

ASSIGNMENT No. 1

Q. 1 Discuss the significance of the primary sources for the narration of Mughal History.

The Mughal Empire at its zenith commanded resources unprecedented in Indian history and covered almost the entire subcontinent. From 1556 to 1707, during the heyday of its fabulous wealth and glory, the Mughal Empire was a fairly efficient and centralized organization, with a vast complex of personnel, money, and information dedicated to the service of the emperor and his nobility.

Much of the empire's expansion during that period was attributable to India's growing commercial and cultural contact with the outside world. The 16th and 17th centuries brought the establishment and expansion of European and non-European trading organizations in the subcontinent, principally for the procurement of Indian goods in demand abroad. Indian regions drew close to each other by means of an enhanced overland and coastal trading network, significantly augmenting the internal surplus of precious metals. With expanded connections to the wider world came also new ideologies and technologies to challenge and enrich the imperial edifice.

The empire itself, however, was a purely Indian historical experience. Mughal culture blended Perso-Islamic and regional Indian elements into a distinctive but variegated whole. Although by the early 18th century the regions had begun to reassert their independent positions, Mughal manners and ideals outlasted imperial central authority. The imperial centre, in fact, came to be controlled by the regions. The trajectory of the Mughal Empire over roughly its first two centuries (1526–1748) thus provides a fascinating illustration of premodern state building in the Indian subcontinent.

The individual abilities and achievements of the early Mughals—Bābur, Humāyūn, and later Akbar—largely charted this course. Bābur and Humāyūn struggled against heavy odds to create the Mughal domain, whereas Akbar, besides consolidating and expanding its frontiers, provided the theoretical framework for a truly Indian state. Picking up the thread of experimentation from the intervening Sūr dynasty (1540–56), Akbar attacked narrow-mindedness and bigotry, absorbed Hindus in the high ranks of the nobility, and encouraged the tradition of ruling through the local Hindu landed elites. This tradition continued until the very end of the Mughal Empire, despite the fact that some of Akbar's successors, notably Aurangzeb (1658–1707), had to concede to contrary forces.

The foundation of the empire was laid in 1526 by Zāhīr al-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur, a Chagatai Turk (so called because his ancestral homeland, the country north of the Amu Darya [Oxus River] in Central Asia, was the heritage of Chagatai, the second son of Genghis Khan). Bābur was a fifth-generation descendant of Timur on the side of his father and a 14th-generation descendant of Genghis Khan. His idea of conquering India was inspired, to begin with, by the story of the exploits of Timur, who had invaded the subcontinent in 1398.

Bābur inherited his father's principality in Fergana at a young age, in 1494. Soon he was literally a fugitive, in the midst of both an internecine fight among the Timurids and a struggle between them and the rising Uzbeks over the erstwhile Timurid empire in the region. In 1504 he conquered Kabul and Ghaznī. In 1511 he recaptured Samarkand, only to realize that, with the formidable Ṣafavid dynasty in Iran and the Uzbeks in Central Asia, he

should rather turn to the southeast toward India to have an empire of his own. As a Timurid, Bābur had an eye on the Punjab, part of which had been Timur's possession. He made several excursions in the tribal habitats there. Between 1519 and 1524—when he invaded Bhera, Sialkot, and Lahore—he showed his definite intention to conquer Hindustan, where the political scene favoured his adventure.

Conquest of Hindustan

Having secured the Punjab, Bābur advanced toward Delhi, garnering support from many Delhi nobles. He routed two advance parties of Ibrāhīm Lodī's troops and met the sultan's main army at Panipat. The Afghans fought bravely, but they had never faced new artillery, and their frontal attack was no answer to Bābur's superior arrangement of the battle line. Bābur's knowledge of western and Central Asian war tactics and his brilliant leadership proved decisive in his victory. By April 1526 he was in control of Delhi and Agra and held the keys to conquer Hindustan.

Bābur, however, had yet to encounter any of the several Afghans who held important towns in what is now eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar and who were backed by the sultan of Bengal in the east and the Rajputs on the southern borders. The Rajputs under Rana Sanga of Mewar threatened to revive their power in northern India. Bābur assigned the unconquered territories to his nobles and led an expedition himself against the rana in person. He crushed the rana's forces at Khanua, near Fatehpur Sikri (March 1527), once again by means of the skillful positioning of troops. Bābur then continued his campaigns to subjugate the Rajputs of Chanderi. When Afghan risings turned him to the east, he had to fight, among others, the joint forces of the Afghans and the sultan of Bengal in 1529 at Ghagra, near Varanasi. Bābur won the battles, but the expedition there too, like the one on the southern borders, was left unfinished. Developments in Central Asia and Bābur's failing health forced him to withdraw. He died near Lahore in December 1530.

