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## The Mughal and the Trading of Horses in India, 1526-1707

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**Abstract:** This paper is an effort to study about the Mughal military culture and socio-economic importance of horses during the Mughal period. It explores the military and economic significance of the horses and its importance in the cavalry that was the mainstay of the Mughal army. It was the Mughal army that was the vanguard of the Mughal expansion. The most crucial feature of the Mughal army was its cavalry. The centrality of the horses in the cavalry regiment helped in the centralisation of the Mughal Empire.<sup>1</sup> The Mughal cavalry was admixture of 'Turco-Mongol', Central Asian, Middle East Asian and Indian warriors, especially the horsemen. Apart from the military man power, the geographical fringes of the above mentioned also procured/supplied the best quality of the Arabian, Persian, Turki, Tuzuki, Qabuli, Qandhari and Janglah Horses to the Mughals.<sup>2</sup> The good horses were imported to the Mughal state from Arabia, Iran, Turan, Turkey, Turkestan, Badakhshan, Shirwan, Qirghiz, Tibbet, Kashmir and other countries. This paper argues that the centrality of the horses in the Mughal 'military-civil' necessities encouraged the Emperors to establish control on the trade of war-horses, land-routes and other entrepots of the horses. The safety and security provided to trading activities was aimed to encourage the continuous supply of war-horses to the Mughal army. The continuous procurement of war-horses from Central Asian regions and neighboring countries established the Mughal superiority in cavalry warfare. Apart from the land routes, horses were also imported through the sea-routes, mainly from the countries of the Safavids and the Ottomans and the Uzbeks. Kabul and Qandhar were the major entrepots on the land-routes in the Mughal India for the horse traders. The ports of Surat, Cambay, Kutch, Thatta, Lahori Bandar and Sonargoan were the major entrepots for the bahri horses. This paper suggests that due to the crucial role of horses in the state building, the Mughals encouraged horse trading and invested in horse breeding too. In order to establish control over the horse trade, the Mughal Emperors established friendly and diplomatic relations with the neighbouring countries, provided protection to merchants and facilitated the trade by constructing proper roads and caravansarais and controlled the banditry through suppressing tribal and local insurgency. Apart from the construction of the fortified post at regular intervals, the Mughal Emperors also issued farmans on regular intervals addressed to the state officials (like amin, mansabdars, kotwals, zamindars and mutasaddis etc), for the remission of taxes for promoting the horse trade. They further suggested to officers to reduce heavy taxes and to provide proper safety and security to the merchants and their merchandise to encourage the trade within India. Due to the centrality of the horses, the horse traders even enjoyed close ties with the courtiers, and got multiple favours and administrative post in return. This paper also argues that the horses have been culturally considered more than the 'resources' and 'units of state-formation'. The utility and significance of horse in domestic, military and commercial milieu revealed its symbolic value and it became a representative of power and authority. This research is an effort to highlight the significance of the animal, who was mainstay of the Mughal military.

**Keywords:** military-civil, bahri, luharnis, caravansarais, khasa entrepots, mutasaddi, darogha

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Mughal had always given weightage to cavalry in their army structure.<sup>3</sup> It was the elementary and most reliable structure of their army. The horses were the integral part of the Mughal's military and political culture which was specially used for the aristocratic occupations of war, pageantry and riding.<sup>4</sup> The ranking of the Mughal *mansabdars* were represented by the dual rank of *zat* and *sawar*;

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<sup>1</sup> R.B. Azad Choudhary, "The Horse and the Mughal Military Culture in Transition, 1526-1795", M.Phil.Dissertation, Department of History, Delhi University, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> AbulFazal, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. H. Blochmann (Calcutta: Bib. Ind., 1867-77).

<sup>3</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 241-61.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Deloche, *Transport and Communications in India Prior to Steam Locomotion, Volume 1: Land Transport*, James Walker (trans. from the French) (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.228.

the former determined *mansabdar's* personal pay (*talab-i-ghasa*) and his status in official hierarchy and the latter (*sawar*) rank indicated the size of cavalry (horses and horsemen) unit under his command as well as the sanctioned amount of payment for maintaining the horsemen.<sup>5</sup> It also draws attention to the importance of warrior-administrators as an integral part of Mughal bureaucratic structure.<sup>6</sup> William Irvine has provided the detailed accounts on the number of the cavalry forces employed in the army of various Mughal emperors.<sup>7</sup> The estimated number of the cavalry force under Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah was 200,000; which was approximately half of the cavalry strength of Mughal Emperor Akbar.<sup>8</sup> Throughout the dominant Mughal period, 1526-1707 A.D., the Mughals maintained a larger cavalry force and it was their main military strength.

The excessive hot and humid ecological conditions of India were not favourable for the ideal breeding of the horses. Due to hot and monsoon conditions the breeding of the best quality of horses was not possible in India. The adverse variations in Indian topography also decreased the standard life span and breeding capacity of the horses. Further, the Indian grasses were less nutritional in comparison of the grasses of the Central and Middle-East Asia. In India the breeding was popular in certain limited areas but their standard was lower than the *Arabian*, *Persian* and *Turki* horses.<sup>9</sup> The Indian breed of the horses was not able to match the standard and quality of the horses imported from the foreign countries. Therefore, to attain the superior quality of horses in the imperial army, the Mughals heavily depended on the horse trade from the countries of Arab, Iran and Central Asia. The arid zone of Middle-East Asia and Central Asia was the soul and centre for the breeding and produced the best quality horses, like *Arabian*, *Persian*, *Tuzuki*, and *Turki* which were in huge demand by the Mughals due to their political and military consumptions. Francisco Pelsaert describes that 76% of the imperial horses were of *Arabian*, *Persian* and *Turkish* breed and were imported from the countries of Middle-East Asia and Central Asia.<sup>10</sup> The imported horses were more expensive and the imperial documents reveal that the Mughal had spent maximum of their revenue share on the purchase of quality horses.

From the period of 16<sup>th</sup> to the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century the Mughals played a very critical role in maintaining and continuing the regular import of horses for the imperial services. In order to keep control over the horse trade the Mughals even established friendly relations with the neighbouring countries and provided protection to merchants by constructing proper road<sup>11</sup> and *caravansarais*.<sup>12</sup> They also controlled the banditry by appointing regional influential element into Mughal aristocracy

<sup>5</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire*, pp. 201-23. Also see Shireen Moosvi, 'The Evolution of the "Mansab" System under Akbar Until 1596-7', pp. 173-85; William Irvine, 'The Army of the Indian Moghuls: Its Organization and Administration', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, (Jul., 1896), pp. 509-570. The *mansab* granted to *mansabdars* was not hereditary. The dual ranking of *zat* and *sawar* granted to *mansabdar* was divided into three categories. The first category was of those *mansabdar* who had *sawar* ranks equivalent to their *zat* ranks. Under second category the *mansabdars* were granted to maintain *sawar* lesser than of their *zat* ranks but not lesser than half of their *zat* ranks. The third and last category was of those *mansabdars* who were granted to maintain the *sawar* less than half of their *zat* ranks. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, the ranks varied from the *dahbashi* (commander of 10 horses) to the *dah-hazari* (commander of 10,000 horses).

<sup>6</sup> Maarten Van der Wee, 'Semi-Imperial Polity and Service Autocracy: The Mansabdars in Mughal India (ca. 1550 to ca. 1750)', pp. 209-225.

<sup>7</sup> William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 140.

<sup>10</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire*, p. 274.

<sup>11</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, ed. H. Blochmann (Calcutta: Bib. Ind., 1867-77), I, p. 590; T.H. Holdich, *The Indian Borderland: 1800-1900* (Delhi, 1987), pp. 47-8.

