The ascendancy of Aurangzeb as the Mughal Emperor introduced significant changes in the policy of the Government towards states and territories in the country. An imperialist in his attitude, the Emperor was vindictive towards the rulers who had so long resisted the suzerainty of the Mughals. The internal challenges immediately after the assumption of power were also no mean. Everywhere, lawlessness caused tumults, the ryots refused to pay the revenue, the zamindars disobeyed the local governors or tried to rob and conquer their rivals. Thus the local rulers, especially in the north-east, violated the frontiers and made inroads into the imperial territory.

During the viceroyship for two terms in Deccan, Aurangzeb virtually trained himself in the art of practical politics as well as diplomatic skill from the association with Mir Jumla, who followed a policy wholly divorced from ethical considerations and mainly guided by exigencies of the given time and circumstances. As such, Aurangzeb's aggressive Deccan policy was rooted in the counsel and co-operation of Mir Jumla, the wazir of Golconda and then prime minister of the imperial Mughals. Thus both the officials began to act as a centre of gravity in the imperial politics of Mughals.

who used to formulate their grand strategy in collaboration with each) Jagadish Narayan Sarkar rightly says:

"Aurangzeb had to rely on Mir Jumla for inducing the Emperor Shah Jahan to approve of an aggressive policy against the Deccan by counteracting the machinations of Dara, always friendly to the Sultans, and opposed to the Viceroy and the Wazir and who wielded a great influence over the Emperor." 2

AURANGZEB IN MAKING

Aurangzeb was promoted to the Viceroyship of Deccan in July 1636 and completed the first term in May 1644, with his seat at Aurangabad. "During these eight years he paid four visits to his father in Northern India, leaving some great noble, usually his maternal uncle Shaista Khan, to act for him." 3 Most probably Aurangzeb was intriguing to get a higher position in the imperial seat. But the Emperor Shah Jahan in collaboration with Dara transferred Aurangzeb to Gujrat as Governor. The main intention was to embarrass him in controlling that turbulent province. 4 There he acquired considerable experience of tackling the robber tribes and rebels. The Emperor did not like the long-stay of Aurangzeb at Gujrat. Because the popularity of Aurangzeb could cause menace to the future rise of Dara. Aurangzeb was accordingly transferred to Balk and Badakshan. 4 In this north-west front Aurangzeb had to face acute hardship in subduing the robbers. No substantial gains were made; rather it incurred heavy losses. Aurangzeb

   * From Feb. 1645 to Jan. 1647.
4. Ibid., p.46.
was discredited and naturally the Imperial authority took an opportunity to condemn Aurangzeb in further assignment.

By March 1648 Aurangzeb was posted as Governor of Multan and Sindh and maintained that post upto July, 1652. For the first time, Aurangzeb came in contact with the hostile Afghan and Beluch clans. Aurangzeb was not the man to brook disorder and disobedience. Whatever damages done in the preceding assignment were repaired by the present campaign of Multan and Sindh "Everywhere lawless men and frontier clans felt that they had got a new master (Aurangzeb), who could not be safely defined." \[As Viceroy he not only displayed administrative capacity but also as successful general\] Even in economic matters, he envisaged some plans for the enrichment of Imperial exchequer. But his Qandahar operations in 1649 and 1652 met with failure not because of negligence. Rather the Imperial authority did not grant any power to act in discretion. The last Viceroyship of Aurangzeb was completed in the Deccan where he took real training. As such the second vice-royalty of Deccan, (1653-1656) was a crucial period in the political career of Aurangzeb. The experiences that acquired were put into operation for mastering the art of political chess-board of the Imperial government. Indeed, Mir Jumla came forward to train Aurangzeb to acquire the most coveted imperial throne. Contrary to the intentions of Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb emerged successful in the war of succession

for the Mughal throne among four brothers. When Agra fort surrendered, Aurangzeb became truly the sovereign, and the whole administrative staff submitted to him. A grand darbar was now held (10th June 1658) in his camp, and captive Shah Jahan presented him a sword named 'Alamgir'. The high grandees and other imperial officers came in troops to the court of Aurangzeb in the hope of suit and each received favour suited to his rank. As Murad Baksh, the younger brother of Aurangzeb, was violently preparing a rebellion and was waiting for an opportunity to carry his futile plans, Aurangzeb made him a prisoner at Mathura and thus freed the people from mischief and tumult; the captive was sent to the fort of Delhi under Shaikh Mir.

Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan and the favourite to be the successor of Emperor, took asylum in Punjab on certain considerations. Firstly, Punjab was the land of soldiers. Moreover, from the north-west frontier provinces the services of the hardiest mercenaries could be properly utilised. Secondly, he had past experiences as the Viceroy of Punjab. Besides, Lahore fort contained immense wealth and war materials. But Aurangzeb was vigilant in keeping his eagle eyes upon Dara. He took personal initiative in chasing Dara who was camping in different places such as Multan, Sewan, Sindh and then to Gujrat. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb halted at Multan and turned back towards Delhi because an

7. Sir J.N. Sarkar (tr), Maasir-i-Alamgir, p.3.
8. Ibid., p.4.
alarming situation had been developed in the east by Shuja's invasion which required his presence there, entrusting the campaign to divisional commanders. Dara made an attempt to capture Agra fort from the west while Aurangzeb camping in the Punjab. The battle of Dsoral (Ajmir, March 1659) shattered his hopes and he fled to Gujrat and ultimately was made prisoner by Malik Jiwana, an Aryan aide-de-camp of Aurangzeb and brought to Delhi in Aug, 1659. The doomed prince's agent unsuccessfully tried to save his life by running to different mediators. Dara was put to death in the same year and in 1661, his son, Sulaiman Shukoh fell into the clutches of Aurangzeb who ordered him to be removed to the fortress of Gwalior, where he was killed by poisoned to death.

The next rival of Aurangzeb for the Imperial throne was Prince Shuja, the severed son of Shah Jahan who served in the capacity of viceroy in Bengal Subah for two terms. In 1649 A.D. Prince Shuja was re-appointed for the second term to the Wissat of Bengal by Shah Jahan. As the Governor of Bengal he was involved in the administration of the northeast frontier of the Mughals and his contention for the throne of Delhi immediately attracted the attention of Aurangzeb to the northeast. When the news of Shah Jahan's illness reached him, Shuja did not fail to register his claim to the Mughal throne. However, he could be satisfied with the pact with Sulaiman

10. Ibid., p.289.
11. Ibid., pp. 337-38.
Shukoh, son of Dara, effected in May 1658 that made him the supreme authority over Bengal, Bihar, Orissa up to the east of Mungir. The news of the reverses faced by Dara and the defeceto assumption of power by Aurangzeb prevailed upon him to march towards Delhi. But the struggle between Aurangzeb and Dara had terminated before Shuja’s arrival and Aurangzeb already mounted the imperial throne and he could use the entire army of Hindustan against Shuja. In the battle of Khajwa (Jan 1659) Prince Shuja was defeated by Aurangzeb by winning over the general and commanders of Shuja by bribes and temptations. Meanwhile, Aurangzeb’s position was strengthened by the arrival of Mir Jumla from Deccan. “Being in constant attendance on the Emperor during the battle, as his right-hand man, he offered him timely advice regarding the tactical moves and instilled hope and courage into his mind during critical moments.” Shuja was now forced to take to flight and fortifying the passes of Teliagadi and Sakrigali, he entrenched himself at Rajmahal (Akbarnagar). Aurangzeb, however, returned to Delhi apprehending danger from Jaswant Singh who was reported to have taken his position in favour of captive Shah Jahan. On the eve of his departure, Mir Jumla was provided with a large force to pursue Prince Shuja. Aurangzeb also bestowed special powers and privileges to Mir Jumla probably with two-fold objectives. Firstly,

17. A. Salam (tr), op.cit., p.220.
Mir Jumla would explore and utilise all the potential sources that are available in order to end the physical existence of the fugitive Prince Shuja and his legacy. Secondly, Mir Jumla would chalk out a new strategy in order to execute the aggressive policy in the north east frontiers of Bengal.

