CHAPTER III
JAGIRDARI SYSTEM

Under the Mughals the imperial territory for purposes of land revenue administration was divided, somewhat unevenly, into the two broad categories of the khalsa and jagir mahals. The mahal earmarked as jagir but not yet assigned constituted a sub-category and were known as mahal-i-pai-baqi. The bulk of the imperial territory constituted jagir lands and the revenue of these lands was assigned to the imperial servants known as mansabdars in lieu of their salaries against their ranks in the imperial service. These assignees were entitled to collect the State revenue of the mahals assigned to them as jagir, tiyul or iqtal and in this capacity they were known as jagirdars or tiyuldars. Each mansabdar held a definite rank in the imperial service which might be a single zat rank or a double rank comprising zat and sawar ranks. The pay scales of zat and sawar rank were separately laid down and the salary of a mansabdar, holding a certain rank was accordingly cal-

1. Khulasat-ag-Siyaq, f.43b
2. The author of the Mirat-ul-Istilah makes a distinction between jagir and tiyul in as much as the jagir was assigned to nobles and mansabdars and the tiyul was assigned to the princes and the persons belonging to the royal family. See Mirat-ul-Istilah f.15a. It is, however, to be noted that in the chronicles and documents of the Mughal period the two terms indicate an assignment with no special meaning attached to them.
3. Iqtal is also used in the sense of assignment but its use is rather rare. See Mirat-i-Ahmadi, I, p.355
culated in terms of dams. An area — a single mahal, a part of mahal or more than one mahal — yielding an estimated income to the salary was assigned to him as jagir. This estimated income was technically known as jama or jamadami and included the land revenue as well as the income from other heads of taxation known as sair jihat or sair. The income from transit duties and from the taxes on the commodities bought or sold in towns or markets constituted separate mahals known as sair mahals, and these were often assigned as jagir. The salary of the mansabdars, however, could also be paid in cash and those of the mansabdars, who received cash salaries were known as nagadis. An assignment which carried no obligation with it and denoted an increase in the mansab was known as inam.

The jagirdari system under the Mughals developed as a distinct institution and was governed by elaborate rules and regulations. The foundations of this unique institution were laid under Akbar but it was Shahjahan who transformed the simple organisation into a complex institution. Gradually the institution emerged as

1. For details see "Mansabdari system" by Abdul Aziz; Selected Documents of Shahjahan's Reign pp. 80, 81, Farhang-i-Kardani ff. 21a-24a; Khulasat-us-Siyaaq ff. 76a-77b
2. The taxes on clothes, hide, oil, grains and other edibles, on instruments, horse, camel, etc., collected in the market place and chabutara-i-kotwali were known as sair jihat.
3. Amal-i-Saleh III, pp. 65, 149; Mirat-i-Ahmadi pp. 305, 329, 337
5. The author of the Jalamir Nama says that in the Mughal Empire none except the princes of the royal blood was raised to rank above 7000/70000. As a mark of favour and consideration to a noble who had already attained the high rank of 7000/700

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the most characteristic feature of the Mughal administrative system. Primarily, the system was evolved to secure the efficient and disciplined services of a body of men and at the same time to relieve the government from the enormous burden of the land-revenue administration and the maintenance of law and order in the rural areas. But as the system developed by the end of the 17th century it began to threaten the administrative and economic stability of the Empire. As such it is important to ascertain the essentials of the system and investigate its nature and working in greater detail.

Nature of the Institution:

The institution of jagirdari, as it unfolded itself, in the 17th and 18th centuries appears to be complex and subject to constant changes. It was complex in the sense that the lands assigned as jagirs were subject to the dual authority of the State and jagirdars. Whereas the estimated income of a jagir was to be calculated by the Revenue Ministry, the actual assessment and collections were made by the jagirdar or his agent. Again even in matters of assessing the individual holdings the jagirdar could not be given a free hand and he was required to conform to the rates sanctioned by the Revenue Ministry. The practice of transferring jagirs complicated the working of the land revenue

(footnote in continuation of previous page) and the Emperor granted an additional assignment over above the jagir assigned to the noble as his salary against his rank which was known as inam. Alamgir Nama I 618. See also Amal-i Saleh III p.207; Mirat-i-Ahmad I p.291.

1. Akbar Nama III, p.381
administration in a jagir still further and elaborate and precise rules were laid down to divide collections, if the jagir was transferred in the middle of the year, between the former jagirdar, the government and the new assignee. The constant attempt to narrow down gap between the jame and the hal-i-hasil and the later development of determining the obligations according to the hal-i-hasil indicates the complex pattern of the jagir administration. The institution was also subject to constant changes since the reign of Akbar and was extremely sensitive to political, administrative or economic changes. The extension of the empire, the weakening of the central authority, an increase in the number of mansabdars, famine, scarcity or impoverishment of peasantry or zamindars violently affected the working of the jagirdari system. An attempt is made in these lines to underline the main features of the institution and note the changes in it which ultimately led to its decline by the middle of the 18th century.

