

AREA OF META DATA	CONTENT
THEME	Akbar and the Mansabdari System
SUBJECT	History
LINKAGE OF THEME WITH CHAPTERS(NAME)	Mughal Empire
CLASS/LEVEL	Class VII
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To explain the main features of the Mansabdari system under Akbar • To critically analyse the administrative structure of the Mughals.
DESCRIPTION	<p>The Mansabdari system was the core foundation of the administrative system of the Mughal Empire introduced mainly by Akbar in 1595-96 CE. The word mansab is of Arabic origin meaning rank or position. The system, hence, determined the rank of a government official. Every civil and military officer was given a ‘mansab’ and different numbers which could be divided by ten, were used for ranking officers. It was also meant for fixing the salaries and allowances of officers. The mansabdars of the Mughal Empire received their pay either in cash (naqd) or in the form of assignments of areas of land (jagir) from which they were entitled to collect the land revenue and all other taxes sanctioned by the emperor and therefore, the mansabdari system was also an integral part of the agrarian and the jagirdari system. Consequently, the numerical strength of the mansabdars and its composition during different periods materially influenced not</p>

	<p>only politics and administration but also the economy of the empire.</p> <p>The job of the mansabdars was to ensure the implementation of the imperial policy. Let's look at the mansabdari system as it evolved under the Great Mughals</p>
KEY WORDS	Amir, Amir -ul Umara, jagir, zat rank, sawar rank, mansab, watan jagir, zabti, jama, hasil
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JALLALUDDIN AKBAR 1555-1605



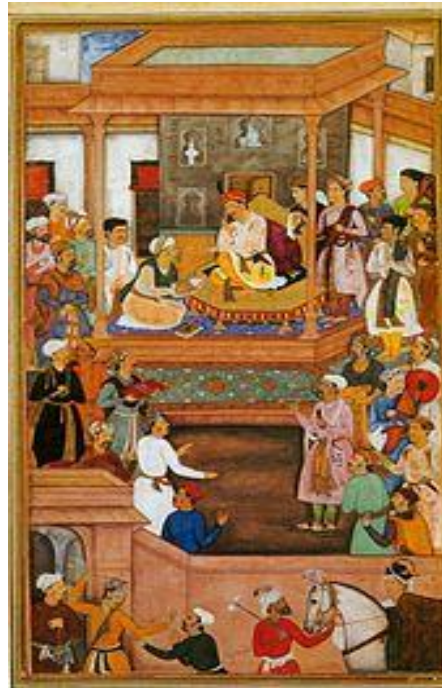
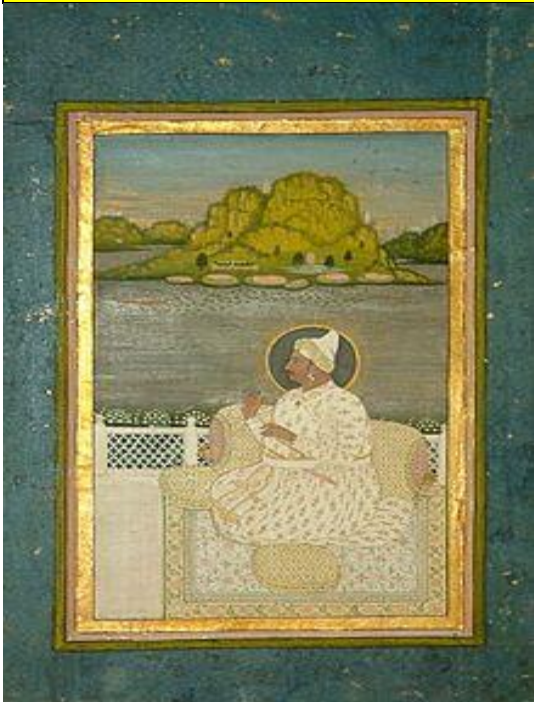
Late 16th century portrait of Akbar by Manohar

The system is believed to have originated in Mongolia. It was brought to India by Babur and was prevalent during the reign of Humayun as well. The credit for giving mansabdari system an institutional framework goes to Akbar who made it the basis of Mughal military organization and civil administration. The mansabdars formed the ruling group in the Mughal Empire. Almost the whole nobility, the bureaucracy as well as the military hierarchy, held mansabs. In practice there were 33 grades of mansabs mentioned by Abul Fazl in his book Akbarnama. During the early reign of Akbar, the lowest grade was ten and the highest was 5,000. Towards the end of the reign it was raised to 7,000. Higher mansabs were given to princes and Rajput rulers who accepted the suzerainty of the emperor.

What Did a Mansab Imply?

- (a) Salary of the officer
- (b) Status of the officer
- (c) Number of soldiers, horses and elephants etc., maintained by an officer.

d) Salary of the officer.



Raja Todar Mal, Finance Minister during Akbar's Reign

Abul Fazl presenting Akbar Nama to Akbar

MAIN FEATURES

The king himself appointed the mansabdars. He could enhance the mansab, lower it or remove it.

