MADAD MAASH LANDS

Muslim rulers of India granted rent free lands to men of piety and learning, and to persons belonging to the noble families who had no other means of earning their livelihood. The Mughals continued the practice of granting subsistence allowance to the pious, the learned, the poor and needy and to Shaikhs, Sayyids and Irani and Turani women. Such a subsistence allowance could be granted in cash or in the form of a grant of land. The subsistence allowance in cash was known as wazifah or rozinah and the grant of rent free land was known as madad maash or milk.² The two types of grant were covered by the general term aiyurghal.³

Madad maash, thus was a grant in land made in recognition of the need, piety, learning or the claim of the recipient by birth more especially to Shaik and Sayyid families. According to Abul Fazl persons belonging to the four classes were eligible for the grant of madad maash lands. First were those who were seekers after truth and for acquiring real knowledge had renounced the world. Secondly, there were persons who strove for conquering the desires of the sense and self and to attain their object had chosen a life of self abnegation and self-annihilation. Thirdly the claims of the needy and the poor,

1. Ain-i-Akbari I, p.141
2. Ibid I, p.140
3. Ibid I, p.140. The word aiyurghal which is of Mongol origin literally means a favour or a grant. Originally it denoted the document by which a tiyul was granted (Ency. of Islam vol. IV p.800).
who could not earn their livelihood on account of physical disability or for lack of material resources, had to be recognised. Lastly came the persons, claiming noble birth, who foolishly deemed it below their dignity or social status to take up any trade or profession.¹

**Nature of grant:**

It appears that grant could be made renewed, extended, curtailed or resumed whenever the Emperor liked to do so.² But in actual practice it conferred hereditary proprietary right in land, subject to periodical verification, confirmation or renewal of the grant to the heirs of a grantee.³ Some of the *farmans* specifically stated that the grant was made to the grantee and his descendants.⁴ It appears that the verification or confirmation was not annual but periodical.⁵ Another important feature of these grants was that in the overwhelming majority of cases the grants were in the nature of *maafi* i.e. free from land revenue and all other taxes termed as *huqqa-i-diwan* and *awarizat-sultan*.⁶ Thus it can be safely presumed that generally the *medad maash* grants were rent-free and the grantee was entitled

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2. Ibid I, pp. 140, 141.
5. Ibid No. 161
6. *Farhang-i-Kadami* f.39b: the list of remitted taxes is given in Allahabad Document No. 60 and in Akbar's *farman* preserved in the Research Library, Department of History, Muslim University, Aligarh. They were: *qanlichen* (process fee), *peakhkash* (presents), *jaribbanah* (rate imposed for defraying the charges of measurement of land), *sabitanah* (fee paid to measurers and assessors), *muhaassilanan* (fee of the tax gatherer), *muhanaran* (fee for sealing documents), *darojanahan* (superintendence charges), *beger* (employing anyone with-
to appropriate the produce of the soil or the revenue from the land and could lease out the land to the cultivator. But the possibility for the assessment of madad maqsh lands cannot be altogether ruled out and in fact we have some evidence to show that madad maqsh lands were sometimes subject to assessment. The earliest evidence about the assessment of madad maqsh land dates back to the year 1058 A.H. 1648 A.D. in Shahjahan’s reign. We learn from a document, preserved in the Central Records Office, Allahabad, that 990 bighas of land was granted to one Began Birlas earlier in the reign of Shahjahan. In 1058 A.H./1648 A.D. out of the total grant 476 bighas and one biswa of cultivated land was assessed in the way of zabti. A revenue demand of Rs.244/6/- was fixed at the rate of annas eight per bigha as was the customary rate in the parwana. Later on a parwanah granting remission of Rs.56/- was issued. The remaining balance of the revenue demand amounting to Rs.188/6/- was remitted in the year 1060 A.H./1649 A.D.

The evidence just summarised deserves some notice. We do not know the special circumstances which became responsible for the assessment of a part of the madad maqsh lands. Neither the reasons for partial and subsequently total remissions have been recorded. But the evidence clearly establishes that under particular conditions, not specified in the document under reference, the rent-free grant

(Footnote continued in continuation of previous page)

out remuneration), shikar (hunting fee), deh nimi (tax of five percent), mugaddami (headman’s fee), sad doi (tax of two percent) gaumundoi (fee of officers in charge of land tenures) and zabt-i-harseelah (cost of annual settlement). Also see Selected Documents of Shahjahan’s reign p.190.
of land was liable to partial assessment and that if and when the conditions permitted the assessed revenue or a part of it could be remitted.

