The unit of assessment in the first half of the 18th century known as was mauza or the village. It comprised arable land, abadi or the village site, pools, groves, nullah and forest or waste lands. The boundaries of the village were demarcated and the villages varied within wide limits as to the area entered against them. But an average village might contain about one thousand bighas of arable land. The land under cultivation was divided into plots each marked by raised borders and probably each field was denoted by a particular number. A village, it appears contains thousands of such plots. The peasants remebered each field with a proper noun as they do even today.

An ordinary village might be expected to contain, in addition to the zamindars, muqaddams, the peasants, known as asami or mezareas, landless labourers, the village servants or the khidmati parjas. We have already examined the position, the rights and functions of the village zamindar in some detail. The landless

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1. Dastur-ul-Amal-i-Alamgiri f. 41b. cf. Garden of India p. 200; Diwan-i-Pasand f.7b, Diwan-i-Pasand f.8a.
2. Allahabad Documents No.302. The names of the field given in the document read as:
labourers, although forming an important section of the village population, did not possess land and, therefore, their position lies beyond the scope of our discussion. An attempt is made in these lines to examine the position of the peasants in the village economy in some detail and their relations with the village servants will also be briefly noticed.

**Peasants**

Before we proceed to examine the relevant evidence about the peasants contained in our authorities it may be pointed out that the present writer will be using the word peasant in a sense different from the one in which it was used by Late Mr. Moreland. For me, the peasant signifies the cultivator who might or might not have enjoyed the occupancy right but he never held an hereditary and transferrable right in the soil tilled by him. Such a cultivator in the Persian chronicles and documents is described as kashvārī, mārarā, sami, or ryot. According to Late Mr. Moreland the peasantry included the Brotherhood or village zamindārs, the peasants living in the village and the peasants living in another village and those coming in to work.  

However, we will be using it in a restricted sense which excludes the village zamindārs. The reason for the use of the word peasant in a restricted sense and different from the one in which it was used by the distinguished writer is an anxiety to avoid the confusion which would be created in the mind of a student of the subject.

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1. *Agrarian System of Moslem India*, p.161. It has been noted by Mr. Moreland in the foot notes that in the records the peasants forming the Brotherhood are usually called village zamindārs, pattidārs, or partners (p.161 fn.).
to whom the word zamindar signifies something quite different from one who cultivated the land, paid land revenue but claimed no transferable rights in it. Our Persian authorities have clearly differentiated between one who belonged to the socio-economic class of the zamindars and the one who came from the unprivileged mass of the ryots. The land was tilled by the ryots or peasants as well as by the cultivating zamindars, but the important difference between the two was that the one belonged to a class, claiming rights and interests in land which were hereditary and transferable, whereas the other could not put forth any such claims and even his right of occupancy could be successfully disputed. Thus it will be readily seen that the use of the word peasant in a sense which ignores the essential difference between the two important sections of the agricultural community is rather treacherous and tends to understate the basic, social and economic difference which subsisted between the two classes and which has been invariably assumed by our Persian authorities.

Peasant in the Ain:

With these preliminary remarks we may now turn to trace the position of the peasant in the agricultural community that he occupied under Akbar. Meagre as it may appear, the evidence contained in the Ain helps us to form an idea of the agricultural community in the village and also throws some light on the position of cultivator. A careful examination of the two sections reveals

1. Ain-i-Amal Guzar and Ain-i-Bitikchi.
that the peasant occupied a somewhat subordinate position to persons who are referred to as kalantoran-i-dah and rais.\(^1\) We read about the rais-i-dah who was closely associated with the work of assessment. He was paid in the form of grant of land or otherwise according to the amount of the service put in by him.\(^2\) Similarly, kalantoran i-dah, when read in the context in which phrase has been used suggests that these persons enjoyed a superior economic and social position to that of the peasants, and in fact they were regarded as potential oppressors of the peasants, in case the naseem arrangements were made with them and it was left to them to distribute the assessed land revenue over the holdings of individual cultivators.\(^3\)

We also note the presence of the Muqaddam in the village but he appears more in the role of a semi-official who recorded the measurement operations along with the Patwari and was also associated with the work of collection.\(^4\) Thus a careful analysis of the two sections in the Ain reveals that the agricultural community in a village was divided into two broad categories, those who were vested with interests and rights of a superior nature in land and those who occupied a subordinate position in the economic structure of a village. Those who belonged to the first category have been variously referred to as rais, kalanter, and avam. We have examined elsewhere that certain persons, even in the reign of Akbar, held certain rights in land which were hereditary and transferrable in their

\(^1\) *Ain-i-Akbari* I pp. 198-200; Kalantoran-i-dah refers to those who occupied a superior social and economic position in the village and rais signifies one who owned property.

