

CHAPTER 9

THEME NINE

Kings and Chronicles

The Mughal Courts (c. sixteenth-seventeenth centuries)

1. The Mughals and Their Empire

- Mughals – It was not the name the rulers of the dynasty chose for themselves.
- They referred to themselves as Timurids, as descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur on the paternal side.
- During the sixteenth century, Europeans used the term Mughal to describe the Indian rulers of this branch of the family.
- The founder of the empire, Zahiruddin Babur, was driven from his Central Asian homeland, Farghana, by the warring Uzbeks.
- He first established himself at Kabul and then in 1526 pushed further into the Indian subcontinent
- His successor, Nasiruddin Humayun (1530-40, 1555-56) expanded the frontiers of the empire, but lost it to the Afghan leader Sher Shah Sur, who drove him into exile.
- Humayun took refuge in the court of the Safavid ruler of Iran.
- In 1555 Humayun defeated the Surs, but died a year later.
- Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) expanded and consolidated his empire, making it the largest, strongest and richest kingdom of his time.
- Akbar succeeded in extending the frontiers of the empire to the Hindukush mountains, and checked the expansionist designs of the Uzbeks of Turan (Central Asia) and the Safavids of Iran.
- Akbar had three fairly able successors in Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707), much as their characters varied.

- Imperial structure were created during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries
- These included effective methods of administration and taxation.
- The visible centre of Mughal power was the court.
- After 1707, following the death of Aurangzeb, the power of the dynasty diminished.
- In place of the vast apparatus of empire controlled from Delhi, Agra or Lahore – the different capital cities – regional powers acquired greater autonomy.
- In 1857 the last scion of this dynasty, Bahadur Shah Zafar II, was overthrown by the British.

2. The Production of Chronicles

- Chronicles commissioned by the Mughal emperors are an important source for studying the empire and its court.
- They were written in order to project a vision of an enlightened kingdom to all those who came under its umbrella.
- The rulers wanted to ensure that there was an account of their rule for posterity.
- The histories they wrote focused on events centred on the ruler, his family, the court and nobles, wars and administrative arrangements.
- Their titles, such as the *Akbar Nama*, *Shahjahan Nama*, *Alamgir Nama*, that is, the story of Akbar, Shah Jahan and Alamgir (a title of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb), suggest that in the eyes of their authors the history of the empire and the court was synonymous with that of the emperor.

From Turkish to Persian

- Mughal court chronicles were written in Persian.
- Under the Sultans of Delhi it flourished as a language of the court and of literary writings, alongside north Indian languages, especially Hindavi and its regional variants.
- As the Mughals were Chaghtai Turks by origin, Turkish was their mother tongue.
- Their first ruler Babur wrote poetry and his memoirs in this language.
- It was Akbar who consciously set out to make Persian the leading language of the Mughal court.
- Persian was elevated to a language of empire, conferring power and prestige on those who had a command of it.
- It was spoken by the king, the royal household and the elite at court.
- Further, it became the language of administration at all levels so that accountants, clerks and other functionaries also learnt it.
- Persian became Indianised by absorbing local idioms. A new language, Urdu, sprang from the interaction of Persian with Hindavi.
- Mughal chronicles such as the *Akbar Nama* were written in Persian, others, like Babur's memoirs, were translated from the Turkish into the Persian *Babur Nama*.
- Translations of Sanskrit texts such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* into Persian were commissioned by the Mughal emperors.
- The *Mahabharata* was translated as the *Razmnama* (Book of Wars).

The making of manuscripts

- All books in Mughal India were manuscripts, that is, they were handwritten.
- The centre of manuscript production was the imperial *kitabkhana*.
- It is, a place where the emperor's collection of manuscripts was kept and new manuscripts were produced.
- The manuscript was seen as a precious object, a work of intellectual wealth and beauty.
- It exemplified the power of its patron, the Mughal emperor, to bring such beauty into being.
- Calligraphers and painters held a high social standing
- Calligraphy, the art of handwriting, was considered a skill of great importance.

