Chapter 4

Mughal Administration
The Mughal emperors established a broad administrative system in India. In the existing administrative machinery, which they inherited from their predecessors, the sultans of Delhi, the Mughal emperor certainly introduced many new features. The most fundamental position was occupied by the central government in the administrative set up the Mughals.

4.1 THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

4.1.1 The Emperor

The pivot of the entire administrative machinery in Mughal India was the emperor\(^1\). He combined in himself all civil and military powers. He was the commander in chief, the chief executive; the highest judge against whose decision there was no appeal, and the chief legislative authority. He made all significant appointments throughout the Mughal Empire. He levied whatever taxes he wanted to and spent whatever had been collected as when he liked. Being not answerable to any earthly authority, the emperor held all strings of administration in his hands\(^2\).

As most of the time of Babur and Humayun was spent in military campaigns, they had not laid down the prototype of work. It was Akbar who evolved a system of daily work, writing about him Dension Rose remarks “Akbar’s day was both long and strenuous, beginning as it did with the public appearance soon after sunrise and continuing often until long after sunset, the morning work usually occupying four and half-hours a stretch.”

The emperor was expected to hold court at least five days a week. He appeared daily at the salutation balcony or jharoka till Aurangzeb discontinued this practice. On the occasion of the jharokha-i-Darshan the subjects of the emperor were supposed have

\(^{1}\) Ibn Hasan, The Central structure of the Moghul Empire(Lahore 1936)
\(^{2}\) S.R. Sharma, Moghul government and administration (Bombay, 1951)
to unhindered approach to him in the courtyard below the balcony. Petition could be submitted by the supply-can who could expect swift justice then there from the Emperor.

The Emperor met his high officers the Mir bakshi and the diwan, sometimes the khan-i-saman in the private apartment, which was the ghusal khana. Akbar in the beginning admitted only a few trusted persons to this apartment. Subsequently this rigidity was relinquished. In addition to the Vazir and Mir Bakshi, some key nobles of the imperial court were also permitted to join his discussions. The successors of Akbar continued this practice of transacting noteworthy state business in the ghusal khana.

The greater part of public business of the Mughal government was however, transacted in Diwan-i-Khas-o-Aman and this may be called a Court of Commoners as it was open to all. It was a court of justice, an executive council, a legislature and defence council rolled in to one. Here the representatives of independent rulers and agent of high dignitaries were granted audience by the Emperor. On assumption of office, on transfer and while passing through the capital all high officers were expected to take royal permission to attend it. The Emperor intermittently reviewed the troops stationed at the capital and inspected the stores and workshops, i.e. karkhanas. Aurangzeb effected some other changes. A public darbar was held in the forenoon and selected audience in the afternoon thus splitting the work in to the two separate meetings distinguished as Diwan-i-Khas respectively.

The court in practice moved with the Emperor. Naturally a camp office accompanied him wherever he went, except he was bent on recreation. Therefore the daily schedule of the Emperor was fairly systematic and strenuous. Even when the Mughal Empire was in the process of decay and the effectiveness and working of the administration was fast dwindling one find the aged Aurangzeb performing his daily routine with utmost zeal.³

4.1.2 The Ministers

No monarch, even the most absolutist, has ever been able to rule his state unassisted. Ministers and ministries were the need of the hour. The credit for properly organising ministries at the centre goes to Akbar. These officers could decide specific problems on their own, but for others they had to take imperial orders. Attempts were every now and then made by interested parties to approach the Emperor without delay. The court records of Aurangzeb at least show that such attempts were rarely successful. Such representations were usually referred to the appropriate ministry for its recommendation.

The Mughal Emperor had the following ministries to assist and to conduct day to day work.

4.1.2.1 The Vakil

The office of the Vakil seems to have come in to eminence under the Mughal rule when Akbar was a minor and Bairam Khan acted on his behalf as his deputy or vakil. The office of the Vakil slowly but surely lost its significance. After Bairam Khan many persons were appointed to this desirable post of the Vakil but with the exception of Asaf Khan none seems to have the benefit of political powers, in fact it became an honorary office.

