The reign of Aurangzeb, like that of Akbar, is significant for a number of developments in the Mughal land revenue system. It saw some changes in the relative importance of the methods of assessment, a probable increase in the land revenue demand, a multiplication of intermediaries and an enormous increase in the jama figures when compared with those under Akbar. The reign is also notable for an unprecedented increase in the number of mansabdars, and a corresponding decrease in the number of pai-bad or jagirs available for assignment. A critical examination of these developments reveals that the land revenue administration and the mansabdari system were faced with a grave crisis which tended to undermine the political and administrative stability of the Mughal Empire. Thus the reign of Aurangzeb has a two-fold significance. In the first place, it saw the development of certain tendencies which were inherent in the system of Akbar, even though he himself might have disapproved of them. Secondly, these developments determined very largely the history of land revenue administration in the first half of the eighteenth century.

The reign of Aurangzeb opened under the shadow of a prolonged

1. **Literally amount; in land revenue administration it signified total amount of rent or revenue; here it refers to valuation or the maximum estimated income of the Empire.**

2. **Jagir lands resumed and not yet assigned constituted the mahal known as pai-bad, or the mahal available for assignment.**
civil war. It considerably affected the political and administrative stability of the Empire. The situation in the opening years of the reign is recorded in the Alemair Nama and in a froman addressed to Rasikdas Karori. It appears that cultivation suffered on account of the ravages committed by local chieftains who took advantage of the disturbed conditions in the Empire and did not miss the opportunity of defying the authority of the king with impunity. Local officers neglected the proper assessment of land and the records maintained by them were unsatisfactory by the Revenue Ministry which could not exercise necessary control over the local administration in the absence of reliable data regarding agrarian problems. It was also suspected that they were corrupt and indulged in malpractices, calculated to defraud the state and oppress the peasantry. There was general decrease in cultivation and the situation was alarming. The Revenue Ministry took a serious view of the situation. A thorough enquiry into the agrarian conditions of the country was made and specific evils in the working of the land revenue administration were pointed out. The forman issued to Rasikdars Karori records a critical examination of the situation and contains necessary regulations for improving the tone of administration.

Methods of Assessment: In the forman under reference the methods of assessment are given in order of priority. The evidence about the methods of assessment may be supplemented by the evidence con-

1. Alemair Nama pp. 436, 437
2. Nizam Name-i-Munshi ff. 129-131
3. Ibid ff. 129-131
tained in the Farhang-i-Kardani and the Khulasat-us-Sivaq which describe the various methods of assessment that obtained in the Empire. The farman under reference says that the jama of the most of the villages of the pargana 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. The method of assessment described in the farman has not been named but its description fits in with the description of nasaq in the Farhang-i-Kardani. We are told by Jagat Rai Shujai that the first method of assessment was nasaq which implied an assessment on the basis of mawazinah-dab-saleh, the jama figures for the last ten years. In order to determine the jama the Amin struck an average of the jama for the ten or twelve years and prepared the jamabandi or the revenue demand. Some confirmatory evidence is available in the Khulasat-us-Sivaq which indicates that nasaq in the form of group assessment was the general practice in the closing years of Aurangzeb.

1. Farhang-i-Kardani ff.32-33
2. Nizam Nama-i-Munshi ff.129-131
3. Mawazinah-dab-saleh: also known as teqsim was maintained by the Munshi. It was a consolidated statement of the agrarian conditions obtaining in a pargana for the last ten years, showing the number of villages, the area of arable land, land under cultivation, waste, forest, gardens, pools, nullah and the area of maded masah land; various crops sown in rabi and shahi with current prices of every article; jama figures, rates of assessments, and particular of receipts and arrears. (vide Hastur-ul-Aamal-Aalamgiri f.41.a; Land Revenue History of Bengal p.165 Liwan Fasad f.77).
4. Farhang-i-Kardani f.32 b; for a fuller discussion see appendix A.
5. Khulasat-us-Sivaq f.23 b.
Other methods of assessment which find a place in our authorities were zabt or measurement, kankut and shallah-bakhshi or sharing. In addition to these Farhang-i-Kardani takes note of some minor and comparatively little known methods of assessment known as hast-o-bud, polah bandi and khara bandi. The text contains many lacunae and it is not possible to describe these methods of assessment with any amount of certainty. Thus the important methods of assessments were nasaq, zabt, kankut, and shallah-bakhshi. However, the relative importance of the various methods of assessment had undergone some change.