- It was practised using different styles.
- Akbar's favourite was the *nastaliq*, a fluid style with long horizontal strokes.

3. The Painted Image

- Painters too were involved in the production of Mughal manuscripts.
- Chronicles narrating the events of a Mughal emperor's reign contained, alongside the written text, images that described an event in visual form.
- The production of paintings portraying the emperor, his court and the people who were part of it, was a source of constant tension between rulers and representatives of the Muslim orthodoxy, the *ulama*.
- Muslim rulers in many Asian regions during centuries of empire building regularly commissioned artists to paint their portraits and scenes of life in their kingdoms. (eg. the Safavid kings of Iran)

4. The Akbar Nama and the Badshah Nama

- The author of the *Akbar Nama*, Abu'l Fazl grew up in the Mughal capital of Agra.
- He was widely read in Arabic, Persian, Greek philosophy and Sufism.
- Moreover, he was a forceful debater and independent thinker who consistently opposed the views of the conservative *ulama*.
- These qualities impressed Akbar, who found Abu'l Fazl ideally suited as an adviser and a spokesperson for his policies.
- One major objective of the emperor was to free the state from the control of religious orthodoxy.
- In his role as court historian, Abu'l Fazl both shaped and articulated the ideas associated with the reign of Akbar.
- Beginning in 1589, Abu'l Fazl worked on the *Akbar Nama* for thirteen years, repeatedly revising the draft
- The *Akbar Nama* is divided into three books of which the first two are chronicles.
- The third book is the *Ain-i Akbari*.
- The first volume contains the history of mankind from Adam to one celestial cycle of Akbar's life (30 years).
- The second volume closes in the forty- sixth regnal year (1601) of Akbar.
- The very next year Abu'l Fazl fell victim to a conspiracy hatched by Prince Salim, and was murdered by his accomplice, Bir Singh Bundela.
- In the *Ain-i Akbari* the Mughal Empire is presented as having a diverse population consisting of Hindus, Jainas, Buddhists and Muslims and a composite culture.

- A pupil of Abu'l Fazl, Abdul Hamid Lahori is known as the author of the *Badshah Nama*.
- Emperor Shah Jahan commissioned him to write a history of his reign modelled on the *Akbar Nama*.
- The *Badshah Nama* is this official history in three volumes (*daftars*) of ten lunar years each.
- Lahori wrote the first and second *daftars* comprising the first two decades of the emperor's rule (1627-47); these volumes were later revised by Sadullah Khan, Shah Jahan's *wazir*.
- Infirmities of old age prevented Lahori from proceeding with the third decade which was then chronicled by the historian Waris.

5. The Ideal Kingdom

A divine light

- Abu'l Fazl placed Mughal kingship as the highest station in the hierarchy of objects receiving light emanating from God (*farr-i izadi*).
- He was inspired by a famous Iranian sufi, Shihabuddin Suhrawardi (d. 1191) who first developed this idea.
- Mughal artists, from the seventeenth century onwards, began to portray emperors wearing the halo, which they saw on European paintings to symbolise the light of God.

A unifying force

- Mughal chronicles present the empire as comprising many different ethnic and religious communities – Hindus, Jainas, Zoroastrians and Muslims.
- As the source of all peace and stability the emperor stood above all religious and ethnic groups, mediated among them, and ensured that justice and peace prevailed.
- Abu'l Fazl describes the ideal of *sulh-i kul* (absolute peace) as the cornerstone of enlightened rule.
- In *sulh-i kul* all religions and schools of thought had freedom of expression but on condition that they did not undermine the authority of the state or fight among themselves.
- The ideal of *sulh-i kul* was implemented through state policies – the nobility under the Mughals was a composite one comprising Iranis, Turanis, Afghans, Rajputs, Deccanis –
- Further, Akbar abolished the tax on pilgrimage in 1563 and *jizya* in 1564 as the two were based on religious discrimination.
- Instructions were sent to officers of the empire to follow the precept of *sulh-i kul* in administration.

