

Introduction:

During the 16th and 17th centuries, 85% of the Indian population lived in villages. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. Farmers and landlords are engaged in agricultural production. The common occupation of agriculture, farmers and landowners, has created a relationship of cooperation, competition and conflict between them. Agriculture was the main source of income for the Mughal Empire. That is why revenue assistants, collectors and record keepers have always tried to control the rural community. The primary unit of agricultural society is the village. It was mostly inhabited by farmers.

1. Religious Histories: Bhakti-Sufi Traditions

During the 16th and 17th centuries, 85% of the Indian population lived in villages. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people. Farmers and landlords are engaged in agricultural production. The common occupation of agriculture, farmers and landowners, has created a relationship of cooperation, competition and conflict between them. Agriculture was the main source of income for the Mughal Empire. That is why revenue assistants, collectors and record keepers have always tried to control the rural community. The primary unit of agricultural society is the village. It was mostly inhabited by farmers.

Farmers have been engaged in agricultural work for years. Our main sources in the history of agriculture in the 16th and 17th centuries are histories and documents written by scholars under the supervision of the Mughal court.

Ain-i Akbari, written by Abul-Fazal, records the arrangements made by the state for cultivation, tax collection, and regulation of relations between the state and rural zamindars. Sources from the 17th century show that there were two types of farmers. These are kayak and pie kayaks. The Kashties lived permanently in the villages. While they were farming there on their own land, while Pahi-Khastha was farming on a contract basis, the land actually belonged to someone else.

Land availability, availability of labor and farmers' mobility are the main reasons for agricultural expansion. Rice, wheat and millet are the most commonly grown crops. Agriculture was mainly carried out in two main seasons; Rabbi and Kharif. A maximum of two crops are sown in a year.

In those days monsoons were considered as the backbone of Indian agriculture. Therefore, agriculture was mainly dependent on rainfall. Many new crops such as corn, tomatoes, potatoes and peppers were brought here from the New World in the 17th century. The Gram Panchayat is elected by the House of Elders. The head of the panchayat was called mandal or muqaddams. He enjoyed his position until he gained the confidence of the village elders.

The power to impose fines on the gram panchayat and expulsion from the community is a strict action to be taken for a limited period of time. It is very difficult to distinguish between farmers and artisans. Because these two groups do two kinds of things. People like potters, carpenters, blacksmiths, razors, goldsmiths etc. rendered their services to the men of the village and were compensated by a large number of villagers.

The Jajmani system was also prevalent there. Under this policy, the blacksmiths, carpenters and jewelers were paid by the Bengal landlords by giving them a small daily allowance, food and money for their work. Among the zamindar lords, women had the right to inherit property. The term 'wild' is used to describe people who earn their living from hunting, gathering and forest products.

Zamindari integration went slowly. This can be done through various sources such as colonization of new lands, transfer of rights, order and purchase of the state. These processes probably allowed the lower castes to rise to the position of zamindars. The landlords played an important role in the colonization of agricultural land and assisted the cultivators by providing agriculture and cash loans. Ain-i Akbari discusses in detail a number of issues, including the court and administration of the empire, sources of income, literary, cultural and religious traditions of the people.

Ain-i-Akbari, despite some shortcomings, remains an extraordinary document of its time. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the vast majority of India's population, or about 85%, lived in villages. Both the peasantry and the feudal aristocracy were involved in agricultural production and gained their rights to share in the total production.

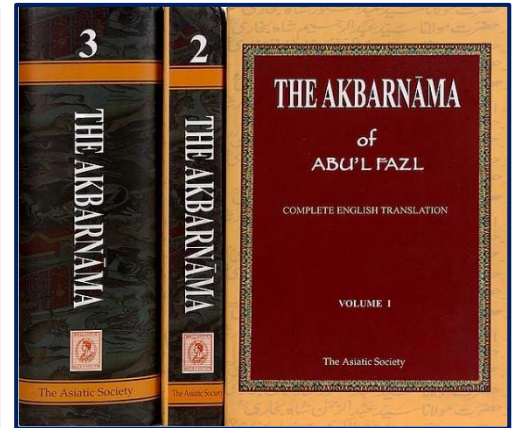
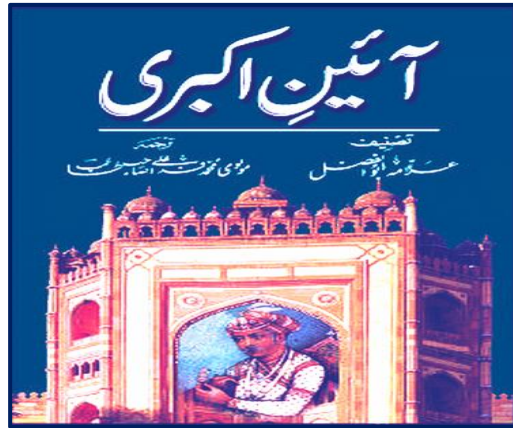
2. Historical Sources of the Agricultural Society and the Mughal Empire:

The primary unit of the farming community was the village in which the peasants lived, who carried out various activities such as plowing the land, sowing the seeds, and cultivating the crops. The main sources of agricultural history in the early 16th and early 17th centuries were histories and documents.



