

A Review of the Road Policy of the Mughal Emperors.

Prithwis Kumar Biswas, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Bejoy Narayan

Mahavidyalaya, Itachuna, Hooghly-712147, West Bengal, India, Email:

prithwis16ts@gmail.com

Abstract

The road system is one of the main elements to protect the integrity and vitality of any state. Because the Mughal Empire, like other states of the Middle Ages, was not built on the basis of public support and this huge empire inhabited by many peoples was solely dependent on military power to protect its integrity. In order to suppress the separatist forces of the empire and to protect the integrity of the empire, there was an urgent need to supply troops to the affected areas and in this the role of land was important. The economic prosperity of the state depended on timely collection of land revenue and expansion of trade and in this also the role of roads was immense. Because, without the improvement of the communication system, it is not possible to collect the land revenue from every region of the state at the right time and the communication system of a state is mainly dependent on the land route. Along with the construction of roads for the expansion of trade, it is also necessary to make the roads free of crime. Because the Mughal emperors were fully aware of these issues, the construction of roads, Be proactive in reforms and pedestrian safety.

Keywords: Road system, Mughal, Empire, Military power, Revenue, Trade, Government, Kotwals.

The permanence and prosperity of an empire depended largely on its road system. Realizing this reality, the far-sighted Mughal emperors pursued a definite policy on road systems. The imperialist Mughal emperors were especially careful in the construction of better roads and their security for three reasons. First: The existence of the Mughal Empire was not dependent on the loyalty of the people, but on military power. As a result, improved roads and transport systems were absolutely necessary to suppress the separatist forces and quickly send troops to the affected areas. For this reason, the Mughal emperors, the rulers of the vast empire, undertook to build roads to connect the peripheral and important regions of the empire with the heart of the empire. Secondly: The Mughal Empire was an agrarian state. Most of the state income came from land revenue. The prosperity of the empire depended on the amount and speed of collection of land revenue (hasil) collected. As a result, a well-developed and safe

road system was needed for the timely collection of land revenue from all regions of the vast empire. Although the economy of the Mughal Empire was mainly based on agriculture, the prosperity of the treasury was also dependent on industry and trade. For the expansion of internal and external trade of the country, the construction of new roads and the provision of comfort to pedestrians and common people was absolutely necessary and for this reason the Mughal administrators were keen on the construction of new roads as well as their security and for the convenience of traders and pedestrians, the construction of roadside inns, digging of wells and providing shade. Take initiative to create trees. Third: In times of emergency such as famine, flood, epidemic, there was a need for a better and safer road system to quickly deliver government aid to the people. Due to all these military, economic and administrative needs, the powerful Mughal emperors took initiatives to improve the road system and ensure its security.

Law and order were closely maintained in the cities, villages, and trade routes by the Mughals. To safeguard the security of businesses, artisans, etc. travelling from one place to another, various security measures were put into place. The Mughal Emperors, from Babur on through Aurangzeb, were keenly aware of the political and economical importance of roadways. Because control of separatist regional rulers and economic prosperity resulting from the expansion of imperial trade were absolutely necessary to keep the vast Mughal Empire intact. therefore, Mughal Emperors established a plan to maintain safety along the trade routes, which also led to significant road construction.

The conqueror Babur counted his victories from Agra to Kabul. He constructed horse chowkis every 36 miles and towers every 18 miles in order to establish a successful mail system. Emperor Babur established these checkpoints. So that he could monitor the situation in Kabul and defend himself against incursions from the north-western frontier provinces. These posts were constructed for the security of individuals who journeyed along these roads, as well as providing rest places for passengers and a steady supply of horse feed. Babur the Great ordered that these rest homes be built close to crown land and that the Parganas, from which the towers or post houses emanated, be charged for their construction. [1]

