

HIS5B08 HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL INDIA  
MODULE-1  
TOPIC- DELHI SULTANATE

Prepared By  
Smitha Puthur  
Assistant Professor  
Dept Of History  
Little Flower College  
Guruvayoor

# THE MUGHAL EMPIRE (1526-1707)

- The Mughal emperors (first six rulers).
- BABUR (1526-30)
- HUMAYUN (1530-56)
- **AKBAR (1556-1605)**
- **JAHANGIR (1605-28)**
- **SHAHJAHAN (1628-58)**
- **AURANGZEB (1658-1707)**



# PRIMARY SOURCES

- MAJOR HISTORIANS:
- ABUL FAZL
- ABDUL QADIR BADAONI
- GULBADAN BEGUM
- ABDUL HAMID LAHORI
- SAQI MUSTAID KHAN
- BHIMSEN

# INTRODUCTION

- What were the factors behind the success of the Mughals?
- How they were able to establish and maintained their sovereignty over the Indian sub-continent and legitimize their rule?
- Was it because they had better military technology and skills? Or had charismatic

# INTRODUCTION

- rulers? Or were the centralizing institutions and broad base and culturally diverse bureaucracy responsible for their success?
- How did the descendents of Babur who ruled over a small principality in Farghana (Afghanistan) created one of the most powerful gunpowder empires (other two: the Ottoman Turks and Safavids of Persia)

# THE LARGEST ARMY

- The Mughals maintained the largest standing army of that time. Just one estimate: In 1628 there were 200,000 salaried cavalymen, 8000 *mansabdars*, 7000 *ahadis* and mounted musketeers were stationed at the imperial capital, besides the armies of the nobles, *mansabdars* and the princes. In many instances they had the fastest moving army as well. Akbar was able to cover a distance of 500

# THE LARGEST ARMY...

- miles (normally it took twenty-one days), in nine days to crush a rebellion (this feat was never repeated).
- Mughal dynamism depended on its military conquest, so much that some historians call it “a war state (J F Richards). Mughal emperors made little apology for attacking the neighbouring rulers and they regarded the



# CHARISMATIC RULERS

- adjoining territories either as tributaries or enemies.
- The Mughal emperors, especially Akbar, created a special image of himself, and some of his personal qualities and virtues later served as a model for his successors (more details when legitimization process will be discussed).

# CENTRALIZING INSTITUTIONS

- Most of the administrative institutions were initiated and established during the reign of Akbar. He was able to build a centralized administration which was capable of steady expansion as new territories were added to the empire. At the apex of this system was the emperor who acted as a chief executive.
- At the central level there were four main

# THE MINISTERS...

- officials and their ministries namely: *Diwan* in charge of finance and revenue, *Mir Bakshi* in charge of army and intelligence, *Qazi* in charge of judiciary and patronage and *Mir-i-Saman* in charge of the royal household, and its central workshops, buildings, roads and canals throughout the empire.
- All other functions such as diplomacy and

# THE MINISTERS..

- external affairs remained under emperor's control.
- The Mughal civil and administrative officials were regulated and organized under the *mansabdari* system.
- Each of these officials were supported and helped by a large staff of clerks, accountants, auditors, messengers, and other functionaries.

# THE PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS

- The division of functions established at the centre was duplicated in the provinces. At each provincial capital a *subahdar* (governor) responsible directly to the emperor, shared power with a *diwan* (finance official) reported to the imperial *diwan*, *bakshi* (military and intelligence official) reported to the *mir-bakshi* and a *sadr* reported to the imperial *qazi*.

# THE *MAN SABDARI* SYSTEM

- Every official in the Mughal empire, high or low, had a rank or a *mansab*. Their status, duties, pay and importance were graded accordingly. Technically, all mansabdars had to maintain a military contingent for which they were paid. All other officials were paid in cash. During Akbar's time the official bearing a decimal rank of 500 were ranked as a noble

## THE *MANSABDARI* ....

- or *umara*. But by the end of the seventeenth century the *mansabdars* with 1000 rank were accorded the status of a *umara*.
- All *mansabdars* had dual ranks and they were remunerated on that basis. The successful regulation of the *mansabs* and the salary assignment (*jagirdari* system) can be truly termed as a Mughal phenomenon.

