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MILITARY ADMINISTRATION OF MUGHAL EMPIRE: A PART OF MANSABDARI SYSTEM

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Abstract: The army was the hub of Mughal administration. The medieval age was an epoch of extensive empires. It was the heartfelt desire of the rulers of medieval period they should extend their empire as much as possible by capturing the territories of the neighboring weak rulers. For this purpose they needed a powerful and vast array. Moreover, the north- west frontier of India was unsafe and foreign intruders invaded india from there from time to time, hence it was also essential for the Mughals, to maintain a large army for the safety of the country. The rebellions tribes in the country, such as Afghanistan's, Rajputs, uzbegs, jats and marathas also created problems for the emperors, hence the need of a powerful army was realized for crushing the revolts of these tribes therefore, all the Mughal emperors from Babur to Aurangazeb paid their utmost attention to the maintenance of a strong and powerful army. The mughal army was built on the mansabdari system. Although the mansabdari system was visible during the sultanate period, Akbar gave it a scientific structure. Akbar had track record of unbeaten military campaigns that consolidated mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent Akbar's skilled structural and organizational calibration of the Mughal army was the foundation of this military prowess and authority.

Keywords: Nature of Mansabdari System, Mansabdars, Reforms of the Army, Evolution.

Introduction: A very characteristic feature of mughal administration was mansabdari system. Akbar, line Sher Shah was against Jagirdari system. During the Mughal rule the core of both, civil and military administration was based on mansabdari system as was introduced by Akbar. This system was prevalent in Persia from very old days- Akbar followed than in India, prior to Akbar under the Mughals no effective effort to organize the imperial service was made. Humayun of course made a classification of aristocrats on the basis of income into three categories and the military heads of the state were placed. In the first class viz, ' Amil - i- Doulat ' or men having riches. But he did not have much time to him turn the attempt into a success. It is Akbar, who first in history introduced mansabdari system under its fold. Of course, we should remember in this context that during the sultanate, some civil and military officers were paid salaries in cash from the Diwan - in- arig. From the book of Barani it is known that the court Poet of Allauddin Khalji received monthly allowances from Diwan-i- arig. But there is no evidence that they participated in any battle waged by the sultan.

OBJECTS OF MANSABDARI SYSTEM

The present paper has been undertaken with following objectives

1. A basic feature of mansabdari system under Akbar.
2. An inclusive understanding of the mansabdari system and its impacts upon the military administration of mughal empire.
3. Show that mansabdari system tried to establish a link between chieftainship and feudalism.
4. It is a system which of feudal lords at it put on end to the Jagirdari system.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: This paper will focus on the literature related to the history and evolution of the critical analysis of military organ in mughal india during Akbar period. A literature review is a thorough overview of earlier studies on a subject. The literature review examines academic books, journals, and materials that are pertinent to a specific of study. It needs to provide a theoretical framework for the study and assist author in defining its scope. A literature review gives the reader a complete grasp of the advancements in the subject by providing a "landscape "for them.

DISCUSSION: The Mughals public services were based on the mansabdari system. Mansabdari was instituted by Akbar, which became the backbone of the Mughal bureaucracy and military. It was a ranking system in which every officer of the state was given a mansab or a rank. A mansabdar holder or mansabdar was liable for services anywhere in the empire. Mansabdari was characterized by grading and pay scale. There were three grades or classification of mansabdars : mansabdars (officers) – those in command of ten to four hundred; amirs (nobles) – those in command of five hundred to twenty five hundred; and umara - i- kabir or umara- i- azim- those in higher ranks from five thousand and above . All classification of mansabdars was based on the zat and sawar. The zat denoted the ranking in the court and the sawar rank denoted the command over cavalry troops. Each mansabdar had to maintain out of his



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salary a fix number of troops, horses and other beasts of burden. A mansabdar had to send troops to state service whenever asked. However, mansabdars remained generally deficient in maintaining an expected number of troops. Still, the mansabdar army formed a bulk of the Mughal army.