Again we learn from a document relating to the same reign that *aima* lands of village Bhuara and village Haibatpur were assessed for Rs. 25/- and Rs. 5/- respectively.¹ We learn elsewhere that *aimadara* of Amethi had to pay the customary land revenue² of Rs. 1,0015/-. The *aimadara* of pargana Haidargarh, Satraik, Ibrahimpur and Anbola had also to pay a fixed land revenue.³ It appears that the entire parganas were granted as *madad maash* and that such lands were liable to assessment of land revenue. We can also infer that certain types of *madad maash* lands had acquired more or less the same character as *zemindari* lands, subject to revenue assessment. But the fact that they were still referred to as *madad maash* and *aima* lands suggests that the rates of assessment for such lands were most probably lighter than those of the *zemindari* lands. In fact the inference is supported by the evidence just quoted. We have noted that an entire village was assessed for Rs. 25/- while the grantee of other one had to pay only Rs. 5/- as the land revenue. Again it appears that the entire paragana of Amethi was assessed for an amount of Rs. 10,000/ or so which could hardly be the usual land revenue for a pargana.

Lastly, it is to be noted that the holders of *madad maash*

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¹ Allahabad Documents No. 1
² Ibid No. 218; dated 1179 A.H./1764 A.D
³ Ibid No. 218; dated 1179 A.H./1764 A.D.
lands enjoyed the right to sell or transfer land as gift\(^1\) in the same way as the zamindars did. The inference is based on evidences relating to the reign of Aurangzeb and post-Aurangzeb period and as such we cannot say with any amount of certainty that the holders of madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah land enjoyed the right to sell and transfer under Akbar and his two immediate successors. Thus for all practical purposes the madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah holders were owners of land granted to them and were not much different from the small zamindars as far as the interests and rights in the land were concerned. However, the majority of madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah grantees enjoyed the unique economic immunity from all heads of taxation. But it appears that quite a large number of grantees had to pay the land revenue like the zaminder, but most probably a preferential treatment was meted out to them in applying lighter rates of assessment to their lands.

**Type of land granted as Madad Mea\(\text{̄}\)ah:**

The madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah lands could be granted in jagir area\(^2\) or in mahal earmarked as khalsa\(^3\) or it could be granted out of land described as waste land excluded from jama\(^4\). It was also a well-established practice to separate madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah lands from khalsa and jagir mahals and consolidate it in order to avoid any dispute at the time of measurement.\(^5\) The idea of separating the madad mea\(\text{̄}\)ah lands from

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1. Allahabad Documents Nos. 294, 296
2. *Pastur-al-Amar* Beikas ff. 40 ab
3. Akbar’s Farman (986 A. H.) Allahabad Documents Nos. 3, 156, 157, 159, 162
4. Allahabad Documents Nos. 150, 157, 159, 160, 162
5. Ibid Nos. 10, 180, 160
khalsa and jagir mahale was for the first time mooted by Akbar.  

The grants of madad maash lands out of khalsa and jagir lands were few and far between. Only a few documents indicate that the madad maash grant was made out of khalsa lands, especially under Akbar. Gradually the practice tended towards grant of madad maash lands out of land lying waste and excluded from the jama and by the first half of the 18th century it had become a well-established administrative practice. Under Akbar the proportion of cultivated and cultivable land was fixed in the ratio of 1:1. It appears that the ratio indicated in the Ain served only as a standard and not as a rigid regulation and variations according to the local conditions were admissible by the Revenue Ministry. The area of a madad maash grant by virtue of a single farman varied from 15 bighas to more than four thousand bighas. Generally, the larger grants of madad maash lands ranged between 500 to 1000 bighas. But it would be wrong to presume that there was any ceiling over a grant of more than one thousand bighas of lands, as has been suggested by some scholars. In fact, there is evidence to show that grant made by virtue of a single farman exceeded

