

A Comparative Study on the Administrative Reforms of Shersha Suri and Akbar the Mughal Emperor

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ABSTRACT

Akbar the Great (1556-1605) was a well-known Mughal (or Moghul) king who was recognised as a great ruler for his military, political, development, and administration achievements. After his victory over an army headed by Hemu in the Second Battle of Panipat in 1556, he was considered as the final creator of the Mughal Empire. The victory allowed Akbar to become the Indian subcontinent's sole monarch, and he continued to pursue battles against Hindu rajahs. Akbar instituted a number of administrative reforms in order to unite the vast Indian provinces under a single Mughal empire. Despite the fact that Sher Shah only governed for around five years, he made numerous contributions. Sher Shah's most important achievement was the establishing of law and order throughout the realm. Sher Shah placed a high priority on road safety and took harsh measures against thieves and dacoits. He was persuaded that the only way to secure the safety of the roadways was to keep the zamindars under control, some of whom were in cahoots with the robbers. As a result, he took strong action against Fath Khan Jat, who had demolished the entire tract of Lakhi Jungle (in the present Montgomery district, as well as the former sarkar of Dipalpur) and caused confusion from Lahore to Delhi by his violent behaviour.

Keywords: Mughal Empire, zamindars, Administrative reforms, victory

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of a stable administration, as well as other social and cultural pursuits, is hallmarks of mughal rule. Life's arts grew in popularity. It was a period of great transformation that, while not immediately visible on the surface, formed and moulded our country's socioeconomic existence. Because Akbar was concerned with the development of a national culture and viewpoint, he fostered and launched initiatives in the religious, political, and cultural arenas that aimed to extend his contemporaries' perspectives and instill in them a sense of belonging to a single civilization.

Although there is ample evidence to show that Akbar benefited greatly from the council of able administrators, he boasted unjustly that he was the author of most of his measures by saying that he was grateful to God that he had found no capable minister, otherwise people would have given the minister credit for the emperor's measures. He admitted that a king should not conduct duties that his subjects might perform; he did so not for administrative efficiency's sake, but because "the errors of others it is his part to repair, but his own lapses, who can correct?"

The Mughals were able to imbue the emperor with such a position and functions in the popular mind, an image that can be found not only in historical and literary works of the time, but also in folklore, which can still be found in the form of popular stories told in the villages of the Mughal's vast dominions when his power was still strong. The emperor was seen as the father of those whose job it was to protect the helpless and moderate the oppressed.

True, there have been rebellions that have had to be put down, as well as conquest or retaliation wars, but these have not succeeded in eradicating the image among the general public.

The Mughal conception of kingship was given a new dimension by Abul Fazl. To him, the institution of kingship was endowed with farri-izadi, rather than the individual who held the post (divine effulgence). His padshah or shahanshah (king

of kings) was a one-of-a-kind figure who served as God's viceregent on Earth. During Jahangir's reign, another prominent scholar on the subject was Shaikh Abdul Haqq Dihlawi, who composed the Nuriyya-i-Shltaniyya, a book encompassing all elements of the subject.

Internally and outwardly, the sovereign or king has complete independence. Every institution and person was subordinate to the king on the inside. Externally, the Mughal Sovereign did not recognise any higher authority, such as the caliph, as the Delhi Sultans had done.

Sher Shah placed a high priority on developing roads and communication systems, both to enable military movements and to promote trade and commerce. Roads also gave the government more authority over the countryside. As a result, he rebuilt the old imperial route that ran from the Indus River in the west to Sonargaon in Bengal. He also constructed a road from Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor, which must have connected to the highways heading to Gujarat's seaports. He constructed a third route connecting Lahore and Multan, which served as the starting point for caravans travelling to western and central Asia. He built a fourth route from Agra to Burhanpur, connecting it to the roads that led to Gujarat's seaports. According to legend, he built sarais on the roadway at a distance of two karohs to ensure road safety and provide comfort to travellers (4 miles). Separate apartments for Hindus and Muslims were erected, complete with beds and cooked food, and Muslim and Brahman cooks were assigned to the task. There was also a provision for Hindus with their own caste rules to receive uncooked food supply. Sher Shah issued a law that "whoever came to the sarai was to be fed with meals out of government money according to one's rank, and his pony was to be given grain and drink," according to Abbas Khan. In each sarai, a custodian (shahna) was chosen to secure the merchants' goods, and rent-free lands in the neighbourhood were allotted for their expenditures, as well as the expenses of the imam and muezzin for the mosque that was built in each sarai.