\(^2\) Ibid, I p. 198

\(^3\) Ibid I p. 199

\(^4\) Ibid I p. 199, 200
nature and such persons were recorded in the documents as zamindars. We have also observed that such zamindars were village zamindars who were quite distinct from the tributary chiefs, and we could meet them almost in all the mahals of the Empire. These facts, when read together with the inferences drawn on the basis of evidence available in the two sections of the Ain lend strong support to the proposition that the words rais, kalantar and avan represent those interests in land which have been identified by us with the village zamindar. Thus a village under Akbar contained the village zamindar and the peasants or cultivators who have been variously recorded in the Ain as kashtwar, bazantar and ryots and it were they who really formed the peasantry in the Indian sense of the word. Now it remains to ascertain the actual position occupied by the peasants in the agricultural community of a village.

**Direct relationship:**

An examination of the relevant passages indicates that direct relationship existed between the government and the peasants. We are told that the agreement about the revenue demand with individual cultivators was duly recorded against the name of the individual cultivators. We read in the same section that after the completion of assessment operation the revenue demand against each peasant was noted and the total demand against the village was accordingly prepared.¹ Elsewhere the Amil has been instructed

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¹ *Ain-i-Akbari*, p.200
that he was required to estimate the area of the damaged crops in the course of measurement operation, prepare a note and hand it over to the peasants on that very day. The evidence under reference implies that generally the assessment was made directly on the holdings of the individual peasant and that immediate redress was available to him if some damage was done to his crops. Moreover, positive instructions were issued to the Amal Guzar not to make nasaq arrangement with the kalantoran-i-dah as it would lead to oppression and the weak (peasants) would suffer. He was on the other hand advised to approach the individual cultivators and hand over the deed of agreement to him.¹

The relevant evidence also indicates that in matters of collection direct relationship between the peasants and government existed. The individual peasant was entitled to pay the land revenue directly to the person authorised by the government to collect the land revenue.² The land revenue administration under Akbar did not favour the collection of land revenue through an intermediary and the Amil was instructed to see that the peasant should twice or thrice see the treasurer and deposit the land revenue with him, so that the evil caused by the exacting and wicked intermediaries could be eradicated. Again the Amil was required to instruct the Patwari of every village to note the collections made from the ryots in detail in a memorandum and hand it over to the ryots.³ This memorandum was known

¹ Ain-i-Akbari I p.199  
² It appears that Muqaddams and Patwari were authorised to collect the land revenue from the peasants. (Ain I p.200)  
³ Ibid, I p.199  
⁴ Ibid, I p.200
as yaddaht or sarkhat. We again read in the Ain-i-Akbari that the Bitiekhvi was required to adjust the accounts without keeping the ryots in waiting when they approached him for the adjustment of their accounts. The evidence summarised above bears strong indications that generally the collections were made directly from the peasants and where the work was done through intermediaries it was disapproved by the Revenue Ministry.

Thus our investigations reveal that direct relationship existed between the government and the peasants, in matters of assessment as well as in collection. One might be tempted to argue that the evidence contained in the Ain may be taken to represent the ideal rather than the actual practice. However, evidence relating to a subsequent period indirectly indicates that under Akbar the assessment was made on the holdings of individual cultivators and not on the entire village. We will soon be examining the evidence under reference in some detail. Here it should suffice to note that the evidence in the Ain tends more to indicate the actual practice than the ideal. Variations in practice cannot be ruled out in a large empire like that of Akbar but may be tentatively suggested that in the majority of the villages the peasants came in direct relationship with the government.

