CHAPTER 2
GENERAL FEATURES OF THE JAGIRDARI SYSTEM

The jagirdari system as it evolved in the reign of Akbar formed the bedrock on which the administrative structure of the Mughal empire was raised. The principle official obligation of the mansabdars was the maintenance of cavalry. In order to meet the financial costs of this obligation they were given jagirs.

2.1 GENERAL PATTERNS

The jagirdar was entitled to collect the revenue from the area assigned to him as jagir. This helped him to meet not only his personal expenses but also those of the cavalry contingent that he was expected to maintain for the service of the emperor. The Chaudhuris or deshmukhs, ganungos and mugaddams and the peasants and the cultivators were answerable to the assignee for the whole of the mal-i-wajib (revenue) and huquq-i-Diwān (fiscal demands). Though this consisted mainly of land revenue, it could also include the numerous additional cesses which were probably exacted by officials even in the fairly distant rural areas.1 Generally speaking, the market of

-------------------
the large towns and the ports were constituted into separate mahals (as distinct from the parganas, or territorial mahals), but these again were as frequently assigned in jagir as the others. 

The jagir was usually assigned in lieu of the mansabdar's service to the state, now it was necessary to determine in each case an area that would yield in revenue an amount equivalent to the sanctioned pay. A standing assessment, or jama, was, therefore prepared for each unit of territory, the village and more especially, the parganas or mahals. To serve best this jama should have approximated as closely as possible to the actual collection or hasil. As Abul Fazl makes quite clear, the working out of such a jama was one of the chief objective of Akbar's revenue policy. As a rule jagirs were conditional on rendering military service, but we also hear of a jagir to which no military service was

---


attached. This appears to be called *bedagh-o-mahalli*, i.e., the holder had neither to provide any military contingent nor to collect taxes. Badaoni had such a *jagir* of 1000 *bighas* at which he often grumbled calling himself by jokingly a *hazari* or commander of one thousand. The *jagir* of Fattullah Shirazi of Baswar was of the same nature.

As has been stated in the introductory chapter a noble who received their salary in *jagir* are known as *jagirdars* and who receive their salary in cash were known as *naqdi*. During the earlier period of Akbar's reign the nobles' salaries were paid by either of these means. But in the later period of his reign there were quite a number of nobles who received their salary partly in cash and partly in *jagir*. The system of granting land to the noble had been in vague for centuries, in European as well as Asian countries. Among the Mongols and Turks, a kind of *jagirdari* system was prevalent. Chingiz Khan and Timur allotted substantial *jagirs* to their nobles. The latter

laid down the guidelines for granting jagirs to nobles. According to K.M.Ashraf, 'The system of assignment in the form in which it came to India was first designed by the Calipha Muqtadir.'

There is nothing in the available literature to indicate that either Babur or Humayun made any significant alterations in this system, they accepted what they found. Babur distributed assignments to his nobles soon after the battle of Panipat. It has been generally said that Babur, after his victory over Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi and occupation of Agra, 'parcelled out the land and cities of the more settled regions amongst his officers, or jagirdars, who levied land-tax from the peasant cultivators, the duties from the merchants and shop-keepers, and the pool-tax from non-Muslim'. The revenue assignments made by Babur to his nobles are generally


referred to as wajh and casually with two other synonyms viz., wajh-i-istiqamat and wajh-i-ulufa. The holders of such assignments are called wajhdars. Humayun also confirmed the assignments which had been given to nobles by his father, and we also hear of his granting new assignments in Bengal and elsewhere. Jahangir wrote, "our ancestors and forefathers were in the habit of granting jagirs to everyone under proprietary title." No doubt in the beginning of Akbar's reign the assignment of jagirs to the nobles was similar in many ways to that which was followed by his ancestors. The cities, towns and villages were distributed among officers according to their rank. "The whole country" wrote Badami, "with the exception of those lands held immediately for the crown (Khalisa lands) were held by the amirs as jagirs. But Akbar sought to improve the functioning of the system. That is why according to Moreland, 'we may fairly treat the accession of Akbar as the opening of a new period.'

---

16. Gulbadan Begam, Humayun nama, p.25 text.
In the beginning of Akbar's reign, the Mughal empire appeared to be divided into seven or eight military zones, commanded by leading nobles from their headquarters at Kabul, Qandahar, Lahore, Multan, Delhi, Agra, Etawa, Kalpi and Sambhal. Within these military zones these were many nobles who also held smaller charges under the commandant (hakim) of a larger territory. Side by side with this there also existed revenue assignments of individual nobles. The jagir of the hakim (commandant of large territory) would mostly be located within the territory controlled by him. The territory controlled from Delhi extended over a number of surrounding sarkars. Tardi Beg administered this entire territory from Delhi, but his own jagir was located in Mewat, which lay within suba Delhi. The sarkar of Narnaul apparently comprised the military charge as well as the revenue assignment of one of Tardi Beg's subordinate, Manjun Khan Qaqshal. Similar arrangements also seem to have existed in other parts.

