



**THEME II**

**MILITARY AND  
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS**

THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

Time Line

Army Organization

*Iqta*

*Mansab*

*Jagir*



ignou  
THE PEOPLE'S  
UNIVERSITY

**Rohtasgarh Fort Entrance Gate**

**Photograph: Mariyosh, 2012**

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## UNIT 7 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE\*

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## 7.0 OBJECTIVES

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After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- understand the contacts that were maintained with the Caliphate by the Delhi Sultanate,
- analyze the nature of administration under the Delhi Sultanate,
- list the different departments at the central and provincial level under the Delhi Sultanate and understand their workings,
- explain the evolution of the Mughal administrative structure,
- discuss the principal provincial officers, their duties and responsibilities during the Mughal regime,
- understand the administrative set-up at the local level and its linkage with the central authority,
- discuss some basic features of town and port administration, and
- evaluate the manner in which control was exercised by the various officials under the two regimes – the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire.

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### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

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You have already read in **Unit 2** how in 1206 Qutbuddin Aibak laid the foundation of an independent Sultanate at Delhi and a beginning was made in severing links with Central Asia. We have also dealt with the territorial expansion under the Sultans. The initial Turkish conquests in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century displaced many local chiefs. In order to consolidate power, the Turkish rulers made revenue assignments (*iqta*), in lieu of cash to their nobles (*umara*). The *iqta* system shall be dealt in detail in **Unit 9** of this Course. This Unit introduces you to the central and provincial administrative system, and the nature of administration under the Delhi Sultanate.

This Unit would also acquaint you with the overall working of the Mughal polity. The basic objective of the Mughal administrative set-up was to exercise control over the different parts of the Empire so that recalcitrant elements challenging the Mughal sovereignty could be checked. You will appreciate the difficulties if you could visualize that each part of the Mughal Empire was inhabited by diverse set of people over whom their respective rulers or dominant chieftains exerted considerable influence. The ingenuity of the Mughal polity lies in the fact that it not only incorporated these refractory rulers and chieftains into its administrative set-up but also enrolled them into military service (for details, refer to **Unit 8** of this Course). The logical corollary of sustaining the huge administration was to appropriate maximum rural surplus in the form of land revenue for which the Mughal polity was geared to.

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### 7.2 THE CALIPHATE AND THE DELHI SULTANATE

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The institution of the Caliphate came into existence after the death of Prophet Muhammad when Abu Bakr became the new head (*Khalifa*) of the Muslim community (*Umma* or *Ummat*). Originally, there existed some elements of elective principle in the matter of succession, a practice not much different from the previous tribal traditions.

In the Islamic world, the Caliph was regarded as the guardian of religion and the upholder of political order. He was the leader of the entire community. After the period of the first four 'pious Caliphs' (Abu Bakr, Umar, Usman and Ali)

dynastic rule became the norm when the Umayyads took over the Caliphate in 661 CE from their base at Damascus in Syria. After the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate the Abbasids came to power in the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century as Caliphs at Baghdad. However, with the decline of central authority, the centralized institution of Caliphate (*Khilafat*) broke into three centres of power based in Spain (under the rule of a branch of the Umayyad Caliphs), Egypt (under the Fatimids) and the older one at Baghdad – each claiming the exclusive loyalty of the Muslims. Nearer home, towards the north-west, many minor dynasties carved out small states, one of which was based at Ghazna. The significant point to remember is that, theoretically, no Muslim could have set up an ‘independent’ state, big or small, without procuring the permission from the Caliph, else its legitimacy could become suspect amongst the Muslims. And, yet, all this was nothing more than a formality which could be dispensed with impunity.

The recognition of a Caliph by the Delhi Sultans seen in the granting of robes of honour, letters of investiture, bestowing of titles, having the name of the Caliph inscribed on coins and reading of *khutba* in his name in the Friday prayer symbolized an acceptance and a link with the Islamic world, though in reality it only meant an acceptance of a situation whereby a ruler, had already placed himself in power. The Sultans of Delhi maintained the fiction of the acceptance of the position of the Caliph. Under the Saiyyids (1414-1451) and the Lodis (1451-1526), the legends on the coins continued in the sense of a tradition being maintained but it was purely a nominal allegiance. In actual effect, the Caliphate, weakened and far removed as it was, had little direct role to play in the Delhi Sultanate.

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### 7.3 NATURE OF ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

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The early Muslim Turkish State established itself in north India by virtue of conquests. Since the Turks were far fewer in number than the indigenous population over whom they sought to govern and since they also lacked resources, they, of necessity, had to control the resources of the country. This had an important bearing on the nature of the Turkish State.

In a theoretical and formal sense, the Delhi Sultans recognized the supremacy of the Islamic law (*shariah*) and tried to prevent its open violation. But they had to supplement it by framing secular regulations (*zawabit*), too. A point of view is that the Turkish State was a theocracy; in practice, however, it was the product of expediency and necessity wherein the needs of the young state assumed paramount importance. The contemporary historian Ziauddin Barani distinguished between *jahandari* (‘secular’) and *dindari* (‘religious’) and accepted the inevitability of some secular features, because of the contingent situations coming up. Thus, the needs of the emergent State shaped many policies and practices not always consistent with Islamic fundamentalism. For example, during the reign of Sultan Iltutmish (1211-1236), a sectarian group (*shafai*) of Muslim divines approached the Sultan and asked him to enforce the Islamic law strictly, that is, giving the Hindus the option of Islam or Death. On behalf of the Sultan, the *wazir*, Junaidi, replied that this could not be done for the moment as the Muslims were like salt in a dish of food. Barani records a conversation that Sultan Alauddin Khalji had with one of his leading theologians, Qazi Mughisuddin, over the question of appropriation of booty. While the Qazi pointed out the legalistic position which prevented the Sultan from taking the major share of the booty, the Sultan is said to have emphasized that he acted according to the needs of the State which were

paramount. These instances show that, in practice, the Turkish State was not theocratic but evolved according to its special needs and circumstances despite the fact that the main ruling class professed Islam.

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## 7.4 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

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The central administrative machinery of the Sultanate consisted of the nobles controlling various offices with the Sultan at the helm of affairs.

### 7.4.1 The Sultan

In the early Islamic world, there was no sanction for the position of the Sultan. With the disintegration of the Caliphate, the Sultan began to appear in the sense of a powerful ruler – an independent sovereign of a certain territory.

The Delhi Sultans could make civil and political regulations for public welfare. *Khutba* and *sikka* were recognized as important attributes of sovereignty. The *khutba* was the formal sermon following the congregational prayer on Fridays wherein the name of the Sultan was mentioned as the head of the community. Coinage was the ruler's prerogative: his name was inscribed on the coins (*sikka*).

The Sultanate witnessed a rapid rise and fall of dynasties. The Sultan, or a contender to the throne, could only keep himself in power with the support of the nobles who were themselves divided into numerous groups. Barani says that Balban stressed the special position of the Sultan as 'shadow of God' (*zil al-Allah*) on earth. Balban emphasized courtly splendour, decorum and etiquette. He also believed in severe exemplary punishments even to the nobles. All this bore relevance to a situation where the throne was never safe from the ambitions of the nobles, many of whom felt that they had an equal right to rule.

There were many officials to look after the royal household. The *wakil-i dar* looked after the entire household and disbursed salaries to the Sultan's personal staff. The *amir-i hajib* functioned as the master of ceremonies at the court. All petitions to the Sultan were submitted through the latter. There were other minor officials also.

### 7.4.2 The Wizarat

The *wazir*, as the head of the *diwan-i wizarat*, was the most important figure in the central administration. Though he was one of the four important departmental heads, he exercised a general supervisory authority over others. The *wizarat* organized the collection of revenue, exercised control over expenditure, kept accounts, disbursed salaries and allotted revenue assignments (*iqta*) at Sultan's order.

There were several officials who helped the *wizarat* such as the *mushrif-i mumalik* or the accountant-general and the *mustaufi-i mumalik* or the auditor-general. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, the *diwan-i mustakhraj* was made responsible for the collection of arrears of revenue.

### 7.4.3 Diwan-i arz

The *diwan-i arz* or military department was headed by the *ariz-i mumalik*. He was responsible for the administration of military affairs. He inspected the troops maintained by the *iqta*-holders. He also supervised the commissariat duties (supply and transport) of the Sultan's army. During the reign of Alauddin Khalji, some measures were introduced to maintain a check on recruitment and quality. He

ordered a descriptive roll (*huliya*) of every soldier to be kept and also ordered the branding (*dagh*) of horses to be done so that horses of poor quality were not brought by the *amirs* or *iqta*-holders to the muster. It seems that the branding of horses was strictly maintained till the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq.

#### 7.4.4 Other Departments

The *diwan-i insha'* looked after State correspondence. It was headed by *dabir-i mumalik*. This department dealt with all correspondence between the Sultan and other rulers, and between the Sultan and provincial governments. It issued *farmans* and received letters from subordinate officials.

The *barid-i mumalik* was the head of the State news-agency. He had to keep information of all that was happening in the Sultanate. The administrative sub-divisions had local *barids* who sent regular news – letters to the central office. The *barids* reported matters of state – wars, rebellions, local affairs, finances, the state of agriculture, etc. Apart from the *barids*, another set of reporters existed, who were known as *munhiyan*.

The *diwan-i risalat* was headed by the *sadr-us sudur*. He was the highest religious officer. He took care of the ecclesiastical affairs and appointed *qazis*. He approved various grants like *waqf* for religious and educational institutions, *wazifa* and *idrar* to the learned and the poor.

The Sultan headed the judiciary and was the final court of appeal in both civil and criminal matters. Next to him was the *qazi-ul mumalik* (or *qazi-ul quzzat*), the chief judge of the Sultanate. Often, the offices of the *sadr-us sudur* and *qazi-ul mumalik* were held by the same person. The chief *qazi* headed the legal system and heard appeals from the lower courts.

The *muhatsibs* (public censors) assisted the judicial department. Their task was to see that there was no public infringement of the tenets of Islam.

#### 7.4.5 Slaves and Karkhanas

Slaves were an important feature of the royal household. Alauddin Khalji owned 50,000 slaves, while Firuz Tughlaq is reputed to have had 1,80,000 slaves. During his reign, a separate department of slaves (*diwan-i bandagan*) was set up. The slaves were used for personal service and acted as body-guards (the latter numbering 40,000). Afif also records that a large number of Firuz's slaves (12,000) worked as artisans (*kasibs*). Barani describes a large slave market at Delhi, but by the first quarter of the 16th century there is no mention of slave markets.

