CHAPTER VI

ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF NOBILITY

The nobility during the Mughal period was in a position of access where it could receive rich and heavy income from various quarters. The life-style of the nobility of this period was indeed luxurious. The nobility of this period had accumulated rich dividends economically. To gain respect from their contemporaries and their emperors, the Mughal nobles indulged in heavy monetary expenses. The Mughal emperors had a first hand knowledge of the individual wealth of their nobles. And so, the nobles did not shy away from spending, not being able to save anything. During the Mughal times, the higher ranks of the imperial services were highly remunerative, when compared to the higher ranks of state services in India during the British period or independent India, or any place in the world in the same periods. During the Mughal times, no other career in India could carry with it such monetary attractions. This is why, a career in the higher imperial services,

1. J.N. Sarkar, Mughal administration, Calcutta, 1920, p. 79
2. Ibid, p. 80
3. W.H. Moreland, India at the death of Akbar, Delhi, 1974, p. 70
4. Ibid, p. 70
attracted the most talented men from all over western and central Asia, and brought them to the fore of Mughal nobility. It was a common activity among the Mughal nobility to indulge in trade and commerce. They traded with merchants from as far as Hormuz, Philipines, Mocha, Bantam, Achin, and Bassora. A huge quantity of money passed through the Mughal nobles' activities in trade and commerce of that time.

Shahjahan's commander-in-chief, Asaf Khan, who held the rank of 9000/9000, enjoyed a total salary of 16 crores and 20 lakhs. After paying the salary of his troops, he pocketed an income of nearly 50 lakhs of rupees. At Lahore he built a costly palace for himself from a capital of 20 lakhs of rupees and lived there lavishly. Upon his death, he left a treasure of more than 2 crores and fifty lakhs of rupees. This huge treasure consisted of precious stones of 30 lakhs, gold mohurs of 42 lakhs, gold and silver utensils of 30 lakhs, and one crore and 25 lakhs of rupees in cash.

5. Ibid, P.71
7. Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshah-Nama, Calcutta, 1867-68, pp.68-69
amassed a treasure over ten crores of rupees. The personal treasure of Shahjahan's noble, Ali Mardan Khan amounted to 30 lakhs of rupees. However, very few among the Mughal nobles could save from their fortunes because of their extravagant ways and means of living. The minimal cost of the necessities of life as it was during the Mughal times, encouraged and helped the Mughal nobles to save and in turn spend on the various luxuries in which they indulged in.

Moreover, they always dreaded that after death, their property would be confiscated by the state, and so they never really opted to save their money. Thus, the Mughal nobles, besides spending, often landed themselves into heavy debts. Thus there were few Mughal nobles, who were actually rich, but a large number among them consisted of those who were living in debt down to their knees. The rich presents handed over by the Mughal nobles to the Mughal emperors all through their career, and the expensive households they maintained proved to be suicidal for them in the end.

The establishments of the Mughal nobility were the miniatures of the royal household. Thus it was natural that the resources

10. Francois Bernier, Travels in the Mogul empire, Delhi, 1966, P. 213
11. Ibid, P. 214
12. Ibid, P. 215
of the Mughal nobles often became exhausted, and the nobles began to extract money from the general people in order to maintain the extravagant ways of their living. The extravagance of the Mughal nobility had a different effect on the general economic situation in the land. The people belonging to the weaker sections of the state, especially those in ordinary state services, developed an inferiority complex and started to ape the living style of the Mughal nobility. The Mughal nobles lived in pomp and splendour. Each noble had in his employ hundreds of attendants. Whenever any Mughal noble came out into the streets of the towns and cities they had a large following of servants and slaves. A noble never walked in the streets alone, without anybody to attend upon them. It became a sort of well-practised custom. A Mughal noble maintained a horde of horses and elephants according to the requirements of their dignity. All the large establishments of the Mughal nobles must have meant a huge amount of money even though the wages of the servants and slaves were low and the living very cheap when compared to the modern times. The stables of

13. Ibid, P.210
14. Ibid, P.82
15. J.N.Sarkar, op.cit, P.71
16. Ibid, P.72
17. Ibid, P.99
18. Ibid, P.98
a Mughal noble were an essential part of his establishment, and the life at a camp was more expensive and extravagant than the life at the capital city\(^\text{19}\). The Mughal emperors always travelled in extreme luxury and comfort. This precedence exemplified by the imperial camp was followed upon by the Mughal nobles\(^\text{20}\). The nobles competed each other in matters of the sizes of their tents and the overall impact of their extravagance and splendour. The tents of the nobles were designed by brocade and velveteen. They were lined with tafetta and damask, and also gold linings\(^\text{21}\). The Mughal nobles spent a large part of their income in purchasing jewellery. They thus purchased gold, silver and precious stones in huge quantity\(^\text{22}\). A large portion of the jewellery as possessed by the Mughal nobles ultimately mingled up with the imperial treasury because of the Mughal nobles' habit of handing over presents to the Mughal emperors\(^\text{23}\). The Mughal nobles also spent fortunes on palatial buildings. Babur started to build a palace in Agra, he asked the nobility to follow his example, and they in return followed his wish\(^\text{24}\). Following Akbar who built the palatial complex