Just sovereignty as social contract

- Abu'l Fazl defined sovereignty as a social contract: the emperor protects the four essences of his subjects, namely, life (*jan*), property (*mal*), honour (*namus*) and faith (*din*), and in return demands obedience and a share of resources.
- Only just sovereigns were thought to be able to honour the contract with power and Divine guidance.

6. Capitals and Courts

Capital cities

- The capital cities of the Mughals frequently shifted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- Babur took over the Lodi capital of Agra, though during the four years of his reign the court was frequently on the move.
- During the 1560s Akbar had the fort of Agra constructed with red sandstone quarried from the adjoining regions.
- In the 1570s he decided to build a new capital, Fatehpur Sikri.
- Sikri was located on the direct road to Ajmer, where the *dargah* of Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti had become an important pilgrimage centre.
- The Mughal emperors entered into a close relationship with sufis of the Chishti *silsila*.
- Akbar commissioned the construction of a white marble tomb for Shaikh Salim Chishti next to the majestic Friday mosque at Sikri.
- The enormous arched gateway (Buland Darwaza) was meant to remind visitors of the Mughal victory in Gujarat.
- In 1585 the capital was transferred to Lahore to bring the north-west under greater control and Akbar closely watched the frontier for thirteen years.
- In 1648 the court, army and household moved from Agra to the newly completed imperial capital, Shahjahanabad.
- It was a new addition to the old residential city of Delhi, with the Red Fort, the Jama Masjid, a tree-lined esplanade with bazaars (Chandni Chowk) and spacious homes for the nobility.

The Mughal court

- Its centrepiece was the throne
- The *takht*, which gave physical form to the function of the sovereign as *axis mundi*.
- The canopy, a symbol of kingship in India for a millennium, was believed to separate the radiance of the sun from that of the sovereign.

- In court, status was determined by spatial proximity to the king.
- The place accorded to a courtier by the ruler was a sign of his importance in the eyes of the emperor.
- Once the emperor sat on the throne, no one was permitted to move from his position or to leave without permission.
- The forms of salutation to the ruler indicated the person's status in the hierarchy: deeper prostration represented higher status.
- The highest form of submission was *sijda* or complete prostration.
- Under Shah Jahan these rituals were replaced with *chahar taslim* and *zaminbos* (kissing the ground).
- The protocols governing diplomatic envoys at the Mughal court were equally explicit.
- The emperor began his day at sunrise with personal religious devotions or prayers, and then appeared on a small balcony, the *jharoka*, facing the east.
- Below, a crowd of people (soldiers, merchants, craftspeople, peasants, women with sick children) waited for a view, *darshan*, of the emperor.
- *Jharoka darshan* was introduced by Akbar with the objective of broadening the acceptance of the imperial authority as part of popular faith.
- After spending an hour at the *jharoka*, the emperor walked to the public hall of audience (*diwan-i am*) to conduct the primary business of his government.
- Two hours later, the emperor was in the *diwan-i khas* to hold private audiences and discuss confidential matters.
- The Mughal kings celebrated three major festivals a year: the solar and lunar birthdays of the monarch and Nauroz, the Iranian New Year on the vernal equinox.
- On his birthdays, the monarch was weighed against various commodities which were then distributed in charity.

Titles and gifts

- Grand titles were adopted by the Mughal emperors at the time of coronation or after a victory over an enemy.
- Mughal coins carried the full title of the reigning emperor with regal protocol.
- The granting of titles to men of merit was an important aspect of Mughal polity.
- The title Asaf Khan for one of the highest ministers originated with Asaf, the legendary minister of the prophet king Sulaiman (Solomon).

- The title Mirza Raja was accorded by Aurangzeb to his two highest-ranking nobles, Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh.