1. Allahabad Documents No. 24
2. Akbar's Farman dated 985 A.H. reveals that the entire grant was made of the cultivable land included in the jama. The area of the land tilled by the peasants and the land tilled by the grantees themselves are given in the farman.
3. Allahabad Documents Nos. 157, 158, 159, 163; Farhang-i-Kardani f.39 a
4. Ain-i-Akbari I, p.141
5. Allahabad Documents No.162, the document is dated the 14th regnal year of Jahangir Document No.296 dated 1004 A.H. records the grant of 29 bighas, 20 bighas cultivated, 9 bighas fallow.
the area of four thousands bighas.¹

Procedure of Grant:

The procedure of the grant of madad maash land can best be studied from some documents,² preserved in the Central Records Office Allahabad and in the Farhang-i-Kardani.³ It appears in the first instance a report stating a deserving case along with the necessary recommendation was submitted to the imperial court. The report was known as the fard-i-haqiqat.⁴ After it had been received at the court and duly recorded in the siyaha⁵ it was presented to the emperor. In case the recommendation made in the report was approved by the emperor he issued verbal orders for the grant of madad maash lands. The details of the grant, the name of the Sadr and the name of the wajah-i-nilgah were recorded in the yaddasht-i-wajiah. After the completion of these entries in the Sadr instructed that the yaddasht should be presented to the emperor again. This process was known as arg-i-mukarrar. These families completed the Sadr issued an order to prepare the farman for the grant of madad maash lands approved by emperor. The farman specified the area of land granted as madad

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1. Allahabad Documents No.154, dated 12th regnal year of Shahjahan 1049 A.H./1639-40 A.D.; also see Allahabad Documents Nos.144, 180, 199 which record the grants of 1562 bighas, 3039 bighas and 2220 bighas respectively.
2. Allahabad Documents Nos.220,226
3. Farhang-i-Kardani f.39
4. Ibid, f. 39a
5. Most probably refers to siyahi-i-waqai or the register recording the proceedings and translations at the court.
maash, the name of the grantee and necessary instructions to the officers concerned to note the content of the farman and make over the possession of the land specified in the farman to the grantee. An account of the formalities completed at the court, and the details of the area of land granted as madad maash land¹ was recorded on the back of the farman which was known as zimn. A parwanah, recapitulating the content of the farman was issued by the department of the Sadr and it bore his seal. The parwanah made a reference to the content of the farman along with the date on which it was issued and directed the qasas and Karoris to comply with the royal order.

Verification, Confirmation and Renewal:

The grant made as madad maash was subject to periodical verification and confirmation by the office of the Sadr. It was the duty of the grant holders to come to the office of the local Sadr and establish their claims by producing reliable witnesses who had to confirm that the grant holders in question were still alive, and that the land granted to them was in possession and use of the grantee. In case the Sadr was satisfied on these points a new sanad² was issued to the grant holders which confirmed them in the possession and use of the land granted to them.³ This administrative practice was known as tashihah.⁴ On the death of a grant holder his or her heirs had

1. It appears that under Akbar till the year 986 the details of the area of land granted as madad maash lands were given in the text of the farman (see Akbar's Farman dated 986 A.H./1578 A.D. Deptt. of History, Muslim University, Aligarh.

2. Patent

3. Allahabad Document Nos. 2,165,168,174,176,178,

4. Ibid Nos. 168, 171, 175
to apply for renewal and confirmation of the grant in their names. They had to establish their claims to the grant by producing witnesses who attested to the following:

1. That the claimants were alive and the land granted to the deceased was in their possession and use.
2. That they had no other means of livelihood.
3. That they possessed the verification and confirmation deeds of the former Sadrs.

In case the Sadr was satisfied on these points he recommended the case for renewal and confirmation of the grants to the heir of the deceased. The grant was thus confirmed and renewed by virtue of $\text{hasab-ul-hukm}$.

The Department of the Sadr.

The administration of madad maash lands was entrusted to a separate department under the Sadr or Sadr-us-Sudur. Under Akbar the department does not appear to have been a very elaborate one, but it was well organised and was served by three important officials, namely a Bitilchi or secretary of distinguished ability known as Diwan-i-Saadat, the Qazi and the Mir Adl. The Sadr was selected on the basis of certain qualifications. He was required to possess clear thinking and a liberal outlook so as to admit no distinction on grounds of

1. I have examined some ten cases of renewal and confirmation to the heirs of a deceased grantee. But of ten nine have been renewed and confirmed in compliance with a $\text{hasab-ul-hukm}$. Only in one case the grant has been renewed and confirmed by virtue of a farman in which the area of land granted as madad maash exceeds 4 thousand bighas (Allahabad Documents No.154). It appears that generally that renewal and confirmation was made on the authority of $\text{hasab-ul-hukm}$. The renewal and confirmation by virtue of a farman was made a special case as it involved considerably large area of land granted as madad maash. For cases renewed and confirmed by $\text{hasab-ul-hukm}$ see Allahabad Documents Nos.9,166,167,168,169,170,171,173,175,
race or religion. Kind disposition and industrious habits were other two qualifications necessary for selection.