<sup>12</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 140-1. Emperor Akbar paid much attention regarding the horse-dealers. He constructed convenient quarters where the horse-dealers could secure them and their animals from the hardships of seasons. Also see, Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 7-8 (Emperor Jahangir ordered to his official about the construction of *sara'is*, mosque and wells for the merchants, travellers and people to secure their safety and security while travelling); Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*, trans. W.H. Moreland and P. Geyl (Cambridge, 1925), p. 50; Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, trans. V. Ball, ed. William Crook (London, 1925), p. 77, 118; Peter Mundy, *The Travels of Peter Mundy*, vol. II (London, 1914), p. 78, (explains about the Noor mahal sarai at Agra which having accommodating capacity of 3000 men and 500 horses); Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. I, trans. William Irvine (London, 1907), pp. 68-9.

and constructing fortified posts to guard the route. The Mughals even granted advantages and subsidies to local tribal people for protecting the long distance trade in the north-western frontier areas. The Mughals attempted to link the trade politics of the frontier and inter-regional areas with the centre. They controlled the long-distance trade routes and made them safe by engaging the local populace in imperial service. The consistently moving and shifting Mughal court and army through the embracing large medieval capitals of Lahore, Delhi and Agra rooted their power deeply at inter-regional level and granted security to trading activities.<sup>13</sup> Mughal officials exercised the much deeper control over commerce and production (agricultural and industrial) to regulate and collect the revenues. It worked in the favour of the Mughal state and strengthened the imperial treasury. The protection and security of overland trade routes also helped in the expansion of the Mughal boundaries in dual way; first they provided protection and security to the trading activities which generated extra revenue for the state; on the other hand, it increased the Mughal's conquest and expansion through constant and regular supplying of the food and fodder during the war time.<sup>14</sup> Abul Fazl tells that the merchants brought the horses to the Mughal court from various countries of Arab, Iran, Turan, Turkey, Turkestan, Badakhshan, Shirwan, Qirghiz, and other part of the Central Asia through the overland routes via Kabul.<sup>15</sup> The good *bahri* horses were also imported via sea-routes to the Mughal ports of Surat, Cambay, Kutch, Thatta, Lahori Bandar, Broach, Hugli and Sonargoan.<sup>16</sup>

## **2. LAND-ROUTES FOR HORSE TRADING IN INDIA**

The overland-route of the horses moved along the following regions of Mughal suba Kabul, Qandhar, Multan, and Thatta. The borders of suba Kabul overlapped with the Uzbek's territories in north, while the south-western part of suba Kabul, western part of Qandahar, Multan and Thatta bordered with the political boundaries of the Safavids.<sup>17</sup> Kabul and Qandhar were the major entrepots on overland trade route for the commodities imported from the Empire of Uzbeks and Safavids. The overland caravan trade routes from Kabul were diverted into two separate directions. One went to the territories of the Uzbeks via the Hindu Kush passes to Balkh, Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva. Consequently, another went to Qandahar in India and Herat in the territories of the Safavids. The Punjab and Sindh border of suba Multan and Thatta was directly connected to Iran via the overland route from Qandahar. The Mughal entrepot of Qandahar was connected to the Safavid cities of Herat, Kirman, Farrah, Isfahan, Shiraz, Bandar Abbas and Bushira through trade routes. The overland trade route from Qandahar was connected to Kabul, Peshawar, Atak (Attok), Amritsar, Lahore and Kashmir in north and northern-east direction. While on the other hand it was connected to Shikarpur, Dera Gazni Khan, Thatta, Multan, Bahawalpur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jaipur and Jodhpur in south and southern-east direction. Tavernier says in his travels about the overland trade route from Agra to Qandahar that "there were two routes to reach Qandahar via Kabul through crossing the Khyber pass or via Multan crossing the Gomal, Sanghar and Sarwand passes".<sup>18</sup> The Multan route was shorter than the Lahore-Kabul-Qandahar route by 10 days but the caravan merchants scarcely ever took Multan-Qandahar route.

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<sup>13</sup> Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, pp. 100-111.

<sup>14</sup> During the Mughal period, the *Banjaras* worked as commissariat for supplying the food. Emperor Akbar encouraged *Banjaras* for the regular procurement of grains for their armies during the campaigning seasons. He even issued several *farmans* for the exemption of toll and taxes over the trading activities of *Banjaras*. For detail see, Fr. A. Monserrate, *The Commentary Father Monserrate, S.J. on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, translated by J.S. Hoyland & annotated by S.N. Banerjee (London, 1922), pp. 79-80.

<sup>15</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 140.

<sup>16</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*; vol. II, trans. H.S. Jarrett (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949), pp. 248, 249, 250, 338; Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 167, 415-6, 441. Niccolao Manucci notes that Surat was the largest port of the Mughal India. This was connected to different ports of the Europe, Persia, Arabia, Mecca, Bassora, the coast of Malabar and Masulipatnam, Bengal, Siam, Acheen, Queddah, the Maldives, Malacca, Batavia, Manilla, China and many other ports of the world via Arabian and Indian oceans, for detail see, Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. I, p. 61. For detail on the ports of Bengal see, Radhakumud Mookerji, *Indian Shipping: A History of the Sea-Borne Trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians from the Earliest Time* (Calcutta: Longmans, 1912), pp. 218-20.

<sup>17</sup> Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire: Political and Economic Maps with Detailed Notes, Bibliography and Index* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. xviii.

<sup>18</sup> Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. I, trans. V. Ball, ed. William Crook (London, 1925), p. 73.

Because it was almost a desert country and the caravan had to move 3 or 4 days without water.<sup>19</sup> Most of the overland trade in-between Mughal and Safavid territories were channelized through the Multan-Qandahar route via crossing the Bolan Pass in south and Sanghar and Gomal passes in north.

The overland routes of Bukhara-Kabul-Lahore (via crossing Khyber pass), Qandahar-Kabul-Lahore (via crossing Khyber pass), Qandahar-Multan (via crossing Sanghar, Sarwand and Gomal passes) and Qandahar-Shikarpur (via crossing the Bolan Pass) were the main caravan overland routes through which the horses were imported to India from the territories of Uzbeks and Safavids. Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, Kabul, Qandahar, Shikarpur, Atak (Attok) and Amritsar were the major entrepots on these land routes.<sup>20</sup> On the Indian side it connected to the inter-regional markets, cities, animal fair and qasbas via the Grand Trunk Roads constructed by Sher Shah Suri. The Grand Trunk Road connected the Ganga-Yamuna doab regions from Sonargaon on the edge of Bay of Bengal to Central and Western Asia through Peshawar, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Allahabad, Benares and Dhaka. In southward direction the city of Agra was further connected to Burhanpur, on the borders of the Deccan, while in the south-west direction it was connected to Jodhpur and Chittor, which were further connected or linked to Lahore and Multan through the roads.<sup>21</sup> This trade route network was the route above which horses were imported into India from the countries of Iran, Turan and Central Asia.

The environment of Central and Middle-East Asia was favourable for breeding of all kind of horses. Especially the Arabian, Persian, Turki and Tuzuki horses were produced for trading purposes. Due to their strength and stamina, the horses mainly of the Arabian, Persian, Tuzuki, and Turki breeds were greater in demand among the people of the Mughal court. They were recruited mainly for the royal services, and military necessities. The types of horses which were imported to India were mainly Bahri (the Arabian and Persian horses) which were brought to India via sea (Bahr) routes and the other are Turki and Tuzuki horses which were brought through the land routes. The horses of Turki and Tuzuki breeds were brought to Hindustan via the long distance caravan trade routes of north-western frontiers after crossing the Khyber, Sarwand, Sanghar, Gomal and Bolan passes. Mostly the Central Asian horses were brought by the Luharnis and Afghani merchants who use to travel along with caravans of Powindah trading nomads.<sup>22</sup>

Babur has narrated about the trading of horses in his auto-biography Babur-nama. He notes that about 7,000 to 10,000 Turki horses were annually taken to Kabul for their sale in the Indian markets.<sup>23</sup> It was further sent to the Indian inter-regional markets and animal fairs by the horse trader and local merchants. The detail given by Babur indicates that there was a huge demand of the horses in northern Indian markets. Francois Bernier notes that about 25,000 horses were annually brought to India from Uzbek's territory and the Arabian and Persian horses were brought to India by overland from Iran through Qandhar route and the Bahri horses were also imported to India from the countries of Iran and Africa via sea-routes.<sup>24</sup> The estimated number of imported horses highlighted by Francois Bernier shows that the breeding of horses in India was not sufficient to fulfill the military demand of the Mughals. He further asserts that during the 17th century the Mughals were the biggest consumer of the foreign horses and were much dependent on the imports rather than the utilization of indigenous horses. During the 17th century, Kabul was the main entrepot for the horse traders. The horses were first brought here from the counties of Iran, Arab and Uzbek. After entering the Mughal's entrepot of Kabul they further went into different direction to reach varied Indian markets, capitals, cities and animal fairs. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier has also explained about the importance of Kabul as the main entrepot for the imported horses and in support of his analysis he figured out that about 60,000 horses were brought annually by the Uzbek merchant to Kabul and they moved to different directions for

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 73.

<sup>20</sup> Arup Banerji, *Old Routes: North Indian Nomads and Bankers in Afghan, Uzbek and Russian Lands* (New Delhi: Three Essays Collective, 2011), p. 121; Scott C. Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and its Trade*, pp. 33, 40, 111;

<sup>21</sup> Muzaffar Alam, 'Trade, State Policy and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, c. 1550-1750', pp. 202-227; Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, p. 137.

<sup>22</sup> Stephen Frederic Dale, *Indian Merchants and Eurasian Trade*, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup> Babur, *Babur-Nama*, p. 202.

<sup>24</sup> Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, p. 203.

their selling in the Indian markets.<sup>25</sup> The Italian traveller Niccolo Manucci who visited India during 17th century also noted the importation of the foreign horses and importance of the major Mughal entrepots. He asserts that most of the horses used by the Mughal came from the regions of Balkh, Bukhara and Kabul.<sup>26</sup> He has estimated that more than 100,000 horses were imported annually and out of them the best 12,000 horses were directly chosen by the Mughal officers for the Emperor's stables.<sup>27</sup> Due to its courage and strength, the Turki horses were the most preferred one for their recruitment in the Mughal cavalry.<sup>28</sup> The import of the horses played a significant role during the Mughal period. It fulfilled the dual aim of the Mughal Empire. On the one hand it maintained the regular supply of the horses to the Mughal cavalry and on the other hand it created an extra source of income for the Mughal Empire in form of 'duty-charges'<sup>29</sup> imposed on horses while their trading in India.

