CHAPTER-7

CONCLUSION

It is quite possible that the uncertainty of the early years of his reign made it clear to Akbar that he would have to found his kingdom on a sound administrative base. He inherited from Humayun, Delhi and some tracts of Panjab. Delhi was lost shortly afterwards to Hemu, who a little later posed a threat even to Akbar's occupations in Panjab. This caused panic in the camp of Akbar and many nobles around him began to clamour for going back to Kabul to replenish their military power. However, Bairam Khan's bold decision to face the challenge rather than falling back changed the complex of the situation, the resultant battle of Panipat saved the Mughals. Hemu was caught and executed, Delhi and Agra fell to Akbar.

The establishment, subsequently, of a firm system of governance required the efficient management of land revenue, and its effective utilization under different heads. Out of the entire jama of the empire, the share of suyurghal was at best a mere 3.4 percent\(^1\), while the major part of it was alienated in the form of territorial revenue assignments (jagirs) to mansabdars. The remainder

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belonged to the Khalisa, where the revenue was collected directly for the imperial treasury. Even out of the jama of the khalisa, a portion must have again been claimed by such mansabdars as were designated naqdi. The imperial establishment was financed mainly out of the balance of the khalisa revenues.

Keeping in view the division of the jama under the heads of jagir and khalisa, we can fix a minimum limit of the expenses incurred on the nobles salaries; since jagirs were given in lieu of salaries, the portion of jama set aside as representing for jagirs was the minimum level of the share of revenue alienated to nobles. The actual amount disbursed on salaries was probably larger. This was because many of the nobles also received cash salaries from the khalisa revenues.

Unfortunately, the extent of khalisa or jagirs is not easy to calculate. In the 31st regnal year Akbar remitted one-sixth of the jama of the khalisa in the provinces of Awadh, Allahabad and Delhi. This remission amounted to 4.05, 60.596 dams. The total khalisa in these provinces then works out to 24,33,63,576. The combined jama of these provinces as given in the Ain-i-Akbari is 1,01,43,52,077 dams. Here the jama of the

khalisa was about 23.99 percent of the total jama.\textsuperscript{5} It is not necessary that the extent of the khalisa in all the provinces was the same i.e. 23.99 percent. Nevertheless, the three provinces considered may be quite representative of the general situation because they excluded Agra and Lahore where the khalisa was perhaps larger, as well as such provinces as Bengal, Ajmer and Bihar, where it was probably smaller.\textsuperscript{6}

In the references of jagir in our sources are by no means very detailed and we cannot calculate the exact amount of the jagirs allotted to the nobles nor the total area or revenue that was set aside under the head of khalisa. Nevertheless, some general argument can be put forward. The Jesuit accounts, suggest that 'for all the kingdoms and provinces which he \textsuperscript{\textcopyright} Akbar\textsuperscript{\textcopyright} conquers he holds as his own, appointing his captains over them. From these he takes a third portion of the revenues, the reminder being for their personal needs, and the maintenance of the soldiers, horses, and elephants which each of them is bound to keep'. If this statement is taken at face value then it would mean that the jagirs normally accounted for two-thirds of the jama and the khalisa for a third.

\textsuperscript{5} Irfan Habib, The Agrarian system of Mughal India, p.272; Shireen Moosvi, The Economy of the Mughal Empire c.1595, p.196-7.

This rather limited evidence seems to suggest that during Akbar's reign the khalisa constituted anything between 24 per cent and 33 per cent of the total jama. The jagirs then would be between 67 and 76 per cent. According to Shireen Moosvi this would mean a lower estimate of 2,65,34,192 dams for payment of salaries, and an upper estimate of 1,30,69,079 dams for expense on the imperial establishment. The actual expenses in the latter case were probably smaller because some of the nobles were also paid in cash from the khalisa revenues.