The needs of the royal household were met through *karkhanas* which were broadly of two types: (a) manufactories, and (b) store houses. Even the royal library (*kitabikhana*) was considered as a *karkhana*. Under Firuz Tughlaq, there were 36 *karkhanas*. Each *karkhana* was supervised by a noble who had the rank of a *malik* or *khan*, and a *mutasarrif* who was responsible for the accounts and acted as the immediate supervisor. A separate *diwan* or accounts office existed for the *karkhanas*.

The *karkhanas* manufactured articles for Imperial household as well as for military purposes. It is said that Muhammad Tughlaq had employed about five hundred workers in gold brocade and four thousand weavers to manufacture cloth required by the court and for making robes of honour to be given in gift to the favoured ones. It must be remembered, however, that articles produced in the royal *karkhanas* were not commodities, i.e. not for sale in the market. Nobles, too, maintained their own *karkhanas*.

Check Your Progress-1

1) What were the symbols of allegiance maintained by the Delhi Sultans with respect to the Caliphate?

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2) Outline the main functions of the *diwan-i wizarat*.

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3) Write a note on *karkhanas*.

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4) Define the following:

a) *Mushrif-i mumalik* .....

b) *Ariz-i mumalik* .....

c) *Barid* .....

d) *Qazi-ul mumalik* .....

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### 7.5 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE DELHI SULTANATE

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As the State became more settled and efforts were made for greater centralization, provincial administration also underwent a change. A separation between fiscal and military responsibilities started evolving. During the reign of Muhammad Tughlaq, fiscal responsibilities were partially withdrawn from the *muqtis* or *walis* and placed under central officers. According to Ibn Battuta, the *iqta* of Amroha was placed under two officers, one called *amir* (possibly in-charge of the army and administration) and the other as *wali-ul kharaj* (in-charge of revenue collection). Muhammad Tughlaq also ordered that the salary of the soldiers maintained by *iqta*-holders be paid by the *diwan-i wizarat* to prevent fraud by the officers.

Greater control also came to be exercised over fiscal matters. The *diwan*'s office at the centre received and examined detailed statements regarding income and expenditure in the provinces. It supervised the work of the revenue officials in the provinces. The provinces had a *sahib-i diwan* whose office kept books of



account and submitted information to the centre. It was assisted by officials like *mutasarrifs*. The entire lower revenue staff was called *karkun*.

By the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, contemporary sources refer to an administrative division, known as *shiqq*. We do not have adequate information about the exact nature of *shiqq*. However, by the time of Sher Shah (1540-1545 CE) *shiqq* had emerged as a well-defined administrative unit, known as *sarkar*. Administrative officials, mentioned with respect to *shiqq*, were *shiqqdar* and *faujdar*. The demarcation of their duties is not very clear.

According to Ibn Battuta, *chaudhuri* was the head of hundred villages. This was the nucleus of the administrative unit later called *pargana*. The village was the smallest unit of administration. The functioning and administration of the village remained basically the same as it had existed in pre-Turkish times. The main village functionaries were *khot*, *muqaddam* (headman) and *patwari*.

The judicial administration of the sub-division was patterned on that of the centre. Courts of the *qazi* and *sadr* functioned in the provinces. The *kotwal* maintained law and order. At the village level, the *panchayat* heard civil cases.

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## 7.6 ADMINISTRATION UNDER SHER SHAH

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In the process of evolution of Mughal administrative machinery, the Afghan interlude (1540-1555) was significant. Under Sher Shah Suri the experiment in the formation of a bureaucracy under a centralized despotism had taken place. Akbar gave it a definite shape.

We get very little information about the working of central administration under Sher Shah. But he was an autocrat and kept everything under his direct control and supervision. Therefore, things went well so long as he was alive: his successors were no match to him.

The village was the smallest unit of administration. A group of villages constituted a *pargana* and a few *parganas* a *shiqq* which was equivalent to Mughal *sarkar*. However, in few areas, such as Punjab, Bengal, Malwa, etc. several *shiqqs* were placed under an officer whom we can equate with the Mughal *subadar*. The village-head was known as *muqaddam* who worked as the sole link between the government and the village. Though he was not the government servant, nonetheless he was responsible for maintaining law and order in his village. Next comes the *patwari*, a village record-keeper. He was also not an employee of the state but of the village community.

The *shiqqdar* was in-charge of the *pargana*. His chief function was to collect the revenue at *pargana* level. He was frequently transferred under Sher Shah. He was assisted by two *karkuns* (clerks) who kept the records both in Hindi and Persian. The *munsif* was responsible for measuring the land, etc. Both (*shiqqdar* and *munsif*) were directly appointed by the government. The *qanungo* maintained the records at *pargana* level. He was a hereditary semi-official. The *fotadar* was entrusted with the treasury of the *pargana*.

A number of *parganas* formed a *sarkar* (*shiqq*), headed by *shiqqdar-i shiqqdaran*. He was the supervisor and executive officer over the *shiqqdars* of all the *parganas* in a *sarkar* (*shiqq*). The *munsif-i munsifan* performed the duties of *amin* (created later by the Mughals) at *sarkar* (*shiqq*) level. There were 66 *sarkars* (*shiqqs*) in Sher Shah's Empire.

Sher Shah attached great importance to the administration of justice. Civil cases of the Muslims were taken care of by the *qazi*, while the criminal cases were

tried by the *shiqqdar*. The largest responsibility for detecting crimes rested upon *muqaddams*. If the *muqaddam* of the village, where the crime was committed, failed to capture the culprit, he was liable to severe punishment.

**Check Your Progress-2**

- 1) What were the functions of the *wali* or *muqti*?

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- 2) What were the *shiqqs*? Discuss its chief functionaries.

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- 3) Discuss Sher Shah’s judicial system.

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## 7.7 CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MUGHALS

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The Mughal Empire had a Pan-Indian character. Babur and Humayun for reasons of their brief reign and that of being busy in military matters could not concentrate on establishing a definite system or pattern in administration.

By the end of Akbar’s reign, we find establishment of elaborate offices with assigned functions to the heads of offices. The rules and regulations guiding both their public and private conduct had all been fixed so that the officers were converted into what can be termed the ‘Apparatus of the Empire’.

### 7.7.1 The Emperor

The ancient Indian traditions had always supported a strong ruler. The Muslim jurists and writers also held the same view. Thus, the concept of divine origin of monarchy could easily find credence among the Indian people. It is not surprising that the Mughals publicized their *jharokha darshan* with great deal of pomp and show in which the Emperor appeared at an appointed hour before the general public, the myth being that a mere look of his majesty would redress their grievances.

With such popular perception of the ruler, it is obvious that all officers in Mughal administration owed their position and power to the Emperor. Their appointment, promotion, demotion, and termination were subject to the ruler’s personal preference and whims.

### 7.7.2 *Wakil and Wazir*

The institution of *wizarat* (or *wikalat* since both were used interchangeably), according to some accounts, can be traced back to the Abbasid Caliphs. Under the Delhi Sultans, the *wazir* enjoyed both civil and military powers. But under Balban his powers were reduced when the Sultan bifurcated the military powers under *diwan-i 'arz*. As for Sher Shah, this office remained almost in abeyance under the Afghans.

The position of the *wazir* revived under the early Mughals. Babur's *wazir* Nizamuddin Muhammad Khalifa enjoyed both the civil and military powers. Humayun's *wazir* Hindu Beg also virtually enjoyed great powers.

The period of Bairam Khan's regency (1556-60) saw the rise of the *wakil-wazir* with unlimited powers under Bairam Khan. In the 8th regnal year (1564-65), Akbar took away the financial powers of the *wakil* and entrusted it into the hands of the *diwan-i kul* (Finance Minister). Separation of finance gave a jolt to the *wakil's* power. However, the *wakil* continued to enjoy the highest place in the Mughal bureaucratic hierarchy despite reduction in his powers.

### 7.7.3 *Diwan-i Kul*

We have already seen how Akbar strengthened the office of the *diwan* by entrusting the revenue powers to him. The chief *diwan* (*diwan-i kul*) was made responsible for revenue and finances. His primary duty was to supervise the imperial treasury and check all accounts.

He personally inspected all transactions and payments in all departments. He maintained direct contact with the provincial *diwans* and their functioning was put under his vigil. His seal and signatures were necessary for the validation of all official papers involving revenue. The entire revenue collection and expenditure machinery of the Empire was under his charge. No fresh order of appointment or promotion could be affected without his seal. To check the *diwan's* power, the Mughal Emperor asked the *diwan* to submit the report on state finances daily.

The central revenue ministry was divided into many departments to look after the specific needs of the Empire. For example: *diwan-i khalisa*, *diwan-i tan* (for cash salary), *diwan-i jagir*, *diwan-i buyutat* (royal household), etc.

Each branch was further sub-divided into several sections manned by a secretary, superintendents and clerks. The *mustaufi* was the auditor, and the *mushrif* was the chief accountant. The *khazanadar* looked after the Imperial treasury.

### 7.7.4 *Mir Bakhshi*

The *mir 'arz* of Delhi Sultanate changed its nomenclature to *mir bakhshi* under the Mughals. All orders of appointments of *mansabdars* and their salary papers were endorsed and passed by him. He personally supervised the branding of the horses (*dagh*) and checked the muster-roll (*chehra*) of the soldiers. On the basis of his verification, the amount of the salary was certified. Only then the *diwan* made entry in his records and placed it before the king. *Mir bakhshi* placed all matters pertaining to the military department before the Emperor. The new entrants, seeking service, were presented before the Emperor by the *mir bakhshi*. He dealt directly with provincial *bakhshis* and *waqai navis*. He accompanied the Emperor on tours, pleasure trips, hunting expeditions, battlefield, etc. His duty was to check whether proper places were allotted to the *mansabdars* according to their rank at the court. His *darbar* duties considerably added to his prestige and influence.

The *mir bakhshi* was assisted by other *bakhshis* at the central level. The first three were known as 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> *bakhshi*. Besides, there were separate *bakhshis* for the *ahadis* (special imperial troopers) and domestic servants of the royal household (*bakhshi-i shagird pasha*).

### 7.7.5 *Mir Saman*

The *mir saman* was the officer in-charge of the royal *karkhanas*. He was also known as *khan saman*. He was the chief executive officer responsible for the purchase of all kinds of articles and their storage for the royal household. Another important duty was to supervise the manufacture of different articles, be it weapons of war or articles of luxury. He was directly under the Emperor but for sanction of money and auditing of accounts he was to contact the *diwan*.

