

Mansabdari System

Under the Mughal rule, the Mughal's bureaucratic administration was based on Mansabdari System. The officers of the Mansabdari system (noble who joined the Mughal service) were called Mansabdars in the Mughal administration.

The Mughal Emperor appointed the mansabdars for military and civil posts. The term Mansab means rank, status, or position. Concerning the Mughal empire, the term Mansab refers to the rank of Mansabdar according to the official hierarchy in the Mughal Administration Structure. According to the records, there were 66 mansabdars' grades during Akbar's rule. Perhaps only 33 mansabs of them were working in practice.

Origin of Mansabdari System

The origins of the the Mansabdari System date back to when Changez Khan organized his army based on units. He had 10,000 highest and 10 lower divisions, and all these units' commanders were called Khans. But, the Mansabdari System in North India was introduced by Babur. However, Akbar was the first Mughal ruler to institutionalize the Mansabdari System in the civil administration and military set up in 1571. He introduced the concept of Zat and Sawar. Instead of using the term Mansabdar, he used the word Wajahdar which could be transferred between civil and military sections per the Emperor's orders. During Akbar's rule, there were 1800 Mansabdar which were tremendously increased to 14500 during Aurangzeb's rule.

How were Mansabdars recruited?

The Mansabdars were recruited and promoted by the Mughal Emperors. However, Akbar appointed the Mansabdars based on Mirbakshi's suggestion. There was no discrimination based on religion or race for their enrollment in government jobs. The individual wishing to join the Mansabdar system had to file a petition through a noble. The particular noble, then, presents Emperor with a tajwid.

Structure of Mansabdar System

Two ranks represented mansab during Akbar's empire-

- Sawar- Sawar represents the Cavalry Rank. It symbolizes the horse and cavalrymen maintained by Sawar.
- Zat- Zat described the rank and salary of the Mansabdar in the administrative system.

There were three categories of Mansabdars-

- First Class Mansabdar- The first class mansabdars had an equal number of Zat and Sawar.
- Second Class Mansabdar- In this, the number of Zat is double the number of Sawar.
- Third Class Mansabdar- When the number of Sawar is less as compared to the half of Zat, it's considered third class mansabdar.

Mansabdari System – Ranking of Administrative Officers

The ranking/ hierarchy of the Administrative officers in the Mansabdari System is as under-

- Amir- The officials with a rank of 1000 or below were called Amir.
- Great Amir (Amir-al-Kabir)- The officials with a rank between 1000 and 5000.
- Amir of Amirs- The title of Amir-al-Umara was given to the Mansabdars. They have a rank above 5000.
- There were 10 lowest ranked Mansab, and 10,000 highest ranked Mansabs during Akbar's rule.

Mansabdars – Salary (Cash & Land)

Their respective rank determined Mansabdar's salary in the Mansabdari System. Jagirdars receive the payments through the land and have the right to collect land revenue. On the other

hand, Naqdi receives compensation through cash. The mansabdar's post was not subjected to hereditary rule.

Mansabdars – Military Responsibilities

The military responsibilities of Mansabdars are as follows-

- The Mansabdars brought cavalymen for their review and registration.
- The maintenance of the specific number of Cavalymen and horses was the responsibility of Mansabdars.

Fall of Mansabdari System

There were 29 mansabdars with the rank of Amir of Amirs during Akbar's rule, and this number got a tremendous boost during Aurangzeb's rule. There were 79 such mansabdars. However, this increase in number created a fire for the crisis between Jagidari and the agrarian crisis. This crisis became a significant reason for the fall of the Mansabdari System.

It was during Akbar's rule that Mansabdari System worked perfectly. The revenues collected from the Jagirs could fill the Emperor's treasures and the salary of Mansabdars. In the later stage, there was a shortage of Jagirs. As a result, their size in the system shrank during the Aurangzeb's reign. Thus, resulting at the end of the system.