

CHAPTER 8

THEME EIGHT

Peasants, Zamindars and the State

Agrarian Society and the Mughal Empire (c. sixteenth-seventeenth centuries)

1. Peasants and Agricultural Production

- The basic unit of agricultural society was the village, inhabited by peasants who performed the manifold seasonal tasks that made up agricultural production throughout the year

Looking for sources

- Major source for the agrarian history - chronicles and documents from the Mughal court
- One of the most important chronicles was the *Ain-i Akbari* authored by Akbar's court historian Abu'l Fazl.
- It recorded the arrangements made by the state to ensure cultivation, to enable the collection of revenue by the agencies of the state and to regulate the relationship between the state and rural magnates, the zamindars.
- The central purpose of the *Ain* was to present a vision of Akbar's empire where social harmony was provided by a strong ruling class.
- Other Sources - include detailed revenue records from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.
- The extensive records of the East India Company provide us with useful descriptions of agrarian relations in eastern India.
- All these sources record instances of conflicts between peasants, zamindars and the state.

Peasants and their lands

- The term which Indo-Persian sources of the Mughal period most frequently used to denote a peasant was *raiya* or *muzariyan*.
- Sources of the seventeenth century refer to two kinds of peasants – *khud-kashta* and *pahi-kashta*.

- *khud-kashta* - were residents of the village in which they held their lands.
- *pahi-kashta* - were non-resident cultivators who belonged to some other village, but cultivated lands elsewhere on a contractual basis.

Irrigation and technology

- The abundance of land, available labour and the mobility of peasants were three factors that accounted for the constant expansion of agriculture.
- Basic staples such as rice, wheat or millets were the most frequently cultivated crops.
- Areas which received 40 inches or more of rainfall a year were generally rice-producing zones, followed by wheat and millets, corresponding to a descending scale of precipitation.

Irrigation

- Dependent on Monsoons but there were crops which required additional water.
- Artificial systems of irrigation had to be devised for this.
- Irrigation projects also received state support

An abundance of crops

- Agriculture was organised around two major seasonal cycles, the *kharif* (autumn) and the *rabi* (spring).
- Most regions, except those terrains that were the most arid or inhospitable, produced a minimum of two crops a year, whereas some, where rainfall or irrigation assured a continuous supply of water, even gave three crops.
- This ensured an enormous variety of produce.
- The Mughal provinces of Agra produced 39 varieties of crops and Delhi produced 43 over the two seasons. Bengal produced 50 varieties of rice alone.

***jins-i kamil* (literally, perfect crops)**

- The Mughal state also encouraged peasants to cultivate such crops as they brought in more revenue.
- Crops such as cotton and sugarcane were *jins-i kamil* par excellence.
- Cotton was grown over a great swathe of territory spread over central India and the Deccan plateau, whereas Bengal was famous for its sugar.
- Such cash crops would also include various sorts of oilseeds (for example, mustard) and lentils.
- Maize (*makka*), was introduced into India via Africa and Spain and by the seventeenth century it was being listed as one of the major crops of western India.
- Vegetables like tomatoes, potatoes and chillies were introduced from the New World at this time, as were fruits like the pineapple and the papaya.

2. The Village Community

- Peasants held their lands in individual ownership.
- At the same time they belonged to a collective village community
- There were three constituents of this community – the cultivators, the panchayat, and the village headman (*muqaddam* or *mandal*).

Caste and the rural milieu

Menials

- Among those who tilled the land, there was a sizeable number who worked as menials or agricultural labourers (*majur*).
- Despite the abundance of cultivable land, certain caste groups were assigned menial tasks and thus relegated to poverty.
- Such groups comprised a large section of the village population, had the least resources and were constrained by their position in the caste hierarchy, much like the Dalits of modern India.
- In Muslim communities menials like the *halalkhoran* (scavengers) were housed outside the boundaries of the village
- Similarly the *mallahzadas* (literally, sons of boatmen) in Bihar were comparable to slaves.
- There was a direct correlation between caste, poverty and social status at the lower strata of society.
- Such correlations were not so marked at intermediate levels.
- The Gauravas, who cultivated land around Vrindavan (Uttar Pradesh), sought Rajput status in the seventeenth century.
- Castes such as the Ahirs, Gujars and Malis rose in the hierarchy because of the profitability of cattle rearing and horticulture.

- In the eastern regions, intermediate pastoral and fishing castes like the Sadgops and Kaivartas acquired the status of peasants.