Any examination of the evidence contained in the farman to Raskikdas, the Farhang-i-Kardani and in the Khulasat-us-Siyaq reveals a very significant fact for the student of land revenue administration under the Mughals. We learn that zabt was replaced by nasaq as the general practice in assessing the majority of villages. We can infer from the Ain that zabt constituted the most important method of assessment under Akbar in the five provinces of Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Awadh and in parts of Bihar, Malwa and Ajmer, and that his preference for it was quite pronounced. In the second half of the 17th century, however, nasaq had become the general practice.

1. Nigar-Nema-i-Munshi ff.129-131; Farhang-i-Kardani f.32 b; Khulasat-us-Siyaq ff.21.b-22.a
2. zabt or measurement involved measurement of land under cultivation and application of cash rates on the area under cultivation; in kankut the assessment was made on an estimate of the expected produce calculated on the basis of the area of land under cultivation; shallah-bakhshi signified sharing of the crops or grain.
3. The text can be read as pālah-bandī or lolah-bandī.
4. Farhang-i-Kardani f.32 b.
and sabt occupied only the second position. Next came the kanjcut and shallah bakhshi was the fourth alternative. It is also significant that under Aurangzeb the nasaq arrangements were generally made with the Muqaddams or zamindars. Akbar had, as recorded in the Ain, issued definite orders not to make nasaq with the headmen of the village. But in the second half of the century the practice was well-established. What is even more significant was the practice to make arrangements with the Muqaddams even in the areas where sabt obtained. Thus the intermediary in one form or another had established himself in the larger part of the empire. The assessment might or might not be made on individual peasants but the collection was invariably made through the Muqaddam or the zamindar. It was he who undertook to pay the assessed jama for a village or a pargana. The new practice in nasaq areas indicates that the government levied tax on land and not on produce as was done in the reign of Akbar. It also denoted the weakening of the administrative machinery and it was clear that the intermediary helped by the political and administrative conditions that obtained, had emerged with a position of more power and stability. We can safely presume that the agrarian conditions made it impossible for the government officers to collect money directly from the peasants. It appears that the cultivators were unable to pay the assessed jama, which had probably increased and the majority of them were found defaulters who preferred to leave their villages than pay the assessed jama. Such cultivators, who chose to leave their villages, found land and shelter in the nearby zamindari areas. Moreover, we know definitely that the
conditions in a *zemindari* area were better for cultivators than in the areas administered by the government officers. Under such conditions the local officers had no option but to make arrangements with an intermediary *muqaddam*, *zemindar* or *chaudhari*, who knew and understood the conditions of peasants and could exercise his local influence to persuade or coerce them to pay the assessed *jama*. The lump sum assessment of a village or pargana gave him some margin to lessen the tax pressure on the peasants and also to gain something for his own exertions, apart from the commission on collection allowed by the government. It was this margin or *gunjaish* which enabled him to serve the interests of the state and the peasants alike. At the same time he enjoyed a better economic position than his predecessor under Akbar or Jahangir.

**Share of the State:** The state demand, under Akbar, as we have noted, was fixed at one-third of the gross produce. This demand was the maximum and was collected from the land known as *polaj* and *parsuti* while reduced rates were applied in the case of less fertile land *chacker* and *benjar*. However, it appears that by the time of Aurangzeb the maximum had risen to one half of the gross produce. We cannot say precisely when the increase in the state demand occurred. But the evidence contained in the *Nigar Nama-i-Munshi*, the *Khulaasat-us-Siyaa* and the *Mirat Ahmadi* clearly indicate that during Aurangzeb's

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1. *Amsir Nama* pp. 781, 782
2. *Nigar Nama-i-Munshi* pp. 929, 142
3. *Khulaasat-us-Siyyaa* pp. 17-19
4. *Mirat-i-Ahmedi* pp. 270
reign the maximum had risen to one half of the gross produce. The orders say that the collection officers should not realise more than half of the gross produce. The inference is that in actual practice even more than one half of the produce might have been realised before this ceiling was fixed. At the same time the officers were advised to collect even less than half of the produce in case the agricultural conditions in a particular area justified it. They were instructed to assess the land revenue in keeping with the capacity of the peasants to pay so that they might not be ruined and uprooted. The assessment officers were advised to exercise their discretionary power to increase or reduce the revenue demand provided it did not exceed one half of the gross produce.

