

**NOBLES UNDER DELHI SULTANATE :
A SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECT**

Thesis Submitted for the Award of the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**in
History**

By

Rafia Ashraf Bhat

Registration Number: 42000433

Supervised By

Dr. Tariq Ahmad Sheikh

Associate Professor

Department of History

School of Social Sciences

Lovely Professional University

Co-Supervised by

Dr. Amita Gupta

Assistant Professor

Centre of Comparative Religion and

Civilization

Central University of Jammu



LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY, PUNJAB

2026

DECLARATION

I, **Rafia Ashraf Bhat** bearing Registration No. **42000433** hereby declare that the research work embodied in the Ph.D. thesis titled "**Nobles Under Delhi Sultanate: A Socio-Cultural Aspect**" submitted to Lovely Professional University is the original and bonafide work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Tariq Ahmad Sheikh, Associate Professor, School of Liberal and Creative Arts, Social Sciences and Languages, Lovely Professional University.

I further declare that:

- a) The work presented in this thesis is a genuine contribution to the field of research and is a result of investigations carried out by me during the period of my doctoral study.
- b) The research work has been conducted in accordance with the academic and ethical standards prescribed by the university.
- c) Due acknowledgements and references have been duly given wherever the work of others has been cited or used.
- d) The thesis has not been submitted either partly or fully to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

I understand that any violation of the above declarations may lead to the cancellation of my degree by the university at any stage.



Rafia Ashraf Bhat

Reg.No. 42000433

Date: 27/ 08/ 2026

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled “**Nobles Under Delhi Sultanate: A Socio-Cultural Aspect**” submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the award of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the History / School of Social Sciences is a research work carried out by Rafia Ashraf Bhat, (42000433) is bonafide record of his/ her original work carried out under my supervision and that no part of thesis has been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.



Signature of Supervisor

Name: Dr. Tariq Ahmad Sheikh

UID 21368

Date: 27/ 08/ 2026



Signature of Co-supervisor

Name: Dr. Amita Gupta

UID (if applicable)

Date:27/ 08/ 2026

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All praise and thanks are due to Almighty God, without whose guiding light and perennial help we achieve nothing.

I deem it a great pleasure to express my deep sense of gratitude and thanks to my respected supervisor Dr. Tariq Ahmad Sheikh, Associate Professor, Department of History, School of Liberal and Creative Arts, Social Sciences and Languages, Lovely Professional University, for his constant encouragement and guidance in carrying out research work. He despite in academic engagements, provided excellent valuable advice, effective inspiration and matured guidance. This work in fact bears imprints of his balanced criticism and knowledge approach.

With same sincere feeling I place on record my sense of indebtedness to my co-supervisor Dr. Amita Gupta, Assistant professor, Department of Centre for Comparative Religion and Civilization, Central university of Jammu, whose constructive suggestions have been a source of inspiration to me.

I would also like to thank the Hon'ble Chancellor of the Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, Sh Ashok Kumar Mittal, for his kind blessings. My sincere thanks also go to Dr. Pavitar Prakash Singh, Senior Dean School of Liberal and Creative Arts (Social Science and Languages) Lovely Professional University Phagwara. I would like to thank Dr. Tabish Hashmi, Head of Department of Social Science Lovely Professional University Phagwara. He guided me many times during my research work. In the completion of this work, I own the greatest debt of gratitude Dr. Santosh Kumar for providing intellectual support.

I would like to thank Librarian and the rest of the library staff of Lovely Professional University Phagwara for their help accessing the books and articles during my research.

No words can adequately express my debt of gratitude to my esteemed loving parents, Mohd Ashraf Bhat and Rehmat Jan whose kind cooperation and continuous encouragement and sacrifice devotions gave me the success for submitting this thesis

for the award of Ph. D Degree. Above all, I would like to express my deepest love and gratitude to my husband, Abdul Raheem thank you for your patience, encouragement, and unwavering support through the highs and lows of this journey.

To my dearest daughter, Shanzay Hareem, you have been my greatest source of joy, strength, and inspiration throughout this journey.

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the Socio-Cultural roles and dynamics of the nobles under the Delhi Sultanate, a significant period in Indian history spanning from the 13th to the 16th century. Focusing on the noble class's political, social, and cultural influence, this study examines the ways in which these elites contributed to and were shaped by the administrative, military, and religious structures of the Sultanate. The nobility, comprising primarily of Turkish, Persian, and Central Asian elites, played a pivotal role in shaping the administrative, cultural, and social structures of the Sultanate. The thesis investigates how the nobles, often of diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds, played a critical role in the Sultanate's governance and cultural production. It emphasizes their contributions to the urbanization of the empire, their patronage of art, architecture, and scholarship, and their involvement in the promotion of education within the region. Additionally, the study delves into the personal and familial networks that shaped the social hierarchies of the time and the negotiation of status within the courtly environment. It focused on the intricate interplay between aristocratic customs, traditions, and the political and cultural milieu of medieval India. By analyzing primary sources such as chronicles, court records, and architectural remnants, the thesis provides a comprehensive understanding of the nobility's socio-cultural impact during the Delhi Sultanate. It investigates the social dynamics within the nobility, including their lifestyle, marriages, festivals, ceremonies, various etiquette followed by nobles in royal courts and how these factors influenced their cultural contributions, their role in education, and religious affiliations. It highlights how the nobility navigated their dual identity as both representatives of the Sultanate and participants in the local cultural milieu which act as a bridge between rulers and local population.

It also explores the cultural contributions of the nobility, particularly their patronage of art, architecture, literature, and music, which facilitated the synthesis of Persianate and indigenous Indian traditions. This cultural fusion is evident in the architectural marvels of the period, such as mosques, tombs, and palaces, as well as in the development of Persian and vernacular literature. Through a socio-cultural lens, this

research aims to enhance our understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of nobility in the Delhi Sultanate, moving beyond the traditional political and military perspectives to highlight the cultural and social contributions of these elite groups. This thesis also addresses the legacies of Delhi Sultanate nobility, which influenced subsequent political and cultural developments in the Indian subcontinent.

By integrating insights from political history, sociology, and cultural studies, the thesis contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the Delhi Sultanate and the significant role of the nobility in shaping its legacy.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter	Title	Page No.
	Introduction	1 – 39
Chapter 1	Dynamics of Court Culture	40 – 66
Chapter 2	Festivals, Ceremonies and Mode of Entertainment	67 – 99
Chapter 3	Household and Domestic Life	100 – 129
Chapter 4	Art, Architecture and Literature	130 – 157
	Conclusion	158 – 177
	Bibliography	178 – 200
	Appendix	i – xvi

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Delhi Sultanate, spanning from the early 13th to the late 16th century, represents a pivotal era in Indian history marked by profound socio-political and cultural transformations. The establishment of Muslim rule in India by the Turkish and Afghan dynasties brought about significant changes in the administrative and cultural landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Central to this transformation was the emergence and evolution of a distinct class of nobility that played a crucial role in shaping the Sultanate's socio-cultural fabric. They not only facilitated the governance and expansion of the Sultanate but also contributed significantly to the cultural and social life of the period. Their influence extended beyond mere political and military dominance, encompassing patronage of arts, architecture, and literature, which led to the flourishing of a unique Indo-Islamic culture. In recent past historians have been increasingly attracted to study of the Sultanate nobility. The most important sources for understanding the role of the nobility are the political chronicles of Persia, of which Minhaj-us-Siraj Juzjani's *Tabaqat-i- Nasiri*, which covers the period up to Balban, Zia-ud-Din Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi* and *Fatawa-i-Jahandari*, which continues the narrative up to the time of Firuzshah Tughluq, and later works such as Isami's *Futuhu's Salatin* and the works of Amir Khusrau are the most important.

Serious and sustained efforts are made by historians to explain the origin and evolution of nobles and their role in polity and administration. In 1967, a modern historian S.B.P Nigam published his pioneer work *Nobility under Sultan of Delhi* and trace the evolution of the nobility, its character, organization and administrative organization. The Nobles as an influential element of the Delhi Sultanate started their carrier mostly as slaves of Sultan or those of higher nobles. The nobility under the Delhi Sultanate comprised a diverse group of individuals, including *Chihalgani* slaves of Iltutmish, neo-Muslims and *Barwar* group of Khilji and *Amiran-i-Sada* of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Other group consisted of Afghan, Mongols and Indian Muslims, Abyssinians (*Habshi*) and Khorasanis who held key positions in the

administration and military.¹ The importance of nobility cannot be underestimated as this is also the history of the achievements of the nobility, because the sultans were nobles themselves, since there was no recognized right of inheritance. A number of works has been done on their political and administrative aspect thus ignoring socio-cultural aspect. Recently Peter Jackson in his work *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, and Sunil Kumar in his work *Emergence of Delhi Sultanate*, also focused on political and administrative role of nobles. However, although the nobility under the Delhi Sultanate attracted the attention of historians and scholars, their socio and cultural aspect has been ignored in historical scholarship.

In the 13th century, the Ilbari rulers laid the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate and the century ended with the replacement of their authority by the rule of the Khalji. The early Ilbaris were particularly characterized by strong tribal or nomadic influence. This gave the nobility in the 13th century the special quality of functioning according to the principle of “*primus inter pares*”, with the sultans being considered “first among equals” vis-à-vis the nobility. Also, the term “*khwaja-tash*”, meaning that all nobles were equal in terms of power, status and privileges because they were slaves of the same master, and ‘*sultani*’, meaning 'slaves of the master they placed on the throne.

Scholars like Nizami and Nigam have portrayed the nobility as consisting of two monolithic groups - the Turks and the non-Turks of high descent (*Tajiks*, who were Persian-speaking men and mostly free-born). The nobility was undoubtedly dominated by *Turkic Ghulams* (slaves). As there is no concept of inheritance so they are termed as ‘Kingmaker’. There are also groups within *Turks* nobility such as Shihabuddin Muizzuddin (*Muizzi* slaves), Aibak (*Qutbi* slaves) and Iltutmish (*Shamsi* slaves) who were loyal only to their master.² The nobility thus consisted of different elements, all of which were in competition with each other. The Sultan himself often encouraged these divisions to weaken the nobility and strengthen his own position.