Ain-i-Akbari:

Ain-i Akbari is the most important history written by Abul Fazal, the court historian of Akbar. Ain is composed of five books (offices), the first three of which describe Akbar's rule. The fourth and fifth books (Daftar) deal with the religious, literary and cultural traditions of the people and also include Akbar's 'Shubha Baton' collection. Despite the limitations, Ain is an extraordinary document of that period.



DO YOU KNOW?

Right: It is used to refer to a farmer in Indo-Persian sources.

Haseel: This is the actual amount collected.

Khud-Kashti farmers: Farmers in a village where they have land. **Pahi-kashta:** Usually farmers from a different village.

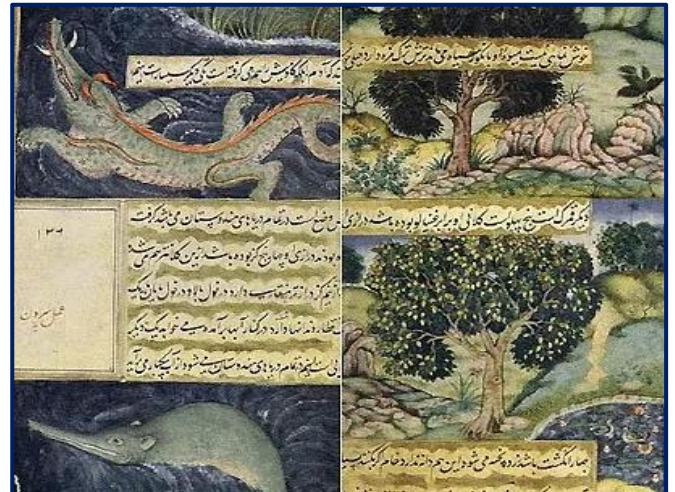
Other sources:

Other sources include revenue records of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and extensive records of the East India Company. All these have given us useful details of agricultural relations in East India. During the Mughal period, the peasants were called Rites and there were two types of peasants, Khud-Kasht and Pahi-Kasht. Khud-Kashta are the residents of the village who own their lands. Pahi-Kashta are non-resident farmers belonging to another village and practicing on contract basis.

Agriculture continued due to the abundance of land, the available labor and the mobility of the farmers.

The monsoons have been the backbone of Indian agriculture, while irrigation projects (excavation of new canals and repair of old ones) have received state support. Agriculture was conducted around two major seasonal crops, kharif (autumn) and rabi (spring).

Agriculture in medieval India was not just for subsistence. The Mughal state encouraged farmers to cultivate ginseng-a-Kamil, i.e., the best crops (cotton, sugar, etc.).



DO YOU KNOW?

Shroff: A money changer who also works as a banker.

Amin: Officials responsible for royal regulations.

Pargana: An administrative subdivision.

Deposit: Collected as fixed amount and revenue.

3. Land Revenue System of the Mughal Empire:



The income from land was the economic source for the Mughal Empire. The Diwan's office, the Revenue Officer, the Record Keeper have all become important to the agricultural sector. The land revenue system consists of two states, first, the valuation (Jama) and then the actual collection (hustle).

Both cultivation and arable land are measured in each province. During the time of Akbar, the land was divided into polaz, parauthi, chachar and banjaras.

DO YOU KNOW?

- 1526:** Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at Panipat and becomes the first Mughal emperor.
- 1530-1540:** First phase of Humayun's rule.
- 1540-1555:** Humayun is defeated by exiled Sher Shah at Safavid Court.
- 1555-1605:** Humayun regains lost territory.

Silver flow and its impact on the economy:



Exploration expeditions and the opening of a new world led to the vast expansion of Asia, especially India's trade with Europe. Expanded trade brought large amounts of silver bullion to Asia to pay for goods. Was purchased from India and most of that bullion went to India. Silver is good for India as it has no natural resources. Consequently, the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was marked by remarkable stability in the silver currency.

4. Caste based village societies:

The village community consists of three parts: the cultivator, the panchayat and the village head (muqaddams or mandal). Farmers are a very different group. There were caste inequalities and some castes were allotted small jobs and thereby faced poverty.

