CHAPTER VI

THE MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER WORKS

A historiographic review of the administrative system of the Mughals is of more than academic interest. Apart from being the pivot of the stability of the Empire in its palmy days, it served as a model for the various native kingdoms not directly administered by the Mughal Emperors. In many ways it formed the substructure of the British-Indian administrative edifice. Its impact can be seen in some of the administrative practices prevalent in the contemporary India. Naturally, Mughal administration

1 J.N. Sarkar, Mughal Administration, 4th edition, M.C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1952, pp. 2-3. "Even a staunch champion of Hindu Orthodoxy like Shivaji at first copied it in Maharashtra and it was only later in life that he made a deliberate attempt to give a Hindu colour to his administrative machinery by substituting Sanskrit titles for Persian ones at his court... when in the late 18th century a band of English merchants and clerks were unexpectedly called upon to govern a strange land and an alien race, they very naturally took over the Mughal system than prevailing among the people... the administration (under the British) has again and again departed from its Mughal original... but the new has been built upon the old, our present has its roots in our past".
as a subject of study has drawn considerable attention of historians. However, the nature of work done on the subject is specialised and limited in scope and chronology.  

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Jadunath Sarkar was the first in the field so far as the 'study of the mansion and not merely describing its bricks' goes. His pioneering monograph *Mughal Administration* grew out of his 12 lectures on the subject at the Patna University in the years 1920-21. Though not as monumental as his works on Aurangzeb, Shivaji or fall of the Mughal empire, it was the first of its kind as a comprehensive study despite the limitations the historian imposed on himself on the topics of organization of the army and land revenue. In the subsequent editions it had been minutely corrected, considerably rewritten and amplified with four new chapters.

Studies in Mughal India (1919) and editorial work of

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3 I.H. Qureshi's assertion (*The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, p. 20) that J.N. Sarkar's *Mughal Administration* 'fails to give the reader any insight into the logic of the administrative organization ... it describes as if it were, bricks, rather than the building' after a study of the work is not justified. More than anything else it brings forth the logic and spirit of administration under the Mughals, even if one may like to interpret it differently.

Ain-i-Akbari, Vols. II & III of the Bibliotheca Indica Series (1948-1950) also contributed to the subject substantially.  

The Mughal Administration presented basically a 'combination of Indian and extra Indian elements; or more correctly it was the Perso-Arabic system in Indian setting'.

The Quranic law recognized the sovereign as commander of the true believers and responsible to the general body (Jamait) of the Muslims. There was no constitutional machinery to check his powers, though in practice he could be restrained by the fear of the Muslim soldier or the fear of incurring social odium. So long he was not deposed by a successful rebellion or by the verdict of the Quranic law, issued by the Ulama, his power was supreme as the head of the Church and the State alike. His ministers, in charge of different central departments, at best could influence his policy by 'arts of gentle persuasion and veiled warning'.

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6 Ibid., p. 5.

7 For details on Central Government, J.N. Sarkar's Mughal Administration, pp. 16-54.
A 'centralized despotism', it was essentially a 'military state'. The administrative system in the Mughal Provinces was 'an exact miniature of the central government'. The villages and small towns of the empire enjoyed, 'parochial self-government rather than local autonomy' in absence of the essentials of political freedom and power of self-taxation. In the 'most traditional and conservative branch of government activity in India' - land revenue administration, the Mughals 'retained the Hindu revenue system intact' as regards procedure but applied to it the 'theory of the Canon Law of Islam'. The administration of law and justice was based on the practices of older Islamic States outside India and here the Mughal Government the 'weakest and least capable of improvement and expansion with time'.

A notable feature as regards the Mughal nobility 'escheat' of property lands held on service tenure as well as their personal property was perhaps based on 'the Quranic law of the sacredness of private property, superimposed upon an

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8 Ibid., p. 55.
9 Ibid., p. 13.
10 Ibid., p. 8.
11 Ibid., p. 153.
older alien institution, namely the communal ownership of
all property among a nomadic tribe*. It was practised to
settle the noble's accounts with the government, who under
the system received advance of money (Musaidat) and
materials (ainas) and the accounts were hardly ever
settled in the life-time of a noble. The escheat was
'Provisional' or Pendentefike and it was 'unhistoric to
suppose that these escheats were originally due to a wicked
desire of the autocratic sovereign to seize his subjects'
rightful property when they were no longer alive to defend
it'. Its practical effect however, was 'most harmful' it

12 Ibid., p. 153.

13 Ibid., pp.148,154 - 'There was no nobleman who was not a
servant of the State, a holder of mansab or rank in the
army. He received advance of money and materials or other
payment on account from the Public Treasury and his
business was to achieve fresh gains for the state by
employing these means, and in the end, he was to be rewarded
by his grateful employer with a share of the profits.
Therefore, all his acquisitions were legally bound to
revert to the State... military accounts, especially in an
age when wars were frequent... took many years to be
written up and audited... again the exact salary earned by
a general could be ascertained only after he had brought
his contingent to the muster'.

14 Ibid., p. 155.
not only led to 'material waste and moral degeneration of the highest class in society', the political effect was even more disastrous. 'It prevented India from having one of the strongest safeguards of public liberty and checks on royal autocracy, namely an independent hereditary peerage whose position and wealth did not depend on the king's favour in every generation... it made the Mughal nobility a selfish band, prompt in deserting to the winning side in every war of succession or foreign invasion, because they knew that their lands and even personal property were not legally assured to them, but depended solely on the pleasure of the king de-facto'.

The Mughal state declined more often than not, any of the 'socialistic' functions associated with a state presently. What was worse, the Mughal emperor being the head of both Church and State to his Muslim subjects only, with the exception of Akbar discharged the 'socialistic' functions for the Muslim subjects, whereas towards the non-Muslim subjects the 'policy of individualistic minimum of interference' was followed. Encouragement of art,

16 Ibid., p. 4. The support of public education was not a duty of the State - indeed it was recognised as a national duty even in England as late as 1870.
17 Ibid.
literature and education was hence a 'purely personal matter with the king', the vast majority of non-Muslim subjects was outside the pale of state charity.  