¹ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, Delhi, 1968, p.104

² Irfan Habib, ‘*Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century*’, *Medieval India 1: Researches in the History of India, (1200-1750)*, Aligarh, 1992, pp.1-21

Qutub ud-Din Aibak (1206-1210 CE) took over the rule of Delhi Sultanate, he was supported by *Qutbi* nobles, but *Muizzi* nobles criticized it. Later, the accession of Shams ud-Din Iltutmish (a *Qutbi Ghulam* and son-in-law of Aibak) in 1210 was supported by the *Shamsi* nobility over the *Qutbi* nobility's claim to a son of Aibak - Aram Shah. Thus, *Qutbi* and *Muizzi* amirs revolt against him outside Delhi. Sultan Iltutmish curbed this revolt with heavy hands.³ This was an important development in the evolution of nobility. Under Iltutmish, the nobility was incorporated into a formal administrative structure. He placed himself above the other slave nobles by creating his own corps of elite slaves, *Bandagan-i-Turk-Chihalgani* or “group of forty slaves”. This term was firstly used by Zia-ud-Din Barani in his work *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*.⁴ Minhaj Siraj⁵ give the information about twenty-five nobles, and scholars like Peter Jackson and Habib mentioned that the number of nobles would be far less and not forty. Irfan Habib is of the view that it could have been an exaggeration and is by no means an accurate number⁶.

Iltutmish also gathered many *Tajik* officers who were foreigners and held important posts at the courts. They are princes of royal blood and high ranked nobles who fled from central Asia due to frequent invasion of Mongols settled down in India in search of employment and hence treated very kindly by Iltutmish⁷. His wazir Nizam-ul-Mulk Kamal ud din Junaidi and his *naib* Khawaja Muhazzab-ud- din was also a *Tajik*. Malik Firuzshah Iltutmish, prince of Khawarizm, Malik Alauddin Jani, prince of Turkistan, Malik Izzi ud Din Hamza Abdul Jalil were among the nobles of Iltutmish who were *Tajiks*.⁸ Malik Fakhur-ul-Mulk Isami, *Wazir* of Bagdhad also held

³ Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., Major H.G. Raverty, *A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan from AH 198 (810 A.D) to A.H 658(1260 A.D)*. London 1881, p. 607

⁴ Gavin Hambly, Who were the *Chihalgani*, the Forty Slaves of Shams Al-Din Iltutmish of Delhi? *Iran*, Vol. X, British Institute of Persian Study, London, 1972, p. 58

⁵ Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, the chronicler of both the *Shamsabanid* dynasty of Ghur and of the so-called Slave Kings of Delhi, at whose court he wrote the *Tabaqat-i- Nasiri* makes no mention of the *chihalgani*.

⁶ Sunil Kumar, When Slaves were nobles, the *Shamsi Bandagan* in the early Delhi Sultanate, *Studies in History*, Vol. X, 1994, pp. 50-51

⁷ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans off Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, Delhi, 1968, p.106

⁸ Major H.G. Raverty, *A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan from AH 198 (810 A.D) to A.H 658(1260 A.D)*, pp. 625- 626; S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p.107

important post in his reign.⁹ This group of Shamsi nobles held all the important positions and were bound together by the need to protect the monopoly from other factions of the nobility.

“He (Nāṣir al-Dīn, r. 1246–66 CE) sought the goodwill of the army chiefs and cordially wished each one of them well. He did not take any decision (*rā’y’zādī*) without their knowledge (*bī-’ilm-i īshān*) or moved a foot without their orders (*nah bī-ḥukm-i īshān dast va pā’ ī’zādī*). He did not drink a drop of water, nor sleep a moment without their knowledge”.¹⁰

Iltutmish began the practice of appointing his successor, and for some time after his death the crown remained in his family. The period was marked by great instability, as the sultans came to power only for a short time. During the time of Razia Sultan¹¹, there emergence of a new kind of factionalism within the nobility - between the nobles of Delhi and the nobles of the province. Wazir Nizamul Mulk Muhammad Junaidi did not acknowledge her. Also, Kabir Khan-i-Ayaz, Malik ’Izz-ud-Din, Muhammad, Salari, and the Nizam-ul-Mulk, Muhammad, Junaid also revolt against her. Malik Nusrat-ud-Din, Ta-yasai, whom she appointed as governor of Awadh supported her in gaining power while nobles of provinces rebel against her.¹² Abyssinians nobles also gain prominence during her reign. Malik Jamalud-Din, Yakut, the Habashi [Abyssinian or Ethiopian], who was Lord of the Stables, acquired favor from Sultan and Turks *amir* and *Maliks* began to be envious threat. Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-Din, Altuniah, who held the fief of Tabarhindah broke out into rebellion, when she reached there to suppress the revolt Turks Amirs revolted against her and put Jamal-ud-Din Yakut to death with his death their influence at the court receded.¹³ When Ghiyas-ud-din Balban came to power, he curb the power of nobles he was initially a member of the Turkish nobility known as the “*Chihilgani*” or “Forty”.

⁹ Ferishta mentioned that he is ancestor of author of *Futuhāt-i-Salatin*

¹⁰ Sunil Kumar, Courts, Capitals and Kingship, Delhi and its Sultan in Thirteenth and Fourteenth CE. *Court Culture in the Muslim World, Seventeenth to Nineteenth Century*, ed. Alberchet Fuess and Jan Peter Hartung, New York, 2011, p. 128

¹¹ Iltutmish ordered his officer *Mushrif-i-Mumalkat* Tajul Mulk Muhammad Dabir to prepare a decree naming Razia as his heir apparent. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 638

¹² Major H.G. Raverty, *A General History of the Muhammadan Dynasties of Asia, Including Hindustan from AH 198 (810 A.D) to A.H 658(1260 A.D)*. p. 639

¹³ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p.108

However, after becoming Sultan, Balban systematically dismantled the power of this group to consolidate his own authority. He followed the theory of 'Blood and Iron'. It is mentioned that there were only three *Chihilgan* slaves during Balban's reign - Balban himself, Sher Khan, governor of Lahore and Bathinda and Malik Tamar Khan-i-Qiran, governor of Awadh.¹⁴ There were number of New Muslim Mongols in his court, two of them held the post of *Sarishtadar-i-Maimana* and *Sarishtadar-i-Maisara*.¹⁵ Hindu nobles also attend the royal courts, but their political role is negligible. Rai Danuj, *muqti* of Lakhnuti, helped Balban in capturing Tughril was treated with honour but their influence in royal court was minimum. Balban also placed great confidence in Afghan nobles, there are three thousand Afghan soldiers in his army. He even handed over the newly constructed Jalali fort to them.¹⁶

During Khalji Period, racial organization of nobility was the key feature. Jala ud Din Khalji coveted all the important posts to Khiljis most of whom were his relations. During his short reign, new Muslims also received great patronage. Many Mongols, *Amiran-i-Hazara* and *Amiran-i-Sada* embraced Islam and settle down in Delhi. Jalal -ud-Din fixed their salaries and they settle down in Indarpath, Kilokhari and Giyaspur.¹⁷ Malik Ulughchi held important post in army of Jalal ud din Khalji.¹⁸ The reign of Ala-ud-din Khalji can be divided into two periods marked by two different developments. First, he uprooted the old Jalali nobles and then created a new group of nobles based on blood relations and personal service. However, real power was never shared by anyone except the Sultan and his four leading nobles and competent generals like Malik Naik Kafur Hazar Dinari, Khusrau Khan, Malik Shahin, Malik Yaklakhi. Hindu converts to Islam rose in Ala-ud-din's service and formed an important branch of the nobility, which proved successful, Malik Jhitam who was son of Rai Riyan Ram Deo¹⁹. He sought to weaken the independent power bases of

¹⁴ Gavin Hambly, *Who were the Chihalgani, the Forty Slaves of Shams Al-Din Iltutmish of Delhi?* p. 61

¹⁵ Muhammad Qasim Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., John Briggs, *History of the rise of Mohammaden Power in India*, Calcutta, 1909, pp. 55-56; Both of them bear the name Malik Tugril

¹⁶ Ibid, p.58.

¹⁷ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p.111.

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 112.

¹⁹ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p. 112; K.S. Lal, 'Political Conditions of Hindus under the Khaljis', *Indian History Congress*, 1946, pp. 232-237

the nobles by reducing their control over land and military resources. He established a comprehensive network of spies and informers throughout his empire. This network was designed to monitor the activities of the nobles and to detect any signs of rebellion or disloyalty. It extended to the suppression of any private gatherings. Ala-ud-din introduced a unified and strong administration in which all nobles received their salary in cash except Malik Kafur. Afghans who played an important role under Ilbaris made remarkable progress under Khaljis. Alauddin Khalji admitted them in the ranks of nobility. Foremost among them was Malik Ikhtayr-ud-Din Yal. Another literary person during his reign was Moulana Abdul Kareem Sherwani, who was the teacher of Shaikh Nasir -u-din Hidayat.²⁰

By the time of advent of Tughlaqs, the concept of racialism was faded away as many groups emerged during this period and this discouraged the rise of a particular group. Moreover, Tughlaqs were also foreigners with hardly any aristocratic antecedents, and they also have to rely on old Khalji nobility who supported them in gaining power. When Ghiyas ud din Tughlaq ascended many of the nobles were those of Ala-ud-din and his son Qutub-ud-din Mubarak Shah. These nobles continued to hold the office during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firuzshah Tughlaq. The Turkish nobles continued to hold significant power, especially in the early years of the Tughlaq dynasty. Persian nobles, who brought with them administrative expertise and cultural influence, played an important role during the Tughlaq period. They were often appointed to key positions in the administration, including the roles of *Wazirs* and governors.²¹ The Persian cultural influence remained strong, particularly in court etiquette, literature, and architecture. Indian Muslims who had converted from Hinduism or other local religions had become a significant part of the nobility. These nobles were often used to administer newly conquered territories or regions with significant local populations, helping to integrate them into the Sultanate's governance structure. Mongols, Arabs and Khorasanis also were in his royal court and Muhammad bin Tughlaq used to call them *Aziz* or dear. Among them, Ala-ul-Mulk Fasih-ud-Din Khurasani Shaikhzada Isfahani, Malik Sanjar Badakhshani held

