

Zawabit and Administrative Discipline in the Mughal Empire

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Abstract

The Mughal Empire was established on the foundation of military strength and effective war tactics. Thus, once they established themselves in Indian subcontinent, they tried to ensure an effective governance over a vast consolidated diverse empire by accumulation of the Islamic principles and practical state regulations. Among them, Zawabit implemented secular and administrative laws thus highlighting the Mughal Emperors' role in maintaining public order, regulating officials and safeguarding the interest of both the masses and the state.

Keywords- Mughal Empire, Hadis, Zawabit, Rajputs, Revenue, military, religion

Zawabit, which implied state laws were followed during Mughal rule and were distinctive as compared to the laws followed during the rule of early Sultans. Unlike them, the Mughal rulers did not make sharia as the base of their laws and tried to practise a type pf government that is not all exclusive and incorporated diverse elements in the Empire. The body of law or the rules were built during the time when *hadis* (religious sayings of Prophet) were formed. By that time, the body of rules known as *fiqh* came into being. The literal meaning of *fiqh* is knowledge. The *fiqh*, after combining with the scholastic theology formed the basis of sharia, which means the sacred law. The sharia covered wide aspects of religious, political, and civil life. It contained in itself all kinds of laws, that is, from the family laws and laws of inheritance and property or power, to the rules of criminal law, its procedure and implementation. It also includes the constitutional law which aimed at bringing reforms in the administration of the state.¹ The nature of state laws followed were basically conservative, but it kept on regulating itself and adjusted according to the needs but without making any kind of violations in the fundamentals. Earlier, the sultans of India used to associate themselves with the caliph of Baghdad and the sultans submitted their manumission as their commandants. For example, Iltutmish got a formal letter of investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad in 1229.² The nature of state laws, that is *zawabit*, were crafted by the state. Under this system, the law which includes the 'will of God', focussed on living the way of life as per the Islamic principles and the ruler too had to lead his empire according to Islamic political thought.³ But when the Mughals came to Indian Territory, a new school of thought also came into existence. According to it, the sovereign of Mughal Empire used to call themselves 'caliphs' of their own territories, which was established earlier by Timur, ancestors of mughals.⁴ As a result, the recognition of the caliphate of Baghdad to the rulers of

Published: 14 February 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.70558/SPIJSH.2026.v3.i1.45527>

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Indian territories was not applied by rulers of Mughal Empire and their claim of being the padshah of their own empire was also accepted by the orthodox subjects. Mughals before coming to India were already great rulers and used to follow political code, that is, *Yasa*, which was different from the political law described in Islamic sharia.⁵ It was totally in contrast to the rule of earlier sultans, where Turkish traditions were the basis of sovereignty in *Dilli*, and sharia was highly expounded by the authorities. It means that the ruler of the state was guided by the religious heads in all the legal and administrative matters. But during the Mughal period, the king was not bounded by the advice of any religious institution. The whole administration laid on the will and decision of the monarch. Before them, the sultans in India used to resolve the problems related to the administrative affairs of the state through sharia, and related all their political actions usually with this institution. It implies the fact that these rulers used to take the assistance of sharia to legitimise their political acts.

Even Akbar in 1579, when trying to sought approval for the *Mahzar* document, approached the religious heads.⁶ But during 17th and 18th centuries under Mughals rule, the authority of sharia in the political discourse fades away, although to some extent, it was revived by Aurangzeb during his rule, but most of his decisions are the resultant policies of his political ambitions rather than any religious influence.