Ijarah: This reign also saw the practice of ijarah or revenue-farming becoming wide-spread and on a scale, perhaps unknown to the earlier reigns. It is difficult to say when the system was introduced but we know that certain mahals in Bengal were obtained by the Portuguese on ijarah in the reign of Shahjahan. However, no generalisation can safely be made on the basis of such meagre evidence as is available to us. During the reign of Aurangzeb the practice seems to have become quite wide-spread and khalas lands were leased out on ijarah. The Farhang-i-Kardani contains the form of a qubullat or deed of agreement for obtaining a pargana in ijarah against the payment of a stipulated sum.2 Again we hear Kani Hadi, the widow of Raja Jaswant Singh, imploring for grant of pargana Jodhpur in lieu of Swajah and

1. Anad Swalch I p. 496
2. Farhang-i-Kardani f. 34
and Jatiyaran or to lease out the said pargana in *ijarah* which could be duly assessed by the Diwan. We learn elsewhere that a large number of parganas were taken on *ijarah* by Diwan Sanjar Khan and Dilawar Khan in Awadh for a period of 12 years or more. A document dated 1084 Fasli records the lease and acceptance of 32 bighas, 8 biswas of land in village Khaswa, *pargana* Hisampur, Sarkar Bahraich against an annual *jama* of thirty two rupees eight annas to be remitted to the *khalsa* treasury regularly. The *farman* to Rasikdas Karori enjoins the local officers to prepare a complete list of the *mustajirs* and *mazar'as* in each village.

A critical analysis of the foregoing evidence should throw considerable light on the nature and extent of the practice of *ijarah* under Aurangzeb. The practice seems to have been very widespread; the State had recognised the practice as lawful and *khalsa* land was given in *ijarah* to petty as well as big *ijarahdars*. The holdings obtained in *ijarah* rights could be held for more than ten years. The practice can be regarded as a long term assessment on land and the agreement for collection of land revenue was made with an intermediary who was known as *ijarahdar*. This type of intermediary held the land for a fixed period on contract against a stipulated amount but he could not claim any hereditary rights in the land as his

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1. *Nagai Sarkar* Ajmer p.95
2. *Makhzan-i-Akhbar* ff.18,19
3. Allahabad Document No.177
4. Revenue-farmers
5. Peasants
6. *Nigar Nama-i-Munshi* ff.32,33
counterparts, the Muqaddam and zamindar, were allowed to enjoy. The ijara-dars could be classified under a number of grades according to the extent of the land held by them which ranged from a few bighas of land to a village, a pargana or a more than one pargana.

In fact ijara could be regarded as a variant of nasaq in an accentuated form. As in nasaq, the assessment was made on land and the land revenue was collected through an intermediary. But there was an important difference between nasaq and ijara. Whereas the former entitled an annual assessment, the latter could be made for a longer period. The ijara-dar had greater and ampler opportunity than the zamindar to exploit the land and the peasants to amass wealth for himself. Again he had no permanent roots in the soil and as such he was inclined to exploit the peasantry to the point of cruelty or callousness. In fact the inference is borne out by the evidence contained in documents belonging to a somewhat later period.\(^1\) Thus the new class of intermediary, most probably belonging to the class of rich merchants and businessmen, appeared in the role of parasite, ever keen to exploit the land and the peasantry for their own economic prosperity but quite different to the interests of the peasantry and the State alike. The emergence of the new class contributed still further to the deepening crisis in the land revenue administration. It squeezed the peasantry and defrauded the State.