Transfer of Jagir:

As noted above the jagirdari system, in its essence, was a mode of payment by assignments. The jagirdar was entitled to collect the state revenue from the mahal assigned to him as jagir in order to meet his own expenses and those of the contingent maintained by him for the service of the Emperor. Assignment of jagir as a mode of payment implied that his claim was strictly limited to the revenue of the assigned mahal and this fact was specifically

1. Khulasaat-us-Siyas, f.48b
stated in the order of assignment. It also implied that the jagirdar could not claim any right or title to the land in the mahal assigned to him. However, the right of assessment and collection of land revenue in a particular area for a considerably long time might be availed of to create some sort of permanent right or claim in the land or to establish local connections which might be utilised for acquiring proprietary right in land in one capacity or another. A long tenure as a jagirdar entailed such possibilities and the Mughal Emperors, who introduced the jagirdari system to secure the efficient and loyal services of an imperial service, took necessary measures to forestall the danger. This end was attained by introducing the practice of constant transfer of the jagir. It was Akbar who deliberately planned to transfer the jagir of Atka Khail in the Panjab and provide alternative assignments in various provinces in the 13th regnal year. Abul Fazal recording the event has made out the point in some detail. According to him the practice of transfer of jagir was essential if the jagirdars were to be kept within their limits and the interests of the ryots were to be

1. The pananah dated 19th May, 1635 A.D. issued by Wazir Afzal Khan reads that Sayyid Abdul Wahab was assigned 36,68,100 dams in pargana Daryapur, Sarkar, Gawil, Subah Berar, and that the Deshmukhs, Muqaddams and cultivators were instructed to acknowledge him as the jagirdar of the said amount and pay land revenue and other taxes to his agents. Selected Documents of Shahjahan's Reign pp. 4, 5; also see pp. 17, 18, 23, 147

2. Akbar Nama pp 332, 333
kept within their limits and the interests of the ryots were to be served. In order to attain these ends the **jagirdar** who had been concentrated in a locality should be stationed in different regions because such a staggering, in fact, led to peace and stability.¹

Later on the practice of transferring **jagir** became a well established policy of the Mughals,² and some passages in the chronicles suggest that the **jagirs** were not only transferred as an administrative routine but also with a view to neutralise the local influence and ties established by a **jagirdar**.³ The **jagirdars** were even forbidden to take away land from the ryots and bring it under their own cultivation. It was also laid down that the **jagirdar** should not enter into matrimonial relations with people in the pargana assigned to him as **jagir**.⁴ The underlying aim of these regulations was to prevent the **jagirdar** from establishing local influence or economic independence which would seriously impair the morale and efficiency of the Mughal imperial service.

A letter contained in the **Nigar-Nama-i-Munshi** and written by the agent of a prince in connection with the transfer of the **jagir** held by the prince in the Panjab and the alternative arrangements to be made in Bihar gives some insight into the procedure of the transfer.

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1. *Akbar Nama II*, p.332, 333
2. *Nizam, jagirs* were, however, exceptions which were hereditary or were granted for the lifetime. For transfer cases refer to *Tabari-i-Akbari II*, pp.223, 340, 350; Selected Documents of Shahjahan's Reign pp. 147, 150, 151, 158; *Mirat-i-Ahmadi I*, p.277, 305; *Nigar Nama-i-Munshi* ffs. 57, 69
4. *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* p.4; *Mirat-i-Ahmadi I*, p.185
and the complications that it involved. The letter recapitulates the proceedings in the Revenue Ministry and the notes exchanged between the agent and the assigning officer and points out that in the given circumstances the assignment in Bihar should not be accepted at that stage as it would entail considerable financial loss to the prince and that the matter should be postponed till the next financial year. An examination of this evidence reveals that the transfer of jagir entailed a considerable amount of red tape. Notes were exchanged between the wakil of the jagirdar and the secretaries in the Diwan’s office. The agent of the jagirdar was entitled to note his objections on the order specifying the new parganas assigned as jagir and could make his own choice out of the parganas specified in the list. In case, he was not satisfied with the list specifying the parganas to be assigned, he could send his own proposal. If the jagirdar or his agent was satisfied with the alternative assignment he was required to submit a deed of agreement. Thus it appears that a limited right of selection was extended to the jagirdar. The evidence suggests that the practice of transfer caused a great deal of inconvenience to the jagirdar in case his jagir was resumed in the middle of the year and the alternative assignment was accepted in the same season. The agent in his letter pointed out the difficulties created by resumption of a jagir in the middle of the year and the acceptance of the new assign-

1. Nigar Nama-i-Wunshi ff. 57, 63
2. Also see Selected Documents of Shahjahan’s reign p.150
3. Most probably this only applied to princes and powerful nobles.
ment in the same year. It appears that the completion of formalities in the Revenue Ministry, the appointment of the Amils and their arrival in their respective mahals took considerable time and consequently little time was left in the year for a satisfactory collection of land revenue by the agents of the jagirdar. Normally, we are made to believe a jagirdar suffered considerable financial loss in such an arrangement. Again the yields from rabi and kharif were normally unequal and sometimes the difference was very considerable. Therefore a transfer in the middle of the year might deprive the jagirdar of the better half of the annual yields.¹

The practice of transfer, it may be pointed out, was almost indispensable from administrative consideration. But it caused inconvenience to the jagirdar and entailed a great deal of bargaining and even corruption in the Revenue Ministry. Again the temporary nature of tenure of a jagir failed to create any interest among the jagirdars in the land and prosperity of the peasants. On the other hand it tended to make them realise the maximum and rackrent the peasantry.²

¹. We are told in Ruggat Alemair that the pargana of Patodhi was assigned to Multafit Khan with effect from the beginning of kharif and was resumed from him with effect from the beginning of rabi. The mahsul for kharif is stated to be far less than that of rabi. As such the jagirdar would incur loss. See Ruggat Alemair p.173.