Panchayats and headmen

- The village panchayat was an assembly of elders, usually important people of the village with hereditary rights over their property.
- In mixed-caste villages, the panchayat was usually a heterogeneous body.
- An oligarchy, the panchayat represented various castes and communities in the village, though the village menial-cum-agricultural worker was unlikely to be represented there.
- The decisions made by these panchayats were binding on the members.
- The panchayat was headed by a headman known as *muqaddam* or *mandal*.
- Headmen held office as long as they enjoyed the confidence of the village elders, failing which they could be dismissed by them.
- The chief function of the headman was to supervise the preparation of village accounts, assisted by the accountant or *patwari* of the panchayat.
- The panchayat derived its funds from contributions made by individuals to a common financial pool.
- These funds were used for defraying the costs of entertaining revenue officials who visited the village from time to time.
- One important function of the *panchayat* was to ensure that caste boundaries among the various communities inhabiting the village were upheld.
- In eastern India all marriages were held in the presence of the *mandal*.
- One of the duties of the village headman was to oversee the conduct of the members of the village community “chiefly to prevent any offence against their caste”.
- Panchayats also had the authority to levy fines and inflict more serious forms of punishment like expulsion from the community.
- In addition to the village panchayat each caste or jati in the village had its own jati panchayat.
- These panchayats wielded considerable power in rural society.
- In Rajasthan jati panchayats arbitrated civil disputes between members of different castes.
- In most cases, except in matters of criminal justice, the state respected the decisions of jati panchayats.
- Village panchayat was regarded as the court of appeal that would ensure that the state carried out its moral obligations and guaranteed justice.

Village artisans

- There were substantial numbers of artisans, sometimes as high as 25 per cent of the total households in the villages.
- The distinction between artisans and peasants in village society was a fluid one, as many groups performed the tasks of both.
- Cultivators and their families would also participate in craft production – such as dyeing, textile printing, baking and firing of pottery, making and repairing agricultural implements.
- Village artisans – potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, barbers, even goldsmiths – provided specialised services in return for which they were compensated by villagers by a variety of means.
- The most common way of doing so was by giving them a share of the harvest, or an allotment of land, perhaps cultivable wastes, which was likely to be decided by the panchayat.
- In Maharashtra such lands became the artisans' *miras* or *watan* – their hereditary holding.
- Another variant of this was a system where artisans and individual peasant households entered into a mutually negotiated system of remuneration, most of the time goods for services.
- For example, eighteenth-century records tell us of zamindars in Bengal who remunerated blacksmiths, carpenters, even goldsmiths for their work by paying them “a small daily allowance and diet money”.
- This later came to be described as the *jajmani* system, though the term was not in vogue in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- Cash remuneration was not entirely unknown either.

3. Women in Agrarian Society

- Women and men had to work shoulder to shoulder in the fields.
- Men tilled and ploughed, while women sowed, weeded, threshed and winnowed the harvest. With the growth of nucleated villages and expansion in individuated peasant farming, which characterised medieval Indian agriculture, the basis of production was the labour and resources of the entire household.
- Naturally, a gendered segregation between the home (for women) and the world (for men) was not possible in this context.
- Nonetheless biases related to women's biological functions did continue.
- Menstruating women, for instance, were not allowed to touch the plough or the potter's wheel in western India, or enter the groves where betel-leaves (*paan*) were grown in Bengal.

- Artisanal tasks such as spinning yarn, sifting and kneading clay for pottery, and embroidery were among the many aspects of production dependent on female labour.
- Women were considered an important resource in agrarian society also because they were child bearers in a society dependent on labour.
- At the same time, high mortality rates among women – owing to malnutrition, frequent pregnancies, death during childbirth – often meant a shortage of wives.
- This led to the emergence of social customs in peasant and artisan communities that were distinct from those prevalent among elite groups.
- Marriages in many rural communities required the payment of bride-price rather than dowry to the bride's family.
- Remarriage was considered legitimate both among divorced and widowed women.
- The household was headed by a male. Thus women were kept under strict control by the male members of the family and the community.
- They could inflict draconian punishments if they suspected infidelity on the part of women.
- Amongst the landed gentry, women had the right to inherit property.
- Hindu and Muslim women inherited zamindaris which they were free to sell or mortgage.
- Women zamindars were known in eighteenth-century Bengal.