Power and Functions of the Sadr:

The most important duty of the Sadr was to enquire into the conditions of the people and assess their needs so that they might be given subsistence allowance due to them. Moreover he was required to organise and run his department at the centre and in the provinces. He was consulted by the emperor in granting madad maas lands and the fact was recorded on the back of the farman. Every important paper dealing with the grant of madad maas lands bore his seal. It appears that the Qazis, provincial Sadrs and Muftis were appointed on his recommendation and with his consent.

Position:

Akbar's early Sadrs seem to have occupied an important position and exercised a great degree of discretionary power in granting madad maas lands. However the corruption and nepotism that obtained in the department led to a change in Akbar's attitude towards the power and position enjoyed by the Sadr. He began to take a personal interest in the administration of the department and consequently the Sadr was divested of much of the powers enjoyed by him. It was

1. *Ain-i-Akbari* I, p.140
2. Ibid, I, p.141
3. Akbar's Farman dated 985 A.H.
laid down that all such cases in which the grant exceeded five hundred bighas should be referred to the Emperor and until they were approved by him they should be withheld. Later on another regulation was issued which laid down that all grants exceeding hundred bighas which were not specified in the farman, should be reduced to 2/5th of the original area and the balance of 3/5th should be resumed as khalsa. The Sadr was authorised to enforce division of grants which were made to more than one person in case one of the grantees died. The share of the deceased was to be resumed as khalsa till the heirs of the deceased were presented to the Emperor. The power of the Sadr was limited to the grant of fifteen bighas of land without the prior sanction of the Emperor. The Sadr was also authorised to verify, confirm or renew the old grants. In the early years of Jahangir the Sadr regained some of his former powers and privileges. But it did not last long and after the seventeenth year the Emperor divested the Sadr of the power to make grant on his own authority. Under Shahjahan theoretically the position remained the same but Muswai Khan, the Sadr, transgressed the limits of his power. He was accused of granting madad maash lands and wazifah to undeserving persons without any reference to the Emperor. Shahjahan took a serious view of the situation and the Sadr was removed from his office.

1. Ain-i-Akbari I p.141
2. Central Structure of the Mughal Empire, pp. 272,273
3. Central Structure of the Mughal Empire pp. 275 Badshah Name II, pp. 365,366
The office of the Sadr-us-Sudur continued to function in the first half of the 18th century. It appears that the appointment in his department were made through him and the order of appointment bore his seal.¹ A passage in Khafi Khan reveals that during the supremacy of Sayyid brothers, Mir Jumlah, who held the office of the Sadarat-i-kulhad lost much of his power and authority. Ratan Chand exercised absolute powers even in matters relating to the Holy Law. Even the Qazis and other officers of the department of law and justice were recommended and appointed by him.²

The Provincial Sadr.

We have noted that Akbar tried to curtail the power of the Sadr-us-Sudur and check the corruption that obtained in the department. He also paid adequate attention to organise the department at the provincial and pargana level. The madad maash land were separated from the khalsa and jagird lands and were directly administered by the provincial or regional Sadrs and the pargana Qazis. It appears that for some time the office of the Sadr-us-Sudur was abolished and the administration of the madad-maash land was entrusted to regional and provincial Sadrs.³ However, later on the office of the Sadr-us-Sudur was revived and the provincial Sadr continued to function throughout the 17th and first half of the 18th century. We do not know much about the function and duties attached to the office of the provincial Sadr under the great Mughals. However,

1. Mirat-i-Ahmedi Supplement p.173
3. Akbar Nama III p.372
the functions and duties attached to office of the provincial Sadr, as it existed in the first half of the 13th century, have been described in the Mirat-i-Ahmadi. The provincial Sadr, we are told, was appointed by virtue of a sanad bearing the seal of Sadr-us-Sudur. The provincial Sadr held a zat and a gawar rank and the office carried with it a conditional rank of 50 zat and 10 sawars. The Qazis, the Muhtasibs, the Imams and the Mutawallis of tombs and the Moazzins served under him and obtained their letters of appointments from his office. The sanads relating to maded maash, wahifah and rozinah were submitted to him for verification and confirmation. Papers relating to resumption of maded maash lands bore his seal and signatures.