Under the *mir saman* there were several officers, including the *diwan-i buyutat* and *tahvildar* (cash keeper).

### 7.7.6 *Sadr-us Sudur*

The *sadr-us sudur* was the head of the ecclesiastical department. His chief duty was to protect the laws of the *Shariat*. He was also connected with the distribution of charities – both cash (*wazifa*) and land grants (*suyurghal*, *inam*, *madad-i ma'ash*).

Initially as the head of the judicial department, he supervised the appointment of *qazis* and *muftis*. Before Shah Jahan's reign, the posts of the chief *qazi* and *sadr-us sudur* were combined and the same person held the charge of both the departments. However, under Aurangzeb, the post of the chief *qazi* (*qazi-ul quzzat*) and the *sadr-us sudur* got separated. It led to sharp curtailment of *sadr's* power. Now in the capacity of *sadr*, he supervised the assignment of allowances and looked after the charitable grants. He also looked into whether the grants were given to the right persons and utilized properly. He scrutinized applications for all such grants, both fresh and renewals, and presented before the Emperor for sanction. Alms were also distributed through him.

#### *Qazi-ul Quzzat*

The chief *qazi* was known as *qazi-ul quzzat*. He was the head of the judiciary (We have already mentioned that prior to Aurangzeb's reign his powers were combined in *sadr-us sudur*.) His principal duty was to administer the *Shariat* law both in civil and criminal cases.

In the capacity of the chief *qazi*, he looked into the appointment of the *qazis* in the *suba*, *sarkar*, *pargana* and town levels. There was a separate *qazi* for army also. Besides the *qazi-ul quzzat*, another important judicial officer was *mir 'adl*. Abul Fazl emphasized the need to have a *mir 'adl* in addition to *qazi*, for the *qazi* was to hear and decide the cases while *mir 'adl* was to execute the orders of the court.

The *muhtasibs* (censor of public morals) was to ensure the general observance of the rules of morality. His job was to keep in check the forbidden practices – wine drinking, use of *bhang* and other intoxicants, gambling, etc. In addition, he also performed some secular duties – examining weights and measures, enforcing fair prices, etc.

## 7.8 PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MUGHALS

In 1580, Akbar divided the Empire into twelve *subas* (later on, three more were added). Each *suba* was divided into a number of *sarkars* and these were further divided into *parganas* and *mahals*. During Shah Jahan's reign, another administrative unit *chakla* came into existence. It was a cluster of a number of *parganas*.

### 7.8.1 Provincial Governor

The governor of a *suba* (*subadar*) was directly appointed by the Emperor. Usually the tenure of a *subadar* was around three years. Among the duties of the *subadar*, the most important one was to look after the welfare of the people and the army. He was responsible for the general law and order problem in the *suba*. A successful *subadar* was one who would encourage agriculture, trade and commerce. He was supposed to take up welfare activities like construction of *sarais*, gardens, wells, water reservoirs, etc. He was to take steps to enhance the revenue of the state.

### 7.8.2 Diwan

The provincial *diwan* was appointed by the Emperor. He was an independent officer answerable to the Centre. He was the head of the revenue department in the *suba*.

The provincial *diwan* supervised the revenue collection in the *suba* and maintained accounts of all expenditure incurred in the form of salaries of the officials and subordinates.

The *diwan* was also to take steps to increase the area under cultivation. In many cases advance loans (*taqavi*) were given to the peasants through his office.

A *roznamcha* (daily register) was maintained by the *diwan* which carried entries of amount that was deposited in the royal treasury by the revenue officials and *zamindars*. A large number of clerks worked under him.

Thus, by making the *diwan* independent of the *subadar* and by putting financial matters under the former, the Mughals were successful in checking the *subadar* from becoming independent.

### 7.8.3 Bakhshi

The *bakhshi* was appointed by the imperial court at the recommendation of the *mir bakhshi*. He performed exactly the same military functions as were performed by his counterpart at the Centre. He was responsible for checking and inspecting the horses and soldiers maintained by the *mansabdars* in the *suba*. He issued the paybills of both the *mansabdars* and the soldiers. It was his duty to prepare a list of deceased *mansabdars*, but often news reporters (*waqai navis*) of the *parganas* directly sent information to the provincial *diwan*. Often his office was combined with *waqai nigar*. In this capacity his duty was to inform the Centre the happenings in his province. To facilitate his work, he posted his agents in the *parganas* and various important offices.

### 7.8.4 Darogha-i Dak and the Secret Services

Developing a communication network was very essential to govern a vast Empire. A separate department was assigned this important task. The imperial postal system was established for sending instructions to the far-flung areas of

the Empire. The same channel was used for receiving information. At every suba headquarters, *darogha-i dak* was appointed for this purpose. His duty was to pass on letters through the postal runners (*mewras*) to the court. For this purpose, a number of *dak chowkis* were maintained throughout the Empire where runners were stationed who carried the post to the next *chowki*. Horses and boats were also used to help in speedy delivery.

At the provincial level, *waq 'ai navis* and *waq 'ai nigars* were appointed to supply the reports directly to the Emperor. Besides, there were also *sawanih nigar* to provide confidential reports to the Emperor. Many reports of these secret service agents are available to us. They are very important sources of the history of the period.

Thus, the Mughals kept a watch over their officials in the provinces through offices and institutions independent of each other. Besides, the Mughal Emperors' frequent visits to every *suba* and the system of frequent transfers of the officials after a period of three years on average, helped the Mughals in checking the officials. But the possibility of rebellion always existed and, therefore, constant vigil through an organized system of intelligence network was established.

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## 7.9 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MUGHALS

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In this Section, we will discuss the working of administration at the *sarkar*, *pargana* and *mauza* (village) levels.

### 7.9.1 Sarkars

At the *sarkar* level, there were two important functionaries, the *faujdar* and the *amalguzar*.

#### *Faujdar*

He was the executive head of the *sarkar*. But his area of influence seems more complex. He was not only appointed at the *sarkar* level, but sometimes within a *sarkar* a number of *faujgars* existed. At times their jurisdiction spread over two full *sarkars*. We hear different *faujgars* appointed to *chaklas* as well. It seems his duty was mainly to take care of rebellions, and law and order problems. His jurisdiction was decided according to the needs of the region.

His primary duty was to safeguard the life and property of the residents of the area under his jurisdiction. He was to ensure safe passage to traders within his jurisdiction. As the chief executive of the region, the *faujdar* was to keep vigil over the recalcitrant *zamindars*. In special circumstances, he was to help the *amalguzar* in matters of revenue collection.

#### *Amalguzar*

The most important revenue collector was the *amil* or *amalguzar*. His primary duty was to assess and supervise the revenue collection through other subordinate officials. A good *amil* was supposed to increase the land under cultivation and induce the peasants to pay revenue willingly without coercion. All accounts were to be maintained by him. Daily receipts and expenditure reports were sent by him to the provincial *diwan*.

### 7.9.2 Pargana Administration

The *parganas* were the administrative units below the *sarkar*. The *shiqqdar* was the executive officer of the *pargana* and assisted the *amils* in revenue collection.

The *amil* looked after the revenue collection at the *pargana* level also. His duties were similar to those of the *amalguzar* at the *sarkar* level. The *qanungos* kept all the records pertaining to the land in his area. He was to take note of different crops in the *pargana*.

The village was the lowest administrative unit. The *muqaddam* was the village-headman while the *patwari* took care of the village revenue records. Under the Mughals, the pattern of village administration remained almost on the same lines as it was under Sher Shah.

### 7.9.3 *Thana and Thanadar*

The *thana* was a place where army was stationed for the preservation of law and order. They were to arrange provisions for the army as well. These *thanas* were established specifically in disturbed areas and around the cities. Its head was designated as *thanadar*. He was appointed at the recommendation of the *subadar* and *diwan*. He was generally placed under the *faujdar* of the area.

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## 7.10 TOWN, QILA AND PORT ADMINISTRATION

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To administer the cities and ports, the Mughals maintained separate administrative machinery.

### 7.10.1 *Kotwal*

For urban centres, the imperial court appointed *kotwals* whose primary duty was to safeguard the life and property of townsmen. He may be compared to the present day police officer in the towns and cities. The *kotwal* was also to maintain a register for keeping records of people coming and going out of the town. Every outsider had to take a permit from him before entering or leaving the town. The *kotwal* was to ensure that no illicit liquor was manufactured in his area. He also acted as superintendent of weights and measures used by the merchants and shopkeepers.

### 7.10.2 *Qil'adar*

The Mughal Empire had a large number of *qil'as* (forts) situated in various parts of the country. Many of these were located at strategically important places. Each fortress was like a mini township with a large garrison. Each fort was placed under an officer called *qil'adar*. A cursory survey of the persons appointed as *qil'adars* reveals that *mansabdars* with high ranks, generally were appointed. He was in-charge of the general administration of fort and the areas assigned in *jagir* to the *qil'adar*. Sometimes, the *qil'adars* were asked to perform the duties of the *faujdar* in that region.

### 7.10.3 *Port Administration*

The Mughals were aware of the economic importance of the sea-ports as these were the centres of brisk commercial activities. The port administration was independent of the provincial authority. The governor of the ports was called *mutasaddi*, who was directly appointed by the Emperor. Sometimes the office of the *mutasaddi* was auctioned and given to the highest bidder. The *mutasaddi* collected taxes on merchandise and maintained a custom-house. He also supervised the mint house at the port. The *shahbandar* was his subordinate who was mainly concerned with the custom-house.

## 7.11 NATURE OF MUGHAL ADMINISTRATION

Some historians (Irfan Habib, Athar Ali, etc.) hold that Mughal administrative structure was highly centralized. This centralization is manifested in the efficient working of land revenue system, *mansab* and *jagir*, uniform coinage, etc. But Stephen P. Blake and J.F. Richards, while they accept the centralizing tendencies, point out that the Mughal Empire was patrimonial-bureaucratic. For them, everything centred around the imperial household and the vast bureaucracy. For Streusand, despite being centralized, the Mughal structure was less centralized at its periphery. Chetan Singh supports this view. He is of the opinion that even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Mughal Empire was not very centralized. For him, the centralized structure controlled through the efficient working of *jagirdari* seems to hold little ground. According to him, *jagir* transfers were not as frequent as they appear, and the local elements at the periphery were quite successful in influencing the policies at the centre.

The extent to which the Mughal Empire was centralized in practice can be a matter of debate. However, theoretically the Mughal administrative structure seems to be highly centralized and bureaucratic in nature. The Emperor was the fountainhead of all powers, and bureaucracy was mere *banda-i dargah* (slaves of the court).

