

Jahangir

Jama-dami: -

The Mughal nobles had great attachment for land because control over land was a mark of social prestige. The revenue department had therefore to mark an assessment of the income of different areas so that each nobles and mansabdar was assigned land or jagir according to his status. This assessment was made in 'dams' Therefore, the income of the jagir was called Jamadami.

Ahadi: -

'Ahadi' were brave soldiers who were directly recruited by the Mughal Emperor. They were besides the troops provided by the Mansabdars. As these 'gentleman' troopers were recruited by the Emperor himself so they were considered highly trusted and were paid higher salaries than other troopers.

Karkhanas: -

'Kurkhanas' was a government department that catered to the needs of royal house hold not only by manufacturing but also by purchasing goods from the market.

Barak-andaz and Tir-andaz: -

'Barakandaz' were the skilled musketeers who trained their muskets on the enemies and brought havoc upon them. On the other hand, 'Tir-andaz' were the bowmen who struck arrows while mounted on their horses. Both were an important part of Mughal army.

Banduqchi

'Banduqchi' were the matchlock bearers. They formed a part of the footmen in the Mughal army and were paid salaries between three and seven rupees a month.

After the death of Akbar in 1605 his eldest son Jahangir succeeded to the throne without any difficulty. His two younger brothers Murad and Danyal had already died due to excessive drinking. However, shortly after Jahangir's accession, his eldest son, Khusrau rebelled against his father. Khusrau had intentions of occupying Lahore but he was pursued by his father and was captured and imprisoned and later on murdered by his brother Prince Khurram (Shah Jahan) in 1622. Jahangir died in 1627 and was buried at Shahdra, near Lahore.

Achievements: - In 1614 Usman Khan the Afghan governor of Bengal revolted against Mughals. He was, however, defeated by imperial forces in 1615 and peace was resorted in Bengal.

The main achievement of Jahangir, was the settlement of outstanding dispute with Mewar. Rana Pratab had been succeeded by his son Rana Amar Singh. Akbar had sent a series of expeditions against Amar Singh in order to force him to accept Mughal suzerainty. Jahangir himself was sent twice against him, but could achieve little. However, after his succession in 1605 Jahangir took up the matter energetically. In 1614 A.D. Prince Khuram fought a successful war against Amar Singh and he accepted the Mughal suzerainty.

Jahangir in return gave him all the territories including Chittor and did not insist up on the Rana's paying personal homage to him.

Like his father, Jahangir realized that conquests could be lasting on the basis not of force but of securing the good will of the people. He therefore treated the defeated Afghan and Rajput chiefs, and their followers with consideration and sympathy.

Setbacks: - Akbar had conquered Qandhar from the Persians in 1595. In 1622 Shah Abbas, the Shah of Iran abruptly attacked Qandhar and captured it. Jahangir had a mind of reconquering Qandhar but due to the rebellion of prince Khuram he could not achieve success and Qandhar was lost which lowered the prestige of the Mughals.

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Nur Jahan

Nur Jahan's original name was Mehr-un-Nisa. She was the daughter of Mirza Ghias Beg (Itimadudaula - title), who belonged to a respectable family of Persia. On account of some adverse circumstances, Ghias Beg left Persia to try his luck in India.

Nur Jahan was first married to an Iranian young man, Ali Quli Khan (Sher Afghan) who was the governor of Burdwan. It has been alleged by some historians that when Jahangir came to the throne he managed to kill Sher Afghan in 1607 in order to marry Mehr-un-Nisa. But sober historians do not believe that Jahangir was responsible for the death of her husband. She got married to Jahangir in 1611. Her father Itimadudaula had been made joint diwan by Jahangir in the first year of his reign. Having been tested in this office and following Nur Jahan's marriage with Jahangir, Itimadudaula was raised to the office of the chief Diwan and her brother Asaf Khan was made Khan-i-Saman and later wakil. Other members of the family also benefitted from the alliance, their mansabs being augmented. Nur Jahan died in 1645 and was laid in a grave besides Jahangir.