There was no segregation of civil and military services under mansabdari. A mansab was called to provide both military and civil services. A mansabdar was transferred anywhere in the empire, and his Jagir was taken back after his death. Usually, the salaries of mansabdars was quite high. Shah Jahan reduced their salaries and introduce the practice of paying salaries for only four months in a year. Even with this reduction, the Mansabdars lived extravagantly. During Akbar’s reign, the mansabdari system reached its most efficient level. But during the later Mughal era, the system was faced by many defects due to the inefficiency of the rulers and the corruption of the officials. Mansabdari is compared to the civil service during British rule, in which civil servants formed an all India Cadre of official to the British empire. Mansabdari therefore provided cohesion and unity to the Mughal empire that was lacking during the sultanate.

REPLACEMENT OF JAGIRDARI SYSTEM WITH THE MANSABDARI SYSTEM

Besides having the need to organize the royal army and administration on a sound basis the mansabdari system was introduced to replace the Jagirdari system. The Mughal administration was military based. The government official’s allegiance to the emperor was deemed to be essential. But this was not ensured under the Jagirdari system. When Akbar ascended the throne the state of the army was highly unsatisfactory. Under the Jagirdari system state officials were not paid in cash. They were given “jagirs “ or over lordship of certain areas. These over lords were required to keep a certain number of horsemen and were bound to serve the Emperor a times of was horse, men, and auxiliaries. But most of these Jagirdars usually kept inefficient soldiers and horses.

They would even defraud the state by mustering people of different trades from amongst the rustics and dodged the law. Thus, the Emperor had to depend on these worthless undisciplined troops of Jagirdars in times of need. The second defect of the Jagirdari system was that same amirs growing too powerful would often defyoioieven challenge the Emperor. They could easily do so as they were the pay masters of their men in the army. The soldiers would show allegiance to them and not to the Emperor. As such through the army’s expenditure were burned by the emperor (through Jagirs) he could not claim their loyalty. Thirdly, under this system dishonest officials could defraud the exchequer by non- payment of taxes and revenues. In order to make place for new Jagirdars many “khalisa “ or government land were deprived of its dues. For all these reasons, Akbar tried to do away with the Jagirdari system as far as possible and replaced it with mansabdari system in which officers were paid mainly in cash. Akbar's main purpose in abolishing “Jagir” system was to bring in a thorough change in his army. Instead of relying on the worthless army provided by the Jagirdars he wanted to construct a more trained, disciplined and loyal force of his own.

REFORM OF THE ARMY WAS BROUGHT UNDER MANSABDARI SYSTEM

Akbar was a very able ruler with an instinctive organizational skill. Being troubled by the revolts of nobles of the empire at the initial years of his rule, he saw the need of organizing his army and make it a fitting means of his conquests. He felt the need to reform his army both infantry, cavalry and the may. In 1571 when shahbaz khan, was appointed Mir Bakshi. Akbar drew up a scheme of reform and entirely changed the structure of the army. The entire military organization was thus brought under the “ Mansabdari system “ directly under his own control. The Mansabdars under Akbar, as they were very critilly chosen and appointed by him, were very efficient, aspiring and industrious. The omrahas, a mirs, and other Hindu mansabdars enjoying 1000 and more Zats and Sawars were the true pillars of Akbar's empire.

MEANING OF THE WORD MANSAB

The word “ Mansab “ means rank or position in the military service. But the word “ mansab “ in the context of mughal administration meant at least four things

- i) Rank in the court
- ii) Pay an extra allowances of a holder
- iii) Dignity and position outside the capital
- iv) Obligations and the number of horses, soldiers, elephants and carts a mansabdar was required to maintain.

Though the word “mansab “chiefly refers to the position in the army hierarchy it was applied in cases of civil administration too. As prof. Qureshi has observed “The mansab was defined in military terms through the military definition was only a myth or at best a symbol “. Though all officials were given a place in the military hierarchy, it was not compulsory for all of then to perform military duties. Still, it is undenyng that under the Mansabdari system all officers, had some sort of military obligations.