Sher Shah is said to have built 1700 similar sarais. They were fortified inns that were built to last, as evidenced by the fact that several of them have survived to this day. According to legend, Sher Shah ordered that markets be established in each sarai. Many of the sarais were converted into mandis, where peasants could sell their produce, and they served as the foundation for the development of towns (qasbas) where trade and handicrafts flourished.

These sarais must have been popular since Islam Shah later ordered that a sarai be built between every two of Sher Shah's sarais. The sarais were also employed for dak chowkis (postal service), and each sarai had two horses. News may be relayed from a distance of 300 kos in a day using this method.

Sher Shah also took various steps to boost trade and commerce. In place of the debased coins of mixed metals of former times, he produced excellent silver and copper coins of uniform standard. For a long time, his silver rupee was a standard coin. He also tried to standardise weights and measurements.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA DURING THE REIGN OF SHER SHAH SURI

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The Extent Of His Empire

Sher Shah was the ruler of a great empire. Sher Shah Suri had taken control of the regions of Bengal and Bihar before conquering Delhi. With the exception of Assam, Kashmir, and Gujarat, the Suri empire spanned virtually all of Northern India within a few years following his ultimate triumph over Humayun. It spanned the region from Sonargaon (now Bangladesh) in the east to the Gakkar country in the north. It was bordered by the Himalayas in the north and the Vindhya

Mountains in the south. The empire covered the majority of Punjab up to the Indus River, as well as Multan and Sindh. Rajputana (mionus Jaisalmer), Malwa, and Bundelkhand were the states of the south. Bikaner's Kalyan Mal had recognised his suzerainty. Gujarat, on the other hand, was left out since Sher Shah had made no attempt to conquer it.

The king was aided by four important ministers.

- Diwan –i- Wizarat or Wazir – in charge of Revenue and Finance
- Diwan-i-Ariz – in charge of Army
- Diwan-i-Rasalat – Foreign Minister
- Diwan-i-Insha – Minister for Communications

Provincial Administration

On the topic of Sher Shah's provincial administration, historians have disagreed. While Qanungo claims that there was no such administrative entity as a 'Suba' or 'Iqta,' Dr. P. Saran claims that there were 'Subas' where Sher Shah selected military officers.

Provinces were established throughout the kingdom. Some provinces were huge, while others were little. There was no consistency in terms of income, size, or administration. Military governors oversaw government in critical provinces such as Lahore, Multan, and Malwa. The province of Bengal, on the other hand, was managed by a civilian.

Sarkars

A province was split into several Sarkars (Districts). There were 47 districts in total. In each district, there were two chief officers. The Shiqdar-i- Shiqdaran, or head Shiqdar, was a military officer. He kept the district in order, assisted in the collection of revenue and other taxes, and oversaw the work of his subordinate officers, known as Shiqdars.

The chief Munsif, or Munsif-i-Muinsfan, was the other officer. He was primarily a judicial officer in charge of the district's justice system. He was also in charge of his subordinate judicial officers' duties throughout the parganas. In carrying out their tasks, these two officials were assisted by a number of junior officers and other subordinates.

The extent to which these changes were applied to different regions of the empire under Sher Shah and Islam Shah, and whether the settlement was made with each individual cultivator or with the village headmen (muqaddams) and zamindars, has been the subject of much debate. Although Abul Fazl claims that Hindustan transitioned from crop-sharing and estimation to measurement under Sher Shah and Islam Shah, a detailed study by Irfan Habib shows that the system of measurement was only used in the settled parts of the empire, such as the doab, Punjab, and Malwa, and that even there, it is likely that it did not cover the entire land in any province. The advent of the zabt system, on the other hand, was unquestionably a significant breakthrough. We're told that the sum each peasant was required to pay was written down on a piece of paper known as patta, and that each one was informed of it. No one was allowed to make any additional charges. As a result, some modern historians have compared it to the British ryotwari system, in which the state had direct contacts with the peasants. Modern research, on the other hand, contradicts this. While an attempt was made to assess individual farmer obligations, local headmen and zamindars were involved in both the evaluation and collection of land-revenue, and were compensated for their efforts. The mediaeval state made no attempt to abolish the muqaddams and zamindars because it lacked the resources to do so. All it could do was put a cap on their demands.

Sher Shah's concern, on the other hand, was limited to peasants who were entirely loyal, followed imperial regulations, and paid their dues without protest. Those zamindars and their followers who were late with their contributions or did not attend the amils' office were not to be spared. In such scenario, their villages would be invaded, the men would be killed, the women and children would be enslaved, their animals and possessions would be seized, and new peasants would be brought in to replace them. This appears to be a long-standing custom.