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19. Ibid, P.99
20. Ibid, P.72
21. Ibid, P.75
22. Ibid, P.77
23. Ibid, P.78
24. Zahiruddin Babur, Babur Name, Delhi, 1970, P.47
at Fateh Pur Sikri, his nobles built many costly palaces and towers. After Akbar laid the foundation of the fortress at Fateh Pur Sikri, he asked his nobles to build lofty palaces in and around the holy city. He also asked them to dig out a big tank in the neighbourhood. The nobles of the Mughal times also spent enormously on their dresses and wardrobes. The dresses were all of very costly materials and their types and fashions were many. But the Mughal nobles, as soon as they reached a status, they were provided with enough means to lead the life-style according to their ranks. The Mughal emperors did not tolerate nobles who were not properly dressed up before coming before his august presence. Besides his opportune salary, the Mughal noble also had several other means to increase his income. To win over the favours of the emperors, it was necessary for the Mughal nobles to exhibit proper and exuberant splendour. As such, the Mughal court was unparalleled in splendour and magnificence in all the countries.

26. Ibid, P. 137
27. Muhd. Qasim Shah Firishta, Tarikh-i-Firishta, Bombay, 1832, PP. 44-45
28. A. Q. Badayuni, op. cit, P. 205
29. Ibid, P. 155
30. W. H. Moreland, From Akbar to Aurangzeb, Delhi, 1972, P. 293
31. Ibid, P. 132
But it may also be stated that all this fortune of the Mughal nobility could be finally appropriated by the state government. The Mughal noble's jagir was not his landed estate or his territorial hereditary possession even during his lifetime, not to speak of the situation after his death. Those estates which were comparatively bigger in size possessed both civil and criminal jurisdictions but unhereditary. The nobles exercised only those rights over the land, which were a part of the government and which in turn had given him such powers. For example, the power of realizing that amount which was the share of the government as the produce was. The nobles who held jagir and were thus termed as jagirdars, were government officials. As such, they could be removed from their jagirs on the pleasure and discretion of the emperor. The Mughal nobles could not ever act against the wishes of the emperor because recalcitrant tendencies were forcibly curbed down by the emperors. And then they could only remain in obscurity for the rest of their lives. It were the Hindu

32. A.Q. Badayuni, *op.cit.*, PP. 106-08
34. N.A. Siddiqui, *Land-revenue administration under the Mughals*, Bombay, 1970, PP. 139-40
35. *Ibid.*, P. 142
36. S.A.A. Rizvi, "The Mughal elite in the sixteenth and seventeenth century", *Abr-Nahrain*, 1977, PP. 82-85
chieftains alone, who had the full possession of their lands since ages, who were independent of the imperial control for a great limit. Because, even they had to submit unwittingly up to a more formidable political force. The theory and practice of the state control over land gave rise to many evils and proved to be disastrous for the society's development. The unlimited nature of the emperor's demands in land, and its frequency were both to be criticized. The European traveller, Francois Bernier, relates the pathetic condition of the land during the Mughal times to the lack of proprietary rights among the Mughal nobles;

"From what I have said, a question will naturally arise, whether it would not be more advantageous for the king as well as for the people, if the former ceased to be sole possessor of the land, and the right of private property were recognized in the Indies as it is with us. I have carefully compared the condition of European states, where that right is acknowledged, with the condition of those

37. Ibid, PP.92-93
38. N.A. Siddiqui, op. cit, P.89
39. Ibid, P.93
countries where it is not known, and are persuaded that the absence of it among the people is injurious to the best interests of the sovereign himself. 40.

As regards the extreme high standard of life of the Mughal nobles and its economic aspect, Francois Bernier writes:

"They maintain the splendour of the court, and are never seen out-of-doors but in the most superb apparel; mounted sometimes on an elephant, sometimes on horse-back, and not infrequently in a Palkey attended by many of their cavalry, and by a large body of servants on foot, who take their station in front, and at either side of their lord, not only to clear the way, but to flap the flies and brush off the dust with tails of peacocks; to carry the picquedent or spittoon, water to allay the Qmrah's thirst, and sometimes account-books, and other papers" 41.

