

Jagirdari System, Development, Types, Features, UPSC Notes

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Jagirdari System was a system of allocating revenue from a specific territory to nobles in lieu of cash salaries for their services to the state. The Jagirdari System was a common practice during the Delhi Sultanate, with revenue assignments referred to as *iqtas*. The Jagirdari system continued under the **Mughal Empire**, and it involved granting land (jagirs) to nobles (mansbdar) for revenue collection and governance.

Jagirdari System was essential to the Mughal Empire's administration. Jagirdars were responsible for collecting taxes. The system incorporated various jagirs, such as Jagir Tankha, Mashrut Jagir, In'am Jagir and Watan Jagirs. The system evolved and underwent multiple changes before stabilizing. However, the basic framework was created during Akbar's reign.

Jagirdari System About

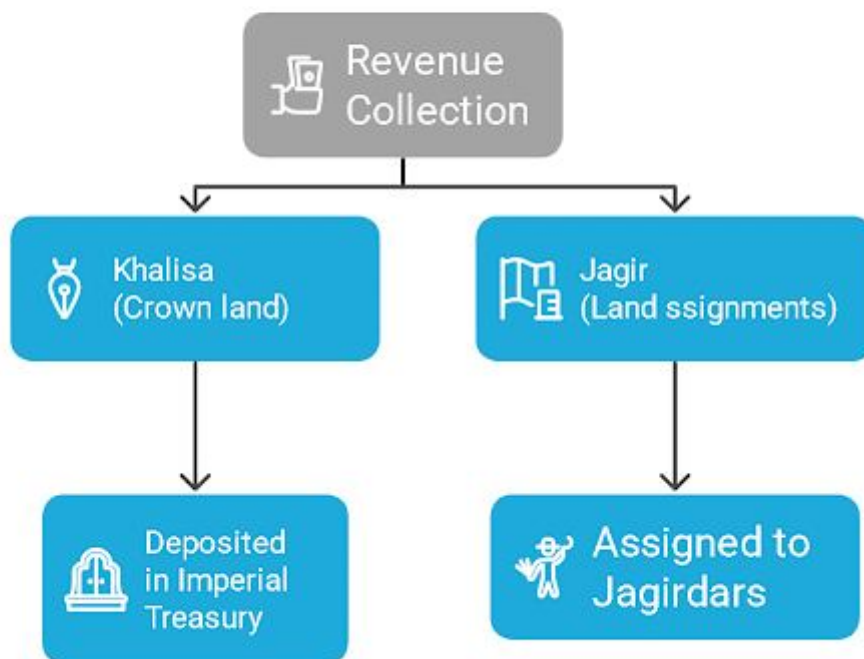
Jagirdari system, prevalent under the Mughal Empire, involved awarding land for revenue collection, called **Jagir**, to nobles and military personnel in return for their services. The holders of Jagirs were called **Jagirdars**. Jagirdars gathered revenue from these territories and maintained local government and army support. They were assigned

the right to collect revenue from the land and not the land itself.

Jagirdari System Development

Jagirdari system was a crucial component of Akbar's Mansabdari system and was modified several times under his successors. All Mughal mansabdars were compensated through the assignment of jagir. During Akbar's reign, all the territories were divided into Khalisa and Jagir. The revenue from Khalisa (Crown Land) went to the imperial territory, and the income from Jagir (Land Assignments) was allocated to Jagirdars instead of their cash salary.

Revenue Distribution in Mughal Empire



Jagirdari System and Iqta System

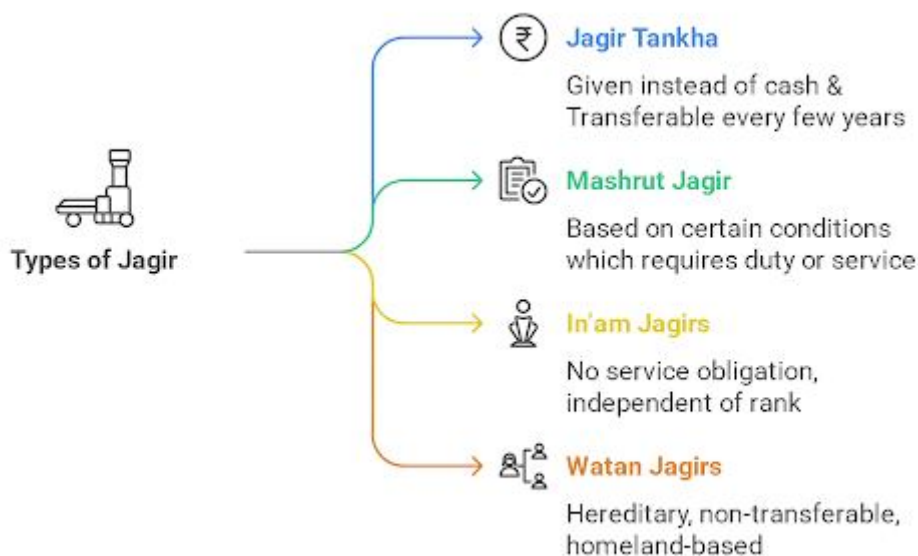
Jagirdari System and Iqta Systems served as means of military governance and tax collection. The **Delhi Sultanate** instituted the Iqta system, giving nobility non-hereditary, movable land allocations in exchange for tax collection and military maintenance. In the Jagirdari system, the jagirdars collected the revenue as part of their salary.