Bābur's achievements

Bābur's brief tenure in Hindustan, spent in wars and in his preoccupation with northwest and Central Asia, did not give him enough time to consolidate fully his conquests in India. Still, discernible in his efforts are the beginnings of the Mughal imperial organization and political culture. He introduced some Central Asian administrative institutions and, significantly, tried to woo the prominent local chiefs. He also established new mints in Lahore and Jaunpur and tried to ensure a safe and secure route from Agra to Kabul. He advised his son and successor, Humāyūn, to adopt a tolerant religious policy.

Humāyūn's rule began badly with his invasion of the Hindu principality of Kalinjar in Bundelkhand, which he failed to subdue. Next he became entangled in a quarrel with Sher (or Shīr) Khan (later Sher Shah of Sūr, founder of the Sūr dynasty), the new leader of the Afghans in the east, by unsuccessfully besieging the fortress of Chunar (1532). Thereafter he conquered Malwa and Gujarat, but he could not hold them. Leaving the fortress of Chunar unconquered on the way, Humāyūn proceeded to Bengal to assist Sultan Maḥmūd of that province against Sher Khan. He lost touch with Delhi and Agra, and, because his brother Hindal began to openly behave like an independent ruler at Agra, he was obliged to leave Gaur, the capital of Bengal. Negotiations with Sher

Khan fell through, and the latter forced Humāyūn to fight a battle at Chausa, 10 miles southwest of Buxar (Baksar; June 26, 1539), in which Humāyūn was defeated. He did not feel strong enough to defend Agra, and he retreated to Bilgram near Kannauj, where he fought his last battle with Sher Khan, who had now assumed the title of shah. Humāyūn was again defeated and was compelled to retreat to Lahore; he then fled from Lahore to the Sindh (or Sind) region, from Sindh to Rajputana, and from Rajputana back to Sindh. Not feeling secure even in Sindh, he fled (July 1543) to Iran to seek military assistance from its ruler, the Ṣafavid Shah Tahmāsp I. The shah agreed to assist him with an army on the condition that Humāyūn become a Shi'ī Muslim and return Kandahār, an important frontier town and commercial centre, to Iran in the event of his successful acquisition of that fortress.

Humāyūn had no answer to the political and military skill of Sher Shah and had to fight simultaneously on the southern borders to check the sultan of Gujarat, a refuge of the rebel Mughals. Humāyūn's failure, however, was attributable to inherent flaws in the early Mughal political organization. The armed clans of his nobility owed their first allegiance to their respective chiefs. These chiefs, together with almost all the male members of the royal family, had a claim to sovereignty. There was thus always a lurking fear of the emergence of another centre of power, at least under one or the other of his brothers. Humāyūn also fought against the heavy odds of his opponents' rapport with the locality.

Q. 2 Examine Babur's strategy at the Battle of Panipat.

It was on this scene that the Mughal or Turkish chief Babur appeared in the year 1517. He was trying to recover in one direction what he had lost in others. Babul's dynasty is entitled Mughal or Mongol but it should in fact be thought of as Turkish, which language they spoke. Turk and Mongol had been intermixed in the ebb and flow of Central Asian intertribal warfare. Babur was fifth in descent from the great Taimur. His father's kingdom was reduced to the small principality of Farghana in Badakshan.

Babur succeeded as a boy of eleven in 1494 but soon found himself threatened by the Uzbek chief Shaibani Khan. He was soon a fugitive and spent years between 1494 and 1513 trying to maintain himself in Farghana and recover Samarkand.

In 1504, in one of the turns of north-western politics, he gained control of Kabul and Kandahar. Gradually he merged these two districts with Badakshan and formed a personal kingdom which for him was a compensation for the loss of Samarkhand. But his over ambitious attitude made him look towards India as a southern expansion of his fledgling empire.

During his frequent raids to India he had noticed the wealth and prosperity there. He had also noticed the disunity and disaffection which prevailed in the region. It was a easy prey for a fugitive like him. But the real invitation came when the Afgan governor of Punjab disillusioned my Ibrahim Lodhi's pretensions invited him to invade India and replace Ibrahim Lodhi.

Babur took his cue with the two invasions of 1523-24 and 1525-26 leading up to the battle of Panipat on 21 April 1526.