². Bernier p.23. The author gives a graphic picture of the evil consequences of the practice of the transfer of jagirs. In a word, the land is not tilled but almost by force, and consequently very ill; and much of it is quite spoiled and ruined; there being none to be found that can or will be at the charge of entertaining the ditches and channels for the course of waters to be conveyed to necessary places; nor any body that care to build houses, or to repair that are ruinous; the peasant reasoning thus with himself—why should I toil so much for a tyrant that may come tomorrow to take all away from me, or at least all the best of what I have,

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Extent of the Imperial Control:

We have noted earlier that a jagirdar held a definite rank in the imperial service and his claim in his jagir was limited to the collection of the amount assigned to him against this salary or his rank. His position as a jagirdar, therefore, precluded any pretense of exercising powers and privileges which might contravene the imperial regulations. On the other hand, there is sufficient evidence to show that the internal administration of a jagir, in all its essentials, was carried on in accordance with the imperial regulations which covered the land revenue as well as general administration within a jagir. Thus a jagirdar was required to assess the land revenue in accordance with the dastur and even in matters of collection he had to forego a part of his claim in case remission was granted by Emperor on account of damages done to crops. Even the arrears for the past years could be remitted by the Emperor and a jagirdar had to

1. As early as the 27th year of Akbar's reign it was laid down that the jagirdars should collect land revenue and other taxes in accordance with the dastur. See Akbar Nama III p.331

2. In 993 A.H./1585 A.D. Akbar granted remissions in the provinces of Allahabad, Awadh and Delhi. The remissions in Khalsa lands amounted to 79,74,703 damas. Abul Fazal adds that the remissions granted in jagirs can be calculated accordingly, Akbar Nama III p.458. See also Akbar Nama III, pp.494,534.
comply with the royal order. Imperial regulations pertaining to affairs other than the land revenue were equally applicable to the jagir lands and the provincial Diwan communicated the content of the royal order to the jagirdar and his agents.

The internal administration of jagir lands was supervised and controlled in more than one way. The important agency to control the jagirdars were the sawanah nigark who were required to report the activities of the jagirdars and the conditions that obtained in the jagirs. If a jagirdar was reported to be oppressive or he failed to conform to the imperial regulations he was liable to punishment. The punishment involved the transfer or resumption of the jagir or a

1. In 1083 A.H./1672 A.D., Aurangzeb issued the order to the provincial Diwan of Gujrat that the arrears for the past in khalsa and jagir mahals should be considered as remitted and the ryots should not be oppressed for the arrears. Mirat-i-Ahmadī, I, p.290.

2. In 989 A.H./1581 A.D., the jagirdars along with the other officers of the government were directed to maintain records about the inhabitants of the village within their jurisdiction, nothing their names and professions. They were also instructed to see that none was allowed to live without engaging himself in one profession or another. See Akbar Nama III, pp.346,347. We read elsewhere in the Akbar Nama that the jagirdars were required to report about the wicked, the obedient and the rebel within their jagirs. See Akbar Nama III, p.381.

3. Selected Waqai of the Deccan, I, p.46

4. Ruqqat-i-Alamerī pp. 11, 15, 37

5. Hasan Beg, the jagirdar of Chakla Kora was reported to be oppressive and the inhabitants of Chakla made constant complaints. Aurangzeb issued orders to resume his jagir without making an alternative assignment (see Ruqqat-i-Alamerī p.43). It was reported that Shah Beg Khan did not maintain the contingent as required by the regulations. Shahjahan issued an order to Aurangzeb that the parganas held in tiyal by Shah Beg Khan should be taken away and he should be sent to the Court (see Ruqqat-i-Alamerī p.93).

6. Tabaqat-i-Akbarī, II pp.340,350

7. Ruqqat-i-Alamerī, p.43, Ruqqat-i-Alamerī, p.93
fine could be imposed on the defaulting jagirdar.¹

Another important agency which enabled the Revenue Ministry to keep an eye on the working of the land revenue administration within jagirs were the hereditary offices of the Chaudhari, Qanungo and the Patwari. These officials as we know, maintained the village and pargana accounts in their offices. While the jagirdars were transferred or even the jagir lands might be resumed as khalsa, the offices of the Chaudhari, Qanungo and Patwari remained unaffected and the continuity of local records and traditions was maintained by them. These local records were always available to an assessing officer or any other officer deputed to gather first hand information about a jagir. Thus the Revenue Ministry had the necessary machinery to keep itself well-informed about the conditions of revenue administration in jagir lands. Moreover it was a well-established practice that the jagirdars submitted every year the halāti-hasil figures for the current and past years² and gave an undertaking that the figures furnished by them were correct and that they would be accountable for any discrepancy discovered in them.³ They also submitted the mawaznah-jah-salah.⁴ Thus the Revenue Ministry could obtain the revenue statements and records from two sources and could ascertain the conditions that obtained in the jagir lands.

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1. Ruqqat-i-Alemgiri p.37
2. Selected Documents of Shahjahan’s Reign pp.88,89,90; Mirat-i-Ahmedi I p.327
3. Mirat-i-Ahmedi I p.327
4. Selected Documents of Shahjahan’s Reign pp.88,89,90,164
5. Mirat-i-Ahmedi, I p.327
We have noted that the imperial servants known as mansabdars, with a few exceptions, were paid in the form of assignment and, therefore, it was necessary that the estimated income of the imperial territory should be ascertained. Consequently the estimated income of every village and more especially of every mahal was determined and it was technically known as jama or jamadami. Jama, broadly speaking, included the estimated income from all the sources of income of a mahal which were generally classified under the two heads of mal (land revenue) and sair (taxes other than land revenue). However, in calculating the jama of a mahal all the cultivable land within it was taken into account and an hypothetical assessment was made on it. But there are indications that generally all the cultivable land within a village or a mahal was not brought under cultivation and considerable part of it was left fallow. It has been recognised that under the Mughals, the land was waiting for men and there was not enough capital and man power to bring all the cultivable land under cultivation. Thus a considerable part of the land was left fallow and was not actually assessed. This peculiar agrarian condition gave rise to a wide gap between the jama calculated on the basis of hypothetical assessment and hal-i-hasil or actual assessment for a given year. The land revenue administration under the Mughals took due note of the fact and the dastur-ul-amals invariably record the