The Afghan Empire fell apart after Islam Shah's death, and chaos broke out. The Mughal Emperor Akbar, as a result, gave the administrative structure of the Empire a new

dimension. Along with restoring order, he also launched a number of beneficial projects that resulted in an improvement in administration as a whole. From the beginning of his reign, Emperor Akbar's prime aim was the establishment of a strong central authority. He captured nearly all of the great Rajput lords while destroying Afghan strongholds in Punjab, Bihar, and Bengal through the use of both diplomacy and force. He extended the Deccan and the West Coast into the area of power of his empire. He constructed roads, bridges, and military outposts, which boosted trade and improved army mobility. [2]

The Mughal Empire was comprised of twelve subas, or provinces, under Emperor Akbar. Consequently, each suba was divided into a number of kotwals (districts), and each Sarkar was subsequently divided into Parganas or Mahals (present tehsils). A subedar (government representative) was chosen to supervise a suba's operations. He was supervised by a number of Suba government officials. Waqia Nawis worked under the Diwan, who was a suba's financial officer. The Sarkar was placed under Faujdar's command. During the Mughals, Amil was granted authority over Parganah. It was the duty of the Amil to protect the farmers from injustice and make sure that just the taxes set forth by the government were being taken from them.

The Faujdar of a Parganah had a duty to ensure peace and security within his domain so that travellers might move from one place to another without worrying about theft or robbery. The villages were governed by panchayats, and the towns were governed by kotwals. He was responsible for any theft that took place while he was in charge, and he had to pay back any money that the victims of the theft lost.

Provincial governors and district administrators were charged with maintaining and securing the roads, but it was the zamindars who were primarily in charge of protecting travellers and merchants from theft and harassment. It was the duty of the Zamindar to maintain the safety of caravans, officials, and other travellers, as well as to defend the highways and other routes in the region under his jurisdiction from thieves and dacoits. The maintenance of neighbourhood security was also given to the locals to manage. The townspeople were instructed to find the assailant and reclaim the stolen property in the event of a murder or theft on a roadway; in the event that they were unsuccessful, they were instructed to compensate the victim. [3]

The Mughals developed effective communication networks by constructing roads and bridges. Under the command of Emperor Akbar, a significant number of local roads and highways were constructed and maintained. He used the custom of measuring the length of the roads while travelling, and he had wells and inns built in the locations of his former lodgings. He also gave the order to plant trees on both sides of the street. Emperor Akbar, according to Muhammad Arif Qandhari, the author of "Tarikh-i-Akbari," ordered the building and maintenance of highways for the ease and safety of travellers. He also instructed the construction of minars (turrets) between Agra and Ajmer (a distance of 140 Akbari karons, or kos). Away from each Ko, rest areas were built. Deer or stag horns were fastened to these towers (minars) so that travellers could use them as markers when travelling on roadways and prevent getting lost. There were close to three hundred or four hundred horns on these minarets.

The Mughals gave preserving road safety a high priority because it was difficult to completely prohibit theft and robberies on the highways. Emperor Akbar was primarily worried about the safety of regional and national highways. He assigned some officials the duty of maintaining the safety of the routes and guarding against the risk of robbers and thieves in merchants' transit. In various locations throughout the city, Emperor Akbar built Sarais, or rest houses, to make travel more comfortable. Manucci claims that Emperor Akbar built countless new Sarais around his realm and ordered that the poor be given free food and shelter. In the year 1560 AD, the mother of Emperor Akbar constructed the Arab Sarai, a 300-person capacity sarai. [4]

Additionally, Emperor Akbar instructed his officials to maintain the safety of the trade and travel routes in Qandhar, Kabul, and Gaznin. The Afghan tribes that resided between Kabul and the Indus region tormented and attacked tourists due to their conceit and ignorance. Emperor Akbar erected Thanas and Sarais in these dangerous regions. He also put some brave men in these thanas to protect the tourists from abuse and molestation. Emperor Akbar went to great lengths to protect passengers from highway robbers, dacoits, and looters. He lessened tourists' suffering by making travel easy and comfortable. In his works on the subject, Abul Fazl asserts that Hindustan has developed into a centre for security and peace in addition to a location of righteousness and justice. As a result, a sizeable population immigrated and picked this country as their new home, especially lawyers and smart men. [5]