4.1.2.2 The Vazir

In the course of development the Vazir assumed an important position among the ministers of the state and took away many of the powers enjoyed by the Vakil. Since the finances of the state were placed under his control he was called Diwan-i-Ala also. In this capability he dealt with all papers related to revenue and decided cases connected with organisation, assessment and collection of revenue. In shaping the policies of the government he seems to have bigger say in comparison with other ministries.
4.1.2.3 The Mir Bakshi

He is wrongly regarded as the paymaster of the army but according to Ibn Hasan, making payment to the army was “not a part of his regular and permanent duties. He was concerned with the financial matters only when the army was on active service. Thus during the peace time when the army was not deployed for campaigns and battles it received salaries from the office of the Vazir. He was not entrusted with the disbursement of salaries. Otherwise duties of the Mir Bakshi were far from extensive. The Mir Bakshi was the head of the military department. He reserved records of all appointments, promotions, demotions, leave granted, advances made and realised. He arranged for the payment of salaries in cash and by jagirs i.e. authority to collect a specified amount of land revenue from specified areas of land after the diwan or the Vazir had sent the appropriate orders to him. He was the chief establishment officer who passed all the salary bills. On the battle – field, he acted as the chief military advisor of the Emperor. Every province had a provincial Bakshi.

4.1.2.4 The Khan-i- Saman or Mir Saman

He was accountable of stores, supplies, public works, royal industries and commerce. He met all the needs of the Emperor and the imperial palace. He supervised public works, organised and ran imperial workshops. The Khan-i-Saman or Mir Saman was responsible for the quality of what they produced. Robes of office and the honour were supplied by him to all vital public servants before they could assume office. It is also to be noted that all important official papers were required to be countersigned by the Mir Saman.

4.1.2.5 The Sadr

The office of the Sadr, the chief Qazi and the chief Mufti are often separately mentioned, but in practice, the Sadr combined in his person the office of the chief Qazi. On exceptional occasion however, we come across names of separate holders of these offices. Usually it is the Sadr acting in one or the other capacity. To begin with

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4 W.H. Moreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb: A Study in the Indian Economic History (London 1932)
5 Ibid. pp. 30-130
the Sadr occupied central position in the early years of Akbar’s reign but in the subsequent period the power of this office was much curtailed, Ibn Hasan, the well-known authority on the Mughal Administration thus writes:

“his (Sadr) powers, from the administrative point of view, were curtailed first by the internal arrangements of the administrative machinery by which all grants of lands by the Sadr passed through the hands of all other ministries, secondly, by restrictions imposed on the use of power of making such grants and thirdly by the creation of provincial sadrs”

During the reigns of Akbar’s successors the administrative powers of the Sadr remained in regard to the distribution of land grants.

The Sadr was also the head of the judiciary. But in this respect also his authority suffered because of the kings “holding weekly courts on a regular basis and paying more personal attention to judicial work”.

4.2 HIGH BANKING OFFICERS

In addition to the ministers there were many other important officers like the following:

4.2.1 The Imperial News writer

The Imperial News writer was the head of the intelligence agency which was in charge for gathering information from every part of the Empire. The news writer in every province sent news and intelligence to the imperial News writer. He also received the reports of the news writers that accompanied the military expeditions. He read the reports sent by them –or such extracts as he thought pertinent –in the court or passed them to the diwan (Vazir) if they had first to be discussed in the private audience chamber of the emperor. He took the orders of the court as they were passed there and read them out the next day for confirmation.
4.2.2 The Superintendent of Posts

This incumbent organised a postal service for the distribution and communication of royal orders and for conveying to the court the news-letters and intelligence gathered by news-writers of various sorts.

4.2.3 The Chief Muhtasib

The *Chief Muhtasib* also operated as the Inspector-general of Weights and Measures in addition to being the chief Censor. Under Aurangzeb, his functions as a censor overshadowed his work as the inspector–general of weights and Measures. His main duty now becomes the enforcement of the religious policy of the Emperor. As the list of things and acts unlawful and prohibited expanded so did the functions and powers of this officer. As a censor, he was set above all public servants did not like his prying in to their private lives and public conduct and that there are many instances of occasional conflict between the high ranking officers and the *Muhtasib*.

The fact that all these ministers and officers held their offices at the amiable will of the Emperor, and they were answerable to him alone undoubtedly restricted their authority, initiative and personal effort. Nevertheless they were not sheer non-entities. Every one of them had some support in the ruling group of the empire. For this reason; their advice could not be summarily disregarded. However, in the last analysis, everything ultimately depended on the strength or weakness of the sovereign.