Mir Jumla was also asked to guide Sultan Muhammad, first-born son of Aurangzeb in the campaign, and was given the supreme command to execute the operation. "Reinforcements were soon despatched under Mir Jumla, as joint Commander-in-Chief, raising the pursuing force to 30,000 men." Prince Shuja displayed remarkable feat in respect of courage and war strategy. But due to irony of fate, he had to retreat from place to place. Finally, he bade farewell even to his eastern capital Dacca in May 1660 along with his family and few faithful officials and took shelter in Aracan. This fate of Prince Shuja was occasioned by a multiple of factors. The character and strength of the new Emperor and the efficiency of his deputy, Nawab Mir Jumla, were known to the Chieftains and zamindars in Bengal, most of whom shifted their allegiance to the new administration. The Mughal officers in the province like the Faujdaras and Thanadaras also deserted Shuja and confirmed their loyalty to the Nawab. Prince Shuja pushed his way to Arakan through south-eastern frontier and this episode brought the eastern kingdom of Tripura into the forefront. Taking

---

the advantage of the confusion caused by the War of Succession.

Raja Kalyanmanikya, who had earlier submitted to Shuja, proclaimed his independence and regained some portions of the western plain that had ceded to the Mughals. Kalyanmanikya died in 1660 A.D. (Saka 1582), and was succeeded by his son Govindamanikya who was the defector ruler of the kingdom during the last years of his father's reign and was instrumental in throwing away the Mughal yoke. Prince Shuja, therefore, turned to Nakshatra Roy, the step brother of Govindamanikya, encouraged him to dethrone Govindamanikya and promised him military support. Nakshatra Roy accordingly rebelled against his brother but meanwhile Shuja was dislodged from his authority in Dacca and no help could be accorded to the rebelled prince. And Shuja also could secure no help for shelter from Tripura then ruled by an unfriendly Govindamanikya. The imperial authorities were, however, perhaps under the impression that Shuja had entrenched himself in Tripura or was in league with the rulers of Tripura and Arakan. Aurangzeb, therefore, in a letter addressed to Govindamanikya demanded that the latter should capture Shuja and hand him over to Mir Jumla. To quote the letter:

"I hope you will capture him and send him carefully under the surveillance of your army officers and thereby oblige me, so that the age-old friendship may continue to exist. Otherwise you will take it for certain that as a result of the stay of that imprudent rash in your territory, our happy relationship will be breached by conflicts. I do believe that things will be done in accordance with my letter."

24. Rajmala, Education Directorate, Tripura, pp. 76-78.
Meanwhile Shuja had sent his son Sultan Bang to the King of Aracan for help and the latter sent Sultan Bang back to his father with a number of war boats. Commanded by Portuguese subjects up to the Chittagong frontier where the Aracanese frontier met Mughal Bengal. This, however, being unable to reckon with the Mughals and as no help was forthcoming from Tripura, Shah Shuja ultimately fled to Aracan with his family and followers. Though the Aracanese King initially promised him help, the difference of opinion crept in between the two, when the King demanded the daughter of the Prince and also the services of his sons and officials. Shuja then planned to proceed to Macca and according to Dutch records ('Dag Register', p.115), he started for Tripura. Nevertheless, he was chased by the Aracanese and killed in the jungles either of Tripura or Chittagong hill tract.

Govindamanikya, Raja of Tripura, on the other hand, incurred the displeasure of Aurangzeb and Mir Jumla having failed to captivate Shah Shuja who had already escaped to Aracan. The rebel claimant to the throne of Tripura, Nakshatra Roy managed to secure the support of the Mughals and possibly with the help of Mir Jumla, as believed by the historians of Tripura, occupied Udaipur and ultimately succeeded in dethroning Govindamanikya. The royal chronicle of Tripura, however, claims that Govindamanikya voluntarily abdicated in favour of

28. N.R.Roy Choudhury, Tripura through the Ages, p. 41.
Nakshatra Roy, although it describes fierce battle between Ramdev, son of Govindamanikya, and Nakshatra Roy. Be that as may be, Nakshatra Roy began his reign as the Raja of Tripura in 1661 A.D., and assumed the name of Chatramanikya as known from his coins, presumably as an ally of the Mughals. Govindamanikya was thus forced to be a fugitive and ultimately obtained asylum in the Arakanese court where, according to some traditions, he met Prince Shuja and the latter presented him a precious sword and a diamond. The allignment, if at all any, between the two fugitive princes could not certainly pose any threat to the Mughals or their ally in Tripura because, as it has already been mentioned, Prince Shuja was killed shortly after. Govindamanikya could, however, stage his come back to Tripura after a few years, but this too not without the blessings of the Mughals, as will be described later on.

