CHAPTER-III

ADMINISTRATIVE RELATION BETWEEN THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL.

With the establishment of the Mughal authority in the province of Bengal, the Mughal Emperors were found very much cautious about retaining their hold over this distant but prosperous province.

This province supplied to the Mughal rulers considerable wealth which was used for meeting the military and other expenses of the Imperial Government. Shri J.N. Sarkar has shown that the Imperial Government had become very much dependent upon the revenue of Bengal\(^1\), but his view has recently been rebutted by Sm. Saba Samiuddin, since the revenue of Bengal constituted only one-fifth of the total revenue earnings of the entire Mughal Empire\(^2\). However it can not be denied that the Mughal Emperors were very keen to receive the revenue of this province\(^3\).

The past history of this province and its relation with the Imperial Governments at Delhi, surely induced the Mughal Emperors in formulating their policies for the administration of this far lying but prosperous province.

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2. Revenue Administration of Bengal, unpublished thesis of Sm. Saba Samiuddin, Aligarh University, referred by Shri Aniruddha Ray in a speech delivered in the seminar, Published in Madhyajuge Bharat\(^1\), Itihas Sansad, 1987.
That was why the Mughal Emperors always tried to keep the head of this province under their close relatives or under very trusted officers. Thus, we see that five⁴ out of twenty-one governors, appointed from the period of the Emperor Akbar to that of Emperor Farrukhsiyyar i.e., from 1605 A.D. to 1715 A.D., were sons and grandsons of the Emperors, four⁵ were close relatives of the royal family, two including Nawab Jafar Khan were very experienced officers of the State. The eagerness of the Mughal Emperors to keep this province under the control of their family members, at least nominally, if not totally, was seen in the appointment of the infant Farkhunda Bakht⁶ entitled Jahangir Shah, with well experienced Nawab Jafar Khan as his deputy.⁷ But it would be evident later that personal relation with the

⁴. Pr. Shahjahan (1622-25)
   Pr. Muhammad Shuja (1639-60)
   Pr. 'Azim-ush-Shan (1647-77)
   Pr. Muhammad 'Azam (1678-80)
   Farkhunda Bakht

⁵. Qutub-ud-Din Khan (1606-7)
   Ibrahim Khan (1608-22)
   'Azam Khan (1677-78)
   Shaista Khan (1664-77 & 1680-89)

⁶. The infant was the Emperor's son who died of smallpox, within a few months after his appointment.

⁷. Later Mughals - Irvine, p-262
royal family could never take prominence when the question of interest of the State arose. Moreover, to keep this province under the control of the Imperial Government, appointment of high officials of this province, their transfers or terminations from services were made by the Imperial Government itself. The provincial officers also never denied the authority of the reigning Emperors. Even after Nadir Shah's invasion when the authority of the Mughal Emperor was at the lowest ebb, we see that the Nazims of Bengal were seeking formal confirmation of the Emperors for their assumptions to the musnad of Bengal though force was being considered more effective than the Imperial Sanad. This illustrates a prominent fact that the rulers of Bengal could never dare to assert formal independence against the Mughals, unlike their predecessors of the Sultanate periods, though the Empire was disintegrating during this time, and most particularly the

8. Infra, pp 41, 52.

9. Both Nawab Shuja-u'd-Daula and 'Alivardi had sought for Imperial confirmation before their assumption to the office of Nazim of Bengal, Siyar, Vol.-I, p-328, Riyaz, p-287

Marathas were challenging the sovereignty over the different provinces. The rulers of Bengal during the entire period under review, never categorically refused to remit its revenue to the Imperial Government which was the ultimate symbol of subordination of provincial rulers to the Imperial authority.