In the summing up, the legacy of the Mughal Government, the empire at its greatest, governed more area of the country than ever done under any earlier empire in the country. It provided political unity for nearly two hundred years (1556-1748) and gave 'oneness of official language, administrative system and also a popular lingua franca for all classes except the Hindu priests and the stationary village folk'. Other contributions of the rule, which were already started by the preceding Muhammadan dynasties, were the continuation of contact with the outside world, that had been lost after the decline of

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18 J.N. Sarkar, Mughal Administration, pp. 143-144. 'In Mughal India as in medieval Europe, education was a branch of religion and the educational expenditure of the State was defrayed out of the Alms Fund and through the hands of the imperial Almoner (Sadar-us-sadur) the vast non-Muslim population was outside the pale of State charity'. A farman of the earlier part of Aurangzib's reign illustrates this arrangement (Mirat-i-Ahmadi, I. 258). He instructs the diwan of Gujrat that every year teachers should be appointed at the cost of the state and stipends paid to the students according to the recommendation of the Sadar or the province... the money was to be paid out of the public treasury. The grant was very small, as we read of only three mamlavis being appointed, one at Ahmadabad, one at Patan and a third at Surat and only 45 students enjoying the subsistence allowance.

19 Ibid., p. 228.
Buddhism in India. Internal peace and stability also led to the improvement of civilization in general, revival of monothelism in Hinduism and the example of Islamic society acted as a solvent on Hindu prejudices. Another outstanding gift was that of historical literature, improvements in the art of war, which the Mughals had borrowed from Europe through Turkey and to some extent through Persia.

From the political and administrative stability of two centuries of Mughal government, the Islamic influence on the upper classes of Hindus in many social spheres like etiquette, dress, food and literature became deeper still, though the masses in the villages remained practically unaffected by it. In the domain of architecture, the

20 J.N.Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 230. Though the passes of the Afghan frontier, the stream of population and trade flowed peacefully into India from Bukhara and Samargand, Balkh and Khurasan, Khwarizm and Persia, because Afghanistan belonged to the ruler of Delhi, till near the end of the Mughal empire.

21 J.N.Sarkar, India Through the Ages, pp. 42-43. 'Gifts of the Muslim Age to India' referred to also by J.N.Sarkar in 'Achievements and Failures of Mughal Rule', Mughal Administration, p. 228.

22 J.N.Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 232.

23 Ibid., pp. 229-230, 243.

24 Ibid., p. 233.
Mughals further improved and evolved the Muslim contributions - the semi circular radiating arch, the vaulted dome and the geometrically laid out gardens. In fine arts, the most outstanding contribution of the Mughals was the Indo-Saracen School of Painting. This School still holds the field under the name of 'Mughal Painting', the so called Rajput School is only the Mughal or Indo-Saracen style with Hindu mythological or epic subjects.

Hence, 'Muslim rule in general and the Mughal empire in particular achieved many things great and good for medieval India'. However, by the 18th century, the Mughal civilization was like a 'spent bullet', fall of the empire with or without Nadir Shah or Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasions, was 'only a question of time'. If on the one hand, the degeneration of Muhammadans, with lapse of time

25 J.N. Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 234.

26 Ibid., pp.233-234; Studies in Mughal India, pp.290-291. The Mughals introduced Chinese painting by way of Bukhara and Khurasan and at the court of Akbar this art mingled with the indigenous Hindu painting of which traditions still lingered amidst neglect and poverty. The result of the fusion was that the Chinese characteristics were rapidly dropped and a purely Indian appearance was given to paintings marked by undeniable foreign technique. Thus, in painting there was a true revival of the highest genius was displayed by the artists in this field in the Mughal age.

27 J.N. Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 242.
on the Indian soil was complete, the 'natural growth' of Hindus except during Akbar's reign was also checked.\textsuperscript{28}

Moreover, the Mughal monarchy like other oriental monarchies 'depended on the personality of the sovereign and of the ruling minority.' The progressive deterioration in the ruling families could not be checked by infusion of new blood 'either from among mass of the local people or from the thinned stream of foreign immigrants'.\textsuperscript{29} The fatal defect of the Mughal rule, despite its glories was its failure 'to build a nation or a homogeneous state', its failure to follow 'the first principle of political science' that 'there cannot be a great empire without a great people', the mass of the people remained 'human sheep',\textsuperscript{30} as was to be proved when they confronted the 'handful of Britishers' who had the 'enormous reservoir of the British democracy with all its collective talent and resources'. Islam has 'all the strength and weakness of a strictly dogmatic creed', in all lands it led its followers 'to succeed upto a certain point', while progress is the 'law of the living world'. The British conquest of the Mughal empire was 'an illustration of progressive races replacing the conservative ones'.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{28}J.N. Sarkar, \textit{Mughal Administration}, pp. 238-245.
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., p. 243.
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., pp. 243.
\textsuperscript{31}Ibid., p. 244.
It was nearly thirty years after Sarkar that another comprehensive work on the subject appeared. Sri Ram Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration* (1951) aimed at presenting a systematic study of the Mughal administration 'during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' (1526-1707). The author owed in more than one respect to his predecessor on the subject.\(^{32}\)

The Mughal State was a theocracy, in a very limited sense, for there was no independent religious head.\(^{33}\) If Babur, Humanyun and Aurangzib were 'inspired by the current notions of Muslim law', Akbar, Jahangir and to a lesser extent Shahjahan formulated or followed politics otherwise.\(^{34}\)

The Mughal government was then 'a despotism but of a peculiar brand... The Mughal rulers made few laws of their own and did not

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\(^{32}\)Sri Ram Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, Hind Kitab, Bombay, 1951, Preface, viii. "Above all I am thankful to the doyen of Indian historians Dr. J.N. Sarkar, for his unfailing assistance. He placed his unrivalled collection of books and MSS on Mughal India at my disposal whenever I asked for such assistance. He was generous enough to allow me access to his notes and some of his then unpublished material occasionally. But for his help my studies would not have borne much fruit".

\(^{33}\)Sri Ram Sharma, *Mughal Government and Administration*, p. 18. "Islam recognises no Pope infallible in his interpretation of law. The Sadr was more a Chief Justice than a Pope or an Archbishop. The King had no higher right to interpret Islam than the meanest of his subjects".

