

Putrescence in military administration and reforms introduced by Akbar

Abstract:-

Akbar was not only a great conqueror but also an able, wise, and efficient administrator. He introduced various reforms in all the branches of administration but the most important reform introduced by him was the Mansabdari system. The Mansabdari system plays a key role in the consolidation of the Mughal Empire. As we know during the reign of Akbar much greater part of the Mughal Army consisted of mansabdars and their followers. So the excellence of the Mughal Army, thus, mainly depended upon the leaders selected under the Mansabdari system and the soliders enrolled and presented by them. According to Machlavelli, it is a nature Phenomena that every Human-being is selfish, wicked and egoistic and same was the case of these mansabdars. They even were selfish and tried to fulfill their desired ends by following the way of false muster. False muster was an evil from which the Mughal Army suffered very much. To check this, Akbar introduced the System of branding the horses in the state employ and of keeping descriptive rolls of troopers and their horses.

Keywords:-

Mansab, Zat, Suwar, Tainatiyan, Alif, Tabinan, Dag-i-mohali, Chihrah etc.

Introduction:-

The word "Mansab" is an Arabic word which means rank, position, status or an office and hence Mansabdar an officer or holder of the rank. Mansab was not a term confined solely to military service but every man in state employ above the position of a common soldier or messenger whatever the nature of his job-civil or military received a Mansab. The Mansabdars were generally administrative officers engaged in civil work but each of them had to furnish the number of troopers of which he held the Mansab. The Mansabdari system, therefore, implies that civil officerwere bound to render military services when they were called upon to do so.

Akbar was the architect of theMansabdari system, an institution of political and economic significance that plays a critical role in the consolidation of the Mughal Empire. The Mansabdari system introduced by him was a unique system which did not have any exact parallel outside India. Under this system every officer was assigned a rank. The lowest rank (Mansab) during the reign of Akbar being a Command of ten (10) (DahiBashi) the highest Mansab being a command of 10,000 (ten Thousand)(Dahazarai). At the beginning according to AbulFazal, Princes of the royal blood received higher mansabs, but towards the end of his reign we also get many examples of higher mansabs received by other persons as well. The

mansabdari system under Akbar developed gradually. At first there was only one rank i,emansab. But later on the ranks were divided into two –zat and Suwar. The word zat means personal. It fixed the personal status of a person and also salary due to him. While the word Suwar means horseman that a mansabdar was required to maintain for the service of the state.

As we know that Akbar himself remained at the helm of affairs of the state and so all the powers remained in his hands so far as the recruitment, promotions and demotions of the Mansabdars were concerned. The mansabdars appointed by him were called tainatiyan (appointed) while as their contingents were called Tabinan (followers). As already mentioned in the abstract that cavalry was Principal arm of the Mughal Army and the mansabdars provided the overwhelming proposition of it. So the excellence of the Mughal cavalry,thus,entirely depended upon the leaders selected under the Mansabdari system and the soliders enrolled and presented by them. For efficiency purpose Akbar has issued a Farman that the contingents of the mansabdars were mustered at stated times. But hehad faced much trouble with these musters as dishonest and false ways were quite common. According to Machiavelli it is a natural Phenomena that every human-being is selfish, wicked and egoistic and same was the case of these mansabdars. They even were selfish, wicked and egoistic and desired to fulfill their dreams by means of false muster. False muster was an evil from which the Mughal Army Suffered much heavily. As a result of it the conditions of the soliders got deteriorated on the on hand while on the other hand the mansabdars enjoyed the fruits of theirMansab (rank) without maintaing the full quota of their soliders. Baduni had thrown ample light on the false muster. According to him, the mansabdars put most of their own servants,dhobis and kins into soliders uniforms brought them to the musterand performed each and everything according to norm. but whenthey got their jagris they gave leave to their servants,dhobis and kins and when a new emergency arose they mustered as many borrowed soliders as were required and sent them again when they had served their purpose. In this way the income and expenditure of the mansabdars remained in statusque dust fell into the plates of the helpless soldiers so much so that they remained no longer fit for anything. When Akbar knows about these evil practices he immediately introduced various reforms. Among these reforms the most important one was Dag-i-mohali.Dagi-i-mohali was not a new practice in India.It was first introduced by Ala-Ud-Din Khiliji and afterwards The law under Sher Shah Suri. The question here arises why did Ala-ud-Din Khiliji introduced the system of Dag and what does it means. The answer of the first question lies in the fact that the main objective of Ala-Ud-Din Kahliji behind this reform was to check the forgery of nobles and soliders. However the reform proved quite fruitful as he succeeded in maintaining a large and efficient army. So Akbar followed the footsteps of Ala-Ud-Din Khiliji and reintroduced the system of Dag-i-mohali.Dag-i-mohali simply means that horses were branded with imperial marks. During the reign of Akbar Dag (brand) was first put on the right side of the neck of the horse and it was made in the shape of ((۳but after

some time it was made in the shape of two alifs intersecting each other at right angles but the heads of the alif being made heavy as shown as(+). However finally numerals were introduced which plan best frustrates fraudulent practices. They make iron numerals by which all indistinctness is avoided. These are put on the thigh of the horse. Formerly each horse on being mustered for the first time was marked with a (1), second time with a (2), third time with a (3) So on. Later on Akbar ordered that separate numerals should be used for the horses of the princes, the provincial governors and also for other high officials who were inclined to the court. The branding system, thus, proved very fruitful as it not only checked the fraudulent exchanges but also makes it possible for state to employ only superior quality of horses.