We may have a brief discussion about the remittance of provincial revenue from Bengal under the Mughals. The Mughal Governors of Bengal had not remitted any revenue to the Imperial Government during early days of Mughal rule in this province. They had not remitted any revenue on the plea of meeting the expenditure of military establishments. It was Muzaffar Khan (1579-80), who first remitted Rs. five lakhs and a number of elephants and other valuables, manufactures and produces of the country. Qasim Khan (1614-17) was compelled to send Rs. two lakhs besides an undertaking "for the balance due", which he had promised to send through provincial couriers. In 1627 A.D., Nawab Fidai Khan (March, 1627-Feb. 1628)

11. In 1731 A.D. when Baji Rao I defeated Nizam-ul Mulk, Marathas obtained complete sovereignty over Malwa and the lands between Chambal and Narmada rivers and Mughal Emperor had to confirm it.

12. Hist. of Bengal, (Mughal period), A.C. Roy, p. 326

13. Ibid, p. 326-7
stipulated to remit a sum of Rs. five lakhs as present to
the Emperor and an equal amount to the Empress. Since
then the provincial tribute of the Bengal Governors was
fixed at that sum. In 1682, Nawab Shaista Khan promised
to pay Rs. five lakhs as the annual tribute of this
province so long the Emperor was engaged in his Deccan
campaign. Nawab Shaista continued to send this amount
at least till 1685 A.D. Earlier in 1680, Emperor Aurang-
zeb took a loan amounting to Rs. Seven lakhs from Nawab
Shaista Khan who was also his maternal uncle. Nawab
Shaista Khan later loyally wrote the debt off saying
that he offered the whole amount as his paskash. Nawab
Ja'far Khan, Diwan of Bengal, became a favourite of Aurang-
zeb for his ability to "remit a huge surplus of the Bengal
revenue to the credit of the Emperor". After the death
of the Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D., the Governors of
Bengal remained loyal to the Mughal throne and when
Jahandar Shah (killed in 1713) ascended to the Mughal
throne, Nawab Ja'far Khan who was his Diwan and defacto

15. Ibid, pp. 326-7
16. Nawab Shaista Khan served two terms in Bengal
(1664 to 77 and 1680 to 89)
17. Hist. of Bengal Vol.-II, Sarkar, p 373
18. Riyaz, pp. 248-260 Ja'far Khan remitted Imperial revenue in cash and not in bill of exchange (T.B., F 386, 390) referred by Karim in p-96, besides elephants, horses, buffaloes, domesticated deer, wold leather shields, sitalpati mats etc., Murshid Quli's Times, Karim, p 96. But we have, at least in 1715 A.D., Imperial Revenue both in cash and hundi was sent by Nawab Ja'far Khan. Akbarvali-`danfer-`Mullah ft.118, 2.1.75, p. 31. Sarkar Collection, National Library, Calcutta.
Nazim of Bengal, sent him the usual present and tribute according to the usual usage. During the period of Civil war among the Mughal family for securing the throne of Hindustan, Nawab Ja'far Khan remained loyal only to the reigning Mughal Emperor and categorically refused Prince Farrukh Ayar to send any tribute as demanded by the later. This refusal offended the Prince who sent Rashid Khan to replace Nawab Ja'far Khan. The latter defeated Rashid Khan. But, when Farukhsiyar (1713-19) ascended to the throne of Delhi, Ja'far Khan remitted the entire balance of revenue along with his presents and tribute. Emperor Farukhsiyar also confirmed Nawab Ja'far Khan to the united offices of the Nizamat and Diwani of Bengal along with the provinces of Orissa and Bihar. Again in 1719 A.D., when Muhammad Shah ascended to the throne of Delhi, Nawab Ja'far Khan sent him the usual presents and tribute. The former in return confirmed Ja'far Khan to his office.

Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula after the death of Nawab Ja'far Khan in 1727 A.D., sent the revenue and customary piscoosh to the Emperor. Similarly, Nawab Sarfaraz, the

19. Riyaz, p-268
20. Rashid Khan was the elder brother of Afrasiab Khan Mirza Ajmiri.
21. Ibid, p273
22. Riyaz, p 275
23. Ibid, pp 288-89
sen and successor of Nawab Shuja-u'd-Daula, first showed his allegiance to the Mughal Emperor till the invasion of Nadir Shah. The next Nawab 'Alivardi Khan (1738-56) remitted the usual revenue and Rs. fourteen lakhs as tribute and received confirmation to his office. The keenness of the Emperor and Imperial officers to get the Bengal revenue, has been pointed by Sir J.N. Sarkar in the following letter of 'Amir Khan II.