INCORPORATION OF DIVERSE ELEMENTS

Mughal Emperors in India did not try to establish an orthodox monarchy. The reason for this might be, when Mughal Empire was established, most of the country's authority was allocated by some small and large Hindu principalities. They had covered most of the areas of northern India, and amalgamated many pastoral tribes and small ruling elements. Moreover, the other reasons like coming of Irani immigrants, matrimonial alliances with the Rajput community, growth of bhakti movement during the era, due to which, there started becoming small independent reformed groups within the society and also, the acceptance of the sufist ideological approach among the common sections of the society resulted into the formation of homogenous nature of the territory.⁷ Thus, it was not possible for the Mughal emperors to hold any kind of orthodoxy principles under such circumstances, as it could pose a threat to the position of the monarch and the whole empire. Therefore, it was necessary to create a type of coalition government, along with the regional states that was considered as the tributaries of Mughal Empire but they were allowed to rule as independent and autonomous states under their local rule. These rulers were free to exercise their authority in their respective states, but on the condition that they had to accept the Mughal sovereignty, pay regular tribute, and also serve Mughal Empire, with their services whenever needed. From the middle of 17th century, we find a wide list of evidences which shows that the Hindu elements were not only infiltrated in the administrative departments and military, but also, they occupied influential positions in the departments of accountancy, and the various offices of revenue were filled by kayastha and khatri community people. For example, Harkaran Das Kumbh, a munshi of Multan, was very popular with his writings and were considered as modals by later *munshis*.⁸ Also, we find various elements who contributed a lot for the Persian literature formed during this period.

For example, Mahdo Ram, Sujan Rai Bhandari, Anand Ram Mikhlis made splendid contributions to Persian language and literature and their writings even formed part of the course work of Persian studies at the *Madrasa*.⁹

Relations with Rajputs:

The policy of absorption of indigenous subjects into the Mughal Empire was not a new concept and it was started by early sultans too. For example, Sikander Lodhi used to encourage the Hindus to learn Persian and achieve high position in the administration.¹⁰ Also, Sher Shah had incorporated many Rajputs elements in his army.¹¹ But by the time of Mughal empire, the presence of indigenous elements, particularly the Rajput community was so pronounced that the rulers had started depending largely on the potential capabilities of these people for various administrative and military purposes. This bond was so well coordinated that the Hindu elites, at some time, started identifying themselves with the Mughal state and also with the Mughal Persian culture. Babur, tried to negotiate with Rana Sanga, then the most important ruler amongst Rajput chiefs, for the objective of contesting against Ibrahim Lodhi.¹² Humayun too, during his reign answered humbly to the reply of Rani Kurnavati, who asked him for help against Bahadur shah who was planning to capture Chittor, by sending him *Rakhi* (a bracelet).¹³ But the policy of friendship was revolutionised by Akbar whose deliberate policy based on principles justice, recognition of merit, and initiative to maintain harmony, proved successful towards the chief of Rajasthan. Akbar decision to have the cooperation of the Rajputs was well conscious act as during the time when Muslim officials were rebelling and Afghans in the country were continuously creating trouble for them, Rajputs were best alternative, who were famous for their valour and loyalty. Thus, he decided to negotiate with them on honourable terms to attain his political ambitions. One more reason behind this policy was that, Rajputs were already established chiefs of the country, and were close to the majority of the population of the state, so in order to reach to the subjects of the empire and make them to recognise their authority, it was necessary that they should accept their chiefs too as the ruler of their respective states. In this way, they could carry on the administration without any obstacle as the management of law and order were in the hands of these Rajput chiefs.¹⁴ As a result, Akbar showed his willingness to invite Rajputs for a cooperative government, provided on the condition that they would accept the Mughal sovereignty. Many of the Rajputs agreed to accept the sovereignty.

The ruler of Amber, Raja Bharmal was the first to enter into alliance with him. He also established matrimonial relations by marrying his daughter to him.¹⁵ Though, there were some exceptions too, where some rulers refused to enter into alliance with him. For example, the *Ranas* of Mewar, who considered Turks as their natural enemies entered into conflict with the Mughals,¹⁶ in which Mughals came out of it victorious ultimately. But in spite of it, majority of the Rajput principalities into alliance with the Mughal Empire and many of them were even enrolled as *Mansabdars*. Thus, the generous and humane nature of Akbar towards that of Rajputs proved helpful from administrative point of view also as a large part of north India was under the authority of Mughal Emperor without any war or conflict. Later, the state of Mewar was also brought under mughal Empire during the reign of Jahangir, who also like his father, tried to continue the friendly alliance with the Rajputs.¹⁷ This was continued even