Nawab Mir Jumla thus completed the immediate task of clearing his new province from the threat of Shuja and could consolidate his authority in the eastern frontier. The uncertainties, and resultant anxiety, however, prevailed in the Mughal camp as the news of Shuja’s death was concealed for some time by his followers who also spread the false news that he had fled into jungle. Aurangzeb could be sure of the death of Shuja only when it was confirmed by the Dutch factors. Moreover, "these uncertainties and expectation came to an end in time."

---

through the evidence of many persons from Arakan, who had been present at the unhappy prince's death.\textsuperscript{32} Thus the lust of Mughal throne kindled among the four sons of ill-fated Shah Jahan was terminated making Aurangzeb, the indisputed master of this mighty Empire.

**MIR JUMLA IN BENGAL**

Mir Jumla consolidated his position as the Governor of Bengal and was destined to supervise north-eastern policy of the Mughals under Aurangzeb. He had also acquired practical knowledge of Bengal and its frontier states while pursuing Prince Shuja for long seventeen months. The action of the new Subahdar makes it clear that while the frontier policy of Shuja was defensive, Mir Jumla's policy was aggressive as well as offensive.\textsuperscript{33} The strength of his aggressive attitude was in the highly imperialistic policy of his Emperor. On becoming the Emperor, Aurangzeb reshuffled the policy in respect of appointment of Provincial Governors and other high officials. The reason behind this change was to eliminate the loyalties towards the popular regime of Dara, Shuja and Murad respectively. Obviously, most of the provincial Governors and high officials were replaced by those who had firm faith and loyalty in Aurangzeb's paramountcy, both in the central and provincial levels. The immediate problems of the Emperor seemed to be three-fold in nature. Firstly, the authority in north-east frontiers had to be reasserted. Secondly, the Deccan problem was mounted by the rise


of Marathas under Shivaji. Thirdly, the Afghan tribes in the
north-west frontier were in rebellious state. One of the major
administrative changes made by Aurangzeb at his second coronation
(July, 1659) was the posting of Shaista Khan to the viceroyalty
of the Deccan, in the place of Prince Muazzam. He was specifically
directed to suppress Shivaji.34 Muhammad Amir Khan, son of
Mir Jumla, was given the charge to crush the chronic rebellions
of north-west frontier provinces reasserting forward frontier
policy. North-east frontier was entrusted to Mir Jumla who
devoted his full energy to assert imperial prestige as well as
to extend the bounds of the empire upto the royal seat of Assam.35

NORTH-EASTERN POLICY

Aurangzeb’s attitude towards the States on Mughal’s
frontiers was based mainly on the expansion of imperial boundary
as well as assertion of Mughal prestige and authority. The
application of this policy was directed in the Deccan, the north­
west and the north-east with different variable magnitude
depending on geo-political factors. To assess his frontier
policy by one scale will be over-simplification of the whole
issue, though some elements are common. Aurangzeb could not
freely apply his personal discretion in asserting the expanding
imperial policy towards Deccan as well as north-west frontier
during his viceroyship, because of restrictions and interruptions
of the Imperial authorities. But the supreme authority of the
imperial Mughals, he was now free to design and implement his

35. S. Talish, Fathiyya-i-ibriyya; MSS No D 72, Asiatic
own scheme. Aurangzeb unearthed his true guide in the intriguing personality of Mir Jumla. As a matter of fact, Aurangzeb’s personal political missions and diplomatic schemes were processed and materialised in different phases under the stewardship of this Persian general. No wonder, Aurangzeb’s expanding frontier policy towards the north-eastern states was solely entrusted to Mir Jumla. However,

"It was the common belief that Aurangzeb ordered Mir Jumla into Assam that he might be got rid of, dreading that, as he had thrown the kingdom of Gulkandah into confusion, and had known how to arrange for the conquest of Dara and the destruction of Shivaji, he might likewise attempt by his devices to place someone else on the Mogul throne."

Although difference of opinion was occasionally noticed between the Emperor and the Subahdar, there is a reason to believe that Mir Jumla enjoyed the full confidence and support of Aurangzeb.