4. Forests and Tribes

Beyond settled villages

- Apart from the intensively cultivated provinces in northern and north-western India, huge swathes of forests – dense forest (*jangal*) or scrubland (*kharbandi*) – existed all over eastern India, central India, northern India (including the Terai on the Indo-Nepal border), Jharkhand, and in peninsular India down the Western Ghats and the Deccan plateau.
- Forest dwellers were termed *jangli* in contemporary texts.
- The term described those whose livelihood came from the gathering of forest produce, hunting and shifting agriculture.
- These activities were largely season specific.
- Eg – Bhils, spring was reserved for collecting forest produce, summer for fishing, the monsoon months for cultivation, and autumn and winter for hunting.
- For the state, the forest was a subversive place – a place of refuge (*mawas*) for troublemakers.

Inroads into forests

- External forces entered the forest in different ways.
- Forest products – like honey, beeswax and gum lac – were in great demand.
- Some, such as gum lac, became major items of overseas export from India in the seventeenth century.
- Elephants were also captured and sold.
- Trade involved an exchange of commodities through barter as well.
- Some tribes, like the Lohanis in the Punjab, were engaged in overland trade, between India and Afghanistan
- Many tribal chiefs had become zamindars, some even became kings. For this they required to build up an army. They recruited people from their lineage groups
- Tribes in the Sind region had armies comprising 6,000 cavalry and 7,000 infantry.
- In Assam, the Ahom kings had their *paiks*, people who were obliged to render military service in exchange for land.
- The capture of wild elephants was declared a royal monopoly by the Ahom kings.
- Though the transition from a tribal to a monarchical system had started much earlier, the process seems to have become fully developed only by the sixteenth century.

5. The Zamindars

- Zamindars - class of people in the countryside that lived off agriculture but did not participate directly in the processes of agricultural production.
- They were landed proprietors who also enjoyed certain social and economic privileges by virtue of their superior status in rural society.
- Caste was one factor that accounted for the elevated status of zamindars
- They performed certain services (*khidmat*) for the state.
- The zamindars held extensive personal lands termed *milkiyat*, meaning property.
- *Milkiyat* lands were cultivated for the private use of zamindars, often with the help of hired or servile labour.
- The zamindars could sell, bequeath or mortgage these lands at will.
- Zamindars also derived their power from the fact that they could often collect revenue on behalf of the state
- Control over military resources was another source of power.

- Most zamindars had fortresses (*qilachas*) as well as an armed contingent comprising units of cavalry, artillery and infantry.
- Abu'l Fazl's account indicates that an "upper-caste", Brahmana-Rajput combine had already established firm control over rural society.
- The dispossession of weaker people by a powerful military chieftain was quite often a way of expanding a zamindari.
- The slow processes of zamindari consolidation involved colonisation of new lands, by transfer of rights, by order of the state and by purchase.
- These were the processes which perhaps permitted people belonging to the relatively "lower" castes to enter the rank of zamindars as zamindaris were bought and sold quite briskly in this period.
- A combination of factors also allowed the consolidation of clan- or lineage-based zamindaris.
- For example, the Rajputs and Jats adopted these strategies to consolidate their control over vast swathes of territory in northern India.
- Likewise, peasant-pastoralists (like the Sadgops) carved out powerful zamindaris in areas of central and south- western Bengal.
- Zamindars spearheaded the colonisation of agricultural land
- They helped in settling cultivators by providing them with the means of cultivation, including cash loans.
- The buying and selling of zamindaris accelerated the process of monetisation in the countryside.
- Zamindars often established markets (*haats*) to which peasants also came to sell their produce.
- Their relationship with the peasantry had an element of reciprocity, paternalism and patronage.

Two aspects reinforce this view.

- First, the bhakti saints, who eloquently condemned caste-based and other forms of oppression did not portray the zamindars as exploiters of the peasantry. Usually it was the revenue official of the state who was the object of their ire.
- Second, in a large number of agrarian uprisings which erupted in north India in the seventeenth century, zamindars often received the support of the peasantry in their struggle against the state.

6. Land Revenue System

- Revenue from the land was the economic mainstay of the Mughal Empire.
- The land revenue arrangements consisted of two stages – first, assessment and then actual collection.

- The *jama* was the amount assessed, as opposed to *hasil*, the amount collected.
- In his list of duties of the *amil-guzar* or revenue collector, Akbar decreed that while he should strive to make cultivators pay in cash, the option of payment in kind was also to be kept open.