1. Describing the condition of land and cultivation Bernier says, "that even of those that would be fertile, there is much that is not used for want of workmen." Bernier part II p.5. Also see Agrarian System, Moreland, Introduction p.xii.
jama and hal-i-hasil figures separately. It may, however, be noted that in a certain year for a variety of reasons the area under cultivation could increase considerably and could be regarded as the maximum for the past few years. In such an year the actual assessment closely approximated to the hypothetical assessment and such an assessment was known as hasil-i-sal kamal or hasil-i-kamal.

In the early years of Akbar's reign the jama was determined arbitrarily and was known as jama Raqami qalam. It was increased on paper because the number of available jagirs was small and the number of those claiming jagirs was very large. It appears that the jama Raqami qalam affected the working of the jagirdari system adversely and it was set aside in the 11th or the 15th year by Muzaffar Khan and Raja Todar Mal. The new jama was calculated on the basis of the accounts obtained from the local Qanungos and an estimate of the hal-i-hasil or assessed land revenue. It was slightly less than the former jama but there was still a wide gap between the jama and the hal-i-hasil. Consequently, the jagirdars, soldiers and peasants were put to considerable distress. In the 19th regnal year the bulk of the imperial territory except Bengal, Gujrat and Kabul was resumed to khalsa and the jagirdari system for the time-being was suspended. In the 24th regnal year the jama Deh Salah was prepared by striking the average of the revenue demand for the ten years (15th to 23rd regnal year), and taking into consideration any improvement in the conditions of productions and the fluctuations in the
prices. The account of the Jama Dah Salah in the Akbar Nama suggests that the reforms aimed at narrowing down the gap between the jama and hal-i-hasil figures and that the Revenue Ministry did succeed in its objective when the Jama Dah Salah was finally prepared. With the preparation of a satisfactory jama the practice of assignment was revived.

Under Akbar the jama amounted to more than 350 karores of dams. At the end of Jahangir's reign it stood at 700 karores of dams. The marked increase in the jama figures can be attributed either to the increase in the area under cultivation or a rise in the prices or to both. Again the jama figures might have been inflated in order to meet the situation caused by increase in mansabs and in the number of mansabdars. We know that the Emperor Jahangir inaugurated a policy of lavish increase in the mansab. The fact that the land revenue administration under Jahangir suffered from inflated jamas is suggested by the reforms undertaken by Shahjahan who introduced the month-proportions for assignment of jagir and corresponding month-scales for determining the pay and military obligations of the jagirdars.

The inference is directly confirmed by Palsaret, a contemporary Dutch

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1. The above summary is based on the evidence contained in the Akbar Nama and the Ain. For reference see Akbar Nama II p.270, Akbar-Nama III pp.114-117, 282; Ain II p.2

2. Agrarian System pp. 97,98

3. Ain-i-Akbari II p.48

4. Badsah Nama, II p.711

5. Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, pp.4,5. According to Tuzuk, the mansabs were increased in the proportion of 10:30 and 10:40. The lowest increase in the mansab amounted to 20%

writer. He tells us that the valuation of the jagirs was inflated. A jagir with a valuation of 50,000 rupees, did not sometimes yield even 25,000 rupees although the peasants were rackrented. The evil of the inflated jama had its repercussions on the mansabdar system and impaired the efficiency of the imperial service. According to Pelsaret many assignees who held the rank of 5,000 horse did not even keep 1000 in the service.¹

Under Shahjahan, the wide disparity between the jama and the hal-i-hasil was recognised as an established fact and no attempt was made to narrow down the gap between the two figures. On the other hand, a new method was devised to determine the expected income of the jagirdar and his obligations were accordingly laid down. The hal-i-hasil or actual assessment for each mahal was ascertained and it was expressed in month proportions to jama which indicated the hal-i-hasil for twelve months. If the hal-i-hasil of a mahal amounted to 2/3rd of the jama, the mahal was described as eight-monthly; if the hal-i-hasil equalled to 1 of the jama the mahal was classified as six monthly and so on. The pay scales of the mansabdars and their military obligations were consequently, determined, in accordance with the hal-i-hasil of their jagirs and the obligations and salary of the mansabdars, holding the same rank, were calculated for each month ratio.²

1. Pelsaret, p.54
2. The interpretation is based on the administrative literature of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb’s reigns. The main references are cited below: Selected Documents pp.64, 248; Ruqqaat-i-Alamgiri, pp.10,88,107 118,121-2,130-31,135,163-64; Badshah Nama II p.506; Mirrat-i-Ahmadi I p.227-229.
The Jama Figures:

The *jama* figures for the reigns of Mughal emperors (Akbar to Bahadur Shah) are available in the *Ain*, the *Badshah Nama* and in a number of *dastur-ul-amals*. A comparative analysis of the *jama* figures reveals that they tended to increase from the reign of Akbar onwards till the climax was reached by the end of Aurangzeb's reign. The total increase in the *jama* figures can be partly explained away by the addition of territories in the Deccan and partly by the increased income from taxation on the expanding trade and commerce. But an examination of the comparative *jama* figures for various provinces and even for sarkars in various reigns reveals that the *jama* figures had witnessed a definite and notable increase.