7. The Imperial Household

- The term "harem" is frequently used to refer to the domestic world of the Mughals.
- It originates in the Persian word *haram*, meaning a sacred place.
- The Mughal household consisted of the emperor's wives and concubines, his near and distant relatives and female servants and slaves.
- Polygamy was practised widely in the Indian subcontinent, especially among the ruling groups.
- Both for the Rajput clans as well as the Mughals marriage was a way of cementing political relationships and forging alliances.
- The gift of territory was often accompanied by the gift of a daughter in marriage.
- This ensured a continuing hierarchical relationship between ruling groups.
- It was through the link of marriage and the relationships that developed as a result that the Mughals were able to form a vast kinship network that linked them to important groups and helped to hold a vast empire together.
- In the Mughal household a distinction was maintained between wives who came from royal families (*begams*), and other wives (*aghas*) who were not of noble birth.
- After Nur Jahan, Mughal queens and princesses began to control significant financial resources.
- Shah Jahan's daughters Jahanara and Roshanara enjoyed an annual income often equal to that of high imperial *mansabdars*.

Humayun Nama

- *It was written by Gulbadan Begum.*
- Gulbadan was the daughter of Babur, Humayun's sister and Akbar's aunt.
- Gulbadan could write fluently in Turkish and Persian.

8. The Imperial Officials

Recruitment and rank

- One important pillar of the Mughal state was its corps of officers, also referred to by historians collectively as the nobility.
- The nobility was recruited from diverse ethnic and religious groups.
- The officer corps of the Mughals was described as a bouquet of flowers (*guldasta*) held together by loyalty to the emperor.

- In Akbar's imperial service, Turani and Iranian nobles were present from the earliest phase of carving out a political dominion.
- Two ruling groups of Indian origin entered the imperial service from 1560 onwards: the Rajputs and the Indian Muslims (Shaikhzadas).
- The first to join was a Rajput chief, Raja Bharmal Kachhwaha of Amber, to whose daughter Akbar got married.
- Iranians gained high offices under Jahangir, whose politically influential queen, Nur Jahan (d. 1645), was an Iranian.
- Aurangzeb appointed Rajputs to high positions, and under him the Marathas accounted for a sizeable number within the body of officers.
- All holders of government offices held ranks (*mansabs*) comprising two numerical designations: *zat* which was an indicator of position in the imperial hierarchy and the salary of the official (*mansabdar*), and *sawar* which indicated the number of horsemen he was required to maintain in service.
- In the seventeenth century, *mansabdars* of 1,000 *zat* or above ranked as nobles (*umara*, which is the plural of *amir*).
- The nobles participated in military campaigns with their armies and also served as officers of the empire in the provinces.
- The troopers maintained superior horses branded on the flank by the imperial mark (*dagh*).
- The emperor personally reviewed changes in rank, titles and official postings for all except the lowest-ranked officers.
- Akbar, who designed the *mansab* system, also established spiritual relationships with a select band of his nobility by treating them as his disciples (*murid*).
- A person wishing to join the service petitioned through a noble, who presented a *tajwiz* to the emperor.
- *Tajwiz* was a petition presented by a nobleman to the emperor, recommending that an applicant be recruited as *mansabdar*.
- If the applicant was found suitable a *mansab* was granted to him.
- The *mir bakhshi* (paymaster general) stood in open court on the right of the emperor and presented all candidates for appointment or promotion.
- There were two other important ministers at the centre: the *diwan-i ala* (finance minister) and *sadr-us sudur* (minister of grants or *madad-i maash*, and in charge of appointing local judges or *qazis*).

- The three ministers occasionally came together as an advisory body, but were independent of each other.
- Akbar with these and other advisers shaped the administrative, fiscal and monetary institutions of the empire.
- Nobles stationed at the court (*tainat-i rakab*) were a reserve force to be deputed to a province or military campaign.