If the nobles were in overall military-administrative charge of a sarkar or suba, it did not mean that the whole revenue of that sarkar or suba was under

22. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:36.
their control. Their personal jagir was confined to only a part of that sarkar and suba under their control. Munim Khan was the overall military administrative incharge of sarkar Kabul. His personal jagir comprised only a part of the total estimated revenue of sarkar Kabul. Several places which lay within the sarkar of Kabul are known to have been held as jagirs by nobles serving as Munim Khan's subordinates. In this connection we can refer to Mir Hashim's jagir comprising Kahmard, Ghoraband and Zuhak, or to Khwaja Jalaludin Muhammad holding the hukumat of Ghaznin. The sarkar of Qandahar was the jagir of Bairam Khan and was administered by his deputy, Shah Muhammad Qalati. But Zamindawar which was one of the vilayats of Qandahar was held by Bahadur Khan Uzbek as his military and revenue assignment. But Bairam Khan's personal jagir consisted of the town (balda) of Qandahar and its environs (muzafat). In the 29th R.Y. (1584) Mirza Koka was appointed as the governor of Malwa. The revenue of the whole of Malwa was not assigned to him as jagir, but

27. Nizamuddin Ahmad, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, 2:130.
only Gara and Raisin in suba Malwa.  

The grant of jagirs inevitably involved political considerations. Since the emperor alone could confer, increase, diminish or resume the jagir, the jagirdars were essentially his creations. But it is possible that the king sometimes delegated his authority of assigning jagirs in different regions to local commanders or specifically appointed some central officials to carry out the proper allotment of jagirs to nobles. One such case pertains to 1574 A.D. when Munim Khan was authorized by Akbar to recommend the assignment of jagirs in the eastern sarkars. Akbar is reported to have told Munim Khan 'I recognize your hand writing [A noble] will be assigned a jagir (only) after receiving a recommendation in your hand writing'. Also in 1594 A.D., Kashmir was given as jagir to Ahmad Beg, Hasan Beg, Hasan Beg Gurd, Hasan Ali Arabs and Muhammad Beg Aimaq of Badakshan, and Asaf Khan was sent by Akbar to Kashmir in order that he might make a new and proper division among the jagirdars. For the same purpose Shahbaz Khan was sent off to Bengal, with instructions to make over the whole of that 'District' to

29. Iqtidar Alam Khan, 'The Mughal Assignment System during Akbar's Early Years, 1556-1575,' Medieval Indian, p.72.
During 7th R.Y. Muinuddin Khan Farankhudi, then a wazir in the Diwan-i-buyutat, was deputed to supervise the distribution of jagirs in Malwa. He was instructed to return to Agra after performing this task. 'Muin Khan after putting the country in order and allotting the fiefs proceeded to court'.

It also seems that the specific location and actual value of the jagir of even the most influential mansabdars was expected to be properly approved and mentioned when the sanad was finally issued by the central Diwan. It seems that one of the causes of the breach between the Uzbek nobles and the court in 1565 A.D. was the refusal of Ali Quli Khan and other Uzbek noble to accept such control. It is noteworthy that while agreeing to stop military operations against Ali Quli Khan in 1565 A.D., without insisting on his surrender, Akbar still insisted that he would only be allowed to re-occupy his jagir after obtaining a formal sanad from the central Diwan. Again, during the brief peace of 1566 A.D., Ali Quli Khan was persuaded to send his agent to Agra to obtain the formal papers of his jagir from the court.

There were, however, times when provincial officers

32. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:260-61
33. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:388; Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, 2:84.
34. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:421.
allotted 
jagirs
to noble without proper approval to authority. But such allotments had later to be ratified by the emperor or the central Diwan. In the time of Mirza Hakim's rebellion, the emperor started on an expedition against him. Shahbaz Khan, the Mir Bakshi of the empire, who was assigned the task of looking after the administration, in the absence of Shah Mansur who had accompanied the emperor in his march against Mirza Hakim, granted as 
jagir
the entire region lying between Garhi to the Panjab amongst officers on his own initiative, and he explained his action to the emperor as an act off expediency to reconcile the officers who otherwise would have rebelled in a body.  

Akbar seems to have accepted this action and the explanation provided by the Mir bakshi. In 1560 A.D., Ali Quli who was then the hakim of Jaunpur and the adjoining sarkars, assigned sarkar Banaras to his younger brother, Bahadur Khan, on the presumption that he was doing it on behalf of the king.  