²⁰ Shair Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, ed., Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Aligarh, 2017, p. 62

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 67

important place.²² In spite of hatred by Ulemas and other Muslims his court was conglomeration of men of different races. The Afghan element in the Delhi Sultanate's nobility began to gain prominence towards the end of the Tughlaq dynasty and became particularly influential during the Sayyid (1414–1451) and Lodi (1451–1526) dynasties. Prior to this period, the nobility was dominated primarily by Turkish and Persian elites, but the weakening of central authority and the need for strong military leaders provided an opportunity for Afghan chiefs and warriors to rise in prominence. Afghan also gained prominence during this period. Malik Ikhtayar-uddin Yal who was noble in Ala-ud-Din Khalji court continued to hold his position in court of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Apart from this Malik Makh Afghan, Malik Khatta Afghan, Malik Jalhu, Malik Mandi Afghan and last but not the least Malik Shahu Lodhi.²³

Hindus too became active participants during Tughlaq period. Ratan was one of the important nobles whom Muhammad bin Tughlaq gave the title Azim-us-Sindh. Dhara was another noble who was made *Naib Wazir* of Deogir by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. The Position was reversed during the reign of Firozshah Tughlaq. Although he was born of a Hindu mother but Hindus did not gain any prominence. His maternal uncle Rai Bhiru Bhatti was only Hindu in his court with an insignificant position.²⁴ The Mongols also attained a respectable position under the Tughlaq. Many of them were given high rank in army, prominent among them was Kalghi. Qabtagah Amir Mehman and Malik Muazzam Amir Ahmad Iqbal held high posts in the court of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq.²⁵

The Sayyid dynasty, which emerged after the decline of the Tughlaq dynasty, was relatively weak and relied heavily on its nobility to maintain control over its territories and this helped in the rise of Afghan nobles, who were increasingly powerful during this period. The Turkish nobles, who had been prominent during the earlier Delhi Sultanate, continued to hold positions of influence but were gradually

²² S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p.114

²³ *ibid*, p. 115

²⁴ Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin, or Shahnama-i-Hindustan of Isami*, ed. Agha Mahdi Hussain, Aligarh, 1967, p. 365

²⁵ S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p.116

being overshadowed by the Afghans. The Sayyid rulers granted significant autonomy to provincial governors (*muqtis*) and military commanders (*iqta* holders) to maintain control over the Sultanate's territories. Further, feudal characteristics weakened the central authority and made the Sultanate vulnerable to external threats and internal rebellions.

The increasing power and influence of Afghan nobles set the stage for the eventual rise of the Lodi dynasty, which would succeed the Sayyids and further consolidate Afghan dominance in the Sultanate. The Lodi dynasty, founded by Bahlul Lodi in 1451, was the first Afghan dynasty to rule the Delhi Sultanate. The Lodi period marked a shift towards a more Afghan-dominated nobility, reflecting the increasing influence of Afghan chieftains and military leaders in the Sultanate's affairs. While the Turkish and Persian nobles continued to hold some positions of influence, their power had significantly declined by the time of the Lodi dynasty, as the Afghan nobles became the dominant force. The Lodi period marked a significant shift in the composition and role of the nobility in the Delhi Sultanate, with the Afghan nobles emerging as the dominant force. The Lodi dynasty's reliance on the Afghan nobility reflected the broader socio-political changes in northern India during the late Sultanate period.

In the field of society and culture many historians made their contribution like Shaikh Abdur Rashid's work *Society and Culture in Medieval India 1200-1526* and K.M. Ashraf's work *Life and Condition of People of Hindustan*. Both these historians focused upon the cultural environment of the period but failed to focus on the nobility as a special case of its own. Thus, the social and cultural life of the nobles remained a neglected affair. However, the present proposed title Noble under Delhi Sultanate; a Socio-Cultural Aspect seeks to fulfill this lacuna in the history of Delhi Sultanate.

The evidences are scanty and scattered, beside this there are prominent work done by a number of historians like Hasan Nizami's *Taj-ul Masir*, Zia-ud-Din Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Amir Khusrau's *Khazain-ul- Futuh*, Nuh Siphir, Shams Siraj Afif's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* Minhaj Siraj's *Tabaqat-i-Naisiri* and many more. These

entire chronicles while recording the historical events of Sultanate period provide scattered but significant information. Other than these there are foreign travelers who gave us a lot of information about social and cultural life of nobles at that time. The account of Ibn Batuta and Shihabbudin al Umari record minute detail about social etiquette, ritual and customs observed by the nobles they provide detail accounts of royal court royal feasts their marriages festivals their residential houses their structure etc.

1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Shams Siraj Afif (1891) in his book '*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*' states that the nobility wielded immense power through control over vast *jagirs*, reinforcing the Sultanate's hierarchical structure and socio-political dominance. In '*Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*', Shams Siraj Afif highlights the role of the nobility in governance during Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq's reign. Afif writes, "The nobles, entrusted with *jagirs* across Hindustan, managed these lands with full autonomy, ensuring that the revenues flowed consistently to the royal treasury". He also remarks on the political significance of the land grants: "The Sultan granted the *iqta* system to his most trusted men, allowing them to rule as governors with military and administrative power over vast provinces". Afif emphasize that the Sultanate's hierarchical structure was sustained by the strategic allocation of *jagirs* and *iqtas* to the nobility, creating a network of semi-autonomous rulers who were economically and politically influential. The nobility's control over these estates not only reinforced their authority but also symbolized the Sultan's dependence on them for stability and territorial control.

The nobility's patronage of art, architecture, and literature played a vital role in shaping the Sultanate's cultural identity and vibrancy, fostering an environment where artistic and intellectual pursuits flourished under royal and aristocratic support. As Shams Siraj Afif notes in *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, "the grandeur of the Sultan's court was reflected in the fine edifices, poetic compositions, and scholarly works that found encouragement among the elites". This patronage extended to the construction of monumental structures, the promotion of Persian literary traditions, and the commissioning of intricate decorative arts, reflecting a synthesis of diverse cultural

influences. The emphasis on artistic and literary endeavors reinforced the Sultanate's image as a hub of '*tamaddun*' (civilization) and '*adab*' (refinement), where Persian aesthetics intermingled with indigenous elements to create a unique cultural ethos. Afif's observations highlight how noble support was instrumental in fostering a sense of '*shaan*' (prestige) and intellectual advancement, aligning with broader Islamic traditions of cultural flourishing. The enduring impact of such patronage is evident in the architectural legacy and literary richness that continue to define the historical memory of the Sultanate.

The nobility lived a life of immense wealth and privilege, indulging in opulent residences, sumptuous feasts, and luxurious possessions, which symbolized their elevated status within the Sultanate. As Shams Siraj Afif describes in *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, "their palaces, adorned with intricate carvings and vast courtyards, echoed with the melodies of poets and musicians, while their banquets overflowed with exotic delicacies and rare wines". He further notes, "their garments were woven with gold and silver threads, embedded with rare gems, while their steeds were adorned with silk and brocade". The nobles also displayed their opulence through grand festivities, where "lavish gifts of perfumes, fine fabrics, and gold coins were exchanged as tokens of honor and prestige". This extravagant lifestyle extended to fine textiles, elaborate jewelry, and richly decorated furnishings, reinforcing their dominance in both political and social spheres. This culture of grandeur not only reflected their '*martaba*' (rank) but also emphasized their role as patrons of '*zebaish*' (adornment) and refinement. Afif's account reveals how wealth was a crucial marker of influence, where possession of '*naadir*' (rare) artifacts and lavish feasts distinguished the elite from the common populace. The display of '*shaukat*' (splendor) in clothing, architecture, and social gatherings reinforced hierarchical divisions while consolidating the nobles' authority. Such indulgence, while projecting an image of power and sophistication, also underscored the deep socio-economic divide within the Sultanate, where the contrast between aristocratic luxury and common hardship became increasingly apparent.

Nizamuddin Ahmad (1973) in '*Tabaqat-i-Akbari*' highlight that the nobility upheld the Sultanate's stability by managing military and administrative functions, despite

ethnic and regional divisions. In *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Nizamuddin Ahmad emphasizes the role of the nobility in maintaining the Sultanate's political and administrative stability. He writes, "The nobles were entrusted with extensive *iqtas*, where they commanded armies and ensured the Sultan's laws were enforced across provinces". Ahmad further observes, "Despite being divided by ethnic origins-Turkish, Persian, and Afghan- the nobility upheld their loyalty to the Sultan through their shared responsibility for the Sultanate's military campaigns". Ahmad illustrates that the nobility's control over *iqtas* and their administrative authority were pivotal in stabilizing the Sultanate's territories. Despite the diversity and factionalism within the nobility, their military and bureaucratic roles helped mitigate internal divisions, reinforcing the Sultan's rule and ensuring a cohesive state.

Nobles showcased their status through lavish lifestyles, marked by grand feasts and luxurious clothing, symbolizing their political and social power. As Nizamuddin Ahmad describes in *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, "the nobles, draped in robes of silk and brocade, adorned with gems of rare brilliance, dined in halls where golden vessels overflowed with delicacies from distant lands". Their grandeur extended beyond attire and feasts, encompassing intricately designed palaces, vast gardens, and prized possessions that reflected their affluence and dominance. This indulgence in '*rahat*' (luxury) and '*shaukat*' (splendor) reinforced the nobility's position at the apex of the Sultanate's social hierarchy. Ahmad's observations illustrate how such displays of wealth were not mere excesses but deliberate assertions of '*martaba*' (rank) and '*izzat*' (prestige), ensuring their influence remained unchallenged. While these extravagant customs cemented their authority, they also highlighted the stark contrast between the aristocracy and the common populace, revealing the deep socio-economic divisions within the Sultanate.