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CLASSIFICATION OF MANSABDARS: ZAT AND SAWAR

For every Mansabdar the Emperor would fix two numbers that would determine his "Zat" and number of his "Sawar" . And these two numbers would indicate his position in the army. According to Moreland and Abdul Aziz "Zat" denoted the Mansabdars individual rank or position in the army. The term "sawar" would indicate how many soldiers he would maintain. According to A.J. Qaisar, Akbar introduced Mansabdari system in the 18th year (1573-74) of his rule and the two categories- Zat and Sawar of Mansabdars were existing from the very beginning. This view of A.J. Qaisar has been objected to by Shireen Moosvi. She has shown a few stages of evolution of the system under Akbar. According to her, prior to Akbar's accession to the throne and ten years after that there was no fixed military obligation for the officers. In 1566-67 on the 11th year of his rule Akbar first thought of imposing certain military obligations on his officers. He tried to make it obligatory for the Jagirdars to maintain a number of soldiers according to the size of their Jagirs. On the 18th(1573-74)year of his rule Mansabdari system was first officially introduced. Then only one number (zat) was demarcated which indicated the number of horses and men would an officer maintain. In practice, of course, very few officers would or be able to keep the stipulated number of soldiers or horses. As such, Akbar, on the 40thyear (1595-96) of his rule revised the Mansabdari system thoroughly. He classified mansabdars under him in three categories. The basis of distinction was how many cavalymen really a mansabdar keep as against his rank in the army. From this time the rank of "Sawar" was separated from his Zat rank. From the next year the two-ranks "Zat and Sawar" were settled permanently.

MADE OF PAYMENT

On the basis of the dual positions of a mansabdar(zat and sawar)the amount of his claims were determined. His "zat" would indicate his personal salary. His "sawar" rank would determine how much he would be paid from the royal seoffer for maintenance of horses and soldiers. According to Moreland, the payment to a "sawar" was standardized from 1595 itself. It was 960 dam per sawar per annum. But prof. Irfhan Habib has raised Questions against this view. According to him, it such a simple equation was existent. Abul Fazal must have mentioned it. Rather, the opposite was true. The processes of payment to sawars were calculated in a very complex manner which is a follows. In the first, when a men was given "sawar" rank a national amount of payment was fixed for him. This rate was called "Barabardi" and it existed on ledgers only. For Irani and Turani mansabdars this rate was 12000 dams and 9600 dams for Indian mansabdars per sawar per annum in the next stage the generals would muster their horses and horsemen soldiers before the "Bakshi" for inspection.

RANK OF MANSABDAR

The "Bakshi" then would evaluate afresh his emolument on the basis of the class and condition of the horses maintained by him. Yak aspa or the sawari of one horse would get Rs- 12- Rs 25 according to their soldiers. But this amount was 15 for the revenue collectors of the emperors "khas" or khalisa land. Du- aspa or sawari of two houses and "shi- aspa or Sawars of three horses were, perhaps, paid more than "yaks aspa, sawars. On this stage after a physical verification of sawars and horses. If it was found satisfactory, any mansabdar could claim much more amount of money then the primary "barabardi" rate. It is to be noted here that Akbar, at the 40thyear of his rate. As a result of this change, we can find a standard rate of 9600 dam per annum for the Yak- aspa soldiers. This rate was much lesser than the previous one. This new rate was changeable too. The Mansabdars where payments made according to "Barabardi" rate would seldom keep soldiers and horses at per with their ranks and this was not expected too.

APPOINTMENT OF MANSABDARS

The Emperor was the sole appointing authority of a mansabdar. The general practice in this regard was that the Mir Bakshi would make a list of applicants and present it before the Emperor for selection. The Emperor would hold an interview with the persons seeking appointment. On the basis of this the Emperor would select a few names and that would be recorded by the Diwan and the Mir Bakshi. Then the Wazir make appointment letters for the Mansabdars and would again ratify then by the Emperor for the second time. After wards these appointment letters were sent under sealed cover as "foreman" to the selected mansabdars .Though the Emperor was the final authority about appointing a mansabdar, he would sometimes, entertain recommendations of the princess or the Wazir. If necessary the Emperor, without showing any cause could degrade or discharge a mansabdar. Thus, happened if a mansabdar would fail in his duties or should signs of disloyalty to the Emperor.