Badaoni further stated that it was fixed that every amir should commence as a commander of twenty (Bisti) and be ready with his followers to mount guard, carry messages as had been ordered and when according to rule he had brought the horses of his twenty troopers to be branded he was then to be made a commander of 100 (sadi) or of more. They were like wise to keep elephants, horses and camels in proportion to their command according to the same rule. When they had brought to the muster their new contingents complete they were to be promoted according to their merits and circumstances to the post of a commander of 1000 (hazari), 2000 (duhazari) etc. and if they failed to maintain their required quota then they were demoted as a mark of punishment. There were also elaborate rules for periodical inspections. Every mansabdar who held a Jagir had to present his horses after three years and if he failed to do so his Jagir was diminished to the extent of 1/10th as a mark of punishment. The officer who draw his salary in cash had to renew his dag every eighteen months. Grandees whose Jagirs lie in the farflung areas were given a concession. The gap between the two dags was not to exceed twelve years in any case. Yet after a gap of six years they lost 1/10th of their Jagir. So the free concession truly extended to six years only. And if a mansabdar has been promoted to a higher rank and three years has gone since the muster he draws only his increased Zat salary but their extra horsemen can not get any salary until it has passed through the dag. The second and latter musters were technically known as Dag-I mukarar (repetition of dag)

Thus we can say that the dag system introduced by Akbar proved very fruitful as it curbed the evil practices in army administration. It makes the Mughal cavalry quite strong and efficient. As a result of it Akbar was able to expand his empire and maintain his hold over it without facing much difficulty.

The second important reform introduced by Akbar was the Chihrah system. Chihrah system was not a new practice. It was also first introduced by Ala-ud-din Khiliji. Here again Akbar followed the footsteps of Ala-Ud-Din Khiliji and issued an order that the descriptive rolls (chihrah or hulya) of the mansabdars and soldiers should be registered to avoid

fraudulent practices. Thus a descriptive roll of the new mansabdar was first of all drawn up showing his name, his father's name his tribe, his caste, his colour, his dwelling, his peculiar marks etc. All these things were noted. Similarly, also a descriptive roll of the every soldier was drawn up showing his name, his father's name, his complexion, his caste, his peculiar marks etc. were all noted. In addition to these, the Chihra-i-Aspan (descriptive roll of horses) was also maintained. It was an elaborate description of the horses or horse, setting forth in detail the class to which the horse belonged in a highly elaborate system of classification and describing minutely the marks on the horse's body. But in the case of the horses the descriptive rolls were not a sufficient safeguard against fraud. So the imperial brand, i.e. dag was put on the horse as already mentioned.

This reform also proved quite fruitful. As a result of it the nobles would not lend each other the men to make up their quota at the time of inspection. In other words we can say that it prevented the mansabdars from the ways of false musters as they were in the habit of putting their own servants and attendants into soldiers' uniform brought them to the musters and performed each and everything according to the norm.

Akbar had ordered that it was the duty of Bitikchis to make out these descriptive rolls of soldiers. A Darogha was also appointed whose duty it is to see that the men are not unnecessarily detained. Everyone who wishes to join the army is taken before the emperor in whose presence his rank is fixed and after which the clerks make out the Taliqa.

Akbar has also appointed five experienced officers and their main function is to look towards conditions of the men, their horses and the stipulated amount of pay. His Majesty has the men summoned in an open place and received the several descriptive rolls, when the men with their horses are handed over to the above five officers. The amount of their pay is then entered at the bottom of the descriptive rolls and is countersigned by those officers which serves as a proof and prevents fraudulent alterations. Each roll is then handed over to the inspecting darogha. He takes them in the manner described above to his Majesty, who orders the pay to be increased or decreased When the roll is thus certified, it is also signed by the Waqia Navis, the Mir Arz and the officer commanding the guards. On the strength of this certificate the Darogha of the dagh (Brand) mark, the horses.

Conclusion: -

The analysis of the data in the foregoing pages clearly shows that Akbar was an enlightened and successful administrator. He introduced various reforms in all the branches of administration. But he is widely known for military reforms. The military reforms introduced by him particularly the Dag and chehra system plays a critical role in the consolidation of the Mughal empire. These reforms not only curbed the evil practices in army administration but also played a key role in making the army quite efficient, strong and well-disciplined. It was

with this efficient army Akbar was able to expand his territory and maintain his hold over it without facing much difficulty.

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