We also have references, where the emperor or the central Diwan cancelled such a assignment. Ali Quli Khan had allotted the 
jagir
of Sandila to Ismail Khan a relative of Ali Quli Khan. But this assignment was superseded by the central Diwan, who assigned it in 
jagir
to Husain Khan Jalair.


Ali Quli Khan, who initially encouraged Ismail Quli Khan in his resistance, subsequently, appears to have relented. In 1581 A.D. Shaikh Ibrahim maintained law and order at Fathpur remarkably well. Shahbaz Khan Kambuh offered the Shaikh a jagir in Mahaban (Mathura) in order that he might stop the depredation of robbers but Shaikh Ibrahim rejected it on the ground that he could accept no jagir without His Majesty's order. Prince Daniyal also took away the jagirs of Mirza Sharukh when he was serving in Deccan. When this incident was related to the emperor, an order was issued to the prince stating that his resumption of the jagir was exceedingly disapproved of, and that he must restore it.

The mansabdars during Akbar's reign probably preferred their jagirs to be granted within the territory of the suba and near their place of appointment. The nobles who lead armies into the battlefield or were appointed governors in provinces may even have preferred to hold jagirs as near as possible to the locality of their administrative or military charge. In 1594 A.D. Khan Azim Mirza Aziz Koka was sent on an expedition to Gujarat and his jagir was also allotted to him within the suba of

Gujarat. Zain Khan who replaced Quli Khan in suba Kabul because the latter had failed to manage Afghanistan well, was given Kabul as his jagir. The other jagirdars there were ordered to act according to his orders. In 1580 A.D. the emperor sent Mirza Khan to manage the country of Ajmer and granted him Ranthambhor as a fief. In 1577 A.D. Bahadur Khan upon being shifted to Multan as jagirdar was also ordered to suppress the Biluchis near that area, who were in a state of unrest. Around the year (1590-91) A.D., 'the emperor took away Jaunpur from Khan Khanan and put him incharge of the government of Multan and Bhakkar. He was also entrusted with the task of subduing the Kingdom of Sindh and Baluchistan and to settle of hash of Mirza Jani Beg'.

Down to 1560 or 1561 A.D., apparently the revenue assignments covered a compact territory of contiguous parganas or sarkars. This is suggested by references in the sources to the assignment of jagirs and the appointment of hakims. Before 1560 A.D. one does not come across any case where one part of the salary of a noble was assigned against a fraction of the revenue of one

42. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:480.
43. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:94.
44. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, 2:386.
pargana and the other pargana. It would appear that till 1560 A.D. the salaries of the nobles were arbitrarily settled in term of the *jama* of the pargana against which it was assigned. Under this practice, a noble could hold as his *jagir* part of a pargana, one whole pargana, or several contiguous parganas and a fraction of another adjacent pargana, but it was never in parts against the partial *jama* of two or more parganas. When around 1560 A.D., an attempt was made by the officials of the Central Diwan to fragment the *jagir* of a senior noble by assigning it against the partial *jama* of two different parganas, it prompted the nobles to accuse the officials of vindictiveness. Shamsuddin Muhammad Atka\(^45\) in his letter to Akbar, written around December, 1560 A.D. complains bitterly that one crore copper tankas sanctioned as his 'juldu' the authorities had assigned forty lakhas (80 lakhas dams) against Firuzpur. We know that at the time of the compilation of the Ain-i-Akbari the *jama* of Firuzpur amounted to 1,14,79,404 dams.\(^46\) This indicates that the rest of the revenue of the pargana were either assigned to some other noble or were reserved for the Khalisa. The remaining 60 lakh copper tankas (120 Lakh dams), of Shamsuddin Muhammad Atka's assignment were to be given to him elsewhere. This was, apparently, viewed by

\(^{45}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:182.

\(^{46}\) Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, 2:335.
him as a deviation from established practice. There is also other evidence which suggests that earlier the parganas assigned to a noble were always contiguous ones. Bayazid Bayat tells us that in December 1560 A.D. 'Ali Quli Khan was assigned (Jagir Kardand) sarkars Jaunpur, Banaras, Ghazipur and some of the parganas of Sarkars Manikpur and Awadh. Apparently, part of 'Ali Quli Khan's salary that exceeded the total jamā of sarkars Jaunpur, Banaras and Ghazipur, was assigned against some of the parganas of two neighbouring sarkars. It is significant that both the sarkars bordered upon sarkar Jaunpur. This would strongly suggest that these parganas were contiguous to the rest of the territory of 'Ali Quli Khan's jagir, of which sarkar Jaunpur was a part.'