## THE *MANSABDARI*...

- All Mughal officials received a dual rank when they joined the Mughal imperial service. That was *zat* (personal salary) and *sawar* (payment for the military contingent). For example the *mansab* of Prince Salim (Jahangir) was 5000 *zat*/5000 *sawar*. What does it mean: Prince Salim's personal salary was based on his *mansab* of 5000 *zat* and for 5000 *sawar*, he had to maintain a military contingent.



## THE *MANSABDARI*...

- During Akbar's reign the ratio was one horsemen and two horses and a *mansabdar* of 5000 *sawar* had to maintain a contingent of 5000 horsemen. The *mansabdars zat* rank never exceeded his *sawar* rank (either it used to be equal 5000/5000 or 3000/ 4000 or less than the *sawar* rank). The *zat* numerals were always used to be stated first.
- The highest rank (*mansab*) was 7000/7000 which was awarded to the officials/royalty.

# CHANGES IN THE *MANSABDARI*

- After the reign of Akbar when the highest ranking mansabdars who had reached the maximum limit in their mansab had nothing to aspire for. For this reason there were some changes in the *mansabdari* system.
- The quota of the contingent which each *mansabdar* had to maintain was lowered and there were further reductions in the contingent if the *mansabdars* were posted on the frontiers or far away places.

# THE CHANGES...

- Changes in the *mansabdari* system:
- *Du-aspa* and *sih-aspa* categories: For example the *mansab* of Ali Mardan Khan (1628) was 7000/7000 *du-aspa* (His personal rank was 7000 but for his 7000 contingent he had to maintain only 66% of troops)
- If the *sih-aspa* category was added then the *mansabdar* had to maintain 33% of his contingent.

# THE CHANGES...

- The crisis in the *mansabdari* system was becoming obvious by the time of Shahjahan. The *zat* rank of the mansabdars starting exceeding their *sawar* rank and had crossed the maximum limit of 7000. A *mansabdar* could have a *mansab* of 20,000/ 5000. (will be elaborated).

# THE *JAGIRDARI* SYSTEM

- All the Mughal *mansabdars* were paid through an assignment of *jagirs*.
- These jagirs can be linked to the Delhi Sultan's Iqta system where the Sultans parcelled out their territories to be administered by their nobles and the state officials. These officials were responsible for maintaining law and order and collection of land revenue. After meeting

# THE *JAGIRDARI*...

- the necessary expenses the *iqtadars* used to send the surplus revenue to the central treasury.
- The jagir assignments initiated by Akbar, however, only gave the right to collect revenues to the *mansabdars*. They were not responsible to maintain law and order or any other responsibilities. It was a purely fiscal

# THE *JAGIRDARI*...

- arrangement and only Rajput *mansabdars* were given more extensive rights of residence within their own homeland (Rajputana). They received patrimonial (Mughal term: *watan*) lands as a part of the *jagirs* assigned to them.
- The most important element of the *jagir* assignments was that they were transferable. Abul Fazl compared the transfer of *jagirs* to

# THE *JAGIRDARI*...

- re-sowing of the seeds in the garden. In practice, however, the higher *mansabdars* preferred to retain their *jagirs* (if they were good) and bribed the imperial officials lavishly for that.
- Deaths, transfers, promotions, and demotions of the imperial cadres necessitated continuing transfer of *jagirs*.



# THE *ZAMINDARI* SYSTEM

- The local level administration was carried on the local elites or hereditary landowners and in Mughal parlance known as *zamindars*. They claimed a hereditary right to collect a share in the revenue collection.
- For administrative purposes they could be categorized into three broad groups.

# THE *ZAMINDARI*...

- **AUTONOMOUS *ZAMINDARS***: the hereditary landowners who enjoyed sovereign powers. Rajput rulers, Jats (large peasant landowners) belonged to this category.
- **INTERMEDIARY *ZAMINDARS***: the *zamindars* who collected the land revenue and paid to the imperial treasury or the *jagirdars*.

# THE *ZAMINDARI*...

- **PRIMARY *ZAMINDARS***: the proprietary rights over agricultural as well as habitational lands. Mughal emperors conferred such *zamindari* rights on people who cleared the forests or brought waste lands under cultivation.