7. The Flow of Silver

- The Mughal Empire was among the large territorial empires in Asia that had managed to consolidate power and resources during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- These empires were the Ming (China), Safavid (Iran) and Ottoman (Turkey).
- The political stability achieved by all these empires helped create vibrant networks of overland trade from China to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Voyages of discovery and the opening up of the New World resulted in a massive expansion of Asia's (particularly India's) trade with Europe.
- Expanding trade brought in huge amounts of silver bullion into Asia to pay for goods procured from India, and a large part of that bullion gravitated towards India.
- This was good for India as it did not have natural resources of silver.
- As a result, the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was also marked by a remarkable stability in the availability of metal currency, particularly the silver *rupya* in India.
- This facilitated an unprecedented expansion of minting of coins and the circulation of money in the economy as well as the ability of the Mughal state to extract taxes and revenue in cash.

8. The Ain-i Akbari of Abu'l Fazl Allami

- Culmination of a large historical, administrative project of classification undertaken by Abu'l Fazl at the order of Emperor Akbar.
- It was completed in 1598
- The *Ain* was part of a larger project of history writing commissioned by Akbar.
- This history, known as the *Akbar Nama*, comprised three books.
- The first two provided a historical narrative.
- The *Ain-i Akbari*, the third book, was organised as a compendium of imperial regulations and a gazetteer of the empire.

- The *Ain* gives detailed accounts of the organisation of the court, administration and army, the sources of revenue and the physical layout of the provinces of Akbar's empire and the literary, cultural and religious traditions of the people.
- The *Ain* is made up of five books (*daftars*), of which the first three books describe the administration.
- The first book, called *manzil-abadi*, concerns the imperial household and its maintenance.
- The second book, *sipah-abadi*, covers the military and civil administration and the establishment of servants.
- This book includes notices and short biographical sketches of imperial officials (*mansabdars*), learned men, poets and artists.
- The third book, *mulk-abadi*, is the one which deals with the fiscal side of the empire and provides rich quantitative information on revenue rates, followed by the "Account of the Twelve Provinces".
- This section has detailed statistical information, which includes the geographic, topographic and economic profile of all *subas* and their administrative and fiscal divisions (*sarkars*, *parganas* and *mahals*), total measured area, and assessed revenue (*jama*).
- The *Ain* goes on to give a detailed picture of the *sarkars* below the *suba*.

This it does in the form of tables, which have eight columns giving the following information:

1. *parganat/mahal*
 2. *qila* (forts)
 3. *arazi* and *zamin-i paimuda* (measured area)
 4. *naqdi*, revenue assessed in cash
 5. *suyurghal*, grants of revenue in charity
 6. zamindars
 7. columns 7 and 8 contain details of the castes of these zamindars, and their troops including their horsemen (*sawar*), foot-soldiers (*piyada*) and elephants (*fil*).
- The *mulk-abadi* gives a fascinating, detailed and highly complex view of agrarian society in northern India.
 - The fourth and fifth books (*daftars*) deal with the religious, literary and cultural traditions of the people of India and also contain a collection of Akbar's "auspicious sayings".

Exercise

Level – 1

1. Sarkars, parganas and mahals *were the* administrative and fiscal divisions of
 - (a) Jama
 - (b) Subas
 - (c) Arazi
 - (d) None of the following
2. What were the most frequently cultivated crops in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries
 - (a) rice
 - (b) wheat
 - (c) millets
 - (d) all of the above
3. Ain-i Akbari was written by
 - (a) Abu'l Fazl
 - (b) Nadir Shah
 - (c) Ahmad Shah
 - (d) Sayyid Brothers
4. Areas which received 40 inches or more of rainfall a year were generally producing
 - (a) Rice
 - (b) Wheat
 - (c) Millets
 - (d) Jute
5. Shahnahr, a canal in the Punjab got repaired during the reign of which of the following rulers?
 - (a) Shah Jahan
 - (b) Akbar
 - (c) Sher Shah Suri
 - (d) Babur
6. The zamindars held extensive personal lands termed as
 - (a) milkiyat
 - (b) paiks
 - (c) kharbandi
 - (d) None of the above
7. Giovanni Careri came from which of the following countries?
 - (a) Italy
 - (b) Portugal
 - (c) Spain
 - (d) Egypt
8. The Lohanis tribes who were engaged in overland trade, between India and Afghanistan belongs to which of the following regions
 - (a) Uttarakhand
 - (b) Himachal Pradesh
 - (c) Punjab
 - (d) Jammu and Kashmir
9. The Ahom kings had their *paiks*, people who were obliged to render military service in exchange for land.