40. F. Bernier, op. cit., P. 226
41. Ibid., PP. 213-14
On some occasions, the nobles obtained permission from the emperor to carry along a part of their fortune to his home in a foreign country, or to the Muslim holy places of pilgrimage such as Arabia. But such occasions were few and far-between. The emperor usually gave such permission if he was eager to remove any noble out of the country on political consideration. It was a beneficial measure, as all the wealth of the nobles remained in India and was ultimately distributed among the poorer sections of the society. Due to these very reasons the Mughal nobles did not strive to accumulate and save but on the contrary believed in spending. The nobles believed in, and practised the dictum that the greater pomp and splendour they would exhibit, the greater would be their influence among the lesser nobles as well as the emperor himself. Many nobles indulged in gambling and other such side-sports.

According to the European traveller, John De Laet, the opulence of the Mughal nobles was very difficult to describe, because their only concern in life and times was to secure each kind of pleasure that was possible in human life.

42. Ibid, P.52
43. Ibid, P.54
44. Ibid, P.55
45. Ibid, P.62
47. Ibid, P.188
48. John De Laet, The empire of the great Mogol, Bombay, 1928, P.90
The Mughal nobility was not a landed class as was the European nobility during the medieval times. The revenue assignments or jagirs of the Mughal nobles were always transferable. Many of the Mughal nobles were as a matter of fact Naqdis which meant that they got their salaries directly from the central treasury and that also in the form of cash-salary. Thus we can maintain that the Mughal nobles did not comprise a class of hereditary landlords. But it can be also maintained that they were either not a commercial ruling body. Their chief aim in life was to receive salaries, and they did not depend upon commercial gains. The British nobility contemporary to the Mughal nobility belonged to the middle class of merchants. But this was not the case with the Mughal nobility. There are but a rare examples of Mughal nobles rising from the class of mercantiles. Mir Jumla, for one, can be cited for example, as a merchant turning into a political figure during the latter part of the Mughal rule. The European

49. Ibid, P.92
50. Ibid, P.93
52. Ibid, P.70
traveller, Niccolao Manucci, speaking of the Pathans, says that they indulged in war and commerce simultaneously, and so when they became courtiers, they considered it as an investment of their business-mindedness. Nurullah Khan was a prominent noble of the later Mughal period and he was originally a merchant. As belonging to the higher echelons of the governing class, the Mughal nobility could not bereave themselves from participating in commercial transactions. If they held revenue assignments or jagirs, or if they received pay in form of cash, they derived their income only in the form of cash. The revenue from the jagirs was also collected in the form of cash. This is why the Mughal nobility amounted enormous treasures of cash and assets. Because of easy flow of cash from their hands, the Mughal nobles desired to increase it more so by indulging in trade directly or indirectly by allowing capital as advances to the already well-established merchants. It were the Mughal nobility which provided the biggest capital amounts for sea-trade during the Mughal

54. Ghulam Husain, Riyaz-us-Salatin, Bib.Ind. 1890, P.224
55. M.A.Ansari, op.cit, P.189
56. N.A.Siddiqui, op.cit, P.52
57. Ibid, P.65
58. Ibid, P.68
The European traveller, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, states:

"On arrival for embarkation at Surat, you find plenty of money. For it is the principal trade of the nobles of India to place their money on vessels on speculation for Hormuz, Basora, and Mocha, and even for Bantam, Achin, and Phillipenes." 60.

The important Mughal noble, Mir Jumla, provides the most apt example of the Mughal nobility's dealings with the commerce of their times. Mir Jumla had regular contacts with the English merchants as is evident from the following passage;

"The Nobob's money wee positively ordered, without, disputing or pretences, to be paid by Mr. Trevisa back, and that accompt cleared; and that for the future none undertake such an unthankful and trespassing part of service. His ship wee shall endeavour to recover, and hope in March next to give you certain advice of our proceedings therein." 61

59. *Ibid*, P.70
60. J.B.Tavernier, *op.cit*, Vol.1, P.31
Mir Jumla, on several occasions, advanced money to the English merchants as is clearly seen from this passage;

"In the meanwhile Charnock and Sheldon were peremptorily ordered to give respect and accompt of their actions unto Mr. Trevisa. The latter was urged to repay the money lent to him by Mir Jumla and was again reminded of the necessity of a large supply of saltpetre" 62.