In spite of the vast range of powers enjoyed by the central ministers, they were not allowed to usurp and interfere in each other's jurisdiction nor to assume autocratic powers. The Mughals through a system of checks and balances prevented any minister or officer from gaining unlimited powers.

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Define the following:
  - a) *Darogha-i Dak* .....
  - b) *Faujdar* .....
  - c) *Kotwal* .....
  - d) *Diwan- i kul* .....
  - e) *Amil* .....
- 2) Discuss the position of the *wakil* under the Mughals.  
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- 3) Discuss the physical sub-divisions of the Mughal administrative set-up.  
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## 7.12 SUMMARY

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We have seen how the Delhi Sultanate was shaped by its historical experience of being a part of the wider Islamic world and how it changed and evolved as a result of its needs and circumstances during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. We have studied the administrative framework of the Sultanate at the central, provincial and local levels. The need of maintaining a large army (for defence and expansion) and maintaining an administrative apparatus shaped many of its institutions. Greater centralization brought about changes in the nature of administrative control.

The Mughals tried to establish a highly centralized bureaucratic machinery which was based on 'direct' command. The Emperor was the head of all powers. A number of central ministers were directly appointed by the Emperor to assist him in the administration. Similarly, to keep them in check, he adopted the principle of checks and balances.

To have an effective administration, the Empire was divided into *subas* (provinces), *sarkars*, *parganas* and villages. The provincial administration was on the lines of the Centre, headed by separate officers. Here also none of the officer enjoyed supreme powers. Both the *subadars* and *diwans* worked independently and were responsible to the Centre only. Cities and port-towns had separate administrative machinery. The *kotwal* in the cities and *mutasaddis* in the port towns normally took care of the law and order situation. The Mughals had certain military outposts as well where separate *qil'adars* were appointed. At local level, the *pargana* was the most important administrative unit while the villages formed the smallest unit of administration.

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## 7.13 KEYWORDS

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<b><i>Amin</i></b>	Revenue assessor
<b><i>Diwan-i Wizarat</i></b>	Finance Department
<b><i>Khalisa</i></b>	'Crown' land whose revenue was reserved for the Sultan's treasury
<b><i>Khutba</i></b>	A sermon recited in mosques on Fridays wherein the name of the ruler was included
<b><i>Muqaddam</i></b>	Village headman
<b><i>Muqti or Wali</i></b>	<i>Iqta</i> -holder / governor
<b><i>Mushrif</i></b>	Revenue officer
<b><i>Mutasarrif</i></b>	Auditor
<b><i>Patwari</i></b>	Village accountant
<b><i>Waqf</i></b>	Grants assigned for the maintenance of religious institutions
<b><i>Zawabit</i></b>	Regulations

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## 7.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 7.2
- 2) See Section 7.4.2
- 3) See Section 7.4.5
- 4) See Section 7.4

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sections 7.5
- 2) See Section 7.5 and 7.6
- 3) See Section 7.6

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-sections 7.7.3, 7.8.4, 7.9.1, 7.10.1
- 2) See Sub-section 7.7.2
- 3) See Sections 7.9 and 7.10

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## 7.15 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Habib, Mohammad and K.A. Nizami, (ed.) (1970) *Comprehensive History of India* Vol. V: *Delhi Sultanate CE 1206-1526* (Delhi: People's Publishing House).

Habibullah, A.B.M., (1967) *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India* (New Delhi: Central Book Depot).

Hasan, Ibn, (1967) *The Central Structure of the Mughal Empire and Its Practical Working upto the Year 1657* (Lahore: Oxford University Press).

Pandey, Awadh Behari, (1970) *Early Medieval India* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot).

Ray, Anuruddha, (1984) *Some Aspects of Mughal Administration* (Ludhiana: Kalyani Publishers).

Saran, P., (1988) *The Provincial Government of the Mughals, 1526-1658* (Jaipur: Sunita Publications).

Tripathi, R.P., (1959) *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot).

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## 7.16 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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**Establishment and Consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate | IGNOUSSOSS**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCmtBgS1csM>

**Talking History |2| Delhi: The Foundation of Dilli Sultanate | Rajya Sabha TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJ0somraCaM>

**Talking History |4| Delhi: The Era of Alauddin Khilji | Rajya Sabha TV**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrTs0B1qQ9s>

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## UNIT 8 ARMY ORGANIZATION AND MANSAB SYSTEM\*

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### Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Army Organization of the Delhi Sultans
- 8.3 Army Organization of the Mughals
- 8.4 *Mansab* System
  - 8.4.1 Dual Ranks: *Zat* and *Sawar*
  - 8.4.2 Three Classes of *Mansabdars*
  - 8.4.3 Appointment and Promotion of *Mansabdars*
  - 8.4.4 Maintenance of Troops and Payment
  - 8.4.5 System of Escheat
  - 8.4.6 Composition of *Mansabdars*
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Keywords
- 8.7 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 8.8 Suggested Readings
- 8.9 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 8.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, we will discuss the army organization of the Sultanate and the Mughals and the *mansab* system. After reading this Unit, you will be able to know the:

- army organization of the Delhi Sultans and the Mughals,
- working of the *diwan-i arz*,
- powers and position of *Mir Bakhshi*,
- basic features of *mansab* system under Akbar, and
- changes introduced in the *mansab* system during the 17th century.

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### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

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Barani's claim in his *Fatawa-i Jahandari* that 'Kingship is the army and the army is the kingship' clearly suggests that army was the pillar of the empire. No Sultan could ignore the slackness in the army. Balban counselled Bughra Khan: 'Consider no expense for the army as too great and let your *ariz* (muster-master) engage himself in maintaining the old and recruiting new troops and keeping himself informed about every expenditure in his department' (Nizami, 1982: 287). Sultanate was under constant wars to consolidate their position in India for which maintenance of efficient army was a must. Sultans were equally concerned and vigilant about Mongol inroads into India for which strong defence line was needed. Thus no Delhi Sultan could afford to be lax as for the defence and army was concerned. Balban established forts not only in the northwest frontier but also in Kampli, Patiali, and Bhojpur. Alauddin also not only constructed new

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forts at strategic points but also got repaired the old ones. Alauddin ordered 'for the manufacture of *manjniqs* and *arradas* for the ... supply of arms of every kind and for keeping the stores of grain and fodder' in the forts.

Mughal army was a further advancement over the Sultanate army, perhaps, more organised and well equipped; the additional feature was the use of canons and muskets. The pillar of the Mughal army was the *mansab* system. Each *mansabdar* was to maintain strictly a specified numbers of horses (*sawars*) and the horsemen and they were to come for the muster regularly. In this Unit, therefore, a separate Section is devoted on the working of the *mansab* system of the Mughals.

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## 8.2 ARMY ORGANIZATION OF THE DELHI SULTANS

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Like the Mongol army organization Delhi Sultans also organized their army on the similar basis. The Mongol army was based on the multiple of tens which is commonly known as the decimal system/division of the army. The lowest order was 100, a multiple of 10 *tuman* was a commander of 10,000. Under Alauddin Khalji a *sarkhail* had ten horsemen; a *sipahsalar* ten *sarkhails*; an *amir* ten *sipahsalar*s; a *malik* ten *amirs*; and a *khan* ten *maliks*. The command of the army was in the hands of a *khan*.

About the army organization of Iltutmish nothing much is known. However, he appears to have organized 'standing army', 'centrally recruited centrally paid and centrally administered' (Nizami, 1982). Balban realized the importance of army and accordingly increased the strength of the *qalb-i a'ala* (centrally recruited army). To ensure the efficiency of the army he emphasized upon regular drill of the army. To ensure the quality he introduced *dagh-o-chehra* (branding of horses) so that no horse or horsemen could be produced twice. Ghiyasuddin rigorously implemented Alauddin's regulations of descriptive rolls (*huliya*, *chehra*) and branding (*dagh*). However, Firuz Shah discontinued both *dagh* and *huliya*. The army consisted of troops maintained by nobles as well as the standing army (*hashm-i qalb*; army stationed at Delhi/with the Sultan) of the Sultan. However, armies stationed at provincial headquarters were known as *hashm-i atraf*. 'In the thirteenth century, the royal cavalry, in lieu of cash salary, was assigned the revenue of small villages in the vicinity of Delhi which Moreland calls "small *iqta*". Under Iltutmish, the number of such cavalry was about three thousand. Balban tried to do away with these assignments which led to much dissatisfaction. Alauddin Khalji was successful in doing so, and he started paying his soldiers in cash – a trooper was paid 234 tankas while one who brought an additional horse used to get 78 tankas more. Those maintain two horses were known as *do aspa* while those with one horse *yak aspa*. Firuz Tughlaq gave up the practice of paying his royal soldiers in cash: instead, he gave them a paper called *itlaq* – a sort of draft on whose strength they could claim their salary from the Sultan's revenue officers of the *khalisa* ("Crown" or "reserve" land)' (Qureshi 1941; Kiran Dattar, EHI-03, Unit-16, p.8). Cavalry soldiers usually carried two swords (stirrup-swords attached to saddle; and another in his quiver); foot soldiers besides daggers and swords also equipped with bows and arrows. Among the stone and missile throwing machines there were *manjniq*, *arrada* and *maghrabi*.

Elephants also formed important component of the Delhi Sultan's army. Muhammad bin Tughlaq is reported to have three thousand elephants. Firuz's contingent during his second Bengal campaign possessed four hundred seventy elephants. When Balban entrusted Bengal to Bughra Khan he advised him to

send supply of elephants from Bengal. Balban weighed the value of an elephant equal to five hundred horsemen, records Barani. They were useful for carrying soldiers; Firuz's found them useful to 'break the force of the current'.

The Sultanate infantry (foot soldiers), called *payaks*, were largely either Hindus or men of humble origin. They served largely as personal guards and door-keepers. Some *payaks* were provided with horses (*payak-ba asp*). There were also archers (*dhanuks*). *Jandar* were Sultan's personal body-guards and were under the direct control of the Sultan. Balban is said to have 1000 bodyguards and he is said to have known each one by name. The cavalymen and footsoldiers were part of Sultan's standing army. However, there were 'special recruits' as well who were recruited at the time of war. Athletes (*pehlwan*) and runners (*shattar*) also formed part of the contingent.