Nobles contributed to cultural development by promoting the construction of mosques and madrasas, enhancing the Sultanate's Islamic and educational identity. As Nizamuddin Ahmad records in '*Tabaqat-i-Akbari*', "the esteemed nobles, in their devotion to faith and knowledge, erected grand mosques where the call to prayer resounded and established madrasas where scholars engaged in the study of divine sciences". He further states, "these institutions, adorned with intricate calligraphy and

fine masonry, became centers of learning, attracting students from distant lands”. The patronage of such structures not only reflected the nobles’ religious piety but also reinforced their authority by associating them with the propagation of Islamic scholarship and spiritual guidance. This promotion of religious and educational institutions underscored the nobles’ role as defenders of ‘*deen*’ (faith) and patrons of ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge), embedding their legacy within the intellectual traditions of the Sultanate. Ahmad’s account highlights how these efforts were instrumental in fostering a culture of ‘*hikmat*’ (wisdom) and ‘*adab*’ (refinement), ensuring the transmission of Islamic teachings to future generations. Beyond their religious significance, these establishments also served as symbols of ‘*izzat*’ (prestige) and social influence, reinforcing the noble class’s dominance within the political and spiritual fabric of the realm.

Abdul Qadir Al-Badaoni (1868) in ‘*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*’ describes that the nobility acted as cultural custodians and power brokers, driving both political governance and Persianate cultural patronage. In *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Al-Badaoni highlights the nobility’s dual role in governance and cultural patronage, stating, “The nobles, through their control of *iqtas* and administrative offices, held sway over the Sultanate’s politics while also funding poets, scholars, and artists to promote *adab* and Persian traditions”. He further writes, “The patronage of the nobility was instrumental in transforming Delhi into a bastion of Persianate culture, with their *majlis* gatherings showcasing poetry, music, and theological debates”. Al-Badaoni illustrates that the nobility’s political power extended into the cultural sphere, as they used their wealth and status to promote Persianate art and literature, fostering a rich intellectual environment. By blending governance with cultural leadership, the nobility strengthened their social influence and helped shape the Sultanate’s unique cultural identity.

The nobility maintained an extravagant lifestyle with palaces, expensive clothing, and feasts, reinforcing their dominance in a highly stratified society, where wealth and opulence became symbols of power and prestige. As Abdul Qadir Al-Badaoni describes in *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, “the nobles resided in palatial mansions, adorned with embroidered tapestries and encrusted with precious stones, where the

fragrance of rare perfumes lingered in the air”. He further notes, “their garments, woven with gold and silver threads, reflected their ‘*martaba*’ (rank), while their feasts, abundant with exotic delicacies, showcased the abundance of their ‘*dawlat*’ (wealth)”. These extravagant displays not only underscored their elevated status but also reinforced their authority over the lower strata of society. This pursuit of ‘*rahat*’ (luxury) and ‘*shaukat*’ (splendor) was a deliberate assertion of power, where wealth translated into social and political influence. Al-Badaoni’s account highlights how the nobility’s patronage of opulent lifestyles was intertwined with their desire for ‘*izzat*’ (prestige) and ‘*jah*’ (glory), ensuring their supremacy in the Sultanate’s hierarchy. However, these excesses also deepened societal divisions, accentuating the disparity between the elite and the common populace, whose struggles remained far removed from the grandeur of noble courts.

The nobility’s role as patrons of Persian art, literature, and architecture fostered cultural advancements that defined the Sultanate’s legacy, shaping an era of artistic brilliance and intellectual refinement. As Abdul Qadir Al-Badaoni states in *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, “the noble lords, adorned with wisdom and wealth, graced the courts with poets and scholars, ensuring that the echoes of Persian verse and philosophical discourse flourished in the realm”. He further observes, “their patronage extended to the construction of grand edifices, where intricate calligraphy and delicate floral motifs spoke of the fusion of ‘*zauq*’ (aesthetic taste) and ‘*fan*’ (artistry)”. Through such initiatives, the nobility not only reinforced their status but also cultivated an enduring artistic and literary tradition that enriched the Sultanate’s cultural fabric. This devotion to ‘*adab*’ (literature) and ‘*me’ mari*’ (architecture) positioned the nobility as custodians of artistic excellence, linking their legacy to the splendor of Persian influence. Al-Badaoni’s account highlights how this support for ‘*shairi*’ (poetry) and artistic expression strengthened the Sultanate’s identity, merging Islamic and indigenous traditions into a refined cultural ethos. Beyond mere embellishment, these contributions symbolized ‘*shaan*’ (prestige) and intellectual sophistication, solidifying the Sultanate’s place as a beacon of artistic and scholarly achievement .

Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta (1865) in *‘Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi’* acknowledges that the nobility’s ethnic diversity fostered cultural innovation and administrative challenges, shaping the Sultanate’s Islamic identity and governance. In *‘Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi’*, Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta highlights how the Sultanate’s nobility consisted of Turkish, Persian, and Afghan elites, each bringing their own cultural influences. Ferishta writes, “The Turkish ‘*amirs*’ were known for their military prowess, while the Persian nobles promoted art and literature, blending local traditions with Persianate culture”. However, he also notes, “The diversity within the nobility led to frequent factional disputes, weakening administrative unity despite shared allegiance to the Sultan”. Shah Ferishta illustrate that the nobility’s ethnic diversity was a double-edged sword—on one hand, it enriched the cultural landscape by fostering innovation, while on the other, it created administrative challenges due to factional rivalries. The blending of Persianate and local Indian traditions helped shape the Sultanate’s unique Islamic identity and governance practices.

The nobility, through their patronage of Persian literature and art, established a vibrant cultural synthesis that shaped the Sultanate’s identity, blending Persian, Indian, and Islamic traditions into a unique artistic and intellectual heritage. As Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta writes in *‘Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi’*, “the noble patrons, with hearts inclined toward refinement, gathered poets, calligraphers, and artists in their courts, where eloquent verses and intricate designs flourished under their benevolence”. He further notes, “this encouragement of ‘*adab*’ (literature) and ‘*naqqashi*’ (painting) resulted in a fusion of artistic expressions, where Persian aesthetics interwove with local influences, creating a distinct cultural identity”. These contributions not only enhanced the intellectual landscape of the Sultanate but also reinforced the nobility’s status as the custodians of knowledge and art. This deep investment in ‘*zauq*’ (aesthetic taste) and ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge) positioned the nobility as pivotal figures in shaping the Sultanate’s artistic and literary grandeur. Ferishta’s account underscores how this patronage was a deliberate effort to project ‘*shaan*’ (prestige) and sophistication, ensuring the continuity of Persian cultural influence within the Sultanate. More than mere embellishment, these endeavors symbolized a

lasting legacy of '*fan*' (artistry) and intellectual flourishing, cementing the Sultanate's place as a center of cultural brilliance in the medieval world.

The nobility's luxurious living conditions and grand public displays were essential to asserting their power and social prestige, serving as visible markers of their influence and status in the Sultanate's hierarchical society. As Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta writes in *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*, "the nobles resided in splendid palaces, their halls adorned with silk draperies and golden chandeliers, where the scent of '*itr*' (perfume) filled the air". He further notes, "their public appearances were grand spectacles, as they rode through the streets on bejeweled steeds, dressed in '*kamkhab*' (brocade) and embroidered robes, followed by an entourage of attendants and musicians". These extravagant displays were not merely for indulgence but served to reinforce their authority, impressing both allies and subjects alike. This deliberate exhibition of '*shaukat*' (splendor) and '*jah-o-jalal*' (grandeur) functioned as a tool of political legitimacy, ensuring that nobility remained synonymous with power. Ferishta's account illustrates how these luxurious customs were carefully curated expressions of '*izzat*' (prestige) and '*dawlat*' (wealth), designed to instill awe and reinforce their dominance in an increasingly stratified society. However, such ostentation also highlighted the widening gap between the ruling elite and the common populace, as their extravagant lifestyles stood in stark contrast to the hardships faced by the lower classes.

Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami (1913) in his book '*Futuh-us-Salatin*' describes that the nobles were critical agents in advancing the Sultanate's Islamic and administrative ethos while balancing interactions with Indian traditions. In *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami emphasizes how the nobility played a pivotal role in shaping the Sultanate's Islamic governance. He writes, "The nobles upheld the Sultan's authority by promoting *sharia* law and enforcing the Sultanate's administrative decrees". Isami also highlights the interactions with local Indian traditions, stating, "Despite their Islamic foundations, the nobles adopted elements of Indian courtly rituals and ceremonies to win over local populations and reinforce social harmony". Isami demonstrate that the nobility served as essential intermediaries between the Sultan and the local populace, fostering a unique blend of

Islamic administrative principles with Indian cultural practices. This dual role helped consolidate the Sultanate's rule, ensuring political stability and social cohesion across diverse communities.

Nobles patronized Persian art and literature, blending Islamic traditions with local Indian influences to foster cultural innovation, thereby creating a distinctive artistic and intellectual environment within the Sultanate. As Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami writes in *'Futuh-us-Salatin'*, "the noble patrons, with hearts inclined toward '*adab*' (literature) and '*fan*' (art), filled their courts with learned men and poets, where the verses of Persia found new expression amidst the richness of Hindustan". He further states, "their encouragement of '*shairi*' (poetry) and '*tasveer saazi*' (painting) led to a refined cultural synthesis, where the delicate elegance of Persian aesthetics merged harmoniously with indigenous artistic traditions". Through such patronage, the nobility ensured that the Sultanate emerged as a center of literary brilliance and artistic evolution. This support for '*zauq*' (aesthetic taste) and '*ilm*' (knowledge) underscored the nobles' role as custodians of intellectual and artistic progress. Isami's account highlights how their investment in Persian literary and artistic traditions was a conscious effort to assert '*izzat*' (prestige) and cultural superiority, while also integrating the diverse influences of the Indian subcontinent. More than just embellishment, these contributions symbolized the Sultanate's status as a hub of '*hikmat*' (wisdom) and creativity, ensuring its lasting legacy in the annals of history.