The maded maash lands at the pargana level were administered by the Mutawalli. It appears that in the first half of the 13th century the Mutawalli came to be more and more associated with the administration of the maded maash land. From a document in the Dastur-ul-Anam Beikas we learn that a pargana Mutawalli was appointed by virtue of a royal order, and served under the Sadr. He en-

1. Mirat-i-Ahmadi Supplement p.173
2. Mutawalli: an administrator or procurator of any religious or charitable foundation
3. Imam: one who leads the prayers
4. Moazzin: the public crier who assembles the people to prayers by proclamation from a minaret or tower of a mosque
5. Muhtasib: an officer in the police department who examined weights and measures and provisions and prevented gambling and drinking etc.
6. The mutawalli has been mentioned as one of the signatories of a chaknama in a document dated 1019 A.H./1610 A.D. We know from a latter document that he was an officer connected with the administration of maded maash land at the pargana level. (Dastur-ul-Anam Beikas ff. 38-39) It can be therefore, reasonably suggested that office of the Mutawalli dates back to Jahangir's reign if not earlier.
quired into the conditions of the persons who held madad maqash lands or received cash allowances. He was required to send regular reports to the office of the Saadir. He put his seal on the papers relating to grant of madad maqash land and cash allowances.¹

The institution of sivurghal or madad maqash land occupied an important position in the agrarian system under the Mughals. Apparently, it might suggest itself as an institution born of misguided charity which produced a class of parasites who contributed little or nothing to the political and economic life of the country but were a constant source of drain on the public treasury. There may be a partial truth in the hasty conclusion but a careful analysis of the institution will undoubtedly contradict the assumption and give a real insight into the nature and function of the institution in the agrarian set up of the country. In fact it had important bearing on the political, economic and social life of the country and had its own place in the administrative set up of the Mughal Empire.

It may be reasonably argued that the Mughal emperors, generally speaking, were too secular to waste public money for feeding and nourishing a class of parasites that contributed little to their political and administrative ends. It will be readily conceded by every intelligent student of medieval Indian history that the political and agrarian conditions in those days were such that they were hardly conducive to a successful implementation of the imperial

¹. Daftar-ul-Imar Rekab f. 38, 39
regulations in the vast Empire of Hindustan. The tenacious zamindars, in an overwhelming majority of Hindus and the pivot of the political and agrarian life of the country, were ever ready to defy the State authority when they could do so with any amount of success. In fact, if we are keen to detect any trace of class war in medieval times we should seek it in the relationship that subsisted between the State and the petty princes or the numerous descendants of petty princes who were described by Indo-Persian historians as zamindars. It was a never ending conflict, sometimes hidden, at others apparent, in which the zamindars were subdued temporarily but never reconciled to their fate of subjugation by the imperial authority. Thus the attitude of the zamindars towards the State considerably increased the difficulty of maintaining law and order in large areas of the Empire which were at a distance from the administrative centres. It was even more difficult to collect land revenue where and when the zamindars chose to withhold their cooperation from the revenue officers. Under such conditions it was almost a political and administrative necessity to create some pockets of local influence which could be always depended upon for loyal services to the State. This could only be achieved if intelligent and tactful Muslims could be induced to settle down in the interior of the country and their means of livelihood were assured by the State in the form of grant of revenue-free lands. The grant of madad maash land, free from all taxation, was a powerful stimulant to such of the Muslim families who did not like the profession of a warrior and yet shunned trade and commerce as incompatible with their family pride and tradition.
Thus the Mughal State earmarked upon a policy of creating small pockets of Muslim population in a number of villages in almost every pargana. The people who were generally chosen for the tasks were Sheikhs and Sayyids. They were not only pious and learned but fairly tactful and intelligent. They settled down in remote villages in the interior and created a place of honour and respect for themselves among the local population. They by their saintly lives, at least the original grantees, their deep human sympathy and catholicity of outlook won for themselves the unique title of miran, an expression of admiration for virtuous and kind conduct and docility. The development of this attitude towards the madad maah grantees indicates that they inspired confidence in the alien Hindu population and most probably exercised their influence with the local officers to protect the local Hindus from unjust exactions or other forms of oppression. If successful in their efforts to protect the rights and interests of the local population they indirectly inspired confidence among the rural Hindu towards the State. On the other hand, they furnished the government officers with reliable information about the political and administrative condition of the locality, and under conditions of emergency they might join the government forces as soldiers to curb a local disturbance.