There is a direct link between caste, poverty and social status in the lower strata of society. Sometimes castes grow hierarchically due to their developing economic conditions. In mixed caste villages, the panchayat represents the various castes and communities in the village, though the small agricultural laborers in the village are not involved.

Panchayat head muqaddam or mandal. The panchayat used its funds for community welfare programs.



The village headmen observed the behavior of the village community members to prevent any crime against their caste. The panchayat is empowered to impose fines and punish. Apart from the gram panchayat, each caste or clan in the village had their own caste panchayat. The caste panchayat has a lot of power in the rural society.

In most cases, except in criminal cases, the state respects the decisions of the caste panchayats. The villages have a significant number of artists, sometimes up to 25 percent of the total family. The artisans of the village, such as potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, razors, jewelers, etc., rendered special services, for which the villagers would pay them compensation.

In the 19th century some British officials saw the village as a 'small republic' but it was not a sign of rural equality. There are deep disparities in personal ownership over property and based on caste and gender differences.



DO YOU KNOW?

1556-1605: Akbar's rule
1605-1627: Jahangir rule
1628-1658: Reign of Shah Jahan
1658-1707: Reign of Aurangzeb

5. Social and economic status of women in rural areas:



In the field of agriculture, women and men had to work side by side. Men plow and plow, women sow, weed, plow and mow. Yet bias regarding women's biological duties continued. Many sculptural works, such as spinning and knitting for pottery, pottery and embroidery, are based on female labor. Women are considered an important resource in the agricultural society as they produce children in a labor-oriented society.

Sometimes bride-price payment, remarriage, is considered valid for divorced and widowed women in rural areas. Women had the right to inherit property. Hindu and Muslim women also inherited zamindars, who were free to sell or mortgage them.

6. Landlords and their power:

The landlords owned extensive private land called militia (property) and gained some social and economic power in the rural community. Landlords often collected revenue on behalf of the state. Most landlords have forts as well as an armed force consisting of cavalry, artillery and infantry units. During this period the relatively 'lower' castes came into the category of zamindars as zamindars. Bought and sold very quickly. While there is no doubt that the landlords were an exploitative class, there was reciprocity, patriarchy and encouragement in their relations with the peasants.



DO YOU KNOW?

1739: Nadir Shah invaded India and conquers Delhi
1761: At the Third Battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas.
1765: Bengal Diwani transferred to the East India Company.
1857: The last Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah II, is ousted by the British and exiled to Rangoon.

7. Forests and tribes:

The forest dwellers known as 'Jungali' earn their livelihood from forest products, hunting and shifting agriculture. Sometimes a deforestation site, a haven for firefighters. The forest dwellers used to supply elephants to the kings. Hunting was a favorite activity of the kings, sometimes allowing the emperor to travel extensively throughout his empire and to personally see the grievances of his people.

The forest dwellers supplied honey, wax, gum, lacquer etc. Like the 'big men' in the village community, the tribes also had their chiefs. The heads of many tribes became zamindars, and some even became kings. The tribals in the Sindh region have an army of 6,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantries.



Activity

- Q1. Write a difference between the idea of Sufism and Bhakti movements?
- Q2. Make a short note on the concept of Mughal Land Revenue?
- Q3. Write a short note on Caste based village society?
- Q4. See the political world map and find out the trade relation with Mughal to entire world?
- Q5. Make a note on lifestyle of tribe during the Mughal Empire?