Under Aurangzeb, the *jagir* lands still formed the bulk of the imperial territory, nevertheless, there were indications of a definite change in the nature and character of assignment system. The system was evolved, as we know, to restrict the power and pretensions of a landed aristocracy and provide the State with an efficient imperial service, paid in the form of assignment. By the close of the 17th century, however, the smooth working of the system was seriously impaired and it had begun to show signs of becoming an institution which tended to be static and failed to adapt itself to the changed political and agrarian conditions. The efficiency of the imperial service suffered; the *jagirdars* were faced with financial distress.

1. See Appendix B.
and were disgruntled. The resources of the empire were almost ex-
hausted to provide *jagirs* to the *mansabdars* who were newly recruited.

Thus when Aurangzeb died the institution of *jagirdari* was faced
with a number of developments which constituted a serious threat to
the stability of the institution. The glaring contradiction in the
assignment system revealed itself in the form of an overwhelming
increase in the number of *mansabdars*, an equal increase in the *mansabs*
held by the old servants, which continued unabated, and in the corres-
ponding scarcity of the available assignments. The inflated *jama*
and keen competition among the *mansabdars* of the old families (*khanah zada*)
and the new class of claimants to *mansabs* and *jagirs* could be regarded as the logical corollaries to the first two developments. During
the ten or twelve years that followed the death of Aurangzeb and the
accession of Muhammad Shah these tendencies in the *jagirdari* system,
which threatened the breakdown of the system, continued unabated and
were even accentuated. These developments coupled with the weakening
of the central authority accelerated the process of disintegration
and by the time of Nadir Shah's invasion the system had suffered al-
most a complete breakdown. Although nominal *mansabs* continued to be
granted they seldom carried with them the corresponding assignments.
Recruitment on cash basis became more and more common. Thus *jagirdari*
system, as it was developed under the great Mughals, ceased to func-
tion. Whether it continued to function in a modified form or gave

1. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, II pp. 602, 603, 396, 397, 411, 412; cf Bughaat-i-
Alamgiri, p. 7. In reply to a request made for alternative assignment
the emperor pointed out that every few *jagirs* were available for
assignment and the number of those seeking *jagirs* was very large
as such it was not possible to make arrangements for alternative
assignments.
place to some other institution, in the newly carved out principalities in the provinces of Deccan, Bengal, Bihar and Oudh, maybe a useful subject of investigation for those engaged in the study of the land revenue administration under the provincial dynasties. For the present it would suffice to examine the evidence relating to the last phase of the Mughal administration, which corroborate our inferences indicated above.

We have noted that as early as 1691 A.D., the system was faced with the problem of providing jagirs to an ever increasing number of mansabdars, whereas the number of available jagirs was very small. This crisis in the jagirdari system seems to have continued unabated during the remaining years of Aurangzeb's reign and perhaps it was accentuated. Our inference is based on the fact that on his accession Bahadur Shah was unable to provide jagirs to a large number of nobles and amirs. Unfortunately, his own policy of lavish awards of mansabs and increase in mansabs accentuated the crisis still further. The author of the Muskhe-i-Dilkusha recording the events of the first regnal year of Bahadur Shah says that all the mansabdars of Aurangzeb's reign were granted increase in their mansabs and were honoured with titles. A large army had gathered around the Emperor. The princess, and the Khan-i-Khanan, and some of the amirs were assigned jagirs in Hindustan but a large number of amirs could not be provided with jagirs. Khan-i-Khanan worked out and submitted to the Emperor a plan that the watan of the Rajputs should be brought under the imperial
administration and distributed among the amirs. The Emperor, it appears, approved of the suggestion, and left for Ajmer ostensibly to pay homage to the shrine of Muin-uddin-Chishti, but really to take possession of the Rajput's jagirs.

An examination of the evidence under reference suggests that the tendencies which were impairing the jagirdari system did not only continue unabated but were accentuated still further by the new sovereign. Our authorities agree that Bahadur Shah, by his temperament was affable and generous and had little aptitude for the dull details of administration. His reign opened with a lavish award of mansabs and increase in the mansabs. High and low among the Hindus and Muslims were raised to the ranks of 6000 and 7000, and were honoured with titles of jeng, malik, rai and raja. Consequently the mansabs and titles lost their significance.

The new sovereign, it appears, failed to realise the implications of his policy of lavish award of mansabs and increase in the mansabs. In fact, he became a willing agent for the deterioration of the situation in the jagirdari system still further which had become quite

1. Husain-i-Dilkusha ff. 169 ab.
2. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab p.630. According to Khafi Khan, Bahadur Shah was so indifferent and badly informed about the State business that some impertinents calculated his date of accession in the phrase Shah-i-Baikhabar or the king without any information.
3. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, II pp. 628,629,630; Seir-ul-Muttaakhirin II p.380, Husain-i-Dilkush f. 16 qa. According to the author of Ahwal-ul-Khwacin in the reigns of Bahadur Shah's ancestors the title of Khan was not obtained after a life long service and a large number of mansabdadars died in the vain hope of obtaining the title of Khan. But Bahadur Shah was so generous that no mansabdar was left without the title of Khan. Ahwal-ul-Khwacin, f.45 ab.
grave some two decades earlier. However, there were people who fully understood the implications of the new sovereign's generosity in awarding mansabs and granting increase in the ranks without any reference to the availability of jagirs, and foresaw the complete breakdown of the system, if no step were taken to improve the situation. They even made some vain attempt to check the process of disintegration of the system in the very first year of Bahadur Shah's reign. The attempt at reform failed but deserves to be noted in some detail as it represents the contemporary view of the situation in the jagirdari system.