\(^1\) Dastur-ul-\Amal-i-Baiiak\es ff. 51, 52.
Khalsa and Jagir: The division of the Empire into khalsa and jagir lands continued. The same figures for khalsa lands under the reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb for two unspecified years in each reign are available in the Jazawabt-i-Alemgir. For Shahjahān's reigns they are given as 1,34, 46, 60, 245 dama and 1,25,76,60, 245, dama. The figures indicate that area of khalsa lands under the two emperors remained more or less the same.

Jagir: Although jagir lands still formed the major portion of the imperial territories, nevertheless, there were indications of a definite change in the nature and character of the assignment system. The system was evolved, as we know, to restrict the powers and pretensions of an hereditary landed aristocracy and to provide the State with an imperial military service. In the land revenue administration the jagirdars occupied the position of intermediaries with no permanent claim to land. Moreover, the bulk of the State revenue was collected by them, thus relieving the State from an administrative burden which under the given conditions of the times, was too heavy even for the Revenue Ministry of Akbar, remarkable for its brilliant record of efficiency and bold experiments. By the end of Aurangzeb's reign the system seems to have lost much of its purpose. We have no record enabling us to trace the gradual change from the beginning of the reign but a passage in Khafi Khan's Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, recording the events for the year 1102 A.H. 1690-91 A.D.

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1. Jazawabt-i-Alemgir f.81.a
describes the cumulative effect of the changes that had been gradually taking place during the long reign of Aurangzeb. The system, as it has been described by Khafi Khan, failed to provide an efficient and well organised imperial military service. The mansabdars were disgruntled and were reduced, at least in a majority of cases, to misery and poverty. The system could no longer feed the huge class of mansabdars; it, nevertheless, pretended to meet the demands of the ever-increasing numbers on paper by manipulating jama figures. The vast gap between the actual income and the fictitious jama figures, after the death of Aurangzeb, created conditions in which the hereditary claim on land or claim based on force or local influence was reasserted. Thus the system virtually ceased to fulfil its original function and merged into or was replaced by new forms which crystallised into accepted practices in the course of the 18th century.

The passage referred to above contains extremely important information about the developments in the working of the jagirdari system and as such it deserves to be quoted at length. "As audit of the accounts," says Khafi Khan, "formerly used to show amounts due from the mansabdars in favour of the royal treasury, therefore, it was the practice to appoint mace-bearers to get the mansabdars forward their accounts for auditing purposes and the mansabdars spent large sums to evade the process of audit. Later on, on account

1. Muntakhab-ull-Lubab II pp. 396, 397, 411, 412
of the scarcity of available jagirs for assignment and increase in the numbers of mansabdars, especially the hordes of the Marathas and the Deccanis, who were given high mansab, the persons belonging to the old families of royal servants (khawab zadan) often could not get jagir for four or five years. After the appointment of Musawi Khan as the Diwan-i-Tan, it was laid down that newly appointed mansabdars should sign an agreement to the effect that they were not entitled to demand the salary for the intervening period between the preparation of waddaht1 and the assignment of jagirs. However, once the jagir was assigned and later on it was resumed, the salary claim for the intervening period between the resumption of the assigned jagir and the assignment of a new jagir (elsewhere) would be entertained in audit. In order to compensate the bad reputation earned by Musawi Khan for this innovation it was laid down, at his request, in contravention of the former regulation—requiring that a newly recruited servant should, after the receipt of verification certificate, be assigned a post in the army—that a newly recruited servant should not be assigned any charge, save when he himself chose to do so. In spite of the undertaking (given by mansabdars) for foregoing their claims for salary in the initial period, when the audit was undertaken large amounts were revealed which the State owed to

1. Waddaht: an extract from the wacila or record of events relating to the grant of a particular mansab to a candidate in accordance with the certificates issued by the office of the Bakhshi.

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the mansabdars. Consequently although the mansabdars did everything to put up their papers for audit, the auditors of the Revenue Ministry turned a deaf ear to them, and did not audit the accounts of the jagirdars. Even when the mansabdars had succeeded in establishing their claims by their constant endeavours—having obtained a patron, employing an able and conscientious agent, after running about seven and eight months and spending a large amount—they could get only 1/4th of their total claims, in spite of all their best efforts and endeavours, from the royal treasury. At last all rules and regulations were, by and by, thrown into confusion and the practice of audit was given up."

