In the present work we have studied the relation of the hereditary chiefs of Bihar with the Mughal Imperial authority. The hereditary chiefs were all over Northern India and were known as Zamindar, Kalantaran, buzurg and Marzabans and in the region of Bihar were generally called as Rajas. They played quite an important role in consolidating the Mughal conquest in India. Modern historians such as Moreland, P. Saran, Nurul Hasan and Irfan Habib have discussed in details about their power and position in the Mughal empire. Several others important works on zamindars have also been published in learned journals. Ahsan Raza Khan in particular has made a detailed study of the zamindars of Akbar's reign but so far no detailed study of the zamindars of the suba of Bihar of the Mughal period had been attempted. Therefore in the present work a humble attempt is made to study the relation of the zamindars of Bihar with the Mughal Administration.

In the course of study we are able to identify a number of chieftaincies, prominent among them were Kharakpur Raj, the Ujjainias of Bhojpur, the cheros of Palamau, the Kokhra chieftaincy, the Gidhaur chieftaincy, the Darbhanga Raj, the Seor, the Panchet, etc. Some of these chieftaincies were very large having a group of parganas under their sway while others were so small that they held only a part of the pargana. But the information about their relation with the Mughal administration in our sources was so little that it would not have been possible to make a correct assessment of their position in the Mughal political structure. Therefore we have prepared detailed biographical account separately of each of the chieftaincies including
biographies of their chieftains, on the basis of information collected from all possible sources: the contemporary, near contemporary and later Persian sources, European travel accounts, local sources, family records, survey reports and district gazetteers.

In our thesis which is divided into ten chapters including introduction and conclusion, eight chapters (II to XI) are devoted to the biographies of above mentioned chieftaincies.

The first chapter is an Introduction of the present work.

In the second chapter, we have discussed about the Kharakpur chieftaincy which lay in the sarkar of Munger, Sangram Singh was the chief of Kharakpur who submitted to the Mughals in 1574.

The third chapter is related to the Ujjainias chieftaincy which was the biggest chieftaincy in Bihar. It was located in the sarkar of Shahabad and Rohtas. Raja Gajpati Ujjainia submitted to Munim Khan during 1568-69, and agreed to pay a sum of Rs. 5 lakh per annum as malguzari.

The fourth chapter deals with the cheros of Palamau. The Ain-i Akbari has mentioned that the cheros held the zamindari in the parganas of Champa and Pudag (Pundrag) in the south of sarkar Bihar. The chero chieftaincy was not fully subjugated during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir but it was forced to submit during the period of Shahjahan (1633).

In the fifth chapter we have discussed the chieftaincy of Kokhra which lay in the extreme south of Bihar suba. Madhukar Rai, the chief of Kokhra
was compelled to submit the Mughal in 1586 imperial authority and agreed to pay *malguzari*.

The sixth chapter is devoted to the study of Gidhaur chieftaincy, which was one of the oldest family of *suba* Bihar. Gidhaur is mentioned in *Ain-i Akbari* as *Mahal* of *sarkar* Bihar. Puran Mal was the chief of Gidhaur who submitted to the Mughals during 1574-75.

The seventh chapter deals with the chieftaincy of Darbhanga. The nature of Darbhanga chieftaincy was different from other chieftaincies of Bihar. Mahesh Thakur the founder of Darbhanga Raj started his career as *Chaudhari* and *Qanungo* of Tirhut which he obtained through a *farman* of Akbar. The successors of Mahesh Thakur became more powerful with the assignment of additional territories during the reign of Jahangir and Shahjahan and by the time of Aurangzeb, they almost gained the position of an autonomous chief.

In the eighth chapter we have given details of the Champaran chieftaincy of Northern Bihar. The *mahals* of Samru, Mehsi and Majhora of *sarkar* Champaran were under the control of the chiefs. Udai Karan, the *zamindar* of Champaran submitted to the Mughals in 1575 and rendered useful services in recovering the fort of Hajipur from Afghans during 1575-76.