The Ahom kings were prevalent in which of the following regions?

 - (a) Arunachal Pradesh
 - (b) Assam
 - (c) Manipur
 - (d) Nagaland

10. In Mughal empire 'jins-i kamil' represents what kind of crops?
 - (a) Summer crops
 - (b) Winter crops
 - (c) Perfect crops
 - (d) Both a and b
11. Maize was introduced into India from which of the following countries?
 - (a) Africa
 - (b) Portugal
 - (c) Spain
 - (d) Both (a) and (c)
12. The term which was used most frequently in Indo-Persian sources of the Mughal period to denote a peasant was
 - (a) raiyat
 - (b) muzarian
 - (c) asamis
 - (d) both (a) and (b)

Level – 2

13. khud-kashta and pahi-kashta were two kinds of _____
 - (a) zamindars
 - (b) peasants
 - (c) cropping seasons
 - (d) halalkhoran
14. What were the factors that led to the constant expansion of agriculture in sixteenth-seventeenth centuries?
 - (a) abundance of land
 - (b) available labour
 - (c) proper irrigation supply
 - (d) Both a and b
15. In Mughal Empire, an official responsible for ensuring that imperial regulations were carried out in the provinces was known as
 - (a) Ming
 - (b) Safavid
 - (c) mansabdars
 - (d) Amin
16. Find the true statement about Ain-i Akbari
 - (a) It was part of a larger project of history writing, known as the *Akbar Nama*
 - (b) *Akbar Nama*, comprised three books and the *Ain-i Akbari* was the first book of that series
 - (c) It was organised as a compendium of imperial regulations and a gazetteer of the empire.
 - (d) Both (a) and (c)

17. Find the true statement about mansabdari system
 (a) It was responsible for looking after the civil affairs of the state only
 (b) All mansabdar were paid in cash
 (c) Mansabdar were transferred periodically.
 (d) None of the above
18. Find the correct statement
 (a) *Pargana* was an administrative division of a Mughal province.
 (b) *Peshkash* was a form of tribute collected by the Zamindars
 (c) Both (a) and (b)
 (d) None of the above
19. The *Ain* is made up of five books, which of the following is not the part of those five books
 (a) *zamin-i paimuda*
 (b) *suyurghamanzil-abadi*
 (c) *manzil-abadi*
 (d) *sipah-abadi*
20. In the Mughal state, the role of *amil-guzar* was to
 (a) Measure cultivated and cultivable lands
 (b) collect revenue
 (c) to do administrative service
 (d) None of the above
21. Find the incorrect statements regarding the classification of the lands in Mughal empire regime
 (a) *Polaj* is land which is annually cultivated
 (b) *Parauti* is land left out of cultivation for a time that it may recover its strength.
 (c) *Chachar* is land that has lain fallow for three or four years.
 (d) *Banjar* is land uncultivated for ten years and more
22. Find the incorrect statement with reference to the production of Cash crops in Mughal state
 (a) The Mughal state encouraged peasants to cultivate such crops
 (b) Cotton was grown over central India and the Deccan plateau
 (c) Bengal was famous for Jute production
 (d) Cash crops also include various sorts of oilseeds
23. The panchayat was headed by a headman known as
 (a) *mandal* (b) *Jagir*
 (c) *Mandala* (d) None of the above
24. The intermediate pastoral and fishing castes like the *Sadgops* and *Kaivartas* acquired the status of peasants in which of the following regions?
 (a) Western Region (b) Northern Region
 (c) Eastern Region (d) Both (a) and (b)

Answers

Level-1

1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (a) 5. (a) 6. (a) 7. (a) 8. (c) 9. (b) 10. (c)
 11. (d) 12. (d)

Level-2

13. (b) 14. (d) 15. (d) 16. (d) 17. (c) 18. (d) 19. (b) 20. (b) 21. (d) 22. (c)
 23. (a) 24. (c)