4.3 ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

The Emperor was the source of the administrative authority, including the dispensing of justice. For that reason, all the Mughals rulers fixed one day in a week for this purpose. Thursday was fixed in the time of Akbar. Tuesday was fixed in the case of Jahangir. Wednesday was allotted during the rule of Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb continued this practice. In addition the emperor was the highest court of justice which tried both civil and criminal cases. He was certainly assisted by the *Qazi*. Moreover it

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6 Mohammad, Akbar., The Administration of Justice by the Moghuls(Lahore, 1948)
was the *Darogha-i-Adalt* who presented petitions to him. When authoritative interpretation of law was necessary, the issue was referred to a bench of *qazis* for opinion or it could also be referred to special Bench constituted for the purpose. When there was an appeal the Emperor presided it over other *Qazis* and this court gave its verdict both on questions of law and fact.

The *Sadr* or *Qazi-ul-Quzat* was the chief justice of the Empire. It is he who administered the oath of accession of the sovereign and order *khulbah* to be read in the name of the new sovereign. He also had power to put on trial original criminal and civil suits. He even administered the working of the provincial courts.

### 4.4 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

As the many other fields, once again one must recognize the administrative skill of Akbar who organised a homogeneous pattern of administrative structure at the provincial level which proved to be sound, stable and well-organized. In this set-up he had made adequate provisions for local administration\(^7\). The Empire was divided into provinces in 1594. These are:

- Kabul
- Multan
- Agra
- Allah bad
- Bengal
- Gujarat
- Punjab
- Delhi
- Oudh
- Bihar
- Malwa
- Ajmer

With the spreading out of the Mughal Empire its territories were expanded to the south, and consequently the newly conquered territories were divided into provinces.

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\(^7\) Muhammad Akbar, *The Administration of Justice by the Mughals* (Lahore, 1948)
Three new provinces were created: Berar, Khandesh and Ahmadnagar (subsequently known as Daultabad). Orissa seems to have been created out of Bengal under Jahangir. Kashmir was carved out of Kabul, Sind out of Multan, and Bidar out of Ahmadnagar under Shah Jahan. Aurangzeb added Bijapur and Golkunda. Qandhar was under the Mughals for some time as a separate province but it was in due course lost to Iran in 1648. Thus, though officially there were twenty-two provinces in the Empire, in fact these did not exceed twenty-one at any one time.

Each province was headed by a governor and necessary provincial administrative paraphernalia. Under Shah Jahan when a royal Prince was appointed the governor of more than one province separate administrations continue under deputy governors. This happened when the eldest son of Shah Jahan, was the governor both of the Punjab and Multan.

The Mughal territorial claims in the south were humble to begin with. But at one southern kingdom after one another was swallowed by the surging tide of Mughal imperialism it was thought indispensable to create province in every state- or even part of a state taken. Ahmednagar was even split in to two provinces, re-creating Bidar which had been conquered by Ahmednagar earlier. These southern provinces do seem to have been governed by a separate set of officials, even though very often only one governor was appointed to hold them. When Aurangzeb himself was in the Deccan, during the last twenty five years of his reign, the whole area was administered at an emergency footing as the Emperor was engaged in a life-and-death struggle in that peninsula.

• Measures to ensure integrity of the empire:

Akbar’s predecessors had never thought it safe to build a unit of administration as large as a province for fear that its governor might become excessively powerful. After some harsh experience Shershah had to redivide the province of Bengal in to smaller units. When Akbar created his province, he guarded against the possibility of the governors becoming excessively powerful.

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8 Ibid pp.140-160
The Governor and the provincial \textit{diwan} were made independent of each other: both of them took their orders directly from the Emperor and could therefore act as a check on each other. The military forces stationed in a province had to look to the provincial \textit{Bakshi} for almost every other matter connected with their potential in the services. His representatives accompanied every expedition and supplied in their competence as news writers an independent account of affairs. Combining in himself the office the provincial news writer and the \textit{bakshi} its holder could as yet another check on a striving governor.

Further, Akbar did not permit the governors to be permanently attached to their provinces. He transferred governor long enough in a place to harbour rebellious designs. To cap it all the Emperor repeatedly moved from one province to another, at times on a military mission and at others on an administrative tour. These tours reminded his official as his subject that there was a live Emperor above them.