But such a reading of the evidence contained in the Ain

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1. Ain-i-Akbari I p.200
2. Ibid. I p.201
3. Nigar Name-i-Munshi ff.129-131; Khulasat-us-Siyaq f.23 b
4. See Todar Mal’s proposals, Akbar Name III pp.385-386.
appears to be self-contradictory in as much as the presence of intermediary has been taken to be incompatible with direct relationship between the government and the peasants. An examination of the position of the village zamindar or intermediaries, discussed elsewhere in greater detail, will, however, reveal that apparent contradiction owes its origin to misleading conception of the village zamindar under the Mughals. The village zamindar under Akbar and his successors held certain rights and interests in land which were hereditary and transferrable in nature. Moreover, he was associated with the local land revenue administration in connection with cultivation of arable land and collection of land revenue. He was required to ensure that all the arable land in his zamindari was brought under cultivation. He received something for his proprietary rights in land where it was brought under cultivation. The proceeds for his proprietary rights were known as malikanah. For his services rendered to the State in connection with cultivation of land he was entitled to a subsistence allowance known as nanker, which in fact was a commission on the total collections and could be paid either in the form of revenue free land or in cash. However, if a zamindar did not engage for the collection of assessed land revenue he forfeited the nanker rights and was entitled to only malikanah. Thus a zamindar did not lose his right or interest in land if he did not engage for the collection of land revenue as an intermediary and such an engagement was a matter of agreement

between the government and the zamindara. The initiative to make an offer rested with the government and it could withhold it if it chose to do so. Similarly, a zaminder was entitled to accept or refuse the offer to engage for the collection and payment of land revenue. This appears to be the legal position of the zaminder under the Mughals. However, under Akbar, in actual practice, the land revenue administration chose to collect the land revenue directly from the cultivators. As such we can reasonably suggest that the position of the zaminder under Akbar did not preclude direct relationship between the peasants and the government and the presence of intermediary or the village zaminder was not incompatible with the practice of direct assessment on the holdings of the individual cultivators and direct collection from them. The arrangement of revenue assessment and collection under Akbar did not violently interfere with the rights and interest of the widely spread and strongly rooted class of the zamindara and perhaps in the given conditions of the time it was not possible to do so. However, by maintaining direct relationship with the peasants the land revenue administration did much to save the peasants from many possible oppressions which could issue from active participation of the zamindara in the work of assessment and collection. The arrangement appears to have been a happy compromise between the various parties which had an interest in land and the presence of zaminder might also act as a deterrent against the malpractices of corrupt government officers.

The relevant evidence relating to the reign of Aurangzeb and
to the post-Aurangzeb period, however, indicates that in the first half of the 18th century the relative positions of peasants and intermediaries had undergone considerable change which tended to weaken or even eliminate the direct relationship between the government and the peasants. These developments can be traced in a number of documents contained in the *Nigar-Nama-i-Munshi*, the *Khulasat-us-Siyaa*, the *Hadidat-ul-Jawanin* and the *Daestur-ul-Azm-i-Shikae*. An examination of the relevant passages reveals that by the reign of Aurangzeb the holdings of individual cultivators no longer formed the unit of assessment but the revenue demand was fixed for the entire village on the basis of previous records. The earliest notice of the change is available in the *farman* issued to Basikdas Karori in the 8th regnal year of Aurangzeb. The *farman* notes that the *jama* of the most of the villages of the parganas in the Empire was assessed in the beginning of the year on the basis of records showing the maximum collections, collections for the past year, the area of arable land and the resources of the ryots. In other words group assessment on the basis of previous records was the general practice. The *farman* points out that the practice was not desirable either in the interest of ryots or for the prosperity of the country. The local officers were advised to revert back to the practice of assessing the holdings of the individual cultivators. The advice, it appears, was ignored by the local land revenue administration, as is indicated by a passage