Now that 'Alivardi, the slayer of his master is entangled with the Marathas and has no force to spare, if you order Safdar Jang, he will easily conquer that province for you. "Safdar is a loyal servant and will pay you the tribute of the province every year." Emperor Muhammad Shah agreed to send Safdar Jang. However the plan to replace 'Alivardi did not materialize. When the Maratha raided the province of Bengal, Nawab 'Alivardi could not send the revenue to the Emperor for some time. For this, the Nawab expresses his inability in clear terms. "So long as this (Maratha raids) apprehension remains, I too can not afford to

25. Fall of the Mughals Vol.1 Sarkar, p-19.
26. He was a favourite of the Emperor Muhammad Shah. His father was Amir Khan I ex-governor of Kabul for 22 years during the reign of Aurangzeb.
27. Then Subahdar of Oudh
disband my army and my realm cannot be cultivated. The districts on the Western bank of the Ganges have been devastated and not a Kauri is being yielded by them, if some five rupees are realised from this side, it is spent on my troops. Whence the revenue is coming and from what source can I send it?" But he also assures the Emperor, In this state of things if Raghuji or his army does not make any incursions this year, then at the end of the year my militia will be sent back to their houses and whatever revenue is left (after discharging their dues) I shall send it to his Majesty's Court. The Emperor, hard pressed by the Maratha Agents at the Court, could not avoid writing to the Nawab for Bengal revenue.

"Assuredly Raghuji is not going to Bengal, why then are you maintaining an army? Why cling to your suspicion? Send the revenue here in full quittance. If there is any deficit, exactly the amount will be debited from Balaji Rao's account. His subsidy (tanka) has been assigned upon you. I have also asked him to realise as my collecting agent (Sazwal) what ever surplus remains due to my

28. a small shell used as coin, in account four cauries were equal to one 'gonda'.

29. a Maratha chief died on 14th February, 1755.
government. So send the full amount quickly". 30  

On the death of 'Alivardi, his successor Nawab Siraj-u'd-Daula received the confirmation of the Mughal Emperor 31 in return of promise of a heavy tribute. But he was apprehensive of a move of the Emperor to replace him which however, did not take place. The Nawab was not ready to submit tamely to the whims of the imbecile Emperor; he writes to Clive on the 4th March, 1957, "the advanced forces of a new king ('Alamgir II) are endeavouring to make an erruption into Bengal and I propose marching to Azimabad" surely to encounter the attempt of the Imperial army to replace him. The Nawab also sought the assistance of the English forces in this matter: "If you will join me upon this occasion and go with me this occasion and I will allow you every month R. One lakh during the time you continue with me for the maintenance of your army." 32  

Any extra-ordinary increase in the personal wealth of the provincial officers, was seriously viewed in the early days of Islam. Hazrat Umar I, consficated the excessive wealth accumulated by Amar-bin-al-As 33 and that of

30. Selections from the Peswa Daftar Quoted at p-73-74 in the Fall of the Mughals - Voll.I, Sarkar J.N.  
32. Bengal 1856-57, V-2 Hill S.C.  
33. died circa 42 Hijra - 663 A.D.  

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It was considered that such accumulation of wealth, was possible only at the cost of the subjects and naturally it was against the interest of the Islamic State, where share of commoners and rulers was equal. This principle was violated at the sweet will of the officers of the Muslim rulers in different ages. In the context of our province, we see provincial rulers like Nawab Shaista Khan and Pr. 'Azimush-Shan amassed huge wealth through their private trade. Emperor Aurangzeb disliked it also and tried to discourage it but private trade of the officers, could not be totally stopped. We hear, Mir Habib revived the Sauda-i-Khas. Haji Ahmed, in later period, had the monopoly of the trades of several article. In fact, no check from the government of Delhi, upon the provincial officers, could be effected in this matter.

