

...and an method of worshipping Almighty". To respect all

Q. 5. Explain the main features of Akbar's administration.
Or

Write about the central administration of Akbar.

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Ans. Main features of Akbar's Administration

Akbar was an enlightened and successful administrator. It goes to the credit of Akbar that the subsequent Mughal rulers followed in principle the administrative policy developed by him. Babur and Humayun had little time to take any initiative in formulating any administrative policy worth the name.

Important features of Akbar's administration are given below :

Akbar's ideal of Kingship. According to him, "Upon the conduct of a monarch depends the efficiency of any course of action. His gratitude to God should be shown in just government and due recognition of merit."

Concentration of all power in the King. Akbar was the centre of all powers—civil, judicial, military and religious. He was the Supreme Commander of the army. He established a centralised administration. All appointments, promotions or dismissals depended on his decision and orders. Usually he ruled according to Shariat (Islamic Law). Akbar's day started with his appearance at the *Jharokha* (balcony) of the palace. A large number of people assembled below the balcony, presented their petitions to the emperor, besides having a fortunate glimpse of their emperor. The petitions were promptly attended to on the spot or later in the open hall of public

audience (*Diwan-i-am*). Special consultation with the ministers and nobles were held at the hall of Special Audience (*Diwan-i-khas*).

Council of Ministers. Akbar had a Council of Ministers to assist him in the discharge of his administrative responsibilities and state of affairs. The **Wazir**. He was like the Prime Minister and advised the king in all matters. He coordinated the work of all other ministers. After the reign of Aurangzeb, the Prime Minister, then called 'Vakil' became very powerful. Likewise other Ministers became powerful.

Dewan or Finance Minister. He looked after the revenues of the state.

Mir Bakshi or Paymaster General. He was the head of the establishment department. He was also the head of the intelligence agencies of the empire.

Kham-i-Saman. He looked after the imperial house-hold. He also looked after the control of the royal body guards and etiquettes in the court.

Chief Qazi. He was the head of the judicial department.

Other important high officials who assisted the king were *Mir Atish* who supervised the artillery, *Daroga-i-Taksal*, supervisor of royal mint and *Daroga-i-Daak*, supervisor of the mail.

Mansabdari System. The *Mansab* is an Arabic word meaning rank or position or status. Thus *Mansabdari* was a system in which the rank of a government official was determined. Every civil and military official was given a *mansab* and was called a *Mansabdar*. There were two methods of making payments to the nobles. One was giving them Jagirs (land) wherefrom they got their salaries. The second was making cash payment. In the Mansabdari system no *Jagirs* were granted for the purpose of paying salaries. A *mansabdar* got his salary from the royal treasury.

Land Revenue System

Todar Mal, the revenue minister of Akbar played an important role in devising and introducing a very effective and efficient land revenue and record system. There were three systems of land revenue (1) The Zabt system (2) The Ghalla-Bakshi and (3) Nasaq or Kankat.

The Zabt system of the land revenue. This system was prevalent in the areas from Lahore to Allahabad and in Malwa and Gujarat. This covered most of the empire. Following were some of the chief features of the system.

1. **Measurement of land.** Land of each farmer was measured into 'bighas'. The land was measured by means of bamboos joined together with iron rings. This system was called Bamboo Jarib system.

2. **Four categories of land.** The land was divided into four categories according to its produce. (i) *Polaj* land which was regularly cultivated and yielded crops regularly. (ii) *Parauti* land was left uncultivated after every crop to regain its productivity (iii) *Chachhar* land was left uncultivated for

3 to 4 years (iv) Banjar land was left uncultivated for more than 4 years.

3. Three categories of *Polaj* and *Parauti* land. These types of lands were divided into three grades, viz., good, average and bad.

4. *Dahsala* (ten year) assessment. Under this system, the average produce of different crops as well as the average price prevailing over the last 10 years were calculated and accordingly land revenue was fixed.

5. Land revenue in cash or kind. The share of the state was one-third of the produce of the land. Farmers were given the option to pay the revenue in cash or kind.

6. Loans. Farmers could get loans easily from the state which could be paid in easy annual instalments.

7. Remission of revenue. In bad seasons, remissions of revenues were granted to the farmers.

8. Records. Farmers were issued receipts for all the payments made by them. A record of all the holdings and liabilities of every farmer was maintained.

9. Revenue officials. For the assessment and collection of revenue, a large number of officers like the Amil, Bitikchi, Qanungo, Muqaddam and Patwari were appointed.

The Zabti system proved very useful both to the state and the farmers. The system was for ten years. The system on the one hand determined the income of the government and on the other hand enabled the farmers to know clearly how much revenue they had to pay to the government. Now the farmers had direct link with the government and they were saved from the excesses and tyrannies of the landlords and the jagirdars. The revenue officials were instructed not to be harsh with the farmers. The farmers could deposit the land revenue direct to the treasury.

Other systems of the land revenue. According to the Batai or Ghalla-Bakshi system, the produce of the farmers was divided between the government and the farmers in the ratio settled between them. This system was in vogue in Thatta and in parts of Kabul and Kandhar.

Provincial Administration. Akbar divided his empire into fifteen provinces. These were : Agra, Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar, Ajmer, Allahabad, Awadh, Bengal, Berar, Bihar, Delhi, Kabul, Khandar, Lahore, Malwa and Multan. Each province was under the charge of Subedar (Governor). He was assisted by a 'Diwan' who looked after the revenue records. *Bakshi* looked after the needs of the army. The *Kotwal* was entrusted with the maintenance of law and order in the main cities. Qazi looked after justice. The provincial ministers and officers followed the nomenclature of the central administration and performed similar duties. Provinces were divided into *Sarkars*, *Sarkars* into *Parganas* and *Parganas* into villages. *Panchayats* looked after the village administration and also dispensed justice. Normally state officers did not interfere in the village affairs.