In the evolution of the jagir system under Akbar, a crucial development seems to have taken place in 1561 A.D. It is around this time that certain far-reaching changes in the working of the jagir system become discernible. A significant change introduced around 1560 A.D. onwards, was that the jagirs of great noble come to be assigned in fragments scattered over a number of parganas located at considerable distance from each other. Sometime between 1561 A.D. and 1563 A.D. Munim Khan's compact jagir at Hisar Firuza was also reduced by almost

47. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:18.
half and for this he was compensated by being assigned **jagirs** in the widely scattered **sarkars** of Etawah and Khairabad and the **parganas** of Shahpur (in **sarkar** Bari Doab), Jallandhar (in **sarkar** Bet-Jallandhar Doab) and Inderi (in **sarkar** Sharnpur). In the year 39th R.Y. (1594 A.D.) Jahangir was assigned Ten thousand cavalry, five thousand (of them) received **jagirs** in Bengal and four thousand received **jagirs** near Lahore the capital.

2.2 **KHALISA LAND AND ITS RELATION WITH JAGIRS**

It was not necessary that an area once assigned as **jagir** would permanently remain classified as **jagir** would permanently remain classified as **jagir** land. In principle the revenue claim on the entire land belonged to the emperor. Any **jagir** could be converted into **Khalisa** land by the emperor for whatever reason he wished. It was on grounds of political, economic or administrative expediency that these changes were usually made. In 1561 A.D. **sarkar** Hisar Firuza which was the **jagir** of Munim Khan was converted into **Khalisa**, and put under a **hakim** appointed from the central **Diwan**. In the 39th R.Y. 1593 A.D. Bandar Lahari was made crown property (**Khalisa**), and **Swistan**, which had been a present (**peshkash**) in the first


51. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:293-94.
instance, was given in fief to Bakhtiyar Beg and some others. In the year 1574 A.D. Jaunpur and Banaras were converted into Khalisa land from jagir land. There is also the case of Narnaul being converted from Khalisa to Jagir land in 1563 A.D.

However, area which was converted into crown land at a given point of time could later also be allotted as jagir. Later it could once again be reconverted into Khalisa lands. The example of Jaunpur is one such example of this kind. It was converted into Khalisa and Jagir lands alternatively. Similarly Kashmir was converted into crownland so that order could be restored there before its being parcellled out as jagir. In 1592 A.D. it was assigned as jagir to M.Yusuf Khan while in Bihar the jagir of M.Yusaf Khan was made crown land. If a noble failed to administer his jagir, efficiently the emperor could resume it and allow him on salaried status. The Mirza brothers Muzaffar Husain and Rustam suffered because their agents had been oppressive on the tenants. Muzaffar Husains tenants repeatedly complained against the atrocious attitude of Muzaffar Husain and consequently his jagir were converted into crownlands and he was allowed a

52. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:986.
cash salary. Mirza Rustam was also transferred to Pathan for a similar reason and Multan his former jagir was converted into a crown land. Badaoni wrote that, "Multan which had been completely desolate by the tyranny of Mirza Rustam, it was converted into crownland". Jaunpur the bulwark against eastern sides, on a number of occasions was converted into khalisa lands. It had been in the possession of a number of important nobles. First it was with Khan-i-zaman but later it was granted to Munim Khan Khan-i-Khanan.

2.3 THE DEGREE AND NATURE OF IMPERIAL CONTROL

The lands assigned to nobles in the form of jagirs were for all practical purpose subjected to the dual control of the central administration and the jagirdars. While the income of a jagir was estimated by the revenue ministry, the actual collections were made by the jagirdar or his agent. Even in matters of assessing individual holdings the jagirdar was not permitted a free hand. He was required to conform to the revenue rates sanctioned by the

revenue ministry. There is good reason to believe that the internal administration of a jagir was for all practical purposes conducted in accordance with imperial regulations. This covered land revenue as well the general administration within a jagir. It is quite evident, therefore, that a jagirdar was required to collect the revenue (Mal-u-Jihat) and taxes in accordance with the establishment code (dastur-al-amal). Even in matters of collection he had to forgo a part of his claim in case a remission was granted by the emperor on account of damage to crops. Imperial regulations concerning matters other than land revenue were equally applicable to the jagir lands. In 1581 A.D. the jagirdars along with the other officers of the government were directed to maintain records about the inhabitants of the villages within their jurisdiction, noting their names and professions. They were further instructed to try and ensure that all inhabitants engaged in some profession of the other. Abul Fazl also mentions that the jagirdars

60. Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India, p.273
62. In 1586 A.D. Akbar granted remissions in the province of Allahabad, Awadh and Delhi. the remissions in the Khalisa lands amounted to 70,74,762 dams. Abul Fazl, adds that the 'remissions granted in Iqtas can be calculated accordingly'.
63. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:509.
were required to report about their jagirs.