Mir Jumla's ships sailed as far as to Persia, Arakkans and to the southern Indian peninsula 63. He was very much interested in trading with Persia as is evidenced from this passage;

"You (Chamber) will perceive by the copy of our generall consultation that we have condescended and agreed, for the preservation of the Nobob's amity, that now the junk cannot be restored, he may take his choice either of the Anne, with all her ammunition

62. Ibid, P. 153
and stores or of your new built shipp. But this year you must not seem that we do any way condescend to, so that it may come to his knowledge, for you know the Nobob is five times more indebted to us, by his accompt; besides he doth yearly make us as this last yeare with twenty five tons of gumlacke whereof he pays noe freight nor costume in Persia"64.

Apart from the external trade, the Mughal nobles were also interested in trade within the country itself, and that also up to some greater extent65. They used their position and influence in this regard. One Mughal emperor had even to order the officials in Gujarat to look into commercial exchanges which were concerning the Mughal nobles who were making large profits due to them66. The important Mughal nobleman, Shaista Khan, was thoroughly involved in internal trade in India67. This particular noble had

64. Sir Charles Fawcett, op.cit, PP.148-49
65. W.H. Moreland, op.cit, P.87
67. Ibid, P.109
thoroughly monopolised Bengal’s internal trade. We may quote an important source in this regard:

"Shaista Khan used to import by ship, salt, superior betelnuts and other articles, and sold them in Bengal on profitable terms. In addition, he accumulated seventeen crores of rupees by procuring two or three tolas of gold for one gold mohur. He also sold salt and supari to the merchants and traders in the city of Dacca. The latter were thus debarred from making purchases and sales on their own account." Shaista Khan had formed huge "emporiums of salt worth 152,000 rupees at several places".

Again,

"The Nobob’s (Shaista Khan) officers oppress the people, monopolise most commodities, even as low as grass for

69. Ibid, PP. 169 and 172
beasts, caves, firewood, thatch, etc, nor do they want ways to oppress those people of all sorts who trade, whether natives or strangers."70.

It has been stated that,

"Shaista Khan's intentions were: to get the whole trade of peeter (saltpetre) into his own hands, and so to sell it againe to us and the Dutch at his own rates, he well knowing the ships cannot goe from the Bay empty. But he is not likely to get above Maunds 4 or 5,000 this year. His darogha hath so abused the merchants that they are almost all runne away. He pretends that all the peeter he buyes is for the king. It was never known he had occasion of more than Maunds 1000 or 1500 yearely for all his warrs."71.

Thus Shaista Khan wanted to make out commercial profits by any means. During the last days of emperor Aurangzeb, Prince Azimushshan was found to be forcing the


71. Sir Charless Fawcett, op. cit, pp. 395-96
purchase of goods for his individual trade purposes. His father stringently criticized all this. The Mughal nobles were very much interested in trading in luxurious items such as jewels. Shaista Khan entered into transactions with the French traveller, Jean Baptiste Tavernier, for jewels for which J.B. Tavernier went to Europe in 1654. The French traveller writes that the Indians were very particular in trade matters and obeyed their debts without delay. Shaista Khan purchased from him items of 96000 rupees in 1652, in 1660 he once again purchased a few things from J.B. Tavernier, and again in 1666 he again purchased some luxury items. Shaista Khan implored J.B. Tavernier for getting costly jewels for which he would be liberal in payment, as liberal as the emperor himself. The Mughal emperors themselves purchased jewels through employing the nobles for the work of purchase. Once Shaista Khan sent nearly one hundred pearls to the emperor but as their prices were very high they were

72. Ghulam Husain, *Riyaz-us-Salatin*, Bib.Ind., 1890, PP.243-44
73. J.B.Tavernier, *op.cit.*, Vol.1, PP.320-22
74. *Ibid.*, P.326
75. *Ibid.*, PP.15-16
76. *Ibid.*, P.245
77. *Ibid.*, P.156
returned back to him again. When Aurangzeb was a prince, Shaista Khan had sent him some jewels which had interested the prince very much.

