

Analysis Of Information Pertaining To Economic Life In The “Jahangirnama”

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the political and economic measures implemented by the Mughal Emperor Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir upon his accession to the throne at the beginning of the 17th century. Drawing primarily from the Emperor's own autobiography, the "Jahangirnama" (Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri), the study analyzes the financial strategies used to consolidate power. Key findings reveal Jahangir's efforts to stabilize the court by eliminating factionalism and securing loyalty through significant salary increases for officials (a minimum of 20%) and the specialized military corps, the Ahadiys (50%). The research details the redistribution of high-ranking mansabs (ranks), showing Jahangir's reliance on both loyal Mavarounnahr-origin allies and prominent Indian figures like the Rajputs. Crucially, the paper explores the Emperor's comprehensive monetary reforms, including the introduction of new gold coins (Muhr, Nur Shahi, Nur Sultani) struck in unique weights (tolas) and inscribed with distinct poetic and religious phrases. These findings illuminate the early economic policies and administrative changes that underpinned Jahangir's reign, confirming his systematic approach to establishing political authority and fiscal stability through administrative hierarchy and currency control.

Keywords: - Jahangirnama (Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri), Boburids Empire Economic Reforms, Monetary System Mansabdari System, Nur ud-Din Muhammad Jahangir Coinage.

INTRODUCTION

At the dawn of the 17th century, the Mughal Empire experienced a series of economic and social transformations. Following the death of Emperor Akbar due to illness, factionalism emerged among the court nobility. Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir, upon ascending the Mughal throne after his father, embarked on stabilizing the political and economic situation both domestically and internationally. The new ruler instituted several reforms across the social and economic

sectors.

Emperor Jahangir's initial priority was to curb the factionalism among the high-ranking court nobles. To achieve this, he decreed that all officials and functionaries who had served during the reign of his late father, Emperor Akbar, would retain their posts, subsequently increasing their salaries by a minimum of 20 percent. The pay of the Ahadiys (soldiers of a special military corps directly answerable to the emperor and responsible for the supreme ruler's security) was boosted by 50

percent. This substantial increase in the Ahadiys' remuneration was clearly aimed at securing the person of the new sovereign.

The details provided in the "Jahangirnama" indicate that changes among the court officials commenced in 1605 when the governorship of Punjab was conferred upon Sa'id Khan. In a strategic move concerning the military, Emperor Jahangir appointed Shaykh Farid Bukhari, a trusted loyalist, to the important post of Mir Bakhshi (Chief Paymaster). Shaykh Farid Bukhari had been one of the faithful Amirs (nobles) of the deceased Emperor Akbar.

Even the officials who had entered Emperor Akbar's service during Prince Jahangir's rebellion—when the latter had declared the Suba (province) of Allahabad an independent state—were retained in their positions, with some receiving promotions. Nonetheless, Jahangir predominantly appointed his close allies to senior positions. Just fifteen days after his enthronement, Sharif Khan, having arrived in the capital, was bestowed with the title of Chief Minister, or Amir ul-Umaro (Premier Noble). The Amir ul-Umaro was granted the rank of five thousand cavalry and five thousand zat (personal rank). Jahangir specifically highlighted Sharif Khan's lifelong service and loyalty, entrusting the Amir ul-Umaro with the responsibility for his own personal security. It is noted that during the rebellion of Prince Salim (Jahangir), Sharif Khan had been dispatched to Allahabad by Emperor Akbar to reconcile the prince. However, upon reaching Allahabad, he defected from Emperor Akbar's service and did not return to the court.

The Rajput commander Man Singh was also retained in his position. Man Singh, the Subadar (governor) of Bengal, was Emperor Jahangir's brother-in-law. The Emperor's son, Khusraw, and daughter, Sultanunnisa Begum, were Man Singh's nephews and niece, respectively.

Another high post at the court was assumed by Amir Asaf Khan. This individual, who had a mansab (rank) of two thousand five hundred troopers (navkars) during Emperor Akbar's time, was granted a mansab of five thousand cavalry by Jahangir. He was now referred to as Wazir (Minister) rather than Amir and was appointed as Bek Atka (Guardian/Tutor) to the Emperor's son, Prince Parviz. Since there were several individuals named Asaf Khan at the Mughal court across different periods, Mu'tamid Khan, a contemporary chronicler, provided a clarification: "This person's original name was Ja'far Bek, the son of Mirza

Bad'uz-Zaman bin Aqa Mulla". Asaf Khan arrived in India from Iraq in the 22nd year of Emperor Akbar's reign (1578 CE), entered Mughal service, steadily climbed the ranks, and was appointed to the post of Wazir in 1600.