Battle of Panipat (1526, 1556, 1761), three military engagements, important in the history of northern India, fought at Panipat, a level plain suitable for cavalry movements, about 50 miles (80 km) north of Delhi. The first battle (April 21, 1526) was between the Mughal chief Bābur, then ruler of Kabul, and Sultan Ibrāhīm Lodī of Delhi. Although the sultan's army outnumbered the Mughals', it was unused to the wheeling tactics of the cavalry and suffered from deep divisions. Ibrāhīm was killed, and his army was defeated. This marked the beginning of the Mughal empire in India.

Battle Forces and Tactics

Babur's Mughal forces consisted of between 13,000 and 15,000 men, mostly horse cavalry. His secret weapon was 20 to 24 pieces of field artillery, a relatively recent innovation in warfare.

Arrayed against the Mughals were Ibrahim Lodi's 30,000 to 40,000 soldiers, plus tens of thousands of camp followers. Lodi's primary weapon of shock and awe was his troop of war elephants – numbering anywhere from 100 to 1,000 trained and battle-hardened pachyderms, according to different sources.

Ibrahim Lodi was no tactician – his army simply marched out in a disorganized block, relying on sheer numbers and the aforementioned elephants to overwhelm the enemy. Babur, however, employed two tactics unfamiliar to Lodi, which turned the tide of the battle.

The first was tulughma, dividing a smaller force into forward left, rear left, forward right, rear right, and center divisions. The highly mobile right and left divisions peeled out and surrounded the larger enemy force, driving them towards the center. At the center, Babur arrayed his cannons. The second tactical innovation was Babur's use of carts, called araba. His artillery forces were shielded behind a row of carts which were tied together with leather ropes, to prevent the enemy from getting between them and attacking the artillerymen. This tactic was borrowed from the Ottoman Turks.

The Battle of Panipat

After conquering the Punjab region (which today is divided between northern India and Pakistan), Babur drove on toward Delhi. Early on the morning of April 21, 1526, his army met the Delhi sultan's at Panipat, now in Haryana State, about 90 kilometers north of Delhi.

Using his tulughma formation, Babur trapped the Lodi army in a pincher motion. He then used his cannons to great effect; the Delhi war elephants had never heard such a loud and terrible noise, and the spooked animals turned around and ran through their own lines, crushing Lodi's soldiers as they ran. Despite these advantages, the battle was a close contest given the Delhi Sultanate's overwhelming numerical superiority.

As the bloody encounter dragged on toward midday, however, more and more of Lodi's soldiers defected to Babur's side. Finally, the tyrannical sultan of Delhi was abandoned by his surviving officers, and left to die on the battlefield from his wounds. The Mughal upstart from Kabul had prevailed.

The Aftermath of the Battle

According to the Baburnama, Emperor Babur's autobiography, the Mughals killed 15,000 to 16,000 of the Delhi soldiers. Other local accounts put the total losses at closer to 40,000 or 50,000. Of Babur's own troops, some 4,000 were killed in the battle. There is no record of the elephants' fate.

The First Battle of Panipat is a crucial turning point in the history of India. Although it would take time for Babur and his successors to consolidate control over the country, the defeat of the Delhi Sultanate was a major step towards the establishment of the Mughal Empire, which would rule India until it was defeated in turn by the British Raj in 1868.

The Mughal path to empire was not smooth. Indeed, Babur's son Humayan lost the entire kingdom during his reign, but was able to regain some territory before his death. The empire was truly solidified by Babur's grandson, Akbar the Great; later successors included the ruthless Aurangzeb and Shah Jahan, the creator of the Taj Mahal.

Q. 3 Discuss the emergence of Sher shah suri as the leader of Afghans and the system of government he introduced in India.

Humayun "the Fortunate" was the eldest son of Babur. He had three brothers, Kamran, Askari and Hindal. He was born in Kabul in March 1508. He was the son of Mahim Begum who was probably a Shia. Young Humayun learnt Turki, Arabic and Persian. On account of his careless habits, he did not acquire the exactness of a scholar. In his early youth, he was associated by his father with the government of the country. He was appointed the governor of Badakhshan at the age of 20. On the eve of the Battle of Panipat 1526 he was sent against Hamid Khan who was defeated near Hissar Firoza. He also participated in the Battle of Kanwaha. He was given the fief of Hissar Firoza, in 1526, after the death of Babur. An attempt was made to place Mahdi Khwaja (Brother in law of Babur) on the throne of Agra. He was an experienced and competent administrator. On the other hand, Humayun had not shown any outstanding traits of greatness. In spite of that Humayun successfully placed himself on the throne of Agra on 30th December, 1530.