The appointment of Mir Jumla as Governor of Bengal had some special significance. Only the persons in whom the Emperor had firm faith were selected as viceroy, subject to the limitations of imperial decrees sponsored by Aurangzeb. Mir Jumla was reputed as a man of lofty integrity, imperial justice and a cherisher of the subjects. Unlike other Governors, he was given special honour and specific responsibilities. The Emperor conferred on him the title of Khani-Khanan and Sipah Salar, a mansab of 7000 and a belt together with a special bejewelled

---

sword.39

"Aurangzeb also asked Mir Jumla to devote himself to the efficient administration of the province by pacifying the cross section of people, chastising the unruly nobles, regulating the artillery, and especially the nawwara (flotilla), securing the safety of traffic on the roads and highways and issuing well calculated regulations concerning various other matters."40

The aforesaid directives amply justify the truth that Mir Jumla was vested with supreme authority concerning political, military and economic affairs of Bengal and the adjoining territories.

It is pertinent to note that Aurangzeb had tactically snatched all the material wealth that Mir Jumla had acquired from Karnatak and Golconda. Now the Emperor's greed turned towards Bengal subah to reap the last fruits from the aged viceroy. The normal revenue of Bengal province was about four crores, next to Bijapur and Golconda.41 Since the war of succession, the requisite revenues of Bengal subah were not deposited in the Imperial exchequer. Consequently Mir Jumla was obliged to explore all the available sources of revenue and thereby to give economic relief to Aurangzeb's campaigns in the North-West and Deccan fronts. Undoubtedly, Mir Jumla responded to the wishes of the Emperor with all sincerity and never deviated from the task entrusted to him. The Emperor also possibly directed Mir Jumla to carry the banner of Islam in the Hindu Kingdom of North-east frontier. Because 'he was charged with

39. Sir J.N. Sarkar, (tr), Musir-i-Alamgiri, pp 18-19; S.K. Bhuyan (tr) op.cit., pp 151-59,
40. J.N. Sarkar, op.cit., p 209;
the effective chastisement of the rather refractory zamindars of Assam and of the Maghs, who ill-treated and oppressed the Mussalmans. For about three years that he was present in the province for barely a year and a half (May 1660 – Nov 1661) being absent on campaigns in Cooch Behar and Assam from November 1661. During this short period, he skillfully utilised the military resources of the European powers. He also used the services of English, the Dutch and the Portuguese and their ships in his north-eastern campaigns. He also employed an Englishman, Thomas Pratt, in building boats and making ammunition for river fighting. This proves that the zamindars of Bengal who used to supply war boats and man-power for imperial campaigns were inactive and disloyal at this stage. A number of bordering zamindars and tributary Rajas withdrew their necks from the collar of obedience; and not only neglected to send any part of their revenues to the Imperial treasury, but even invaded the provinces.

Meanwhile, the Ahom monarch Jayachvaj Singh, who was also on the alert to take advantage of the dissensions amongst the Mughals, raised a strong army, threw two bridges over the Kallang river and advanced towards Gauhati. After occupation of Gauhati, the Ahom army marched against the western Koches and after a moderate conflict, defeated them twice and drove them across the Sankosh river. The Ahom monarch extended his plunders and

---

42. J.N. Sarkar, op.cit., p 209.
44. C. Stewart, The History of Bengal, p 287.
45. E. Gait, A History of Assam, p 130; Alangirnama, pp 679-80.
laid the country waste almost up to the vicinity of Dacca, and

46
carried away with them a number of the inhabitants as slaves

which was naturally considered as insult to the Mughal Government.

Jayachwaj Singh tried to keep the Mughal viceroy in good humour.

He sent an emissary to Mir Jumla with costly presents and made

a gesture for peace. He put the entire blame for the subversion

of the Mughal authority in Kamrup on the shoulders of Prannarayan,

the Raja of Kooch Behar (c.1633-66), then a Mughal vassal on the

plea that he had taken possession of the imperial territory in

order to prevent it from falling into the hands of Kooch Behar.

As a matter of fact, the Ahom monarch was only gaining time for

further aggressions. But this strategy was smelt by Mir Jumla

who began necessary preparations for the fresh north-eastern

venture. 47

[As Mir Jumla was till then apprehending danger from

Aracan where fugitive Shuja had taken shelter] Naturally he

was anxious to invade Aracan after the end of the rainy season,

and directed Rashid Khan to operate the north-east campaign in

the early part of 1661 and to take delivery of Kamrup from the

Ahoms. 48 On his approach, the Ahoms abandoned Dhubri, and

fell back beyond the Manas river, but he sustained snare and

waited for reinforcement before taking possession of the tract

which they had abandoned. The Ahom monarch gave severe

punishment to the retreated commanders and there appointed

Baduli Phukan to be Neog Phukan as well as Commander in chief.