1. *Mughal Administration* pp.190-198; *Nigar Nama-i-Munshi* ff.129-131
contained in the *Khulasat-us-Siyāq*, a work compiled in the closing years of Aurangzeb's reign. The passage under reference describes the general practice which obtained in assessing the land revenue and adds that the Amin examined the *mawaznah* papers for the last ten or 20 years of every village of the pargana, noted the *jama-i-kabīl* and *jama* for the last two years, assessed the *jama* in lump sum and distributed it over the village in consultation with Chaudharis, and Qanungos. The method of assessment, described in the passage, it may be pointed out, in *naseeq* in its form of group assessment which was disapproved by Akbar. The passage notes the evil effects of the group assessment and points out that such a practice enabled the leading men to under assess their own holdings and those of their relations and transfer the burden on the villages where land was tilled by the ryots. It is added that an Amin who is efficient, experienced and a man of integrity ascertained the conditions obtaining in each village and assessed the land revenue on the holdings of individual cultivators. The inference is that practice to assess the holdings of individual cultivator was still regarded as an ideal but it was in the actual fact an exception and associated only with the Amins of exceptional ability and integrity. The evidence also suggests that the land revenue administration had not yet lost the memory of the direct relationship between the government and the peasant which subsisted in the reign of Akbar. There is some evidence to show that by the reign of Aurangzeb the practice of collecting

1. *Khulasat-us-Siyāq*, f.23b
the land revenue through this an intermediary had become quite common. The peasant had lost contact, at least in majority of the villages, with the government. The assessment was made not on the holdings of the individual cultivator but on the entire village and the distribution of the assessed land revenue was left in the hands of intermediaries who also engaged for the payment of the assessed land revenue. 1

Our investigations based on the evidence relating to the reign of Aurangzeb are directly confirmed and corroborated by evidence contained in the works compiled in the post Aurangzeb period. The instructions about the method of assessment contained in the Hidayat-ul-Sawanin indicate that group assessment was the general practice in the years that followed the death of Aurangzeb. We learn that the assessment was made on the basis of previous records and revenue settlement was signed by the Muqaddams. The zamindars were required to endeavour for the extension of land under cultivation and pay the land revenue as assessed by the Amin. The provision was made that after the payment of land revenue the zamindars could save something for themselves. 2 An examination of the evidence summarized above will reveal that the position of the zamindars as intermediaries to engage for the land revenue was duly recognised. The zamindars continued to occupy the position of intermediary for purposes of assessment and collection in the remaining years of the first half of the 19th century.

1. Farrang-i-Kardani f.34 b; Khulasat-us-Siyaq f.19b
2. Hidayat-ul-Sawanin, f.27 b, 28b
The patta (lease) reproduced in the Dastur-ul-Amal-i-Baikas indicates that the zamindars and Muqaddams engaged for the payment of land revenue.\(^1\) According to the author of the Diwan-Pasand in every mauza or village there were a number of Muqaddams or the owners of the village and subordinate to them were a few hundred persons known as aami or mazarsa. These aami tilled the land and paid the land revenue to the government through the Muqaddams.\(^2\) We read elsewhere in the same authority that it was a common practice to settle the land revenue with the zamindars and such a settlement was known as jama-i-mushakhas. Only when a zamindar, for one reason or other, declined to enter into an engagement for the assessed land revenue that the collections were showing revenue demand against each cultivator. Such a practice was known as amal-i-kham.\(^3\)

\[\text{Peasant in the 18th century:}\]

We had noted that in the first half of the 18th century the direct relationship between the government and peasants had ceased to exist; the group assessment had become the common practice and land revenue was collected through the intermediaries, village zamindars or the Muqaddams. It remains to investigate the nature of the right or interest in the land enjoyed by the peasants. The evidence on the point is rather meagre but an attempt shall be made to piece together the information available in our authorities. The important points of our investigation will be to examine the relationship that

\[\text{Notes:}\]