It is by now quite clear that the larger number of mansabdars of the Akbar received their pay in the form of assignment of area of land from which they were entitled to collect the land revenue and the other taxes imposed or sanctioned by the emperor. These assignment were known as

7. Shireen Moosvi, The Economy of The Mughal Empire c.1595, p.197; Moreland, throughout the Akbar period, the great bulk of the empire, sometimes seven-eighths of the whole, was in the hand of assignees. The Agrarian System of Moslem India, p.93.

jagirs and tiyuls,⁹ (though sometimes the term Iqta,¹⁰ was used in the time of Delhi Sultans). The author of Miṣrat-al-Istilah suggests that the term tiyul was originally used for the assignment held by princes of royal blood and jagir for other mansabdars, but at least in the time of Akbar, the term tiyul was indifferently used for all assignments. Some modern scholars¹¹ have argued that in the reign of Akbar from the 19th R.Y. to 20th Regnal Year the so called assignment system (jagir) was abandoned and the empire was put under direct administration (Khalisa). But a fresh examination of sources supports the view that the practice of assigning (jagirs) continued even in the period in which according to the above scholar 'assignments were not made'. There are several clear references, where already assigned jagirs continued, fresh jagirs were assigned and even confiscated jagirs were reassigned. In the period between the 19th to 24 Regnal year there are many references to

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⁹. Douglas E. Streusand, The Formation of the Mughal Empire, p.68. 'Before the sixteenth century, the concessions were most common called iqta, the Ottomans used the term timar, the safavis tiyul, the Mughals jagirs or tiyul.

¹⁰. Iqta is an Arabic word, almost as old as Islam. It first denoted a peace of landed property received from the state, but gradually came to signify revenue assignments"in which the state has the real right of property".


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the fresh assignment of *jagirs* in the whole empire. In Panjab the pargana of Tirahna (in Sarkar Sirhind) was bestowed on Rahman Quli Qushbegi in the 22nd R.Y.,\(^\text{12}\) Bhakkar (in Suba Multan) was assigned in the 19th R.Y. to Tarson Khan.\(^\text{13}\) In the 23rd regnal year there is a reference to the *jagir* of the Kachhwaha family in Panjab, where Raja Todar Mal was sent to arrange the affairs of the family.\(^\text{14}\) In the other references Dastam Khan was assigned the sarkar of Ranthambhor (in suba Ajmer), Masum Khan FaranKhudi was granted Sarkar Ghazipur (in Allahabad Suba), Jalesar (in Suba Agra) was taken from Khalbir Khan and given to Mir Jamaluddin Husain Anju in 24 R.Y., etc.\(^\text{15}\) Having taken all the references of assignment, it can be said that the *jagirdari* system, as suggested by some scholars, was never completely abandoned. It continued even in the period of which Moreland and others say that it was abandoned.

Some of the more important places like, Sialkot, Hisar Firoza, Sirhind, Multan and Dipalpur were granted to very important nobles of the court. In March 1557 A.D. Multan was held by Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas and at the

\(^{12}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama 3:333.

\(^{13}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama 3:129.

\(^{14}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama 3:358.

\(^{15}\) Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:295, 410, 430. This is also discussed by Mahendar Pal Singh, Akbar Resumption of *jagir* 1575-9, re-examination, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 27(1986):208-11.

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end of same year Multan was assigned to Bahadur Khan Uzbek. In 1560 A.D. Multan was held by Muhammad Qasim Nishapuri, but once again in 1563-64 Muhammad Quli Khan Barlas was the jagirdars of Multan. In 1571 A.D. and 1573 A.D. Multan was granted as jagir to Muhibb Ali Khan and Said Khan Chaghta respectively. In 1556 A.D. Sialkot was the jagir of Sikandar Khan and again in 1580 A.D. Sialkot was the jagir of Man Singh who held the high rank of 7000 zat/6000 sawar. Dipalpur was also the jagir of influential nobles like Mirza Aziz Koka, and Muhammad Sadiq Khan. It appears that some of more important places were quite frequently granted to nobles who held a mansab rank of more then 4000 zat. In 1595 A.D. Mirza Aziz Koka was the jagirdar of Multan, who rose to a mansab rank of 7000 zat/6000 sawar in 1602 A.D. The case of Hisar Firuza was somewhat different from the other places. The revenue of Hisar Firuza was granted to the royal princes. On some occasions it was also granted to some more important nobles of Akbar. For the maximum period of time the areas of Hisar Firuza and Sirhind were under imperial control as part of Khalisa land.