The throne inherited by Humayun was not a bed of roses. Babur had practically got no time to consolidate his position and authority. He inherited an ill organized empire, empty treasure, a kingdom divided into fiefs and a heterogeneous army, which was not dependable. It was a mixed body of adventurers. Some of them were Uzbeks and Mughals, other Indians, Afghans, Persians and Chaghtais. In addition of his claims of his three brothers, Humayun had to deal with many Khans and nobles. They were busy in intrigues against the new emperor and many of them did not consider the kingdom of Delhi and Agra beyond the scope of their ambitions. Humayun had innumerable rivals. The Afghans were defeated in the battle of Panipat (1526) and the Battle of Ghagra (1529) but they were not completely crushed, neutralized or pacified. Moreover, they had not forgotten the days when they were the rulers of the country and aspired to restore their rule.

Humayun made a mistake of real politics in showing kindness to his brothers. In accordance with the wishes of his father, he gave Sambhal to Askari, and Alwar to Hindal. As regards Kamran, he gave him the provinces of Kabul and Qandahar. In spite of this, Kamran was not satisfied. He attacked Punjab and brought the whole of the

Punjab under his control. Humayun did not fight with Kamran and gave the Province of the Punjab to him. This possession of vital military importance gave Kamran control over the high road between Delhi and Punjab. It was a suicide attempt by Humayun. He was deprived of the source from which he could have recruited his new army. He was left only with the empire which was newly conquered and over which his hold was not secure.

Humayun was faced with many difficulties but he could have overcome them if he had possessed tact and stronger will-power. Unfortunately, he did not possess such a character. He was not a man of moment. He failed to measure up to the task before him.

After his defeat at Kanuj at the hands of Sher Shah, Humayun crossed the river Ganga and reached Agra persistently persuaded by Sher Shah.

After having managed to collect his treasure, he straightaway reached Delhi, but found that he could not retain even Delhi on account of the uncertainty of any solid help from any quarter.

At Lahore Humayun collected all his brothers and relatives and requested them for help. Kamran was the last person prepared to help him. Mirza Haider Daghlat, cousin of Babur, advised Humayun to retire towards Kashmir for some time and then organized his forces to attack Sher Shah. In the meantime the Mughals heard that Sher Shah had already crossed the Beas and was coming to Lahore. At last Humayun decided to proceed towards Sindh.

Passing through great hardships during his journey along the river Sindh, Humayun reached Rohri. Humayun approached the ruler of Bhakhar, Shah Hussain Arghun for help to recover Hindustan, but in vain. Then he besieged Thatta, the capital of the ruler of Sindh, but he was not successful due to the intrigues, thus he had to leave Sindh soon.

Humayun stayed with the Shah of Persia for a long time as his honourable guest, after a long negotiation a treaty was concluded between the two, according to which the Shah promised to give Humayun 14,000 strong forces to enable him to conquer Kabul and Kandhar, in return Humayun promised to give Kandhar to the Shah, propagating Shiaism in his new kingdom and to confirm Shia faith. Thus Humayun left Persia with 14,000 strong Persian army to conquer Kabul and Kandhar. Humayun laid siege to Kandhar, defeated Askari and occupied Kandhar. He put Kandhar in charge of Bairam Khan, his faithful ally who was with him throughout his exile. Humayun proceeded to take Kabul. Kamran put up resistance but ultimately he too was defeated.

Humayun had recovered the throne of Delhi after an interval of about 15 years, but he was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victories for a long time. He died on 26th January 1556, by an accidental fall from the roof of his library and fractured his head. Speedy arrangements were made to call Prince Akbar from the Punjab. For some days the news of his death was kept secret. At last, an announcement was made regarding Akbar's accession to the Delhi throne.

The name of Humayun implies "fortunate" but he proved to be one of the most unlucky monarchs who ever sat upon the throne of Delhi. Along with the empire, he inherited many difficulties for which he did not owe any personal responsibility. Humayun was a thorough gentleman. He was an ideal son, husband, father and brother.

In spite of the acts of disloyalty and treachery on the part of his brother, and nobles and others, he forgave them again and again. But this virtue to a fault was the undoing of his career.

Sher Shah was one of the greatest administrator and rulers of the medieval India. The original name of Sher Shah, the lion king, was Farid. He was the grand son of Ibrahim Sur and the son of Hussain. His grandfather came to India in search of employment in the time of Bahlol Lodhi and joined services in the Punjab. Farid is said to have been born in the Punjab in 1472. After Farid's birth, both his grandfather and father entered in the services of Jamal Khan in the Punjab. When Jamal Khan was transferred to Jaunpur in the time of Sikandar Lodhi, he granted the jagir of Sahsaran, Kawnpur Tanda to Hassan in Bihar. When he grew up, his step brothers challenged his right to the whole of the Jagir. Farid refused to share the jagir with his brothers and took up services under Bahar Shah Lodhi, ruler of South Bihar. When he was in this helpless condition, Sher Khan joined the Mughal services in 1527. When Babur attacked Bihar, Sher Khan rendered him very valuable services, as a reward, jagir was given to him. Sher Khan spent his time in Mughal administration and military organization. Thus he had studied the weaknesses of Mughal politico-military machine and economic system with insight and in depth.