The passage summarised above gives a clear insight into the conditions that obtained in the assignment system in the closing years of Aurangzeb's reign. The extraordinary increase in the number of mansabdars had its natural repercussions on the land revenue administration. The mansabdari system, useful in its own way in the early period of the Mughal Empire, had revealed its inherent contradictions and weaknesses by the close of 17th century. The Mughal nobility, at first quite modest in numbers, had become a huge class, depending entirely on the revenues from the land. To it was added the Deccani and the Maratha aristocracy. The cultivable land, in spite of the vastness of the Empire, could not feed the ever-increasing class of mansabdars. The crisis in the jagirdari system

1. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab II pp. 396, 397
appeared under Aurangzeb when the number of those seeking mansaba and jagirs was very large and the available jagirs for assignment were very few. As a matter of fact we are told by Khafi Khan elsewhere that in A.H. 1091-92 A.D., the Emperor solemnly declared that he could provide no jagirs for new comers and therefore it should be made known that no fresh recruitments would be made.¹

This changed situation in the practice of audit clearly suggests that the Revenue Ministry, in order to meet the demands of the ever increasing mansabdas, had been having recourse to the old device of assigning jagirs with inflated jama. The nobles and the mansabdas, once afraid of the rigour of auditing process, now demanded that audit should be done, and it was Revenue Ministry, which in order to conceal the manipulation in jama figures, shrank from the demand of the nobles and the mansabdas. Obviously the situation indicates the inherent weakness of the jagirdari and mansabdar system but it also reveals the utter inability of the Revenue Ministry to face the situation boldly and take necessary measures to improve the worsening condition leading to grave political and administrative difficulties. The situation as it developed was tacitly accepted and was even given legal recognition. The old disease of ever-recurring inflated jama revealed itself in the most glaring form. No minister in the long reign of Aurangzeb gave thought to the problem in a realistic way. Perhaps the disease had developed beyond remedy, and there was

¹ Muntakhab-ul-Lubab II pp. 411, 412
practically left no chance of making a more realistic valuation. We may assume that it was in sheer desperation that the practice of audit was given up. Thus the passage under reference actually records the administrative crisis with which the Mughal Empire was beset. The story of the agrarian system for the next fifty years is the story of gradual collapse of the institutions introduced and perfected by Akbar and his immediate successors. That the condition of the jācirādār was wretched and miserable has been specifically described in another passage in the Muntaḵhab-ūl-Ijāhab dealing with the collection of dues for maintaining royal animals. We are told that the mansābādār were reduced to utmost poverty on account of the scarcity of jācirā available for assignment. Even if they were assigned a portion of their assignments the jācirā were found to be deserted and the entire income from the jācirā could not meet half of the expenses incurred in maintaining the royal animals. The agents of the mansābādār were arrested and the total demand for maintaining the royal animals was made from them. The agents would lodge complaint with the Emperor but the influence of the officers at the court would make the complaint ineffective. A large number of people, we are told, were put to great distress and the agents resigned from their posts. The general statement made in the Muntaḵhab-ūl-Ijāhab is supported by stray references about the condition of jācirādār in the Wāga-i-Sarkār.

1. Muntaḵhab-ūl-Ijāhab pp. 602-603
Ajmer.\(^1\) We learn that even a jagirdar serving as the Faujdar of the province of Ajmer failed to make satisfactory collections and was not able to pay the salary of the soldiers serving under him. His financial position, at a certain stage, became so precarious that he had to disband a large number of troopers under him.