1. Dastur-ul-Amal-i-Baikas f.67a, 68b
2. Diwan-Pasand f.7 b
3. Ibid, f.15ab.
subsisted between the peasants and the zaminder; to ascertain the
nature of occupancy rights of the peasants and to form an idea about
the general economic condition of the peasants. The Dasturul-Amal-i-
Baikas contains a muchilka or undertaking given by the zamindars
or Muqaddams which throws some light on some of the points under
investigation. It appears that the zamindars were entitled to collect
the land revenue from the peasants as shown in the assessment accounts.
The zamindars were also entitled to ask the peasants to plough their
fields without any payment for the services rendered by the peasants.
But the zamindars could not demand more than what was customary in
the area. The passage also indicates that peasants had some occupancy
rights in the land. The zamindar gave an undertaking to the effect
that they would not cause any peasant of the village to leave it. More-
ever, if for one reason or another a peasant left the village they
would conciliate the absconding peasant in the following year, re-
settle him in the village and persuade him to cultivate his holdings.
However, if the peasant did not resettle in the village, his holding
would be divided among the zamindars. ¹ Thus the evidence under examin-
ation tends to suggest that in certain areas the peasant did not
only enjoy the occupancy rights in land but this right remained un-
impaired even in his absence provided he returned to the village
and engaged himself in cultivation of his field within a year of
absconding from the village.

¹ Dastur-ul-Amal Baikas f.36
Some confirmatory evidence relating to the right of occupancy is also available in the Dastur-ul-Amal of Mahdi Ali Khan. The first of the regulations contained in the Dastur-ul-Amal lays down that ryots who held their land in hereditary rights for a long time should not be ousted from the village. They should be under no circumstances be ejected from the hereditary lands occupied by the family of the peasant for a long time. Such land could be however, resumed if a peasant withdrew his claim of his own accord. Land so abandoned should be given to some one who held land in hereditary rights. The regulations under reference indicates that certain peasants held their lands in hereditary rights and that such rights were inviolable, except when such a peasant absconded or disclaimed his rights of his own accord.

We have noted the presence of hereditary ryots who could not be ejected. Evidence available in a work prepared in the late 18th century indicates that in Bengal the cultivators were grouped into three classes namely the pattadar ryots, faaali ryots and pai kasht ryots. The pattadar ryots seem to have enjoyed a superior position because they engaged for ten bighas of land and paid the land revenue for it but actually cultivated fifteen bighas of land. As such they were men of some means. The faaali ryots engaged every year for the land they brought under cultivation and paid the land revenue for they are described to be without any means. Non-resident cultivators were known as pai kasht and paid the land revenue for the land cultivated by them.

1. Dastur-ul-Amal of Mahdi Ali Khan p.11b
2. Risalah-i-Zirat f.9b.cf. Agrarian System p.161
Non-resident peasants were called, as they still are called pai kasht, but with varied spelling e.g. pyekoot). Resident peasants were called either as now chapparband, or else ka (f.n.p.161).
in the preceding lines tends to suggest that hereditary ryots in the preceding lines tends to suggest that hereditary ryots, 

\( \text{pattadar} \) ryots and \( \text{khudkast} \) ryots belonged to a privileged class of the cultivators and perhaps all these terms signify cultivators who enjoyed occupancy right in land and whose holdings were assessed on a comparatively lighter rates than those of the others such as the faasi and \( \text{pah kaah} \) ryots. A number of documents relating to the province of Awadh indicate that in certain areas it was a well established practice to write down the terms and conditions such as the amount to be paid and the period for which the land was acquired by the peasants from the \text{zemindars}. The documents under reference are the deed or deeds of acceptance on the part of the peasants but they suggest that in turn the \text{zemindars} would have given \text{pattas} or lease-deeds to the peasants. On this presumption we can suggest that \text{pattadar} ryots were also found in the province of Awadh.

Thus a careful examination of the available evidence seems to indicate that in the first half of the 18th century the position of the peasants was considerably weakened as they had lost the direct relationship with the government. The distribution of the assessed land revenue was largely left in the hands of the intermediaries who were also entitled to collect the land revenue from the peasants. Such an arrangement gave ample opportunity to the \text{zemindars} to exploit the peasants, if they chose to do so. How the power and privileges vested in the \text{zemindars} were exercised is a matter of conjecture. We have not been able to trace any evidence to indicate the manner in which the power given to the \text{zemindars} was utilised. However, there are indications that a considerably large number of peasants enjoyed the