# THE LAND REVENUE SYSTEM...

- The land revenue (*mal*) was levied on the actual crop and not on the land. In its primitive form this was known as share cropping. This simple form of revenue collection led to the system of *kankut*, here instead of dividing the crops physically, the share were deduced based on previous harvests (in place by the fourteenth century).

# THE LAND REVENUE...

- The *zabt* system introduced by Akbar simplified the process, when on the basis of ten years of harvest, a standard cash rate was fixed for each locality. The land revenue was collected in cash from all parts of the Mughal empire.
- In addition to the land revenue there were a number of other rural taxes such as grazing tax, levies of the officials, taxes on animals, waste lands, forests, etc.

# THE MUGHAL NOBILITY

- Mughal nobility was unique in two ways: a) Mughal empire was the only Muslim state where the *shia* and the *sunni* nobles co-existed peacefully. B) Empire provided opportunities for service irrespective of ethnic, religious or familial ties and thus created a “new individual and group identity”. For instance, the successful expansion of the empire brought

# THE NOBILITY...

- chances of promotion according to the performance of the individual noble. The consolidation of the empire depended on its capacity, firstly, to politically integrate the most important social groups and secondly, to secure the financial resources that were necessary for its survival.
- In order to achieve a certain unity within the

# THE NOBILITY...

- nobility and to gain the nobles undiminished dedication to the concerns of the imperial centre, the Mughal empire had to provide opportunities to satisfy the interests of the imperial elites and in this way build the nobles identification with the imperial idea.
- The Mughal nobility became and remained a heterogeneous body of free men, not slaves



# THE NOBILITY...

- (like the Turkish nobility), who rose to eminence as their talents and the emperor's favours permitted. But no single ethnic or sectarian group was ever large enough to challenge the authority of the emperor. Rewards and incentives rather than force and coercion were the Mughal's preferred approach. The system offered generous money

# THE NOBILITY...

- rewards as well as lavish honours and preferment to those who performed well at all levels.
- Possessing great wealth and power, these nobles or *umara* were highly visible public figures. Their personalities, habits, and movements were the topic of endless rumours and speculations. The greatest nobles used to

# THE NOBILITY...

- be the objects of empire wide- attention. News of royal favour or disfavour, of illnesses, marriages, postings, and other information formed the stuff of countless reports that flashed across the empire. Wherever, they were posted, whether in court or in the provinces, the patrimonial households of the nobles were a focal point of aristocratic life

# THE NOBILITY...

- and culture. To the extent his resources permitted each noblemen emulated the style, etiquette, and opulence of the emperor.
- These nobles patronized artists, and craftsmen who produced the products exclusively from them. In the Mughal cities of Agra, Delhi, Burhanpur and Lahore, the morphology of urban life was determined by the settlement

# THE NOBILITY...

- patterns of the Mughal nobility. Architects, artisans, builders, poets, found permanent employment in the noble entourages. Mughal officials and frequently, their women spent large sums of money for the construction of public buildings i.e. mosques, inns, stone bridges, gardens and markets. The origin of dozen of new towns and villages throughout the Mughal India can be traced to the investment by these nobles.

# LEGITIMACY: AKBAR AND HIS POLICIES

- How did the Mughals legitimize their rule beyond the religiously sanctioned status, they were not above the *Sharia*, or, in case of Non-Muslims, *dharma*. What sort of alliances did they build? How did they secure support and delegate authority. And how did they transformed their power into authority, and what kind of authority they possessed?

# THE LEGITIMACY...

- First of all, the Muslim rulers in India, like their early Muslim predecessors, neither broke away the established kingship system nor interfered with customs, the social order, or indigenous structure of the village administration. The Muslim kings did not present themselves as lawmakers for non-Muslim subjects, but as their protectors and guaranteed the continuity



# THE LEGITIMACY...

- of the traditional social and economic institutions. The Mughals adopted a general policy of tolerance vis-à-vis the largely non-Muslim population and elaborated an entirely new system of cultural ethnic integration, which, in fact, introduced a new quality of imperial rule in India. They claimed to be responsible for the welfare of all their subjects



# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- The historians, scholars and literary writers depicted the Mughal emperors as shadows of God on earth, whose authority to rule was a divine right. While Islamic religious thinking had generally restricted the religious function of the ruler to mere protection of law, Abul Fazl invested the Mughal emperor, Akbar, with a paramount spiritual authority. The

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- moral authority, which he gained by his reputation as a mystic and spiritual guide, did not derive from any particular religion, and therefore, legitimized his position as a ruler for Muslims and Hindus alike. This idea of spiritual leader corresponded with the Hindu and Muslim ideals of a universal monarch. There was a juxtaposition of Hindu/Muslim

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- traditions in formulation of Mughal ideology to legitimize their rule.
- Akbar's contribution to the establishment of Mughal authority on religious tolerance was based on the principles of *sul-i-kul* or “absolute peace”. As a divinely inspired guardian of law and justice, Akbar introduced certain elements, which fostered confidence

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- and acceptance of Mughal authority among his subjects. From his childhood he was inquisitive by nature and was interested in learning about other cultures and faiths. In the beginning of his reign, he was a devout Muslim i. e expeditions against the Rajputs were coined as campaigns against the infidels, and his intolerance towards other Muslim sects.

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- Gradually a shift started appearing in his attitude towards his own faith. Many reasons are given behind the change by historians, but, it all started with his tutors, guardians, close companions, and most importantly, from the outcome of the discussions that took place in his court between the Ulema. Although, he had initiated these talks, but as time went on, he

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- became more dissatisfied with the legal complications and traditional approach of his clerics. He started inviting experts of other faiths to come for discussion in his capital city, Fatehpur Sikri (1578 onwards). In the meantime he made the leading theologians recognize him as the supreme arbitrator in the religious affairs(1579). The leading theologians signed the document known in history as *Mahzar*.

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- The most sweeping change, which had a direct impact on nearly all Hindus, occurred in 1579, when he abolished the *jiziyah*. The termination of this tax implied that the unequal compact between the Muslims and non-Muslims was also abolished. Hence, Akbar's action was bitterly resented by orthodox Muslims.
- Akbar also started celebrating Hindu festivals



# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- and customs and openly worshipping sun with sets of rituals of his own inventions. He engaged in abstinence from excessive meat eating, sexual intercourse and alcohol consumption. Akbar also came to enlist selected members of the nobility as his disciples (misconstrued as a religion by some historians).



# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- He married Rajput princesses and inducted large number of non-Muslims in his nobility.
- Akbar's successors, more or less, continued his tradition of pluralism and tolerance to other faiths. Usually Aurangzeb had been blamed for undoing the cultural pluralism and always compared to his elder brother, Dara Shikoh, and two have come down in history as ideological

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- opponents. Dara as liberal, and Aurangzeb as rigid conservative. Dara, was indeed, an intellectual in tradition of Akbar who sought philosophical truths in all religious traditions. But there were other contradictions. It is also a fact, that Dara was a poor leader and a bad general, therefore, not an ideal choice of being the heir of Shahjahan. Whereas

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- Aurangzeb, was a great general and military commander, a devout Muslim, yet the major focus of Aurangzeb's reign was warfare against the Muslims (Deccan states of Bijapur, Golconda, etc.).
- But to blame Aurangzeb for the decline and collapse of the imperial structure will be coming to an easy conclusion/solution.

# INTEGRATION PROCESSES

- Aurangzeb shifted but did not alter the fundamental policies of the Mughal empire. He preferred strict Islamic or *Sharia* application in administrative matters. No doubt, he ordered the destruction of the temples in Banaras, Mathura and Rajasthan, but it was less to do with religiosity than the presumed disloyalty of nobles associated with these sites. His accusation against the tenth Sikh guru was also, politically motivated since the guru had openly supported his opponent, Dara.

# DEFINING MUGHAL CULTURE

- In Indian languages adjectives derived from the word Mughal connote the ultimate in luxury and display, it also came to be associated with grandeur and extravagance on a large scale. Mughals came to be known for their lavish life styles. Few examples: Akbar only drank water from river Ganges and wherever, he went the water was delivered to him fresh.