Chapter ninth is devoted to the study of Hathwa Raj which was also known as the chieftaincy of Kalyanpur, as Kalyanpur was its headquarters. The Kalyanpur chieftaincy was comprised of Sipah and Huespur, the two
mahals of sarkar Saran. Raja Kalyan Mal, the zamindar of Kalyanpur (Hathwa Raj) submitted to the Mughals during 1682-83.

We have also identified some of the other chieftaincies such as Panchet, Seor, Garhi, Ratanpur, Ramnagar, Bhagwanpur, Chai etc. But we were able to get very little information about these chieftaincies. However whatever little information we were able to gather we have given at the end of ninth chapter.

On the basis of information provided in the above chapters we have discussed in our concluding chapter the relationship of the zamindars of Bihar with the Mughal administration.

Our study had shown that most of the important chiefs of Bihar such as Raja Gajpati Ujjainia, Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Madhukar Rai and Bairisal, the chiefs of Kokhra, Raja Udai Karan of Champaran accepted the overlordship of the Mughal imperial authority during the years 1568-80, when the campaign against the Afghans was in progress. But it is quite surprising to note that even Akharnama does not inform us that under what terms and conditions the chiefs accepted the subordination of the Mughals. For example about Raja Gajpati who submitted before Munim Khan in 1569, Abul Fazl writes that he agreed to pay five-lakh malguzari annually. In 1578 the chief of Seor presented a Peshkash of 30,000 rupees and 20 elephants. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur and Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur after accepting the overlordship of the Mughals in 1591 offered to pay Peshkash of elephants and other rarities of the area. There is
hardly any references of any concession being offered to them on behalf of the imperial government.

However we do find that after accepting the overlordship of the Mughal authority some of these Rajas along with their military contingents helped imperial armies in suppressing the Afghan rebels. But none of them was either given a rank or an office in the Mughal administration. We also find a reference of marriage of Prince Danial with the daughter of Raja Dalpat Ujjainia during the reign of Akbar but even after the marriage the Raja was neither given a rank nor any office in the administration. We find another reference of marriage between the sister of Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur and Chandrabhan, the brother of Raja Man Singh. But after this marriage also the Raja of Gidhaur did not get any special favour from the Mughal administration. It may also be pointed out that later on neither Akbar nor after him any other Mughal ruler entered into matrimonial alliance with the chiefs of Bihar.

It seems that the Bihar chiefs were not considered of sufficient status for the establishment of matrimonial relations or even for grant of mansab. It also seems that politically too they were not considered of much importance even in Bihar because many of them did not have large following of their clan or kinsmen as they had immigrated from different regions of Hindustan and established there zamindaris in Bihar after dispossessing either some local chief or an aboriginal tribe. The chiefs were also not given much importance by Akbar probably because most of them held very small area under their
control and strategically too the areas held by the chiefs were not of importance for the empire.

Besides that there close relation with the Afghans also came in their way because Mughal authorities could not fully rely on them. As a consequence as soon as the imperial armies withdrew from Bihar after suppressing Afghans the Rajas one after the other openly rebelled and refused to pay tribute. Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur, Raja Puran Mal of Gidhaur, Raja Gajpati Ujjainia and Raja of Khokhra rebelled on several occasions during Akbar’s reign.

The chieftains however improved their position at the Mughal court during the reign of Jahangir. For the first time some of them were granted mansabs. Raja Roz Afzun assigned the rank of 1500/700 during the reign of Jahangir. He remained at the court for sometimes and became a great favourite of the Emperor. He was sent to enquire as to why Khurram defied imperial orders and captured the jagir of Dholpur, which had already been assigned to Shahriyar. Again Raja Roz Afzun was sent to summon Prince Parvez to the court to lead a campaign against the rebel Prince Khurram. Raja Roz Afzun was promoted to the rank of 2000 zat and 1000 sawar during Shahjahan’s reign. This was the highest mansab so far given to any chief of Bihar. He was asked not only to help the Mughal authority in and around Bihar but also was deputed to serve the imperial army in Kabul, Balkh and Deccan.