34. Abu Nurrayah. It was considered that such accumulation of wealth, was possible only at the cost of the subjects and naturally it was against the interest of the Islamic State, where share of commoners and rulers was equal. This principle was violated at the sweet will of the officers of the Muslim rulers in different ages. In the context of our province, we see provincial rulers like Nawab Shaista Khan and Pr. 'Azimush-Shan amassed huge wealth through their private trade. Emperor Aurangzeb disliked it also and tried to discourage it but private trade of the officers, could not be totally stopped. We hear, Mir Habib revived the Sauda-i-Khas. Haji Ahmed, in later period, had the monopoly of the trades of several article. In fact, no check from the government of Delhi, upon the provincial officers, could be effected in this matter.

35. Nahj-ul-Balagha, pp. 59-60
37. Private trade of the high officials was known as Sauda-i-khas which actually meant, monopoly of trades of certain goods.
38. Aurangzeb wrote to his Viceroy Azimush-Shan Foot note, Riyaz, p. 246
39. a native of Shiraj; he was naib of Murshid Quli II, at Dacca.
40. Riyaz - p. 300
Though the provincial officers were unbridilled in their attempts to accumulate wealth for themselves the Imperial Government always tried to seize the wealth of deceased officers. Usually, the State dues (Mutaliba) were deducted from the estates of a deceased officers and the rest was given to his eldest son or his all sons. It was also noticed that the son of deceased officer, usually received certain mansab after the death of his father. Emperor Aurangzeb's greed for seizing the wealth of the deceased Nawab Shaista Khan, on the pretext of realising government dues, is well illustrated in his following letter to Asad Khan, Umdad ul Mulk Madar-ul-Mahan.* "Amir-ul-Umra (Shaista Khan) is dead ...... There is some government demand against him so you should write to the household Diwan of that province to seize all his property with every possible despatch and recover the government demands from the member of his family, by any means, either by using pressure or keeping them in custody. You should further clearly explain it to the Diwan of the deceased that his services will be rewarded if he will discharge the work well ......... 

41. Mughal Nobility : A. Ali, pp- 63-68.
42. Asad Khan was son of Zulfiqar Khan. In 1677 he became Prime Minister of Emperor Aurangzeb. He died in 1716 broken hearted when he was at the age of 94 years.
After the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb, this system of seizing the property and wealth of the deceased nazims in favour of the Imperial Government continued, though the empire was then fallen into confusions and disorders. Nawab Shuja'-u'd-Daula had to send Rs. forty lakhs out of the estate of the deceased Nawab Jafar Khan. Similarly, Nawab 'Alivardi remitted Rs. forty lakhs on account of the confiscated treasure of the deceased Nawab Sarfaraz which the former had promised to pay to the Emperor. Murad Khan was deputed by the Emperor to bring the attached property of the Nawab Sarfaraz. As the nazims along with certain other important officers, held offices during the pleasure of the Imperial Government, they were required to enjoy, not only the confidence of the Emperors but they had to secure the supports of other principal officers of the Imperial Govt., also. Support of the principal officers did not matter much during the hey days of Mughal rule.

44. Riyaz, p. 489 and Salimullah, p. 74. But Grant has shown Rs. 60,93,227 - 5 - 3 from the Memorandum of Treasury (Hist & Comp. Analysis, p. 21).