The military department under the Delhi Sultans was known variously as *diwan-i arz*, *ravat-i arz*, *arz-i mumalik*. In the initial years of the Sultanate *Wazir* used to combine both civil and military powers. It was Balban who realized its danger and separated the military powers of the *Wazir*. During his reign the military department was headed by Imad-ul Mulk. Alauddin further strengthened and reorganized the military department. Under Firuz Tughlaq the department was headed by his trusted slave, Bashir Imad-ul Mulk. Defining his position Imad-ul Mulk said, records Barani, 'The king is the master of the army, I am its chief, and the army is the defender of the subjects of the Dominions' (Hasan, 1980[1936]: 212). The *diwan-i arz* had 'direct access' to the Sultan and 'could approach him any time'. He was responsible for the recruitment and training of the forces, inspection and muster of horses and soldiers.

### 8.3 ARMY ORGANIZATION OF THE MUGHALS

The Mughal army organization can be studied in two distinct heads. One, and the most crucial one was the *mansab* system through which the Mughal bureaucracy and more so Mughal cavalry was recruited and the other aspect was the constituent branches of the Mughal army and how were the marches and the pitched battles were organized.

The Mughals like the Mongols and later the Delhi Sultans organized their army on decimal system. Often the term *tuman/tumandar* continued in usage under the Mughals as well, though symbolically. However, the difference between the Mughal army organization and those of the Delhi Sultans was that the Mughal army was based on 'direct command' (means the entire army was under the direct command of the Mughal emperor); while the army of those of the Delhi Sultans like the Mongol army organization was based on 'indirect command'.

#### Constituent Branches of the Mughal Army

The infantry, elephantry, artillery and navy (Jagadish Narain Sarkar prefers to call it admiralty) formed the main strength of the Mughal army. Mughals army was heterogeneous in nature largely consisted of Persians, Turks, Afghans, and Rajputs.

#### Infantry

In the Mughal army organization the position of the Mughal infantry in terms of hierarchy was the lowest. The infantry was known as *piyadagan/ahsham*. These *piyadagan* constituted in a number of groups and performed varied nature of services – spearmen to *bandukchi* (riflemen), swordmen (*shamsheerbaz*), *dakhilis* (state paid soldiers), archers, and also the non-combatants – porters

(*darbans*), *khidmatiyas* (servants; they belonged to Hindu highway robber castes and acted largely as guides and their chiefs were known as *Khidmat Rai*), runners/couriers (*mewras*), wrestlers, athletes, stone throwers, slaves, litter bearers (*kahars*), carpenters, ironsmiths, water carriers, etc. Within them who enjoyed little higher status were *nimah sawars* (half-troopers).

### Elephants

Elephants were important on three counts: a) It was sign of grandeur and often in a pitched battle the commander/emperor used to sit on the elephants so that he could be visible vis-à-vis he could keep vigilant eye on the movement of his army as well as enemy. But more crucial aspect of the deployment was that they were the best beasts of burden and were important for transporting heavy artillery, crossing rivers, shielding army. However, at times they were vulnerable target of the enemy for that elephants were provided with shields/armours. His trunk was covered with metallic plates and often a sword and two daggers were attached with his trunk to enable him to strike the enemy. Even they provided better targets for archers, musketeers and small cannons (*gajnal*).

Elephants carrying baggage and harem ladies were often kept at the rear. Besides elephants, camels, mules and oxen were also used as pack animals.

### Cavalry

Father Monserrate calls the Mughal cavalry 'the flower of the army'. *Ahadis* (gentlemen-troopers) were the personal troopers of the emperor, instituted by Akbar; while *dakhili* soldiers were recruited though on behalf of the emperor but were employed with the *mansabdars*. *Dakhilis* were of two types – *bargirs* who received arms, dress from the state; and the *silehdars* who used to bring their own horses and arms. There were also *kumakis* who were recruited for special duties. However, the most numerous of the cavalry wing were the *tabinans* furnished by the *mansabdars* (we will discuss in detail the nature of *mansabdari* system in the next Section). *Mansabdars* had to bring their horses/horsemen for muster (*dagh-o-chehra*; branding of horses, *huliya* and *chehra* of soldiers) after every 18 months (for *naqadi*) and 36 months (for *jagirdars*). Mughal army possessed largely Turki, Tazik, and Persian horses.

### Artillery

Babur's use of heavy artillery in the battles of Panipat and Khanwah is much talked about. Humayun is reported to have possessed 21 heavy artillery and 700 guns. Sher Shah's artillery was considered to be even superior to Humayun's. Akbar's artillery numbered 150 pieces. Abul Fazl places importance of artillery for 'the siege of fortresses and naval actions'. For artillery Mughals preferred foreigners. Babur's artillery was commanded by famous Ottoman Turks, Ustad Ali Quli and Mustafa Khan; Humayun's master of cannons was Rumi Khan; Akbar counted on Portuguese; Venetian (traveller) Manucci was employed as gunner by Dara. Both heavy (*jinsi*) and light (*dasti*) guns formed part of Mughal artillery. Heavy guns were adorned with high-sounding titles like, Jahan Kusha, Kishwar Kusha, Garh Bhanjan. Mughals had separate *karkhana* for manufacturing artillery and gunpowder. During Shahjahan and Aurangzeb's reigns the efficient musketeers were the Hindu Baksariyas (from Buxar), Bundelas, Karnatakis and Bahelias (of Allahabad).

### Admiralty

Mughals had a separate department under *mir bahri* to look after the fleets and waterways. The department was responsible for building boats, regulate sea and

river ports, impose tolls, and building bridges. However, the Mughals lacked proper navy. Mughals relied on Portuguese and Siddis of Janjira but incapable to face the Portuguese, Dutch and the English.

### Officials

The Commander-in-chief in true sense was the Mughal emperor, though the head of the military department was *Bakhshi-i Mumalik* or *Mir Bakhshi*. All orders of *mansab* grants were issued by him. He supervised the branding as well as inspected soldiers. In the Mughal *darbar* he stood at the right side and presented all matters pertaining to his department and even he accompanied the emperor in his private chamber (*ghusal khana*). He was also incharge of the palace guards. *Mir Bakhshi* also accompanied emperor or at times princes in the expeditions or else could also be given an independent command of a specific expedition. Since he was not commander-in-chief so he was not authorized to lead expeditions and in most cases separate *bakhshis* of expedition (*bakhshi-i askar/lashkar*) were appointed. He was not entitled to deal with financial matters of the army that he was supposed to submit to the concerned *diwan* (*diwan-i tan*). However, when in the active battlefield finances were placed under his charge.

There were three *bakhshis* in the Mughal empire. Their duties were more or less similar with the difference that *Mir Bakhshi* used to deal with Princes and high *Amirs*; the second *Bakhshi* dealt with *mansabdars* of lower ranks; while the third *Bakhshi* used to deal with increments and postings of *yaumiya daran* (those drawing cash salaries) only. There was also a separate *bakhshi-i ahadis*. Later, under Jahangir a separate *bakhshi-i huzur* was created, separate from these three *bakhshis*. However, this post does not appear to have continued under subsequent reigns. In addition we find another *bakhshi* under Jahangir, that of *bakhshi-i shagird pesh* (domestic servants). The office even continued under Shahjahan as well. The incharge of the Mughal artillery was *mir atish*.

### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) Mention the duties of the office of the *diwan-i arz*.

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- 2) Discuss briefly the constituent branches of the Mughal army.

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- 3) Write briefly on the officials of the Mughal army.

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## 8.4 MANSAB SYSTEM

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*Mansab* system under the Mughals in India did not develop suddenly; it evolved steadily through the time. These institutions were borrowed in some form from Western Asia and modified to suit the needs of the time in India. The *mansabdars* were an integral part of the Mughal bureaucracy and formed, as Percival Spear says, 'an elite within elite'. They were appointed in all government departments except the judiciary. They held the important offices of *wazir*, *bakhshi*, *faujdar* and the *subadar*, etc.

The word *mansab* means a place or position and therefore it means a rank in the *mansab* system under the Mughals. During Babur's time, the term *mansabdar* was not used; instead, another term *wajhdar* was employed. The latter differed in some ways from the *mansab* system that evolved under the Mughals after Babur.

Akbar gave *mansabs* to both military and civil officers on the basis of their merit or service to the state. To fix the grades of officers and classify his soldiers, he was broadly inspired by the principles adopted by Chinghiz Khan. As we have seen Chinghiz's army had been organised on decimal system. The lowest unit was of ten horsemen, then came one hundred, one thousand and so on. Abul Fazl states that Akbar had established 66 grades of *mansabdars* ranging from commanders of 10 horsemen to 10,000 horsemen, although only 33 grades have been mentioned by him.

*Mansab* denoted three things

- i) It determined the status of its holder (the *mansabdar*) in the official hierarchy.
- ii) It fixed the pay of the holder.
- iii) It also laid upon the holder the obligation of maintaining a specified number of contingent with horses, horsemen and equipment.

### 8.4.1 Dual Ranks: *Zat* and *Sawar*

Initially a single number represented the rank, personal pay and the size of contingent of a *mansabdar*. In such a situation if a person held a *mansab* of 500, he was to maintain a contingent of 500 and receive allowances to maintain it. In addition, he was to receive a personal pay according to a schedule and undertake other obligations specified for that rank. After some time, the rank of *mansabdar* instead of one number, came to be denoted by two numbers – *zat* and *sawar*. This innovation most probably occurred in 1595-1596.

The first number (*zat*) determined the *mansabdar*'s personal pay (*talab-khassa*) and his rank in the organization. The second number (*sawar*) fixed the number of horses and horsemen to be maintained by the *mansabdar* and, accordingly, the amount he would receive for his contingent (*tabinan*).

There has been controversy about the dual rank. William Irvine thought that the double rank meant that the *mansabdars* had to maintain from his personal pay two contingents of troops. Abdul Aziz, close to modern point of view, held that the *zat* pay was purely personal with no involvement of troops. He rejected the theory of Irvine by stating that it meant the maintenance of one contingent and not two. Athar Ali clarified the position. He says that the first number (*zat*) placed the *mansabdar* in the appropriate position among the officials of the state and, accordingly, the salary of the *mansabdar* was determined. The second rank (*sawar*) determined the number of horses and horsemen the *mansabdar* had to furnish.



### 8.4.2 Three Classes of *Mansabdars*

In 1595-1596, the *mansabdars* were classified into three groups:

- a) those with horsemen (*sawar*) equal to the number of the *zat*;
- b) those with horsemen half or more than half of the number of the *zat*, and
- c) those whose *sawar* rank was less than half of their *zat* rank.

The *sawar* rank was either equal or less than the *zat*. Even if the former was higher, the *mansabdar*'s position in the official hierarchy would not be affected. For example, a *mansabdar* with 4000 *zat* and 2000 *sawar* (4000/2000 in short) was higher in rank than a *mansabdar* of 3000/3000, although the latter had a higher number of horsemen under him.