\(^{34}\)Ibid., pp. 18-20.
claim to do so. A prominent feature of the Hadis that laid the right of the faithful to elect their own rulers, but left 'election vaguely in the air', was that 'no muslim ruler could even claim that he held authority in his dominion by law... successful rebellion created a title at law as valid as that it replaced, a disintegrating principle that led to dire results. Though Akbar's manifold military reforms and the fact of Hindu armies being inferior in organization, contributed to its success in its time and place in India 'even the original organization of the Mughal army was defective'. Although it became customary to speak of the Mughal 'nobles', they were nobles if the present day Indian administrative service officers under different categories could be called nobles.

Mughal administration of justice presented 'a rather complicated picture', following the law of Islamic jurisprudence 'crime was not considered a social offence'.

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35 Ibid., p. 24. "Hence there was no accepted law of succession... every ruler's authority was personal, and valid only as long as he could enforce it".

36 Ibid., p. 25.

37 Ibid., p. 113.

38 Ibid., pp. 208, 221. 'Crime was therefore a private affair - a thing between the offender, his God, his ruler or the injured party... Murder was an affair between the relatives of the murdered man and the murderer... rightful heir of the deceased could kill the murderer himself even without a trial... blood money was sometimes demanded and paid".
Whenever the emperors were apprised of any misconduct, even of their own public servants, they exerted to deal appropriately with the offenders, access to them, however was not always easy. In the religious offences were included marriages between Muslims and Hindus, heresy, apostasy, blasphemy. During the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, listening to music and manufacture of toys representing animate beings, were also added to the above category. Hindus under Aurangzeb could be punished also for 'dressing decently and riding good horses'. The law provided the 'Hindus and the Shiias no protection against blasphemy'.

Akbar treaded new paths in administration and the system devised by him, was successful for about 150 years. Aurangzeb withdrew many of the administrative checks and his multiple governorships, combining of various offices originally intended to be mutually exclusive,

39 Ibid., p. 209. "Even with Jahangir's golden Chain of Justice, which incidentally, could have afforded relief, if any - to the injured persons only in the capital, where the golden chain was installed".

40 S.R. Sharma, Mughal Government and Administration, p. 220. 'Blasphemy could take two forms, oral or written, and both, when proved, were severely punished. Hindus and Shiias were usually held guilty of this offence, though very often it was provoked by similarly offensive language used towards their own religious beliefs'.

41 Ibid., pp. 237-247.
cessation of imperial tours in the empire during the latter half of the reign, and the provincial governors 'playing the emperor in miniature', all combined with other factors leading to the disintegration of the empire, that had been a reality for more than a century and a half. Mughal administrative institutions and practices continued and some still linger on. The administrative legacy of the Mughals, was besides, the legacy of the age too.42

I.H.Qureshi's, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire* is 'intended to be a companion volume' to his earlier work: *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* (1942) and has indeed the author's known characteristics, i.e. his "strongly communal approach" and his treatment of "the Delhi Sultanate as a welfare state," the Muslim community in medieval India as a nation" and "his belief that the Muslims in medieval India more than satisfied modern ideas of tolerance, benevolence and efficiency",43 are the impressions continued in the 'companion volume' too.

42Ibid., pp. 273-281.

43P.Hardy, "Modern Muslim Historical Writing on Medieval Muslim India", *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon*, ed. C.H.Philips, p. 302.
I.H. Qureshi, *The Administration of the Mughal Empire* (1966), covering the period 1556-1707 was certainly not superfluous when it sought to 'bring out the logical co-relation among different institutions' to present a comprehensive picture of the administration and to discuss 'a number of controversial problems'. Yet the work is conspicuous by the effort to defend orthodox Islam in the field of administration. In the author's statement that 'Islam takes a comprehensive view of life and does not separate politics from religion', the word administration could well replace the word politics and is evident in the 'integrated picture' of Mughal administration drawn. His inferences are evidently coloured to praise everything conforming to orthodox Islam and at times self-contradictory.

46 *Ibid.*, p.6. "Because of his (Akbar's) policies, heterodox and non-Muslim elements of the population gained an ascendancy far which the Muslims had to pay a stupendous penalty. All the waywardness that he had shown in his youth, now concentrated itself in his religious beliefs and his own views were so confused and contradictory that they do little credit to him. The public and political results of these views were destructive in the extreme. In other fields the reign was remarkable because, through the prosperity that good administration brought in its wake, rapid strides were made in the field of culture".
The emperor 'legally looked upon as Caliph as well', could however, ally himself with the non-muslim majority, and 'escape retribution' for 'cold shouldering the Islamic law'. At the same time the Mughal emperor was the 'Paternal figure' whose duty it was to 'safeguard the weak and to avenge the persecuted'.

No wonder a group of Hindus would not touch food or go about their daily work without seeing the emperor 'at the Jharokha Darshan' and that the fashion of 'painting Mughal rule in lurid colours started much later... and the Hindu masses were affected by the propaganda of virulent Hindu communal organisations'. The imposition of Jiziyah which 'took away from the poor man the full value of one years food as the price of religious indulgence', was

47 I.H. Qureshi, The Administration of the Mughal Empire. PP. 248-249.

48 Ibid., pp.249-250. The author, however also records (p.9 'Introductory'), 'The ambitious Shiva Ji, the son of a trusted noble of the Bijapur court, found brigandage and rebellion more profitable than service of the state. This was the beginning of the avalanche that destroyed the Mughal Empire'.