during the reign of Shah Jahan, as when during the ending years of his reign, there was chaos and confusion in the empire, Raja Jai Singh and Raja Jaswant Singh were enrolled as commanders to fight against his sons. Although, after they were defeated by Aurangzeb, they were still asked to resume their services under the authority of Aurangzeb.¹⁸ However, the conflict between the Rajputs and Mughals got serious when Aurangzeb on the grounds of unpaid debt confiscated the property of Raja Jaswant Singh which resulted into the series of conflicts and it continued throughout his reign. But as a whole, administration still constitutes a wide strength of Rajputs and they were the highest in percentage, when seen in comparison to early rulers.

All these evidences indicate the fact that the Mughal administration had largely included many diverse elements into their empire, which came from different background. So, the state laws largely formulated by Mughal Empire keeping in mind the homogenous nature of the state. It was visible in their various policies they brought in various aspects of their administration.

STATE LAWS RELATED TO REVENUE

The nature of the economy in India was basically that of agricultural one. Thus, the main source of the state's income was derived from the revenue that was acquired from the peasants. It was obligatory for peasants to pay part of their produce to the emperor in return for the allowance of cultivation of the land within the empire.

That was a gesture of paying allegiance to the emperor and paid him the part of their produce. The defying of which, was considered as an act breaching the 'sacred law' and an act of rebellion.¹⁹ In return to the revenue paid by the peasants, the king ensured the protection of their property and maintenance of law and order to protect them from any kind of exploitation. In general, the share was 1/3rd of the total produce. During the rule of first two Mughal Emperors, that is, Babur and Humayun, the revenue system of the empire did not undergo much change, and revenue was collected without any basis of surveying of the land and the inspection of the quality of soil which differs from place to place.²⁰

But Akbar, during his reign initiated a definite system. He, with the help of his officials, first surveyed the whole land, differentiated the land based on the quality of the soil and then decided the amount of revenue to be paid by the peasants accordingly.

In this way, the state started to earn more profits in the name of surplus revenue which was the result of well organised system of management of cultivable land in the empire. Earlier, there was uniformity in the amount of revenue paid by the peasants in all parts of the empire, irrespective of the nature of soil and produce of that particular area which mostly differs from one place to another. But, Akbar realised the fact that as the soil consisted of different properties with change of its area and composition which affected the crop produce too, so the demand of revenue should also be fixed accordingly. Thus, in 1573, Todar Mal, an official under Akbar, made the assessment of land revenue and a systematic measurement was made. Nearly 64 parganas were surveyed and on the basis of the assessment with reference to the area and the quality of the land, the amount of land revenue was formulated.²¹ The other areas where the measurement was not practised, the system of getting

the share of the produce by actual division of heaps of grains at the time of harvesting or the estimated division of the produce on the standing crops was done. This experiment proved successful and this type of assessment remained throughout the rule of all Mughal Emperors.

The land revenue was mainly collected in cash. Though, Akbar also allowed the payment in kind, where the mode of assessment was in terms of *Ghalla Bakshi*, *batai*, or *nasq*.²² The work of revenue collection was entrusted to state officials termed as amils, assisted by another set of employee known as *patwari*. There were officials who were given the task of surveying the land, assessing it, and then supervising the collection of the revenue.²³

The collectors were mostly advised to maintain friendly attitude towards the peasants, and encourage them to strengthen their cultivation process by providing various kinds of assistance like providing loans (*taqavi*), providing remissions in case of damage of drops due to any natural calamity or exploitation due to some intermediaries.²⁴ The state officials had to submit a report, during the regular interval of time and kept Emperor informed of the condition of the peasantry, situation of the public security, condition of the agricultural produce etc. All these factors states that the condition of the peasantry was better off during Akbar's reign and the relation peasant and emperor was less complicated which was beneficial for the revenue system of the empire, as Akbar considered it as a duty to protect the property rights of peasants. For this, he introduced the concept of documentation of peasants' land in the form of *patta* and *qabuliyat*, so that peasant could be ensured of their ownership of their land and thus could help in the cultivation process of these peasants.²⁵