The internal administration of jagir lands was supervised and controlled in more than one way. The governor (subadar) was the overall incharge of a province. The amirs and jagirdars within the province were normally subservient to his authority and had to visit him on being asked to do so. The governor was also to see that the servants got their due from the amir and jagirdars as fixed by central authority. The sawanih nigars (news writers) posted in the different areas were required to report the activities of the jagirdars and the conditions that prevailed in their jagirs. If a jagirdar was reported to be oppressive or if he failed to conform to the imperial regulations, he was liable to punishment. The punishment involved the transfer or resumption of the jagir or the imposition of a fine. Besides this the local administration also served as a check as the working of the land revenue administration within a jagir. Whereas the right to assess and collection of land revenue vested with the jagirdars, the executive authority vested in the faujdar who was also associated with land revenue and exercised general supervision over several matters related to the jagir. 64 It is said that the Faujdar and the

amin should see to it that none of the cesses remitted by the court were collected by any person entrusted with the work of collection. Besides this the Faujdars were to keep in check the rebellious attitude of the jagirdars. In case the jagirdars tended to be rebellions, he was to prevent them by advice and if that failed he was to collect the evidence of the principal officers in written and punish such jagirdars. Moreover, there were some other local officers (ahl-i-khidmat) who were appointed by the Court. They were required to report those activities of the agents of the jagirdars which interfered with their authority. Among these officers were the chaudhari, the qanungo and the qazi.

It should also be noted that dishonesty amongst jagirdars was found to be rather widespread. This forced Akbar to adopt some more measures to check it. The system of a double rank (zat and sawar) which appeared during the second half of Akbar's reign was probably started with the purpose of compelling every mansabdars to maintain a definite number of horses and cavalrymen for use in the

---

65. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, 2:42, See also for detail about the Position of Faujdars, in Ain-i-Akbari, 2:41-42.


67. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, 2:50, See also for detail about position of collectors, Bitikchis and Khazandars in Ain-i-Akbari, 2:46-63.
imperial service. In order to check all such evasions Akbar also introduced dagh (branding) for the horses and chehra (descriptive rolls) for the men. Abul Fazl says that 'The servants (mansabdars) of His Majesty have their horses every year newly marked, and thus maintain the efficiency of the army, as by their endeavors unprincipled people learn to choose the path of honesty. If a mansabdar delays bringing his men to the muster, one tenth of his jagir is withheld. Formerly, when the mark was repeated, they put the number of the muster of the horse, marking, for example, a horse with a "2" when it was mustered the second time and so on, but now as each class of soldiers had a particular mark, the mark is only repeated at the subsequent musters. In case of the Ahadis, the former custom was retained, some bitikchis, and near servants of Akbar who have no leisure to look after jagirs, receive their monthly salaries in cash and muster their horses every eighteen months. Grandees, whose jagirs are very remote, donot bring their horses to the muster before twelve years have elapsed, but when six year have elapsed since the last muster, one-tenth of their income retrenched. And if a mansabdar has been promoted to a higher mansab and three years have elapsed since he last presented his horses at a muster, he receives a zat (personal) increase of salary but draws the

68. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, 1:266.
allowances for the increased number of his men (only) after the first muster. His old and new men then get their assignments. If at the renewal of the mark at subsequent musters, any soldier brings a superior horse in exchange of his old one, he is taken before the emperor, who inspects and accepts it. 69

Jagirdars were also required to visit the court from time to time. The emperor made it obligatory for officers serving in the frontier that they should periodically come to court. The purpose of this was to keep the jagirdars under as close supervision as possible. We have the instance of a farman being issued in '1001 A.H.' to Azam Khan, who had for a long period of six years absented himself. He was specifically ordered to repair to the court. 70

2.4 THE POSITION OF POWERFUL JAGIRDARS

During the reign of Akbar the mansabdars were purely the personal creation of the emperor. The resumption and allotment of jagirs was the prerogative of the emperor. 'For the ancient usage and custom' wrote Father Monserrate, 'Still obtain the territories acquired by conquest can be given by the king to anyone he likes, not on perpetual tenure but to be held at his pleasure.