The Mughal nobility's serious interest in luxurious items, and for providing various articles and things made according to their tastes, the Mughal nobles established Karkhanas or workshops. These Karkhanas were established for manufacturing utensils, costly clothes, furniture, armaments, etc, and they employed a big number of artisans. The Karkhanas were usually kept by the Mughal emperor, princes, and the nobles. But during the seventeenth century, karkhanas were also maintained by the foreign trading companies. Many traders also maintained individual karkhanas. The nature of working of these karkhanas, especially, the attitude of the Mughal nobility towards the ordinary but skilled artisans employed in these karkhanas is well illustrated by the European traveller Francois Bernier as follows:

78. Aurangzeb, Adab-i-Alamgiri, M.S., K.P. Jaiswal Institute, Patna, f. 113a.
79. Ibid, f. 113 a-b
81. Ibid, P.44
82. F. Bernier, op.cit, PP.254-56
"Workshops, occupied by skilful artisans, would be vainly sought for in Delhi, which has very little to boast of in that respect. This is not owing to any inability in the people to cultivate the arts, for there are ingenious men in every part of the Indies. Numerous are the instances of handsome pieces of workmanship made by persons destitute of tools, and who can scarcely be said to have received instructions from a Master. The rich will have every article at cheap rate. When an Omrah or mansabdar requires the services of an artisan, he sends to the bazar for him, employing force, if necessary, to make the poor man work; and after the task is finished the unfeeling lord pays, not according to the value of labour but agreeably to his own standard of fair remuneration; the artisans having reason to congratulate himself if the Korah (whip) has not been given in part payment. The artists, therefore, who arrive at any eminence in their art are those only who are in the service of the king or some powerful Omrah, and who work exclusively for their patron."

83. F. Bernier, op. cit., pp. 254-56
The Mughal noble Bakhtawar Khan was very proud of the fact that he had established many karkhanas in many towns of the Mughal empire. Along with his houses and palaces, he had established these karkhanas in Delhi, Lahore, Burhanpur, and Agra. Another Mughal noble, Shujat Khan had also established several karkhanas. The articles produced in his karkhanas, such as plates, cups, vessels, etc. were very much appreciated by the Mughal emperors to whom and to other nobles Shujat Khan sent these articles as presents.

Besides the Mughal nobility, the emperors and their offsprings also indulged in maintaining their individual karkhanas so as to be able to cater for their personal needs. During Shahjahan's time, due to the lack of many skilled artisans, the products of the imperial karkhanas especially of his daughter Jahan Ara's were becoming lesser and lesser. Emperor Aurangzeb could not appreciate the products of his personal karkhana. Princess Jahan Ara's karkhana's management was not altered and it went on producing articles for her for a long time.

88. Ibid, f. 25
89. Ibid, f. 196
The Mughal nobility's indulgence in trade and commerce was not by all means an honest one. In fact, they usually restricted the free trade so as to increase their own monetary gains. They did this by using the abuse of their influence and power. They took heavy bribes in order to give out the trade privileges to the traders. The French traders, in order to obtain the royal order or farman for the purpose of trade, had to give 30000 rupees to the Mughal emperors. Jafar Khan was given 10000 rupees and a few other important nobles also received the same amount of bribe. It was only after these payments upon the French traders that they were able to receive the royal insignia for trade, to establish their headquarters at Surat in Gujarat. But they had to pay a duty of two per cent on all their goods in trade. During the seventeenth century, Mir Jumla restricted the English trade at Kasimibazar in Bengal, on the condition that presents be offered to him. He then asked the English to present him with 20000 pagodas and to not consider anymore the 32000 pagodas he himself

90. A.B. Nihawandi, *op.cit*, P.54  
91. Ibid, P.56  
92. Sir Charless Fawcett, *op.cit*, 1655-67, P.281  
93. Ibid, P.281  
94. Ibid, P.281  
95. Ibid, 1655-60, PP.292-93
owed to the English. As the subedar of Bengal, he had exempted the English from paying customs duty because he received from them 3000 rupees per year. The European traveller, Jean Baptiste Tavernier states in this regard as follows:

"So true it is that those who desire to do business at the court of the princes, in Turkey as well as in Persia and India, should not attempt to commence anything unless they had considerable presents ready prepared and almost always an open purse for diverse officers of trust whose service they have need."

When a Mughal emperor died or even when subedars were transferred or changed, the traders had always to pay highly to the new incumbents in order to get the farmans and parwasas renewed again. For example, upon Mir Jumla's death, the English traders had to undergo many hardships in order to get renewed their parwana from the new incumbent Daud Khan. Once Shaista Khan insisted

96. Ibid, PP. 391-92
97. Ibid, PP. 393-94
99. Sir Charles Fawcett, op.cit, 1655-60, PP.197-98
100. Ibid, 1661-64, P.288
upon having paid to him rupees 3000 whether or not the English traders were indulging in any trade transactions at the moment or not;

"Though wee have at present little or noe business of our masters to manage, yet wee are not free from trouble under Nobob's government. 'Tis credibly reported that Ballassere and Piply by the King's order is reduced and brought under the province of Bengall, which wee cannot but lament, especially at this time, it falling under the power of a person most unjust and sobly addicted to covetiousness. We must fear the yearely present of this place Rs.3,000 will be exacted, though wee may have noe shipp arrive, the rent and custome of this town (Hugli) being his jageer" 101.