2. A mansabdar could be asked to perform any civil or military service.

3. For every ten cavalry men, the mansabdar had to maintain twenty horses, for horses had to be provided rest while on a march and replacements were necessary in times of war.

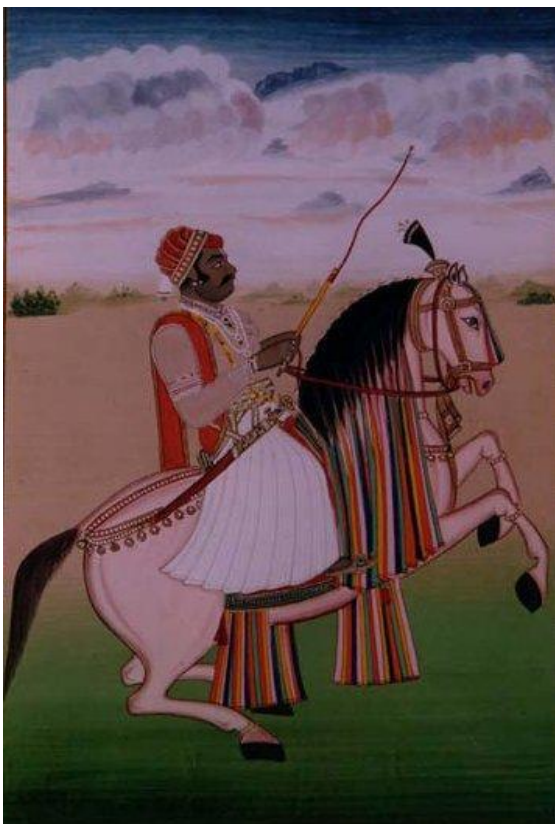
4. A record was kept of the description ('huliya') of each horseman under a mansabdar and of branding ('dag') horses to prevent corruption.

5. The mansab or rank was designated by dual representation - one by personal rank (called zat) and the other by cavalry rank (called sawar). Every mansabdar was given the rank of both zat and sawar.

SALARY OF MANSABDARS

Mansabdars were paid either in cash (naqd) or in the form of assignments of areas of land (jagir). The revenue that was generated through their jagir was handed over to them and the same was deducted from their salary. The mansabdar paid the salary of cavalymen that he maintained out of his salary. Those who received pay in cash were known as naqdi and those paid through assignments of jagirs were called jagirdars.

It is noteworthy that most of the Mansabdars were foreigners or were of Central Asian, Turk, Persian and Afghan origin though there was also small number of Indians who also got appointments as mansabdars.



Raja Man Singh



Bhagwan Das

Raja Man Singh, the first Mansabdar of 7000 zat was not a minister and still enjoyed a higher rank than Abul Fazl who was a minister in the court of Emperor. Bhagwan Das, another Rajput mansabdar with 5000 zat, also enjoyed a privileged position in the Mansabdari system of the empire.

CONTROL OF MANSABDARS

The jagirs were by nature transferable and no mansabdar was allowed to retain the same jagir for a long period. The watan-jagirs were the only exception to the general system of jagir transfers. The watan-jagirs were normally granted to those zamindars who were already in possession of their watans (homelands) before the expansion of the Mughal Empire. Some of the Rajput mansabdars received watan jagirs.

The mansab was not hereditary and it automatically lapsed after the death or dismissal of the mansabdar. This system was the law of escheat (zabti). The son of a mansabdar, if he was granted a mansab, had to begin afresh. This measure had been introduced so that the mansabdars did not exploit the people in a high-handed manner.

ACTIVITY 1

Tick the Correct answer

CIET: Correct answer should blink in green and Wrong Answer should show a 'Try Again '

1. The mansabdari system is believed to have originated in

- a) Mongolia
- b) Persia
- c) Kabul
- d) Uzbekistan

Key (a)

2. The credit of giving it an institutional framework belongs to

- a) Babur

- b) Humayun
- c) Akbar
- d) Jahangir

Key (c)

3. The 'mansab' of a noble implied the following:

- (a) Salary of the officer
- (b) Status of the officer
- (c) Number of soldiers, horses and elephants etc., maintained by an officer
- d) All the above

Key (d)

4. *Zat* and *Sawar* symbolised

- a) Personal rank and cavalry rank
- b) Official position and number of horses to be maintained
- c) *zat* remuneration and rupees two per horse for *sawar* maintenance
- d) All the above

Key (d)

5. The number of categories of mansabdars mentioned by Abul Fazl in his book *Akbarnama* were :

- a) 11
- b) 22
- c) 33
- d) 44

Key (c)

ACTIVITY 2

Indicate whether true or false

CIET: TRUE OR FALSE SHOULD BE USED AS A POP UP

1. The word mansab is of Arabic origin meaning rank or position.

True / False

Answer- True

2. The mansabdari system is believed to have originated in India.

True / False

Answer - False

3. Almost the whole nobility, the bureaucracy as well as the military hierarchy, held mansabs.

True / False

Answer – True

4. The office of the mansab was hereditary.

True / False

Answer – False

5. Mansabdars were paid only in cash.

True / False

Answer – False