GRADES OF MANSADAR

Abul Fazal mentions 66 grades of mansabdari the Ain, but virtually 33 grades are found in all. The gradations were made on the basis of number soldiers under a mansabdar. The lowest grade was often men and the highest was 5000 men. Mansabs of 7000, and 10000 were special grades and were reserved for the princes of the royal family although we confind some exceptions in the cases of Man Singha, Todamol and Qulich Khan who enjoyed 7000 mansabs by don'ts of their exceptional services to the Emperor. Officers below the grade of 500 were called mansabdars; from 500 to 2500 Zat holders were called "Amirs" and men enjoying even higher



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grades than Amirs were called “Amir - i- umda “ ; But in general all these grades were included under the common title “ mansabdar “ .There was no hard and fast rule of promotion and gradation of mansabdars. Anyone could ascend to the highest point of the hierarchy by showing his worth to the Emperor. Sometimes an exceptionally competent mansabdar, who pleased the Emperor by loyal and devoted services, was given an abnormally high lift. So, it was not necessary for mansabdar, to pass through various grades in order to reach a very high place. The Mansabdars rank was not hereditary. After the death of a mansabdar his title and “Jagir “went back to the state.

THREE GRADES OF MANSABDAR

There were further classifications of the grades of mansabdar. Every of mansab of 500 and below comprised three grades viz, first grade, second grade, and third grade. A mansabdar belonged to the first grade of a particular rank if his sawar rank was the same as his zat rank. It, on the other hand, his sawar rank was less than his zat rank but did not fall below half that of the latter, he belonged to the second grade in that rank. But, if his sawar rank was less than half of his zat rank or he had no sawar rank at all, he belonged to the third grade in the rank. For example, a mansabdar of 5000 zat belonged to the first grade in the rank if his sawar rank was also 5000. He belonged to the second grade if his zat rank was 5000 and sawar rank 2500. And if his zat rank was 5000 and rank was less than 2500, he belonged to the third grade. This rule was applicable for all mansabs.

DUTIES OF MANSABDARS

The Mansabdars had to join the Emperor’s forces and help him with men and auxiliaries in times of war. They were belonged to their own race or tribe. Most of the Mansabdars were foreign Turks, Persians and Afghans and local Rajputs: we’re same Arabs and men of other nationalities. The number of Indian Muslims (Shekh Jadas) holding high ranks was small. The Mansabdars were required to purchase their horses and equipment; but sometimes these were supplied by the government. Each mansabdar had to defray the cost of his establishment and the salary of his troops. His salary even after deducting the cost of establishment was very handsome. A mansabdar of 100 zat would get Rs 500, a 1000 zat 4400 and a mansabdar of 5000 Zat’s monthly salary was Rs 30000.

Besides the mansabdar troops there were ‘Dakhili ‘and ‘Ahadi’ troops. Some Mansabdars commanded Dakhili troops which were recruited by the state and the mansabdar would get salary from the state. Ahadis were special troops conducted by an amir. They were very efficient and loyal and were paid higher salaries.

SOME SPECIAL FACTURES OF THE MANSABDARI SYSTEM

The Emperor was the sole appointing authority of a mansabdar. During the Mughal Period, officers both civil and military held mansabs . They were frequently transferred from one place to other and from one branch of service to another. All imperial officers, except, perhaps the Quiz’s and the sadars were enrolled as members of the mansabdari system and were required to maintain some troops proportionate to their ranks. The distinction between military and civil service was non – existent during the Mughal Period. As is seen in the cases of Man singha – chiefly a general being made Governor of Orissa,or Todarmal – chiefly a man of accounts being sent to lead the expedition to Gujarat. A Mansabdar’s zat or sawar rank would not also indicate his position in the Imperial court. Abul Fazal, the wise minister and friend of Akbar held very responsible position in the court, But his salary was much less than that of a class I mansabdar of 5000. On the other hand Man singha a very able general and mansabdar of 7000 was never a minister of Akbar’s a court.

Nature and composition of the system

The Nature and composition of mughal aristocracy was combination and amalgamation of different and varied races. The Mansabdars were recruited from amongst Iranis, Turanis, chaghtainobles – who came along with Babur and followers of Humayun. There were Uzbegs, Afghans who were not locals proper yet not out siders. Akbar struck a balance amongst the local Sheik Jadasand Hindu Rajputs. In his times and latter too, whenever any racial or provincial section of people grew into power and became a potential danger or trouble for the Emperor, efforts were made to bring them under the Mansabdari fold and to give them military or administrative posts. Thus, they become officers under the imperial service. It was obvious that these various groups of races and religions should have their own coteries and fractions who were at deggers drawn with nobles whom they hated. But Akbar was able to keep balance amongst these heterogeneous members of his officers so brilliantly that he had not to depend on a special or particular class of Mansabdar in times of need.