The Mughal nobles terribly hampered the growth and development of trade and commerce by their adopted measures of illegal taxes and impositions of several

101. Ibid, 1665-67, PP.258-59
kinds\textsuperscript{102}. For example the Mughal jagirdars were, under imperial orders, not to realize taxes such as rahdari (road taxes) mahi, (taxes on fishermen on bringing fishes for sale in market) Wallahi,(taxes on merchants and traders at the ferries or boats) tarkari, (tax on vegetables brought by farmers to markets) tahbazari (ground rent imposed on shop-keepers); these taxes being abolished so far as the merchants and traders were concerned\textsuperscript{103}. Furthermore, the jagirdars were not supposed to buy grains at a low price and to sell it at a higher price\textsuperscript{104}. They were directed by the empire not to accept any peshkash offered by the dealers in grains, and other merchants and traders\textsuperscript{105}. It was an imperial order not to direct illegal impositions on those people who indulged in business, but the nobles did not refrain themselves from acting as much\textsuperscript{106}. Although land-revenue was the major source of income of the Mughal nobility, nevertheless it took advantage of its position and indulged in trade and commerce for higher economic gains\textsuperscript{107}. Commercial profits was a thing in which every member of the royal family and

\begin{enumerate}
\item[102.] Ibid, 1664-65, P.132
\item[103.] Ali Muhammad Khan, \textit{op.cit}, Vol.I, PP.286-88
\item[104.] Ibid, Vol.II, P.187
\item[105.] Ibid, Vol.II, P.84
\item[106.] Ibid, Vol.I, P.288
\item[107.] N.A. Siddiqui, \textit{op.cit}, P.146
\end{enumerate}
even wives of the Mughal emperors indulged upon. Though the exploitation of their influential position was to be seen throughout the Mughal period, by its nobility, but it is also true that the Mughal state interfered increasingly in economic affairs. Though income from land-revenue was not definite and certain, but the resources and investments of the Mughal nobility were immense and this is why they invested money in trade and commerce. Individual consumption and procurement of things being high, the Mughal nobles proved to be a hindrance in trade and commerce rather than a help for these. Thus new methods of production remained in vogue, because the nobility could not think anything beyond the karkhana establishments catering for their own individual requirements.

The Mughal nobles received revenue-assignments or jagirs on a very large and distributive basis. As such, they had to depend largely on the revenue only and if it was collected or realized for their income. They often

108. Ibid, P.102
109. Sujan Rai Bhandari, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, Delhi, 1918, P.93
110. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.46
111. Surendra Gopal, Commerce and crafts in Gujerat, Delhi, 1975, P.103
112. Ibid, P.111
113. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.51
let out their jagirs on the system of ijara. Thus they were able to get an amount of their stipulated income from the land-revenue beforehand. Another very general practice of theirs was to get loans against the standing jagir. But generally it was not because of the jagirdari system that they had to take and borrow money. Their extravagant expenses were actually behind their practice of borrowing loans. On a few occasions, such as sudden transfers, or suddenly joining some military expedition, they had to suffer financial hardships. Thus the Mughal nobles always practiced the policy of leaving a part of their salaries in the jagirs itself, because due to this policy they always stood in way of having loans against their jagirs. The interests on loans at that time were extremely high, and those who lent money were very strict about the interests on loans they extended. Around 1645, as is evidenced from the English Factory records, the shroffs or money lenders of Agra city ran a lucrative trade of extending loans to the Mughal nobles on extra higher

114. Ibid, P.69
115. Ibid, P.74
116. Ibid, P.99
118. Ibid, P.72
119. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.61
120. Peter Mundij, op.cit, Vol.IV, P.44
rates of interest. During the fortieth regnal year of Aurangzeb's reign, several money-lenders protested to the emperor against the imperial demand of loan with no interest, and said that such a loan would become news in the outlying provinces of the empire so much so that the provincial governors would also then demand for interest free loans which would ultimately ruin the sahukars or the money-lenders. During the Mughal times money-lending had become such a profitable commercial enterprise that the Mughal nobles also began indulging in it, for we have the instance of the Mughal noble Shaista Khan who lent out a loan of 300000 rupees at a yearly 25% interest to his lesser official the Faujdar of Hugli. Though money-lending is prohibited by the Quran-sharif, yet the Mughal rulers and the Mughal government practiced it and lent out loans to the Mughal nobility on a well-practised scale for the benefit of gains through interests. In order to cooperate with the Mughal nobles who used to borrow loans at high interest rates, Emperor Akbar started the institution of a state loan paid out of the imperial