70. Abdul Qadir Badaoni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, 3:400.
Anybody acting in contravention to this principal would earn the displeasure of the emperor.'\(^{71}\) There was nothing like a hereditary claim over the jagirs. The Mughal nobility, too, therefore, at least in theory was not hereditary. Though in actual practice heredity or family prestige played an important role in the allotment of jagirs. The sons and relatives of a nobleman certainly found it easier to enter the service of the king than an outsider. When Bairam Khan was the regent of Akbar, he allotted jagirs to his own relatives and ignored the Akbari nobles.\(^{72}\) He promoted one of his relatives Husain Quli, who had in no way distinguished himself in the service of the emperor to an equal position with Iskandar Khan, Abdulla Khan, and Bahadur Khan, and gave him cultivated fiefs, while he satisfied the great Khans with waste lands.\(^{73}\) When Maham Anaga and her party decided to win over Bairam Khan's companions, they were promised jagirs commensurate with their status.\(^{74}\) As earlier noted, family prestige or heredity also played an


\(^{72}\) Abdul Qadir Badaoni, Muntakhab-i-Tawarikh, 2:30, See also Ain-i-Akbari, 1:331.

\(^{73}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:163.

\(^{74}\) Abdul Qadir Badaoni, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, 2:30-31.
important role in the allotment of jagirs. After the death of Bairam Khan, the emperor expressed his sympathy to his son Mirza Khan, who was given pattan as jagirs, as at that time he was not even able to look after it, Sayyid Ahmad Khan was appointed to take care of it.\textsuperscript{75} In the year 1593 A.D. the sons of Khan Azim Mirza Aziz Koka easily obtained jagirs for themselves.\textsuperscript{76} Sometimes even after the death of an influential jagirdar due sympathy was shown also to his servants. In 1590 A.D. Shihabu-d-din Ahmad Khan died in Ujjain. He had done much good service in the empire and was one of the most distinguished men of the age in the matter of developing the cultivation of the country. In order to sympathize with his relicts Shihab's fiefs of Ujjain was left to his servants.\textsuperscript{77}

As might be expected in a centralized monarchial system based upon a small ruling class some selected and influential nobles and those belonging to the royal families were given the choicest jagirs. Mirza Muzaffar Husain, an Irani and related to the ruling safavid dynasty, was granted sambhal in suba Delhi as his jagir. Mirza Rustam, another noble of the same dynasty, received Multan. In both these cases the jagirs were worth more

\textsuperscript{75} Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:9.
\textsuperscript{76} Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:982.
\textsuperscript{77} Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:885.
than Qandahar. In the year 1560 A.D. Atka Khan and his brethren were given some of the richest parts of Panjab as jagirs. In the case of Khan Azim in 1583 A.D. he was appointed to Bengal. He disliked the climate of that suba and pleaded for a transfer to some other part of the empire. Akbar agreed to this request and an order was issued transferring his jagir to Bihar. Again in the year 1594 A.D. Khan Azim upon being promoted as Khan-i-Azam was given a mansab rank of panihazari and was also given a choice to select his jagirs in Gujarat, in the Panjab or in Bihar, etc. He chose Bihar. Again in the year 1597 A.D. when he wanted to make amends for his former misconduct (in going to Mecca) he asked to have a jagir near the court. His request was granted and Multan was given a jagir to the Khan Azim. He was also given a jagir of his choice in Malwa, when he was sent in an expedition against the rulers of the Deccan (Khandesh and Berar). We have substantial reference to prove that on many occasions Akbar did allot jagirs to nobles according to their choice. Akbar even helped the influential

78. Abul Fazl, Ain-i-Akbari, 1:328-29.
79. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 2:177.
81. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:1006.
82. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:1068.
83. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:739.
jagirdars when they had grown old. In 1567 A.D. Muhammad Sultan Mirza in his old age was relieved from military service and given the pargana of Azimpur in sarkar Sambhal for his maintenance, so that he might spend his days in tranquility and in offering up prayer (for Akbar's success), several children were born to him in his old age and they all received jagirs suitable to their condition.84

Even though the question of high birth was given considerable importance by Akbar when granting jagirs, but due consideration was also given to ability, learning and merit of a person. In the year 1573 A.D. Akbar encamped in the neighborhood of Ahmadabad. In ten days the affairs of the country were arranged and Akbar made over the charge of the province to Khan Azim, sarkar of Pattan was bestowed upon Khan Kilan, Dhulqa and Dandoqah were given to Sayyid Hamid Bukhari, and similarly jagirs were given to many others. Though the Khan kilan and Qutubdin Muhammad Khan were the uncles of the Khan Aazam and were old, yet the far-sightedness of the Shihinshah put them in a subordinate position, for the code of just sovereignty weight was given to wisdom and not to years, and reliance was placed upon abundance of loyalty, and not upon age. Farsightedness was the pillar, not bodilybulk. Intellect

84. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:414.
was the substantive thing, not the largeness of the visible body. The foundation of appointment is talents and virtues, and the qualities of ancestor are not regarded. With the result of this policy a person of humble origin could rise to a high position and become a member of the Mughal mansabdari and jagirdari system. It was because of the recognition of ability and merit that many foreigner adventures were attracted to seek imperial service. They knew that if entrance was difficult promotion was not, provided they were capable of displaying their ability in the discharge of duties to them. Such a step had one great advantage, the adventurers in the employment of the Mughal emperor depended entirely on the emperor. The improvement of their fortune was based upon their remaining loyal at least so long as they were hopeful of receiving something more.