But there are exceptions to this rule particularly when the *mansabdar* was serving in a difficult terrain amidst the rebels. In such cases, the state often increased the *sawar* rank without altering the *zat* rank. Obviously the system was not a static one: it changed to meet the circumstances. Thus reforms were undertaken without modifying the basic structure. One such reform was the use of conditional rank (*mashrut*), which meant an increase of *sawar* rank for a temporary period. This was an emergency measure adopted in the time of crisis, that is, the permission to recruit more horsemen at the expense of the state.

Another development that took place was the introduction of *do aspa sih aspa* under Jahangir. Mahabat Khan was the first to get it in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Jahangir's reign. According to this, a part or full *sawar* rank of *mansabdar* was made *do aspa sih aspa*. For example, if a *mansabdar* held a *mansab* of 4000 *zat*/4000 *sawar*, he may be granted *huma do aspa sih aspa* (all two-three horses). In this case the original *sawar* rank would be ignored, and the *mansabdar* will maintain double the number of *do aspa sih aspa* (here 4000 + 4000 = 8000). Again, if the rank was 4000 *zat*/4000 *sawar* of which 2000 was *do aspa sih aspa*, then it would mean that out of the original *sawar* rank of 4000, the ordinary or *barawurdi* troopers will be only 2000 and the additional rank of 2000 *do aspa sih aspa* will double itself to 4000 ordinary troopers. Thus, the total number of horsemen would be 6000.

What could have been the reasons for adopting *do aspa sih aspa* system? Our sources do not help us in this respect. But we can visualize the following: Jahangir, after becoming emperor, wanted to promote nobles of his confidence and strengthen them militarily, but there were some practical problems. As we noticed generally the *sawar* rank could not be higher than *zat* rank. In such a situation, any increase in *sawar* rank would have meant an increase in *zat* rank also. The increase in the latter would have led to additional payment as personal pay thereby increasing the burden on treasury. Moreover, there would have been an upward mobility of the noble in the official hierarchy which was likely to give rise to jealousy among the nobles.

In fact *do aspa sih aspa* was a way out to grant additional *sawar* rank without disturbing the *zat* rank or *mansab* hierarchy. It also meant a saving for the state by not increasing the *zat* rank.

### 8.4.3 Appointment and Promotion of *Mansabdars*

The *Mir Bakhshi* generally presented the candidates to the Emperor who recruited them directly. But the recommendation of the leading nobles and governors of the provinces were also usually accepted. An elaborate procedure involving the *diwan*, *bakhshi* and others followed after which it went to the Emperor for

confirmation. The *farman* was then issued under the seal of the *wazir*. In case of promotion the same procedures were followed.

Granting of *mansab* was a prerogative of the Emperor. He could appoint anybody as *mansabdar*. There was no examination or written test as it existed in China. Generally, certain norms seem to have been followed. A survey of the *mansabdars* appointed during the reigns of the Mughal Emperors show that some groups were more favoured than the others.

The most favoured category were the sons and close kinsmen of persons who were already in service. This group was called *khanazad*. Another group which was given preference was of those who held high positions in other kingdoms. The main areas from which such people came were the Uzbek and Safavi Empires and the Deccan kingdoms. These included Irani, Turani, Iraqi and Khurasani. The attraction for Mughal *mansab* was such that Adil Shah of Bijapur in 1636 requested the Mughal Emperor not to appoint *mansabdars* from among his nobles.

The rulers of autonomous principalities formed yet another group which received preferential treatment in recruitment and promotions. The main beneficiaries from this category were the Rajput kings.

Promotions were generally given on the basis of performance and lineage. Manucci, writing during the last years of Aurangzeb's reign, says: 'To get the *hazari* or the pay of one thousand, it is necessary to wait a long time and work hard. For the kings only grant it sparingly, and only to those who by their services or their skill in affairs have arrived at the stage of deserving it. In having this rate of pay accorded to you, they give you also the title of Omera (*Umara*) – that is noble.' However, in actual practice racial considerations played important role in promotions. Unflinching loyalty was yet another consideration.

**Check Your Progress-2**

- 1) Define *zat* and *sawar* rank.

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- 2) What were the three classes of *mansabdars*?

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**8.4.4 Maintenance of Troops and Payment**

*Mansabdars* were asked to present their contingents for regular inspection and physical verification. The job of inspection was performed by the *mir bakhshi's* department. It was done by a special procedure. It was called *dagh-o-chehra*. All the horses presented for inspection by a particular noble were branded with a specific pattern to distinguish these from those of other nobles through a seal (*dagh*). The physical description of troops (*chehra*) was also recorded. This way the possibility of presenting the same horse or troop for inspection was greatly reduced. This was rigorously followed. We come across a number of cases where a reduction in rank was made for non-fulfilment of obligation of maintaining

specified contingents. Abdul Hamid Lahori in his book *Badshahnama* mentions that under Shah Jahan it was laid down that if a *mansabdar* was posted in the same province where he held *jagir*, he had to muster one-third of the contingents of his *sawar* rank. In case he was posted outside, he had to muster one-fourth. If posted in Balkh and Samarqand, he had to maintain one-fifth.

The scale of salary was fixed for the *zat* rank, but one rank had no arithmetical or proportionate relationship with the other. In other words, the salary did not go up or go down proportionately.

The table given below shows the salary for the *zat* rank per month during Akbar's period. (Please note that under Akbar, *zat* rank above 5000 was given only to the princes. In the last years of Akbar, the only noble who got the rank of 7000 *zat* was Raja Man Singh.)

### Pay for *Zat* rank

<i>Zat</i> Rank	Class I (Rs.)	Class II (Rs.)	Class III (Rs.)
7000	45000	–	–
5000	30000	29000	28000
4000	22000	21800	21600
3000	17000	16800	16700
2000	12000	11900	11800
1000	8200	8100	8000

The salary for the *sawar* rank was the sum total of the remuneration given to each trooper which was fixed and uniformally applicable, whatever the number of the *sawar* rank might be. In the time of Akbar, the rate of payment was determined by a number of factors such as the number of horses per trooper (presented for *dagh*), the breeds of the horses etc. The rates fluctuated between Rs. 25 to 15 per month.

#### Month Scale

The *mansabdars* were generally paid through revenue assignments (*jagirs*; for details on see Unit 9). The biggest problem here was that the calculation was made on the basis of the expected income (*jama*) from the *jagir* during one year. It was noticed that the actual revenue collection (*hasil*) always fell short of the estimated income. In such a situation, the *mansabdar's* salaries were fixed by a method called month-scales. For example, if a *jagir* yielded only half of the *jama*, it was called *shashmaha* (six-monthly). If it yielded only one-fourth, it was considered *sihmaha* (3 monthly). The month-scale was applied to cash salaries also.

There were deductions from the sanctioned pay. The largest deductions were from the Deccanis, who had to pay a fourth part (*chauthai*). There were other deductions known as *khurak dawwah* (fodder for beasts) belonging to the Emperor. Those who received cash (*naqd*), two *dams* in a rupee were deducted (*do-dami*). Often there were fines (*jarimana*) imposed for various reasons. With the reduction of salaries, there was thus a definite decline in the income of the nobles.

The distribution of the revenue resources of the Empire among the ruling class shows that 80% of the total revenue resources of the Empire was appropriated by 1,571 *mansabdars*. This shows how powerful the *mansabdars* were.

#### 8.4.5 System of Escheat

Many contemporary accounts, especially those of the European travellers, refer to the practice whereby the Emperor took possession of the wealth of the nobles

after their death. The practice is known as escheat (*zabt*). The reason was that the nobles often took loan from the state which remained unpaid till their death. It was duty of the *khan saman* (see **Unit 7**) to take over the nobles' property and adjust the state demand (*mutalaba*), after which the rest of the property was given to the heirs or sometimes distributed by the Emperor among the heirs himself without any regard for the Islamic inheritance laws. It seems that in most cases it depended on the will of the Emperor. Sometimes the state insisted on escheating the entire wealth. In 1666, Aurangzeb issued a *farman* that after the death of a noble without heir, his property would be deposited in the state treasury. This was confirmed by another *farman* in 1691 which also instructed the state officers not to attach the property of the nobles whose heirs were in government service because the latter could be asked to pay the *mutalaba*.

#### 8.4.6 Composition of *Mansabdars*

Despite the theoretical position that *mansabdari* was open to all, the Mughals, in practice, considered heredity as an important factor. It appears that the *khanzads* (house-born; descendants of *mansabdar*) had the first claim. Out of a total number of 575 *mansabdars* holding the rank of 1000 and above during the reign of Aurangzeb, the *khanzads* numbered about 272 (roughly 47%). Apart from the *khanzads*, a number of *mansabdars* were recruited from the *zamindars* (chieftains). Out of 575 *mansabdars* in 1707, there were 81 *zamindars*. The Mughals also welcomed Persian, Chagatai, Uzbeks as well as the Deccanis in the *mansabdari*. Certain racial groups were well entrenched. They were the Turanis (Central Asians), Iranis, Afghans, Indian Muslims (Shaikhzadas), Rajputs, Marathas and the Deccanis, the last two were recruited by Aurangzeb on larger scale due to military reasons.

#### Check Your Progress-3

1) What was month scale?

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2) Why was the system of *do aspa sih aspa* adopted?

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3) What do you understand by system of escheat?

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### 8.5 SUMMARY

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Delhi Sultans possessed 'standing army' which was centrally recruited and centrally paid. Sultanate army organization was heavily influenced by the

Mongol army organization and was based on ‘indirect command’. Mughal army organization was also influenced by decimal system; however, it was based on ‘direct command’. The key to the Mughal army organization was the Mughal *mansab* system. *Mansabdari* and *jagirdari* were the two main institutions of the Mughal Empire, which embraced both civil and military sectors of administration. The system was developed to create a centralised administrative system as well as creating a large force. *Mansabdars* and their large forces were used to expand the empire and administer it effectively. The main features of *mansab* system were as follows:

- *Mansabdars* held dual ranks – *zat* and *sawar*, the former indicated the status of the officer in the administrative hierarchy, and which also determined the personal pay. The latter denoted the contingent they were expected to maintain.
- *Mansabdars* were divided into 3 classes on the basis of the ratio between their *zat* and *sawar* ranks.
- The salaries and obligation of maintaining troops were governed by a definite set of rules which underwent changes from time to time.

For revenue purposes all the land was divided into two – the *jagir* and *khalisa*. The land revenue collected from the *khalisa* went to the royal treasury while that from the *jagir* to *mansabdars*. *Mansabdars* were paid through the assignment of *jagirs*.

