

MANSABDARI SYSTEM

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Origin-

- It was a system of army and civil services, introduced by Akbar.
- It replaced the Jagirdari system.
- This system was the pillar of the Mughal administration.
- Akbar was not the originator of this system, he merely introduced it.

Meaning of the Mansabdari System

- 'Mansab' is an Arabic word, that meant rank or status of a person.
- It was also meant for the fixation of allowances and salaries of officers.
- Abul Fazl mentions 66 grades of mansabdars, but in practice there were 33 mansabs.
- The lowest grade was 10 and the highest was 7000.
- Higher mansabs were given to the princesses and Rajput rulers who accepted suzerainty of Akbar.

‘Zat’ and ‘Sawar’

- During later year of his reign, Akbar introduced the rank of ‘zat’ and ‘sawar’ in the system.
- According to Blochmann, every mansabdar had to maintain as many as soldiers as were indicated by his rank of ‘zat’. Whereas, the rank of sawars indicated the number of horses among them.
- According to Dr. R.P Tripathi, the rank of sawar was given to mansabdars to fix up their additional allowances.
- Abdul Aziz is of the opinion, that while the rank of zat fixed the number of other soldiers under a mansabdars, the rank of sawar fixed the number of his horsemen.
- Dr. A.L Srivastava shares the same opinion.

Main Features

- The king himself appointed the mansabdars, he could enhance the mansab, lower down it or remove it.
- The mansabdar could be asked to perform any type of civil or military service.
- Mansabdar was paid his salary in cash.
- The salary of the soldier under a mansabdar, was added to his personal salary. Sometimes, for the payment of the salaries to the soldiers, a Jagir was allotted to the mansabdar.
- This was not a hereditary system.
- A mansabdar had to maintain out of his salary, a stipulated quota of horses, elephants, camels, mules and carts.
- A record of the description, 'huliya' of each horsemen under the mansabdar and of branding horse, 'dar' was kept to prevent corruption.
- Later on Jahangir and Shahjahan made some changes to this system.

Merits of the System

- Removal of the ill effects of the jagirdari system.
- Increased military efficiency.
- Extra revenue to the state.
- Qualitative selection.

Demerits of the System

- Soldiers were more loyal to the mansabdars than the emperor.
- This system proved to be very expensive.
- Dishonesty and corruption crept into the system.
- Caste system diseased the mansabdari system.
- Luxury and lavishness led to moral degradation which later on casted an adverse effect on the Mughal administration.

CONCLUSION

- In a monarchy, the emperor is the pivot of the administration.
- His strength and might defines the efficacy of the system.
- Therefore, the merits and demerits of any system rises and decays with the stature of the emperor.