2.5 THE TRANSFER SYSTEM

Another feature of the jagirdari system was that the jagirs were constantly transferred. One of the motives for carrying out such transfers was partly to help the jagirdar who on assuming a new administrative position in some distant province and found it difficult to collect the revenue from his former jagir. It was the general

85. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:46-47.
rule during Akbar's reign that if a noble was transferred or shifted from one place to another, his jagir was also transferred to the place of his new appointment. But the more important reason behind the principal of transfer was, probably, the emperor's desire to see that no jagirdar succeeded in developing a rooted interest in his jagir. Except for the watan jagir it had become almost an established principal not to allow a jagir to be held by the same person beyond a period of about four years. Such transfers might have helped the emperor in preventing the jagirdars from becoming local potentates and from considering any part of the country as their own and thereby making them entirely dependent on the will of the Monarch.

A jagir was not only transferred because of a principle. It was often transferred because a mansabdars, when sent to serve in a province, had to be assigned a jagir there, and similarly those recalled from there would require a jagir at their place of appointment. In 1587 (32nd R.Y.) A.D. Raja Man Singh the governor of Kabul was transferred to Bihar, and his jagir of Kabul was also transferred to Bihar.86 Zain Khan was sent to Kabul and he was assigned jagirs in that province. The other jagirdars were ordered to act under his order.87

Fazl philosophizes about it in one passage and describes it as being similar in nature to the transplantation of plants which a gardner practices for the good of the plants themselves. According to him the transfer of jagirs was essential, if the jagirdars were to be kept within their proper limits and the interests of the peasants were to be protected. In order to attain these ends the jagirdars who had been concentrated in a locality had to be stationed in different regions because such a staggering led, in fact to peace and stability. Iqtidar Alam Khan, writes that the concentration in particular regions of jagirs of nobles belonging to the same clan in Akbar's early years also developed the process of transfer of jagirs. After the Uzbek rebellion, it was felt that a strong clan holding jagirs at one place was not in the interests of the empire. Akbar seems to have decisively established this practice, therefore the Atka clan was also transferred from Panjab to other parts of the empire. Akbar thought this to be one of the bold decisions he had taken. In the words of Bayazid, 'one day the emperor asked Munim Khan what people thought of him as a ruler, the Khan-i-Khanan replied that the people greatly admired


his bold action against Adham Khan. Akbar replied, no I have done something better which, it is strange, people do not mention. You know it but out of consideration for some people you do not tell me. I have expelled the Atkas from the Punjab and have dispersed them all over the country assigning them jagirs at different places. 91 From that time up till the end of Akbar's reign even to the end of 1707 A.D. the practice continued to be rigorously followed.

Akbar also took a serious view of any oppression and irregularity committed by a assignee. As it appeared in 1586 A.D. that the Rajput clan behaved with injustice towards the subjects of the country, of Kabul and that the governor Kaur Man Singh did not look closely into the case of the oppressed. When it came to the emperor's notice he transferred Kaur Man Singh to Bihar. 92 Zain Khan Koka was appointed in his place. Another consideration which had to be kept in view when transferring and assigning jagirs was that the jagirdars should be competent to manage the area which was assigned to him. In 1577 A.D. as it become known that Wazir Khan did not observe the law of equity, and that the country of Gujarat was suffering in consequence, he was transferred from there and Shihabu-

d-din Ahmad Khan was appointed in his place, who was distinguished for his knowledge of affairs, industry, justice, and tenderness to the subjects.93

In theory both the peasants and the zamindars could complain directly to the court or the provincial governor or the Diwan against any act of oppression committed by a jagirdar. But it was apparently considered a normal practice for the agents of the assignees to physically prevent the peasants from proceeding to the court with any complaint. During the period of Akbar jagirs were transferred if a specific request was made. Munim Khan who held a jagir in Bihar after the conquest of Bengal asked for a jagir there, which was granted.94 Khan Azim disliked the cold climate of Kabul and was therefore transferred to Bihar.95

It must, nevertheless, be mentioned that the system of regular transfers was quite inconvenient to the jagirdars and also to the people. Quite possible it was a source of constant tyranny. If the jagirdar was transferred in mid-year, he had to face many difficulties, for if he held an assignment during the Kharif harvest in one place and during the rabi in another and neither happened to be the important crops in the respective

94. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:144.
95. Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:790.
localities he might be a heavy loser during that year. Moreover, transfers occurred not only with effect from the beginning of the harvest, but from that of any month. In case the transfer was ordered in the course of harvest seasons, the old and the new assignee had to share the collection of the whole season according to the number of months the assignment had been in the hand of either. A sudden transfer could also place a jagirdar in some difficulties, if he had not yet been able to collect the full revenue owed to him. At the same time an assignee might be required to collect the previous arrears of revenue and hand them over to the central treasure.\footnote{Irfan Habib, \textit{The Agrarian System of Mughal India}, p.267-68.}

These difficulties prompted the jagirdars to collect as much as they possibly could during the duration of their stay, because they were never sure when their transfer would be ordered. Bernier has given a graphic description of the attitude of the Mughal jagirdar thus, 'why should the neglected state of this land create uneasiness in our minds, and why should we expand our money and time to render it fruitful? We may be deprived of it in a single moment, and our exertions would benefit neither ourselves not our children. Lets us draw, from the soil all the money we can, though the peasant should starve or abscond,
and we should leave it, when commanded to quit, a dreary wilderness.\textsuperscript{97}

2.6 \textbf{THE JAGIR FARMAN}

The procedure on drafting the \textit{farmans} was very elaborate. Having regard to the condition of the age in which the Mughals ruled, every necessary precaution was taken to safeguard against frauds in this connexion. A separate staff was appointed for recording the kings orders, movements and sayings in the \textit{darbar}, and on all other public occasions. They recorded in the diary whatever the king said or did and whatever officers of the state brought to his notice.\textsuperscript{98}

The diary thus prepared was supervised by one of the high amirs present that day in the \textit{darbar} and laid before the king for approval. After the approval of the king it was handed over to the clerk, who made out a separate copy of each order and report and signed it. It was also signed by the parvancis, the mir-arz and by the amir who had laid it before the king. Thus the accuracy of the copy was secured. This paper then become the


\textsuperscript{98} Abul Fazl, \textit{Ain- i-Akbari}, 1:268.
voucher for the chief clerk of the Diwan-i-Tan or (person of officers concerned). The report thus prepared was called Yad-dasht or memorandum. This completed the first stage of recording the orders and reports, and it was considered enough for matters of daily routine and unimportant cases.

But important matters such as appointment, conferring of jagir had to pass through several stages, according to their nature and importance. Besides the clerk mentioned above, there was a big staff of copyist, who wrote in a neat hand and prepared a good summary in a lucid style. They received the Yad-dasht when completed, kept it with them and prepared a proper abridgement of it. The abridgement prepared by them signed by the Vagia-navis, the risalahdar, the mir arz and the darogha. This was given from this office instead of the Yad-dasht, which was deposited here. The abridgement thus completed was called taliqah. "When the taliqah about the jagir had been made out, the Diwan-i-jagir (who kept the jagir accounts) pays the stipulated grants. If the jagir is given for military services, with the order of bringing horses to the muster, the grant is once more sent to the Bakhshi for inspection, when the following words are written either on the back of the corner of the paper Khasa, o mardum baraward numayand; Kargaran -i in Shyqhl

Chihra-nawisi Kunand (this is special; the estimate for the salary may be made out. The proper officers are to prepare the descriptive rolls). When the horses have been branded at the time of the muster, the Bakhshi generally takes the Taligah, keeps it, and hands instead of it a writing specifying the amount of the monthly salary, duly signed and sealed.

This paper, which the Bakhshi grants instead of the taligah, is called sarkhat.

The Sarkhats are entered in the daftars of all sub-Bakhshis, and are distinguished by particular marks. The Diwan then keeps the sarkhat with himself, prepares an account of the annual and monthly salary due on it, and reports the matter to the emperor. If His Majesty gives the order to confer a jagir on the person specified in the sarkhat, the following words are entered on the top of the report. Taliqa-yi-tan qalami numayand (They are to write out a (Taliqa-yi-Tan) Certificate of salary). This order suffices for the clerks; they keep the order, and make out a draft to that effect. The draft is then inspected by the Diwan, who verifies it by writing on it the words sabt numayand (ordered to be entered). The mark of the Daftar, and the seal of the Diwan, the Bakshi and the accountant of the Diwan, are put on the draft in order, when the imperial grant is written on the outside. The draft thus completed is sent for signature of the Diwan.

The Sahib-i-Tawjih, or military accountant, keeps
the former Taligah with himself, writes its details on the farman, and seals and signs it. It is then inspected by the Mustawfi, and is signed and sealed by him. Afterwards the Nazir and the Bakhshis do so likewise, when it is sealed by the Diwan, his Accountant, and the Vakil of the State". 100