# THE MUGHAL CULTURE...

- The imperial kitchens prepared 1000 dishes a day and the imperial tents could accommodate 1500 people.
- Shahjahan was able to immortalize Mughal grandeur in monumental buildings like the Taj Mahal, new capital city in Delhi, large scale renovations in Agra and Lahore and luxurious court adorned with a peacock throne (made in

# THE MUGHAL CULTURE...

- ten million rupees). Shahjahan spent more than 28 million on his buildings. Despite the large investments on war and imperial structures, Shahjahan was able to amass wealth worth ninety one million rupees (half in cash and half in jewels, gold and silver).

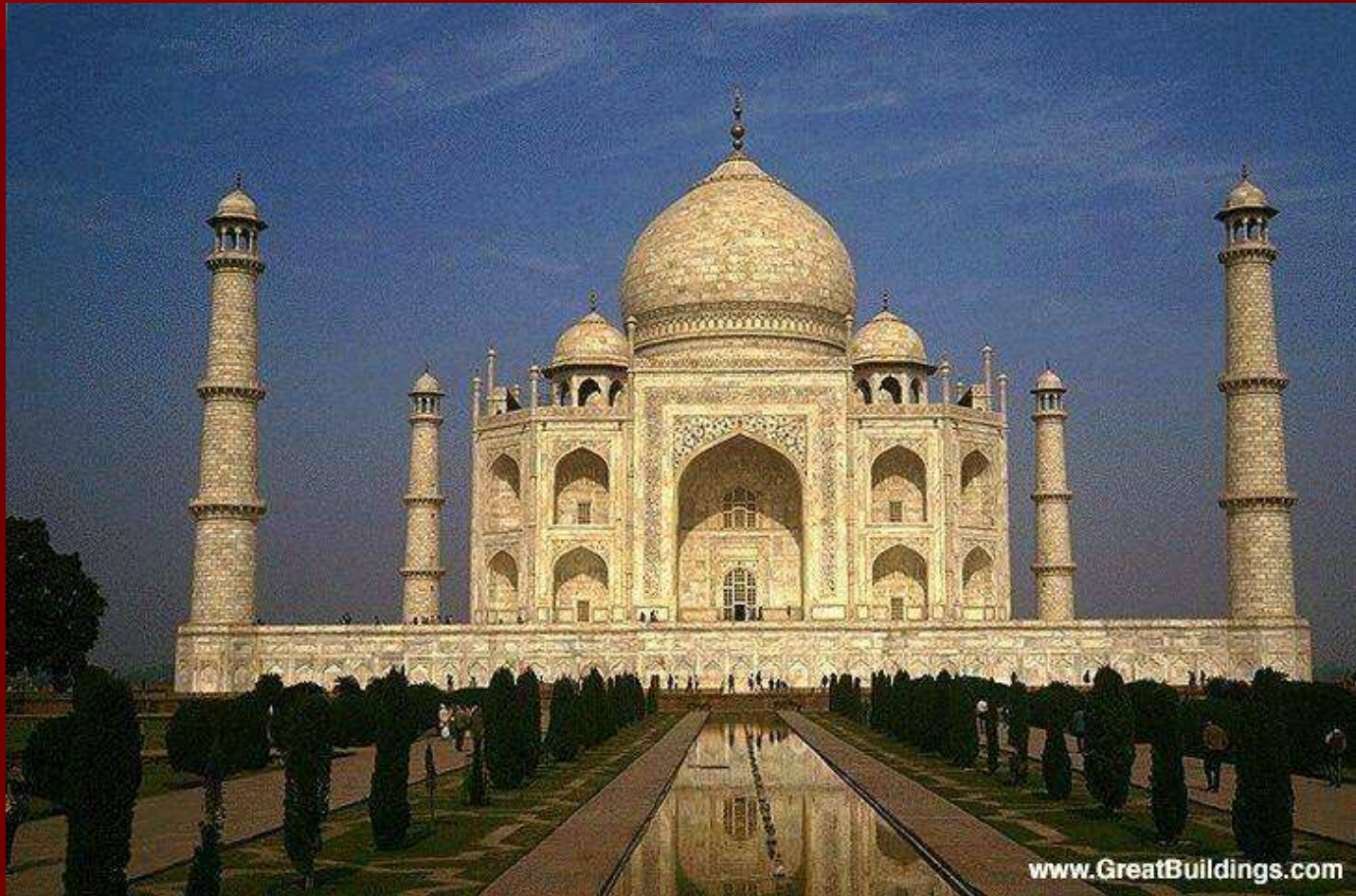


# HUMAYUN'S TOMB, DELHI





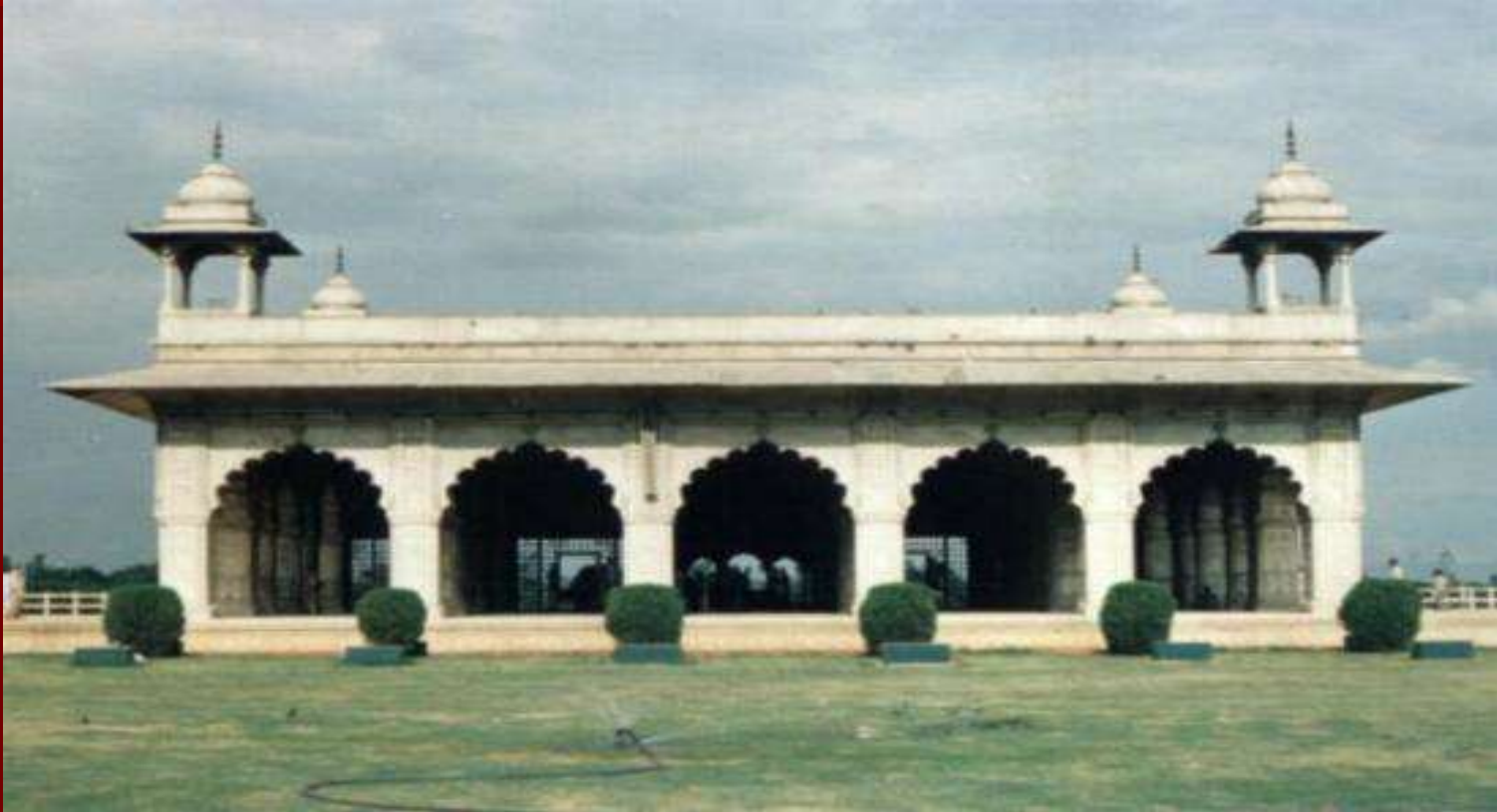
# THE TAJ MAHAL



# ANOTHER VIEW OF TAJ



# DIWAN-I-KHAS, DELHI





# LAL QILA, DELHI

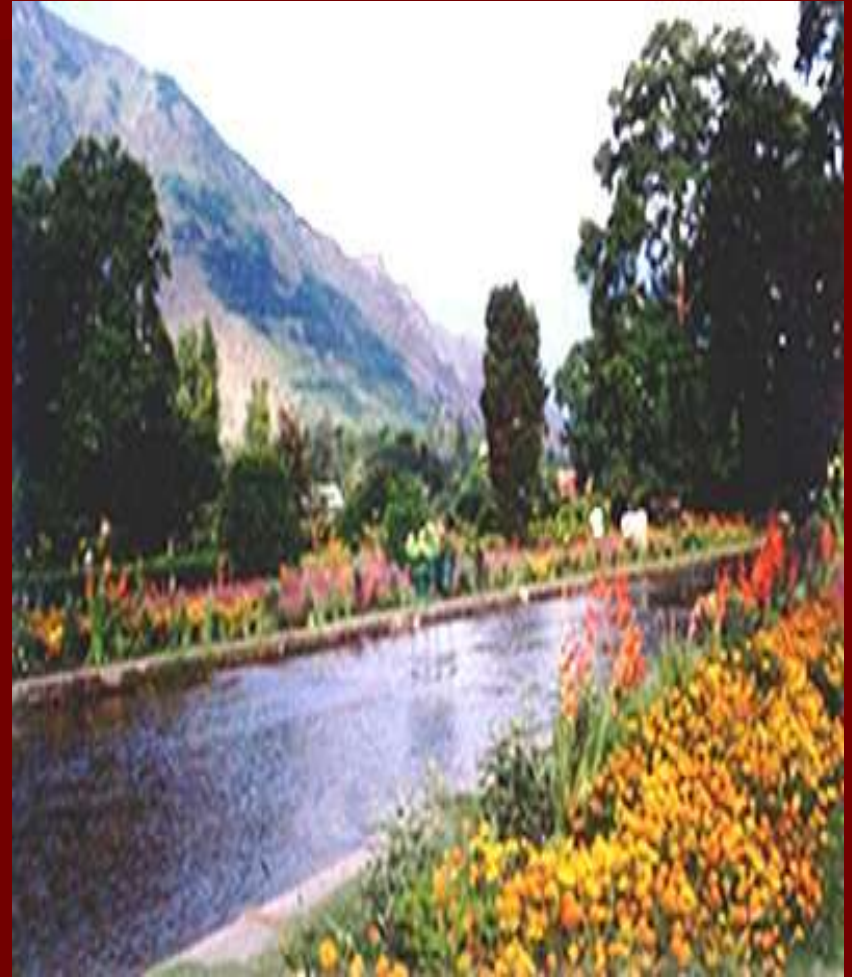
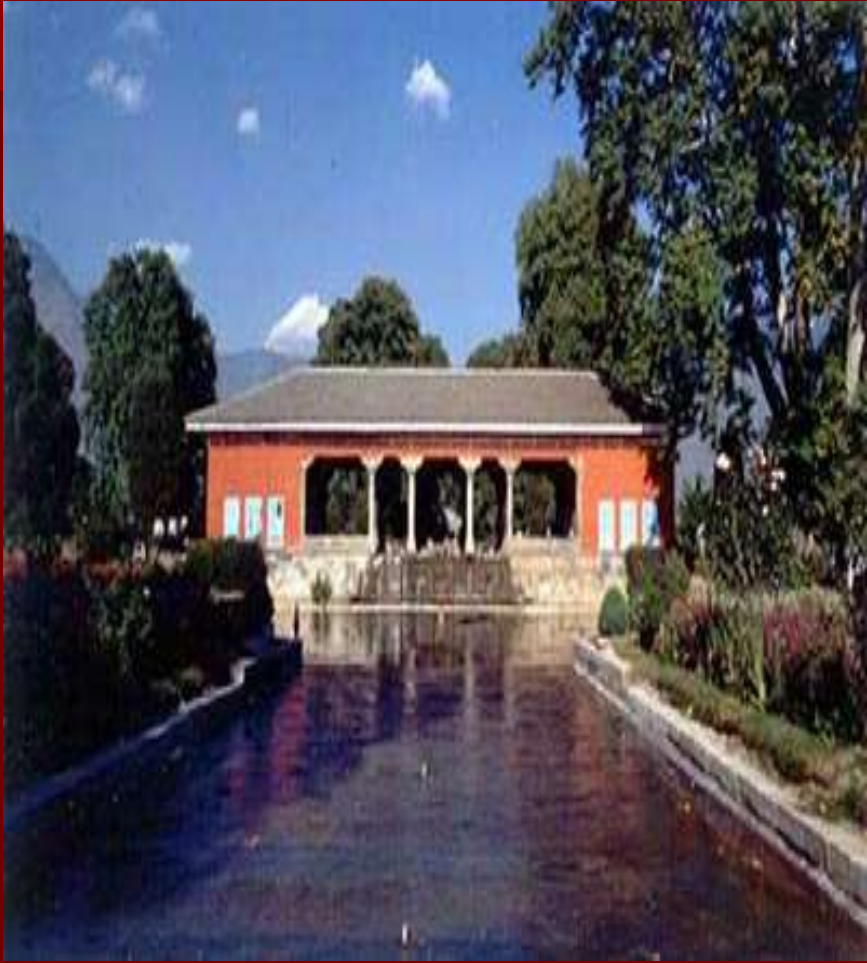