Role of Nur Jahan: - Nur Jahan's marriage with Jahangir in 1611 marks a turning point in the history of Jahangir's reign as because of this alliance Nur Jahan and her family assumed influential position. Immediately after her marriage, Nur Jahan became almost a de facto ruler. No grant of land was conferred upon any women except under her seal. Her name began to appear on the coins along with her husband and the royal *farmans* began to be issued at her instance. Sometimes she would sit in the balcony of her palace, while the nobles would present themselves, and listen to her diktats. Slowly and gradually she not only began to participate in the administration but also tried to concentrate all the authority in her hands. That is why some historians call the period between 1611-1627 as the reign of Nur Jahan. Some modern historians like Noor-ul-Hasan and Chandrapanth do not agree with the theory of overwhelming influence of Nur Jahan upon Jahangir. They believed that Nur Jahan's family assumed power and position by dint of their long-standing service in the Mughal administration where they proved very efficient and loyal. According to them as long as Jahangir was in good health he assumed real power. That is why we find Nur Jahan's opponents in the Mughal service.

However, the fact remains that after her marriage with Jahangir, his father and other family members were also benefited. Itimadudaula was given substantial increase in *mansab* and was raised to the office of chief diwan. Her brother Asaf Khan was also appointed the *Khan-i-Saman*, a post reserved for nobles in whom the emperor had full confidence. Her another brother Abdul Hassan received the title of Itqad Khan and was given a good mansab. Nur Jahan's maternal uncle, her sisters, her brother-in-law and other relations were given high positions.

Nur Jahan's Junta: Nur Jahan could not have exercised the authority without a strong supporting structure. The structure was Junta comprising at its height Nur Jahan; her father Itimadudaula; her brother Asaf Khan and her step-son Khurram (Shahjahan). Almost all the European travelers are unanimous that the administration was really in the hands of the Junta. For example to quote Pelsart, "If any one with request is allowed to speak to the king, the king hears him indeed, but will give no answer of yes or no, refer him promptly to Asaf Khan, who in the same way will not dispose off no important matter without communicating with his sister, the queen..."

However some historians do not agree with this view. They point out that till 1622 when Jahangir's health broke down all the important decisions were taken by the Jahangir himself as is clear from his autobiography.

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Life Sketch of Nur Jahan:

Nur Jahan (Mehr-un-Nisa) was the daughter of Mian Ghias Beg of Iran who during the reign of Akbar had come to India. Jahangir had fallen in love with her at the first sight but Akbar got her married with Sher Afghan. After the death of Sher Afghan Jahangir married Nur Jahan in 1611 A.D. and she was given the title of Nur Jahan. Her father was made Diwan and brother Asaf-Khan was appointed Khan-i-Saman. It is said that Nur Jahan in collaboration with her father, brother and Khurram (or Shah Jahan) organized a Junta which ran the administration and all the powers centred round this body. In 1625, this *Junta* was divided into two parts because of the differences between Nur Jahan and Prince Khurram. Due to this reason even Prince Khurram had to revolt against the Junta. Some historians do not agree with this view. They say that before 1622 A.D. Jahangir controlled the whole affair and Nur Jahan's influence increased only after 1622 A.D. when Jahangir had fallen sick.

Influence of Nur Jahan- Bright Side:

Nur Jahan was an able woman who had very good Influence on the administration. Her presence doubled the splendour of the durbat. She understood all problems of the state very well. She quickly found solution to every problem. She ran the administration very cleverly and efficiently. She was a very kind-hearted lady. She arranged the marriage of about five hundred poor and orphan girls and herself met all the expenses. Her father and brother proved very useful. They did a wonderful job to improve the administration. Nur Jahan also reduced the expenditure of the royal house-hold.

Nur Jahan had not only influenced the administration but she had also had a good effect on Jahangir. She tried to bring moral change in Jahangir. In order to check Jahangir's wrath and his excesses, Nur Jahan played a dominant role. Influenced by her, Jahangir tried to have check on his drinking habits. She was an educated woman. She took great interest in music, art and poetry. She always tried to keep Jahangir in good humour. She had intense love for Jahangir. She always took an extra ordinary care for Jahangir's health. In a nut-shell, it can be said that Nur Jahan has a very healthy and moral influence on Jahangir.