Under Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb the custom of appointing a governor to hold charge of more than one province destroyed one of the important safeguard instituted by Akbar. Aurangzeb preoccupation in the Deccan, the threat of war for twenty five long years. Left the North neglected. Payment by land assignments or the \textit{jagirs} increased. And, recurrently office-holders discovered that they had been cheated as they could not collect the amount due to them from their \textit{jagirs}. It was thus, normal that the integrity of the Empire was destabilized, and the authority of the Emperor diluted.

During the last years of Aurangzeb, s reign his hold over the provincial administration suffered a grave setback. Sometimes after the death of Aurangzeb in 1907 many provincial governors in the North had practically become independent of the central authority. Without formally rejecting the suzerainty of the Mughal Emperors, they to all intents and purposes, exercised the full influence within their domains.

\subsection*{4.4.1 Provincial Officers}

Besides the \textit{Subedar} or \textit{Nizam} (governor) every province had a \textit{diwan} or \textit{bakshi} – who also acted as the provincial news writer a \textit{Diwan-Buyutat} representing the \textit{Khan-i-
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Saman and a provincial Sadr or Qazi. The diwan and bakshi of the provinces did not take their orders from the subedar in the discharge of the duties of their respective departments. They were three officers of equal standing though the governor usually drew a higher salary and acted as the representative of the Emperor in the province.

Every province was divided into sarkars or mahals which were subdivided into parganas. The latter was the lowest unit of administration. Every sarkar was under a faujdar, who was assisted by kakori or amil, representing the diwan.

Every sarkar had a kotwal at the district headquarters who functioned as the person in command of police and kept law and order. Also there was a qazi. The imperial workshops of karkhanas were mostly located at the headquarters of the sarkar and functioned under superintendents who worked under the provincial representatives of the Khan-i-Saman.

The pargana was mainly a revenue unit under a tahsildar or assistant collector of revenue. He was assisted by a Qanungo and one or more chaudharis. The village Mukudam paid the land revenue to the tahsildar at the pargana who was helped by ample staff for keeping an account of the amounts due receipts and arrear. Parganas with a considerable Muslim population usually had qazi. A shiqdar was either a tehsildar known by his pre-mughal title or a lay judge and magistrate.

No government official seems to have been stationed in the village. The muqaddam was probably the head of the local panchayat. A patwari kept record of cultivation and revenue on behalf of the community.

4.4.2 Local Administration of Justice

At the provinces there were four types of law courts

4.4.2.1 Governor’s (Nizam’s) Court

The court of governor exercised both original and appellate authority. For original suit he usually himself constituted the court. In these suits he was engaged not just to rely

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Ibid. pp. 25-110
upon the testimony of the witness or oaths, but he must make every effort to discover
to truth. An appeal from his verdict lay with the appellate court at the centre. While
hearing appeals from the subordinate courts he was assigned by the Qazi-i-Subah.

4.4.2.2 Qazi-I-Subah’s Court

His court was actually the head of judicial administration at the provincial level. He
too had both original and appellate authority. His judicial duties were copious and his
work was of dainty nature many officers were attached to his court and these were
mufti muhtasib, daroga-i-Adalat, Mir Adi, and Waqal Nigar.

4.4.2.3 Diwan-i-Subah’s Court

This court dealt with the revenue cases and also considered appeals against the Amils
orders. There were courts available at the various subordinate levels such as adalat,
pargana, exercising original civil and criminal authority and the panchayat courts at
the village level. Cities had their own kotwal which dealt inconsequential municipal
affairs.

4.5 THE MANSABDARI SYSTEM

The major innovation of Akbar was that he reorganised the entire bureaucracy,
whether military or civil on a new basis, which is known as the Mansabdari system
(mansab means rank). As a replacement of creating adhoc commander of various
ranks he created sixty-six grades of command from a commander of 10 to a
commander of 5000, but in concrete practice there were thirty-three grades. The
salary of Mansabdars of every grade was fixed. To maintain certain number of
horses, elephants and other beasts of burden means of conveyance and his personal
expenditure the mansabdars were paid either in cash or in jagir in accordance to their
mansabs (ranks) \(^{10}\)

For a reasonably long time the mansabdari system worked suitably and provided
needed strength and stability to the Mughal Empire.