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MERITS OF THE MANSABDARI SYSTEM

The mansabdari system was the next systematic and progressive system adopted by Akbar to re-organise his armies within the fold of despotic monarchy, the like of which had never been contemplated by any other Indian ruler.

1. This system tried to establish a link between chieftainship and feudalism.
2. A system of mansabdari freed the Emperor from the grips of the feudal lords as it put an end to the Jagirdari system.
3. The post of the mansabdar was not hereditary; hence every new mansabdar received his mansab from emperor.
4. The promotion and demotion of mansabdar depended on the mercy of emperor, hence he had to be faithful and devoted to the emperor.
5. It lessened the chances of revolt in the empire.
6. Akbar also sought the help of his hereditary martial elements and brave citizens to join the royal army and he, thus, contributed to the political unification of the country.

DEMERITS OF MANSABDARI SYSTEM

The mansabdari system comprised all departments of the government- “the army, the peerage and the Civil administration rolled in one “This system operated wonderfully in the hands of Akbar. But subsequently, when the number of mansabdars increased during the reigns of Jahangir, Shah Jahan, vices corruption began to erode the system.

1. Besides these merits, there were also certain demerits of the mansabdari system. As most of the Mansabdars were foreigners, they did not have any love towards Indian empire.
2. Akbar failed to organize a national army with the help of these mansabdars.
3. The soldiers were recruited by the Mansabdars and they received their salary and promotion from the Mansabdars, they remained loyal to their masters instead of the Mughal Empire.
4. The central army remained weak as the soldiers of the mansabdars had different trainings of arms and discipline with their mansabdars.
5. Corruption in high ranking military officers also adversely affected the army discipline and brought decay and downfall of the Mughal empire.

FINDINGS

1. The mansabdari system was the next systematic and progressive system adapted by Akbar to re-organise his armies within the fold of despotic monarchy, the like of which had never been contemplated by any other Indian ruler.
2. The mansabdari system comprised all of the government “the army, the peerage and the Civil administration rolled in one “. This system operated wonderfully in the hands of Akbar.
3. The mansabdari system fully utilized the troops supplied by the vassal chiefs, nevertheless the Mughal emperor had no longer to depend exclusively on the mercenaries of the feudal lords because the mansabdari system put an end to the Jagirdari system within the territories under the direct control of the imperial government.
4. This system did not give birth to a national army.
5. The two major defects of the system stood in the way of modernization of the Mughal army, i) the non –regimentation of the army, ii) the hesitation on the part of the imperial government to recruit all the soldiers of the mansabdars.
6. No uniform rules were prescribed for systematic training of the soldiers or for the conduct of regular drill or physical exercise to keep them fighting fit.
7. The soldiers under mansabdars were loyal to their employers and not to the emperor.
8. The “escheat “system did not allow the nobility to evolve into a responsible aristocratic force resisting tyranny of emperors.
9. The mansab was not hereditary and it automatically lapsed after the death or dismissal of the mansabdar.

The Jagirdars were **by nature transferable and no mansabdar were** allowed to retain the same Jagir for a long period.

CONCLUSION

A part from the Mansabdars, Akbar also had group of special soldiers and artillery called shades. The entire army was divided into the cavalry infantry, elephant’s artillery and a navy. The ruler of the Emperor was the Supreme commander of the military. The mansabdari system introduced certain irregularities into the army structure- mansab in the Mughal Period did not keep the requisite number of men and horses and therefore amassed a large sum. Military high- rank commanders, such as Amir - ul- Umra and Khan - i- Jahan, drunkenly stumbled on money and lived a pleasant and lavish existence. Their demoralization harmed army discipline and accelerated the determination and demise of the Mughal empire.



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Akbar had a track of unbeaten campaigns that consolidated Mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent. Akbar's skillful structural and organizational calibration of the Mughal army was the foundation of this military prowess authority. The mansabdari system in particular, has been lauded for its role preserving Mughal power during Akbar's reign. The system survived with few changes until the end of the Mughal empire, but it was gradually wakened by his successors.

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