Information and empire

- The *mir bakhshi* supervised the corps of court writers (*waqia nawis*) who recorded all applications and documents presented to the court, and all imperial orders (*farman*).
- In addition, agents (*wakil*) of nobles and regional rulers recorded the entire proceedings of the court under the heading "News from the Exalted Court" (*Akhbarat-i Darbar-i Mualla*) with the date and time of the court session (*pahar*).

Beyond the centre: provincial administration

- The division of functions established at the centre was replicated in the provinces (*subas*) where the ministers had their corresponding subordinates (*diwan*, *bakhshi* and *sadr*).
- The head of the provincial administration was the governor (*subadar*) who reported directly to the emperor.
- The *sarkars*, into which each *suba* was divided, often overlapped with the jurisdiction of *faujdars* (commandants) who were deployed with contingents of heavy cavalry and musketeers in districts.
- The local administration was looked after at the level of the *pargana* (sub-district) by three semi-hereditary officers, the *qanungo* (keeper of revenue records), the *chaudhuri* (in charge of revenue collection) and the *qazi*.

9. Beyond the Frontiers

The Safavids and Qandahar

- The political and diplomatic relations between the Mughal kings and the neighbouring countries of Iran and Turan hinged on the control of the frontier defined by the Hindukush mountains that separated Afghanistan from the regions of Iran and Central Asia.
- All conquerors who sought to make their way into the Indian subcontinent had to cross the Hindukush to have access to north India.
- A constant aim of Mughal policy was to ward off this potential danger by controlling strategic outposts – notably Kabul and Qandahar.

- Qandahar was a bone of contention between the Safavids and the Mughals.
- The fortress-town had initially been in the possession of Humayun, reconquered in 1595 by Akbar.
- While the Safavid court retained diplomatic relations with the Mughals, it continued to stake claims to Qandahar.
- In 1613 Jahangir sent a diplomatic envoy to the court of Shah Abbas to plead the Mughal case for retaining Qandahar, but the mission failed.
- In the winter of 1622 a Persian army besieged Qandahar.
- The ill-prepared Mughal garrison was defeated and had to surrender the fortress and the city to the Safavids.

The Ottomans: pilgrimage and trade

- The relationship between the Mughals and the Ottomans was marked by the concern to ensure free movement for merchants and pilgrims in the territories under Ottoman control.
- This was especially true for the Hijaz, that part of Ottoman Arabia where the important pilgrim centres of Mecca and Medina were located.

Jesuits at the Mughal court

- Europe received knowledge of India through the accounts of Jesuit missionaries, travellers, merchants and diplomats.

- The Jesuit accounts are the earliest impressions of the Mughal court ever recorded by European writers.
- The Portuguese king was also interested in the propagation of Christianity with the help of the missionaries of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits).
- Akbar was curious about Christianity and dispatched an embassy to Goa to invite Jesuit priests.
- The first Jesuit mission reached the Mughal court at Fatehpur Sikri in 1580 and stayed for about two years.
- The Jesuits spoke to Akbar about Christianity and debated its virtues with the *ulama*.
- Two more missions were sent to the Mughal court at Lahore, in 1591 and 1595.

10. Questioning Formal Religion

- Akbar's quest for religious knowledge led to interfaith debates in the *ibadat khana* at Fatehpur Sikri between learned Muslims, Hindus, Jains, Parsis and Christians.
- Akbar's religious views matured as he queried scholars of different religions and sects and gathered knowledge about their doctrines.
- Akbar moved away from the orthodox Islamic ways of understanding religions towards a self-conceived eclectic form of divine worship focused on light and the sun.
- Akbar and Abu'l Fazl created a philosophy of light and used it to shape the image of the king and ideology of the state.