49 See J.N. Sarkar's History of Aurangzeb. Vol.III, pp.176-177, 180. The rates of taxation were fixed at 12, 24 and 48 dirhams a year on Rs.3 1/3, Rs.6 2/3 and Rs.13 1/3... It could never be less than Rs.3½ on a man, which was the money value of nine maunds of wheat flour at the average market price at the end of the 16th century (Ain, 63)... p.180 even from a province like Gujrat with a large Muhammadan population (Mirat-i-Ahmadi, 314), it meant a gross income of 5 lakhs of Rupees a year.
according to I.H. Qureshi, 'A political measure' and 'insignificant' as a source of income. The Mughals had not only sound tradition of financial administration, 'the best organized branch of the Mughal government was 'its agrarian administration', the brilliance of the empire was built on the happiness and contentment of the peasant. The Mughal administration was no less renowned for its dispensation of justice. The Mughals besides established 'a high standard of 'religious tolerance'. Akbar's heterodoxy however led to 'the eclipse of Islam' and the weakening of its hold upon the polity. The empire was a 'culture state'. It rested on 'benevolence, justice and good government', it fell because of 'the intrinsic weakness of its military machine and organization'. The Mughals had a 'progressive outlook', but 'failed to adapt their methods to new situations'.

50 I.H. Qureshi, The Administration of the Mughal Empire, p. 142.
51 Ibid., pp. 140, 161, 179.
52 Ibid., pp. 255-260.
53 Ibid., pp. 139-255.
The latest on the subject as a general study, U.N. Day, *The Mughal Government* (1970), gathers fruits of researches 'in the field by various scholars'. It has a value all its own of weaving it into an integrated study while final verdict in history, according to the author is 'after all, only a fallacy'. The work however, does not confine itself merely to present a co-ordinated account of other works on the subject, the author's own contribution - his observations, agreement or difference of opinion with the other contributors in the field, based on study of 'original source material' amply distinguishes it from a work of mere compilation.

Hence while the monarchical government of the Mughals that was properly organized during the half a century reign of Akbar, too failed to evolve a law of succession and therefore, the bane of unnecessary bloodshed, the incidents of 1658, are better described as 'The Great Rebellion' rather than 'War of Succession' for Aurangzeb's accession was an 'act of usurpation and not a succession to a vacant throne'. The Mughal emperors exerted themselves

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for proper administration of justice all over the empire but they could not introduce any reform in Law, either by way of codifying it to make it more definite or by way of its application. The Fatava-i-Alamgiri considered as the code of Aurangsib, being merely a compilation based on the Quran and the most favoured Hadis. The State could not introduce any substantial reform to recognize murder as an offence for which state could take action at its own initiative to protect those who had 'not the means of seeking redress', perhaps because 'the domination of the Ulema and the dictates of their own conscience as Muslims' the Mughal emperors had to accept the Islamic traditions of Arabia. As regards the fiscal and revenue administration, 'the entire set up was geared to protect the interests of the Emperor rather than the good of the masses that provided for his luxury'. The Indian cultivator, after he paid in shape of revenue and other rural dues was left with 'just enough to subsist'. The mainstay of the administration, the Mughal nobility was 'not permitted to take roots in the soil', no wonder their main interest remained one of 'self aggrandisement, promotion and acquisition of means of ease and comfort'.

57 Ibid., p. xv.
59 Ibid., x.
60 Ibid.
and they could develop loyalty neither to the crown nor to the country. 61

In the final assessment, however, one could neither overlook the age to which the Mughals belonged, nor the 'blessings' of political unity and stability, the 'prosperity' irrespective of general poverty of masses. There was 'an overall' progress in the field of cultural too, specimens of literature, painting, architecture and music patronised by Mughal kings and nobility have survived to form major legacy of the Mughal rule. 62

Jadunath Sarkar's pioneering work on Mughal administration ran into four editions and remained the sole work of kind till 1951. The 'model of condensation without the sacrifice of clarity', 63, has in recent years led to mixed reaction from some of the writers and scholars on the subject. Honest differences of opinions apart, 64 many of the

61 Ibid., xii.
64 e.g. as against J.N. Sarkar's use of the word 'theocracy' some scholars (I.H. Qureshi, Administration of the Sultanates of Delhi, pp. 42-44) prefer to call the Mughal Government 'theocentric' with the exception of Akbar's reign, it was theocracy, more than anything else, as also borne out by Zakhira-ul-Maluk by Shaikh Hamdani, (quoted by R.C. Majumdar, The Delhi Sultanates, Vol.VI, pp. 618-624 of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1960.)
Observations appear unwarranted after a close study of the historian's Mughal Administration and allied works on the subject, for example B.R. Grover's, 'Sarkar and Moreland on Mughal Land Revenue Administration' is hardly justified as a comparative study by 'an Indian professional historian and an English Civil servant developed into a historian', when Jadunath Sarkar had clarified that in his chapters on land revenue, he confined himself, only to supply additional information from manuscripts unknown to Moreland, the rest having been covered by the British historian. Hence if 'Sarkar's translation and published commentaries (commentaries are not Sarkar's) on the farmans have been accepted by the later scholars without any further screening of the problem, the responsibility of it rests with the latter. Similarly

"Modern European writers have studied only two departments of the Mughal administration in detail, namely the land revenue and the army. Much information on these two subjects is available in English. I shall therefore, deal with the army department briefly in this book, and as for the land-revenue confine myself to supplying additional information from manuscripts to my predecessors".

I.H.Qureshi's charges regarding the scope of Jadunath Sarkar's *Mughal Administration* and his comment on the historian's knowledge of Persian at best reflect assertion and boldness respectively. These can perhaps be best dealt the way Gibbon vindicated some of the passages of his work. The historian is not there to do it, if at all he would have cared to do so. I.H.Qureshi while making the statement that Sir Jadunath "was handicapped by his lack of knowledge of Persian" and that "he relied mostly on translations or the renderings of his munshis" does not appear to have been aware of the historian's outstanding

67 i.e. I.H.Qureshi's view *The Administration of the Mughal Empire*, p. 20 that "it describes as if it were, bricks rather than the building" is hardly sustained after a study of J.N.Sarkar's *Mughal Administration*, more than anything else it underlines the nature and spirit of the administration though the 'description of the building' is quite different from the one narrated by I.H.Qureshi.

contribution in the particular respect. Similarly Wahed Husain's charge as regards Jadunath Sarkar's description of the Muhtasib remains 'reckless' in the absence of