On the other hand, Sultan Mahmud, the king of the Bengal, could not tolerate his defeat in the Battle of Shurajgarh and he wanted to wash off his slur. He entered into an alliance with the Portuguese of Chinsura and invaded Sher Khan, but he was defeated in this battle. Encouraged by these victories, Sher Khan proceeded further and besieged the famous fort of Gaur. It was from the Fort of Gaur that the king of Bengal approached Humayun for help. Humayun was then, busy against Bahadur Shah of Ujjain, pleasures and merry making and in the meantime Sher Khan had already occupied not only the whole of Bengal but also the most famous fort of Rohtasgarh.

When Mahmood Lodhi was defeated in the battle of Ghagra in 1529, Mahmood again wanted to try his luck in 1530. He felt that time was ripe for his strength. Humayun, after his succession to the throne, did not take great interest in the affairs of a distant place like Bihar. Mahmood Lodhi got the help of all the Afghan chiefs. Many months were spent in preparation. In the battle of Dourah, in August, 1532, the Afghans were defeated and Mahmood fled. After this success Humayun besieged the fort of Chunar which belonged to Sher Khan. However Humayun made peace with Sher Khan and he was allowed to continue in possession of Chunar on the condition that he was to send a contingent of 300 troops for service in Mughal army.

When Sher Khan occupied Bengal, at that time Humayun was busy with Bahadur Shah, he did not realize the magnitude of danger from the Afghan leader. Sher Khan proceeded to Bengal, but there Humayun committed a fatal mistake, he wasted full six months in reducing the occupation of the fort of Chunar which was not so important achievement. Sher Khan took full advantage of Humayun's blunder, and managed to carry the families of his Afghan nobles and the whole of the treasure to Ruhtas which he had occupied in 1538. Then he returned with his forces to meet the advanced army of Humayun.

Humayun in his march towards Agra crossed the river Ganga at Monghyr and encamped himself at Chausa. Sher Khan reached this place to measure his strength with Humayun. Humayun now realized that he was in a great difficulty. He sent his agents for peace to be concluded between the Afghans and the Mughals but negotiations failed. Then all of sudden Sher Khan fell upon the unprepared Mughal forces. Humayun could not have time to organize his forces against Sher Khan. The result was that Humayun received a crushing defeat at Chausa. Humayun plunged into the river Ganga on horseback and was about to be drowned when he was saved by a water-carrier, Nizam, whom he seated on his throne for two days at Agra in recognition of his services to the emperor.

Humayun was defeated by Sher Khan in the battles of Chausa and in the battle of Kanauj and was forced to flee away from the battle field. Sher Khan pursued Humayun out of the Punjab and the throne of Delhi passed into the hands of the Afghans. The Mughal Emperor was reduced to the position of a helpless fugitive.

Sher Khan was an ambitious person. He wanted to turn out the Mughals from India and establish the Afghan rule once again. His Indian emperor was broadly based upon the people's will. Sher Khan was wise enough to realize that if he wanted to be secure on the throne and leave a permanent name in history, he must win the loyalty and affection of his people and accord equal treatment to them irrespective of creed or religion. Although a strict Sunni, he was well-disposed towards other sects and religions. Though his government was a military despotism, yet he had real care for the welfare of all his people. The Hindus were granted Waqfs for the encouragement of their education. Hindus were recruited in every department of the government.

Q. 4 Do you agree that Akbar's religious and political strategy consolidated Mughal rule in India?

Akbar, in full Abū al-Faṭḥ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar, (born October 15?, 1542, Umarkot [now in Sindh province, Pakistan]—died c. October 25, 1605, Agra, India), the greatest of the Mughal emperors of India. He reigned from 1556 to 1605 and extended Mughal power over most of the Indian subcontinent. In order to preserve the unity of his empire, Akbar adopted programs that won the loyalty of the non-Muslim populations of his realm. He reformed and strengthened his central administration and also centralized his financial system and reorganized tax-collection processes. Although he never renounced Islam, he took an active interest in other religions, persuading Hindus, Parsis, and Christians, as well as Muslims, to engage in religious discussion before him. Illiterate himself, he encouraged scholars, poets, painters, and musicians, making his court a centre of culture.