Nobles indulged in lavish lifestyles supported by vast land holdings, using luxury as a symbol of their political and cultural influence, ensuring that wealth remained synonymous with power and prestige in the Sultanate. As Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami writes in *'Futuh-us-Salatin'*, "the nobles, possessing estates as vast as the eye could see, built grand '*havelis*' (mansions) and adorned themselves in '*reshmi libas*' (silken garments), their wealth reflecting their elevated status". He further notes, "their courts were filled with golden vessels, aromatic '*itr*' (perfume), and the melodies of skilled musicians, as they dined upon delicacies rare even in the lands of Persia and Arabia". This ostentatious display was not mere extravagance but a strategic assertion of authority, reinforcing their dominance over both the ruling class and the common people. Such indulgence in '*shaukat*' (splendor) and '*nazaakat*'

(refinement) was integral to maintaining the nobility's supremacy, projecting an image of unchallenged affluence. Isami's account underscores how their investment in luxury was deeply intertwined with 'izzat' (prestige) and 'martaba' (rank), ensuring their continued dominance in the socio-political order. However, this extravagant lifestyle also widened the gap between the elite and the masses, making visible the stark disparities within the Sultanate's social hierarchy.

Amir Khusrau (1325) in his book '*Khazain-ul-Futuh*' reveals that the nobility's patronage of Persian art and literature was central to shaping the Sultanate's cultural identity and expanding its political authority. In '*Khazain-ul-Futuh*', Amir Khusrau highlights the nobility's active role in promoting Persianate culture, stating, "The nobles, as patrons of poets and scholars, cultivated an environment where Persian literature flourished, blending the poetic tradition of *qissa* with local themes". He further remarks on their architectural contributions: "The nobles commissioned grand *madrasas* and *masjids*, integrating Persian artistry into the Sultanate's urban landscape". Khusrau also underscores the political implications of this patronage, observing, "By associating themselves with the arts, the nobles solidified their *izzat* (prestige) and demonstrated loyalty to the Sultan". Khusrau shows that the nobility's cultural patronage was not limited to artistic expression but also served as a tool for asserting political dominance and social prestige. Their funding of Persian art and literature helped to weave together a distinct Indo-Islamic identity that reflected both local and Persian influences. The cultural synthesis strengthened the Sultanate's authority by promoting unity and legitimizing the nobility's social status within a diverse empire.

The nobility nurtured a unique cultural identity by supporting poets, scholars, and artists, blending Persian and Indian traditions into an Indo-Islamic synthesis that enriched the intellectual and artistic landscape of the Sultanate. As Amir Khusrau writes in *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, "the courts of the nobles echoed with the voices of '*shuarā*' (poets) and '*ulama*' (scholars), where the wisdom of Persia met the melodies of Hindustan, creating a harmony unparalleled in any other land". He further notes, "their patronage of '*musavviri*' (painting) and '*kalam*' (calligraphy) gave birth to a style that bore the finesse of '*ajam*' (Persia) yet carried the soul of

Hindustan”. This cultural fusion was not only a testament to their refined tastes but also a political strategy to unify the diverse subjects under the Sultanate’s rule. By fostering ‘*adab*’ (literature) and ‘*fan*’ (art), the nobility projected an image of sophistication and enlightened rule, legitimizing their authority through intellectual and artistic achievements. Khusrau’s account highlights how their investment in ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge) and ‘*zauq*’ (aesthetic taste) was essential in shaping an enduring Indo-Islamic identity, blending ‘*farsi*’ (Persian) traditions with indigenous influences. More than mere patronage, these efforts symbolized their ‘*izzat*’ (prestige) and ‘*shaan*’ (grandeur), leaving behind a cultural legacy that defined the Sultanate’s historical and artistic narrative.

The nobility’s opulent attire, feasts, and Arabian steeds symbolized their elevated social status and political indispensability, serving as visible markers of their authority and refinement. As Amir Khusrau writes in *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, “the nobles adorned themselves in ‘*zarbaft*’ (gold-brocaded) robes and ‘*reshmi kamkhab*’ (silken brocade), their turbans embroidered with pearls and rubies, signifying their ‘*martaba*’ (rank) and influence”. He further describes their extravagant gatherings: “their feasts, served in dishes of ‘*sang-e-marwarid*’ (mother-of-pearl), overflowed with ‘*naimat*’ (delicacies) from the farthest lands, while ‘*sama*’ (music) and poetry filled the air with enchantment”. Even their steeds, “majestic ‘*asb-e-arabi*’ (Arabian horses), draped in gilded saddles, bore testimony to their ‘*shaukat*’ (splendor) and might”. These elements collectively reinforced their dominance, ensuring their distinction from the common populace. The nobility’s deliberate display of ‘*jah-o-jalal*’ (grandeur) was not merely an indulgence but an assertion of ‘*izzat*’ (prestige) and ‘*siyasat*’ (political strategy). Khusrau’s account highlights how their investment in luxury was a means to solidify their authority, as wealth and magnificence translated directly into influence within the Sultanate. However, this excessive opulence also deepened the social divide, contrasting their extravagant lifestyles with the hardships of the lower classes, further entrenching the hierarchical order of the period.

Ziauddin Barani (1857) In his work ‘*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*’, highlights the consequences of the increasing hereditary privileges of the nobility on the efficiency

of governance. He argues that this concentration of power in noble families led to administrative inefficiency, weakening the state apparatus and causing moral decline. Barani further emphasizes that this decline in governance contributed to political instability and social unrest, which disrupted the functioning of the state. He writes, "The hereditary privileges of the nobility have become so entrenched that it is now almost impossible to bring about reform, and this has led to a degeneration of values". In his analysis, Barani is critical of the state of affairs, where the nobility's increasing dominance undermined the moral fabric of the society. The author stresses that the '*Izzat*' and '*taqwa*' of rulers and their nobility diminished over time, leading to the disruption of justice and order. This critical perspective reveals the ways in which power became more hereditary than earned, diminishing both ethical standards and governance efficiency. Barani notes, "In times of affluence and ease, the rulers lose their '*taqwa*' and '*izzat*', leading to a state of moral decay". Barani's concern about the consequences of noble families' dominance on the efficiency and morality of the ruling elite. His use of '*Izzat*' (respect/ honor) and '*taqwa*' (piety) signifies the moral obligations that were gradually neglected in favor of inherited privileges. Barani's historical perspective underscores a cycle of decay where privileges undermine meritocracy and erode the integrity of governance.

The nobles elevated Delhi to a cultural hub through their patronage of Persianate arts, literature, and architecture, transforming it into a center of intellectual and artistic excellence that reflected the grandeur of the Sultanate. As Ziauddin Barani writes in '*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*', "the nobles, with hearts devoted to '*adab*' (literature) and '*ilm*' (knowledge), adorned Delhi with grand '*madaris*' (educational institutions) and '*kitabkhaneh*' (libraries), where scholars and poets flourished under their generous patronage". He further observes, "their love for '*mimari*' (architecture) gave rise to magnificent '*masajid*' (mosques) and '*maqatib*' (schools), where the elegance of '*islami hunar*' (Islamic art) merged seamlessly with the spirit of Hindustan". This continuous support not only established Delhi as the intellectual heart of the Sultanate but also ensured the lasting influence of Persianate traditions in India's cultural landscape. By fostering '*shairi*' (poetry), '*khattati*' (calligraphy), and '*mimari*' (architecture), the nobility reinforced their '*izzat*' (prestige) and projected

an image of refinement and wisdom. Barani's account highlights how their deliberate investment in artistic and literary endeavors served as both a cultural achievement and a political tool, legitimizing their authority through the patronage of '*fan*' (art) and scholarship. However, this Persianate dominance also reflected an assertion of elite identity, which, while enriching Delhi's cultural fabric, further distinguished the nobility from the broader Indian populace, reinforcing the Sultanate's hierarchical structure.

The moral decline of the nobility was reflected in their preoccupation with luxury and personal gain, which weakened the Sultanate's governance and led to administrative inefficiency and internal strife. As Ziauddin Barani writes in *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*, "the nobles, once devoted to '*adab*' (discipline) and '*khidmat*' (service), abandoned their duties in pursuit of '*naimat*' (pleasures) and '*asaraf*' (extravagance), filling their courts with '*bazm-o-raqs*' (feasting and entertainment) instead of matters of state". He further laments, "their greed for '*maal*' (wealth) and '*jaagir*' (land grants) led to corruption and factionalism, where '*siyasat*' (politics) became a game of deceit rather than governance". This unchecked indulgence in luxury and power struggles eroded the administrative foundation of the Sultanate, leaving it vulnerable to external threats and internal rebellion. The nobility's obsession with '*aysh-o-ishrat*' (pleasures and indulgences) resulted in the neglect of '*insaf*' (justice) and '*zimmadari*' (responsibility), creating a rift between rulers and the governed. Barani's account underscores how this moral decay was not merely a personal failing but a systemic issue that undermined '*hukumat*' (rule) and hastened the decline of the Sultanate. This deterioration of governance, marked by increasing reliance on '*rijal-e-darbar*' (court sycophants) and the marginalization of capable administrators, ultimately led to widespread instability and weakened the state's ability to withstand both internal and external crises.