69 See S.R.Tikakar's On Historiography, Bombay, p.21; K.R. Guamgo, "Jadunath Sarkar as a Historian", Life and Letters, p.38, G.S.Sardesai, "Jadunath Sarkar As I Know Him", Life and Letters, p.23; A.L.Srivastava, "Historian Jadunath Sarkar", Studies in Indian History, Agra, 1974, pp.300-361; S.M.Hasan's "J.N.Sarkar's Collection of Persian Manuscripts", Bengal Past and Present, January-June, 1971, Vol.XC, Part I, Serial No.169, pp.118-120. "Serious research in Mughal history is not possible without consulting the original sources which are mostly in Persian. Jadunath Sarkar was aware of this position. He learnt Persian with the help of a Munshi and to keep it up he used to copy down the texts... his collection of Persian MSS. possesses quite a few copies in his own hand. Tarikh Shah-Shu'ail is entirely in his own hand. J.N.Sarkar translated into English many Persian manuscripts and letters - almost all important ones that he came across and these also appeared in journals. He translated Akhran-i- Alamgiri or Letters of Humaydun Khan, into English in 1912, published from Calcutta. A condensed English translation of Ahval-i-Karana-i-Sha'ia Shiva Khan appeared in June 1934 issue of the Indian Historical Quarterly. His translation of Ahval-i-Najibuddinul by Munshi Biharlal was published in the Islamic Culture (October, 1936). J.N.Sarkar was the first historian to introduce Baharistan-i-sha'ibi with full tables of its contents in the Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society for 1921-22. He also translated a portion of Chahar-masalan of Rai Chatraman in his India of Aurangzib (1901) - A condensed English translation of Tarikh-i-Shivaji appeared in the issues of Modern Review between February and November 1907. In the January issue of the same journal earlier, he published a translation of some letters of Shivaji to Aurangzib. History of Najibuddinul or Tarikh-i-Najibuddinul of Murad Khan was translated by him in the two issues of Islamic Culture, July 1933 and April 1934. Besides he translated 3 Persian MSS in "Bengal Nawabs" namely Azal-al-Hussaini Naib-i-Naqvi Khan, Karim Ali's Musafirnarnas and Yusuf Ali's Ahval-i-Mahabatian. His translations of Jibril Khan (Faqir Khairuddin), 1966; Tarikh-i-Shah Abbas (Hussain Lal), 1970 and Tarikh-i-Biltah (Shimshen Burhapuri) 1970, have been published by Maharasthra State Archives, Poona.

70 Wahed Husain, Administration of Justice During the Muslim Rule in India, p. 159.
his own evidence to contradict the historian's well documented description. P.Saran's complaint is that "The spirit underlying the work of Sir Jadunath (on Mughal Administration) betrays an unfortunate lack of sympathetic appreciation of the relative values of the medieval political institutions and environment in which they grew. Consequently the conclusions that have been drawn appear to be unfair and present an undeservedly dismal picture of the effects of the Mughal administration".  

Apart from the fact of limited scope of P.Saran's work that does not extend beyond 1658 and misses a significant phase of Mughal Administration (1658-1748) as regards its total impact, attention may also be drawn to Jadunath Sarkar's account of the gifts of the Muslim rule in general and of the Mughals in particular.

When it came to discussing the eventual failure of "Muslim rule in general, and the Mughal empire in particular (that) achieved many things great and good for medieval India",


73 J.N.Sarkar, Mughal Administration, p. 234.
the historian in the objectivity of judgement, did not mince words or soft paddle them. Some other unfair observations by the same author on the works of other historians including Jadunath Sarkar, on Mughal Administration have naturally not escaped unchallenged by an eminent historian of medieval India. 74

In the final analysis the value of Jadunath's pioneering work whether as "an excellent work on Mughal Administration which notwithstanding its brevity, still remains the standard work of reference on the subject"75, or

74 See A.L.Srivastava, "A Review Article", Studies in Indian History, Agra, 1974, pp.387-393. 'The impetuosity of the author's style (P.Saran's), his vituperative tone and one cannot help adding - his vilification of elder historians left a bad taste on the mind... overshadowing the merit of the book and also some of its other serious imperfections ... A vein of egotism and contempt for previous writers runs through the entire book and mars its value. A few examples of the attempt made to run down scholars of repute may be given here. V.Smith's views are described as 'thoroughly unsound and misleading' and those of Pant as 'thoroughly absurd and unscientific'. Ishwari Prasad had made 'confusion worse confounded' and we have Qamungo's 'absurd suggestion'. In finding fault with J.N.Sarkar's opinion that the duties of the Kotwal were too heavy for an average man. P.Saran says, "As regards the high moral qualities expected of him (Kotwal) which are the despair of Sir Jadunath, being as he says possible only for a perfect man".

as the work that "supplies materials for further study on the various aspects of the Mughal India history" is unmistakable.

Some of the other works of the historian, which he called 'short excursions' in the field of 'social and economic' history, not only present a brief and yet penetrating purview of the subject dealt, but also reveal the distinction he made between two types of research in 1957. First the general type, an exhaustive study of a king or a general and second 'studies of the supreme type' which (comparable to Bryce's Holy Roman Empire) "have not been produced in India as yet"... But works of this class alone will endure, they push human thought miles ahead.77

Among the other works of the historian, stand out his Studies in Mughal India (1919), Military History of India (1960), Economics of British India (1911), Chaitanya.

76 M.L. Roy Choudhury, The State and Religion in Mughal India, pp. 15-16.

His Pilgrimages and Teachings (1913) - afterwards published as Chaitanya's Life and Teachings, History of the Dashnami Sect, Vols. I and II and India Through the Ages (1928).

Studies in Mughal India contains 22 essays relating to different aspects of life under the Mughal empire of the emperors and the subjects, or topics of interest and value for the student of medieval Indian history. These essays have been aptly described as 'charming and authoritative, miniature ivory caskets of fine literacy workmanship.' While some of these demolish many of the popular misconceptions of those who regarded oriental kings as brainless and heartless despot by bringing out through depiction of daily life.


life of Mughal emperors, that they look a lively personal interest in the administration of justice and suppression of all organized crime such as piracy, robbery and official tyranny. The essay 'Oriental Monarchies' that brings out the essential differences between the oriental monarchies as well as the ganas or republics vis-a-vis their counterparts in the west, is thought provoking.