After reaching the major entrepots of Kabul, Lahore, Peshawar, Multan, Kabul, Qandahar, Shikarpur, Atak (Attok) and Amritsar, the horse merchants further moved towards the major animal fairs, markets and capital centres of northern and southern part of India via inter and intra land routes. The capital centres of the Mughal court, Delhi, Agra and Lahore were the favourite destinations for the horse merchants and dealers. At the capital centres the merchants sold their horses directly to the Mughal rulers, courtiers and nobles. They also sold it through auctions at the regional centres, animal fairs and local market under the supervision and care of local subedar and kotwals. The Bahri horses, especially the Arabian and Persian horses were popular for their beauty, strength, stamina and power. These horses were reserved only for the usage of court people. These horses were costlier than the other Central Asian Horses. Other than the Bahri horses, the Tuzuki, Turki, Qandhari and kabuli horses were more popular among the Indian population due to their strength, stamina and comparatively lower prices.<sup>30</sup>

### **3. KABUL A MAJOR ENTERPOTS**

Through the overland route of Samarkand-Bukhara-Kabul-Lahore the Tuzuki and Turki horses were imported from the territory of Uzbek to India. The demands of these horses were higher amongst the Indian population due to its strength, stamina and comparatively lower prices. At the same time the horses were also imported from the territories of Safavids to Mughal India via Herat-Kabul-Lahore and Isfahan-Kirman-Qandahar-Kabul-Lahore overland caravan routes. Simultaneously, mainly the Arabian and Persian horses from the country of Arab and Iran, and Turki horses from the countries of Central Asia were being imported to India via these routes.

Kabul emerged as an important intersection for these routes. Various trading land routes met at Kabul and from here they were led into the inter-regional trading centres. This made Kabul an important commercial centre. Abul Fazl writes that there were two gates to Hindustan i.e. Kabul and Qandahar. The commercial significance of Kabul made it much wanted by the Mughals. This was due to the strategic location of Kabul that whosoever controlled it, was also enabled to regulate trade routes from Central Asia, Qandahar and Iran from where the horses were imported into India.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the Mughal period the suba of Kabul remained very important part for the Mughal Empire. Abul Fazl notes that the suba of Kabul was comprised of Peshawar, Kashmir, Pakli, Bimbar, Swat, Bajaur, Kandhar and Zubistan.<sup>32</sup> The Mughals controlled this entire area as this was the best way to maintain regular supply of horses and other trade items.

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<sup>25</sup> Jean Baptiste Tavernier, *Travels in India*, vol. II, trans. V. Ball, ed. W. Crooke (London, 1925), p. 63; Surendranath Sen (ed.), *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri* (New Delhi: Published by National Archive of India, 1949), p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. II, p. 390.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 390-91.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*. P. 391.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 390.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 390-91.

<sup>31</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 140.

<sup>32</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, trans. H. S. Jarrett, p. 349.

Akbar and other Mughal Emperors tried to consolidate these routes to increase the constant and regular supply of horses. For this they took various steps for the security of merchants. Politically the trade-routes on the north-western border of Mughal India also worked as a check posts for the Mughals. So, they ensured to protect the Mughal Empire from the possible foreign attacks through appointment of military bureaucratic officials and further controlling trading activities on the north-western borders through them.

During initial phase of the establishment of the Mughal Empire, the north-western boundaries were constantly under disturbance due to the political rebellions of adjoining Empires (the Safavids and the Uzbeks) and tribal revolts of Afghans. All these disturbances hampered the political and commercial interest of the Mughals. Akbar made efforts to establish his political contact and to control over the regional rebellions. Initially, he established his capital at Lahore to influence and control local polity for their submission under the Mughal aristocracy. Simultaneously, the Mughal bureaucracy deeply penetrated the Mughal military power into the inter-regional areas of north-western boundaries by challenging, suppressing and controlling the power of local rebellious groups and insurgency.<sup>33</sup> At the same time the Mughals also implemented numerous efforts to improve the trans-regional trade and to facilitate India's commercial relations with the countries of Iran (Safavids) and Turan (Uzbeks).

Akbar strategically occupied the suba of Kabul, Qandahar and Multan. He constructed the great forts at cities of Multan, Lahore and Attock for surveillance over the political and economic activities of the north-western frontiers. He linked the overland trade route from Multan-Lahore-Attock to the newly constructed Grand Trunk Road. He established numerous smaller forts, called thana and financed the construction of various caravanserais to improve the caravan traffic throughout the north-western frontiers. He appointed rahdars to patrol the routes and ensure the safety of the caravan travellers, merchants and their commodities. He also followed the *nasihat-namas* of his ancestors that the facilities provided to trading communities, merchants and caravan would legitimise his power, and it would also help to generate a major portion of annual revenue for the state.

The land routes of India and Central Asia were connected through the major openings of Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass. Lahore, Multan, Kabul and Qandahar were the major entrepôts on the overland routes, through which the merchandise and horses were imported and then exported into inter-regional part of Middle-East Asia, Central Asia and India. The Mughal emperor Akbar realised the commercial importance of these entrepôts and established a firm control on north-western frontier by annexation of Kabul. He also shifted his capital to Lahore and remained there for thirteen years from 1585-1598.<sup>34</sup> He successfully asserted the imperial power over the entire north-western frontiers from Lahore by subduing Yusufzai tribal confederation in the valley of Swat and Bajaur.<sup>35</sup> This further facilitated a continuous and perennial inflow of horses and other commodities into India through overland routes from the Empire of Safavids, Uzbeks and Ottomans.

There was a constant tribal disturbance during the initial period of Akbar's reign. He regularly faced trouble from the turbulent Afghan tribes namely Afridis and Urakzais, who were living around the area of the Khyber Pass. The Khyber Pass was a major opening into India via Afghanistan connected by the long distance caravan trade-route.<sup>36</sup> The constant disturbances and loots by these Afghani tribes hampered the trading activities between India and the countries of the Central Asia. Therefore, Akbar tried to subdue these turbulent tribesmen by a strict blockade. And finally in 1588, he succeeded in his efforts and an agreement was reached with the Afridis and Urakzais tribes, who agreed to keep the Khyber Pass open, peaceful and uninterrupted instead of subsidies and imperial services.<sup>37</sup> Further, he constructed and broadened the roads to improve the passage accessible for the wheeled carts through the Khyber Pass.<sup>38</sup> He also constructed the fortified posts and appointed the 'offices' of *muqaddams* and

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<sup>33</sup> John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 50.

<sup>34</sup> Jos Gommans, *Mughal Warfare*, p. 23; John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, pp. 49-52.

<sup>35</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. III, trans. H. Beveridge (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1989), p. 802; John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, p. 50.

<sup>36</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, trans. H. S. Jarrett, pp. 404-5.

<sup>37</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. III, trans. H. Beveridge, p. 810.

<sup>38</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. II, trans. H. S. Jarrett, p. 406. Abul-Fazl notes that *khaibar* pass was the connecting link between Iran and India for the traders and merchants.

rahdars (guards) for guarding the overland trade routes.<sup>39</sup> Regarding the construction of the broad roads through the Pass, Akbar instructed his chief engineer Qasim Khan to construct the passage for frequent vehicular movements. Akbar was so impressed by Qasim Khan's effort that he appointed him the governor of suba Kabul.<sup>40</sup>

Akbar's policy to establish complete control on Kabul was strategically motivated to improve the overland trade link between India, Iran, Turan and other part of Central Asia. All the overland routes were running through the entrepôts of Kabul. The Mughal Emperor had realised that the control on Kabul was essential for its commercial importance and continuous horse supply in favour of Mughal Empire. As Babur has mentioned in his autobiography that about 10 to 20 thousand Indian merchants had travelled annually in caravan along with the trading items to Kabul, there they meet the caravans from 'Kashghar, Ferghana, Turkistan, Samarqand, Bukhara, Balkh, Hisar and Badakhshan'.<sup>41</sup> Kabul was a frontier market and it worked as the 'centre for the exchange of trade commodities' among the Indian and Central Asian merchant communities; horse was one of these commodities; holding the significant value. The Mughal control over Kabul, maintained the continuous supply of the Turki, Tuzuki, Qadahari, Kabuli, Arabian and Persian horses to the Mughal army.