\(^{10}\) William, Irvine., The Army of the Indian Moghuls (London,1902)
4.5.1 The States and Salary of the Mansabdars

The Mansabs also indicated the status of every Mughal mansabdar and also his salary. Every now clearly new his status in the hierarchy and with innate anxiety to seek promotion to higher grades, he had resilient motivation to be always up and doing and just rest on his oars. By way of a clearer lure of promotion kept flourishing before his eyes he was thus kept on his toes. Each public servant, civil as well as military was enrolled as a mansabdar – the holder of rank A persons rank did not essentially denote the extent of his military obligation. It simply represented what was called his Zat (personal) rank. His military obligation i.e. The military force that he was to contribute to the state, were denoted by his sawars (cavalry) rank.\(^\text{11}\)

It is nevertheless a matter of controversy as to how to distinguish the two terms the Zat and the Sawar. It is more liable that by the end of the reign of the Akbar “the Zat itself became a fictious member”. The Zat rank was retained to indicate two things

- The salary of an incumbent in the pay-scale in force
- The holder’s appropriate status in official hierarchy

The sawar rank merely indicated the number of horseman and horses the mansabdar was obliged to maintain.

Generally, the mansabdars were given both Zat and Sawar ranks but there are instances which indicate that not every mansabdar had to keep up a well defined force and there are instance of Zat rank being conferred without any Sawar rank.

There was a difference between person’s Zat rank (which can be indicated by adding the suffix “er” to the rank in question, e.g. 10 er, 50er, 100er, etc.) and the sawar rank, as also between his rank and his military obligations the higher the status. Thus, if Zat and Sawar rank were equal the mansabdar was said to be an official of the first class and if it was even less than half he was considered to be of the third class.

There was not much difference in the salary as a consequence as it evident by the fact that in the case of Panj Hjaris (i.e.5000) the mansabdar of the first class received Rs.

\(^{11}\) Abdul, Aziz, The Mansabdari System and the Moghul Army (Lahore,1967)
30,000 per month, the mansabdar of the second class was fixed at Rs. 29000 per month and that of the third, Rs. 28000 per month\textsuperscript{12}.

The mansabdari system included within its fold all officers of state, not merely member of the armed forces. Even the musicians, poets, painters and others were all given a mansab which in turn determined their salary. All those who held high offices, whether civil or military were given mansab appropriate to their position and none were asked to serve under others of lower rank. Unsurprisingly, it was expected that each mansabdar maintain the forces indicated by his sawar rank.

4.5.2 Branding and Descriptive Rolls

The horses of the Mansabdars were branded and for that reason had to be war worthy. The descriptive roll of every soldier was taken down so that not anyone could be passed of as a soldier.

4.5.3 Expansion of Mansabs and Mansabdars

To a certain extent under Jahangir but predominantly under his successors, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, the number of aspirants to the mansabs increased much further than the requirement of service.

4.5.4 Du-aspa Sih-aspa

The term du-aspa sih-aspa was first used in the 10th year of Jahangir's reign. It was however in the reign of Shah Jahan that it acquired a definite meaning. This practice was continued by Aurangzeb. It was a device to encourage the competent mansabdars.

According to the existing mansabdari rules all mansabdars of the same rank enjoyed equal emoluments albeit individual loyalty or efficiency. This was not a unassailable practice. Shah Jahan tried to deal with this by granting this additional distinction to his more loyal and efficient mansabdars.

\textsuperscript{12} Op-cit pp. 30-43
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The device of granting du-aspa sih–aspa, did not entail a heavy burden on the exchequer for if the Zat rank of a mansabdar be added the corresponding financial burden would be much heavier. The du-aspa sih-aspa undoubtedly increased the sawar rank but it did not increase the numerals of Sawar. As it was deemed to be a part of the sawar rank the number both of the trooper and horse was doubled i.e., the obligation for the number covered by this rank was double the obligation for the ordinary rank. If chief quality lay in the fact that the strength of the military force was thereby increased without any additional expense to the exchequer under an increased Zat and (mansab)\(^\text{13}\).