Essays like 'Education in Muhammadan India' and 'Education of a Muslim Prince' present an informative and interesting account of the subject; thus while the state had no

80 J.N. Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India, M.C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1919, p. 15. 'An Old Persian Manuscript of the India Office Library, London, after giving Shah Jahan's routine of work, addresses him in the following couplet:

Khalq sabuk dil ze giran bariyash

Fitna giran Khab ze bidariyash

"O King, thy subjects are light hearted because thou hast taken a heavy load on thy shoulders; Oppression has fallen into a deep sleep (in thy kingdom) because thou hast banished sleep from thy eyes"

And the praise was well deserved'.

81 Ibid., pp. 304-313.
department of education, it was 'a handmaid of religion' as it had been during the period of Hindu supremacy' and was a purely private matter. The essays 'The companion of an Empress' (Sati-un-nissa) and 'Zeb-un-nisa vindicated' give an idea of the noble and accomplished womanhood of Mughal India, as well as a picture of the inner life of the Mughal court of the period. The historian's service to the cause of truth and to the memory of the gifted poetess Zeb-un-nisa (the eldest daughter of Aurangzib) by a thorough scrutiny of history of the period and by the historian's demonstration of the falsity of her alleged illicit relation with Aqil Khan were duly appreciated.

It is however, the essay on 'Art in Muslim India' that one is struck by the deft handling of the subject by the sometimes so called 'political historian' — in the

82 Ibid., p. 299.

83 A Persian lady of noble birth, who entered the service of Mumtaz Mahal and soon with her ability, charm and literary accomplishments, was appointed princess Jahanara's tutoress and promoted above all the household servants. Entrusted with the Empress's seal, she was also the intermediary of Emperor's charity to women. After Mumtaz Mahal's death, as a reward of her loyal services, she was made Sadar or Superintendent of the harems and continued serving the Royal family till her death in 1647.

84 See Bombay Chronicle, 1919, referred to in p. 10 of Works of J.N.Sarkar attached to the Mughal Administration (2nd ed.), 1924.
brief and lively account of the development and contribution of Mughal architecture, painting, textile art, the jewellers and the goldsmith's arts, pottery and metal work - he is as much at home as he is as a biographer of Aurangzeb, and has the added critical acumen of an art historian. Thus, while the radiating arch was a gift of the Muslim rule to India, the Pathan architecture, represented by mosques, tombs, minarets and arched gateways, has a 'certain gloomy massive-ness and solidity' and 'elegance of finish, delicacy, and wealth of decoration to architecture' was provided by the Mughals. In the realm of painting, Akbar's age received great stimulus for the development of India-Saracen painting, while portrait painting achieved perfection by about the middle of the 17th century when 'fidelity to the living original was secured in a high degree and the colouring and drapery reached the perfection of delicacy'. The so-called 'Rajput School of Indian Painting' was not an indigenous Hindu product nor had it any natural connection with Rajputana, but a representation of the Indo-Saracen Mughal Painting at the courts of the vassal Hindu Rajahs of the

Mughal empire. No wonder the historian found in 'beautiful and genuinely old Indo-Saracen Hindu pictures', e.g. the elders of Mathura going out to meet Krishna, 'dressed and armed like Mughal courtiers', or Ram advancing to the conquest of Lanka with his army marching in 'exact divisions, with all the arms, equipment and transport of the Mughal imperial army artillery not left out!'. While a 'few strokes with a brush' could turn Ram of the scene into Akbar, Radha of the 'Rajput Paintings' is only a 'Mughal Noble lady at her toilet with fewer ornaments. 87 There is however, 'a certain crudeness - the use of staring colours, rigidity of outline and bareness of environment'. Indo-Saracen painting at the Mughal Court had a rapid decline after the reign of Shah Jahan and the attempted revival of it in the last quarter of the 18th century under the patronage of Nawabs of Oudh, on which European art began to exercise 'a fatal and dominating' influence - taste, conception and execution alike were affected. The portrait of Akbar with his Christian wife, described by Father Hosten is only a specimen of such a phase. 88 The last attempt to revive the Indo-Saracen painting made by Ranjit Singh is suggestive, "inspite of its elaborate prettiness",

87 J.N. Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India, p. 292.
88 Ibid., pp. 293-294.
of "the last gasp of an old and discarded horse suddenly
flogged into life." The 20th century attempt of 'belated
but pure' revival of the Indo-Saracen art, like the new
School of Indian Painting, that deliberately imitates the
Ajanta style, despite their charm 'cannot possibly cause
a new birth or development of living, growing Indo-Saracen
or Ajanta art', both lack the 'divine madness of the true
creative spirit - whom did the Ajanta painters consciously
imitate'? In a branch of sculpture - ivory carving -
perfection was attained in the Mughal Period and though the
art continued without any noticeable decay to the 20th
century, it is presently fast dying out for lack of patronage.
To the already developed textile art too, Mughal contribut-
ions were varied and distinct. The arts of jewellers and
goldsmiths too received great impetus, the Mughals patronised
these arts both from their natural love for things beautiful
and from the political necessity of reciprocating the
presents from others or as gifts of honour to foreign
dignitaries, courtiers and members of royal family. Inlaid
metal work, porcelains and heavily decorated brass and

89 Ibid., p. 295.
90J.N.Sarkar, Studies in Mughal India, pp. 294-295.
91 Ibid., pp. 296-297.
silver vessels too are a legacy of Muslim rule in general and of Mughal rule in particular and not of the Hindus whose religious prejudices often confined them either to use stone vessels or cheap clay pots and pans to be thrown away after use or metal vessels which have to be scrubbed daily.

The Military History of India, some chapters of which had been published in Hindustan Standard, came out in book form as his posthumous work in 1960. It is a study of the development of the Art of War in India and not a descriptive list of every battle that has been fought in our land. The work opens with a significant chapter on how geography dictates strategy and is followed by a masterly study of the evolution and development of the art of war in India beginning with Alexander's invasion in 327-26 B.C. down to the last battles fought by Wellington and Lake against the Marathas in 1803. In the depiction of battles, minute details topography, military strategy and progress of art of war, the historian's flair for the subject comes to the fore. Since his childhood days, Sarkar


had been an admirer of De-Jomini’s *Art of War*. In this work he established his reputation as ‘a military historian par-excellence’.