Other than that, state also had also laid other taxes in the empire which also contributes as part of state's income. The four kinds of taxes, as according to Islamic theory of taxation – *Kharaj*, *Khams*, *Zakat* and *Jeziya* (for non muslims) were not wholly followed by Akbar, as it is known from the sources that he had abolished the religious taxes, that is, *Jeziya* and pilgrimage tax.²⁶

Though, during the period of Aurangzeb, *Jeziya* was revived and levied again on non Muslims. Apart from taxes, the state's contribution in commerce was also visible. Many imperial workshops and karkhanas, which manufactured a wide variety of goods consumed by royal family members were constructed in the capital city and other important cities.

Many industries like clothing, embroidery, jewellery, ammunitions etc. were highly flourished during the reign of Mughal Empire. The state also had lay monopolies on the manufacturing of certain goods like lead and saltpetre too.²⁷ Also, mints were established in various parts of the empire that were directly under the supervision of the central administration. In this way, all these factors contributed a lot to the state's treasury.

By the time of Jahangir's rule, the revenue system did not undergo much reformation and he mostly continued the system, which prevailed during Akbar's rule, except the fact mentioned by Dr. Beni Prasad that, there was no ten years survey settlement at the time of Jahangir, which prevailed earlier.²⁸ Also the laws related to the protection of rights of property of peasants were elaborately laid and strictly advised to state officials through his ordinances. Besides these, many relief projects like establishments of sarais, hospitals and other aid houses were also introduced.

During the reign of Shah Jahan, due to outbreak of a major famine in 1630-31, the cultivation was largely effected. But the emperor introduced many relief works for the peasants. For example, large scale remissions were made in Ahmedabad and cash amount was distributed among the poor and destitute of Burhanpur.²⁸ Also, for the welfare of the peasants in the hands of nobles, he abolished certain illegal taxes in Kashmir also started the construction of many canals for irrigation in there, during his rule.²⁹

Aurangzeb's intense practising of laws of sharia, during his reign, also left its mark in the revenue system of the state too. As according to one proclamation issued by Aurangzeb to one of his official Muhammad Hashim, where he ordered that in matters of revenue assessment, the principles of Islamic law should be practised.³⁰ The amount of revenue was to be fixed according to the Holy law, but it should not to be exceeds one half or else the peasants would be exploited by these payments. The collectors were advised to collect only the amount that was fixed and it should not be less than 1/3rd and should not exceed half of the produce.³¹ Under Aurangzeb's rule, the assessment of revenue was based on the area actually under cultivation, and the payment could be done in either cash or kind. The entire land of Deccan was surveyed and a regular system of assessment was inaugurated.³² Mostly the amount of revenue was assessed in a way that the cultivator after paying the share to the government was left with at least one half of the produce. Among the duties laid on the use of canals for irrigation purposes, it was assigned differently with regard to various crops. For example, for the cultivation of sugarcane, the rate assessed range from 1/9th to 1/4th. Similarly, highly fertile lands were charged with 1/2 of the produce.³³ The officials were also instructed to increase the cultivation of their respective areas of appointment. Also, the rights and claims of the ownership of land for the people who brought new land under cultivation were also carefully protected.