Exercise

Level – 1

1. The name 'Mughals' was given by ____
(a) Timurids (b) Turkish ruler
(c) Europeans (d) British
2. Who among the following referred to themselves as Timurids, as descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur?
(a) Mughals (b) Tughlaq
(c) The Lodhi (d) Khiji
3. Who was the founder of the Mughal empire?
(a) Zahiruddin Babur
(b) Humayun
(c) Jahangir
(d) Shah Jahan
4. Consider the following description:
He expanded the frontiers of the empire, but lost it to the Afghan leader Sher Shah Sur, who drove him into exile. He took refuge in the court of the Safavid ruler of Iran. In 1555 He defeated the Surs, but died a year later.
The above statement best describes which of the following Mughal rulers?
(a) Nasiruddin Humayun
(b) Jalaluddin Akbar
(c) Jahangir
(d) Shah Jahan
5. Find the incorrect statement about Jalaluddin Akbar
(a) He made his empire, largest, strongest and richest kingdom of his time.
(b) He succeeded in extending the frontiers of the empire to the Hindukush mountains
(c) Akbar was succeeded by Shah Jahan
(d) None of the above
6. Find the true statement about the decline of Mughal dynasty?
(a) After 1707, following the death of Shah Jahan, the power of the dynasty diminished
(b) Regional powers acquired greater autonomy.
(c) In 1857 the last scion of this dynasty, Bahadur Shah Zafar II, was killed by the British.
(d) All of the above

7. **Assertion (A):** Chronicles commissioned by the Mughal emperors are an important source for studying the empire and its court.

Reason (R): They were written in order to project a vision of an enlightened kingdom to all those who came under its umbrella

- (a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
- (b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
- (c) A is true but R is false.
- (d) A is false but R is true.

8. Find the odd one out

Titles	Rulers
(a) Akbar Nama.	Akbar
(b) Shahjahan Nama	Shah Jahan
(c) Alamgir Nama	Aurangzed
(d) <i>Humayunama</i>	Gulbadan Begam

9. Mughal court chronicles were written in _____

- (a) Persian (b) Chaghtai Turks
(c) Turkish (d) Hindavi

10. The mother tongue of the Mughals was

- (a) Turkish (b) Persian
(c) Arabic (d) Urdu

11. Which of the following leader made Persian, the leading language of the Mughal court.

- (a) Akbar (b) Jahangir
(c) Shah Jahan (d) Aurangzeb

12. The Razmnama is a Persian translated version of which of the following books?

- (a) Mahabharata (b) Ramayana
(c) Rig Veda (d) None of the following

Level – 2

13. Find the true statement about Mughal manuscripts

- (a) All books in Mughal India were manuscripts
(b) All the books were handwritten.
(c) The centre of manuscript production was the imperial kitabkhana
(d) All of the above

14. Calligraphy is the art of _____
 (a) Painters (b) handwriting
 (c) Traditional dance (d) dictation
15. Who was the author of the Akbar Nama?
 (a) Sadullah Khan
 (b) Shah Jahan
 (c) Abu'l Fazl
 (d) Bir Singh Bundela
16. In the *Ain-i Akbari* the Mughal Empire is presented as having a diverse population consisting of
 1. Hindus
 2. Jainas
 3. Buddhists
 4. Muslims
 Choose the correct answer from the codes given below
 (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
 (b) 2, 3 and 4 only
 (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
 (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
17. Find the true statement about Akbar Nama
 (a) Abu'l Fazl worked on the *Akbar Nama* for thirteen years
 (b) The *Akbar Nama* is divided into three books of which the first two are chronicles.
 (c) The third book of *Akbar Nama* is the *Ain-i Akbari*.
 (d) All of the above
18. Who was the author of Badshah Nama?
 (a) Abu'l Fazl (b) Abdul Hamid Lahori
 (c) Sadullah Khan (d) None of the above
19. Who among the following leaders abolished the tax on pilgrimage and *jizya*
 (a) Akbar (b) Jahangir
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20. Jharoka *darshan* was introduced by _____ with the objective of broadening the acceptance of the imperial authority as part of popular faith.
 (a) Akbar (b) Jahangir
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Answers