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## 8.6 KEYWORDS

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<b>Barawurdi</b>	Under Akbar the advance paid to <i>mansabdars</i> for maintenance of troops was called <i>barawurdi</i> . From the reign of Jahangir onwards it was used for regular payment given to <i>mansabdars</i> for the maintenance of troops
<b>Khanazad</b>	The sons and close kinsmen of persons who were already holding positions in the nobility
<b>Khurak-dawab</b>	Fodder allowance for animals
<b>Mashrut</b>	The conditional rank given to nobles
<b>Talab-Khasa</b>	The personal pay of the nobles
<b>Tabinan</b>	The contingent maintained by nobles
<b>Umara</b>	Plural of <i>amir</i> i.e. noble

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## 8.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Section 8. 2
- 2) See Section 8. 3
- 3) See Section 8. 3

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) *Zat* indicated the personal pay of the *mansabdar* while *sawar* indicated the number of troops to be maintained. See Sub-section 8.4.1
- 2) The *mansabdars* were categorised into three classes on the basis of their *zat* and *sawar* ranks. See Sub-section 8.4.2

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Month scale was devised to bridge the gap between the estimated income and actual income (net realisation of revenue) of the *mansabdar*. See Sub-section 8.4.4
- 2) This system was adopted to raise the *sawar* rank of *mansabdars* without disturbing the *zat* rank. See sub-section 8.4.4
- 3) Through the system of escheat the Mughal state used to take control of the assets of the deceased noble. For details see Sub-section 8.4.5

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## 8.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## 8.9 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Mansabdari System - I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpQX7Ke8nAQ>

### Mansabdari System - II

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqbJCUJi\\_Ak](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqbJCUJi_Ak)

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## UNIT 9 IQTA AND JAGIR\*

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### Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 *Iqta* System
  - 9.2.1 What were *Iqtas*?
  - 9.2.2 *Iqta* System in Operation
  - 9.2.3 *Iqta* and the Dispersal of Resources among the Ruling Class
- 9.3 *Jagir* System
  - 9.3.1 Early Phase
  - 9.3.2 Organization of *Jagir* System
  - 9.3.3 Various Types of *Jagirs*
  - 9.3.4 Management of *Jagirs*
- 9.4 Summary
- 9.5 Keywords
- 9.6 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises
- 9.7 Suggested Readings
- 9.8 Instructional Video Recommendations

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### 9.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this Unit, we will discuss the *iqta* and *jagir* systems. After reading this Unit, you will be able to know the:

- basic features of *iqta* system under the Delhi Sultans,
- changes introduced in *iqta* system during the 14<sup>th</sup> century,
- the main features and working of *jagirdari*, and
- the various types of *jagirs*.

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### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

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The territorial expansion and consolidation of the Sultanate was a process which continued throughout the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. It involved varying kinds of control in terms of territories: those brought under direct administration and those which paid tribute and remained semi-autonomous. The expansion of the Sultanate and the difficulties involved in administering areas that were far away from the centre shaped different kinds of control. The most important problem of the Sultanate in its early stages, and even later, was to consolidate the conquered territories. The Turks brought with them the institution of the *iqtas* which helped in the centralization of authority to a great extent. As greater centralization was sought to be effected, changes could be seen in the institution of the *iqta*.

Under the Mughals the payment to the Mughal bureaucracy was done largely in the form of assignment of *jagirs*. In the reign of Aurangzeb alone out of the

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total *jamadami* (estimated revenue) of 924 crores of *dams* 724 crores were reserved for *paibaqi* (land reserved for *jagir* assignments; but not yet assigned). The *jagirs* (lands) so assigned (whole *pargana* or a part) were equal to the pay claims of a noble/*mansabdar*. Thus it was essential that there should be balance between the *jama* (estimated revenue) and *hasil* (actual revenue collected) of the revenue claims. However, you will find that this was not always so that is why the empire faced a 'crisis' and Mughal emperors had to bring in modifications in the working of the *jagirs*.

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## 9.2 IQTA SYSTEM

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The new rulers brought with them the *iqta* system that combined the two functions of revenue collection and distribution without immediately endangering the unity of the political structure. The *iqta* was a territorial assignment and its holder was called the *muqti* or the *wali*.

### 9.2.1 What were *Iqtas*?

The initial Turkish conquests in the early 13th century displaced many local chiefs (whom the contemporary sources refer to as *rai* and *rana*). In order to consolidate, the Turkish rulers made revenue assignments (*iqta*), in lieu of cash to their nobles (*umara*). The assignees (known as *muqti* and *wali*) collected revenue from these areas, defrayed their own expenses, paid the troops maintained by them and sent the surplus (*fawazil*) to the centre. *Iqta* is an Arabic word and the institution had been in force in the early Islamic world as a form of reward for services to the State. It was used in the Caliphate administration as a way of financing operations and paying civil and military officers. The grant of *iqta* did not imply a right to the land nor was it hereditary though the holders of *iqta* tended to acquire hereditary rights in Firuz Tughlaq's reign. These revenue assignments were transferable, the *iqta*-holder being transferred from one region to another every three or four years. Therefore, *iqta* should not be equated with the fief of medieval feudal Europe, which were hereditary and non-transferable. The assignments could be large (a whole province or a part). Assignments given to nobles carried administrative, military and revenue collecting responsibilities. Thus, provincial administration was headed by the *muqti* or *wali*. He had to maintain an army composed of horsemen and foot soldiers. The classical definition of the *iqta* system has been given by Nizam-ul Mulk Tusi, a Seljuq statesman of the century:

They (the *muqtis*) should know that their right over the subjects is only to take the rightful amount of money or perquisite (*mal-i haqq*) in a peaceful manner... the life, property and the family of the subject should be immune from any harm, the *muqtis* have no right over them; if the subject desires to make a direct appeal to the Sultan, the *muqti* should not prevent him. Every *muqti* who violates these laws should be dismissed and punished... the *muqtis* and *walis* are so many superintendents over them as the king is superintendent over other *muqti*... After three or four years, the *amilis* and the *muqtis* should be transferred so that they may not be too strong.

A passage from Nizamul Mulk Tusi's *Siyasatnama* on the rights of the *muqti*. English translation from A.B.M. Habibullah, *The Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1976, pp. 209-10.

Thus, according to Tusi's definition, the *iqta* was a revenue assignment that the *muqti* held at the pleasure of the Sultan. The *muqti* was entitled to collect in proper manner the land tax and other taxes due to the Sultan, he had no further claims on the person, women and children, land or other possessions of the cultivators. The *muqti* had certain obligations to the Sultan, the chief being the maintenance of troops and furnishing them at call to the Sultan. The *iqta* was a transferable charge and the transfers of *iqtas* were frequent.



Ilutmish (1210-36) is reported to have assigned in lieu of salaries “small iqtas” in the Doab to the soldiers of the Sultan's army (*hashm qalb*). Balban (1266-86) made a half-hearted attempt at their resumption without success. It was Alauddin Khalji (1296-1316) who established firmly the practice of payment of salaries in cash to the soldiers. A practice that was again altered by Firuz Tughlaq who began to assign villages to soldiers in lieu of their salaries. These assignments were called *wajh* and the holders *wajhdars*. These assignments tended to be not only permanent but hereditary.

### 9.2.2 Iqta System in Operation

In the early years of the foundation of the Sultanate, neither the revenue income of these assignments was known nor the size of the contingent of the assignee was fixed. However, certain modifications and mild attempts at introducing central control to some extent were made by Balban (1266-86) when he appointed a *khwaja* (accountant) with each *muqti*: this may imply that the Sultanate now was trying to find out the actual income of the *iqta* and *muqti*'s expenditure.

The real intervention in the *iqta* administration came under Alauddin Khalji. The central finance department (*diwan-i wizarat*) perhaps prepared some sort of an estimated revenue income from each *iqta*. The audit was stringent, punishments severe, transfers frequent and enhancements (*taufir*) were often made in the estimated revenue income of the *iqta* on various pretexts.

Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq (1320-25) introduced some moderation. The enhancements in the estimated revenue income by the central finance ministry was not to be more than 1/10 or 1/11<sup>th</sup> annually. The *muqtis* were allowed to keep 1/10<sup>th</sup> to 1/20<sup>th</sup> in excess of their sanctioned salaries.

The attempt at central intervention reached its climax during the time of Muhammad Tughlaq (1325-51). In several cases, a *wali* and an *amir* was appointed to the same territory. The *wali* was to collect revenue and, after deducting his pay, to send the rest to the treasury. The *amir* or commander had nothing to do with revenue realization and received his own salary and the salary of his troops in cash, presumably from the local treasury. During Muhammad Tughlaq's reign the troops of the *iqta* holders were paid in cash by the state's treasury. This possibility infuriated the commanders and created political problems for Muhammad Tughlaq. Firuz Tughlaq, therefore, decided to make concessions. He enhanced the cash salaries of the nobles and got new estimates of revenue (*mahsul*) prepared which was designated *jama*.

There was no attempt to restore central control by the successors of Firuz. Under the Lodis (1451-1426), the administrative charges and revenue assignments were combined together and these were no more called *iqta* but were simply called *sarkars* and *parganas*. A system of sub-assignments came in vogue particularly under Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517). The main assignees used to sub-assign portions of their assignment to their subordinates who in turn made sub-assignments to their soldiers.

#### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) How will you define *iqta*?

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2) What changes were introduced in the *iqta* system by Muhammad Tughlaq?

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3) Mark (✓) against the correct and (x) against the wrong statements given below:

- a) Alauddin Khalji allowed the *muqtis* to keep the excess income from their *iqtas*. (    )
- b) Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq handed over *iqtas* to revenue-farmers. (    )
- c) The *jama* under Firuz Tughlaq meant the estimated revenue income. (    )

### 9.2.3 *Iqta* and the Dispersal of Resources among the Ruling Class

The income of the Sultanate was primarily and largely derived from the land revenue. *Khalisa* was the term for the land whose revenue was exclusively meant for the Sultan himself, while the revenue from the land, called *iqta*, was assigned by the state to the nobles. The *muqtis* or *iqta*-holders were required to furnish military assistance to the Sultan in times of need, apart from maintaining law and order and collecting the revenue from their *iqta*.

These revenue assignments were generally non-hereditary and transferable. In fact, it was through the institution of *iqta* that the Sultan was able to control the nobles. The *muqti* collected land revenue from the peasants of his territory and defrayed therefrom his own salary as well as that of his soldiers. The demand to send the excess amounts (*fawazil*) to the *diwan-i wizarat* was symbolic of the trend towards centralization. The *muqti* had to submit accounts of their realisation and expenditure to the treasury. Auditing was severe to prevent fraud.