MILITARY ORGANISATION:-

The rulers of Mughal Empire, particularly from Akbar's reign had not maintained a large standing army. For the maintenance of law and order and to ensure the defence of the boundaries of the empire, the Emperor used to depend upon four different classes of troops. These were- the soldiers supplied by the mansabdars, *Dakhli*- a class of troops under the *mansabdars*, *Ahadis*-or gentlemen troopers and chiefs of autonomous states.³⁴

In the Mughal Empire, the nobles under the *mansabdari* system were required to maintain certain number of troops and serve the emperor by supplying these troops, whenever needed. Also, the chiefs of autonomous states had to give their services and provide contingents to the Mughal Emperor under their command. The chiefs had already accepted the Mughal sovereignty and were liable to render their services to state whenever called upon to do so. According to Monserrate, who came during the reign of Akbar- in 1581, the Mughal army consisted of 45,000 cavalry, 5000 elephants, and many thousands of infantry which were directly paid by the government.³⁵ Also as per writings of Sir Jadunath sarkar- in 1648, that is, during the reign of Shah Jahan, the army consisted of 440,000 infantry, musketeers, and artillery men, 1,85,000 cavalry which were commanded by various nobles and princes.³⁶ Other than that, there is no particular reference of the standing army during the Mughal period and whole authority of the military was organised by emperor and his nobles together.

As per the department of artillery is concerned, its whole expenditure was meted out of imperial treasury. The artillery includes both heavy siege guns mounted on the forts and the light artillery in the form of *narnal* or *shutrnal*.³⁷ Although, it was highly efficient when it was brought with the advent of Babur in India, but it was not as advance and competent as compared to European advanced artillery. Though, European gunners were later employed in appreciable number in the army.³⁸ The cavalry was an important element in the army and the Emperor used to invest huge expenditure in the maintenance of an efficient and well equipped cavalry. To ensure the quality of horses, *dagh* system was introduced that kept the mansabdars under strict observation, when it comes to the maintenance of good quality horses and avoidance of any corrupt practices of the nobles.³⁹ under the department of elephantry, during the reign of Akbar, thousands of elephants were used for war purpose. The elephants, together with good quality cavalry provided better shield during the war.⁴⁰

Amongst the department of infantry, it consisted of mainly the matchlockmen known as *bandukchis*, *dakhili* soldiers who were recruited and paid directly under the state supervision, and *ahadis*. The mansabdars, too had to maintain a fixed number of contingents and among these contingents, at least 12½ % were to be musketeers (*bandukchis*).⁴¹ Besides these, Mughal Emperors, up to the period of Akbar, had not established a developed naval army. This could be analysed from the fact that Mughal, after the conquest of Gujrat, due to failed navy, decided to acquire Portuguese supremacy in the sea. Without making any effort to challenge their authority, they agreed to take licenses (*cartaze*) from them to travel by sea route to ensure their safety from the sea pirates' groups.⁴²

RELIGIOUS POLICY OF THE STATE:

According to the Islamic concept of the state, the kings were the messenger of God, who were sent to enforce their law on all subjects. Thus, to pay homage to the king, was like paying tribute to God and state infidelity was to be seen equivalent to treason.⁴³ In an Islamic state, the non-muslims were given the status of *Zimmis* and for the ensued security of their life and property in the state, they had to pay a commutation money termed as *jizeya*, and *Kharaj* for his land. The amount of *Jeziya* amounted to 48, 24, and 12 silver coins for the rich, average and poor respectively.⁴⁴ Apart from this, the non-muslims in an Islamic theocratic state, were not allowed to build new temples or were not allowed to repair the old ones. They had to live under the subordination of Muslim rulers.

During Mughal period, the religious policies of the rulers were highly varied and distinctive. While some rulers followed the policy of high level of religious tolerance, we also find policy of religious fanaticism and intolerant attitude towards non-muslims of the state practised by some rulers. To start with, Babur in spite of being a highly cultured and broadminded person, was not in favour in granting religious freedom to non-muslims. In his memoirs, he called Hindus as *Kafirs* and used to declare war against them as holy war or *Jihad*.⁴⁵ For example, he declared holy war against Rana Sanga, the ruler of Mewar and instigated his army men on the pretext of participating in some religious duty. Though, this was not the only reason and he did this to incite his men who were already exhausted due to previous war fought against IbrahimLodhi. His assuming of title as *Ghazi*, which means slayer of infidel, against Medini Rao of Chanderi portrayed him as firm believer of his faith.⁴⁶

But in spite, he was a highly cultured man, and was not as fanatic as his great ancestors Timur, the lame who was famous for religious fanaticism and merciless slaying of infidels.