45. Riyaz, p. 322


47. Riyaz, p. 322

48. No heed was given to the complaints of the foster brothers against Nawab Jafar Khan.
because of the supreme control of the Emperors over the Imperial Government but after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D., some principal officers came to play a pivotal role in the matter of administration and the Mughal Emperors, in the later period, were mostly engaged in the matters, other than that of administration. Emperor Jahandar Shah (killed 1713) were known for his love for Lal Kunwar and wine. Emperor Muhammad Shah (1719 - 1748) was famous for his sedentary life of inactivity and sexual excess. "He spent his morning hours, not in doing public justice or holding State Council (as they used to) but in viewing animal fights". Naturally, certain noblemen of the Imperial Government, controlled the reins of the administration and the Emperors' farmans etc., became the products of the sweet wills of their favourites. So, we see, the provincial officers were trying to secure the friendships of those noblemen. Nawab Jafar Khan had not the need of any support from any other officer since he himself was very favourite to the Emperor Aurangzeb but that was not the case in respect of other officers. Nawab Shuja'-ud-Daula obtained the confirmation to his office through the help of

50. Riayz, p.287.
Amirul-umrah Shamsh-ud-Daula Khan. Nawab 'Alivardi had to obtain the confirmation of the Emperor with the help of a number of principal noblemen who were very close to the Emperor. Issac Khan, a nobleman and a friend of Nawab 'Alivardi " was in complete possession of the Emperor Muhammad Shah's ear". These favourites who helped the provincial officers of Bengal, were, in return, bribed with presents from the later. The Imperial Wazir Qamr-ud-Din Khan, Asaf Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk were rewarded with Rs. 3 lakhs and 1 lakh respectively for their support to 'Alivardi against Nawab Sarfaraz.

With the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb when the Imperial Government was gradually losing control over the administration of the distant provinces, it became imperative for the provincial rulers, to keep their agents in the Imperial Court so that a close contact between the two, could be maintained. Sir J.N. Sarkar, has shown from the Hidayat-u'l-Qawid that the Governors were instructed to keep a mediator at the Court, to report the affairs of the province to the Emperor and to receive his orders for the provincial Government. Thus, we find, Rai Bal Kishen was

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52. Riyaz, p. 322
the principal and most effective among the agents of Nawab Ja'far Khan; Raja Jugol Kishore was agent of both Sarfaraz and 'Alivardi. But these Wakils were not always found reliable to promote and protect the interests of their mentors.

When Nawab 'Alivardi had written to Jugal Kishore, his agent, in his efforts to obtain a legal sanction from the Imperial Government for his confirmation in the Govt. of Bihar, then he would turn his attention to remove the disorder at Murshidabad. Jugal Kishore sent this letter of 'Alivardi to the Nawab Sarfaraz. However, Jugal Kishore later intrigued with 'Alivardi, in this matter.

As the provincial government of Bengal was under direct subordination of the Imperial Government, the provincial officers held offices so long they enjoyed the confidence of the Emperors. As it happens now a days, different persons with their own motives lodged complaints to the Emperors against the provincial officers. Complaints lodged to the Emperor Aurangzeb against Nawab Ja'far Khan

54. 'Ahwāl-i-Mahabat Sang', Yusuf Ali, Dr. Senkar J.N., "Bengal Nawabs", p. 85
55. Riyaz, p. 322
gives an interesting aspect of the administration of this province. Diwan and Dy. Nazim of Bengal enjoyed supreme confidence of the Emperor Aurangzeb. He writes to the Emperor: Partners in my work and other selfish people are openly boasting that (in their reports to the Imperial Court) they would write whatever they thought proper, and the Zamindars on the spreading of this news, are withholding the payment of their due revenue. If the Emperor does not remedy it, lakhs of rupees would again be lost (to the State) ........... I have increased the cultivation of the country and gathered crores of rupees in revenue. But as selfishmen are destroying my work, I pray some other servant may be appointed in my place.  

The Emperor encourages his favourite Diwan in reply: "I do not see your point clearly, you are diwan and foujdar with full power, and nobody's allegation against you is acceptable to me. Why do you entertain doubts (about my trust in you) prompted by Satan. God guards us from such wickedness; who are your partners and what is their object? Keep in view my favour and instructions, and give no place to apprehension in your heart.  