Abū al-Faṭḥ Jalāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Akbar was descended from Turks, Mongols, and Iranians—the three peoples who predominated in the political elites of northern India in medieval times. Among his ancestors were Timur (Tamerlane) and Genghis Khan. His father, Humāyūn, driven from his capital of Delhi by the Afghan usurper Shēr Shah of Sūr, was vainly trying to establish his authority in the Sindh region (now Sindh province, Pakistan). Soon Humāyūn had to leave India for Afghanistan and Iran, where the shah lent him some troops. Humāyūn regained his throne in 1555, 10 years after Shēr Shah's death. Akbar, at the age

of 13, was made governor of the Punjab region (now largely occupied by Punjab state, India, and Punjab province, Pakistan).

Humāyūn had barely established his authority when he died in 1556. Within a few months, his governors lost several important places, including Delhi itself, to Hemu, a Hindu minister who claimed the throne for himself.

But on November 5, 1556, a Mughal force defeated Hemu at the Second Battle of Panipat (near present-day Panipat, Haryana state, India), which commanded the route to Delhi, thus ensuring Akbar's succession.

At Akbar's accession his rule extended over little more than the Punjab and the area around Delhi, but, under the guidance of his chief minister, Bayram Khan, his authority was gradually consolidated and extended. The process continued after Akbar forced Bayram Khan to retire in 1560 and began to govern on his own—at first still under household influences but soon as an absolute monarch.

Akbar first attacked Malwa, a state of strategic and economic importance commanding the route through the Vindhya Range to the plateau region of the Deccan (peninsular India) and containing rich agricultural land; it fell to him in 1561. Toward the zealously independent Hindu Rajputs (warrior ruling class) inhabiting the rugged hilly Rajputana region, Akbar adopted a policy of conciliation and conquest. Successive Muslim rulers had found the Rajputs dangerous, however weakened by disunity. But in 1562, when Raja Bihari Mal of Amber (now Jaipur), threatened by a succession dispute, offered Akbar his daughter in marriage, Akbar accepted the offer. The Raja acknowledged Akbar's suzerainty, and his sons prospered in Akbar's service. Akbar followed the same feudal policy toward the other Rajput chiefs. They were allowed to hold their ancestral territories, provided that they acknowledged Akbar as emperor, paid tribute, supplied troops when required, and concluded a marriage alliance with him. The emperor's service was also opened to them and their sons, which offered financial rewards as well as honour.

However, Akbar showed no mercy to those who refused to acknowledge his supremacy. When, after protracted fighting in Mewar, Akbar captured the historic fortress of Chitor (now Chittaurgarh) in 1568, he massacred its inhabitants. Even though Mewar did not submit, the fall of Chitor prompted other Rajput rajas to accept Akbar as emperor in 1570 and to conclude marriage alliances with him, although the state of Marwar held out until 1583.

One of the notable features of Akbar's government was the extent of Hindu, and particularly Rajput, participation. Rajput princes attained the highest ranks, as generals and as provincial governors, in the Mughal service. Discrimination against non-Muslims was reduced by abolishing the taxation of pilgrims and the tax payable by non-Muslims in lieu of military service. Yet Akbar was far more successful than any previous Muslim ruler in winning the cooperation of Hindus at all levels in his administration. The further expansion of his territories gave them fresh opportunities.

In 1573 Akbar conquered Gujarat, an area with many ports that dominated India's trade with western Asia, and then turned east toward Bengal. A rich country with a distinctive culture, Bengal was difficult to rule from Delhi because of its network of rivers, always apt to flood during the summer monsoon. Its Afghan ruler,

declining to follow his father's example and acknowledge Mughal suzerainty, was forced to submit in 1575. When he rebelled and was defeated and killed in 1576, Akbar annexed Bengal.

Toward the end of his reign, Akbar embarked on a fresh round of conquests. The Kashmir region was subjugated in 1586, Sindh in 1591, and Kandahār (Afghanistan) in 1595. Mughal troops now moved south of the Vindhya Range into the Deccan. By 1601 Khandesh, Berar, and part of Ahmadnagar had been added to Akbar's empire. His last years were troubled by the rebellious behaviour of his son Prince Salīm (later the emperor Jahāngīr), who was eager for power.

Previous Indian governments had been weakened by two disintegrating tendencies characteristic of premodern states—one of armies being split up into the private forces of individual commanders and the other of provincial governors becoming hereditary local rulers. Akbar combated those trends by instituting comprehensive reforms that involved two fundamental changes. First, every officer was, at least in principle, appointed and promoted by the emperor instead of by his immediate superior. Second, the traditional distinction between the nobility of the sword and that of the pen was abolished: civil administrators were assigned military ranks, thus becoming as dependent on the emperor as army officers.

Those ranks were systematically graded from commanders of 10 persons to commanders of 5,000 persons, higher ranks being allotted to Mughal princes. Officers were paid either in cash from the emperor's treasury or, more frequently, by the assignment of lands from which they had to collect the revenue, retaining the amount of their salary and remitting the balance to the treasury. Such lands seem to have been transferred frequently from one officer to another; that increased the officers' dependence on the emperor, but it may also have encouraged them to squeeze as much as they could from the peasants with whom their connection might be transitory. Politically, the greatest merit of the system was that it enabled the emperor to offer attractive careers to the able, ambitious, and influential. In that way, Akbar was able to enlist the loyal services of many Rajput princes.

Akbar's reforms required a centralized financial system, and, thus, by the side of each provincial governor (sūbadār, later called nawab) was placed a civil administrator (dīwān, or divan) who supervised revenue collection, prepared accounts, and reported directly to the emperor. As a further safeguard against abuses, Akbar reorganized the existing network of newswriters, whose duty it was to send regular reports of important events to the emperor. Akbar also seems to have instituted more-efficient revenue assessment and collection in an effort to safeguard the peasants from excessive demands and the state from loss of money. But such efficiency could only have been enforced in the areas directly administered by the central government. That excluded the lands under tributary rulers such as the Rajputs and also the lands assigned for the maintenance of Mughal officers.

Physically, he was strong and could withstand hardship on campaigns. Although he seems to have been no more than 5 feet 7 inches (170 cm) tall, he impressed observers as a dominating personality. Clearly, although he was illiterate, he had a powerful and original mind. His unprejudiced inquiries into Christian doctrines misled the Jesuit missionaries he invited to his court into thinking that he was on the point of conversion. He persuaded the

Muslim theologians at his court to accept him as arbiter on points of Islamic law in dispute among them. Although that seems to have been little more than an expression of his systematic approach to problems, the orthodox were offended. He gave further offense by the religious discussions he encouraged between Muslims, Hindus, Parsis, and Christians. Those discussions were continued by a small group of courtiers who shared with Akbar a taste for mysticism. Although their doctrines and ceremonies, known as the Divine Faith (Dīn-e Ilāhī), assigned a central place to Akbar himself, it would be an oversimplification to ascribe political motives to those developments.

Q. 5 Critically evaluate the character and achievements of Mughal emperor Humayun.

Humayun “the Fortunate” was the eldest son of Babur. He had three brothers, Kamran, Askari and Hindal. He was born in Kabul in March 1508. He was the son of Mahim Begum who was probably a Shia. Young Humayun learnt Turki, Arabic and Persian. On account of his careless habits, he did not acquire the exactness of a scholar. In his early youth, he was associated by his father with the government of the country. He was appointed the governor of Badakhshan at the age of 20. On the eve of the Battle of Panipat 1526 he was sent against Hamid Khan who was defeated near Hissar Firoza. He also participated in the Battle of Kanwaha. He was given the fief of Hissar Firoza, in 1526, after the death of Babur. An attempt was made to place Mahdi Khwaja (Brother _in_ law of Babur) on the throne of Agra. He was an experienced and competent administrator. On the other hand, Humayun had not shown any outstanding traits of greatness. In spite of that Humayun successfully placed himself on the throne of Agra on 30th December, 1530.

The throne inherited by Humayun was not a bed of roses. Babur had practically got no time to consolidate his position and authority. He inherited an ill organized empire, empty treasure, a kingdom divided into fiefs and a heterogeneous army, which was not dependable. It was a mixed body of adventures. Some of them were Uzbeks and Mughals, other Indians, Afghans, Persians and Chaghtais. In addition to his claims of his three brothers, Humayun had to deal with many Khans and nobles. They were busy in intrigues against the new emperor and many of them did not consider the kingdom of Delhi and Agra beyond the scope of their ambitions. Humayun had innumerable rivals. The Afghans were defeated in the battle of Panipat (1526) and the Battle of Ghagra (1529) but they were not completely crushed, neutralized or pacified. Moreover, they had not forgotten the days when they were the rulers of the country and aspired to restore their rule.

Humayun made a mistake of real politics in showing kindness to his brothers. In accordance with the wishes of his father, he gave Sambhal to Askari, and Alwar to Hindal. As regards Kamran, he gave him the provinces of Kabul and Qandahar. In spite of this, Kamran was not satisfied. He attacked Punjab and brought the whole of the Punjab under his control. Humayun did not fight with Kamran and gave the Province of the Punjab to him. This possession of vital military importance gave Kamran control over the high road between Delhi and Punjab. It was a suicide attempt by Humayun. He was deprived of the source from which he could have recruited his new army. He was left only with the empire which was newly conquered and over which his hold was not secure.

Humayun was faced with many difficulties but he could have overcome them if he had possessed tact and stronger will-power. Unfortunately, he did not possess such a character. He was not a man of moment. He failed to measure up to the task before him.

After his defeat at Kanuj at the hands of Sher Shah, Humayun crossed the river Ganga and reached Agra persistently persuaded by Sher Shah.

After having managed to collect his treasure, he straightaway reached Delhi, but found that he could not retain even Delhi on account of the uncertainty of any solid help from any quarter.

At Lahore Humayun collected all his brothers and relatives and requested them for help. Kamran was the last person prepared to help him. Mirza Haider Daghlat, cousin of Babur advised Humayun to retire towards Kashmir for some time and then organized his forces to attack Sher Shah. In the meantime the Mughals heard that Sher Shah had already crossed the Beas and was coming to Lahore. At last Humayun decided to proceed towards Sindh.

Passing through great hardships during his journey along the river Sindh, Humayun reached Rohri. Humayun approached the ruler of Bhakhar, Shah Hussain Arghun for help to recover Hindustan, but in vain. Then he besieged Thatta, the capital of the ruler of Sindh, but he was not successful due to the intrigues, thus he had to leave Sindh soon.

Humayun stayed with the Shah of Persia for a long time as his honourable guest, after a long negotiation a treaty was concluded between the two, according to which the Shah promised to give Humayun 14,000 strong forces to enable him to conquer Kabul and Kandhar, in return Humayun promised to give Kandhar to the Shah, propagating Shiasim in his new kingdom and to confirm Shia faith. Thus Humayun left Persia with 14,000 strong Persian army to conquer Kabul and Kandhar. Humayun laid siege to Kandhar, defeated Askari and occupied Kandhar. He put Kandhar in charge of Bairam Khan, his faithful ally who was with him throughout his exile. Humayun proceeded to take Kabul. Kamran put up resistance but ultimately he too was defeated.

Humayun had recovered the throne of Delhi after an interval of about 15 years, but he was not destined to enjoy the fruits of his victories for a long time. He died on 26th January 1556, by an accidental fall from the roof of his library and fractured his head. Speedy arrangements were made to call Prince Akbar from the Punja. For some days the news of his death was kept secret. At last, an announcement was made regarding Akbar's accession to the Delhi throne.

The name of Humayun implies "fortunate" but he proved to be one of the most unlucky monarchs who ever sat upon the throne of Delhi. Along with the empire, he inherited many difficulties for which he did not owe any personal responsibility. Humayun was a thorough gentleman. He was an ideal son, husband, father and brother. In spite of the acts of disloyalty and treachery on the part of his brother, and nobles and others, he forgave them again and again. But this virtue to a fault was the undoing of his career.

Sher Shah was one of the greatest administrator and rulers of the medieval India. The original name of Sher Shah, the lion king, was Farid. He was the grand son of Ibrahim Sur and the son of Hussain. His grandfather

came to India in search of employment in the time of Bahlol Lodhi and joined services in the Punjab. Farid is said to have been born in the Punjab in 1472. After Farid's birth, both his grandfather and father entered in the services of Jamal Khan in the Punjab. When Jamal Khan was transferred to Jaunpur in the time of Sikandar Lodhi, he granted the jagir of Sahsaran, Kawnpur Tanda to Hassan in Bihar. When he grew up, his step brothers challenged his right to the whole of the Jagir. Farid refused to share the jagir with his brothers and took up services under Bahar Shah Lodhi, ruler of South Bihar. When he was in this helpless condition, Sher Khan joined the Mughal services in 1527. When Babur attacked Bihar, Sher Khan rendered him very valuable services, as a reward, jagir was given to him. Sher Khan spent his time in Mughal administration and military organization. Thus he had studied the weaknesses of Mughal politico-military machine and economic system with insight and in depth.

On the other hand, Sultan Mahmud, the king of the Bengal, could not tolerate his defeat in the Battle of Shurajgarh and he wanted to wash off his slur. He entered into an alliance with the Portuguese of Chinsura and invaded Sher Khan's, but he was defeated in this battle. Encouraged by these victories, Sher Khan proceeded further and besieged the famous forte of Gaur. It was from the Forte of Gaur that the king of Bengal approached Humayun for help. Humayun was then busy against Bahadur Shah of Ujjat, pleasures and merry making and in the meantime Sher Khan had already occupied not only the whole of Bengal but also the most famous fort of Rohtasgarh.