Ibn Battuta (1355) in his travelogue '*Rehla*', observes that the nobility of the regions he visited displayed immense wealth and grandeur to assert their political authority, but also engaged in promoting cultural and religious scholarship. This dual focus on showcasing material wealth and fostering intellectual endeavors was central to their efforts to consolidate power and prestige. He writes, "The nobles of this land,

in their '*jalal*' and '*nizam*', show great wealth in the splendor of their palaces and the lavishness of their courts". Ibn Battuta further notes, "Not only do they possess vast fortunes, but they also sponsor the study of '*ilm*' and support scholars, ensuring their position at the forefront of both temporal and spiritual matters". Ibn Battuta's account reveals the intricate relationship between wealth, political power, and cultural prestige in the Islamic world during his time. The nobles' desire for '*jalal*' (majesty) and '*nizam*' (order) went beyond personal display and extended to fostering a scholarly atmosphere that enhanced their authority. His observations highlight how the nobility's patronage of '*ilm*' (knowledge) served to consolidate both their temporal and spiritual influence, reinforcing their control over society. This perspective reveals that the nobility used wealth not only for ostentatious displays of power but also as a means to promote intellectual and religious pursuits. Their sponsorship of '*ilm*' elevated their status while ensuring the flourishing of cultural and academic achievements. Battuta's account underscores the symbiotic relationship between material affluence and cultural patronage as a tool of governance.

Ibn Battuta observed the nobility's immense wealth and ceremonial splendor, which were vital to maintaining authority and reinforcing social hierarchy, ensuring their dominance in both political and cultural spheres. As he writes in *Rihla*, "the nobles, clad in '*harir*' (silk) and '*zari*' (gold-embroidered) robes, moved through courts adorned with '*farsh-e-zarbaft*' (brocaded carpets) and jeweled chandeliers, their '*ashrafi*' (gold coins) scattered in acts of royal generosity". He further describes their processions: "mounted on '*asb-e-arabi*' (Arabian steeds) with '*zarbaan*' (golden saddles), their arrival was heralded by '*naqqara*' (war drums) and '*shehnai*' (flutes), announcing their grandeur to the masses". Such displays were not merely for luxury but served as calculated assertions of power, reinforcing their elite status within the Sultanate. The deliberate exhibition of '*shaukat*' (splendor) and '*azmat*' (grandeur) was essential for maintaining the '*izzat*' (prestige) of the nobility, ensuring that their authority remained unquestioned. Ibn Battuta's account highlights how the nobility's wealth was strategically used to instill loyalty among subjects while distinguishing them from the common populace. However, this extravagant lifestyle also created a growing divide between the ruling elite and the people, making governance more

about spectacle than administrative efficiency, which ultimately weakened the Sultanate's stability.

Minhaj-i-Siraj (1972) in his work '*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*', Minhaj-i-Siraj emphasizes the pivotal role played by the Turkish slave-origin nobility in consolidating the Sultanate's power through their unwavering loyalty and administrative skills. This group, which rose to prominence under the Delhi Sultanate, was instrumental not only in military affairs but also in ensuring the smooth functioning of the state apparatus. Minhaj-i-Siraj notes, "The '*ghulam*' class, though originally slaves, have become the backbone of the Sultanate, their loyalty and '*ikhtiyar*' making them indispensable to the ruler". He further writes, "Their competence in administration and governance ensured that the Sultanate remained stable and effective, a testament to their contribution". In this passage, Minhaj-i-Siraj underscores the transformation of the '*ghulam*' (slave) class into a powerful political entity, whose '*ikhtiyar*' (authority/ choice) and abilities were crucial to maintaining the stability of the Sultanate. The loyalty of the Turkish slaves turned nobility is portrayed as a foundational strength that solidified the Sultanate's position in a region often fraught with instability. By highlighting their administrative expertise, Minhaj-i-Siraj reflects on how these figures were not mere subjects, but key players in governance and statecraft. Siraj reveals that the Turkish slave-origin nobility, despite their humble beginnings, became a force for consolidation and governance in the Sultanate. Their '*ikhtiyar*' was not only based on loyalty but also on their skillful management of the empire's resources and affairs. Minhaj-i-Siraj's account offers a nuanced view of the evolution of this class from servitude to ruling elites, emphasizing their indispensable role in state-building.

Nobles promoted learning and piety by funding *madrasas* and *masajid*, shaping the Sultanate's cultural and spiritual identity while reinforcing their legitimacy as patrons of Islamic scholarship. As Minhaj-i-Siraj states in *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, "the nobles, in their devotion to '*deen*' (faith), established grand '*madaris*' (religious schools) where '*ulama*' (scholars) and '*fuqaha*' (jurists) imparted knowledge to seekers of '*ilm*' (learning)". He further elaborates, "their endowments to '*masajid*' (mosques) ensured that '*tilawat*' (recitation) of the Holy Quran and '*salah*' (prayers) resonated through

the cities, strengthening '*shariat*' (Islamic law) among the people". Through these acts of religious and intellectual patronage, the nobility solidified their influence and ensured the propagation of Persianate and Islamic traditions across the Sultanate. This patronage of '*ta'lim*' (education) and '*tasawwuf*' (spirituality) served a dual purpose: while it reflected the nobles' piety, it also acted as a tool for consolidating their political power. Minhaj-i-Siraj's account underscores how the nobility's role in funding religious institutions helped them secure the loyalty of '*ulama*' and '*mashaikh*' (mystics), thereby reinforcing their control over both governance and society. However, this system also deepened social divisions, as access to these elite centers of learning was often restricted to the aristocracy and higher classes, further entrenching the hierarchical order of the Sultanate.

Rizqullah Mushtaqi (1990) in '*Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*' acknowledges the central role of the nobility in shaping the Sultanate's governance and artistic legacy, even amidst internal factionalism. Despite the power struggles between various factions, the nobility remained a crucial patron of both cultural and political endeavors, helping to maintain the stability of the Sultanate. Mushtaqi writes, "The '*ashraf*' of the Sultanate, though divided by factional rivalries, have continued to support the '*funun*' and '*adab*' of the court, thus ensuring both political power and cultural flourishing". He further notes, "Through their patronage of '*ulama*' and '*shura*', they maintained an aura of legitimacy and artistic sophistication, which served the Sultanate well". Mushtaqi highlights the essential role of the '*ashraf*' (noble class) in fostering cultural and intellectual life through their support of the '*funun*' (arts) and '*adab*' (manners/ culture). Despite the internal divisions, the nobility's patronage ensured that the Sultanate remained both politically stable and artistically vibrant. Their support for '*ulama*' (scholars) and '*shura*' (consultation/ advisory bodies) played a key role in upholding the political and cultural structures of the state. Mushtaqi reveals that even in times of internal turmoil, the nobility's cultural and political patronage was a vital force in maintaining the Sultanate's coherence. By supporting the '*funun*' and '*adab*', they not only solidified their power but also enriched the cultural heritage of the Sultanate. Mushtaqi's account reflects a complex relationship between factionalism and patronage, where cultural and political stability were interwoven.

The nobility's patronage of Persian culture and literature helped shape the Sultanate's cultural and intellectual development, fostering an environment where poets, scholars, and artists thrived under royal protection. As Rizqullah Mushtaqi notes in *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, "the nobles, adorned with '*fazl-o-adab*' (virtue and learning), welcomed '*shuarā*' (poets) and '*udaba*' (men of letters) into their courts, where '*farsi shairi*' (Persian poetry) and '*hikmat*' (philosophy) flourished". He further describes their gatherings: "in grand '*deewankhanas*' (audience halls), '*masnavis*' (epic poems) were recited and '*diwans*' (poetry collections) compiled, ensuring that '*zaban-e-Farsi*' (the Persian language) remained the medium of '*adabi guftagu*' (literary discourse) and governance". These efforts not only cemented Persianate traditions within the Sultanate but also contributed to the evolution of a unique Indo-Persian literary and intellectual culture. The nobles' deep engagement with '*fann-e-sheer-o-adab*' (the art of poetry and literature) reinforced their '*maqam*' (status) as refined and enlightened patrons, distinguishing them from the military elite. Mushtaqi's account emphasizes how this cultural investment not only elevated the prestige of Persian language and literature but also shaped the administrative and educational institutions of the Sultanate. However, this emphasis on Persianate culture also created a divide between the ruling elite and the local population, as the dominance of '*farsi zaban*' (Persian language) in governance and literature limited the accessibility of knowledge to those outside the aristocracy.

Hasan Nizami (1977) in '*Taj-ul-Ma'asir*', praises the role of the nobility in stabilizing the Sultanate through their military and administrative skills, while simultaneously fostering advancements in Persian culture. This dual function of the nobility not only ensured political stability but also facilitated the flourishing of Persian art, literature, and intellectual pursuits. Nizami writes, "The '*nobaran*' of the Sultanate, through their military '*futuhat*' and administrative '*tanzim*' ensured that the Sultanate stood firm against external threats and internal discord". He further observes, "At the same time, their patronage of Persian poets, historians, and artists helped to elevate the '*adab*' and '*farsi*' traditions, marking the Sultanate as a beacon of cultural excellence". Nizami's account reveals the deep connection between the nobility's military competence and their cultural patronage. The use of terms such as

'nobaran' (nobles), 'futuhat' (conquests), 'tanzim' (organization), 'adab' (manners), and 'farsi' (Persian) shows how the nobility was able to maintain political stability while nurturing the cultural legacy of Persian traditions. Through their support for both military and cultural advancements, the nobility played a crucial role in the Sultanate's enduring strength and prosperity. Nizami highlights the nobles' dual responsibility in both securing the state and promoting cultural growth. By overseeing military conquests and administrative organization, they stabilized the Sultanate, while their cultural patronage ensured the flourishing of Persian literature and art. Nizami's depiction underscores the importance of the nobility in shaping both the political and cultural landscape of the Sultanate.

