements and limitations**.
- Students should examine primary and contemporary sources to understand how the administrative system worked in practice.
- The Mansabdari, Jagirdari, and revenue systems should be studied separately as well as together because they were closely connected.
- Comparisons with the administrative systems of **earlier and later Indian rulers** can help explain Akbar's contribution more clearly.
- Historical accounts should distinguish between the **official policies of the Mughal state and their actual implementation at the local level**.

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