“The Du-aspa Sih-aspa rank was theoretical regarded as a port of Sawar rank; The usual official formula for stating the rank is, for example, 4000 zat 4000 sawar all (hama) du-aspa sihaspa which would mean 4000/4000 +4000 or 4000 sawar, of which 1,000 du-aspa sih-aspa, i.e., 4,000/4000. It could, therefore, never exceed the sawar rank, if any portion of the sawar rank became du-aspa sih-aspa, the remaining 3000 were barawudi”

4.5.5 Merits of the Mansabdari System

The Mughal army organised by Akbar, was a huge daunting force. Even some Rajput Rajas tried to adopt Akbar’s system for their own armies. It without doubt was a great improvement on the system of army organisation of the Delhi sultanate’s rulers. After the introduction of some reforms Akbar had a enhanced idea of how big an army he could hope to assemble for an expedition if he called upon a certain commander to join it.

The dagh and chehra system ensured that the horses supplied would be war-worthy and the soldiers not a sheer horde somehow got together for the occasion. The fixed status of commanders in the army made it easy to pick out the leader of an expedition though, rather peculiarly, we find joint commander appointed occasionally. It was up to the leader to establish his worth and to motivate his followers to give off their best.

\(^{13}\) Abdul.Aziz, The Imperial Treasury of the Indian Moghuls (Lahore,1942)
4.5.6 Demerits of the System

Judged by the contemporary standards of military organisation elsewhere, one is not making a tall claim if it were reorganised the Mughal army more than pleasingly needs of the time and provided the Mughal state with a military apparatus which for its strength and outstanding power was second to none. There were some organizational weaknesses and voids in this system. Amid others a few are sketched below.

4.5.6.1 Absence of Regiments

Though the commands indicated status, there was no division of the army in to regiments or other graded divisions. A force 5000 strong was usually loose collection of smaller and un-graded units of varying sizes. The soldiers were parts of the main army of their own particular units, but not of regular regiments of equal numerical strength.

4.5.6.2 The Care of the Horse

About more wearisome than the absence of division in to regiments, was the fact that the soldiers went in to battle on their own horse and with their own arms. The horses were generally of the required quality, but the arms were not always so. But if the horse was killed in the battlefield, the soldier had to provide for another horse at his own expanse. It has been suggested that this made the soldiers anxious with the safety of their mounts, and may have prevented their fighting’s so well as they otherwise could have done.

4.5.6.3 Mughal Artillery and Matchlock men

The Mughal Army was mainly composed of cavalry. In the preliminary stage its efficiency was maintained, but gradually it was no more a force to tot up with. Artillery and elephants were under the emperor’s special command and were supplies to the commanders as and when necessary.
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4.6 THE MUGHAL FINANCE

The financial resources of the Mughals may be separated into two categories, i.e. Agrarian and non-agrarian. Under the head non-agrarian, we may place in the income derived from customs, transit duties, ferry taxes, octroi at chief cities, monopolies war booty fines, mints and present. But the income derived from these sources was negligible when compared with the income realised from the agrarian sources which is land revenue.

4.6.1 Revenue Machinery

The administrative organisation of the land revenue was placed under the Vazir. He was also called as Diwan-i-Ala or Diwan-i-kul. Below him the provincial diwan was the most vital person concerned with revenue and finance. The chief revenue officers in the Sarkar and Pargana were the Amil Munshif or Amin, Bitikchi, the Khazanchi, Qamungo, and the patwaari.

The duties of the revenue officials were not only to carry out assessment and collection of revenue but also to make efforts to increase the yield.

To assist the revenue administration, the Mughal Empire was divided into revenue circles called Mahals. The Mahal often coincided with the parganas, but it was not a rule. In 1573, Akbar had introduced circles yielding a crore of dams and the person uncharged of the circle i.e. the Amil was called the Karori.

4.6.2 Experiments in Land Revenue System

For the purpose of assessment after making a number of experiments in the twenty four year of his reign. Akbar introduced the Ain-i-Dashala in i.e. provinces of Agra, Allahabad, Bihar, Delhi, Lahore, Multanand Oudh. In other words these provinces were put under Zabti System. In other parts Batai or Nasaq, according to convenience were allowed to operate.
The land was classified according to its productivity into the following:

(i) Polaj
(ii) Parauti
(iii) Chachar
(iv) Banjar

One third of the average produce of the first two categories was the land revenue paid. Chachar and Banjar land were progressively taxed.

The revenue was assessed on the basis of actual yield of each crop, and not in the form of the money range or a tax fixed for certain period or forever the produce of each crop the amount of the tax to be realised was fixed crop wise according to the schedule of rates called dasturs prepared by the central government.

