INTRODUCTION

The term nobility generally denote the class of persons who were officers of the king as well as superior class in the political order. However, the Mughal nobility was the creation of the emperor as there was no scientific way of recruitment of the nobles. It was he alone who could admit in service any one of his subjects. But as the character of the monarchy very much depended on the relation of the Emperor with his ruling class the emperor gave utmost importance to the composition of the nobility. However, as the Mughal Emperors belonged to Central Asia the overwhelming numbers of their nobles were of Turani origin with the exception of few Khurasanis who joined Babur’s service after the collapse of the Timuride Kingdom of Hirat. The studies of the nobility of early Mughal period (of Babur and Humayun’s reign) have shown that due to the predominance of the Turanis in the nobility it became difficult for them to establish a strong centralized monarchy. We find that Babur soon after his victory in the battle of Panipat tried to counter these elements by admitting local elements such as local chiefs, Afghans and Shaikhzadas (Indian Muslims). But he died so early that these local elements could not be fully integrated. Consequently Humayun was again faced with the unruly behaviour of the Turani nobility and one of the important factors of his defeat and expulsion from India was the arrogant and unhelpful attitude of his nobility. During the period of his exile and journey to Iran, Humayun had the worst

2 Ibid, p. XIII
4 S. Nurul Hasan, ‘New Light on the relation of early Mughal rulers with their nobility’, Indian History Congress, 1944
experience of his nobles. Therefore, after his conquest of Qandhar and Kabul and during his struggle with Kamran, Humayun brought about significant changes not only in the composition of his nobility but also in his attitude toward them. We also find that the attitude of his nobles also underwent a great change. But before the effect of these changes could take a shape Humayun died, leaving young Akbar to deal with these and several other problems with which the Empire was faced.

The nobility that Akbar inherited from his father Humayun too comprised mainly of Turanis. Some Iranis have joined Humayun’s service in Iran but with the exception of few such as Bairam Khan and Mirza Nijat they held minor positions in the imperial government. Turani nobles held almost all the important offices and military commands. At the time of Humayun’s death Akbar was very young and therefore Bairam Khan was appointed *Wakil us Saltanat* to run the administration. The period of four years of the regency of Bairam Khan saw a grim struggle between the central authority represented by Bairam Khan and the nobility, which appeared determined to ignore the authority of the central power. Although as consequence of the opposition of a section of the nobles Bairam Khan was dismissed but even after that the situation remained unchanged. The nobles even now openly defied imperial authority and in a way opposed every attempt of the emperor to establish his hold over the apparatus of the imperial government. On several occasion they ignored the authority of the emperor. But Akbar during those early years of his

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1. Iqtedar Alam Khan, *Mirza Kamran – A Biographical Study*, Bombay, 1964. See also *The Nobility Under Akbar and Jahangir*, pp. 4-7
2. *The Political Biography of A Mughal noble, Munim Khan Khan-i Khana*
reign was politically so weak that he could not take stern action against his extremely powerful Turani nobility. However, he was not ready to tolerate any longer the irresponsible and disloyal attitude of his nobles. Therefore, to tighten his grip on them he introduced several administrative reforms and also appointed men of his own choice on crucial administrative positions\(^1\). The Turani nobles considered these changes as an assault on their prerogatives that they considered were granted to them by an age-old tradition preserved in \textit{Tura-i Chengezi}. They believed that the relations of the emperor with his ruling class should be governed in accordance with provisions of \textit{Tura-i-Chengezi}, which provided hereditary privileges to a large number of nobles\(^2\). The manner in which the emperor had started taking interest in the affairs of the state and some of the crucial decisions that he took independently made them to think (Turani nobility) that if some strong steps were not taken at this stage the nobles (Turani nobles) would loose their privileged position and in the long run \textit{Tura-i-Chengezi} will also seize to exist.\(^3\). Therefore, they violently reacted by unfurling the banner of revolts against Mughal imperial authority.\(^4\)

Some modern historians are of the view that Rajputs and \textit{Shaikzadas} (Indian Muslims) were admitted in the nobility by Akbar to counter the Turani nobility, as at that time he was not strong enough to take action against

\(^1\) \textit{The Political Biography of A Mughal Noble, Munim Khan Khan-i Khana, pp.} 68-74.


\(^3\) For details, see, \textit{The Political Biography of a Mughal Noble}, Introduction, pp.XI, XVI-XIX.