# FATEHPUR SIKRI





# SHALIMAR BAGH, KASHMIR



# MUGHAL PAINTINGS



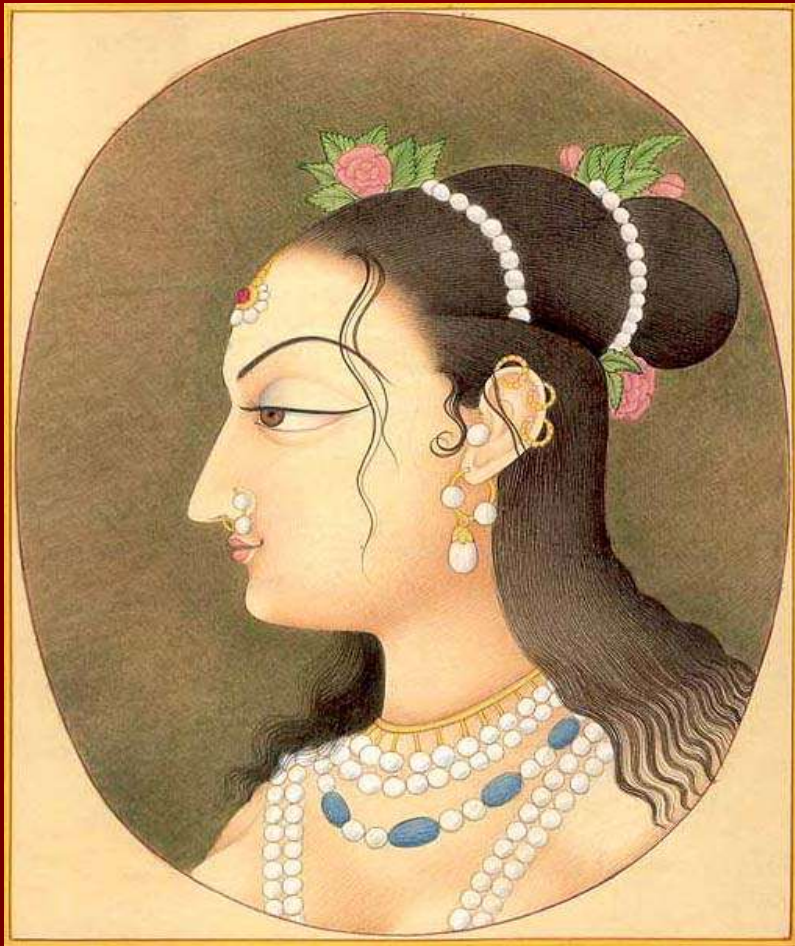


# MUGHAL PAINTINGS





# MUGHAL PAINTINGS



# MUGHAL ART





# MUGHAL JEWELLERY