1. Allahabad Documents Nos. 229, 324, 329
occupancy right in land and they were not reduced to the position of tenants-at-will as became the case in the early 19th century. The provision for protecting the ryots against ejection, and the practice of executing deed of acceptance for acquiring land for cultivation for a specified period indicates that in certain areas the land was considered valuable and there might have been some pressure on land. In the view of the facts noted above, no generalisation about the widespread scarcity of peasants and abundance of land waiting for men can be safely made. We can only suggest that there were areas where land was abundant and peasants were not available to bring it under cultivation. On the other hand, there were such tracts of the country where no additional arable lands were available and it could be acquired either by purchase or by ejecting the peasants. It may also be pointed out that in areas where enough additional land was available for cultivation the question of ejection was of little practical importance. But in other areas, where it was not easy to acquire enough new land for cultivation the question of ejection and the right of occupancy in land had acquired considerable practical importance for the agricultural community as well as for the local administration. This appears to be the significance of the provision for vesting the right of occupancy in the cultivators who were known as hereditary, patta dag or khudkaht ryots.

Conditions of the peasants:

There is no specific evidence to indicate the economic condition of the peasants in the period under study. We know that the peasant had to pay from 1/8 to 1/2 of the produce according to productivity
of the land which varied from place to place. We can also note that he had to pay something over and above the land revenue demand in the form of various taxes which were collected from him to pay the Patwari, the Gaungo, and the Chaudhari. Thus his net share in the produce was less than 1/3 or 1/2 of the produce. We have also noted that the weakening of the administration at all levels and the practice of jirahdar had adversely affected the interests of the agricultural community and specially those of cultivators. But there are indications that the jirahdar sooner or later vacated the village and the original zamindars were restored. Thus the period lacked stability in the administrative practices which was not conducive to the well-being of the peasants. The available facts, therefore, tend to suggest that an average peasant could not have been a man of any considerable means. Most probably he lived from hand to mouth. However, it is difficult to form any idea about the average income of an ordinary peasant. It depended on more than one factor. The caste of the peasants, the type of the village—whether the peasantry or the village zamindars formed the majority in the village, whether the village zamindars lived in an adjoining village and the entire land in the village in question was tilled by the peasants—the pressure on land determining the area of average holding, the integrity or otherwise of the Amil were some important facts which determined the income and means of the peasants. These facts will have to be investigated on a regional basis before we can arrive at any conclusion approximating the real state of affairs. At present all that we can say is that there were peasants who were men of some
means or what is known in rural India as hasiyatdar (literally men of means). In fact, these inferences are supported by the evidence contained in the Risalah-i-Zirat. We are told that pattadars were men of means whereas the faali ryots were destitute of any means.\footnote{Risalah-i-Zirat, f.35b} Such stray references which depict the Indian peasantry as naked and starving teeming millions seem to be a vicious exaggeration of the facts noted in a particular region with pre-conceived notion of poverty and prosperity without any proper perspective of the life in the rural Hindustan. It is difficult to believe that a peasantry, the majority of which lived at the verge of starvation did meet the exacting demands of the greedy and oppressive jirahdar or an Amil and yet managed to save itself from complete extinction. At the present stage of our knowledge it is better to leave the subject open till more definite and conclusive evidence is forthcoming to assess the lot of the peasantry in the first half of the 18th century.

\textbf{Muqaddam:}

Muqaddam literally means the first man and has been rendered into English as the headman. In the revenue literature of the Mughal period the word has been used loosely to signify the holder of an office in the land revenue administration at the village level, a zamindar, a representative of the peasants or of the zamindars, a person occupying the dual position of a servant of the zamindar and the representative of the peasants. The Muqaddam appears in the Ain as the holder of an office at the village level. He was