\(^4\) During the period 1562 to 1567 as many as six rebellions led by senior nobles of the empire took place and out of these five were led by senior Turani nobles. For details see, Iqtedar Alam Khan, ‘The Nobility of Akbar and the Development of his Religious Policy’, \textit{Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1968, pp.} 31-32
them\textsuperscript{1}. But to my mind the reason for the admission of Rajputs in imperial service lay much deeper and it had been hinted in an alleged conversation between Shah Tahmasp of Persia and Humayun when the latter was in exile in Persia. The discussion that took place was as follows:

“\textquote{The Shah\ldots said to His Majesty \textquote{it is surprising that one who has this type of servant as supporters and helpers could not retain his kingdom}. He asked him as to which class of people (in India) constituted clans and were outstanding and brave. His Majesty replied Afghans and Rajputs. The Shah asked if these two groups (\textit{giroh}) were on cordial relations (with each other). He replied in the negative. He (Shah) said, \textquotemanyou cannot now reconcile with the Afghans; you should remove them from military service and divert them to trade and industry. And efforts should be made to establish kinship (\textit{khweshi}) with the Rajputs and to rear them up since without gaining control over the \textit{zamindars}, it is not possible to rule Hind.\textquotemany2

A reference of similar nature also occurs in \textit{Akbarnama} where in Abul Fazal writes that on his return to India, Humayun, \textquotemin order to soothe the mind of the \textit{Zamindars}, entered into matrimonial relations with them. Among these, Jamal Khan, the cousin of Hasan Khan Mewati who was one of the great \textit{Zamindars} of India, came and did homage. He had two beautiful daughters. H.M. himself married the elder sister and gave the younger in marriage to Baimram Khan\textquoteendquote. These references clearly indicate that in the aristocratic circles a thinking had developed that for the expansion and consolidation of the Mughal empire in India the local chiefs (\textit{Zamindars}) should not only be admitted in imperial service but be given important position among the ruling elites. The author of \textit{Maasir-i Rahimi} writes that Bairam Khan after becoming \textit{wakil-us

\textsuperscript{1} See, for details For the first time this explanation was given by Satish Chandra in the introduction of his book, Parties and Politics at the Mughal Court (1707-40), Aligarh, 1959; Thereafter Athar Ali, Mughal Nobility under Aurangzeb, revised ed. Delhi, 1997 and Iqtedar Alam Khan, \textquote{The Nobility of Akbar and the Development of \textquote{his Religious Policy}}

The sultanat of Akbar took keen interest in establishing friendly relations with the Rajputs. Whether it was at the initiative of Bairam Khan or because of his own family problems Raja Bhar Mal, the Kachhwaha chief of the state of Amber visited the court of Akbar in his second regnal year and by his bold actions so greatly impressed the young emperor that he is said to have remarked. "We'll rear you."¹

However, no great progress was made in respect of admitting Rajputs or any other local elements during the period of the regency of Bairam Khan. But after the dismissal of Bairam Khan when Akbar took the reins of government in his hands he decided to admit Rajputs and Shaikhzadas (Indian Muslims) in his ruling class. The emperor also entered into matrimonial relations with both the Rajputs and Indian Muslims. The Kachhwahas of Ambers were the first to join Mughal service but thereafter almost all other prominent Rajput chiefs with the exception of Sisodias of Mewar also joined imperial service. The emperor accorded them the status of loyal subordinates and friends. They were not only given command of the important military campaigns but were also appointed on important administrative duties. They have very significant presence in the nobility both numerically as well as in total mansabs, awarded during Akbar's reign.² The Rajputs also held charge of a number of provinces during his rule.³ Akbar extended matrimonial relations with the Rajputs by tying royal princes more closely with them. Thus the eldest son Salim was married in 1584 to the daughter of Bhagwan Das. Shortly afterwards Salim was also married to the daughter of Mota Raja Udai Singh. A little later Daniyal was married to the

² In the nobility of Akbar Rajputs were about 17% of the total number of nobles. See, The Nobility Under Akbar and Jahangir, p.191
³ For details see, Afzal Husain, 'Provincial Governors under Akbar', Indian History Congress, 1970.
daughter of Rao Raimal son of Rao Maldeo. Apparently this was an attempt to ensure close cordial relations of the Rajputs with Mughal imperial family. It seems that the emperor considered that by establishing close family ties with them, the Mughal Empire will become more acceptable to Indian people and further their close cooperation would help him to establish a strong centralised state in India.