1. Under Akbar, however, a few grants were made to non-Muslims. The grantees were a Parsee, named Kaqubad and a Hindu priest at Gokul. Whereas the grant made to the Parsee is named as madad maah, the fanman conferring the grant of village Gokul merely states that the said village had been granted to meet the expenses of the temple and that the grantee should be exempted from all taxes including land revenue. See The Parsees at the Court of Akbar pp. 119, 193; Imperial Farmans: No.V; also see Farman No.VII.
Economically, the practice created a considerably large class, spread all over Northern India, which depended for its livelihood on land. They were not called zamindars but for all practical purposes they had the same interest and title in land as the zamindars. However, they enjoyed the unique economic immunity in that so far as their lands were free from all taxation. But the grants were generally small ranging from 100 to 1000 bighas and therefore they were, in most cases, not much better off than the village zamindars. Thus the practice of granting madad maash lands created a class of Muslim village zamindars and later on it actually assumed the zamindari right in land, and sometimes had to pay the customary land revenue as paid by the hereditary zamindars or those who had acquired zamindari rights in land by purchase. I do not want to suggest that the Muslim zamindars of the later Mughal period were invariably the grant-holders or their descendants. Muslims, of course, acquired zamindari rights by purchase and sometimes converted the jilarah lands into zamindari. But it is important to note that by the first half of the 18th century the madad maash grants were quite freely treated in transactions as zamindari lands and hardly any distinction was made between a zaminder or one who held this land by right of purchase or a person who had acquired it in hereditary rights as the descendant of a grant holder.

Socially, the institution became responsible for fostering

1. Allahabad Documents No. 439
and developing the belief and practice of religious toleration among the rural population of Hindustan. The Muslims who settled down in the villages had direct contact with the urban culture of the provincial or district head-quarters and were thus in a position to carry the Muslim urban culture in the remote interiors of the country. They were faced with new and unfamiliar surroundings. But as they had long cultural traditions and continued to maintain their contacts with the provincial head-quarters or with the capital they would not be absorbed by the local culture of the majority population. They succeeded in retaining the essentials of their religious beliefs, manners and customs. Nevertheless they were considerably influenced by local custom and some of these became a part and parcel of their own culture. With the passage of time they began to participate in local festivals not as a matter of belief, but merely as local custom which afforded them an opportunity to rejoice with men who, although professing a different religion, were their-life long companions to face the common problems of the rural life. Similarly the simple minded Hindus in the villages came to know and understand the Muslim culture and religion as practiced and observed by the Muslim in their daily life. Gradually the realisation came to the Hindus that the Muslims were not altogether unholy as they were made to believe from the accounts handed down from their forefathers who identified a Muslim with a Turk and a malich, a tyrant and a creature of extremely unholy and unclean habits. Consequently the rural Hindus developed an attitude of toleration towards the much despised Turk and the contemptible odium of Turk was replaced
by the loving and respectable title of Miyan, signifying a man of extreme docility and innate nobleness.

It is difficult to ascertain how far the two sections of the rural population influenced each other and that practices and customs were mutually exchanged. But one who is well-acquainted with the rural conditions in areas of mixed population as well as in areas where Muslim population is concentrated only in a number of villages will agree with the present writer that the settling down of Muslim families in rural areas had tremendously affected the minds of Indian villagers. Hindu and Muslim villagers developed alike a deep rooted sense of religious toleration which was born of a realisation of common needs and problems of the limited but compact life of an Indian village. The direct contacts of life-long duration, often maintained for generations, fostered an understanding between the two sections of the rural population and served to weaken the prejudices against each other. The impact of religious toleration had been so deep that an illiterate villager, Hindu or Muslim not only believes in but practices complete religious toleration, and shuns an act which might hurt the susceptibilities of the followers of another religion. Thus while the grants of revenue-free lands have been liquidated and even the descendants of the grantees might have emigrated from their ancestral homes, the legacy of the religious toleration in rural India is still a cherished asset left by the institution of madad maash grants.