His ‘description of several decisive battles would do honour to Clausewitz’.

The historian’s presentation of some glimpses of religious history include two works on the subject. *A History of the Dashnami Naga Sanyasis* in two volumes and *Chaitanya’s Life and Teachings*. The first is the history of Dashnami Sect ‘of proto-historic ancestry, perhaps the most powerful monastic order which has played a great part in the history of India’. The historian in the work traces the

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a greatman of arms, experienced in the Napoleonic campaigns.


96 K.M. Munshi, Foreword, *A History of Dashnami Naga Sanyasis*. 'The cult of the Nagas, naked ascetics, has a proto-historic ancestry. It must have been formed when U.P. and Bihar were no more than swamps. The famous Mohanjodar seal depicting Pashupati and the later Lord Shiva sitting on Mount Kailash, besmeared with ashes is the appropriate guardian deity. The Vedas refer to the long haired ascetics and the Greeks, when they came with the Alexander, met the naked philosophers, the Gynosophists.
main course of their history, their past services and their present position. Concluding on the role of organization of the Dashnami Orders, the historian brings forth a significant parallel. "Europe has long debated the question as to how Christianity could convert the Roman empire. A century and a quarter after Gibbon's famous analysis of the causes of this marvellous success, English scholars have come to the conclusion that the early Christian Church by imitating the administrative organization of the Roman Empire, built up a system of work which no other religion had adopted and which made its conversion of the Roman world so easy and speedy... The entire course of Hindu life and thought after the age of Buddhism has been dominated by the influence of two intellectual giants (Shankracharya and Ramamuja) between them they have divided the empire of

On initiation, the Dashnami as the very name suggests, is given a name combined with one of the ten words: Gir, Puri, Bharati, Vam, Aranya, Parvat, Sagar, Tirth, Ashram, Ashram, Sarayati. The initiate has to make strict vows not to indulge in more than one meal a day, not to beg for food from more than seven houses, not to salute, not to praise, not to speak ill of anyone, not to bow to anyone but a Sanyasi of a higher order and to cover oneself only with a Bhagwa or brownish red cloth. The Dashnami are divided into two sections, the Shastanadharis, who specialise in sacred lore and the Astradheris who specialise in arms.
Hindu philosophy and religious organization... the organization of the Dashnami orders is the eternal monument to Shankaracharya's disciples who completed the great Master's mission on Earth". 98

In Chaitanya's Life and Teachings, Jadunath Sarkar presented a translation of biography of Chaitanya by Krishnadas Kaviraj Gowsamin, generally held to be the best of the four biographies of the saint in Bengali. 99 He also edited and supplemented it, a the major addition being on the effects of New Vaishnavism and its present position. The 'most authoritative and unvarnished' account of Chaitanya's wanderings and preachings was thus made available to the non-Bengali readers. 100 It is "full of


100 According to K.R. Qamuno, "Jadunath Sarkar, A Biographical Sketch", Life and Letters, p. 53. 'Jadunath has offered a perennial oblation of peace to the soul of his father by writing in English Life and Teachings of Chaitanya and it is perhaps his father's spirit of Vaishnavism, imbued by Jadunath Sarkar, too sublime to be comprehended by lesser beings, is to be ascribed the Ab-i-Hayat or the spring of water of life that kept the old knight of many scars of woe and bereavements, still green and erect at eighty-seven".
human interest from beginning to end a truly human figure comes before us and attracts our own love, even as it attracted the love of his first disciples.\textsuperscript{101} The work gives an account of the life and preachings of the greatest saint of Bengal, who caused a complete moral revolution in Eastern India by preaching the cult of Bhakti or devotion to God as incarnate in Lord Krishna (an incarnation of Lord Vishnu). Vaishnavism conquered Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Tirhut, it also established its stronghold in several other places notably Vrindaban - a natural park of the prehistoric Hindu capital Mathura, on the banks of the Jamuna and is immortalized in Hindu mythology as well as Vaishnav lore as the scene of Krishna's romantic boyhood and youth, its pools, trees and bowers live enshrined in the Vaishnav scriptures.\textsuperscript{102} During the very life time of Chaitanya, his disciples had organized a mission for spreading his preachings


\textsuperscript{102}J.N.Sarkar, \textit{Chaitanya's Life and Teachings}, tr. and edited, p. 2.
both in Bengal and beyond it. Modern Vrindaban with its temples, retreats for reculuses and Sanskrit seminaries that eclipse the older city of Mathura, was the creation of the Vaishnavas, and the Vaishnav Goswamis both at Vrindaban and Navadwip have kept up the study of Sanskrit down to our times.

In the present times, however, the goal of Chaitanya has been lost under two sharply divided sections - 'an emotional but morally undisciplined rabble at the base and a keenly intellectual but cold and fastidious priesthood of Brahmin Goswamis at the top, where the brain has surpassed the heart'.

Jadunath Sarkar's *Economics of British India* (1909) is another illustration of the historian's genius as regards his study of different facets of history. The work consists of a graphic account of India's physical features, economic products and resources, industries, transport facilities, currency, public finance, labour laws,

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103 *Ibid.*, p. 11. The most devoted and dedicated disciples include Nityananda, who afterwards came to be regarded as a god coordinate with Chaitanya. Rup and Satnam along with their nephew Jiv Goswami, great Sanskrit scholars and their devotional works and commentaries also encouraged a revival of Sanskrit studies in general, in that Muslim age.

land tenure system and legislation, foreign trade - for which vast and varied blue books and other authoritative works were consulted and the statistics brought up-to-date (1917)\textsuperscript{105} The latter half of the work traced the economic transformation: the gold standard, high prices, protection and Swadeshi, technical education, village industries, revenue policy, factory legislation, with exact references to sources. The changes effected by the World War I were duly noted and a chapter on India during War was added to the 4th edition of 1917. Whereas Jadunath Sarkar considered some of the 'virtues' such as patience, contentment, aversion to a spirit of adventure or speculation, and above all, concentration of Hindu thinkers on metaphysics, as handicaps in economic struggle along with the pushing races of

the west, he placed the 'frugality, socialistic spirit and domestic virtue' of his countrymen as moral assets of great value in the economic sphere where the ultimate achievements, as now recognised in the west too, are 'due to the race and not to the individual however, brilliant'.