Akbar’s revenue system was Ryotwari in which the actual cultivator of the soil being responsible for the payment of the revenue of the Jagir land was done by the government officials.

4.6.3 Various Forms of Assessment of Land Revenue

Numerous methods of assessment of land revenue were in use when Akbar came to the throne. The underlying principle was that the state should receive a share of the produce of land. The share varied from one fourth to one half of land revenue.

There were many system of assessment of land revenue. The following were the most central.

4.6.3.1 Batai

The system which had been established from very ancient time was one in which the state and the cultivator shared the crop. In other words whatever was the produce it was shared between the producer and the state. Batai as it was and is called so even today took several forms.
4.6.3.2 Kankut

In this system, firstly the land was measured by *Jarib* or by pacing. In second stage the produce of a unit of the field was assessed and then it was applied to the entire land under the share of the state was determined in kind. But this share was paid to be in cash.

4.6.3.3 Zebt

The *Zebt* was a very well-known method of revenue assessment. Akbar disseminated a schedule of rates in cash per *bigha* for every crop.

The unit of measurement was named as *bigha-i-illahi* which was 0.59 an acre. However in later times, the statistics compiled were based on the *Bigha-i-daftari* which was two third of a *bigha-i-ilahi*. As stated before the land was divided in to four grades –

- Polaj (land under continous cultivation)
- Parauti (very infrequently left fallow)
- Chachar (land frequently left fallow)
- Banjar (barren land on the basis of fertility)

The first two grades of land were divided in to good, middling and bad according to their yield. The average of the three was to be the estimated produce which was taken as the basis of assessment.

In the other two cases – *chachar* and *Banjar* where the land was not much of appropriate quality, a different mode of assessment was adopted marks by a tender towards a progressive increase in revenue over the year.

The innovation resulted in the evolution of a system commonly known as *Zebt* system.
4.6.3.4 Nasq

Along with the Batai and Zebt undeniable other methods of assessment also prevailed in the country. One of them was Nasq the hassle and expense of preparing records on the spot was avoided by Nasq.

4.6.4 Collection of Land Revenue

Following each harvest and following the necessary calculations a demand for the whole village was prepared. It was the duty of the headman or the Muqaddam to collect the amount. To make his work trouble-free, demand slip for each cultivator was prepared and supplied to him. He was to make the collection and pay the proceeds in to the treasury.

4.6.5 Other Sources of Revenue

Land revenue formed the foremost source of the Mughal Empire, but the emperors imposed other levies as well. From ten to twenty five percent of their dues was deducted from the salaries of Mansabdars and put aside to be spent on explicit purposes. Some of the ruling chiefs still paid tribute but most of them maintained a contingent of troops at the imperial court. This avoidance of expenditure was in fact an addition to the state resources. Profession tax was paid by many skilled workers. Jizia came to be paid by all able-bodied adult Hindu males after Aurangzeb reimposed it in 1679.

Customs duties were charged at the port since the shape both of import and export duties. Goods in transit were often charged transit dues as they passed from place to place. Octroi duty was charged in the big cities. As all mines were owned by the states, these were let out to leaseholders on payment on a fee. There was also some sizeable income from mintage, though there was free coinage with this feature that everyone seeking to convert his gold in to coins could do it by paying some discount to the mints.
The Mughal workshops turned out articles for the use of the state and the emperors. Surplus produce was sold to other consumers as well. The profit on these commercials undertakings seems to have been extensive.

These also exerted some state monopolies on minerals like lead, sulphate and salt.

_Nazars_ i.e. presents made to the Mughal emperors formed another source of income. Fees and judicial fines also brought in a considerable amount.

The Mughal Empire united beneath and tremendously centralised admiration was in all probability the biggest political entity over established in the subcontinent of India. Even when so thoroughly endowed our people could not be regarded as prosperous. The reason is not tricky to seek out. The agrarian policy of the Mughals as initiated by Akbar, despite its ingenuity of the grand Mughal, was based on the exploitation of the basic producer, the peasant, which left with him a basic subsistence. Yet again the increasing financial requirement of political expansions pitched “the revenue demand at the highest rate possible”. The extraction of the government increased, cultivation declined and the sufferings of the people accumulated.
Figure 4.1: Structure of Mughal Administration