56. Inayetullah's Ahkam 218, referred by Sarkar in Hist of Bengal Vol-II, Sarkar (Dacca) p-411 
57. Ibid, pp.411-12
favours and encouragement were given to the diwan so that he could exert himself more earnestly than before in collecting the revenue. Again the Emperor received complaints from an outside source that the diwan "distributing the parganas of Khalsa etc., in ijarā 58 -- which in the language of that province means farming the revenue to contractors (mal Zamini) and these contractors are practising all types of oppressions upon the weak and the peasantry so that the cultivation of the parganas has almost reached to the point of desolation, and that if this continues for one year more the peasants would be ruined 59.

The diwan in reply to the aforesaid allegation writes: After reaching Dacca, he took security bonds from the contractors of revenue collection and fixed the periodical instalments payable by them at the prayer of the cultivators and following the practice of the late diwan Kifayet Khan 60.

58. Ijarā: constituted a sort of contract and implied the farming out of the revenue of a mahal and or some mahals. Izaradars were required to pay to the State or to a Jagirdar a fixed amount as stated in the stipulated in the agreement without any reference to increase or decrease in the collection but Izaradars had no property rights (Land Revenue Administration under the Mughals. N.A. Siddiqui -pp.92-93)

59. Inayet ullah's Ahkam 217 b, referred by Sarkar in Hist. of Bengal II, p. 411

60. Ahkam referred by Sarkar in Hist. of Bengal II, p. 411.
The Emperor was satisfied with this reply as the steps taken by the Diwan assured him fully of the provincial revenue and ignored the complaints brought against his favourite Diwan.

But complaints to the Imperial Government against the Nazim did not always go in vain. Nawab Bahadur Shah (July 1688 to June 1689) was removed for his tyranny when the Emperor received such complaints against him.

Allegations and reports on the plot for the murder of Nawab Ja'far Khan, hatched by the Nazim 'Azimush-Shah was seriously viewed by the Emperor who in clear terms warned his Nazim. Serious complaints which constituted act of in-subordination, were seriously viewed even as late as the late thirties of the Eighteenth Century when the Mughal empire was gasping on its last leg. Nawab Sarfaraz minted coins in the name of Emperor Nadir Shah and read Khutba in the name of the latter. After the departure of Nadir Shah when the above allegation against Nawab Sarfaraz was brought to the notice of the Mughal Emperor, he granted order for the execution of Nawab Sarfaraz.

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61. Ahkam-i-Alamgiri 2.20a referred in Hist of Bengal Vol-II Sarkar J.N.P.

62. Similarly, Nawab Islam Khan was replaced on the basis of the report of Wakianavis.

63. Riyaz, p. 251.

64. Riyaz, p. 307

But it appears paradoxical when we learn from the same author that the Emperor wept and expressed his regret at the fall of Sarfaraz (Riyaz, p. 322).
The Mughal Emperors enjoyed unbridled authority in the matters of all branches provincial administration. Yet they usually took the Nazims and Diwans of this province into their confidence in the discharge of administrative matters. We have already seen in the first chapter that "the proposals of the Nazims of Bengal should necessarily be entertained" in the matter of appointments but it should not be construed as an obligatory principle; the Emperor Aurangzeb disliked the proposal of Pr. 'Azimush-Shan for granting the jagir of Shankarpur to his father. The Emperors during the period under review usually granted the recommendations for titles and offices to the officers subordinate to the Nazims. However, the Emperor often consulted the Bengal Nazims. Emperor Aurangzeb writes to Pr. 'Azimush-Shan, his Nazim in Bengal:

"! ! ! ! ! ! have also some important questions pertaining to the Kingdom, to consult with you. Therefore you should having regard to the importance of the work and our ardent desire to see you, start with all your

elephants and state treasury as soon as the Firman reaches you ...........67.