Sher Shah does not appear to have made any modifications to the country's political system. The pargana, which consisted of a number of villages, was the smallest unit. Each village had a headman (muqaddam) in charge of law and order, as well as a patwari in charge of accounting. They weren't government employees, but they were entitled to a portion of the profits. The pargana was governed by a shiqdar, who was in charge of law and order as well as general administration, and a munsif or amil, who was in charge of land measurement for land income. Both of these individuals were in charge of collecting land revenue. They were aided by two clerks who kept track of the accounts in both Persian and the local dialect (Hindavi). A khazanadar or poddar was also in charge of keeping the currency and money collected. Sher Shah viewed amil postings to be lucrative, and he rotated them every two years so that others close to him might gain as well. This means that the regulations he had put in place forbidding the collection of cesses and charges in excess of those allowed were being broken in actuality, and he had no way of stopping it.

There has been much debate about whether Sher Shah had a province organisation system or not. According to recent study, there was no such thing as a provincial organisation in the Sultanat, but a number of shiqs were sometimes gathered together and termed khitta or vilayat. This was most common in frontier areas like Bengal and Punjab, as well as some of the more volatile areas. Sher Shah appears to have kept much of the same system in place. A number of shiqs or sarkars were grouped together under the supervision of an amin or muqta who was actually a military commander in Lahore, Bihar, Multan, Jodhpur, Ranthambhor, and the hill-areas near Nagarkot. As a result, Haibat Khan Niazi was assigned to the vilayat of Punjab, Haji Khan to the entire Malwa, and Khawas Khan to the vilayat of Jodhpur, with the faujdars of the sarkars of Ajmer, Nagor, and Mewat reporting to him. Because of the threat of revolt, Bengal was divided into units or shiqs, and a non-military figure, Qazi Fazilat, was appointed amin solely to coordinate.

As a result, only the Mughals were able to establish regional governments. Sher Shah's role was to stabilise and further strengthen the shiqs' or sarkars' boundaries and organisation, which remained the real unit of administration even under the Mughals.

We don't have much information regarding Sher Shah's central government structure. We're informed that Sher Shah despised the Mughal system of governance, which placed a great deal of authority in the hands of corrupt ministers. As a result, he investigated everything personally, devoted himself unwaveringly to his work, and travelled the country on a regular basis.

The Administration Of India During The Reign Of Akbar

Despotic monarchy was the mughal type of government. The executive, legislature, judiciary, and army were all headed by the king. His principal responsibility was to be benevolent to the subjects. The royal Uzuk (little signet ring) was worn by formans who were given senior positions, titles, and jagirs. The nobility and the ulema were the only checks on the king's tyranny. Though the nobles owned their status to the monarch in theory, the king could not ignore the nobility's power in practise.

WAZIR	Akbar abolished the post of all powerful wazirs
DIWAN	Responsible for all income and expenditure and had control over Khalisa and jagir land
MIR BAKSHI	Headed military department, nobility, information and intelligence agencies
MIR SAMAN	In charge of imperial household and karkhanas.
MIR MUNSHI	In charge of Royal correspondence
SADR-US-SADR	In charge of charitable and religious endowment.
QAZI-UL-QUJAT	Headed the judiciary department
MUSHRIF-I-MUMALIK	Accountant general

It is crucial to note that Akbar gave a great deal of thought to agrarian management. He was forced to do so since the situation was about to spiral out of control unless improvements were implemented. This was not due to any fundamental flaws in the system. Akbar inherited a lot of officers with lofty titles and ambitions that were out of proportion to the empire's financial resources. They demanded high compensation and refused to compromise their dignity by accepting lower but more reasonable remuneration.



Aside from being a great conqueror, Akbar was a remarkable administration with a superior administrative structure. Although this administration was built on Shershah Suri's beliefs and institutions, Akbar made numerous improvements to the system to make it more effective. Under Akbar, the Mughal administration was highly centralised. The state's entire power was vested in the God of the soil. There was no one who could stand in his way. He was not only the president of the country, but also the commander in chief of the military forces and the country's judicial authority. Despite his full power, Akbar did not behave in a tyrannical manner. He always kept his people's interests in mind when administering, and he did it in a way that earned him the administration and the people's esteem. Everyone attempted to win the king's good will⁹, as Akbar's life depended on it. The fate of all great reformers in having his personal character assailed, his motivations maligned, and his deeds misrepresented on evidence that rarely bears judicial examination.



The king was aided in the governance of the realm by a number of Ministers, although he was not bound by their advice. The king was the one who made the final choice. In short, the monarch had ultimate power and there was little that could be done to check it.