- It was created under the Mughals and included both inherited and transferable grants.
- Iqtadars had more direct administrative and military control, whereas Jagirdars had revenue collection power and limited administrative roles.

Jagirdari System Types

Jagirdari system generally had four revenue assignments: Jagir Tankha, Mashrut Jagir, In'am Jagirs, and Watan Jagirs. The types are as follows:

- **Jagir Tankha:** They were assignments of land revenue instead of salary, and they were transferable every three to four years.
- **Mashrut Jagir:** It was offered under certain conditions, including performing specified duties, supplying certain services, or complying with governmental legislation.
- **In'am Jagirs:** It involved no obligation of services and was independent of rank.
- **Watan Jagirs:** They were allocated to zamindars in their homeland. They remained hereditary and non-transferable.
 - Under **Jahangir**, some Muslim nobles were given jagirs resembling the watan jagir called al-tamgha.



Jagirdari System Features

Jagirdari System had several features, which included non-permanent nature of jagir assignments, revenue collection, shifting of jagirdars, etc. The features are discussed in detail below:

- **Not Permanent:** Jagir assignment was not permanent or hereditary. The Emperor could shift parts or the entire Jagir from one part of the imperial territory at any time. Similarly, the Emperor could also change the ratio between Jagir and Khalisa land.
 - The ratio between Jagir and Khalisa fluctuated, with Khalisa accounting for only 5% of total revenue under Akbar, 10% under Jahangir, and 9% to 15% under Shahjahan.
- **Revenue Collection:** The estimated revenue was called **Jama** or jamadani as it was calculated in dam(a small copper coin). However, the actual revenue collected was called **hasil**.
 - While **paibaqi** was the term for areas whose revenue was yet to be assigned to Mansabdars.
- **Shifting of jagir-holders:** The jagirdars were shifted from one jagir to another for administrative reasons. The system of transfers prevented jagirdars from establishing local roots.

- The system discouraged jagirdars from long-term development plans, as they prioritized short-term revenue extraction.

Jagirdari System Management

Under imperial laws, the Jagirdar could collect only approved income (mal wajib). Jagirdar used his officials (karkun) to carry out his orders, such as the *amil* (amalguzar) and the *fortadar* (treasurer). The jagirdars were under observation by the Imperial authority. In the suba, the diwan was intended to stop the jagirdars from oppressing the peasantry. The faujdar often assisted the jagirdar in collecting taxes whenever challenges occurred.

Jagirdari System Crisis

Jagirdari Crisis was one of the leading causes of the **Mughal Empire's decline**. During Auranzeb's time, the system started to fall apart. When the empire expanded into Deccan and Maratha lands, more nobles began fighting for a few jagirs. This rivalry undermined the empire's political structure and caused administrative inefficiencies. The burden of revenue collection fell heavily on cultivators, resulting in disputes and lawlessness.

Difference between Jagirdari, Mansabdari and Zamindari System

During the Mughal Empire, two land-based administrative systems were the Jagirdari and Mansabdari. **Lord Cornwallis** implemented the Zamindari System during British Rule. The difference between the three systems can be understood from the table below:

Features	Jagirdari System	Mansabdari System	Zamindari System
Definition	It was land grants to the nobles and the officials for revenue collection.	It was a ranking-based system in the Mughal Army.	It was a revenue collection system by the zamindars from the peasants.
Role	Governance and revenue collection	Military and administrative duties	Collection of revenue and land management
Military Responsibility	Depending on the size of the jagir, the jagirdar had to maintain a contingent.	Mansabdars were responsible for maintaining a specified number of troops.	Zamindars had no military responsibility.
Control over Land	Jagirdars had administrative authority over the land but did not own it.	Mansabdars were given administrative positions but were not associated with specific lands.	Zamindars held hereditary rights over their land and maintained direct control over them.

Jagirdari System UPSC PYQs

Q.1 With reference to Mughal India, what is/are the difference/differences between Jagirdar and Zamindar? (**UPSC Prelims 2019**)

1. Jagirdars were holders of land assignments in lieu of judicial and police duties, where as Zamindars were holders of revenue rights without obligation to perform any duty other than revenue collection.
2. Land assignments to Jagirdars were hereditary and revenue rights of Zamindars were not hereditary.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (d)

Q.2 Consider the following statements: (**UPSC Prelims 2019**)

1. In the revenue administration of Delhi Sultanate, the in-charge of revenue collection was known as 'Amil'.
2. The Iqta system of Sultans of Delhi was an ancient indigenous institution.
3. The office of 'Mir Bakshi' came into existence during the reign of Khalji Sultans of Delhi.

Which of the statements given above is correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans. (a)

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