The nobility adopted luxurious lifestyles marked by grand festivities and opulent residences, reflecting their elevated status in the Sultanate and their control over immense wealth and resources. As Hasan Nizami describes in *Taj-ul-Ma'asir*, "the nobles resided in 'qasr-e-mu'alla' (exalted palaces), adorned with 'zarbaf' (brocade) draperies and 'chandani' (silver canopies), where 'bazz' (festive gatherings) continued for days". He further elaborates, "their feasts, laid out on 'sufras' (banquet cloths) embroidered with gold, featured 'murgh-e-masala' (spiced fowl), 'halwa-e-sheerin' (sweet pudding), and 'mey' (wine), served in crystal goblets". These grand displays of wealth and extravagance were essential to reinforcing their authority and distinction within the Sultanate's rigid social hierarchy. The deliberate use of 'shaan-o-shaukat' (grandeur and magnificence) in their daily lives served as a visible marker of power, distinguishing the nobility from the common populace. Nizami's account highlights how this culture of opulence was not merely personal indulgence but a calculated demonstration of 'izzat' (prestige) and 'maqam' (rank). However, such unchecked luxury also contributed to widening economic disparities, as the nobility's excessive spending on 'aysh-o-ishrat' (pleasures and indulgences) often came at the expense of administrative efficiency and financial stability.

Hamid Qalandar (1985) in '*Khair-ul-Majalis*' discusses the significant influence the nobility held in shaping both the governance and cultural life of the Sultanate. Their power extended beyond military control and administrative affairs, as they played a crucial role in fostering intellectual and cultural advancements. Qalandar

writes, "The '*ashraf*' not only command '*sultani*' power, but also guide the intellectual and spiritual direction of the Sultanate, as their patronage of scholars and poets becomes a mark of their authority". He further observes, "Their role in social stratification is undeniable, as their '*ta'leem*' of the masses and support for '*ulama*' ensures the stability of both governance and culture". In this passage, Qalandar emphasizes the intertwined roles of the '*ashraf*' (noble class) in both governance and cultural life. The term '*sultani*' (royal authority) highlights their political control, while '*ta'leem*' (education) and '*ulama*' (scholars) signify their influence on intellectual development. The nobility's ability to shape social stratification through their educational and cultural patronage is seen as essential for maintaining the stability of the Sultanate. Qalandar reveals that the nobility's influence extended beyond political control into the realm of intellectual and cultural life. Their support for scholars and poets not only cemented their political power but also contributed to the cultural richness of the Sultanate. Qalandar's account illustrates how the nobility's role in governance was inseparable from their cultural and intellectual patronage, which reinforced their position in the social hierarchy.

The nobility's wealth enabled them to maintain vast estates, extravagant palaces, and patronage of cultural and social gatherings, reinforcing their dominance and influence within the Sultanate. As Hamid Qalandar describes in *Khair-ul-Majalis*, "these nobles resided in '*manzil-ha-e-aali*' (grand mansions) surrounded by '*bagh-ha-e-gulzar*' (flower-filled gardens), where fountains of '*aab-e-zulal*' (pure water) shimmered under the moonlight". He further notes, "their '*majlis-ha*' (gatherings) were adorned with poets reciting '*ghazal-ha-e-farsi*' (Persian verses) and scholars engaging in '*bahs-o-munazira*' (intellectual debates), while the air was scented with '*oud-o-musk*' (aloeswood and musk)". These settings not only reflected their affluence but also underscored their role as custodians of cultural and intellectual life. The strategic investment in '*shaan-o-shaukat*' (splendor and magnificence) allowed the nobility to maintain their '*maqam*' (status) and reinforce their legitimacy. Qalandar's depiction highlights how the nobility's patronage of '*ilm-o-adab*' (knowledge and literature) was not solely an act of refinement but also a means of securing influence within the courtly and scholarly circles. However, their excessive

focus on '*aysh-o-ishrat*' (luxury and indulgence) also distanced them from the common populace, creating a socio-political divide that weakened the Sultanate's stability over time.

Amir Hasan Sijzi (1979) in his work '*Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad*', discusses how the nobility utilized their wealth not only to consolidate political power but also to support Islamic art and culture, which enhanced their cultural prestige. By sponsoring artists, architects, and scholars, they reinforced their status and contributed to the broader cultural and intellectual development of the Sultanate. Sijzi writes, "The '*nobaran*' of the Sultanate, with their '*maal*' and '*jahl*' (wealth and influence), have been the foremost patrons of '*fan*' (art) and '*ilm*' (knowledge), ensuring the continuous evolution of Islamic culture". He adds, "Through their support of architectural marvels and the promotion of '*khamisa*' (poetry), they secure not only their own status but also the cultural legacy of the Sultanate". Sijzi's account underscores the dual role of the '*nobaran*' (nobility) in shaping both the political and cultural landscape. By employing their '*maal*' (wealth) and '*jahl*' (influence), they ensured the flourishing of '*fan*' (art) and '*ilm*' (knowledge), facilitating the continuation of Islamic traditions and cultural achievements. Their sponsorship of '*khamisa*' (a poetic form) highlights the ways in which the nobility used cultural patronage as a means to elevate both their political power and social standing. Sijzi reveals that the nobility's patronage was not solely political but deeply entwined with cultural motivations, serving as a tool for both consolidating power and enhancing their cultural legacy. By promoting art and scholarship, they solidified their place in both the political hierarchy and the cultural history of the Sultanate. Sijzi's reflection demonstrates how the nobles used cultural patronage as an extension of their influence and prestige.

The nobles patronized poets and scholars, fostering a flourishing cultural environment that defined the Sultanate era and enriched its literary and intellectual traditions. As Amir Hasan Sijzi records in *Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad*, "the halls of '*diwan-ha*' (royal courts) echoed with the recitations of '*ustad-ha-e-sher*' (master poets), who composed '*qasida-ha-e-farsi*' (Persian odes) in praise of their patrons". He further states, "these nobles, adorned in '*jama-e-khas*' (exquisite robes), rewarded '*ahle-ilm*' (men of knowledge) with '*ashrafi*' (gold coins) and gifted them '*iqta*' (land grants) to

sustain their scholarly pursuits”. This patronage played a pivotal role in elevating the Sultanate’s cultural and intellectual landscape, embedding Persianate influences into its literary canon. The deliberate encouragement of ‘ilm-o-adab’ (knowledge and literature) by the nobility ensured that their courts remained centers of ‘faza’il’ (excellence) and artistic expression. Sijzi’s account demonstrates how this support was not merely an act of generosity but a calculated strategy to secure ‘izzat’ (prestige) and align themselves with the cultural elite. However, while their patronage nurtured artistic brilliance, it also bred dependency among scholars, as their works increasingly reflected the ideals and ambitions of their benefactors rather than independent intellectual thought.

K.A. Nizami (2002) in his work ‘*The Delhi Sultanate*’ The nobility’s wealth, derived from the *iqta* system, allowed them to dominate politically and culturally, while their growing autonomy weakened central authority and contributed to administrative fragmentation. As K.A. Nizami notes in *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, “the ‘umara’ (nobles), enriched by vast ‘iqta’at’ (land grants), wielded influence beyond the Sultan’s reach, governing their domains with considerable independence”. He further observes, “while the nobility lavishly spent on ‘mehfils’ (gatherings) and ‘imarat-ha’ (grand structures), their loyalty to the throne wavered, as the ‘daulat’ (wealth) they amassed fueled ambitions of greater power”. This financial and political strength enabled them to function as semi-sovereign rulers, often resisting royal directives to safeguard their personal interests. The *iqta* system, originally designed for efficient revenue collection and military administration, inadvertently fostered decentralization, eroding the Sultan’s direct control. Nizami’s analysis highlights how the Sultanate’s reliance on a wealthy and autonomous nobility created internal vulnerabilities, as these nobles prioritized ‘qudrat’ (power) over allegiance. While their patronage of culture and infrastructure contributed to the prosperity of the realm, their unchecked authority led to factionalism, ultimately destabilizing the empire from within.

In *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, K.A. Nizami elaborates on how the nobility not only played a crucial role in the political and military realms but also fostered the growth of cultural and intellectual life. Their patronage of artists,

poets, and scholars turned the Sultanate into a significant center of learning and artistic achievement. Nizami writes, "The '*nobaran*' of the Sultanate, through their '*khidmat*' (service) and '*sarmaya*' (capital), supported poets, philosophers, and artists, leading to the emergence of a rich cultural atmosphere". He further adds, "The growth of Persian '*adab*' and '*ilm*' (literature and knowledge) was made possible by their unwavering patronage, making the Sultanate a beacon of intellectual excellence". Nizami's work emphasizes the profound impact of the '*nobaran*' (nobility) in fostering both the cultural and intellectual development of the Sultanate. Their '*khidmat*' (service) and '*sarmaya*' (capital) were instrumental in funding artistic and scholarly endeavors that flourished under their patronage. The rise of '*adab*' (literature) and '*ilm*' (knowledge) within the Sultanate reflects how the nobility's influence extended far beyond the political sphere, shaping the intellectual and cultural identity of the region. Nizami's analysis reveals that the nobility's patronage was not just an investment in art and culture but a deliberate strategy to cultivate the Sultanate as a center of intellectual and cultural leadership. By supporting '*adab*' and '*ilm*', they ensured the prosperity of Persian literature and scholarship, which in turn elevated the Sultanate's prestige. Nizami's perspective shows the nobility's critical role in the cultural transformation of the Delhi Sultanate.