Questions For Practice

1. Which of the following crops was banned by Jahangir?
(a) Betel (b) Chili
(c) Tobacco (d) Corn
2. What is a village headman called?
(a) Muqaddams (b) Asri
(c) Muzarian (d) Rhea
3. Which of the following Muslim community is considered Wahhabi?
(a) Shi'a Muslim (b) Sunni Muslim
(c) Bohra Muslim (d) All of these
4. Jins-a-Kamil in Central India?
(a) Cotton (b) Sugarcane
(c) Oil seeds (d) All of these
5. belonged to the Ahom kings
(a) Madhya Pradesh
(b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) Orissa
(d) Assam
6. All-important Officers had during the Mughal Administration?
(a) Three (b) Five
(c) Four (d) Six
7. Coins were in high demand during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Copper
(c) Tin (d) Silver
8. The Ottoman Empire belongs to _____?
(a) China (b) Iran
(c) Türkiye (d) Iraq
9. Which metal was most commonly used for coinage during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Silver
(c) Tin (d) Copper
10. What was Jins-a-Kamil in Mughal Empire?
(a) Half the crop
(b) Proper harvest
(c) Rabi crop
(d) Kharif crop
11. Which of the following crop was banned by Jahangir?
(a) Betel (b) Chili
(c) Tobacco (d) Corn
12. Who was village headman called in Mughal empire
(a) Muqaddams (b) Asri
- (c) Muzarian (d) Rhea
13. Which of the following Muslim community is considered inferior?
(a) Circle (b) HalalKhorani
(c) Wage (d) wild
14. _____ Important Jeans-a-Kamil in Central India.
(a) Cotton (b) Sugarcane
(c) Oil seeds (d) All of these
15. The Ahom kings belonged to _____?
(a) Madhya Pradesh
(b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) Orissa
(d) Assam
16. All-important Officers had during the Mughal Administration?
(a) Three (b) Five
(c) Four (d) Six
17. _____ coins were in high demand during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Copper
(c) Tin (d) Silver
18. The Ottoman Empire belongs to?
(a) Belgrade (b) Iraq
(c) Turkey (d) All
19. Which metal was most commonly used for coinage during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Silver
(c) Tin (d) Copper
20. What was Jins-a-Kamil in Mughal Empire?
(a) Half the crop
(b) Proper harvest
(c) Rabi crop
(d) Kharif crop
21. Which of the following crop was banned by Jahangir?
(a) Betel (b) Chili
(c) Tobacco (d) Corn
22. Who was village chief called in Mughal empire?
(a) Muqaddams (b) Asri
(c) Muzarian (d) Rhea
23. Which of the following Muslim community is considered inferior?
(a) Circle (b) HalalKhoran
(c) Wage (d) wild
24. Important Jins-a-Kamil in Central India?
(a) Cotton (b) Sugarcane
(c) Oil seeds (d) All of these
25. Ahom kings belonged to the which area in India?
(a) Central India
(b) North India
(c) East India
(d) North East India
26. Who was military Officers are during the Mughal Administration?
(a) Mir Saman (b) Mir Hasan
(c) Mir Bakshi (d) None
27. Coins were in high demand during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Copper
(c) Tin (d) Silver
28. The Ottoman Empire is related to ____?
(a) China (b) Iran
(c) Turkey (d) Iraq
29. Which metal was most commonly used for coinage during the Mughal Empire?
(a) Gold (b) Silver
(c) Tin (d) Copper
30. What was Jins-a-Kamil in Mughal Empire?
(a) Half the crop (b) Proper harvest
(c) Rabi crop (d) Kharif crop
31. Who wrote 'Ain-a-Akbari'?
(a) Abul Fazal (b) Al-Biruni
(c) Ibn Battuta (d) Abdur Razak
32. _____ Akbar was a court historian?
(a) Al-Biruni (b) Abul Fazal
(c) Bernier (d) Ibn-Battuta
33. _____ Important Jins-e-Kamil in Central India?
(a) Cotton (b) Sugarcane
(c) Oil seeds (d) All of these
34. The Ahom kings belonged to _____?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh
(c) Orissa (d) Assam
35. There are _____ daftars (parts) of Ain?
(a) Three (b) Four
(c) Five (d) Six

36. ____ coins were in high demand during the Mughal Empire?
 (a) Gold (b) Copper
 (c) Tin (d) Silver
37. The Ottoman Empire belonged to ____?
 (a) South China Sea (b) Aral Sea
 (c) Mediterranean Sea (d) Baltic Sea
38. Which metal was most commonly used for making coins during the Mughal Empire?
 (a) Gold (b) Silver
 (c) Tin (d) Copper
39. What was the meaning of Jins-a-Kamil in the Mughal Empire?
 (a) Half the crop
 (b) Proper harvest
 (c) Rabi crop
 (d) Kharif crop
40. How did the Panchayats utilize the funds available to them during the Mughal Empire?
 (a) It was used for the entertainment of Revenue officers.
 (b) It was used to pay salaries to the suit and watchmen.
 (c) It was used to meet community welfare costs.
 (d) All of these.

Solutions

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|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 1. (c) | 5. (d) | 9. (b) | 13. (b) | 17. (d) | 21. (c) | 25. (d) | 29. (b) | 33. (d) | 37. (c) |
| 2. (a) | 6. (c) | 10. (b) | 14. (d) | 18. (d) | 22. (a) | 26. (c) | 30. (b) | 34. (d) | 38. (b) |
| 3. (b) | 7. (d) | 11. (c) | 15. (d) | 19. (b) | 23. (b) | 27. (d) | 31. (a) | 35. (c) | 39. (b) |
| 4. (d) | 8. (c) | 12. (a) | 16. (c) | 20. (b) | 24. (b) | 28. (c) | 32. (b) | 36. (d) | 40. (d) |