47. E. Gait, op. cit., p 131; Ilamgirnama, p 680; ...
48. H. Blochmann, Koch-Bihar, Koch-Hajo and Assam, in the 16th

and 17th century according to the Akbarnama, the Padishnama

and Fathiya-Libriya, Vol.XLI, 1872, p 63,
He was particularly ordered to drive out Rashid Khan from the soil of Mughal Kamrup. Mir Jumla was not inclined to forgive the disloyalty of a vassal ruler, Prannarayan of Koch Behar. So a second war front was operated under the generalship of Raja Sujan Sing, the Rajput Chief, subsequently re-inforced by Mirza Beg Shujal, to chastise the Koch ruler. Both the commanders were interrupted by the Ahom and Koch forces respectively. Thereafter, Mir Jumla was compelled to follow an intensive aggressive policy towards this frontier, based on strong military and naval forces. As mentioned earlier, Mir Jumla put more stress on the recruitment of European residents both in the land and naval army. This was imperative necessity as the existing Mughal armies of Bengal were meagre and they had been demoralised and the morale of the general subjects was at its lowest ebb during the period of civil war. Moreover, to contest with the age-long Hindu Kingdoms on the frontier of Bengal, a strong naval force was bound to be formed. So the Mughal viceroy kept Arakan campaign pending and on the night of 1st November 1661, started from Dacca (Khisirpur) accompanied with Dilir Khan on his historic Assam campaign.

Evidently, the crucial years beginning from January 1659 to November 1661 marked the formative period of Mir Jumla's north-eastern frontier policy. The emperor Aurangzeb was too

50. Ibid., p 75.
much engrossed in consolidating his imperial power and prestige just after the closure of the war of succession and at the same time threatened by the ambitious Rajputs in the north as well as the grave Maratha menace in Deccan. Moreover, the traditional north-west policy of the Mughals was to be pursued with a more vigorous push in view of the rebel and hostile Afghan tribes, thereby alarming at the frontiers. So the Emperor had ultimately to take his camp in Kashmir in order to revitalise the conventional frontier policy keeping in view of the maintenance of political equilibrium. Aurangzeb personally guided and supervised the strategies and military operations according to the exigencies of time and situation in the vulnerable frontiers of North-west, the gateway of all the preceding dynastic intruders of India. In view of the above condition, Aurangzeb was not in a position, at the outset, to pay personal attention in the intricate affairs of North-east India but to bank on the ambitious Persian general, who took the unexpected assignment of viceroyship in Bengal by the imperial decree of his Sunni Master in May 1660.

Once Aurangzeb was finally confirmed of the death news of exiled Prince Shuja, the Arakan campaign was put under suspension. Most probably, the cause of the revision of imperial policy was on the apprehension that the prolonged stay of the aggrieved Vicerey in the hot bed of Bengal subah might create either political convulsions or radical revolution endangering

52. Sir J.N. Sarkar (tr), *op. cit.*, pp. 18-19.
the stability of Mughal rule. Taking all these unseen factors into consideration, the imperial order was issued to execute the North-eastern campaign on priority basis. However, the astute Viceroy did not leave the seat of Bengal at the outset. Rather Rashid Khan and Raja Sujan Singh were directed and deputed by Mir Jumla to accomplish the directives of the imperial assignment of North-eastern campaign.\(^5^3\) Mir Jumla, however could not reconcile the ill-motivated and manoeuvres of the imperial authority. Indeed, he was considered as the main pillar and brain to Aurangzeb specially during the crucial period in between 1656 to 1660 because he had limitless wealth. Now the Shia Viceroy of Bengal completing about seventy summers of his life, could not maintain the equilibrium of discretion when Aurangzeb's imperial authority demanded the oscillating energies of the new Viceroy, defying all canons of ethics.\(^5^4\) In obedience to the imperial mandate, the aggrieved general-cum-Viceroy had to carry out the duties with mixed feelings. Now Mir Jumla had no substantial quantum of copper of tide-over the tough and acute problems of the province of Bengal as well as the challenge of the frontier Hindu sovereigns. To consolidate the present incumbency, it was an imperative necessity to inject and impose his earlier policy of Deccan in the soil of Bengal subah and the frontier kingdoms. As a matter of fact, Mir's Deccan formulae were not applicable either in Bengal Subah which was already rent with conflicting loyalties or in North-east regions where ethnical

