

Reforms of the Early Mughal Emperors in Economy

Introduction

The Mughal economy was mainly agricultural. Farmers supported the empire by producing crops, and land revenue became the main source of state income. Trade, industry, and crafts added to this wealth. The Mughal emperors also standardized coins, which brought economic unity. Their economic reforms were closely connected with the political stability and strength of the empire.

Babur's Economic Measures

Babur, the founder, inherited an unstable economy. Agriculture was the main source of production, but resources were weak. He introduced Persian and Central Asian farming methods to improve crops. He also promoted trade routes with Central Asia and began organizing revenue through zamindars. Though limited, his efforts laid the foundation for later structured reforms.

Humayun's Economic Policies

Humayun's reign was troubled by defeats and exile, which weakened the economy. During his stay in Persia, he received financial support and learned from Persian systems. After regaining the throne, he encouraged agriculture and crafts to stabilize revenue, but his economy remained fragile. He passed on these challenges to Akbar, who later brought major reforms.

Akbar's Economic Reforms

Akbar introduced the most effective reforms in the Mughal economy. His *Zabt* system measured land to fix fair taxes based on productivity. Revenue was often collected in cash rather than kind, which improved state finances. He also linked the Mansabdari system with economic resources, ensuring military and administrative stability. Trade expanded under secure routes, making the Mughal economy more prosperous.

Legacy

The economic reforms of the early Mughals built a strong base for prosperity. Agriculture and trade remained central, while standardized coinage ensured smooth exchanges across the empire. Crafts and industry flourished in urban centers, contributing to exports. Akbar's reforms, in particular, created a stable system that influenced India's economy for many generations.