The Mughal nobility after its first phase of development during the reign of Babur and Humayun and the early years of Akbar, came to consist of certain well organized racial groups. There were Turani (Central


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Asians), Iranis (Persians), Afghans, Shaikhzadas (Indian Muslim) and the Rajput, etc. Akbar's policy seem to have been to integrate all these elements into a single imperial service. He often assigned officers belonging to various groups to serve under one superior officer. At the same time, the distinct of separate character of each group was respected. The imperial government regulated the proportion of men belonging to his own race of clan which a mansabdar could recruit. There was, therefore, diversity in unity, and the diversity was capable of producing tensions. Mirza Hakim had pinned his hopes on these tensions in 1581 A.D. He expected that the Irani and Turanis in Akbar's force would go over to his side, while the Rajputs and Afghans would be slaughtered and the other Indians would be captured. 17 Akbar's policy of Sulh-i-kul was partly motivated by a desire to employ elements of diverse religious belief to prevent the sectarian differences among them from interfering with their loyalty to the throne. On the basis of his liberal policy, some of his critic like Badaoni, Sir Wolsley Haig and Dr. V.A. Smith considered him as pro-Hindu or anti Muslim. But as from the present study this does not seem the case, because Akbar did not follow the advice of

17. Akbarnama 3:538. The Mirza's advisers did not know, adds Abul Fazl, the extent of loyalty which the Turani and Irani felt for Akbar, nor how brave the Rajput and Shaikhzadas of India were.
religion leaders in many matters. Akbar appears to have balanced different sections of the nobility. If Abdur Rahim was awarded the title of Khan-i-Khanan, Raja Todar Mal was given the status of Mushrif-i-Diwan. If Raja Man Singh was granted the high mansab of 7000 zat/6000 sawar, the same rank was granted to Khan-i-Azam Aziz Koka and Shah Rukh Mirza. It is logical to conclude that Akbar's attitude towards the nobility was not the result of religious or racial considerations. He preferred to consider the suitability of the person, the office and the political situation from time to time.

The assignment of jagirs among the noble was done in a way that, no single clan of jagirdars could become dangerously influential in any particular area. No doubt in Akbar's early years the jagirdars of the same clan were granted jagirs in the particularly area that was administered by their leader. Subsequently, from 1561 A.D. onwards the jagirs of many great nobles and powerful clans came to be assigned in fragments scattered over a number of parganas located at considerable distance from each other.

The main source of income for the pre-modern Indian state was land revenue. For this reason Akbar keep strict vigilance upon the jagirdars and was quite particular about the welfare of the common peasant. To

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achieve this aim he adopted several measures. In order to keep the power of the jagirdars under control Akbar started a transfer policy, or confiscating a jagir, when they ignored the regulations of authority or oppressed peasants. The government maintained a close and strict supervision over matters pertaining to revenue. The bulk of the revenue being derived from land, the government was particularly conscious of the welfare of the peasants.

Disorders were suppressed with a strong hand. Peace and order was successfully established in the land with the help of an effective administrative system. Despite the despotic nature of the monarchy the welfare of the subjects was not ignored. The nobles, undoubtedly flourished more because of royal patronage. The ordinary peasant, however, had to be safeguarded from the undue oppression of the powerful. That the emperor was quite aware of this is apparent from some of Akbar's sayings that one comes across in the writings of contemporary authors. For example:

"Tyranny is unlawful with everyone, especially in a sovereign who is the guardian of the world."^20

According to Moreland, during the reign of Akbar

19. Athar Ali, The Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb p.155. 'The Mughal nobility, unlike contemporary European nobility, was not tied to the land; their jagirs (or revenue assignments) were transferred from one place to another as a matter of routines'.

just under 70 per cent of the nobles whose origin is known were foreigners belonging to 'families which had either came to India with Humayun or had arrived at the court after the accession of Akbar'. In theory all the mansabdars were appointed personally by the emperor. Almost as a general rule individual hoping for the grant of a mansab had to appear in person before him. Abul Fazl suggests that Akbar had the ability to evaluate the worth of individuals in a single glance. He writes, 'His majesty sees through some men at the first glance, and confers upon them high rank.' The Bakhshi was assigned the duty of presenting all candidates, who came for service before the emperor. Recommendations for recruitment to the mansabdari could also be made by the leading nobles of the empire. The governors of provinces and leaders of military expeditions on many occasions recommended persons for appointment to the emperor. Their recommendations were generally accepted and mansabs were given to the person they recommended.