121. Sir Charles Fawcett, *op.cit*, 1643-1645, P.302
treasury called Musadat\textsuperscript{125}. This institution was started to help the nobility who were in straits financially and also to give a set-back to the corrupt and high-handed money-lenders\textsuperscript{126}. The rates of interest of the Musadat were that,

"for the first year, nothing is charged; in the second, the loan increased by a sixteenth part of it; in the third year, by one-eighth; in fourth year, by one-fourth; from the fifth to the seventh, by one-half; from the eighth to the tenth year by three-fourths; from the tenth year and longer, double the original loan is charged, after which there is no further increase"\textsuperscript{127}.

Though a large number of Mughal nobles used to suffer from financial straits due to their extravagance, not all of them used to live in such a state\textsuperscript{128}. The Mughal nobles were all bureaucrats and thus they successfully exploited the merchants and traders by pressurizing them\textsuperscript{129}. The Mughal emperors possessed the

\textsuperscript{125} Abul Fazl, \textit{Ain-i-Akbari}, Vol.I, Calcutta, 1939, P. 273

\textsuperscript{126} Ibid, P. 274

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, P. 275

\textsuperscript{128} M.H.Khafi Khan, \textit{Muntakhab-al-Lubab}, Calcutta, 1860-74

\textsuperscript{129} Ibid, P. 68
prime right of purchase and so the Mughal governors brought anything in the king's name so as to please him through presents 130. It was this that prompted the provincial governors to indulge actively in trade. The governors were not authorized by the imperial government to do so but they did so on their own account and they escaped with it unpunished and unnoticed 131. Emperor Akbar was indulging in trade and commerce on an individual basis, the result of which was that he had amounted an inconsiderable amount of personal wealth 132. Speaking of Jahangir, an authority states that,

"Likewise he cannot abide that any man should have any precious stone of value, for it is death, if he knew it not at the present time-----. By the means the king hath engrossed all fair stones that no man can buy from 5 carates upwards without his leave for he hath the refusal of all and giveth not by the third part, so much as their value 133."

130. P. Saran, op. cit., P. 73
131. Ibid, P. 76
132. Ibid, P. 207
133. Sir Charless Fawcett, op. cit., 1642-45, P. 91
Emperor Shahjahan, indulged in trade, a fact which we know about through the laments of the English that until his cargo was put on the ships for despatch, little or negligible freight could be received by them, around 1643. Emperor Aurangzeb's cargoes went as far as to Borneo. We know that in 1694, Aurangzeb's biggest ship, 'Ganj-i-sawai', while upon a return journey from Mecca, was looted of its 52 lakhs of rupees by pirates. Shahjahan, even as a prince, before becoming the emperor, used to trade chiefly in stones, salt-petre, indigo, and cloth. In 1618 once, the English helped calicoes disappear from the markets, with the result that Prince Shahjahan's ship was loaded with tobacco. Jahangir's wife, Nurjahan's communications with the English ambassador, Sir Thomas Roe, for trading purposes are well-known. Aurangzeb's sons, Prince Dara and Prince Shuja, both, used to indulge in personal trade. Princess Jahanara also carried on commercial activities. The important Mughal noble, Asaf Khan, Jahangir's father-in-law, during the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjahan, indulged in private trade.

134. Ibid, P.92
135. Aurangzeb, Ruggat-i-Alamgiri, Azamgarh, 1930, P.61
136. Sir Charles Fawcett, op.cit, 1618-21, P.XV(Introduction)
137. Ibid, P.XV
139. Aurangzeb, op.cit, PP.52-54
private trade and amassed great wealth. Sadulla Khan, Shahjahan’s minister, also participated in personal trade. The nobles who were comparatively inferior in ranks also participated in trade. Once the Hindu noble, Mirza Raja Jai Singh took to manufacturing salt but as this posed a challenge to the state salt industry he was ordered to close down his endeavour.

The Mughal jagirdars, a large part of whom formed the Mughal nobility, indulged in extorting the maximum from the economically dilapidated farmers, without having any conscience for the economic upliftment of the areas under their jagirdaris. Revenue farming or ijara became widespread during the later period of the Mughal rule, along with the bankers and shroffs investing their capital in it.

The European traveller Niccolao Mannucci has spoken of this as follows;

“When any hungry wretch takes it into his head to ruin the kingdom, he goes to the king and says to him "Sire! If your majesty will give me permission to raise money and..."