Ikhlas Khan, a man of great integrity and ability, was thoroughly dissatisfied with the policy of his sovereign. He was entrusted with the office of the era-i-mukarrar. He noted the generosity of the Emperor in awarding mansabs and granting increase in the ranks without examining the recipient's merits. He failed to reconcile himself with the policy of the Emperor, and requested the Jumlat-ul-Mulk to do something for bringing about some sort of order in the administration of the jagirs. In case, no attempt was made to set things right, the resources of the Empire, meagre as they were compared to the generosity of the Emperor, would soon be exhausted, and the old servants of the Empire, enjoying some position and status, would be faced with unemployment. He, therefore, proposed that when the waddaasht about the mansab was put up before the Wazir for his signature, after which it could be placed before

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1. Muntakhabul-Lubab II pp. 628, 629; Ikhlas Khan was appointed in the year 1119 A.H./1707 A.D.
the Emperor for the second time, the Wazir should sign it only after making necessary enquiry about the birth, race, rank and status of the candidate in question. The Wazir did not like to earn a bad reputation and Ikhlas Khan was asked to do the necessary enquiry. The latter, in his own turn, expressed his unwillingness to undertake the necessary investigation. At last it was decided that Mustaad Khan alias Muhammad Saqii should be entrusted with the job. It was agreed that the following should be ascertained before the yaddasht was put up before the Emperor for the second time.

1. Whether the candidate, who applied for mansab for the first time, was qualified for the service of the Emperor.
2. The cause for the grant or increase in the mansab.
3. The nature and importance of the recommendation
4. Whether the mansabdar had received more increase in the mansab than he deserved.

It was also laid down that one should not be granted an increase before he had completed the term specified for a promotion in the rank. It was hoped that these enquiries would entail considerable time. After the completion of these enquiries Mustaad Khan was required to write "In Order" (ărūdūf) on the yaddasht prepared for the grant or for increase in the mansab.

An examination of the evidence described above will reveal that the contemplated reforms did not propose a reduction in the mansabs.

1. Muntakhab-ul-Abab II pp. 628, 629
or suspension of fresh recruitments for a limited period. Perhaps such
radical reforms could not be even suggested as they would alienate and
infuriate the all powerful class of munsahdaras who, although origin-
ally created to serve the State, were by now directing and dominating
destiny of the State itself. The attempt at reform was, therefore,
limited to formulate such regulations which would put considerable res-
trictions on fresh recruitments, disqualify the undeserving and slow
down the rate of increase in the munsaha. But the State had become
so weak that it could not implement even those moderate measures of
reform. We have noted that the Wazir had shrunk back from personally
implementing the proposed reforms. Unfortunately, there were forces
which worked against the contemplated reform and won their supporters
within the palace. Mustand Khan was made quite ineffective in imple-
menting the proposed reform. Most often, we are told, the yaddasht
was signed by Mustand Khan without completing the enquiry on account
of pressure brought upon him by the two wives of the Emperor, and
other court favourites. Thus the business of the State, Khafi Khan
points out, was transacted in contravention of the regulations and
the signatures of the Emperor lost its value.¹

We have noted earlier that the jagira were not available for a
large number of ajir as early as the first year of Bahadur Shah’s
reign. To provide for these ajir conquest and annexation of Rajpu-
tana was apparently undertaken but the plan could not be successfully

¹. Mustashahr-ul-Mubah, 14, p.629
implemented. The attempt to check the unprecedented increase in the number of mansabdars and an almost an equal increase in the ranks of the old mansabdars met with complete failure. We can presume that the grant of mansab and increase in the ranks continued and that such a policy was maintained without any reference to the availability of jagirs. Such an administrative policy could lead to only one result: that the mansabs in a large number of cases tended to be nominal and bore little or no relation with the assignment of corresponding jagirs. Our authorities perhaps refer to this situation in the jagirdari system when they note that the ranks and titles lost their importance and significance.

We have noted earlier that the obligation of the jagirdars toward the maintenance of the animals in the royal stables had become a heavy burden in the reign of Mirangzeb. The entire income from jagirs, we are told, could not cover the 1/6 or 2/3rd of the dues to be paid towards the maintenance of the animals in the royal stables. Consequently, the jagirdars and their agents were put to great hardship. In the reign of Shah Alam, at the suggestion of Khan-i-Khanan, it was laid down that in future when the jagirs were assigned to mansabdars, the amount payable in connection with the maintenance of animals in the royal stables, should be deducted from the jama or the dema showing the estimated income from their assignments. This reform we are told, removed the hardship caused to the mansabdars and their agents and it almost amounted to the remission of the tax from the
Incidentally, the evidence under reference suggests that the highly inflated nature of the *jama* was given due recognition and as such the nominal deductions from the *jama* did not really affect the income of the *jagirdars*.

Farrukh Siyyar’s weak and wavering character, the circumstances in which he ascended the imperial throne and the lust for power among the Sayyid brothers generated bitter jealousies among the nobles and converted the imperial court into a hot-bed of intrigues and machinations. As the days wore on the new sovereign emerged more and more as the first puppet Emperor of the Mughal imperial line who became a tool in the hands of the intriguing nobles of one party or another. Gultub-ul-Mulk, Abdullah Khan, primarily a soldier, was hardly qualified to fill the high office of the wazarat. Immersed in the corporal pleasures of life he was little interested in the details of administration and he neglected his formal duties. Gradually, the power passed into the hands of his corrupt Diwan Ratan Chand. Under such circumstances, the grant of *mansabs* and *jagirs* was actuated more by political motives than by other considerations such as conformity with the administrative procedures or due regard to the meritorious services rendered by the grantee. Corruption and nepotism prevailed and *jagirs* and *mansabs* were granted at one time as a measure of appeasement, and at other to keep a balance between the comparative strength of the warring parties. On account of these developments the pace of

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1. *Muntakhab-ul-Ibab*, II pp. 602, 603
disintegration in the jagirdari system which had been let loose in
the closing years of Aurangzeb’s reign became more rapid and glaring
in the reign of Farrukh Siyyar.