Alauddin Khalji also took other measures for controlling his nobility. Regular reports from the *barids* (intelligence officers) kept him posted with the actions of the nobles. A check was kept on their socialising, and marriages between them could not take place without the permission of the Sultan. These measures have to be seen against the background of recurrent incidents of rebellions in which the *muqtis* utilised and appropriated the resources of their areas, to rebel or to make a bid for the throne. This explains the principle of transfer also. Under Muhammad Tughlaq (1325-1351), the nobles were given *iqta* in lieu of cash salary but their troops were paid in cash by the treasury in contrast to the earlier period. These new fiscal arrangements and the greater control over assignments possibly contributed to the conflict between the Sultan and the nobles since they were deprived of the gains of the *iqta* management. However, during the reign of Firuz Tughlaq there was a general retreat from the practice of increased central authority over *iqta*. In practice, Firuz started granting *iqta* to the sons and heirs of *iqta*-holders. The long reign of Firuz Tughlaq comparatively witnessed few rebellions but it also saw the beginning of the disintegration and decentralisation. By the time of the Lodis (1451-1526), the *iqtadars* (now called *wajhdars*) do not seem to have been subject to constant transfers.

**Check Your Progress-2**

1) Write a note on *iqta*.

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2) What were the functions of the *wali* or *muqti*?

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3) What steps were taken to curb the powers of the *muqti* in the 14<sup>th</sup> century?

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4) Mark right (✓) or wrong (x) against the following statements:

- a) i) *Iqtas* were hereditary assignments. ( )
- ii) *Iqtas* were the personal property of the nobles. ( )
- iii) Generally *iqtas* were transferable revenue assignments. ( )
- iv) *Muqtis* were personal bodyguards of the Sultan. ( )
- v) *Muqtis* were religious teachers. ( )
- vi) *Muqtis* were governors to whom the revenue from the *iqtas* were assigned. ( )
- b) *Fawazil* was :
- i) Extra payment met to the nobles. ( )
- ii) Surplus revenue paid to the exchequer by the *iqtadars*. ( )
- iii) Revenue assigned in lieu of salary. ( )

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### 9.3 JAGIR SYSTEM

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We have seen that the revenue assignments made by the Delhi Sultans were termed *iqta* and its holder *iqtadar*. The system was developed to appropriate the surplus from the peasantry and distribute it among the nobles. This also included the administration of the area by the assignee. The Mughal Emperors, too, did the same. These assignments were given in lieu of cash salaries. The areas assigned were generally called *jagir*, and its holders *jagirdar*. Sometimes terms like '*iqta*'/'*iqta*'*adar*' and *tuyul*/*tuyuldar* were also used, but very sparingly. It must be made clear that it was not the land that was assigned, but the income/revenue from the land/area was given to the *jagirdars*. This system developed over a period of time and underwent many changes before stabilising. However, the basic framework was developed during Akbar's reign. Let us first study the early form of *jagir* system.

### 9.3.1 The Early Phase

Babur, after his conquest, restored to the former Afghan chieftains or conferred upon them assignment of approximately more than one-third of the conquered territories. The holders of such assignments (*wajh*) were known as *wajhdars* (*wajh* means remuneration). A fixed sum was assigned as *wajh* out of the total revenue of the area. The rest of the revenue of the territories was deemed to be a part of the *khalisa*. The *zamindars* continued in their respective areas, but in other conquered areas Babur ruled through *hakims* (governors). The same pattern perhaps continued under Humayun.

### 9.3.2 Organization of Jagir System

During Akbar's period all the territory was broadly divided into two: *khalisa* and *jagir*. The revenue from the first went to the Imperial treasury, and that from the *jagir* was assigned to *jagirdars* in lieu of their salary in cash (*naqd*) according to their rank. Some *mansabdars* got cash salary, and, hence, they were called *naqdi*. A few were given both *jagir* and cash. The bulk of the territory was assigned to *mansabdars* according to their rank. The estimated revenue was called *jama* or *jamadami* as it was calculated in *dam* (a small copper coin, 1/40<sup>th</sup> of the silver *rupaya* on the average). The *jama* included land revenue, inland transit duties, port customs and other taxes which were known as *sair jihat*. Another term used by the revenue officials was *hasil*, that is, the amount of revenue actually collected. You must understand these two terms – *jama* and *hasil* – which you will come across frequently. The revenue officials used yet another term, that is, *paibaqi*. This was applied to those areas whose revenue were yet to be assigned to *mansabdars*.

In the year 1596-97 of Akbar's reign, the *jama* of the *khalisa* in the provinces of Delhi, Awadh and Allahabad amounted to about a fourth of their total revenue. Under Jahangir, almost 9/10 of the territory was assigned in *jagir* and only 1/10 was available for the *khalisa* and the 'ratio even fell below five percent of that of the whole empire'. The ratio of *jagir* and *khalisa* kept fluctuating. Under Shah Jahan, it rose to one-eleventh and, by the 20<sup>th</sup> year, it was nearly one-seventh. The trend continued in the next reign; in the 10<sup>th</sup> year of Aurangzeb, the *jama* of the *khalisa* amounted to almost one-fifth of the total. However, in the later part of Aurangzeb's reign, there was a great pressure on the *khalisa* as the number of claimants for *jagir* increased with the increase of the number of *mansabdars*.

Another important feature of the *jagir* system was shifting of *jagir*-holders from one *jagir* to another for administrative reasons. This system of transfers checked the *jagirdars* from developing local roots. At the same time, its disadvantage was that it discouraged the *jagirdars* from taking long term measures for the development of their areas. They were merely interested in extracting as much revenue as possible in a short time.

### 9.3.3 Various Types of Jagirs

There were generally four types of revenue assignments:

- a) *jagirs*, which were given in lieu of pay, were known as *jagir tankha*;
- b) *jagirs* given to a person on certain conditions were called *mashrut jagirs*;
- c) *jagirs* which involved no obligation of service and were independent of rank were called *in'am jagirs*; and
- d) *jagirs* which were assigned to *zamindars* (chieftains) in their homelands, were called *watan jagirs*. Under Jahangir some Muslim nobles were given *jagirs* resembling to *watan jagir* called *al-tamgha*.

*Tankhwa jagirs* are transferable every three or four years, *watan jagirs* remained hereditary and non-transferable. Sometimes *watan jagir* was converted into *khalisa* for a certain period as Aurangzeb did in case of Jodhpur in 1679. When a *zamindar* or a tributary chief was made a *mansabdar*, he was given *jagir tankhwa*, apart from his *watan jagir*, at another place if the salary of his rank was more than the income from his *watan jagir*. Maharaja Jaswant Singh, holding *watan jagir* in Marwar, held *jagir tankha* in Hissar.

### 9.3.4 Management of Jagirs

The *jagirdar* was allowed to collect only authorised revenue (*mal wajib*) in accordance with the Imperial regulations. He employed his own officials (*karkun*) like *amil* (*amalguzar*), *fotadar* (treasurer), etc. who acted on his behalf.

The Imperial officials kept watch on the *jagirdars*. The *diwan* of the *suba* was supposed to prevent the oppression on the peasants by the *jagirdars*. From the 20th year of Akbar, *amin* was posted in each province to see that the *jagirdars* were following Imperial regulations regarding collection of revenue. The *faujdar* often helped the *jagirdar* to collect revenue whenever difficulties arose. It appears that from the period of Aurangzeb, bigger *jagirdars* were having *faujdari* powers, too.

#### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) Write two lines each on various types of *jagirs*.

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- 2) Why were *jagirdars* transferred?

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## 9.4 SUMMARY

We have studied how the need for maintaining a large army and maintaining an administrative apparatus shaped many of its institutions, such as the *iqta* and *jagir*. For revenue purposes all the land was divided into two – the *iqta/jagir* and *khalisa*. The land revenue collected from the *khalisa* went to the royal treasury while that from the *iqta/jagir* to *iqtdars/mansabdars*. *Iqtdars/mansabdars* were paid through the assignment of *iqta/jagir*. The *iqta/jagir* system as an institution was used to appropriate the surplus from the peasantry. At the same time it was used for distributing the revenue resources among the ruling classes. Of the four types of *jagirs* given to assignees, the *watan jagir* was a very effective way of absorbing Indian chieftains in the Mughal ruling class.

## 9.5 KEYWORDS

<i>Amir</i>	Officer
<i>Fawazil</i>	Surplus revenue
<i>Hasil</i>	Actual revenue
<i>Hashm-i qalb</i>	Central/royal cavalry
<i>Jama</i>	Estimated revenue

<b><i>Khalisa</i></b>	‘Crown’ (‘reserve’) land whose revenue was reserved for the Sultan’s treasury
<b><i>Wajhdar</i></b>	<i>Iqta</i> -holder
<b><i>Wali</i></b>	<i>Iqta</i> -holder

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## 9.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

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### Check Your Progress-1

- 1) See Sub-section 9.2.1
- 2) See Sub-section 9.2.2
- 3) a) ×      b) ×      c) ✓

### Check Your Progress-2

- 1) See Sub-sections 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.3
- 2) See Sub-sections 9.2.1, 9.2.2, 9.2.3
- 3) See Sub-section 9.2.3
- 4) a) i) ×      ii) ×      iii) ✓      iv) ×      v) ×      vi) ✓  
b) i) ×      ii) ✓      iii) ×

### Check Your Progress-3

- 1) See Sub-section 9.3.3 where four types of *jagirs* are discussed.
- 2) See Sub-section 9.3.2 *Jagirdars* were transferred to adjust the changes in their ranks and salaries. Besides, it was a method to discourage *jagirdars* from developing local roots in the areas under their jurisdictions.

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## 9.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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- Hasan, Ibn, (1936) *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
- Ray, Anuruddha, (1984) *Some Aspects of Mughal Administration* (Calcutta: Kalyani Publishers).
- Raychaudhuri, Tapan and Irfan Habib, (1982) *The New Cambridge Economic History of India*, Vol. I (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press).
- Saran, P., (1941) *The Provincial Administration under the Mughals [1526-1658]* (Allahabad: Kitabistan).
- Tripathi, R. P., (1985) *Rise and Fall of the Mughal Empire* (Allahabad: Central Book Depot).

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## 9.8 INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO RECOMMENDATIONS

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### Jagirdari System Part I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gggszz3I4bY>

### Jagirdari System Part II

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhqLVUGSsUY>