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| |  | | --- | | **ECONOMIC CONDITION OF INDIA UNDER THE MUGHALS** | |
| India was quite prosperous during the time of Jahangir and Shah Jahan though the foundation was laid by Akbar. He provided security and stability to the Mughal empire. As wealth was mostly concentrated in the hands of the emperors, the nobles, the traders and the industrialists, naturally they led a life of pomp and pleasure. Even the common people generally did not suffer from want as almost all commodities of daily use were available at a very cheap price. But the picture began to change with the accession of Aurangzeb. Revolts after revolts occurred which drained away the economic resources of the empire. Further, during the period of the later Mughals, the economic condition of the country detoriated to such an extent that the common people failed to get even their basic requirements.  The king, the rich traders, high state officials, mansabdars, etc had a lot of wealth with them. The condition of the teachers, artists, craftsmen, etc was somewhat satisfactory. But the peasants were by far the worst sufferers during this period. They were forced to pay various taxes. They were also frequently exploited by the revenue officers.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | **Agriculture** | |   Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy for a vast majority of people. It was carried on much in the same manner as today. Besides the usual crops, such as rice, wheat, barley, gram, peas and oil seeds, sugarcane, indigo and poppy were cultivated in many parts of India. There was localization of crops. Cotton was produced in many places of Central and Western India. Sugarcane was cultivated in parts of modern Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar. Indigo was cultivated in many places of Northern and Southern India. In most cases, agricultural tools and implements were the same as now. Irrigation in the modern sense was unknown in Mughal India. The peasants usually watered their fields from the neighbouring tanks and wells. Some non-agricultural products like salt and liquor were used abundantly. |
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| Besides agriculture, many small industries flourished during the Mughal period. The most important small scale industry was cotton textile. Hand-loom weaving was known to all villagers. Subsidiary dyeing industry also flourished side by side with the cotton industry. Beautiful and fast dyes were produced. High quality gold items were manufactured at Ayodhya and Khandesh. Dhaka and some places in Bengal were famous for silk cloths, fine muslins and mattresses. Kashmir was famous for its woollen shawls and carpets. Beautiful carpets were manufactured at Fatehpur Sikri, Alwar and Jaunpur. Painted cloth was produced in Berar, Ahmedabad, Agra, etc. The state encouraged the manufacture of goods of various kinds on a large scale and the artisans were mostly attached to the courts. Many karkhanas or workshops were there which provided employment to hundreds of people. Weapons of war were manufactured all over the country. Utility articles of various kinds, brass utensils, pottery, brick, etc were manufactured for local use throughout India. No doubt India at that time was self-supporting in almost all articles of daily use. |
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| Trade and commerce developed a lot during the Mughal period. There was a brisk trade with many countries of Asia and Europe. Ceylon, Burma, China, Japan, Nepal, Persia, Arabia, Central Asia were commercially connected with our country during the Mughal period. The Portuguese, the French, the Dutch and the English took away Indian goods for sale in European markets. The chief exports were textiles, especially various types of cotton fabrics, paper, indigo, opium, spices, sugar, salt, silk, ivory beads, hing, turmeric etc. Chief imports from foreign countries were bullion, horses, metals, silk, ivory, coral, amber, precious stones, perfumes, drugs, China goods, African slaves and European wines. Articles of import were sent to the towns of Lahore, Multan, Cambay, Surat, Patna, Agra and Ahmedabad. |
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| An important factor in the economic structure of the Mughal period was a wide gulf separating the producers from the consumers. The producers were agriculturists, industrial workers and traders. The consumer class comprised the nobles, officers of civil and military department, professionals and religious classes, servants and slaves. Another important feature was the superfluity of officers and domestic servants. There were a number of Hindu and Muslim religious mendicants and beggars who performed a number of useful functions and thus a large portion of the state income was siphoned off, the burden of which was borne by the producing classes. The nobles and officers who were paid high salaries spent lavishly on articles of luxury, marriages of their children, on buildings, mausoleums, etc. Their extravagant lifestyle compelled them to extract money from the peasantry by hook or by crook. The upper and middle class consisting of professional classes and ordinary state employees were fairly well off. Skilled workmen earned sufficiently to lead a decent life. |