However, during the closing years of Akbar’s reign their appeared a crisis in their relation with Salim (Jahangir) as a consequence of Raja Man Singh’s active role in the conspiracy to enthrone Khusru at the time of Akbar’s serious illness and at the time of Khshrau’s revolt. Jahangir completely lost confidence in him, although his rank was not reduced but he was not given independent charge of a suba or a military command for the rest of his life. Due to that even the contemporaries believed that Jahangir was hostile towards Rajputs, despite the fact that he established friendly relations with the Sisodias by agreeing to accept those proposals, which Akbar had refused earlier. We have also discussed the role of Rajput houses during the revolt of Khurram, Mahabat Khan’s coup and in the crisis following the death of Jahangir. Similarly the role of Rajput houses in the important developments of Shahjahan’s reign (such as the revolts of Jhujhar Singh Bundela and Khan Jahan Lodi, Deccan, Balkh Badkhshan and Qandhar campaigns, Mewar crisis and the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan) has also been examined. We have also analysed the imperial policy towards different Rajput

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1 For details of imperial Marriages, see, Afzal Husain, ‘Marriages Among Mughal Nobles as an Index of Status and Aristocratic Integration’, *Indian History Congress*, 1972.

houses in the light of his personal relations as well as award of mansabs and appointment given to them.

Though the study of Mughal - Rajput relations has attracted great deal of attention from scholars and in almost all the works on political history of Mughal Empire as well as in the studies on Mughal nobility, some of these aspects have been discussed but barring few monographs and research papers on the lives of important Rajput nobles and houses, no comprehensive study on the Rajput chieftancies and nobility, particularly their role and position at Mughal court so far has been made of the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan.

The present study is an attempt in this direction; however its scope is limited to the study of the imperial policy towards chieftains of the Kachhwahas of Amber, Rathors of Bikner and Marwar, Hadas of Bundi and Sisodias of Mewar of Ajmer suba as illustrative of general norms and circumstances. We have concentrated our study on the chiefs mainly because the Mughal Emperors themselves gave their utmost attention only towards them. However, some other Rajputs too were admitted in imperial service but very few among them were able to get really important position at the court. Therefore, realising that such a study might be one sided, we have also included these other Rajputs in our study. We also feel that a study of this kind must necessarily begin from the

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2 For example, Rajiv Narain Prasad, “Raja Man Singh of Amber”. 
time of Akbar (during whose reign the Rajputs were admitted in service) since to understand the complex problem of the Rajput nobility of the later period a survey of their position during the earlier period is an essential pre-requisite. Therefore we have briefly discussed the situation in Akba’s time in every chapter.

The thesis is divides into seven chapters including introduction and conclusion. After the introduction, the next five chapters (chapter second to six) are devoted to the study of chieftaincies mentioned above. To illustrate the context of these problems we have prepared detailed political biographies of the chieftains starting from the reign of Akbar to the end of Shahjahan’s reign including the events of the war of succession among his sons. While writing about the rulers of the chieftaincies we have specially taken note of all the developments that have taken place in their relations with the imperial court. We have discussed the career and achievements of the chiefs at the Mughal court (particularly mentioning appointments, award of mansabs, promotions etc.) in the form of a historical narrative. Besides the career of the rulers of the chieftaincies, we have also discussed the account of all other relations of the chiefs who were admitted in the imperial service. Several Rajputs not related to the chiefs but of the same clan were also admitted in imperial service. Some of them were given higher ranks, important administrative responsibilities and military commands. At the end of the each chapter we have briefly discussed the career of these Rajput nobles also. To substantiate our point of view we have also given clan wise tabulated information, about numerical strength, mansabs and appointments of Rajput nobles in a given year. The tables have been prepared on the basis of list Rajput nobles of Akbar, Jahangir and Shahjahan’s reign provided in two appendices.
In the preparation of the thesis we have used almost all the available Persian sources in print as well as in manuscript. Besides that we have also used a number of farmans of Jahangir and Shahjahan, nishans, and hasbul hukm issued by princes, and also arzdasht of Rajput nobles. These documents are available in archives, Vir Vinod and also in a calendar of Mughal Documents in two Volumes published by Dr S.I. Tirmizi. We have also consulted European travel accounts and used them with utmost care. We have a number of Rajasthani sources available for our period. As these were quite useful for our study I have extensively used them. We have also consulted all the available articles and books published in English, Hindi and Urdu on the theme connected in any way with our topic.