All the overland routes from India to Kabul, Iran and Turan were running/passing through the Afghan or Baluchi tribal territories. Ensuring the safe passage through these regions was the main aim of the Mughal trade policy. For the safety and security of the trade routes, Akbar constructed various caravansarais, roads, and bridges which improved the frequency and speed of wheeled vehicle and accelerated the swift movement of trading activities. He also constructed the forts, appointed guards, rahdars on the routes to provide safety and security to the merchants and their commodities from the Afghan attackers. He ordered the Mughal army to suppress all the 'unruly' elements on the Qandahar and Lahore route. In some cases he negotiated with the 'pastoral Afghan tribes' by granting economic incentives and administrative posts to them and in lieu demanded protection of the caravan traffic. Abul Fazl says that the efforts of Akbar resulted in the establishment of peaceful environment all over the north-western frontier areas. By providing the security, Akbar improved and accelerated the bilateral caravan traffic coming in and going out of India via Kabul and Qandahar route and restored the confidence of the merchants. This ensured a regular supply of the horses and other commodities for the Mughal army and Indian population. The safety and security provided to the trading activities increased the commercial interest of the business communities, courtiers, nobles and gentries, and substantially benefited the Mughal state through the collection of revenues levied in form of duty charges.

The guarantee provided for the security of lives and goods by Emperor Akbar helped in the development of overland trade in-between the Safavids, Uzbeks and Mughals. It also inter-linked the Indian communities and culture to the countries of Iran, Turan, Russia via the inter-exchange of the community, goods, ideas and population through the caravan trading routes. Apart from trade, it also helped in cementing and benefiting the polity and economy of Mughal rule in India, the Safavid rule in Iran and the Uzbek rule in Turan.

#### 4. HORSE TRADE THROUGH SEA ROUTES

Along with the land-route the horse-trade was also supplemented through the sea-routes. The trade of horses was done via the sea routes since the early medieval times.<sup>42</sup> Mainly the Arabian and Persian horses were imported via sea-routes from Arab, Iran and north-eastern part of Africa. These horses

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<sup>39</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Akbar-Nama*, vol. III, trans. H. Beveridge, p. 792.

<sup>40</sup> Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t-Twarikh*, vol. II, ed. Ahmad Ali and W. N. Lees (Calcutta: Bib. Ind., 1864-69), p. 372; Cf. M. Athar Ali, *The Apparatus of Empire*, p. 13.

<sup>41</sup> Babur, *Babur-Nama*, p. 202.

<sup>42</sup> *Travels of Marco-Polo*, trans. and ed. Henry Yule and H. Cordier (London, 1903). Marco-Polo (c. 1292), a 13<sup>th</sup> century traveller, remarks that India has an age old tradition of practicing of sea trade with the countries of Arabia, Persia and central Asia and the greater part of the Indian revenues was expended on importing or obtaining *Arabian* and *Persian* horses from these foreign countries. Malabar was the main centre for the importation of *Arabian* and *Persian* horses which was further transferred into Indian fairs and market by land routes from where they were supplied to the state.

were considered to be the best quality. They were known for their beauty, sharp features, firm strength, powerful stamina and pleasing colours. They were very popular and their demand was very high among the royal families and gentry classes. These horses were always associated with the interest of court and courtiers for its military importance. The port of Thatta in suba Thatta, Lahori Bandar on Indus basin, Kutch, Cambay and Surat of Gujarat province and Tanda, Bada, Sripur and Sonargaon of Bengal province were the major sea ports of Mughal India.<sup>43</sup> The Mughal ports were connected to the port of Muscat, Hormuz, Siraf, Basra, and Bandar Abbas of Persian Gulf. Especially from the port of Basra, Muscat and Hormuz the best quality of Arabian and Persian horses were imported to the Mughal ports and to the ports of Goa and Malabar<sup>44</sup> Coast. They were then transferred into the inter-regional markets, animal fairs and capital-centres by local merchants via the regional overland trade routes.

The Mughal ports that catered to the horse trade had a very sophisticated administration. The elaborate arrangements and huge investment made by the Mughal state authenticated the significance of horse trade in the Empire. The Mughal ports were the main 'centre of commercial and financial exchanges'. Every trading port was under the supervision of a separate mutasaddi (collector, governor), who supervised and regulated the mercantile commercial activities and was also responsible to report back to the Mughal court about the various activities of the ports via newsletters.<sup>45</sup> The mutasaddi had the legitimate authority to collect and impose custom duties on the imported commodities. It was within his jurisdiction to resolve all the disputes regarding the trading activities as per the imperial orders. He also established the friendly and diplomatic relations with the administrator of other ports for the regular and continuous supply of imported commodities into the territories of the Mughal state. The Mughal ruler ruled over the port areas efficiently and controlled the mercantile activities through the mutasaddis. On the eve of coronation, nearly all the Mughal Emperors received numerous horses and other gifts sent by the Safavids and other Sultans via the sea-routes.<sup>46</sup> And under the supervision and guidance of the respective mutasaddi these gifts were delivered from the ports to the Mughal court. The mutasaddi also maintained recording of political negotiations between the Mughal emperor and the Sultans of neighbouring countries. The mutasaddi under the Mughal system shared power and responsibility with the Qiladar and other officials.<sup>47</sup>

During the Mughals, the ports were placed under the mutasaddi (governor or administrator of the Mughal port) who exercised wide power and was perceived as a high Mughal administrative officer of

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<sup>43</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*; vol. II, trans. H.S. Jarrett, pp. 248, 249, 250, 338; Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, vol. I, pp. 167, 415-6, 441. Niccolao Manucci notes that Surat was the largest port of the Mughal India. This was connected to different ports of the Europe, Persia, Arabia, Mecca, Bassora, the coast of Malabar and Masulipatnam, Bengal, Siam, Acheen, Queddah, the Maldives, Malacca, Batavia, Manilla, China and many other ports of the world via Arabian and Indian oceans, see, Niccolao Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor*, vol. I, p. 61. For detail on the ports of Bengal see, Radhakumud Mookerji, *Indian Shipping*, pp. 218-20. Ralph Finch was the first English traveler at Bengal (1586) who observed that Tanda was one of the busiest port from where there was "great trade and traffic of cotton and cotton cloth" was carried to the west and east.

<sup>44</sup> For sea-mercantile activities, Malabar was called as the key of Hind, whose production, such as rubies, aromatics, spices and pearls were carried to Iraq, Khurasan, Syria, Rum and Europe.

<sup>45</sup> Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mir'at-i-Ahmadi (suppl.)*, ed. Nawab Ali (Baroda, 1930), pp. 180-81, 183-4, 194, 223; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mir'at-i-Ahmadi*, vol. I, p. 353; Ashin Das Gupta, *Indian Merchants and the Decline of Surat*, p. 24; Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India*, pp. 38-9. For more detail see Syed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, 'The Mutasaddi of Surat in the Seventeenth Century', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 44<sup>th</sup> Session, Burdwan, 1983, pp. 214-221; Farhat Hasan, 'The Mutasaddi of Surat – Evidence of Persian Records of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 53<sup>rd</sup> Session, Warangal, 1993, pp. 276-280; Shireen Moosvi, 'Mughal Shipping at Surat in the First Half of Seventeenth Century', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 51<sup>st</sup> Session, Calcutta, pp. 308-320. The rank and personal status of the *mutasaddi* depended upon the *mansab* granted by the Imperial court. He was assumed to be a nobleman of greatest quality. The *mutasaddi* held the high status and rank both as individual and official.

<sup>46</sup> Saqi Mustaid Khan, *Ma'asir-i-'Alamgiri*, trans. Jadunath Sarkar (Calcutta, 1947), p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> Ashin Das Gupta, *Trade and Politics in 18<sup>th</sup> Century India, Islam and the Trade of Asia*, in D.S. Richards (ed.) *A Colloquim* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 191-192; Lakshmi Subramanian, 'A Trial in Transition: Courts Merchants and Identities in Western India, circa 1800', *The Indian Economic and Social Science History Review*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (2004), pp. 269-292.



the port.<sup>48</sup> The *mutasaddis* were appointed directly from the Imperial court by a *sanad* (office) of the *diwan-i-ala*.<sup>49</sup> The collection of custom and checking of imported or exported goods was the central part of his duty.<sup>50</sup> The *mutasaddi* administered over the port with the help of other subordinate officials, clerks and helpers such as *shahbandar*, *bandardar*, *qiladar*, *qazi*, *kotwal*, *darogha*, *muhtasib*, *waqa-i-navis*, *sawanih-navis*, *harkara*, *thanadar*, *mushrif*, *tahwildar*, *muqim* and *piyadas* (troopers, helpers, porters, carters and peons) to look after general administration, justice, law and order and defence both within and outside the port town. All the Mughal ports were governed by similar administrative structures and were under direct control of the Imperial court.