Among the Rajput commanders, Madhu Singh was awarded a mansab of three thousand cavalry. Shaykh Ruknuddin Afghan was promoted from a mansab of five hundred cavalry to three thousand five hundred cavalry. Ram Das Kachchvaha (three thousand), Abdurrahman (son of Abulfazl Allami), Maha Singh (grandson of Man Singh), Zahid Khan, Jamil Khan, and Qara Khan Turkmen were each granted a mansab of two thousand cavalry.

Raja Bir Singh Dev, from the Bundela Rajput clan, received a mansab of three thousand cavalry. It was this very Bir Singh Dev who had assassinated Abulfazl Allami, who served as Chief Minister during the reign of Jahangir's father, Emperor Akbar. When Emperor Akbar summoned Abulfazl, the commander of the Mughal army fighting in the Deccan region of South India, to the capital, the Chief Minister was murdered by Bir Singh Dev, along with approximately fifty of his retinue, on the instruction of the rebellious Prince Salim.

Mir Ziyauddin Qazvini's mansab was also increased by one thousand cavalry, and he was appointed Chief of the Emperor's Stable (Sayiskhana) because he had served Emperor Jahangir during his childhood.

Mirza Ali Akbarshahi was appointed to a mansab of four thousand cavalry.

Evidently, Emperor Jahangir appointed his close associates and trusted individuals to higher positions. Among these officials were not only natives of Transoxiana (Mavarounnahr) but also local Indians and Afghans.

Emperor Jahangir also raised the ranks of officials serving far from the court. For instance, valuable gifts were dispatched to Mirza Rustam, the Governor of Qandahar, and to Abdurrahim Khani Khanan, the commander-in-chief of the Mughal army in the Deccan region.

Lal Beg, who held a mansab of one thousand five hundred cavalry and arrived at the court a month after Jahangir's enthronement, was elevated to a mansab of four thousand cavalry and appointed as the Subadar (Governor) of Bihar.

Qilich Khan, who had been sidelined from the court during Emperor Akbar's reign, was appointed Subadar of Gujarat, and one hundred thousand rupees were allocated from the treasury for his expenses.

Mir Sadr Jahan, holding a mansab of two thousand

cavalry, was considered a close confidant of Emperor Jahangir since the latter's childhood. The Emperor increased his mansab to four thousand cavalry.

Ghiyas Beg, who held the post of Diwan-i Buyutat (the subordinate Diwan of the suba (province) answerable to the central Diwan) and a mansab of seven hundred cavalry during Akbar's time, was granted a mansab of one thousand five hundred cavalry.

Clearly, Emperor Jahangir sought to win over more people to his side. During Emperor Akbar's era, the Timurid prince Shahrukh Mirza Badakhshani held a mansab of five thousand zat (personal rank). Jahangir raised his mansab to seven thousand zat. Shahrukh Mirza's ancestor, Sultan Ways Mirza, was both a paternal and maternal cousin to Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur. He is mentioned in the pages of the "Baburnama" as Khon Mirza and Mirzakhan. After Mirzakhan's death, Babur appointed his eldest son, Humayun, as the Governor of Badakhshan and took the deceased Mirzakhan's son, Sulayman Mirza, under his guardianship. Babur later appointed the grown-up Timurid prince as governor in his father's place. Shahrukh Mirza, the son of Ibrahim Mirza, who was the son of Sulayman Mirza, was later appointed as the Subadar of Malwa.

Emperor Jahangir extended a series of opportunities to all officials who served during his father's time and those appointed after his accession. He noted that in accordance with the Chingiz Khan's Tura (Yassa/Code), he granted them Tugh (standard/banner) and seals. It was mandatory for the seals to be impressed with red ink.

Upon his accession to the throne, Emperor Jahangir, in accordance with the prevailing traditions, ordered the minting of gold, silver, and copper coins in his own name. The first volume of the "Jahangirnama" records that new gold and silver coins of various sizes and weights were struck, each being assigned a unique name. All the coins were measured according to the tola, the unit of weight then in use in India. One tola was equivalent to twelve grams of weight.

During the years of Nuruddin Muhammad Jahangir's rule over the Mughal Empire, monetary reforms were implemented by the ruler's command, and the newly minted coins were personally named by the Emperor:

- The largest gold coin was called the Muhr and weighed 100 tolas. Emperor Jahangir named the

100-tola gold coin "Nur Shahi".

- The gold coin weighing 50 tolas was named "Nur Sultani" by the Emperor.
- The gold coin weighing 20 tolas was given the name "Nur Dawlat."
- The gold coin weighing 10 tolas was named "Nur Karam."
- The heavy gold coin weighing 5 tolas was designated "Nur Mihr."
- The gold coin weighing 1 tola was named "Nur Jahani."
- The gold coin weighing half a tola was named "Nurani."

The gold coins during Emperor Jahangir's reign were thus issued in seven different weights and sizes. The following Persian couplet was inscribed on the gold coins weighing 100, 50, 20, and 10 tolas:

Persian Couplet (Line 1):

بخط نور بزرر کَلک تقدیر

رقم زد شاه نورالدین جهانگیر

Transliteration (Original/Persian):

Bakht-i nūr bi-zarur ki-lki taqdīr

Raqam zad Shāh Nūr ud-Dīn Jahāngīr

Meaning:

With the line of light upon the gold, the pen of Destiny

Inscribed the name of Shah Nur ud-Din Jahangir.

The Kalima (the Islamic profession of faith) was inscribed between these two lines. Another couplet was inscribed on the reverse side of the coins:

Persian Couplet (Line 2):

شد چو خورزین سکه نورانی جهان

افتاب مملکت تاریخ آن

Transliteration (Original/Persian):

Shud chu khwar-zīn sikkah-yi nurānī jahān

"Āftāb-i mamlakat" tārikh-i ān.

Meaning:

As this coin became radiant like the sun, the world [was illuminated],

Its date became "The Sun of the Realm."

The phrase "Āftāb-i mamlakat" (The Sun of the Realm) in the second line of that couplet represents the Hijri year 1014 (1605/1606 CE) in abjad (numerical value of letters) calculation, which is the year Emperor Jahangir ascended the throne. Thus, the coins were minted in that very year. The year of mintage was inscribed on the coins in the form of the Hijri year, along with the name of the mint and the cities where they were struck—Agra, Ajmer, and Lahore.

The following couplet by Amir ul-Umaro Sharif

Khan was inscribed on the Nur Jahani gold coin, which weighed one tola:

Persian Couplet:

روی زررا ساخت نورانی برنگ مهر و ماه
شاه نورالدین جهانگیر ابن اکبر بادشاه

Transliteration:

Rū-yi zar-rā sākht nūrānī ba-rang-i mihr wa mäh,
Shāh Nūr ud-Dīn Jahāngīr ibn Akbar Pādshāh.

Meaning:

He made the face of the gold radiant with the color of the sun and the moon,
Shah Nur ud-Din Jahangir, son of Akbar Padshah.
Emperor Jahangir also personally named the silver coins minted during his reign:

- The silver coin weighing 100 tolas was called "Kawkab-i Ṭālī" (Star of Fortune).
- The silver coin weighing 50 tolas was named "Kawkab-i Iqbāl" (Star of Prosperity).
- The silver coin weighing 20 tolas was named "Kawkab-i Murād" (Star of Desire/Goal).
- The silver coin weighing 10 tolas was named "Kawkab-i Bakht" (Star of Luck).
- The silver coin weighing 5 tolas was designated "Kawkab-i Sa'd" (Auspicious Star).
- The silver coin weighing 1 tola was named "Jahāngīrī."
- The silver coin weighing half a tola was named "Sultānī."
- The silver coin weighing a quarter of a tola was named "Nisārī."
- The monetary unit of the silver coin weighing half a quarter of a tola (i.e., 1.5 grams) was called "Khayr-i Iqbāl" (Good Fortune).

Thus, silver coins were minted in nine different types, according to their size and weight. The Nur Jahani gold coin (weighing one tola) and the Jahāngīrī silver coin (also weighing one tola) were widely circulated. Jahangir also noted that one tola in India was equivalent to two and a half misqāl in Iran and Turan.

According to the information presented in the "Jahangirnama," gold and silver coins were minted in the city of Cambay in 1618 CE. Emperor Jahangir records that he commanded the striking of new gold and silver coins that were twice the weight of the previous ones. He specified that these coins must bear the phrase "Jahangirshahi" and the numerical date 1027 (AH). The use of the Turkic word "tanga" in the book attracted the attention of European scholars, although they could not provide a definitive explanation for it. Alexander Rogers, the translator of the "Jahangirnama" into English, rendered the form as tanka. In this context, the Mughal Emperor Jahangir, acknowledging the

extreme popularity of the Ashrafi and Shahrukhi coins of the time, desired his newly minted coins, called Jahangiri, to be widely adopted in commercial transactions.

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