Level-1

1. (c) 2. (a) 3. (a) 4. (a) 5. (c) 6. (b) 7. (a) 8. (d) 9. (a) 10. (a)
 11. (a) 12. (a)

Level-2

13. (d) 14. (b) 15. (c) 16. (d) 17. (d) 18. (b) 19. (a) 20. (a)

Explanations

Level – 1

1. c • During the sixteenth century, Europeans used the term Mughal to describe the Indian rulers of this branch of the family.
2. a • Mughals – It was not the name the rulers of the dynasty chose for themselves.
 - They referred to themselves as Timurids, as descendants of the Turkish ruler Timur on the paternal side.
3. a • The founder of the empire, Zahiruddin Babur, was driven from his Central Asian homeland, Farghana, by the warring Uzbeks.
 - He first established himself at Kabul and then in 1526 pushed further into the Indian subcontinent
4. a • Nasiruddin Humayun (1530-40, 1555-56) expanded the frontiers of the empire, but lost it to the Afghan leader Sher Shah Sur, who drove him into exile.
 - Humayun took refuge in the court of the Safavid ruler of Iran.
 - In 1555 Humayun defeated the Surs, but died a year later.
5. c • Jalaluddin Akbar (1556-1605) expanded and consolidated his empire, making it the largest, strongest and richest kingdom of his time.
 - Akbar succeeded in extending the frontiers of the empire to the Hindukush mountains, and checked the expansionist designs of the Uzbeks of Turan (Central Asia) and the Safavids of Iran.
 - Akbar had three fairly able successors in Jahangir (1605-27), Shah Jahan (1628-58) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707), much as their characters varied.
6. b • After 1707, following the death of Aurangzeb, the power of the dynasty diminished.
 - In place of the vast apparatus of empire controlled from Delhi, Agra or Lahore – the different capital cities – regional powers acquired greater autonomy.
 - In 1857 the last scion of this dynasty, Bahadur Shah Zafar II, was overthrown by the British.

7. a • Chronicles commissioned by the Mughal emperors are an important source for studying the empire and its court.
 - They were written in order to project a vision of an enlightened kingdom to all those who came under its umbrella.
8. d • The histories they wrote focused on events centred on the ruler, his family, the court and nobles, wars and administrative arrangements.
 - Their titles, such as the *Akbar Nama*, *Shahjahan Nama*, *Alamgir Nama*, that is, the story of Akbar, Shah Jahan and Alamgir (a title of the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb), suggest that in the eyes of their authors the history of the empire and the court was synonymous with that of the emperor.
9. a • Mughal court chronicles were written in Persian.
10. a • As the Mughals were Chaghtai Turks by origin, Turkish was their mother tongue.
 - Their first ruler Babur wrote poetry and his memoirs in this language.
11. a • It was Akbar who consciously set out to make Persian the leading language of the Mughal court.
 - Persian was elevated to a language of empire, conferring power and prestige on those who had a command of it.
 - It was spoken by the king, the royal household and the elite at court.
12. a • The *Mahabharata* was translated as the *Razmnama* (Book of Wars).

Level – 2

13. d • All books in Mughal India were manuscripts, that is, they were handwritten.
 - The centre of manuscript production was the imperial *kitabkhana*.
 - It is, a place where the emperor's collection of manuscripts was kept and new manuscripts were produced.
14. b • Calligraphers and painters held a high social standing
 - Calligraphy, the art of handwriting, was considered a skill of great importance.
 - It was practised using different styles.

15. c • The author of the *Akbar Nama*, Abu'l Fazl grew up in the Mughal capital of Agra.

16. d

17. d

18. b • A pupil of Abu'l Fazl, Abdul Hamid Lahori is known as the author of the *Badshah Nama*.

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19. a • Akbar abolished the tax on pilgrimage in 1563 and *jizya* in 1564 as the two were based on religious discrimination.

20. a