\footnote{Risalah-i-Zirat, f.35b}
associated with the work of assessment and collection; he recorded the measurement operations along with the Karkun and the Patwari,\(^1\) maintained tawlih or the assessment account,\(^2\) collected the land revenue and deposited it in the pargana treasury\(^3\). In a document dated 1072 A.H./1661 A.D., the Muqaddam appears to be occupying the dual position of the Karindah or the manager of the zamindar and the representative of the peasants in the village.\(^4\) We learn from another document dated 1060 A.H./1650 A.D., that there was a dispute between the two parties in a village about the collections made under the heads of muqaddami and biswai or sattarhi. They agreed, we are told, to divide the collections made under the two heads in equal halves between themselves. In the document under reference the muqaddami rights have been used as quite distinct from the sattarhi or biswai rights, which as we have noted in an earlier section, was another name for the zamindari or proprietary rights. The inference is that the parties to the dispute held the dual position of the owners of land and the holders of the office of the muqaddami. Incidentally we note that the office could be held by more than one person. The relevant evidence in the Dastur-al-amal Beikas indicates that they occupied a position similar to that of the village zamindar. They engaged for the payment of assessed land revenue and gave an undertaking to the effect that all arable land in the village would be brought under cultivation.\(^5\)

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1. Ain-i-Akbari I p.199
2. Ibid, p.200
3. Ibid I p.200
4. Allahabad Document No.375
5. Dastur-al-amal-i-Beikas ff. 31,32; Farhang-i-Kardani f.34 b, 64,65.
In a later work the Muqaddams has been defined as the owner of land. We are told that in every village there were many Muqaddams i.e. owners of the village and a large number of persons subordinate to them were known as asami or the cultivators, who tilled the land and paid land revenue through the Muqaddams. In the passage under reference it appears, that Muqaddam has been used as a variant for the zamindar. The inference is supported by an evidence contained in the same authority where the zamindar is described as an intermediary who engaged for land revenue. Thus the author of Diwan Pasand does not differentiate between zamindar and Muqaddam and uses the terms to signify an intermediary who engaged for land revenue and also held proprietary right in land.

From the reports compiled in the first quarter of the 19th century it appears that in some districts of the Doab the Muqaddams were representatives of village cultivators who claimed proprietary right in land. Such a right was not disputed yet they were usually ascribed to a class, different from the village zamindars. In the district of Delhi and in the districts adjoining to it the Muqaddams were recognised as the representative of the village zamindars. In many districts, we are told, many estates were found where no village zamindars or proprietors were forthcoming to engage for land revenue. In these districts the collections were made from the ryots who possessed no proprietary rights in the land. The collections were usually

1. Diwan Pasand ff. 7b, 8 a
2. Diwan Pasand f.15ab
3. Revenue Selections pp.91-92
4. Ibid, p.92
made through the representatives of the ryots who were known as Muqaddams.¹ The Muqaddam, we learn from the report, in some cases appeared as an old zamindar, who had sold his property but still continued to cultivate his paternal fields. Being the leading man in the village he still preserved his influence and therefore he was employed by the purchaser or the new zamindar to manage the village on his behalf in the character of a ryot-muqaddam.

Thus the records compiled by the early British administrators substantively confirm the inferences based on the evidence contained in the Persian sources. We might conclude by saying that the Muqaddam held certain interest in land and generally he occupied a representative position in the agricultural community. He might represent the zamindars or the peasants and at times he represented both. In certain areas, however, he was treated more or less on the same footing as a zamindar.

**Perquisites:**

In his position as the representative of the agricultural community the Muqaddam served the community as well as the government. For the services rendered by him he was paid either in cash or some land was granted to him. We have noted that certain persons were entitled to the collections made under the muqaddami dues.² The Muqaddam was also granted some land for services rendered by him and such a grant of land was known as *nankar*.³ It appears that the *nankar* grant

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¹ Revenue Selections p.92
² Allahabad Documents No.275
³ Dastur-ul-Amal-Alamgiri f.110 a, also see f.53b. A passage in Farhang-i-Kordani, however, notes that the Muqaddams were entitled to *inam* or grant of rent free land whereas the Chaudharis were entitled to *nankar* (see f.29)
was made over and above the muqaddami dues. The Amil was required to maintain among other papers the tumar or register showing the adjustments made on account of the nankar and muqaddami dues. He also maintained a register showing the area of land held by the Muqaddams. According to the Board's report of 1808 the nankar lands were held in some cases by the proprietor of the soil in others. It was held by persons totally unconnected with proprietary right in land such as Ganungo, their gumaashtas, Muqaddams, Chaudharies and Qaziz. Thus it appears that the Muqaddams were entitled to two perquisites namely muqaddami and the nankar. Muqaddami was most probably a commission on the total collections whereas the nankar was a grant of rent-free land.