The port town was divided into four distinct *mahals* (fiscal divisions). Each of the Mughal port town consisted of *mahal farza* (concerned with sea borne trade), *mahal khushki* (dealt in trade through land), *mahal langer jahajat* (looked after the charges such as supervision of harbour, anchorage of ships and anchorage fee) and *mahal jihat godi* or *mahal marammat jahazat* (looked after ship-repairing and ship-building work-shops). The constituents of a bigger port were different from the constituents of a smaller one. The mechanism of administration of a bigger port was also different from the administration of smaller port. The bigger ports were always consisted of four distinct *mahals*. Each *mahal* had separate subordinate officials, clerks and helpers who worked collectively under the guidance of the Mughal port collector or governor, the *mutasaddi*. The bigger ports were never part of the suba territory. The administrations were never managed by the *subedar* of the concerned suba in which it was located. The bigger ports were constituted into separate units which were the sub-division of the suba and were managed and administered by an independent authority of the *mutasaddi* who was a direct appointee from the imperial court. The *mutasaddis* of the bigger ports were the chief administrative officer who guided and supervised his sub-ordinate officials to work properly.

On the other hand, the smaller ports were placed into the dependency of the larger ports for the administrative purposes or were combined together to form a separate unit under the authority of an individual *mutasaddi*; who often single handedly enjoyed the power of the *faujdar*, *thanadar*, *bandardar*, *darogha* and the *shahbandar* of the particular port.<sup>51</sup> The smaller ports were generally called as *bara*.<sup>52</sup> The *bara* was generally connected to seas through the rivers and accessible only by the smaller boats. Since at the smaller ports, the *mutasaddi* also held the office of *faujdar* and *thanadar*, he maintained a strong military contingent and fortified the port town for its defense. As a *bandardar* and *darogha* of the smaller port, he also patrolled the coastal areas and kept the vigilance over the activities which lay within his jurisdiction. And finally as the *shahbandar*, he controlled the port and the custom house individually. The administrative authority of smaller ports was also shared by the *faujdari* of the *sarkar*, in which they existed.

The knowledge of assessing a quality horse was one of the essential requirements or qualifications that the state looked for in recruiting the *mutasaddi*.<sup>53</sup> Beside this, as the chief controller and caretaker of the Mughal ports, he was expected to have remarkable 'skills to judge' the rarities, stones, jewels,

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<sup>48</sup> The foreign traveller Hawkins, Tavernier, Thevenot and Finch has described the Mughal official of *mutasaddis* as the governor and administrator of the port areas. He was the direct appointee of the Mughal Emperor and had enjoyed the first right to purchase.

<sup>49</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (Suppl.)*, pp. 194, 222.

<sup>50</sup> Sayed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, 'The *Mutasaddi* of Surat in the Seventeenth Century', pp. 214-222.

<sup>51</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (suppl.)*, pp. 193-4. For instance, the port of Surat, Cambay and Hugli were the larger one and it was under the administration of a separate *mutasaddi*. Due to smaller in size and lesser traffics, the ports of Cambay, Gogha and Gandhar were initially placed under the administration of the *mutasaddi* of Surat. But due to increased traffics and greater inflow of merchants, the ports of Cambay, Gogha and Gandhar were later separated from the port of Surat. These ports were combined together into a separate unit under the port of Cambay and their administration was given to the *mutasaddi* of Cambay. Similarly, the port of Hugli and Qasimbazar was under the authority of an individual *mutasaddi* who administered both the ports. All the Mughal ports were governed by similar administrative structure and were under direct control of the Imperial court.

<sup>52</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, vol. I, pp. 205, 222, 239-40.

<sup>53</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, vol. I, p. 222; Muhammad Amin Qazwini, *Padshahnama*, vol. II, p. 607.

pearls and other precious and luxurious commodities that were imported through the sea-routes. Ali Akbar, a merchant of Isfahan was appointed as the *mutasaddi* of the Surat and Cambay just because he had efficiency and skills to judge the quality of horses and jewels.<sup>54</sup> On behalf of the Mughal government *mutasaddi* was given the right of first purchase<sup>55</sup> and was supervised to purchase the best horses for the Mughal cavalry directly from the horse-trader. Annually a large number of the horses were purchased by the *mutasaddi* at the Mughal ports for the royal stable. Nothing was permitted to be sold in the port-markets without the *mutasaddi's* knowledge. The foreigners and merchants first approached him for the permission of trading activities. On behalf of the Mughal government the *mutasaddis* were advised to purchase the commodities required for the state such as horses, corns, grains, arms, jewels and rarities. He also acted as the “negotiator” for entire foreign trade on behalf of the Mughal government.

The *Mutasaddi* was not only concerned with horse trade. He had wider duties and responsibilities. The wider Imperial mercantile activities and policies were executed via him throughout the port towns. He was granted authority to ‘fix the prices’ of the commodities according to their quality and value of the goods. All the fiscal administration within the port areas was also completely under his control.<sup>56</sup> He supervised his subordinate officials regarding the collection of the custom duties and independently controlled all administrative and fiscal activities of the harbour. The commodities that entered at the ports were further channelized within India via in-land trade routes. But before any further movement of the commodities into the regions of Mughal Empire, the merchants needed to pay the custom duty levied on it in the custom house of the port town. After the payment of custom duty a seal was fixed on the list of mercantile goods and a deed was granted to merchant which relaxed them from the further levied duty charges with-in countries of the Mughal Empire.

The *shahbandar* official worked as the *naib* under the supervision of *mutasaddi*.<sup>57</sup> His responsibility was to look after the payment of custom duties and nothing could be imported or exported without this payment. The imported goods were checked at *mahal farza* and exported goods from the country were checked at *mahal-i-khushki*.<sup>58</sup> Both these two *mahals* were under his direct control. He was authorised to check the goods and released them after having been stamped with the king’s seal and collection of custom duties.<sup>59</sup> The function of the *qiladar* was independent from *mutasaddi* and responsible for the protection of the port city. The *mushrif* for *mahal farza* and *mahal khushki*, *tahwildar*, *darogha-i-khizana* and *muqim* were the officials to collect the custom duties, keep treasury and maintain the custom register in Persian and local languages. They were the direct representative of the Mughal headquarters and worked under the *mutasaddi*.

The *qazi*, *thanadar*, *kotwal* and *darogha* looked after the law and order of the port cities. The *qazi* was responsible to solve the disputes and to look after corruption, abuse of authority and tyranny by the local officials.<sup>60</sup> The *thanadar* was responsible to maintain military contingent to strengthen the fortification and defend the port city from attacks. He had to keep vigilance over the activities of the port city. He also patrolled the coastal areas for surveillance of the illegal activities. The *kotwal* was the caretaker of the city gates so that none could leave without paying the custom and fulfilling the other formalities of the port’s administration. The *darogha* was appointed to look into the abuses in minting and other irregularities. Significantly, he was also in-charge of purchasing the Bahri horses for the royal stables. The *amin* managed the expenses. The officials of *waqai-navis*, *sawanih-navis*,

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<sup>54</sup> *Padshahnama*, vol. II, p. 607. Jahangir appointed his favorite Muqarrab Khan as the *mutasaddi* of Surat because he had an expert quality in identifying and procuring rarities and stones.

<sup>55</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, vol. I, pp. 260-62; Sayed Ali Nadeem Rezavi, ‘The *Mutasaddi* of Surat in the Seventeenth Century’, pp. 214-222.

<sup>56</sup> Farhat Hasan, ‘The *Mutasaddi* of Surat – Evidence of Persian Records of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century’, pp. 276-280.

<sup>57</sup> Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (suppl.)*, pp. 194, 222.

<sup>58</sup> Ali Mohammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi (suppl.)*, p. 194.

<sup>59</sup> After the payment of the custom duties, a receipt (*dakhila-i rawai mahsul*) was issued to the merchants. It included the seals of the *mutasaddi*, *mushrif*, *tahwildar* and signature of the *muqim*. It verified the payment of custom duties and the merchant was able to sell their goods in the markets of the Mughal countries. The receipt symbolised the Mughal authority and granted to avoid any kind of double levy.

<sup>60</sup> Farhat Hasan, *State and Locality in Mughal India*, p. 61.

khufia-navis and harkara (messenger) were known as the akhbar-navis and were posted by the Imperial headquarters to obtain the news of all the activities going on at the port cities. The office of the akhbar-navis was independent from the mutasaddi but before sending the news to imperial court they had to show it to the mutasaddi.<sup>61</sup> A large number of piyadas were engaged as the helper of the government. They were also hired by the passengers and merchants for different jobs. They also worked as watchman, carters and porters at the port.

To a large extent the Mughals invested in this elaborate port administration because they wanted to maximize profits from trade such as custom duties. These profits were used to procure the best quality of the horses for the royal stable. The Arabian and Persian breed which were produced in the peninsular part of Arabia, Iran and north-eastern part of Africa were imported to India via sea and land routes. The horses were also brought from Jedda (Jeddah).<sup>62</sup> After reaching of the horses at the Mughal ports, it was responsibility of the mutasaddi to purchase the good quality horse first from the horse-merchants and send them to royal stables. The period of 16th to 18th centuries was specifically prosperous for the horse traders. The merchants and traders were getting the maximum profit in importing and selling of the horses in the Indian market. It was easier and safer to import horses via land routes but sea-routes were also preferred by the merchants living on Indian coastal areas of Lahori Bandar, and Kutch, Cambay and Surat of Gujarat, Malabar and Bengal. Consequently, the trading of quality horses via sea routes was safer than the overland routes, due to its safety from banditry, theft and disturbances caused by political revolts, and also took lesser time than the trading via the overland routes, simultaneously.