Explanations

Level – 1

- 1. b • *Subas* and their administrative and fiscal divisions (*sarkars*, *parganas* and *mahals*)
- 2. d • Since the primary purpose of agriculture is to feed people, basic staples such as rice, wheat or millets were the most frequently cultivated crops.
- 3. a • The *Ain-i Akbari* was the culmination of a large historical, administrative project of classification undertaken by Abu'l Fazl at the order of Emperor Akbar.
- 4. a • Areas which received 40 inches or more of rainfall a year were generally rice-producing zones, followed by wheat and millets, corresponding to a descending scale of precipitation.
- 5. a • Irrigation projects received state support as well (eg. digging of new canals (*nahr*, *nala*) and repairing old ones like the *shahnahr* in the Punjab during Shah Jahan's reign
- 6. a • The zamindars held extensive personal lands termed *milkiyat*, meaning property. *Milkiyat* lands were cultivated for the private use of zamindars, often with the help of hired or servile labour.
- 7. a • The testimony of an Italian traveller, Giovanni Careri, who passed through India c. 1690, provides a graphic account about the way silver travelled across the globe to reach India.
- 8. c • Tribes, like the Lohanis in the Punjab, were engaged in overland trade, between India and Afghanistan
- 9. b • In Assam, the Ahom kings had their *paiks*, people who were obliged to render military service in exchange for land.
 - The capture of wild elephants was declared a royal monopoly by the Ahom kings.
- 10. c • The Mughal state also encouraged peasants to cultivate such crops as they brought in more revenue. Crops such as cotton and sugarcane were *jins-i kamil*. (literally, perfect crops) par excellence.
 - Cotton was grown over a great swathe of territory spread over central India and the Deccan plateau, whereas Bengal was famous for its sugar.
 - Such cash crops would also include various sorts of oilseeds (for example, mustard) and lentils.

- 11. d • Maize (*makka*), was introduced into India via Africa and Spain and by the seventeenth century it was being listed as one of the major crops of western India.
- 12. d • The term which Indo-Persian sources of the Mughal period most frequently used to denote a peasant was *raiya* or *muzarian*.

Level – 2

- 13. b • Sources of the seventeenth century refer to two kinds of peasants – *khud-kashta* and *pahi-kashta*.
 - *khud-kashta* - were residents of the village in which they held their lands.
 - *pahi-kashta* - were non-resident cultivators who belonged to some other village, but cultivated lands elsewhere on a contractual basis.
- 14. d • The abundance of land, available labour and the mobility of peasants were three factors that accounted for the constant expansion of agriculture.
- 15. d • *Amin* was an official responsible for ensuring that imperial regulations were carried out in the provinces.
- 16. d • The *Ain* was part of a larger project of history writing commissioned by Akbar. This history, known as the *Akbar Nama*, comprised three books.
 - The first two provided a historical narrative.
 - The *Ain-i Akbari*, the third book, was organised as a compendium of imperial regulations and a gazetteer of the empire.
- 17. c • The Mughal administrative system had at its apex a military- cum-bureaucratic apparatus (*mansabdari*) which was responsible for looking after the civil and military affairs of the state.
 - Some *mansabdars* were paid in cash (*naqdi*), while the majority of them were paid through assignments of revenue (*jagirs*) in different regions of the empire.
 - They were transferred periodically.
- 18. d • *Pargana* was an administrative subdivision of a Mughal province.
 - *Peshkash* was a form of tribute collected by the Mughal state.

- 19. b • The first book, called *manzil-abadi*
- The second book, *sipah-abadi*
- The third book, *mulk-abadi*
- The fourth and fifth books (*daftars*) deal with the religious, literary and cultural traditions of the people of India
- 20. b • The land revenue arrangements consisted of two stages – first, assessment and then actual collection. The *jama* was the amount assessed, as opposed to *hasil*, the amount collected. In his list of duties of the *amil-guzar* or revenue collector, Akbar decreed that while he should strive to make cultivators pay in cash, the option of payment in kind was also to be kept open.
- 21. d • The Emperor Akbar in his profound sagacity classified the lands and fixed a different revenue to be paid by each.
- Polaj is land which is annually cultivated for each crop in succession and is never allowed to lie fallow. Parauti is land left out of cultivation for a time that it may recover its strength.
- Chachar is land that has lain fallow for three or four years. Banjar is land uncultivated for five years and more.
- 22. c • The Mughal state also encouraged peasants to cultivate such crops as they brought in more revenue.
- Crops such as cotton and sugarcane were *jins-i kamil* par excellence.
- Cotton was grown over a great swathe of territory spread over central India and the Deccan plateau, whereas Bengal was famous for its sugar.
- Such cash crops would also include various sorts of oilseeds (for example, mustard) and lentils.
- 23. a • The panchayat was headed by a headman known as *muqaddam* or *mandal*.
- 24. c • In the eastern regions, intermediate pastoral and fishing castes like the Sadgops and Kaivartas acquired the status of peasants.