By the time Humayun came to the throne, he did not find much time to adopt some religious policy towards the non-muslims subjects of the state, due to continuous disturbance in the state.

But during the reign of Akbar, a wide reformation in the religious policy of Mughal Emperor came into being. The reason was because of his tutor Abdul latif, who himself being a man of liberal religious view, left a great influence on Akbar by teaching him the principle of liberation and universal peace.⁴⁷ Although, initially too, he was under the influence of some orthodox sects, but soon he acquired the strings of administration in his own hands, he tried to bring reforms in the policy formulated by his predecessors. His matrimonial alliances with the Rajput princes and his friendly attitude with the Rajput states was first and foremost step in this direction. Although, earlier too, this policy was practised by earlier Sultans, but Akbar took one step further by providing religious freedom to the Rajput princesses in their *Harem*, where they were free to practise their own religion and worship their God.⁴⁸ Akbar had a broad outlook towards all religions. He had established a council where the discussion regarding the religions of the world use to held. Although, only Islamic religious heads were permitted initially, but when he found a wide variety of opinion, in a single religion itself, other religious heads were also invited in the council. There, Parsis, Jains and Christians extended their opinions in the debate which made Akbar realise of the existence of truth in all religion and presence of learned scholar men everywhere.⁴⁹ As a result of this, in 1584, he abolished the *Jeziya* which was earlier collected from the Non-Muslim subjects. Also, he prohibited the collection of Pilgrimage tax from the people.⁵⁰ To add to this, Akbar also freed his non-Muslim subjects from all the restrictions like to practise their own religion, freedom to build new temples and repair the old ones by Hindus etc.⁵¹ An important step taken by Akbar, which shows his high liberal mentality towards all religions was the process of appointment of state officials in the administration which was solely based on merit and potential capabilities and not any important background based on race, caste and creed. They were held in all important posts in various departments of the administration such as civil, military or accountancy. For example, Todar Mal, a Khatri by caste, was promoted to the office of prime Minister. Similarly, Man singh held the mansab of 7000, which was considered as highest rank in the Mughal nobility.⁵²

Further to this, in order to show respect to Hindu sentiments and customs, Akbar even forbade the use of beef and started participating in Hindu festivals. A major example of it is shown when some Brahmin people tied strings of thread to the wrist of Mughal Emperor. Akbar obliged them by declaring *Rakhi* as a national festival.⁵³ Also, Akbar initiated the custom of celebrating the festival of Diwali with his vast majority of subjects. In order to get the better understanding of other religions, he got religious books of Hindus translated into Persian. Various sacred books like *Ramayana*, *Upanishads* and other secular indigenous literature like *Lilavati*, *Panchtantra*, etc. were translated into Persian during his reign.⁵⁴ Akbar, by introducing the weighing ceremony, that is, *Tuladan*, on his birthday, tried to absorb the customs of Hindus in the Persian culture.⁵⁵ Not only Akbar acquired various

customs of Hindus in his daily life. He also tried to bring some reforms in the extreme practices prevalent among Hindus. For example, he tried to prevent unwilling *Sati* and forbid the sending of widow on funeral pyre who were unwilling to lay down their lives.⁵⁶ Though, he did not interfere in the case where they were voluntarily trying to commit this practise. Akbar's interest in bringing harmony and peace between different religious sects and to end religious bitterness led him to the establishment of a system based on Divine Monotheism or *Tauhid-i-Ilahi*.⁵⁷ It was not any religion, but an initiative of Akbar which was based on universal toleration for people of all faith. By this, Akbar tried to bring various religious sects under common platform and ensemble the good attributes of all religion under one roof. It believed in the unity of God and various religious doctrines were incorporated and discussed. He was greatly in favour of loving what is good in all religion and discard what, according to him, is inappropriate and inhuman. However, it only continued till Akbar's reign and perished with Akbar's death. Akbar was conscious of the fact that he, being the ruler of the empire, when vast majority were non-Muslims. So, in order to reach vast majority, he had to involve himself within the social strata and tried to reach the mentality of the people by acquiring their activities and practices and implementing in his life too. Thus, it was not only the religious broadmindedness but also involved administrative tactic of Akbar which proved very successful as we don't find any kind of strong opposition from any religious sects. This was because, the people were contended with administration functioning under the supervision of Emperor and didn't find any rigorous enforcement by the Emperor. Even the invitation to join *Din-I-Ilahi* was not compulsory and it was up to the nobles to join this institution or not. For example Birbal did not join this institution, yet he was one of the important officials under Akbar.