\(^5^3\) A. Salam, \textit{op.cit.}, pp 223-24; \textit{Alamgirnama}, pp 678-80.
diversities were too much pronounced to accept any homogeneous paramountcy. However, Mir too like his Sunni master was lured by the dazzling prospects of acquiring the treasures both from Bengal Subah and unexplored wealth of the entire north-east frontier states. But this wild venture was too much difficult to be accomplished especially in North-east India, as the aspirant was to start from Dacca, where he had stayed only for eighteen months (May 1660 - November 1661).

Further, the political and economic conditions of Bengal Subah was in a fluid state right from the Viceroyalty of Prince Shuja (1639-1657) and this unavoidable wounds were aggravated by the War of Succession. The feudal economic structure of Bengal Subah became stagnant. Corruptions in all phases of the cross-section of life became rampant. The reactionary forces of conflicting loyalties towards Aurangzeb’s authority created a vacuum especially in Bengal Subah. The imperial revenues from Bengal were in arrears since 1657. Curiously enough, the contumacious masses alike expressed their gestures of superficial loyalties especially during the period of interregnum following war of succession. Consequently, the din of rebellion and divisive forces became rife when ex-wazir of Golkonda was seated in the capacity of Viceroy at Dacca (Jahangirnagar). Again, to chastise the age long powerful rulers and Chieftains of North-east India, representing heterogeneous nature, it vitally required considerable time factors, substantial finance (addition).
to trained men and war materials. As already referred to that the Bengal Subah was on the brink of financial bankruptcy. But the rulers and chieftains were comparatively maintaining political and economic stability than the counterpart of Mughal province. It is because the Mughal-Ahom bilateral treaty of 1639 was more favourable to Mughals especially in trade and as such the Mughal authority pursued a definite policy of non-intervention in North-east India, ensuring the territorial integrity and uninterrupted commercial activities of the frontier rulers. However, the terms of this treaty were put in abeyance since the War of Succession. 57

In fact, the concerted plan of north-eastern campaign was conceived by the emperor Aurangzeb while it had to be executed by his so long general Mir Jumla, although it was not pre-concerted by the two diplomats. Again the course of actions and modalities of conducting the North-eastern campaign, projected later on altogether different attitude of the Emperor who exercised the imperial authority as the supreme of the Mughal army. But none of the Imperial forces and economic resources were made available to Mir Jumla because of the concentration of lion parts of Mughal corps into other frontiers. Yet the Viceroy was expected to mean his own business by husbanding the stagnant resources on the spot. Indeed, it was a formidable and herculean task involving risks for Mir Jumla who required to collect a sound finance within the time bound limit of eighteen months only before he could launch the historic campaign of North-east India by November 1661 in the

57. H. Goswami, (ed) Purani Assam Buranj, p 166.
lines of integrated operation.\textsuperscript{56} Even though, this Viceroy
was given solely the independent charge coupled with some
prerogative powers in formulating the policy matters of Bengal
Subah as well as North-East frontier states, but the Persian
statesman started his policy shakily at the initial stage under
adverse conditions as cited earlier. Now, Mir was to be guided
only by his own wisdom and experiences what-so-ever, inorder to
overcome all the unforeseen problems and hurdles he was to face.