**Control of the Emperor on Jagir lands**

To conclude we can piece together the evidence indicating the nature and extent of the control exercised by the Emperor over the jagir lands. It appears that all the important regulations were binding upon the jagirdars and the provincial Diwan saw to it that the content of the regulations was communicated to the jagirdars or their amshahtas.\(^2\) The farmans also included the jagirdar among the persons and officials who were enjoined to execute the imperial regulations.\(^3\) The provincial Bakhshi saw to it that the jagirdar maintained the requisite number of horsemen according to their mansaba. A mansabdard, according to the regulations could not start collections in the jagir assigned to him unless he brought the fixed number of horsemen to muster.\(^4\) A jagirdar, apart from rendering military service to the state, was also accountable for the conditions of law and order within his jagir. He was accountable for acts of theft and robbery and for tracing theives.\(^5\)

**Administrative Machinery.**

The land revenue administration in a province was carried

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1. Waza-i-Sarker Ajmer, pp. 88-89
2. Selected Waza-i- of the Deccan, p.46
3. Mirat-i-Ahmadi I, pp. 171, 172
4. Waza-i-Sarker Ajmer pp. 8, 9
5. Waza-i-Sarker Ajmer pp. 25, 26
on by a Diwan and an Amin. Generally the two offices were held by the same persons. Below them, in every pargana, there were the Amil, pargana Amin, Khazanadar, Qanungo and Chaudhari. Sometimes the offices of the Amin and the Amil or the Amin and the Faujdar were held by the same person. Similarly a Faujdar could hold the office of the Amil as well.¹

Amil or Karori

The functions and duties of the Karori are described in the Farhang-i-Kurani and the Khulasat-us-Siyaa. He collected the land revenue within the specified period on the basis of tumar-i-jamabandi prepared by the Amin and remitted the amount to the treasury. He locked the treasury under his own seal and that of the Amin and watched over it with utmost care. He was not entitled to spend a single dam without the prior sanction of the Revenue Ministry. He received a commission on the collections made on behalf of the government. At the end of the year he settled the accounts with the Chaudharis, Qanungos and Muqaddams against their respective perquisites known as nankar, rusum, and inam, provided the entire

¹ Mazar-i-Ahmadi pp. 291, 292, 330, 334
² Nizar Name-i-Munshi ff. 79, 80, 87, 89, 93, 94
³ Literally subsistence allowance; grant of rent-free land to zamindars and Chaudharis for services rendered to the State. Other recipients of nankar grant were Qanungos, Muqaddams and Qasim
⁴ Customary rights; Qanungo’s commission of 2% from the share of ryots; a commission of 2% or 2½% on the rent-roll to be paid to the Qanungo.
⁵ Grant of rent-free land, whether made by the ruling power or by individuals; the inam of the Muqaddam appears to be a local arrangement.
collections had been made in the pargana. He was responsible for weekly despatch of the detailed account of receipts to the Revenue Ministry. At the end of every season he sent the papers showing the details of jama, receipts and arrears against every village. He was also required to submit an annual abstract of the total income and expenditure. According to the Khulasat-ua-Sivao he was required to see that the total area as entered in the naqao agreement was brought under cultivation and no decrease in the area under cultivation was to be allowed. He appointed a Tappahdar\(^1\) in every tappah\(^2\) who was to stay in the tappah and keep himself fully informed about every village and every cultivator so that no arable land in any village might be left fallow and the cultivator did not leave his village. He was required to request the Amin to grant tegav\(^3\) loan to poor and needy cultivators who could not till the land for lack of necessary resources, namely oxen and seeds. When the crops were ripe he appointed some persons for keeping watch over them so that the cultivators did not evade the payment of land revenue for the current year and the arrears against them. He was required to see that no cesses remitted by the Emperor were collected. He had to maintain some twelve registers furnishing all necessary information about local land revenue administration.\(^4\)

1. The officer who supervised the revenue affairs of a tappah.
2. A small tract or division of a country, smaller than a pargana but comprising one or more villages.
3. Loan granted for agricultural purposes.
The Amin.