The Emperor also approved the proposal for transferring jagirs of mansabdars from Bengal to Orissa, submitted by Diwan Jafar Khan68. After his reappointment in 1710 as Diwan of this province, Jafar Khan's effort in placing the collectorship of customs, Hughly Port under his control, met with success when he secured an order in this matter from the Imperial Government. Collectorship of customs of Hughly port was not then under the Diwan of Bengal; it was placed directly under the Central Government, two years ago 69.

The Imperial Authority sometimes inquired into the opinions of the Nazim of Bengal before granting of privileges to the European companies. Nawab Shuja-u'd-Daula writes the following letter to Khan Durran, in reply to such enquiries: "I am scarce-able to recount to you the abominable practices of this people. When

68. Riyaz, p. 248. Salim-ullah, p. 19
they first came to this country, they petitioned the then Government in a humble manner for liberty to purchase a spot of ground to build a factory house upon, which was no sooner granted but they run up a strong fort, surrounded it with a ditch which has a communication with a river and mounted a great number of guns upon the walls ....... they rob and plunder and carry great numbers of the King's subjects of both sexes into slavery to their own country which hath obliged me to give very strict orders to all my phousdars about them......... It is therefore my opinion that if any favours are designed them by the imperial Court it may be of ill consequence to give them a phirmaund for any other privileges than they enjoyed in the reign of Aurangzeb. Not only in the matter of appointments transfer or termination of services of the high officials, we see the Imperial Government exercised control over the rank and pay of the officers of this province. Pr. 'Azimush-Shan when earned displeasure of the Emperor Aurangzeb for his private trade, he was not only rebuked but his rank was reduced by 500. Even during the

70. Consulations 18.6.1733 quoted at p.66 in S.Bhattacharyya's E.I.Co. & Economy of Bengal.

period of turmoil after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, we are informed; "the Vizier has reduced the allowance of all the omrahs at court and turned out a great many and that Ja'far Cavone's allowances are reduced from seven thousand munsub to five thousand and the diwans in proportion" as part of the economy drive started throughout the Empire by the Imperial Wazir Nizam-ul-Mulk in the 1720s.

The Imperial Government under the Mughal Emperors had tried to control almost every sphere of provincial Administration. But such control became impossible even during the heydays of the Mughal rule in this province. The fact remained that the provincial officers often flouted the farman issued by the Imperial Government under one pretext or another we are informed Imperial Edicts were issued from time to time to prohibit the illegal cases but the collection of illegal tolls continued unabated and the amount of some of tolls enhanced. For instance, Rahdari a forbidden tax

72. B P C. 18.4.1722 R.I./5 referred by Bhattacharya in E.I. Company & Economy of Bengal p. 66-7
73. From Akbar to Aurangzeb, Moreland, p. 284.
75. Custom pass, transit duties, tolls and duties collected in land stations upon grains and other
was continued to be collected during the entire period under review. Instructions of the Emperors and Nawabs addressed to the Rahdars bear testimony of the afore-said conclusion. The rohdari was sometimes excused as pointed out earlier. The Imperial Government was also aware of it but it had failed to stop such collection.

The privileges granted by the Imperial Government to the English Company, had been enjoyed by them freely in this province without least interference from the local officers but since the eighties of the seventeenth Century, laments Hedges, Governor of the British Company: "Had Shahjahan been, king, Charnok said an agreement with him, would have had great force. But it was otherwise with Aurangzeb. His orders were little accounted by the local governors".76

Nawab Shaista Khan also freely interpreted the wording of, the Imperial farmans at his sweet will.

76 Hedges II, 46 referred by Wilson in Early annals Vol.-I, p-93.
Nawab Shaista Khan also freely interpreted the wording of the Imperial Farman at his sweet will. Taking advantage of an uncertain punctuation in a Farman, he had demanded poll tax from the English Company in Bengal. The Farman so runs: "...
In Surat, Be it known ..... it is agreed of the English nation besides their usual custom of 2% of their goods more 1½% jiziah shall be taken. Wherefore it is commanded that in the said place, from the 1st day of in the 23rd year of our reign of the said people, 3½% of all their goods an account of custom or poll money, be taken for the future. And at all other places, upon this account, let no one molest them for custom, raddari, or farmaish and other matters by Emperor's court forbidden not make any demands in these partally".