The motive of Akbar might be to bring the values of all the religion and did not try to enforce his authority in the customs of various religions. In the case of forbidding unwilling sati, too, he did not tried to put strict action on it, as Rajputs and other elite section of Hindu communities still practised it and strict attitude of Akbar in exploring it and strict attitude of Akbar in enforcing the law could lead the Rajputs hostile against him, which he could not afford on strategic and administrative basis. Thus, it was Akbar's deliberation of attaining his political ambition by way of religious harmony and brotherhood at social and cultural level.

Like Akbar, Jahangir too adopted a friendly attitude with all the religious sects and tried to maintain peace and harmony with them. Although, after Akbar's death, the Muslim theologians tried to win back their position under Jahangir which had been earlier undermined and tried to inflict their orthodox view in the minds of Jahangir,⁵⁸ but he, assumed as liberal minded monarch, choose the path of toleration which his father had already established. He continued to abolish *Jeziya* and pilgrimage tax. The highest posts in the administration under his rule were opened to all people irrespective of their social background and he also took part in holding discussions with the learned men of all the religions. His association with Yadrup Gosain,⁵⁹ is a good example of his interest in learning about other religious doctrines. Not only he was firm in following his faith with full honesty and determination, but also he used to take keen interest by taking part in customs and festivals of other religion too. For example, he celebrated *Rakhi* festival and called it *Nighadashti* during 17th year of his reign.⁶⁰ Though, there were some exceptions during his

reign. For example, he was against the practise of Hindu rulers of Rajouri in Jammu, who married Muslim girls and stopped the conversion of Muslim women in Hinduism.⁶¹ Also, his relation with the Sikh community got worsened when its 5th leader, Guru Arjun Dev, blessed his son, prince khusrau, when he was rebelling against Jahangir. Jahangir ordered the imprisonment of Guru Arjun Dev, after he refused to pay fine. He died in prison as a result of torture inflicted on him.⁶² Whatever the reasons were, but his death became the cause of rising bitterness between the Mughals and the followers of Guru Arjun Dev. But this incident didn't show his conservatism as he was against Arjun Dev's practise of giving refugee to his rebellious son, and not due to some religious mindedness. Also, his step to put a ban on the sale of wine and other intoxicants in public markets was a reason of his personal weakness. He himself used to consume huge amount of wine and aware of his consequences, and it can be assume that he didn't want it to inflict it on the state office.

Though, it was not very strictly implemented as the nobles continued to consume wine and hold parties on a regular basis in their private apartments. But the fact that need to be noted that Jahangir kept intact the Muslim organisation in its essential aspects. Along with it, he also continued his father's tolerant religious policy in the Mughal Empire.