According to the author of the Ahwal-ul-Khwagin the majority
of mansabdars who did not deserve the rank of 500 had been granted
the rank of 5000 and 7000 and had acquired vast jagirs. But if summoned
to serve in an emergency they were worthless for military service.
Moreover, the descendants of the old nobles suffered from want of
favour and could hardly meet their daily expenses. Incidentally, we
also learn that almost all the khalsa land had been assigned as jagir.
Similar developments are recorded in another contemporary authority
the Muntakhab-ul-Lubab. The Hindus, Khwaja saras and Kashmiris, we
are told by Khafi Khan, had obtained high mansabs by force and fraud.
They had succeeded in obtaining jagirs which yielded maximum revenue
at the cost of other sections of the class of mansabdars and it had
become difficult for others to get jagirs. Inayatullah Khan made an

1. Ahwal-ul-Khwagin ff. 182 ab, 183a. The passage records the state
of affairs which was revealed to Nizam-ul-Mulk when he examined
the paper on taking charge of the wizarat in the first regnal year
of Muhammad Shah. It is obvious that these developments must have
taken place during the previous reigns. The reign of Jahangir Shah
was short lived and he had not been successful to remove his all
rivals. As such the evidence under reference may be ascribed to the
reign of Farrukh Siyyar.

2. Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, II, p. 775

3. Inayatullah Khan was appointed Diwan-i-Jan and Khalsa on
12th April, 1717 and given the rank of 400 zat and 3000
sawara. Irivine I p.334.
attempt to introduce the necessary reforms. He reported the matter to the Emperor and proposed to take away the mansabs from the Hindus and others who were not qualified to hold their mansabs, after a scrutiny of awarijah and taujih. Ratan Chand and others who held position of authority in the Revenue Ministry strongly resented the proposed reforms. They referred the matter to Qutub-ul-Mulk who did not allow the contemplated reforms to be implemented. On the other hand, all the Hindus on account of the re-imposition of jizya and proposal for decrease in the mansab developed a hostile attitude towards Inayatullah Khan. An account of these bickerings, the agreement which had been reached between Qutub-ul-Mulk and Inayatullah Khan did not work and they developed enmity towards each other.

The evidence summarised deserves a careful examination as it really records the disappearance of the essentials of the jagirdari system and the complete domination of the State by the mansabdars. It indicates an unprecedented increase in the mansabs without the

1. An abstract account of the receipts and disbursements of the jagirs and other lands of the subah showing the total income of the sarkars and parganas together with the details of the revenue from each village.

2. A record which contained entries regarding the pay of the salary; also the revenue accounts showing the name of each payer of the revenue together with the amounts paid and the arrears.

3. The general statement in our authorities that great increase in mansabs and lavish award of mansab had become a prominent feature of the mansabdari system since Bahadur Shah's accession is supported and corroborated by an examination of the rise in the ranks of individual mansabdars.

Bahadur Shah:
(a) Munir Khan was granted the title of Khan-i-Khanan Bahadur Zafar Jang and his rank raised from 1590 to 7000 zat, 7000 sawars (Irvine II, p.36)

(Contd. on next page)
corresponding ability of the mansabdars to fulfil their obligations. We are told that the mansabdars who did not deserve the rank of 500 were granted the rank of 5000 and 7000. But as to their efficiency to serve the State as a unit of army they were of little use and even worthless. In other words, the State was not in a position to impose the obligations for which the jagirs were assigned. And it is to be noted that such was the case with the majority of mansabdars; secondly a new class had entered the ranks of the mansabdars who had little skill and prowess as warriors. They were the Kashmiris, the Khwaja saras and Hindus. It appears that they served at the imperial court as mutasaddis or clerks and had acquired high mansab and rich jagir by manipulation and intrigue. The development was unfortunate as these munshees were neither willing, nor possessed the necessary qualifications for performing the military obligations imposed upon the mansabdars. In fact, they may be aptly described as the mansabdars and jagirdars at-large who did little or nothing for the money they

(Footnote in continuation of previous page)

(b) Asad Khan was given the rank of 8000 zat 8000 sawars da-aspeh sih aspeh. Zulfiqar Khan, his son, the rank of 7000 zat, 7000 sawars (Irvine II p.33,39)

(c) Nizam-ul-Mulk was given the title of Khan-i-Dauran Bahadur with a rank of 7000 zat, 7000 sawars

Jahandar Shah's reign:

Kai Man, the woman, who gave alarm when an attempt was made to assassinate Jahandar Shah, bravely attacked the assailants and slew one of them and received for this good service the titles of Raza Bahadur Rustom Hind and the rank of 5,000 zat (Irvine I p.231)

Farrukh Siyyar:

(a) Muhammad Murad Khan was appointed as Mir Tusuk with a rise of 500 in rank making him 5000 zat in Jan. 1718. In March 1718, he received the rank of 5000 zat, 2000 sawars. In May 1718, he was raised to 6000 zat, 5000 sawars. In December 1718 he was promoted to the rank

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extorted from the State. Thirdly, the new class acquired the mansab and jagir at the cost of those who were descendents of the old servants of the Mughal Empire, who had a brilliant record of prowess and skill in the art of warfare and equally commendable records of loyal services rendered to the State. In the keen competition the descendents of the old mansabdars lost the position of power and pelf to the new comers, remained without mansab and jagir and were reduced to extreme poverty. This naturally caused discontent and dissatisfaction among the people who were willing and able to serve the Empire. We can also note that even at this stage an attempt of reform was made but met with its usual fate and could not be implemented.