To secure the security and wellbeing of his empire, Jahangir the Great also took a number of actions. The persecuted individual who could not receive justice swiftly due to the administration's insincerity may come and shake this chain and draw Emperor Jahangir's attention; therefore, he tied the golden chain of justice (Zanfeer-i-adl). In order to improve traveller safety and lower highway crime and robbery, Emperor Jahangir also built sarais, wells, and reservoirs on the roadways. He also placed a major emphasis on keeping the shrine clean. Emperor Jahangir established 12 laws to rule the Mughal Empire. In Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, his autobiography, he makes reference to these regulations. Road safety, merchant security, and the construction of sarais, mosques, and wells were some of the topics covered by these rules. To lessen theft and highway robberies, several measures were introduced. On the highways where robberies and thefts took place, he gave the jagirdars of the neighboring regions the order to build public restrooms (sarais), dig wells, and build mosques adjacent to the roadways—possibly a little distance from habitations.

For travellers and traders, the highways and roads that crossed through the cities and villages were secure. However, many did not consider it safe to go on routes that were far from towns and villages. Edward Terry in 1617 According to the author, robbers resided in the mountains and forests between Surat and Mandu during his journey there. It was risky to drive on these highways. Visitors hired security guards to keep their belongings and lives safe from robbers and criminals while they were travelling. They employed valiant warriors (Rajputs, Pathans, or Balochis) to serve as their protectors. These were trustworthy individuals who would risk their lives to keep both the person they had hired and their property safe. Additionally, he asserts that English merchants with such security are capable of making the journey alone from Surat to Lahore with a vast collection of diamonds. As long as they were being paid, no one dared approach the individuals these guards were escorting. [6]

The Mughals went out of their way to provide protection for the travellers and put a stop to any theft or robbery. Even Tavernier acknowledges that most visitors to India go at night due to the country's scorching climate. When the tourists reached a town, the local governor informed them that if they needed to leave the town, they should do so before sundown as the town's gates are shut and no one is permitted to leave after dark as the governor is accountable for any theft that occurs there.

Emperor Shah Jahan (1628–1658 AD) made a number of efforts to guarantee the safety of the roads and highways. He assigned patrol squads and guards to keep routes safe from robbers and thieves. These officials were tasked with checking travellers' documents and travel authorizations. For the safety and security of travellers, he built many sarais. According to the French adventurer Bernier, Delhi once had a vast and spacious Sarai named Begum Sarai. It was built by Begum Sahib, the eldest daughter of Shah Jahan. Not just this princess, but all the nobles who coveted the Emperor's favour decorated the new city (Shah Jahanabad) at their own expense. This sarai, which gave perfect protection, could accommodate wealthy Persian, Uzbek, and other foreign merchants.

Additionally, the security and well-being of travellers and commerce were of utmost importance to Emperor Aurangzeb (1658–1707 AD). He established a number of free kitchens (Langarkhana or Balghurkhana) in Delhi and other provinces for the poor and other weak people. He gave the order to build a Sarai, or inn, in places where there were no rest stops for visitors. When he founded the city of Fatehpur, Emperor Aurangzeb ordered the building of sarais and the cultivation of gardens. According to Manucci, the Faujdars, who were in charge of ensuring the safety of travellers and merchants throughout the day, were instructed to make up for their losses. However, it was the passengers' duty to put off looking for safety if they were robbed at night. The victim received no compensation from the Faujdar. The Mughals placed a high priority on the security and safety of the routes. They exerted every effort to put an end to thievery and highway robberies. [7]

In conclusion, it can be claimed that many different social groups moved around in Mughal India and that the state provided a wide range of amenities to traders and tourists. Trade and commerce in Mughal India were boosted by the state's provision of security measures for merchants and other travellers. The following Mughal rulers waived a sizable levy that was owed by merchants. As a result, the Mughal treasury became rich. Besides enriching the treasury, the road building policy of the Mughal emperors played a significant role in preventing separatist activities.

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