

The Mughal Empire

Political and Social structure

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

Central Administration

The Mughal Empire was a **centralized autocracy ruled by the Padshah (sovereign emperor)**. The empire had a well-defined administrative hierarchy, ensuring efficient governance.

- ◆ **Emperor (Padshah)** – Supreme authority in political, military, and judicial matters.
- ◆ **Wazir (Prime Minister)** – Chief advisor and head of the imperial administration.
- ◆ **Subahs (Provinces)** – The empire was divided into several provinces, each governed by a Subahdar (provincial governor) who held political, military, and revenue powers.



◆ Key Provincial Officials:

Official	Role & Responsibilities
Diwan	Revenue collection and financial administration.
Mir Bakhshi	Head of military administration; supervised Mansabdars.
Sadr as-Sudr	Managed religious affairs and endowments.
Qazi	Judiciary head; interpreted and implemented laws.

Local Administration

Administrative Unit	Head Official(s)	Functions
Sarkar (District)	Faujdar (Law & order)	Maintained security and enforced imperial laws.
	Amalguzar (Revenue)	Collected land revenue and managed finances.
Pargana (Sub-district)	Shiqdar (Law enforcement)	Maintained local order and security.
	Kanungo (Record-keeper)	Maintained revenue and land records.
Village	Muqaddam (Village head)	Managed village affairs and administration.
	Patwari (Land record keeper)	Maintained land records and tax collection.

Mansabdari System:

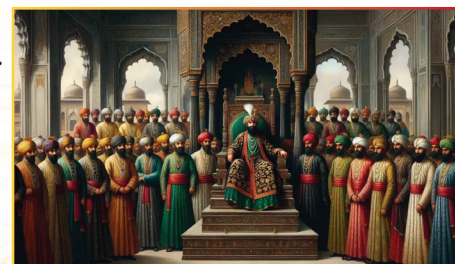
Introduced by **Akbar**, was a hierarchical bureaucratic and military ranking framework ensuring efficient governance and a strong military.

◆ **Mansab (Rank)** – Assigned to both military and civil officials, reflecting their status, salary, and responsibilities.

◆ **Zat Rank** – Determined personal status, salary, and administrative position.

◆ **Sawar Rank** – Indicated the number of cavalymen an officer maintained for military efficiency.

◆ **Du-Aspah Si-Aspah System** – Introduced by **Jahangir**, requiring select Mansabdars to maintain twice the cavalymen, increasing their military obligations.



Classification of Mansabdars

Rank	Zat Range	Designation
Mansabdar	Up to 500 Zat	Lower-ranked officials
Amir	500 to 2,500 Zat	Mid-ranking officers
Amir-i-Umda	Above 2,500 Zat	Senior officers
Higher Ranks	7,000–10,000 Zat	Nobles and princes
Top Officials	Up to 12,000 Zat	Mir Bakhshi & highest-ranking officers
Lowest Mansab	10 Zat	Assigned to minor officials
Highest Mansab	12,000 Zat	Reserved for imperial princes & top generals

Payment System

- ♦ **Jagir System** – Most Mansabdars received **non-hereditary jagirs** (land revenue assignments) instead of salaries, preventing feudal power consolidation.
- ♦ **Cash Salary** – Some Mansabdars, especially in the capital or direct military service, were paid in cash.
- ♦ **Revenue Collection** – Mansabdars collected revenue from their assigned jagirs but had no ownership rights.
- ♦ **Periodic Transfers** – Frequent transfers prevented local power consolidation and ensured central control.



SOCIAL STRUCTURE

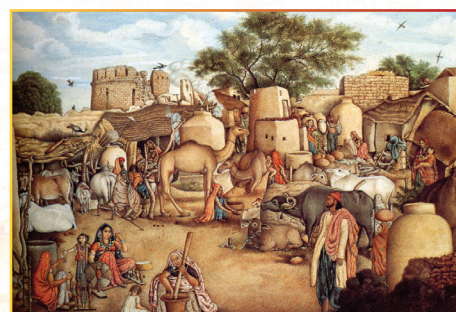


- ♦ **Ruling Elite** – Mughals, Rajputs, Afghans, Indian Muslims, and Persian nobles held top administrative and military roles.
- ♦ **Middle Class** – Included small zamindars, merchants, artisans, and lower-ranking mansabdars.
- ♦ **Peasantry & Laborers** – Majority paid high taxes and lived in poverty.
- ♦ **Kamin Class (Untouchables)** – Landless workers in menial jobs.



Zamindars: Powers & Functions

- ♦ **Types** – **Autonomous zamindars** (hereditary landowners) and imperial zamindars (appointed by the state).
- ♦ **Revenue Role** – Acted as intermediaries between the peasantry and the Mughal administration, collecting land revenue and remitting it to the state.
- ♦ **Police Functions** – Maintained law and order in their territories, conducted criminal investigations, and ensured justice at the local level.
- ♦ **Judicial Authority** – Settled disputes and minor cases in their jurisdiction.



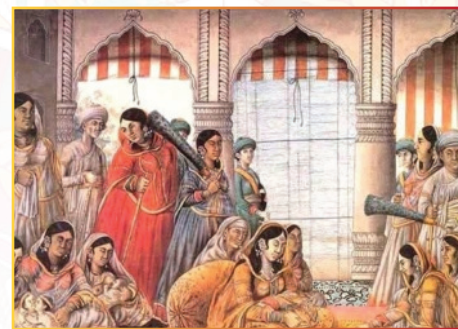
Types of Peasants

- ♦ **Khudkasht (Miryoti)** – Self-cultivating peasants who owned and tilled their land.
- ♦ **Pahi-Kasht** – Non-resident cultivators or migrant peasants who worked on land temporarily, often settled by zamindars.
- ♦ **Muzarian** – Tenant farmers who cultivated land owned by others and paid rent either in cash or kind.



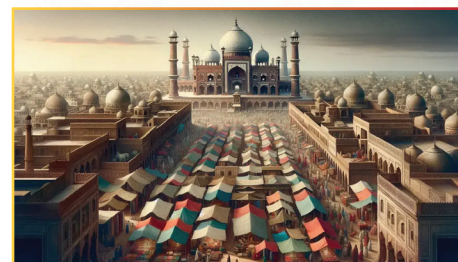
Women's Status

- ◆ **Elite Women** – Figures like **Nur Jahan and Jahanara Begum** held influence.
- ◆ **Purdah System** – Restricted noblewomen's mobility.
- ◆ **Legal Rights** – Islamic law granted property rights, while Hindu laws limited inheritance.
- ◆ **Bhakti & Sufi Movements** – Encouraged gender inclusivity.



Urbanization



- ◆ Major cities: **Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Fatehpur Sikri, Ahmedabad.**
- ◆ **Trade Centers** – Connected via caravanserais and markets.
- ◆ **Hartals (Strikes)** – Recorded in Ahmedabad.




New Crops Introduced

- ◆ **Maize, potatoes, red chilies, tobacco, pineapple** via Portuguese trade.




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