But the most important development was the assignment of the khalsa lands as jagir. What really happened can be easily visualised. With the increase in the power and position of the nobility and the mutasaddis, the demand for jagir became more vociferous. They refused to be contented, with the grant of nominal mansab, as most probably they were in the reign of Bahadur Shah, but clamoured for assignment of jagir against the mansab granted to them. But the jagir were not available. The ingenious device of making assignment on khalsa lands was proposed. The weak Emperor, always a puppet in the hands of one party or another ultimately succumbed to their demand. Recourse

(footnote continued in continuation of previous page)

of 7000 kat, 7000 sawara, 4000 do asapah, six asapah. The best jagir in Gujrat, Delhi and Agra provinces were allotted to him (Irvine I, 349, 344, 354).

(b) Ratan Chand, in 1714, was created Raja with a rank of 7000 kat (Irvine I p.291). In May 1720 he was promoted to the rank of 5000 kat 5000 sawara (Irvine II p.13)
was taken to make assignments on the **mahala** earmarked as **khalsa**, in order to meet the claims of the **mansabdars**, and within a short time almost the entire **khalsa** lands passed into the hands of the **jagirdars**. It was an unusual development in the administrative history of the Mughal Empire, and amounted to the virtual surrender of the rights of the State to the **mansabdars**. Thus it happened that the class which was created to serve in and support the State at first became an enormous and unprofitable burden and still later an usurper of the right of the State. The inherent contradiction in the **jagirdari** and **mansabdari** system was fully revealed; it served to destroy the State which created the system.

Even the conversion of **khalsa** lands into **jagirs** could not solve the problem of the increase in the number of **mansabdars** and the scarcity of available **jagirs**. The **mansabdars** who were required to serve directly under the Emperor were, consequently recruited on the basis of cash salaries till **jagirs** were available for them. The Emperor Farrukh Siyyar we are told, at the instigation of Lutf-‘Ullah Sadiq¹ issued the order that the **padshahi**² **mansabdars** holding the rank of 20 to 900 and **walaheh**³ **mansabdars** holding the rank of 7000 to 8000 should be paid at the rate of **Rs. 50** per month till they were provided with **jagirs**. The **walaheh** **mansabdars**, who had estab-

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1. He joined the imperial service in the reign of Bahadur Shah but fell from favour under Jahander Shah. He was appointed Diwan-i-Khalsa under Farrukh Siyyar and held the office of Khan-i Saman in the reign of Muhammad Shah. He died in the reign of Ahmad Shah (Maasir-ul-Umara III part I p.178)

2. **Mansabdars** who joined the imperial service after the accession of the reigning sovereign.

3. Most trusted troops of the reigning sovereign who had been attached to his person and served under him while he was still only a prince.
lished their loyalty and prowess, had not been paid for ten to twelve months. A large number of them were serving in the hope of getting jagirs. Orders were all of sudden issued for their dismissal. The bakshis told them that their services were terminated.

The last attempt to save the system from complete breakdown was made by Nizam-ul-Mulk when he assumed the Wizarat in October 1721. He examined the records and papers in the Revenue Ministry and the revelation, indicated in the preceding lines, was almost shocking. The results of his enquiry were brought to the notice of the Emperor and Nizam-ul-Mulk was authorised to take necessary steps for restoring order in the administration of jagir lands. His proposals for reforms may be summed up as follows:-

1. The ranks of the old nobility should be increased.
2. Those who had acquired mansabs and status in recent time were to be awarded mansabs according to their individual merits. He proposed to decrease their mansabs.
3. The mahals earmarked as khalsa in the previous reigns were to be resumed as such.
4. The jagirs where collections could only be made by employing force or threat of force should be assigned to powerful nobles and tiyuls where collections could be made without much difficulty should be assigned to smaller and weaker

   According to Seir-ul-Mutakherin the order for recruitment was issued in the beginning of the fifth reignal year. A majority of recruits held the rank of 20 to 900. It specifies the padshahi and malashahi mansabdars separately.
mansabdars.

The contemplated reforms raised high hopes in certain quarters and it was hoped that the administrative stability, which was seriously impaired since the death of Aurangzeb, would be restored. But soon the hopes were belied and the Wazir met with stiff opposition from such persons as Samsam-ud-Daula and Haider Quli Khan. Those who had vested interests and the professional intriguers at the court soon alienated the Emperor from the able and well meaning Wazir and the Emperor was induced to humiliate the Nizam-ul-Mulk. He fell from favour and was constrained to leave Delhi in December, 1723 and within a few months reached Malwa. The last chance to save the jagirdari system and the Empire was missed and soon the inevitable came to pass. By the middle of the 18th century the system had ceased to be a living organisation. One seldom got an assignment, we are told by Anand Ram Mukhlis. Even if the assignment was made he could not obtain the possession of his assigned jagir.

1. Ahwal-ul-Khawagin ff. 182 ab, 183 a. Shah Name-i-Wunwar-ul-Kalam ff. 3ba Seir-ul-Mutaakhirin
2. Tasvirat-ul-Muluk ff. 131 ab.
4. Mirat-ul-Istilah f. 64 b