Man's selfishness and desire to preserve nature is the most significant impediment to the preservation of social order and national peace. Cruelty, oppression, injustice, and insurgency have become ingrained in man's nature. As a result, God has commanded that one hakim-i-adil be chosen from among the people to guide the acts of Adam's sons and the affairs of the world's inhabitants in the proper direction and to keep them safe and secure. When a just ruler is deposed, swords are drawn and blood is shed. The person with a powerful hand can do whatever he wants. It's like a fire that spreads through a reed bed and consumes everything dry. The proximity of dry plants likewise reduces the green plants to ashes.'

Abul Fazl begins with a similar premise. 'Without royalty, the whirlwind of strife would never lessen, and selfish ambition would never go.' Mankind would descend into the abyss of ruin, the world.....would lose its prosperity, and the entire earth would become a desolate waste because of lawlessness and lust.'

Anarchy, confusion, man's selfish nature, and tyranny of the powerful serve as justifications for royal power, and 'protection' becomes the monarch's primary responsibility. 'The monarch should come first, then the wife, and finally the wealth, for how could one enjoy wife and wealth if there was no king?' If a monarch protects his subjects properly, he obtains the sixth part of their spiritual merit from each and every one of them; if he does not, he receives the sixth part of their demerit as well.' 'As payment for his protection service, the king receives revenue.' A thief among monarchs is one who fails to adequately defend his subjects.'

The role of Hakim-i-Adil is to restrain the strong from oppressing the vulnerable. Mischief, turmoil, and sanitation are all shut down by the sovereign. God instilled fear of him in the hearts of the people, allowing them to live in peace under his justice and seek his power's stability. 'By the light of imperial justice, some cheerfully followed the path of obedience, while others abstained for fear of punishment and, as a result, chose the path of rectitude.'

When peace and protection are provided, blessings follow, and the blessings or conditions that follow peace and protection described by these writers indirectly offer us an indication of their vision of kings' responsibilities and the extent of state activity. 'People sleep with their doors open; women, decked in all their ornaments and unguarded by males, walk fearlessly through the streets; people practise virtues rather than harming one another; the three classes make great sacrifices of various kinds; the science of agriculture and trade, which is the root of this world, is in good order.' As a result of Abul Fazl being under the reign of a true king, 'sincerity, health, chastity, justice, polite manners, fidelity, truth, a rise in sincerity....are the result.' He is constantly concerned about the kid politician's health and treats the various maladies that afflict him. The purpose of the state under him was to abolish tyranny and bring forth dormant faculties, or exploit the capacities of subjects under him, and so 'a multitude of persons became fused into one body by means of the warmth of the beam of unanimity and concord.'

CONCLUSION

Sher Shah Suri, often known as Sher Khan or the Lion King, was one of mediaeval India's most powerful administrators. Sher Shah Suri's administration was founded on old institutions in a new spirit, and he was so successful at it that he nearly revolutionised mediaeval Indian administration to serve the people's interests. He did not create a new ministry, and his administrative divisions and sub-divisions, as well as his officer titles, were all borrowed from the past. His military changes were similar to those of Ala-ud-din Khalji, and his tax management was also not very innovative. But he instilled a new spirit in these venerable organisations, transforming them into tools for the common good. Sultan Sher Shah, like all other rulers of the Sultanate of Delhi, was a dictator at the helm of the Central authority. But, unlike his forefathers, he was a good despot who used his authority for the good of the people. Despite this, he held all the strings of policy, as well as civil and military power. His ministers were in charge of the day-to-day operations of the administration, but they had no ability to make policies or propose major changes to the way business was conducted or the administrative structure. Jalal ud-Din Ayatollah Khomeini Muhammad Akbar (r. 1560-1605) was a Muslim monarch who aimed to establish Hindustan's first lasting Muslim dynasty. Akbar's motivation for doing so was not only to consolidate all power under his control, but rather to use his position as sultan to employ political methods that would allow Hindustan to thrive as a whole. He realised that in order for his dynasty to endure, he needed to legitimise his authority and maintain Mughal military superiority in the eyes of all of his subjects, even the Hindu majority. Indeed, his re-imagining of court practises, revision of the land revenue system, and introduction of a variety of administrative reforms should be seen as tools aimed at legitimising the new Mughal sovereign in the eyes of the majority of his subjects, the Hindus, as well as potential Mughal opponents. This paper will show how Akbar legitimised his rule by creating a new ideology for Hindustan's ruler, which was to be sustained by such legitimising measures as the use of unchanging court ritual to solidify his personal relationship with his officials, as well as the establishment of an efficient land revenue system and imperial administration. Following Akbar's legitimising acts, the Indian subcontinent received a more efficient type of government than it had under previous Muslim kings.

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