Raja Narayan Mal Ujjainia was also granted mansab of 1000 zat and 800 sawar during the reign of Jahangir. His son Raja Pratap Ujjainia held
mansab of 1500 zat and 1000 sawar in the first year of Shahjahan’s reign. He also granted him jagir in sarkar Shahabad. Another Ujjainia chief Raja Rudra Singh was able to win the confidence of emperor Aurangzeb and was appointed the faujdar of sarkar Shahabad for sometimes during 1682. Pratap Chero (1000/1000), Raj Bir Narayan of Panchet (700/300) Amar Singh of Bhojpur (1000/800) were also given ranks in the time of Shahjahn. During the reign of Aurangzeb no further promotions were given to any of the chiefs.

During the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan, all the four sons approached several chiefs of Bihar and sought their help. Princes Shah Shuja and Dara Shikoh, both appealed to Raja Dal Singh of Gidhaur to help them with his arm retainers. Dara Shikoh persuaded Dal Singh to capture Kharakpur as its chief Raja Bahroz had declined to help him and preferred to support Prince Shah Shuja. Dara Shikoh also rewarded Koklat Ujjainia (Gokul Chand Ujjainias, a rival of Amar Singh, the chief of Bhojpur), by promoting him to the rank of 1000 zat and 800 sawar for his help in the war against his brother. Raja Bahroz of Kharakpur helped prince Shah Shuja till the battle of Samugarh (29 May, 1658). Thereafter he went over to Aurangzeb and helped him against Shah Shuja. Other chiefs also sided with one or the other prince in the succession war. However after the accession of Aurangzeb also the position of the chiefs of Bihar could not improve.

The relation between the chiefs and the Mughal administration were generally not very cordial. During the reign of Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb also several chiefs rebelled and the imperial administration took very strong action after suppressing their rebellions. Raja Pratap Ujjainia
rebelled against the Mughals in 1637. He was arrested and executed in Patna and his chieftaincy (Bhojpur) was brought under Khalsa and Nemat Khan, son of Sayid Khan was deputed to look after the affairs of Bhojpur. However after a lapse of nearly twelve years, his son Amar Singh with the help of Prince Shah Shuja, was able to get back his chieftaincy. The case of Raja Sangram Singh of Kharakpur in this connection is quite unique and merits our attention. In 1606 he rebelled and in the battle fought with the imperial army posted in Bihar he was killed. It appears that after his death his state was brought under Khalsa and was restored to his son Toral Mal (named Roz Afzun after conversion) after some time on the condition of his embracing Islam. In the reign of Shahjahan also Raja Udho Singh of Garhi was recognized as the legal successor only on the condition of his conversion to Islam. We don’t have much information about Raja Udho Singh but Raja Roz Afzun and his successor Raja Bahroz enjoyed important position after conversion to Islam. Some of them such as Ujjainias of Bhojpur, Kharakpur, Palamau and Panchet were absorbed in the Mughal administration and were given mansabs But the Rajas of Gidhaur, Champaran, Kalyanpur, Kokhra, Seor etc were not given any mansab although they rendered military services as and when the Mughal administration required.

The chieftains were required to pay tribute (Peshkash) as a mark of submission. However the information in this regard is so little that it is difficult to determine the exact amount of Peshkash paid by the chiefs of Bihar. It is also not clear whether it was yearly or half yearly. Peshkash was generally presented at the time of submission or whenever the emperor, princes or their representative (high mansabdars or commander etc.) passed
through their territories. It was paid either in cash or kind. When in kind, it consisted of valuable commodities or the rarities of the region. In Bihar besides cash, elephants were the main items to be presented as *Peshkash*. The region of Kokhra being rich in diamonds its Raja invariably included diamonds in his *Peshkash*. In certain chieftaincies the administration arbitrarily fixed *Peshkash* at a very high rate and as the chieftains failed to pay the amount the states were invaded by the imperial armies and forced to pay the amount. If they failed, the chieftaincies were brought under *Khalsa*.

In view of ensuring the fidelity of the chiefs, whether *mansabdars* or *non mansabdars*, they were required to send their sons or kinsmen as hostages to the court. Hari Singh, son of Puran Mal of Gidhaur, was kept as a hostage at Delhi for the good conduct of Puran Mal.