The result of 'the political and economic causes' was not only modernisation of India, but also reduction of India as a dependency of Great Britain "to the position of a debtor country" - the country that was 'one of the richest in raw-materials' and where the standard of comfort was so low as to make the European observers wonder as to why the Indians live - the effect of the 'Home Charges' meant 'compelling India every year to part with above 30 crores of rupees in excess of her imports', the profits in war and peace were shared not by peasants

106 J.N. Sarkar, Economics of British India, 4th edition, M.C. Sarkar & Sons, Calcutta, 1917, pp.52-53. 'A nation which recognises it as the duty of every man to marry and of every woman to undertake motherhood, must prove superior to a nation of selfish pleasure seekers, who deliberately commit race-suicide. When education, sanitary improvements and development of industries overcome the heavy untimely death rate and open new fields of work at home, India's immense and regularly replenished manpower must be of great advantage to her as a producer'.
and labourers, when 'Swadeshi was better than protection'.

The call to the English Bar enforced by the Charter Act of 1774 meant, not merit but only a sojourn in England for would be Indian barristers. A few of such barristers were 'innocent of humour' and puzzled the judges by often speaking of "the he-cock" when they meant Mr. Heycock, or by pleading in a curious mixture of Urdu and English. 107

The remedy to it all, lay in a positive approach and not in brooding over the past. 'To put the present to the best use, we must accept if wholeheartedly... In the economic sphere, we must face facts, however, unpleasant they may be... after once climbing to the highest peak of industrial success, we must ever move on and face the sacrifices which constant improvement and ceaseless activity make necessary. 108

107 The above critique is spread over the entire book specially on pages 139-140, 33, 366, 282, 142, 39, 113.

108 Ibid., Forward v, vii. J.N. Sarkar's moderate and positive approach is evident. "Admitting for the sake of argument that everything said by Messers Digby and Dutt about the strangling of Indian industries by England in the 18th century, the needless wars of the East India Company at the cost of India and the accumulation of unproductive debt on railways is true, it all amounts to the condemnation of a certain past, it sketches before us no programme for the future".
Economics of British India first published in 1909 was widely acclaimed in the country and abroad, by general readers as well as serious students of economics for its "irrefutable logic, charm and vigor of style". If on the one hand it was considered as "the best work we possess on the economic condition of India"\textsuperscript{109}, on the other, it was also in passages, committed to memory and recited "to fan the patriotic fire" of the sluggered amongst the young generation.\textsuperscript{110} Though the book was written "throughout from the Indian standpoint", to this "no exception could be taken since the facts were accurately given".\textsuperscript{111} The work was a sober and yet a vigorous attack on the weakest spot of the British Indian Government, i.e. its economic policy. Sir Theodore Morrison in his review appreciated the 'conscientious investigation of detail' as much as its author's qualities of 'courage and independence' and also the advice to his countrymen on the spirit


which should animate them in grappling the socio-economic problems. Morrison confessed 'no Englishmen could persuade to offer (such) advice, (and a ) few of them could withhold from him their tribute of silent admiration'.

The book became 'an indispensable vade mecum' for those wanting to follow the economic discussions in the press and legislature with interest and intelligence, and ran into four editions, till the author chose to withdraw it from the market, when the demands of Clio made it difficult for the historian to keep himself up-to-date with economics and statistics.

The book which of all his works is recommended to a person who can read just one of his works is Jadunath Sarkar's *India Through the Ages*. "A survey of India's inner life and outer growth from the standpoint of evolutionary development through the ages". It is a masterpiece in handling the telescope of history by the

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113 K.R. Qamungo, "Jadunath Sarkar As a Historian", *Life and Letters*, p. 64.

historian who, notwithstanding his microscopic studies on Aurangzib, Shivaji and fall of the Mughal empire, was aware of the defect of studying history of India 'as divided into watertight compartments' when "India has been the home of a living, growing people".\textsuperscript{115} It presents a brief but graphic panorama of the growth of Indian life and thought since Vedic age to the historian's times. In the Chapter added to the 4th edition (1951), 'How the British Lost India', he took note of how the British Government in India intensified national disunity and of the fact that "If India's distress was England's opportunity, India's glory could not be England's glory".\textsuperscript{116} While the balance of our loss and gain under the British empire could be appraised 50 years after their departure, in 'just balance, all passion spent'. The seer in the historian warned his countrymen against "the class of professional politicians" as well as false sense of values and urged them for patient, constructive

\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., p.1.

\textsuperscript{116}J.N.Sarkar, \textit{India Through the Ages}, p. 93.
work for the nation's uplift. He observed that the 'study of our country's history' led "irresistibly" to the conclusion that "we must embrace the spirit of progress. Modern Indian civilization is a composite daily growing product and not a mummy preserved in dry sand for four thousand years". As far back as 1928, he urged his countrymen to take seriously the 'unmistakable message of the time spirit', that is "Give up your dream of isolation standardise and come into line with the moving world outside, or you will become extinct as a race through the operation of relentless economic competition in a world which has now become as one country".

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117 Ibid., p. 207. "A Class of professional politicians ("A Professional politician is a person who has no ostensible livelihood except his political status" - Note in the Memorandum submitted by the Government of Bihar to the Simon Commission) has risen to power and are held back from doing incalculable mischief by the few giants at the top... to have been held by the English in political detention is proclaimed as a qualification for ministership, a coat without a collar is the symbol of true patriotism and a tie? Good God ! it is a badge of a slave of the English".

118 Ibid., p. 208.

119 J.N.Sarkar, India Through the Ages, p. 82.
Thus, Sir Jadunath occupies a unique position as regards the vast and varied range of his contribution to facets of history that cover topography and statistics, political history and biography, government and economics, religion and military history surveys and essays: covering yet another variety of topics including art and historiography. No other Indian historian has perhaps covered such a wide range of the aspects of history.