### 5. HORSE MERCHANTS AND THE MUGHAL STATE

If horse trade triggered the Mughals to develop port cities and administration, the horse merchants emerged as major investors in Mughal economy. The Mughals encouraged horse-trading and invested in horse-breeding because it was crucial for state building. The horses played an important role in Mughal military operations and Mughal political organisation. During the medieval period, the horses had a social and economic value and it was regarded as a status symbol in the Mughal society. The Mughals paid great attention to the horses due to its military, economic and political importance. The expansion of the Mughal state depended on the cavalry unit and demanded an increased supply of the war-horses to improve the military and political efficiency of the Mughal army. The growth in demand for war-horses by the Mughals triggered horse-trading and fore fronted the need to improve horse-breeding. The Mughals took administrative steps to encourage horse-trading in order to increase the supply of good-quality of horses. They appointed officials to protect the long distance overland caravan-trade-routes. Horse merchants emerged as privileged traders in the Empire. The Mughals lured the horse-traders and merchants by granting security, through letter of deed, relief from paying of rahdari tax and bestowing administrative posts.

At the same time attempts were made to facilitate horse-breeding in India so as to support the additional supply of the horses to the Mughals and local population. Numerous personal or institutional breeding centres and studs were established all over the Mughal country. The primary concern of horse-breeding projects was to achieve the high standards set by the Arabian and Persian horses. Indian horses of similar stature were attempted to be bred so that they could survive in Indian environment.

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<sup>61</sup> Since the officials of *akhbar-navis* was independent from the authority of the *mutasaddi*. On several occasion they inform the Imperial court about the corruption and irregularities of the *mutasaddi*. The continuity of a particular person as the *mutasaddi* of the port city totally depended on the news report provided by the *waqai* of the *akhbar-navis*. They were even transferred or punished for their misdeed. That's why the *mutasaddi* were always afraid of the news-reporters (*waqai*) and always tried to lure them for his favour. Kartalab Khan, the *mutasaddi* of Surat had bribed the courier for not to report matters to the Emperor correctly. For more detail, see Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, vol-I, Nawab Ali (ed.), p. 312.

<sup>62</sup> Shireen Moosvi, 'Mughal Shipping at Surat in the First Half of Seventeenth Century', *Proceeding of the Indian History Congress*, 51<sup>st</sup> Session, Calcutta, 1990, pp. 308-320. Emperor Shahjahan sanctioned two lakhs of rupees to the *mutasaddi* of Cambay and Ahmedabad to purchase the merchandise for export to Jedda and in return the merchant were advised to import pearls, qualitative horses and other rarties.

Foreign breed horses were a coveted possession for a gentleman. Thus they were in high demand. In order to maintain the continuous supply of ideal breed horses, the Mughal state controlled the horse-trading by extending finances and protection to the horse merchants. The Mughal state also encouraged the cross-breeding. Akbar established a bureaucratic edifice to oversee the purity of horse breeds, supply of the horse and to ensure their imports from the neighbouring lands. Akbar attempted to control major horse dealers, who sold imported horses from various parts of Iran and Central Asia to the imperial stables at Agra. Only few trusted and privileged merchants were allowed to trade the horses with the Mughal state. He took substantial steps to encourage the horse-dealers to trade with the state. He ordered for the construction of suitable place (sarais), where the horse-dealers could stay in convenient quarters with their horses to protect them from the adversities of seasons, robberies and insurgency. An experienced and knowledgeable official of *amin-i-karvansara* was appointed to keep watch over horse-dealer in order to regular procurement of good horses.<sup>63</sup> He appointed clerks to keep the records on purchasing of horses. Apart from this, experienced man was employed to determine the prices of horses and to examine their quality as well.<sup>64</sup> Apart from this, Akbar also established a special department of the imperial stable and employed the specialised officials of the *Atbegi*,<sup>65</sup> *Darogha*,<sup>66</sup> *Mushrif* (an accountant),<sup>67</sup> *Dida-war*,<sup>68</sup> *Akhtachis*,<sup>69</sup> *Chabuksuwar*,<sup>70</sup> *Hada*,<sup>71</sup> *Baytar* (horse-doctor),<sup>72</sup> *Naqib*,<sup>73</sup> *Sais*,<sup>74</sup> *Nalband*,<sup>75</sup> *Zindar*,<sup>76</sup> *Abkash*,<sup>77</sup> *Farrash*,<sup>78</sup> *Sipandsoz*,<sup>79</sup> and *Khakrub*<sup>80</sup> for caring, maintaining, training, feeding, and healing of horses and for the maintenance of royal stables.<sup>81</sup> The horses were categorized according to their origin and qualities.<sup>82</sup> In spite of all these control and restrictions horses were frequently sold in the markets and fairs through open auctions.<sup>83</sup> Thus it appears that state monopoly over horse trade was not full proof. Horses were also available for the Indian population, especially for the moderately rich people.

However, there was a constant effort by the state to ensure that the best quality of horses should be sold only to royal stables. For this purpose they lured the horse merchants by granting relief to them

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<sup>63</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid*, p. 141.

<sup>65</sup> The *Atbegi* was in charge of all horses belonging to the imperial stables. He directed the duties of all the officers associated to the management of horses.

<sup>66</sup> The *Darogha* was appointed to check the quality and maintenance of horses in the royal stables. Every royal stable had an individual *Darogha* to look over the maintenance of horses.

<sup>67</sup> The *Mushrif* kept the roll of horses and look over all the expenditure associated to stable.

<sup>68</sup> The *Dida-war* was the imperial inspector to inspect horses before their mustering by the Emperor. He also determined the rank and condition of horses. He used to work under the guidance of the *Mushrif*.

<sup>69</sup> The *Akhtachis* was responsible to look after the harnessing and saddling of horses.

<sup>70</sup> The *Chabuksuwar* was responsible to check the speed of horses.

<sup>71</sup> The *Hadda* trained the horses for the different purposes of cantering, trotting, galloping and stepping.

<sup>72</sup> The *Baytar* was appointed for the healing of horses from animal-diseases.

<sup>73</sup> The *Naqib* was retained for supervision. He used to inform the condition of each stable to the *Darogha* and *Munshif* of the imperial stables.

<sup>74</sup> The *Sais* was responsible for the grooming of one or two horses individually.

<sup>75</sup> The *Nalband* was appointed for the horse-shoeing.

<sup>76</sup> The *Zindar* was the saddle holder.

<sup>77</sup> The *Abkash* was water carrier in the imperial stable.

<sup>78</sup> The *Farrash* was appointed for dusting of the royal stable.

<sup>79</sup> The *Sipandsoz* used to burn mustard-seed (*sarso* or *sipand*) in the stables of forty horses for the purpose of prevention of horses against the *nazar-bad* (evil eye).

<sup>80</sup> The *Khakrub* was the sweeper, who used to clean the dung of horses.

<sup>81</sup> Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, pp. 145-47.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p. 243; William Irvine, *The Army of the Indian Moghuls*, p. 51; J.P. Pigott, *Treatise on the Horses of India*, pp. 1-46.

<sup>83</sup> Fr. A. Monserrate, *The Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J. on his Journey to the Court of Akbar*, p. 208; Cf., Shireen Moosavi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire*, p. 242.

from paying rahdari tax and port dues (the tamgha). The Mughal court encouraged the Irani and Afghani merchants for the direct supply of the best horses to the Mughal stables and guaranteed them the administrative posts or economic gains in return. Many times the Mughal emperor also sent their personal representative to Iran and Turan for purchasing and importation of the horses. Like the Mughal Emperor Jahangir instructed his commercial agent Kamran Beg to purchase the best quality of horse while visiting the Safavid court. At the Indian markets, animal fairs and capital centres, the horses were freely sold by the foreign and Indian merchants through auctions. The state's officials/courtiers/nobles could also purchase horses from the open markets, animal fairs and trading centres by participating in auctions in capacity of individual bidder.