During the reign of Shah Jahan, various orthodox practices of the Emperor like abolition of *Sijda*, which according to Islamic tradition is due to God alone, as it involved prostration too, restoration of *Hijra* Era to the national calendar etc. are found.⁶³ Also, he forbade the marriage of Hindus and Muslims and ordered the Hindu rulers of Rajouri in Jammu, to either pay fine or become a Muslim themselves.⁶⁴ But in majority, he did not adopt much rigorous practices and like his predecessors, he also kept the administration open for all the subjects, belonging to diverse sects. But it can also be assume that his policy were less generous than that of his father as out of 563 nobles employed in the administration, during his reign, only 110 were Hindus.⁶⁵

The reign of Aurangzeb came with a wide change in the religious policy of Mughal Empire as Aurangzeb, being an orthodox Sunni, he tried to restore Islam as the religion of the state. For this, he immediately after his accession appointed Muhtasibs, and assigned them the task of enforcing the Islamic way of life on the Muslim subjects.⁶⁶ He abolished the celebration of festivals like *Nauroz*, *Holi*, etc. and banned music and other type of entertainment in the Mughal court. Being a strict observer of his faith, he even stopped stamping *Kalima* on the coins as it could drop on the ground and could come under the feet of non believers which was considered as inauspicious. He also discontinued attending public gatherings in the name of *Jarokha* and stopped the practise of weighing, that is, *Tuladan* on his birthday and other festive occasions. In 1679, he even stopped using gold and silver utensils and got it removed from the palace and started using earthen ware utensils.⁶⁷ But the most important step that showed his religious conservatism was, when he reimposed *Jeziya* in 1679, and pilgrimage tax.⁶⁸ Though, the reason behind this act was not only his religious conservatism, but also the state treasury which had already exhausted during his father's rule and the way of replenishing the treasury would be the imposition of taxes and extract money as according to Europeans, who mentioned this in their records. Among them, Manucci mentioned that the

reason behind Aurangzeb's imposition of *Jeziya* was because of shrinking treasury and to force Hindus to accept Islam in order to avoid paying the tax.⁶⁹

The reason behind the policies of Aurangzeb that perceived him as a fanatic ruler, were not only because of his strict religious thoughts of his faith, but also he wanted to impress upon the religious heads and wanted their support. He ascended the throne after imprisoning his father and eliminating his brothers, who were aspirant to the throne. So, in order to gain his administrative zeal, he might have adopted strict religious measures and followed Shariat in the political strata of the empire. However, his announcements remained a mere quote figure, as most of his proclamations like banning of music and other occasional celebrations were limited to the royal court only and was practised by the nobles and chiefs of autonomous states where the various kinds of arts like music and painting continued to flourish in the 18th century. And as per the reaction against Aurangzeb's religious policies, the rebellion of *Jats* in Agra, and *Satnamis* in Doab⁷⁰ were more of regional revolts. Although, the religious discontentment triggered the whole situation but this was not the only reason because due to Aurangzeb's stay at Deccan for a longer period of time, their whole administration in the Northern part of the empire had already weakened and local group like *Sikhs* (who were already instigated as a result of the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur by Aurangzeb)⁷¹ and *Marathas* found it favourable opportunity to annex the territories of Mughal Empire under their authority. Thus, Aurangzeb's religious policy, sort of created circumstances that instigated the Rajputs and other communities against Aurangzeb which proved fatal for the Mughal Empire later.

Mughal emperors discouraged orthodoxy. It is evident from the references from matrimonial alliances with the autonomous chiefs. Moreover, the Mughal emperor's policies of making coalition with them, particularly Rajputs also projected them as promoters of regional identities of India. Thus, a system of government based on the coalition with the local chiefs was necessary but it was on the condition that they had to accept the Mughal sovereignty. By this system Mughals tried to avoid any kind of oppression which could arise from those autonomous states and it also helped to manage such a vast empire as numer of Rajputs were recruited at important posts in the Mughal administration. The laws established in the Mughal state were not like those established under the rule of earlier Sultans of Delhi, but it was consisted of the administration that had incorporated diverse elements, both indigenous and foreign. Thus, laws related to revenue and administration in the Mughal Empire were based on the welfare of the peasants and policies were formulated in such a way that the peasants were not to be harassed in the hands of local officials and they were to be encouraged to bring more and more land under cultivation. The reason behind the formulation of such policies was the administrative zeal which led them to get the cooperation of local Rajput chiefs for an efficient and smooth functioning of the administrative system in the Mughal Empire during 16th-17th century.

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