Village servants:

We have noted that an ordinary village contained the village zamindars, the peasants, the landless labourer and the village servants, who still in certain rural areas are known as the khidmati paria. They served the entire village community and specially the agricultural community of the village, the zamindars and the peasants. No account of the village servants, except that of Patwari is available in the Persian records but the important village servants have been noted in the reports of the revenue officers in the early 19th century. The description of the village servants contained in the British records is corroborated by the presence of hereditary village servants even today in most of the villages in the country which is

1. Dastur-ul-Amil Amanzirī f.110 a
2. Revenue Selections p.199
now known as Uttar Pradesh. The important among the village servants, it appears, were the loher or blacksmith, the barahee or carpenter, nase or the barber and dhobee or the washerman. In some villages the sweeper also came under the head of village servant. Generally, the village servants were paid in kind and the practice continues eventoday. According to the report submitted by the collector of Agra for every plough on the estate it was customary, for the following persons who comprised the village establishment received from the tenants 10 seers of grain or adhwa (seer) on each khet (field). It appears that in some villages saqqah or water carrier was also employed and was paid a similar allowance of grain as above. The dhonook or the village watchman was an important servant in the village. The payment was made either in the form of grain or grant of rent free land. The bhangee or the sweeper was also granted some land but generally speaking the custom was for each house to give daily a rotee or cake.

Patwari:

The Patwari or the village accountant was an important servant in the village. His functions and duties find a notice in the Ain. Later documents hardly throw any light to indicate changes, if any, in the functions attached to the office of the Patwari. Under the Mughals the Patwari was the writer or the accountant of the village. Each village, we are told, by Abul Fazl, had one Patwari. He was

1. Revenue Selections p.278
2. The Village Establishment comprised blacksmith, carpenter, barber, washerman (Revenue Selections p.278)
3. Revenue Selections 278
4. Ibid 278
5. Ibid 278; In certain areas the pastees served as village watchmen.
6. Revenue Selections, p.278
employed on behalf of the cultivators and was paid one percent of
commission on the collections made under the head sad-doI of Patwari. 1
As to his functions he noted the measurement operations along with the
Muqaddam and Karkun and attested the consolidated accounts of assess-
ment. 2 He was also associated with the work of collection and he en-
tered in detail the collections made from the ryots in a memorandum
which was handed over to the peasants. 3 This memorandum was known as
sarkhat. He was authorised to collect the money and deposit it in the
pargana treasury. 4 He maintained the muakha-i-taujih or the accounts
of assessment, and the accounts of receipts and arrears. 5 We learn
elsewhere that the Patwari maintained a complete account of all collec-
tions made by the Amil in the local language. The account was known
as kachra-i-kham which was translated into Persian by the regular staff
in order to detect the misappropriations on the part of the Amil. 6

It appears that in the early years of the 19th century the
Patwari was paid by the zamindar who, in his own turn, collected a
tax, known as dema from the peasants at the rate of six pie on each
rupee as the right of the Patwari. 7 In a document dated 1154 we read
about the dema collected by the zamindar from the peasants at the rate
of one fulus per bigha which was over and above the satthi or
zamindari dues. 8 In case the dema under reference can be identified
with the dema described in the Revenue Selections as the right of the
Patwari collected by the zamindars, we can reasonably suggest that

1. Ain-i-Akbari I p.209, sad-doI literally means two percent
2. Ibid, p.199
3. Ibid, p.199
4. Ibid, p.200
5. Ibid, p.200
6. Khulasat-us-Siyas f.43 b, 44 a
7. Revenue Selections pp.278-79
8. Allahabad Documents No.329. The document under reference adds
    (Contd. on next page)
in the first half of the 18th century the Patwari was actually paid by the peasants through the zamindar. The inference is corroborated by the evidence contained in the Ain and quoted in the above lines.

(Foot note continued from previous page)

that the rates for dami were the same as in the past. The inference is that the dami was collected from the peasant even even in the 17th and 18th century.