Above all, North-east India was to offer Mir Jumla
altogether a different terrain, unfamiliar plateau, treacherous
weather, turbulent rivers with upward current, streamlets,
covered lands, unfavourable climate etc., about which he must
have ascertained the factual reports from the traders, preachers,
saujdar, petty officials of the frontier outposts. He also
collected the news of stored wealth of the Ahom rulers from
microscopic number of muslim settlers of Ahom Kingdom. He was
also provided with solid informations about the frontier Kingdom
from Rashid Khan and Raja Sujan Singh, the two generals of
twin operations whom Mir had despatched before for diplomatic
transactions as well as raids. To Mir Jumla, it was not viable
and practicable to formulate a ready made war plan or to pursue
the traditional policy of military campaign which he had been
following in the Deccan and northern India. Therefore, the
policy concerning north-eastern campaign developed from time to
time and with every new turn of events, it had undergone changes
before it could take a final shape and his success and failure
also varied accordingly to the extent he could master strong
his limited resources inorder to execute his policy.\textsuperscript{60} To
\textsuperscript{56} S.K. Bhuyan, (ed) Assam Buranji, p 76.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., p 77.
\textsuperscript{60} W. Irvine (tr), \textit{op. cit.}, Vol. I, p 92.
understand the predicament which befell him in the North-east India, it is desirable to make brief comparative estimate of Mughal north-east and north-west policy in the light of which the new re-orientation of Mir Jumla’s policy can be better appreciated in its formation period referred to.

NORTH EAST AND NORTH WEST

On his accession to the Mughal throne the Shrewd Emperor, Aurangzeb was called upon to reckon with the two traditional frontiers of the empire, the north-east and north-west, both to pacify the rebellious conduct of frontier Chiefs and to articulate his policy of imperial expansionism. The use of defensive diplomatic weapon was the common feature in the North-west frontier but this doctrine was not conducive to the rulers and chieftains with heterogenous character in the North-east. Consequently, the policy was oscillating like pendulum from defensive to offensive and vice versa. Again in North-west, the policy was mainly of punitive character and the Mughal authorities had to patch up peace by pensioning of the hostile tribal leaders from time to time, overlooking their depredations. But in the North-east the policy was based on aggrandisement and annexation. The retributary measures of North-west were more or less sustained whereas in north-east these were mere transitory.61 The Mughal authority used to take the advantage of the inter-tribal jealousy with a view to root out the perpetual source of irritation created by the plundering raids of the rebel Pathans and the political indoctrination continued to

be a dominant factor in dealing with the inhabiting tribes; but in the North-east such a policy could not be very meaningful as the rulers and chieftains were backed by sound political organisation. The maintenance of political equilibrium and stable government with sound financial basis, obviously, evoked and excited the jealousy of Mughal authorities. The benevolent monarchy of North-east India, devoid of religious fanaticism, intensified the jealousy of Mughal rulers most of whom were the believers of autocracy based on religious bigotry. Freed from the traditional Shia-Sunni conflict of the north-west, the Mughal authorities in the North-east had to resort to determined stress and strain in consolidation of the Muhammadans in the Brahmaputra, Surma and Barak valleys. The pan-Islamic policy could be exercised in the foot hills of Tripura, Khasi and Jaintia hills and Garo hills in phased and calculated manner. Nevertheless, the main object of North-east policy was to control and monopolise all the trades and the commercial routes and centres so as to fill up the gap of both provincial exchequer of Bengal Subah and the tottering Imperial treasury with booty and revenues.62 Contrary to the north-west where political stability and border security were the sole aims, In fact, economic imperialism was put into operation under the coverage of frontier policy in the fertile regions of North-East. Strategic position of the two frontiers was pole asunder in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In fact, the basic problems of the two pulsative and sensitive fronts differed in scope and magnitude.63

63. F. Bernier, op.cit., p 360; W. Irvine (tr) op.cit., vol. II, pp 412-13
The earlier Mughal authorities could not properly visualise these two fronts in proper perspective. Thus on the accession of Aurangzeb, the problems of the above fronts took different turn. This new Emperor also put over-emphasis by magnifying the problems of North-west, and diverting and draining away the best forces of the country unto 1680 A.D. As a result, the Mughal authorities under Aurangzeb also failed to make proper and requisite assessment and importance in the North-east frontier policy. In this frontier, the Mughal authorities continued to handle and analyse the strategic values mere on simple equations. No matter, when the Mughal authorities were in illusion, the European free booters and traders under the coverage of the respective factors exploited the fluid situation and step by step took available advantages on the plea that they would extend their possible assistance in realising the dreams of the Mughals. As the final phase of Mughal’s north-west frontier policy began to roll under the stewardship of emperor Aurangzeb, the wheels of fortune turned otherwise. To the Emperor, the strategic value of North-east front was decreasing whereas to the European factors it was in ascending scale. Of course, the Emperor pretended to revitalise the North-eastern frontier policy, though based on the principle of exigency.

64. F. Bernier, op.cit., p 168.