



FACULTY OF JURIDICAL SCIENCES

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Lecture-35



MEDIEVAL INDIA

Kings and their Courts

Mughal State (Mansabdari System and Administrative Apparatus)

Genesis of Mansabdari System

The origins of the Mansabdari system, however, can be traced back to Changez Khan. Changez Khan organized his army on a decimal basis, the lowest unit of his army was ten, and the highest ten thousand (toman) whose commander was known as '**Khan**'. Then, it was first introduced by Babur in North India. But it was Akbar, who institutionalized it in Mughal military set up and civil administration after reforming and introduction of two new concepts namely 'Zat' and 'Sawar.'

Nature of Mansabdari System

The mansabdars constituted the ruling section in the imperial structure. The Mansabdars were said to be the pillars of the Mughal administration; the entire nobility, in fact belonged to mansabs; among them one or the other held a mansab. Mansabdari system was nothing but a system of nobles or mansabdars under which a mansabdar or noble was granted the rights to hold a jaguar which meant revenue assignments (not the land itself) for services rendered by them, but the authority bestowed upon them was not unbridled but with the direct control of these nobles in the hands of the king.

Mechanism of Mansabdari System

As above-mentioned mansabdars were paid either in cash (naqd) or in the form of assignments of areas of land (jagir) out of which they had the entitlement to collect the land revenue and all other taxes through an authority appointed by the emperor. The revenue that was generated through their jagir was handed over to them and the same was deducted from their salary. The mansabdar paid the salary of cavalrymen that he maintained out of his salary. Those who received pay in cash were known as naqdi and those paid through assignments of jagirs were called jagirdars. Thus the mansabdari system became an integral part of the agrarian and the jagirdari system of Mughal administration under Akbar.

As institutional framework of mansabdari existed in both military organization and civil administration the mansabdars were transferred from the civil administration to the military department and vice versa.

Structure of Mansabdari System

The mansab or rank was designated by dual representation - one by personal rank (called zat) and the other by cavalry rank (called sawar). Every mansabdar was given the rank of both zat and sawar and a mansabdar was paid rupees two per horse. To

elaborate it further, a mansabdar was given rupees one thousand additional allowance if he had received the rank of five hundred sawars. Furthermore, the duties of a mansabdar were not in accordance with the mansab or position he held. For a mansabdar, higher rank did not necessarily mean a higher post. For instance, Raja Man Singh was not a minister and still enjoyed a higher rank than Abul Fazal who was a minister in the court of Emperor.

The emperor was the sole authority that conferred, decreased, increased and resumed the mansab. He also granted promotions to those who displayed their prowess in military service. The officers were granted territorial commands in return for the military service. They had to bring in some fixed number of men-at-arms, horses and elephants to the field and accordingly were rated on the basis of the numbers which was known as Zats. So they were called Mansabdars of 10, 20, 100, and 1000 and so on.

Classification of Mansabdari System

Broadly, there were three categories among the mansabdars. Those holding ranks below 500 zat were known as mansabdars, those holding ranks of more than 500 zat that, but below 2,500 zat were named amirs and fall in the second category. In the administration, the third category was of amir-i-umda or amir-i-azam or omrahs -those mansabdars who holding the ranks of 2,500 zat and more. The lowest rank holder was provided with 10 mansabs. Mansingh, the first Mansabdar of 7000 zats and Bhagwan Das with 5000 zats, enjoyed the privileged positions in the Mansabdari system of the empire.

It is noteworthy that most of the Mansabdars were foreigners or were of Central Asian, Turk, Persian and Afghan origin, though there were also a small number of Indians who also got appointments as mansabdars. During Mughal Akbar's reign the mansabs (ranks) ranged from 10 to 5,000 troops. Later on, the highest number of mansabs was raised from 10,000 to 12,000; thus there was no fixed number of mansabdars.

Mansabdari System under Mughal Rulers

It kept on changing from Akbar to Aurangzeb. The total number of mansabdars during the reign of Akbar was nearly about 1800; but towards the end of Aurangzeb's rule their number increased close to 14,500. The jagirs were given to mansabdar in such a manner as not to be transferred to other's name; hence the post of mansabdar was not hereditary in any way and after his death or dismissal his personal estate was confiscated by the emperor deducting what he (mansabdar) owed to the state and returning the balance to his heir. This law or rule was known as zabti.

The son of a mansabdar, if he was granted a mansab, had to begin his tenure as mansabdar afresh as per the rules and regulations imposed on him by the emperor. This measure was made integral to the system so that the mansabdar could not misuse his position and exploit the masses.

Hence, the Mansabdari System of Mughal was a complex system. Its efficient functioning depended upon a number of factors, including the proper functioning of dagh (branding) system and of the jagirdari system.

MCQ

1. Which of the following statements is *incorrect* regarding the mansabdari system?

- a. Apart from his personal pay, the mansabdar was expected to get additional pay to maintain a corps of elephants, camels, mules and carts.
- b. The Mughal mansabdars were paid very handsomely: in fact, their salaries were probably the highest in the world at the time.
- c. A mansabdar holding the rank of 100 zat received a monthly salary of Rs. 500.
- d. One holding the rank of 1000 zat received Rs. 4,400, while one holding the rank of 5000, zat received Rs. 30,000 a months

2. During the reign of Akbar the dagh system was_____.

- a. To mark the divisions of land
- b. To marks the swords of each soldiers
- c. To mark the horses of each sawars
- d. To mark the territorial boundaries of the Mughal empire

3. Who among the following was responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the pargana?

- a. Emperor
- b. Sarkar
- c. Fauzdar
- d. Amalguzar

4. Who among the following was responsible for all income and expenditure during the reign of Akbar?

- a. Mansab
- b. Diwan
- c. Amalguzar
- d. Mir bakshi

5. During the rule of Akbar, the head of the military department was called as_____.

- a. Mansab
- b. Diwan
- c. Amalguzar
- d. Mir bakshi