According to the *Khulasat-us-Siyaq* the Amin was the adjudicator between the king and the ryots. He was required to see that the State dues were not left unrealised with the ryots and that no injustice and oppression was committed against them so that half of the produce was realised by the State and the other half was appropriated by the ryots and no land was permitted to be appropriated by the ryots or those who had occupied land without a legal claim. He compared the assessment papers for the last ten years, inspected each field under cultivation and assessed the jama within the specified time. When the assessment for the entire pargana had been completed he prepared the *tumar-i-jama-bandi*, bearing the signatures of the Chaudharis, Qanungos and the Qazi. He also obtained an undertaking for the total collection from the Karori. The Amin, however, was vested with the discretionary power to accede to the request of the ryots and assess on the basis of zabt, ghallabaikhshi or kankut. The Amin issued lease-deed to the ryots and obtained a written agreement on their behalf. He maintained some sixteen registers furnishing complete information about the agrarian conditions in the pargana.

The Khazanadar:

The treasurer was known as Khazanadar or Fotahdar. He was

1. *Khulasat-us-Siyaq* ff. 17, 18
2. *Farhang-i-Kardani* f.29
3. *Khulasat-us-Siyaq* ff.17,18,19
4. *Khulasat-us-Siyaq* ff. 17,18
responsible for the safe custody of cash receipts under proper authority. All cash collected by the Amil or his agents was to be deposited with him. However, he could make no disbursement without proper authority. 1

The Qanungo:

The office of the Qanungo seems to be an administrative legacy from the remote past. He had always been a very important functionary in the revenue administration. The chronicles contain no explicit evidence as to the territorial jurisdiction of the said officer, which underwent constant changes and modifications under the Mughals. In Akbar's reign he seems to have been a pargana officer. But in the Mirat-i-ahmadi there is evidence to show that he was a revenue officer of a circle of a parganah. A pargana was divided into a number of circles and each circle was placed under a Qanungo. The content of an order of Aurangzeb, incorporated in the Mirat, shows that the emperor reduced the number of Qanungos in a pargana which was not to exceed ten. The inference is that during the reign of Shahjahan the number of Qanungos had increased without any relation to the increase in the amount of work. Aurangzeb took necessary steps to keep a proper proportion between the amount of work and the number of officials employed by the State.

Functions and duties:

The Qanungo was consulted about ascertaining the revenue

1. Khulasat-us-Siyas ff. 18, 19, p.29
2. Ain-i-Akbar I p.209
3. Mirat-i-Ahmad I, p.233; cf. nigar ilma-i-Munshi ff.104,105
customs, usages, and perquisites of the area under his jurisdiction. He kept the same revenue papers as the Patwari of the village, and also the papers stating the village revenues in money and in kind. In the Farhang-i-Kardani we are told that he together with the Chaudhari and the Muqaddam signed a gabuliat to the effect that they accepted the assessment made by the Amin and stood surety for the payment of the same by the ryots. He was entitled to certain commission provided the full rental had been realised. He put his signatures on the tumar-i-jamabandi prepared by the Amin which was to be sent to the imperial office

The Chaudhari:

Besides, the regular staff of the revenue administration the State secured the services of a number of semi-officials such as Muqaddams, and Chaudharis. A passage in the Mirat-i-Ahmadi throws some light on the territorial jurisdiction of a Chaudhari. The passage under reference is the content of an order issued by Aurangzeb, which lays down that the number of Chaudharis in a pargana should not exceed two. An examination of the relevant passage in the Farhang-i-Kardani throws considerable light on the function and duties of the Chaudhari. His primary and foremost duty was to assist the revenue officers in the work of revenue collection. He did so by exercising his personal and local influence on his community. He

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1. Ain-i-Akbari I p.200
2. A written agreement, especially one signifying assent as the counterpart of a revenue lease.
3. Farhang-i-Kardani f. 34
stood surety for individual cultivators and saw that revenue demands were paid to the Karori. Moreover, he put his signatures to the tumar-i-jamabandi prepared by the Amin. In recognition of his services rendered to the state he was entitled to nankar perquisites.¹

Muqaddas

Literally it means the first man. In the chronicles it denotes the first man of the village. His duties were similar to those of the Chaudhari. He put his signatures to certain papers prepared by the Amin and other officials, stood surety for individual cultivators and assisted the government agents in the work of revenue collection. For his services rendered to the State he was entitled to inam in accordance with the established custom.²

1. Farhang-i-Kardani, f.34
2. Farhang-i-Kardani ff.29, 34