The Mughal state played an important role in maintaining the regular supply of horses to the inter-regional markets and regional animal fairs. The horse traders and merchants were directly in touch with the Mughal court through the agents. The mansabdars and jagirdars were informed about the coming of foreign breed horses at the regional markets, fairs, and ports centres by barids or local spies or local kotwals, amins, daroghas, munshi, rahdars and muqaddams. The Mughal bureaucrats influenced the horse dealers through the administrative structure of subadar (the provincial governor), diwan (revenue chief of the province), kotwal (local police in-charge), munshi (clerks) and muqaddam (village revenue officers). The Mughal officials kept vigilance over the movement of horse traders and their caravans within the inter-regional commercial centres.<sup>84</sup> All the local officials were instructed to inform the ruler through letters about the coming of horse traders in their region. The kotwal was responsible for keeping the vigilance on commercial activities of horse traders, munshi was appointed for maintaining the records about the prices and quality of the horses and muqaddam and rahdars was to ensure the safety and security of the traders and their commodities from the local thieves. The kotwal also exercised the power to regulate the selling and purchasing of the horses. The appointment of darogha was directly done by the imperial court. He supervised the purchase of horses for the imperial army. A person having skills and knowledge to identify a qualitative horse was appointed as the darogha. All these efforts of the Mughal state also generated extra revenues for the state, which was extracted from the merchants in exchange of safe and secured commercial activities.

The Mughal state also tried to control the price of the horses. The state fixed the prices of the horses as per the quality and variety of the horses. The prices varied as per the breed and quality of the horses. The price of horses was fixed in rupiya and muhrs.<sup>85</sup> The price of horses ranged from 2 rupees to 500 muhrs as per the quality of the horses.<sup>86</sup> The price fixing was also an important criteria for the classification of the royal stables that were established to maintain the Arabian, Persian, Turki, and Tuzuki horses separately; according to their breeds. The imperial stables were classified as stables of the Khasa (high breed) horses and Bad-Khasa (low breed) horses. The imperial stables of Khasa horses were further divided into six different Khasa stables and each was containing 40 horses of Arabian, Persian and Turkish breed respectively.<sup>87</sup> The horses costing more than of haftad-muhri (70 muhrs) were kept in the Khasa stables. The horses costing between dah-muhari (10 muhrs) to haftad-muhri (70 muhrs) were kept in the non-Khasa stables.<sup>88</sup> The non-Khasa stables were of three kinds, for instance si-aspi, bist-aspi and dah-aspi stables which were containing 30, 20 and 10 horses respectively.<sup>89</sup> This suggests that prices of horses in the imperial non-Khasa stables varied normally from 10 to 70 muhrs.<sup>90</sup> It was also aimed to determine how many horses of the royal stables belonged to various price categories. The price detail of the purchased horses also leads us to understand that most of the horses used in the royal stables were of qualitative and higher breed. Almost all of them were procured from the neighbouring foreign countries of the Iran, Uzbek and Central Asia. The fixation of the price of horses was also aimed to control the price of imported horses and to revive the horse trade in favour of India by providing assistance and encouragement to the Indian agricultural

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<sup>84</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, pp. 142,

<sup>86</sup> Shireen Moosvi, *The Economy of the Mughal Empire*, p. 243.

<sup>87</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 141.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, pp. 141-42.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p. 141.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 142.

and industrial productions. It was also aimed to control the out flow of Indian bullions in-exchange of foreign breed horses.

The Mughal state had a close contact with the merchants and their activities. Akbar and the other Mughal Emperors leaned on merchants for assistance in the financial affairs of the state. The Mughal chronicles *Ain-i-Akbari*, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *Shahjahan-nama*, *Ma'asir-i-'Alamgiri* and the contemporary foreign travelogue reflect the presence of merchants and horse-trading communities in the Mughal court. The merchants traded in horses and other commercial activities, but they also worked as the representative of the Mughal state with-in and out-side India. Several kinds of favours and facilities were bestowed upon them by the state to ensure their uniform and continuous services. The merchants were associated closely with affairs of Mughal court. They were proficient in Persian and other dialects and interacted closely with the Mughal officials at local level. This enabled them to expand their commercial activities across Mughal India and into Central Asia. The close association of merchants with the Mughal court encouraged 'patron-client' relations between them, which remarkably depended on their commercial benefits. Because the people of Mughal court like, rulers, courtiers, princes, princesses, nobles and their families were very ambitious about their commercial ventures. They appreciated and encouraged the commercial activities for their own personal financial gains as well as for firming up the state. At many level the Mughal princes, princess and nobles were personally involved in the commercial activities and also tried to influence the administrative decisions of the state for their personal benefits.

Their association with the Mughal state also guaranteed them safety and security, and also ensure the safe passage of their goods to neighbouring counties of Iran and Turan. It also brought foreign goods, bullions and horses to Mughal India. The close association with the officials of the court also enabled them to get the letter of deed of commercial and financial contracts from the Mughal judicial authorities. Such deed documents facilitated the establishment of trade monopolies by certain merchants. It was the close affiliations of the Luhanis, Powindas and Afghans with the Afghan administrators of the Mughal state which expanded their horse trading activities. Simultaneously, merchants worked as shipping agents for transporting the horses which were purchased by Indo-Muslim and non-Muslim merchants from Iran, Turan and Central Asia in exchange of Indian goods.

Among the Multani and Shikarpuri non-Muslim merchants, the Punjabi Khatri groups were visibly the largest section who was involved in commercial and trading activities. Their sphere of commercial activities involved the trading in-side and outside India. They dominated in larger part of Punjab, Sindh, Iran, Central Asia and southern part of Russia in terms of commercial activities.<sup>91</sup> They directly or indirectly influenced the commercial relations of the Mughal state to the countries of Safavids and Uzbeks. They worked as humble merchant-traders, bankers, goldsmiths, dealers, shopkeepers, grain sellers and moneylenders. They dominated in Indo-Central Asian commercial exchange,<sup>92</sup> and played a significant role in importation of the foreign bullion into Mughal India.

Due to the dominant role played in the commercial activities of the regions of Punjab and north-western India, some of the Khatri merchants became very influential. They even enjoyed a dominant influence among the people of the Mughal court system and were appointed as high-level Mughal officials. Todar Mal was one of the best known Khatri officials who became diwan, the chief revenue officer under the reign of Emperor Akbar.<sup>93</sup> The Mughal courtiers and nobles opposed the appointment of Todar Mal as the diwan under the Mughal administration. They argued that appointment of Todar Mal as diwan would lead to their personal loss of financial and commercial gains and further it would also shift their commercial interests in the favour of Khatri community. They also hoped that it would harm their personal financial affairs. They even criticised Akbar on the appointment of Todar Mal as a revenue minister and claimed that it would also harm the financial affairs of the Mughal state.<sup>94</sup> Basically the critics of Akbar aimed to pressurise him to cancel the

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<sup>91</sup> C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, p. 155; Arup Banerji, *Old Routes*, pp. 46-49.

<sup>92</sup> Muzaffar Alam, *Trade, State, and Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, c. 1550-1750*, pp. 202-227.

<sup>93</sup> Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 377.

<sup>94</sup> Abdul Qadir Badauni, *Muntakhabu-t Tawarikh*, vol. II, trans. G. Ranking, ed. B.P. Ambashthya (Patna: *Academica Asiatica*, 1973), p. 65.

appointment of Tadar Mal. They hoped that this would ensure their own personal gains associated with the trading activities. But they never succeeded in their aim.

Through the appointment of a Khatri Hindu Todar Mal, as the diwan of the Mughal administration, Akbar tried to secure also the commercial and financial upper edge in the Indo-Central Asia commercial ties. A large number of Khatri merchants/Baniyas were scattered within the countries of Iran, Turan, Russia, Uzbek and Central Asia and were controlling trading activities. Their loyalty was won over with the appointment of Todar Mal. Akbar also supposed that the affiliation of the Indo-Muslim and non-Muslim merchant communities with the state's administration would generate an extra amount of revenue that would strengthen the state's treasury. All these fiscal gains would enable the Mughals to maintain a large cavalry force by spending these revenues on purchasing the horses of the foreign and hybrid origins. The same revenue was also invested on the building of a strongest and unchallengeable military power, which was an essential demand of the medieval times for the protection and expansion of Mughal political boundaries.

Abul Fazl claims that the presence of merchant communities in the Mughal court was prominently visible and they were also very close to both the ruler and nobles. Akbar and other Mughal rulers had realised the potential of merchant class and tried to concentrate their commercial activities to strengthen the state by firming the military structure. Therefore, it would be correct to say that the appointment of Hindu Khatri Todar Mal, Kishan Chand and Chander Bhan by the Mughal Emperors was certainly aimed to please the Hindu merchant communities as well as to win their loyalty for the Mughal state.