Difficulty arose from uncertain punctuation in the Farman; with a full stop after "future" it would appear that Aurangzeb demanded 3½% on account custom and poll tax only at Surat, and that in all other places their trade was to be absolutely free.

77 It was later revealed that the Nowabi's interpretation was correct. Supra, p. 167.
If "be" removed and placed after "and at all other places" the sense is altered. At Surat and all others places a tax of $3\%$ is to be levied. Shaista demanded poll tax.78

Nawab Jafor Khan though granted some privileges to the English Company in accordance with the Farman issued by the Emperor Farrukh Siyar in 1713, he flouted the order of selling the thirty eight villages adjacent to Calcutta, to the English Company. He also instructed his Zamindars in this direction. The use of mint by the English Company as permitted by the Emperor's Farman was also denied.79 The fact remained that the concession granted to the foreign Trading Companies were not made available to them. The local authorities were fully aware that violation of the provisions of the royal Farman in this respect, was unlikely to attract punishment. Indeed, whenever such violations were brought to the notice of the Imperial Government, the response consisted, at most, in the issue of a supplementary order, directing the relevant authorities to honour the exemption made available to the Companies.80

78. Diary of William Hedges, Vol.I, 100
79. Supra, p.180
80. Dutch East India Company and Economy of Bengal, Omprakash, p.44.
A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE LIMITATIONS IMPOSED
UPON THE PROVINCIAL OFFICERS

As stated earlier the Mughal Emperors were very much cautious about retaining their grips over this province, they had formulated certain codes of conducts which imposed limitations upon the activities of the Nazims and Diwans. Any hair-breadth deviation of the codes of conduct was seriously viewed by the Imperial Authority.

This was however true until the death of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707. Appointment of Diwan imposed a large-scale check upon the activities of the Nazims in the matter of expenditure from the Provincial treasury. Similarly, Bakshi's control over military expenses detracted much from Nazim's autocratic authority. As important provincial officers were appointed by the Imperial Government, the officers so appointed were ultimately responsible to the Imperial Government which could terminate their service or transfer from the posts they held. This naturally imposed some sort of check upon the activities of the Provincial Officials. However, the Nazims could recommend appointments or transfers of officers and their recommendations were usually accepted.

1. Wickramasinghe, Secretly reported to the Imperial Government for this purpose Infra, pp.44, 51. However, Officers at this far lying province of the Mughal Empire complied to the Imperial orders at their sweet will; see Supra, p. IX.

2. Infra, p.50.

3. Infra, p.41.
Nazims of Bengal could not take his seat above ground level while giving audience to public. Nawab Ibrahim Khan, once used a couch while the Qazis and other officers had to seat on the floor. Emperor Aurangzeb, on receiving information through news-writer immediately sent a sharp letter to his Viceroy, telling him that if he was unable to sit on the ground by reason of any disease, he should urge his doctors to cure him.\(^4\)

Nazims could not transfer mints from one town to another. Nawab Shaista Khan categorically expressed his inability in this matter when the English merchants prayed for such transfer.\(^5\) Imperial order was necessary in this regard. However, Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula was compelled to allow the English East India Company to have their own mint at Calcutta.\(^6\) But we must remember that Imperial control at this time became almost nil.

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As per the provision of the Treaty of Alinagar English Company was allowed to set up a mint at Calcutta Prior to the battle of Palassey.
Nazims were not authorised to confer titles upon their subordinate officers. We learn, titles were conferred usually on the recommendations of the Nazims by the Emperor, even after Nadir Shah's invasion which had shaken the very foundation of the Mughal Authority. However, the Nawabs occasionally granted titles to his subjects when Imperial Authority grew cold. For instance, the title of Sudramani was granted to Raja Raghudev of Bansberia.

8. The Bansberia Raj, Dey S.C., p. 28.