Give a brief evaluation of Jahangir as a ruler:

Jahangir was a man of strange personality which cannot be easily understood. In fact Jahangir was a combination of several virtues and vices. He is therefore regarded as a mixture of opposites. According to **Dr. V.A. Smith**, "*He was a strange compound of tenderness and cruelty, justice and caprice, refinement and brutality, good sense and childishness.*"

Bright Side of Jahangir's Character or His Achievement as a Ruler. Most of the foreign historians have found more faults in Jahangir's character which is not the real picture. He possessed several of the qualities which none of his contemporary rulers could claim to have. The bright side his character, as a ruler, is enumerated below:

A Kind and Affectionate Man. Jahangir was a generous and kind person who was always ready to give help to the poor and the destitute. He would distribute free gifts among the poor and he had opened several free dispensaries for them. He was also an affectionate person who had great love for his children, wives and distant relatives.

An Able Ruler. Jahangir was an able ruler who sincerely cared for the welfare of his subjects. Soon after his succession to the throne, he carried several laudable reforms for the benefit of his people. He abolished several vexatious taxes. He also abolished inhuman punishments like chopping off hands and limbs. He also built inns and got several wells and tanks dug for his people. He took several other steps for the welfare of his people.

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A Just King. Jahangir was a great lover of justice. It was the most significant quality of his character. Soon after his accession to the throne, he tried up a golden chain of justice in the Agra Fort. Even the humblest could pull it and seek his justice. He inflicted severe punishments on those who created chaos in the country or disturbed peace and order so that they could never raise their heads to perpetrate injustice on his subjects. He did not spare even the royal princes and the nobles while dispensing justice. His justice was equal and indiscriminate which made him well known far and wide.

A Religious Tolerant. Like his father, Jahangir was tolerant towards other religions. He was generous towards the people of all faiths. He held discourses with the Hindus yogis and gave due respect to the Christian missionaries. Though himself a staunch follower of the Sunni faith, he never persecuted those who followed other sects and faiths. It made him popular among the people.

An Able Statesman. Jahangir followed the same policy towards the Rajputs as his illustrious father Akbar had followed before him. He appointed them to high offices and established matrimonial alliances with them. Raja Man Singh and Mirza Aziz Koka had opposed his succession to the throne but he forgave them and thus was able to win over their enduring friendship. In the same way, he gave the honour and respect to Rana Amar Singh of Mewar and won his allegiance to the Mughal throne by not forcing him to submit to any matrimonial alliance.

A Capable General. Jahangir was a fine shot, brave soldier and a capable general. He not only suppressed the revolts successfully but also conquered the territories of Mewar, Kangra and Ahmadnagar etc.

A Patron of Literature. Jahangir was a great scholar. He had a great mastery over Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindu languages. He himself wrote his biography called the "Tuzuki-i-Jahangiri" which is regarded as a precious source of contemporary history; Jahangir also gave honour to the scholars. In his court flourished several scholars like Abdullah Dehlavi, Niamatullah, and Mirza Ghias Beg etc.

A Lover of Art and Beauty. Jahangir was a great lover of art and took great interest in painting, music and architecture. He was generous and liberal to help the artists. He was also a great lover of all that is beautiful. He enjoyed the beauties of nature and was particularly enamored by the beautiful waterfalls and springs of Kashmir.

Dark Side of Jahangir's Character or Jahangir's Failure as a Ruler: Besides the above qualities of his character, Jahangir had some defects in his character which had almost completely overshadowed his good qualities. Following was the dark side of his character as a ruler: -

His Addiction to Drinking. The main defect of his character was his total addiction to wine drinking which had completely ruined his health and made him quite lazy and indolent. In the beginning, he used to take twenty cups a day. But after his accession to the throne, when the influence of Nur Jahan, he became moderate and took wine only at night.

Capricious and Cruel. Though Jahangir was normally a kind and generous ruler but whenever he lost temper, he became capricious and cruel and inflicted needlessly cruel punishments quite disproportionate to the nature of the crime. Most people could not understand this aspect of his nature.

Lover of Ease and Pleasure. Another defect of his character that interfered with Jahangir's administration was his love of ease and pleasure. That is why he left the reins of his government in the hands of his wife Nur Jahan which only added to his troubles. He was so drowned in a cup of wine and was contented with half a seer of flesh that he forgot that he was the ruler of a great

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country whose administration he had to run. He easily came under the spell of those he loved and became a puppet in their hands. For a long time, he played in the hands of Nur Jahan and her brother Asaf Khan.

It is because of the strange combination of these qualities and defects in his character that most historians call him 'a mixture of opposites' and a 'talented drunkard'. As a ruler, he was successful in some fields while he was an utter failure in others.

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