Akbar did not overlook the necessity of periodically recognizing good service. This he did by rewarding his officers in various ways. Rewards could take the form of mansab, promotions, larger jagirs, titles, trophies, robes of honour, cash awards and royal

visits. Such rewards were granted the emperor especially on the occasion of royal festivities like birthday and coronation anniversaries, *Mauroz*, and the victorious return of the emperor from a military campaign. Public servants were rewarded by the emperor for their distinguished service by the grant of titles. Ordinarily a title denoted some quality in a person, or particular office held by him. Officers were also given the grant of a flag, a Kettledrum, ornaments or a costly robe of honour. The emperor at times paid a casual visits to favoured nobles in the course of his journeys. A visit of the emperor to a noble was regarded as an exceptional privilege and placed the favoured noble in a position prominence and influence. There were times when Akbar not only honoured his officers, but also showed personal concern for them. When in February 1586 A.D. he forbade the entry of Bhagwan Das to the court and the latter out of embarrassment struck himself with a dagger, Akbar took personal interest in his treatment and appointed the best physicians for his core. Sometimes Akbar went to the extent of risking his own life to save his officer's life. In 1584 A.D. during an elephant-fighting, the elephant cacar, notorious for killing men, got violent and rushed toward Birbal and was nearly to kill him, Akbar drove his


horse between the monaster and Birbal and when the enraged brute rushed at him, he was overcome by the majestic avanant (Durbash), and thus, Birbal was saved. In October 1598 A.D. when Pratap Singh attempted suicide by cutting his throat by a dagger and his condition became serious, Akbar appointed skilled surgeons to treat him and as a result of this he recovered in a very short time.\textsuperscript{25}

The power, wealth and jagirs which the nobles enjoyed during their lifetime was purely a temporary phenomenon. A substantial part of the grandeur, which surrounded a noble during his life disappeared with his death. The property of a noble who died without heir, lapsed to the state. This practice was based on the Muslim law according to which the property of a Muslim who dies and has no heir, is one of those properties which should go to the public treasury. The origin of this law is based upon an authentic hadith in which his Holiness the prophet says, 'I am the master of one who has no master. I receive the property of heir less person and free his slaves.' In the times of Akbar the prominent example available is of no less a person than Munim Khan, Khan-i-Khanan. Badaoni wrote since (Khan-i-Khanan Munim Khan) had no heir, the officials seized all that wealth.

\textsuperscript{25} Abul Fazl, Akbarnama, 3:774, 793.
and gain which had taken many years to accumulate. Even in cases where the nobles had sons and heirs, the emperor did not hesitate to acquire almost all property of the nobles. The king generally allowed the horses and furniture of the dead noble to be passed to his widow and children along with some kind of official position of reduced importance. Suppose the noble held a mansab of five thousand zat or more, the emperor might as a favour have granted one of one thousand or fifteen hundred on his son. Thus, the property of a noble was, in fact, the state property and he was simply to enjoy its benefits only in his life time. Thereafter, the entire property lapsed to the state. They could simply lay their claim to petty belongings like furniture etc. The heirs of the noble had to start afresh.

The entire structure of the Mughal empire rested on the creation of a faithful and satisfied nobility which would support the emperor in all times. This Akbar was very successful in doing through the mansabdari system. If we were to look even deeper, however, the mansabdari system rested upon the proper assignment of jagirs. In the ultimate analysis the large majority of the mansabdars were jagirdars and it was the proper working of the jagirdari system that was the very basis of the Mughal administrative structure. The greatness of the jagirdari

system as evolved by Akbar has been commented upon by Moreland. He writes up to the end of the seventeenth century, with the exception of one short period, payment by assignment was the rule of the Mughal empire and payment from the treasure was exceptional. It will therefore not be wrong to conclude that the stability of the Mughal empire even in later reign was derived to a very great extent from the essential principles of the jagirdari system to the evolution of which Akbar made a remarkable contribution.