The Mughal state encouraged the development of agricultural and textile production to support the import of foreign horses in exchange of Indian goods and textile materials. Throughout the period of the 16th and 17th century, horses were imported from the countries of Arabia, Iran, Turan and Central Asia to India. The nomads of Iran, Turan and Central Asia were the chief suppliers of horses to the Mughal armies. The expenditure on the importation of horses was counter balanced by exporting commodities which were sent to the inter-regional markets of Central Asia. Export from India to Iran, Turan and other part of Central Asia included commodities such as Indian cotton cloth,<sup>95</sup> indigo,<sup>96</sup> silk, sugar,<sup>97</sup> slaves,<sup>98</sup> opium, spices (specially pepper, nutmeg, mace, cinnamon, cloves, ginger), medical drugs,<sup>99</sup> grains and Indian handicraft materials and textiles etc. These items were exported to the inter-regional markets of Central Asia, Iran, Russia and Turan (Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent and Khiva) via entrepots of Iran and Turan by the Indian merchants. While in return, horses, dry and fresh fruits, musk, wine, furs, falcons, corals and carpets were imported from the countries of Central Asia and Middle East Asia to India. Francois Bernier noted that horses from the Uzbeks and Persia (about 25,000 horses were annually brought to India from Uzbek's territory) and fruits such as melons, apples, pears, and grapes which had great demand at Delhi, were imported from the countries of Samarkand, Balkh, and Persia.<sup>100</sup> Similarly the dry fruits such as almonds, pistachio, nuts, plums, apricots and raisins were imported to India throughout the year and were sold at very high prices.<sup>101</sup> Simultaneously, good horses were also imported from the countries of the Arabia, Persia and Ethiopia through the port of Bassora, Bandar-Abassi and Moka to India.<sup>102</sup> Apart from the luxury items, the foreign horses and bullion were also imported to Mughal India. Profits made by the Indian merchants after selling the Indian commodities in the inter-regional markets of Iran, Turan, and Central Asia, were invested in the purchase of the Arabian, Persian, Turani, Tuzuki, and Turki horses for the Indian markets.

Initially, during the early phase of the 16th century, the long-distance trade was not in favour of India due to political instability. There was also constant fear of banditry on the north-western frontier trade routes that could lead to heavy loss. The Mughal court was aware of it and was looking for alternate

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<sup>95</sup> Babur, *Babur-Nama*, p. 202.

<sup>96</sup> Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India*, pp. 10-18.

<sup>97</sup> Babur, *Babur-Nama*, p. 202.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 202.

<sup>99</sup> Francisco Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India*, pp. 44-46.

<sup>100</sup> Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, pp. 203-04.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 203-04.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p. 203.

options. Hence, to control the banditry and provide safety and security on trade routes, Akbar established the Mughal capital at Lahore and monitored the crushing of the unruly Afghan tribal banditry in the north-western areas. While on the other hand to make horse trade profitable for the Indian merchants and to regulate and control the prices of horses in the Indian market, the Mughal state also encouraged the agricultural and textile productions, which were in demand in the inter-regional markets of Iran, Arab, Turan and Central Asia. The Mughal state was much interested in foreign trading activities for the financial and commercial gains. To support the financial gains of the Mughal court, Akbar and Jahangir themselves got involved and took part in commercial activities that benefitted the state.

The Mughal state welcomed the foreign traders and provided ample protection and security to their transactions. Further a very low custom duty was also levied on the imported and exported commodities to increase and encourage the commercial activities of merchants. The Mughal court was aware of the demand of important Indian export items like indigo, saltpetre, spices, opium, sugar, woollen and silk and cotton cloths, yarns, salt, beads, borax, turmeric, lac, sealing wax, and drugs of various kinds in the foreign markets. The deep interest of the Mughal Emperors in commercial activities was the main reason behind the reduction in custom duties. Regarding the remission of toll taxes and custom duties, the especial farmans and orders were issued by the Mughal Emperors to kotwals, amins, mutasaddis, and jagirdars of every provinces and districts. These concession grants on merchandise were mainly aimed for the promotion of trade.<sup>103</sup> To make it more profitable and convert the horse trade in favour of Mughal India, the Mughal state took special interest for the development of indigenous agricultural and textile industries. Akbar established silk and cotton weaving industries at Bengal, Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur-sikri, and Gujarat, and the workshops were established to encourage the craftsmen for increasing the production of woven handicraft items.<sup>104</sup> Bernier noted that during the Mughal period, Bengal was providing the best quality of cotton and silk products in huge quantity to the foreign world.<sup>105</sup> At the same time the Mughal court also encouraged the agricultural productions of cash crops such as cotton, sugarcane, indigo, opium, grains, and lac etc. All these efforts were for the development of Indian industries and to support the foreign demands. Through all these constructive efforts the Mughal state tried to protect their aim of financial gains and court consumption, simultaneously they also tried to provide the commodities for both the domestic and foreign markets.

The efforts of the Mughals for the development of agricultural and textile industries ensured the continuous supply of foreign horses, goods and bullions to Mughal India. The Indian merchant communities started making huge profits in exchange of Indian commodities (Indian goods like grains, handicrafts, herbal plants, spices etc.). They were earning large amount of money in form of gold and silver bullions and the same bullions were invested for purchasing of the Arabian, Persian, Turki and Tuzuki horses for the Indian markets. The exchange of Indian cotton, indigo, opium, sugar, spices and other commodities for Central Asian horses became profitable for Indian merchants. The above mentioned business activities by the Indian merchants profited the Mughal Empire in form of imports of the bullions and qualitative horses which helped in strengthening the Mughal economy and its military power. While on the socio-cultural front it also influenced the foreign people for their migration to the Mughal capitals in search of better opportunities as merchants or as nobles in the Mughal court.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The military power of the Mughals was mainly centred on the implementation of the Middle East Asian, Central Asian and European traditions of military technology, tactics, and logistics that revolutionised the Mughal's mechanism of warfare and strengthened their standing army of cavalry and infantry. Throughout the Mughal period, their military organisation remained centred on the force

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<sup>103</sup> Before the establishment of the Mughal state in India, the custom duties charged on the merchandise at the ports of Gujrat was very high, it was about 8 to 10% of the merchandise value. Mughal Emperor Jahangir reduced it to 2 to 2½ %. For more information see, Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i- Jahangiri*, trans. Rogers and Beveridge, Delhi, 1968, p. 417. Similarly, in 1669, Aurangzeb remitted all the road toll and taxes on food stuffs.

<sup>104</sup> S.M. Edwards and H.L.O. Garrett, *Mughal Rule in India* (Delhi, 1956) , p. 265.

<sup>105</sup> Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, p. 202.



of heavy cavalry. Speed, strength, swift movement and faster retreating capacity of the horse were the fundamental features for their heavy dependence on trained cavalry. The Mughals implemented highly successful military tradition of horseback warfare tactics adopted from the Middle-East Asia and Central Asia.

Besides highlighting the importance of horses in the Mughal cavalry, this study is also an effort to characterise the social, political and cultural significance of horse as a 'gentle' animal. As Abul-Fazl notes in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, "His Majesty is very fond of horses, because he believes them to be of great importance in the three branches of the government, and for expeditions of conquest, and because he sees in them a means of avoiding much inconvenience."<sup>106</sup> Politically, the possession of horses played a crucial role in the establishment of hierarchies within the Mughal nobility. It was associated to the distribution of ranks to the *mansabdars*. Apart from this, it also consolidated the strength of the imperial army and helped in the political expedition by enhancing the retreating, attacking and withdrawing capabilities of the Mughals.

For the continuous procurement of war-horses, the Mughals were depended on horse traders of the neighbouring countries of the Central Asia and Middle East Asia. Horses were imported to India via the long-distance caravan trade-routes and sea-routes as well. Horses imported via the sea-routes were called as *bahri*. I have shown that the Mughal Empire encouraged various methods and established separate institutions to give momentum to the trading and commercial activities. The Mughals were well aware about the presence of corporate and merchants groups. The Mughals were supportive and helpful towards trading and mercantile activities. This study has shown that the establishment of Mughal Empire in India provided a peaceful, safe and prosperous environment for the development of trading activities with-in and out-side India. The Mughal Empire was not only an agricultural based society; it was also a corporate and mercantile based society. These corporate and mercantile groups indulged in trading activities with foreign countries in exchange of Indian agricultural and other products. The agrarian products, textile goods, medicinal herbs and spices etc. were exported to foreign countries in exchange of good horses (especially the *Arabian, Persian, Mujannas, Turki, Yabus, Tazi, janglah, kabuli, qandhari* etc.), precious stones and jewellery, pleasurable items, dry fruits and bullions of gold and silver. The centrality of horses for the military and administrative necessities and for the purpose of transportation and personal usage encouraged the Mughals to control and regulate the horse trade in favour of the state. Rather than explaining the Indian trading and commercial activities, I have focussed on the efforts of the Mughal state and their officials for controlling, regulating and encouraging horse trade. During the Mughal period, India was the favourite destination for the Central Asian Luhanis, Afghanis and Powindas 'pastoral-nomads' horse trader. The good horses were imported to the Mughal court from the countries of Arab, Iran, Turan, Turkey, Turkestan, Badakhshan, Shirwan, Qirghiz, Tibet, Kashmir and other countries.<sup>107</sup> During the Mughal period, horse trade between India and the countries of the Central Asia and Middle East Asia was done through the long-distance caravan trade-routes and sea-routes as well. Kabul and Qandhar were the major entrepots on the land-routes in India. The ports of Surat, Cambay, Kutch, Thatta, Lahori Bandar and Sonargoan were the major entrepots for the *bahri*, the *Arabian* and *Persian* horses.

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<sup>106</sup>Abul-Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, vol. I, p. 140.

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