140. Beni Prasad, History of Jahangir, Allahabad, 1930, P.69
141. B.P. Saxena, History of Shahjahan of Delhi, Allahabad, 1958, P.87
143. Saiyad Nurul Hasan, Thoughts on agrarian relations in Mughal India, Delhi, 1983, P.31
144. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.58
a certain number of armed men, I will pay so many millions",...... The men armed with the order, and impelled by their desire to gain an overplus on the sum contracted for, go about seizing everybody and putting them to torture".145.

The high handedness exercised by the jagirdars in the way of collecting land-revenue was largely due to their temporary and momentary charges of jagirdari administration.146 The Hindu chiefs also were no exception in this regard.147 The Mughal imperial government had to depend largely on the zamindars for the land-revenue collection and provided them extra-government perquisites for the implementation and exercise for the same.148

There were emerging during the Mughal period various kinds of zamindars. Some zamindars paid their tribute to the imperial government, some zamindars held their right over their areas of zamindaris, and some zamindars had come to accumulate hereditary rights over their lands.149

145. N. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. III, PP. 48-9
146. S. Nurul Hasan, op. cit., P. 24
147. N. Manucci, op. cit., Vol. III, P. 46
148. S. Nurul Hasan, op. cit., P. 18
149. Ibid., P. 34
During the later part of the Mughal period, when revenue-farming became extensive, some influential zamindars came to get hold of big tallugadaris, which signified the tenure through which its holders got engaged on behalf of other zamindars. By investing in revenue-farming many speculating shroffs and speculators became zamindars in their own way. Murshid Quli Khan, the influential Mughal noble, came to hold half a dozen big zamindaris, which provided him half of the land-revenue of Bengal. Thus in course of time, ambitious chieftains, countryside bankers, and revenue-grantus, all became zamindars of different sorts in their own way and right. Thus, the institution of jagirdari, which was in the beginning not hereditary, gradually came to acquire a hereditary character by the close of the Mughal period.

The Mughal nobles received the jagirdaris in the capacity of being state-servants, the jagirs providing them with their salaries. Thus, in principle, the jagirs reverted back to the charge of the state after the said

150. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.26
151. S. Gopal, op.cit, P.85
152. N. Manucci, op.cit, Vol.II, P.53
153. S. Gopal, op.cit, P.73
154. N.A. Siddiqui, op.cit, P.15
nobleman's death. The European traveller, William Hawkins speaks as such:

The custom of this Mughal emperor is to take possession of his nobleman's property when they die, and to bestow on their children what he pleaseth; but commonly he dealeth well with them..... and unto the eldest son he hath a very great respect who in time receiveth the full title of his father.

François Bernier remarks:

"the barbarous and ancient custom obtains in this country, of the king's constituting himself sole heir of the property of those who die in his service."

The same author remarks again;

"The Umrah of Hindustan cannot be proprietors of land or enjoy an independent revenue like the nobility of France... Their

156. W. Foster, Early travels in India, 1583-1619, P. 34
157. F. Bernier, op. cit, P. 169
income consists exclusively of pensions which the king grants or takes away according to his pleasure. 158.

The chief reasons why the property of the deceased nobles were taken by the empire, were, that the nobles were in the control of high state funds, and secondly they were invariably in debts to the imperial government. 159. These accounts were cleared and the rest of the money was given to the noble's children. 160. Emperor Aurangzeb enforced this rule very stringently. 161. However, on one occasion, when his noble Shaikh Muhiyuddin expired, the noble's son agreed to debit the credits of his father to the state, and so the emperor did not confiscate the dead noble's property. 162. Niccolao Manucci says that,

"He (i.e. Aurangzeb) seizes everything left by his generals, officers, and other officials at their death, in spite of having declared that he makes no claims on the goods of defunct persons. Nevertheless, under the pretext that they are his officers and are in debt to the Crown, he lays hold of everything." 163.

158. Ibid., PP.163-65
159. John De Laet, The empire of the great Mogol, Bombay, 1928, P.52
160. Ibid., P.57
161. Ali Muhammad Khan, op.cit, P.238
162. Ibid, P.284
163. N. Manucci, op.cit, Vol.II, P.392
Sir J.N. Sarkar speaks as such in this regard:

"the political effect of the escheat system was most disastrous. It prevented India from having one of the strongest safeguards of public liberty and checks on royal autocracy, namely an independent hereditary peerage, whose position and wealth did not depend on the king's favour in every generation and who could, therefore, afford to be bold in their criticism of the royal caprice and their opposition to the royal tyranny" 164.

164. J.N. Sarkar, op. cit, P.156