Sirhindi, Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah (1931) in '*Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*' describes that the nobility's wealth and patronage of Persian and Arabic traditions significantly shaped the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Sultanate, reinforcing its identity as a center of Islamic scholarship and artistic refinement. Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, in *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, states, "the '*umara*' (nobles) adorned their courts with '*fuzala*' (scholars) and '*shu'ara*' (poets), ensuring that the traditions of '*adab*' (literature) and '*hikmat*' (wisdom) flourished under their guardianship". He further records, "these patrons of knowledge constructed '*madaris*' (seminaries) and '*kutubkhana-ha*' (libraries), where the works of '*mufasssirin*' (Quranic exegetes) and '*hukama*' (philosophers) were preserved and studied". This cultural investment not only reinforced the Sultanate's intellectual legacy but also strengthened its political and religious legitimacy. Sirhindi's account highlights how noble patronage of Persian and Arabic scholarship ensured that Delhi

emerged as a beacon of ‘ilm’ (knowledge) and ‘darbari-zaban’ (courtly language), enhancing its prestige in the wider Islamic world. While this cultural flourishing was a testament to their ‘himayat’ (support) for learning, it also underscored the reliance of scholars and artists on noble benefaction, often shaping intellectual discourse to align with aristocratic ideals. However, the nobles’ increasing focus on prestige and grandeur sometimes diverted resources from governance, contributing to administrative inefficiencies that weakened the state’s stability.

The nobility’s patronage of Persian poetry and philosophy sparked a cultural renaissance in the Sultanate, elevating Delhi as a center of literary and intellectual excellence. Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, in *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, writes, “the ‘umara’ (nobles) not only admired but also actively supported ‘shu‘ara’ (poets) and ‘hukama’ (philosophers), ensuring that the art of ‘fann-e-sher’ (poetry) and ‘hikmat’ (wisdom) thrived in their courts”. He further notes, “these patrons of knowledge established ‘majalis’ (literary gatherings) where the verses of ‘masnavi-go’ (epic poets) and the discourses of ‘mutakallimin’ (theologians) were recited and debated with great reverence”. Through this sustained investment in Persian literary and philosophical traditions, the nobility shaped the Sultanate’s cultural and intellectual legacy. Sirhindi’s account highlights how noble patronage created an atmosphere where Persian poetry became an integral part of the Sultanate’s elite culture, influencing courtly life and governance. This renaissance in ‘adab’ (literature) and ‘fikir’ (thought) contributed to the evolution of Indo-Persian intellectual traditions, blending local and Persian influences into a distinct cultural identity. However, while this flourishing of ‘zaban-e-Farsi’ (Persian language) strengthened the Sultanate’s prestige, it also signified an elitist cultural dominance that distanced the ruling class from the common populace, creating social divides.

Tughlaq, Firoz Shah, (1996) in his *Futuh-at-i-Firuzshahi* (ed. Azra Alavi) summarizes that the nobility’s role as patrons of art and literature was intertwined with their political authority, leaving a lasting cultural legacy that reinforced their legitimacy and influence. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, in *Futuh-at-i-Firuzshahi*, states, “the ‘umara’ (nobles) sought to glorify their rule by commissioning ‘katibaan’ (scribes) and ‘naqqashan’ (artists) to embellish ‘darbar-ha’ (royal courts) and

‘*masajid*’ (mosques) with inscriptions and intricate designs”. He further records, “these noble patrons ensured that ‘*diwan-ha*’ (poetic collections) and ‘*tazkira-ha*’ (biographical works) were preserved, thus safeguarding the intellectual traditions of the Sultanate”. By fostering artistic and literary endeavors, the nobility not only enhanced the aesthetic and intellectual environment of their courts but also solidified their status as cultural leaders. Tughlaq’s account emphasizes how noble patronage played a crucial role in shaping the Sultanate’s artistic and literary identity, linking political power with cultural sophistication. The flourishing of ‘*shairi*’ (poetry) and ‘*mimari*’ (architecture) under their benefaction underscored their commitment to preserving Persianate traditions, while also incorporating elements of indigenous artistic expressions. However, this investment in ‘*hunar*’ (art) and ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge) was often motivated by the need to assert dominance and reinforce ‘*izzat*’ (prestige), rather than purely intellectual pursuits, revealing the strategic nature of cultural patronage.

The nobles played a significant role in cultural patronage, leaving lasting architectural and artistic legacies in the Sultanate by commissioning grand structures and supporting artisans. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, in *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*, writes, “The ‘*umara*’ (nobles) erected magnificent ‘*madaris*’ (schools) and ‘*masajid*’ (mosques), ensuring the flourishing of ‘*ilm*’ (knowledge) and ‘*hunar*’ (art) within the empire”. He further states, “Their patronage extended to the embellishment of ‘*shahr-ha*’ (cities) with ‘*bāghāt*’ (gardens) and ‘*hammam-ha*’ (public baths), reflecting their commitment to civic and aesthetic enhancement”. By investing in grand architectural projects, the nobility not only strengthened the cultural identity of the Sultanate but also displayed their political influence and devotion to Islamic traditions. Tughlaq’s narrative highlights the nobles’ role as custodians of artistic and architectural grandeur, linking their authority with cultural sophistication. Their construction of ‘*masajid*’ (mosques), ‘*sarai-ha*’ (caravanserais), and ‘*qanat-ha*’ (water channels) facilitated urban development while simultaneously serving as a testament to their wealth and power. However, this patronage was often driven by the desire for ‘*izzat*’ (prestige) and ‘*jaal-o-shaukat*’ (grandeur), reinforcing their elite status rather than purely altruistic or religious motivations.

The nobility indulged in luxury to assert their social and political power, while also funding artistic and architectural projects to enhance their legacy. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, in *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*, states, “The ‘*umara*’ (nobles) adorned their courts with ‘*zarinfam*’ (golden tapestry) and ‘*rangin shamad*’ (colorful carpets), displaying their grandeur to the world”. He further writes, “Their patronage extended to the construction of ‘*shandar imarat-ha*’ (magnificent buildings) and ‘*hauz-ha*’ (royal reservoirs), ensuring their names were eternally inscribed in the annals of history”. By intertwining opulence with cultural patronage, the nobility not only solidified their dominance but also contributed to the artistic and urban development of the Sultanate. Tughlaq’s account underscores how noble patronage of the arts and architecture was not merely an act of benevolence but a strategic tool for reinforcing their status and influence. The construction of grand ‘*masajid*’ (mosques), ‘*baradari-ha*’ (pavilions), and ‘*qanat-ha*’ (irrigation canals) enhanced the urban landscape, reflecting their ‘*qudrat*’ (power) and ‘*shaukat*’ (splendor). However, this indulgence in material excess also led to growing economic burdens, highlighting the paradox of their rule—balancing political dominance with fiscal responsibility.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The objective of the research is to study the relationship between the Sultan of Delhi and Nobles. A lot of work is done on nobility and Sultanate of Delhi but it remains up to political and administrative roles. Nobility, although it attracts historians’ attention, the socio-cultural aspect was totally ignored in historical scholarship.

- To analyze the composition, status, and social life of the Delhi Sultanate nobility, with special attention to their ethnic diversity and their court culture.
- To examine their festivals, ceremonies, traditions they followed in various festivals and different mode of entertainment.
- To study the domestic life of nobles which include their houses, food, drinks, costumes, matrimonial relations etc.
- To explore the cultural contributions of nobles in the fields of literature, architecture, art, and music, highlighting their role as patrons of knowledge, refinement, and Indo-Islamic traditions.

1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is confined to the socio-cultural dimensions of the Delhi Sultanate nobility from the establishment of the Sultanate in 1206 CE to its decline in 1526 CE. It will not primarily address the political or purely administrative functions of the nobles, except where these intersect with social and cultural life. Instead, the focus will be on examining their social composition, lifestyle, household structures, and patterns of luxury; their cultural contributions in the fields of literature, art, architecture, music, and cuisine; and their participation in festivals, feasts, and modes of entertainment.

The study will draw upon contemporary Persian chronicles, biographical works, court literature, and archaeological remains, as well as modern secondary scholarship, to reconstruct a holistic picture of the nobility's role in shaping Indo-Islamic culture. While acknowledging regional variations, the emphasis will be on the Delhi-centered nobility, since they were the primary bearers of Persianate courtly traditions. The scope also extends to evaluating the cultural legacy of these nobles, particularly how their practices and patronage influenced later Mughal courtly and social traditions.

The study holds significance as it seeks to broaden the understanding of the Delhi Sultanate beyond its conventional political and administrative history by focusing on the socio-cultural life of the nobility, a subject that has often been overshadowed in historical scholarship. By analyzing the everyday life, cultural patronage, religious engagements, and social practices of the nobles, this research contributes to a more comprehensive view of medieval Indian society.

The study is particularly important because the nobles were not only pillars of the Sultanate's political system but also agents of cultural synthesis, who played a central role in the transmission of Persianate-Islamic traditions into the Indian context. Their patronage of literature, architecture, art, and Sufism shaped the contours of Indo-Islamic civilization, leaving a legacy that endured well into the Mughal era.

Furthermore, the research will enrich the field of medieval Indian history by incorporating a multi-disciplinary perspective that blends social, cultural, religious,

and intellectual aspects. It will provide new insights into how elite lifestyles and cultural choices influenced broader patterns of society, thereby contributing to the understanding of cultural encounters, identity formation, and the evolution of Indo-Islamic court culture.

1.5 RESEARCH GAP

The study of the nobility under the Delhi Sultanate has long been a subject of historical and political interest. However, while there is substantial research on the political and military roles of these elites, the socio-cultural dimensions of their lives and influence remain relatively underexplored. The socio-cultural contributions of these nobles such as their patronage of arts, architecture, literature, and their role in the dissemination of culture remain relatively under-studied. There is a need for more nuanced research into how nobles influenced cultural transformations and patronized intellectual pursuits, beyond their political roles. Moreover, sociological analysis of the internal dynamics of the nobility by examining the social stratification, relationships, and cultural exchanges between Turkic, Persian, and indigenous nobles is yet to be fully explored and how this exchange influenced both their social practices and cultural output. The patronage of the arts by the nobles, including their support for literature, architecture, and visual arts, needs to be studied comprehensively, focusing on their role as cultural agents in shaping the Sultanate's artistic and intellectual heritage.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This framework is purely inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary in social science research methodology. The study combines historical analysis, sociological perspectives, and cultural examination to understand the position and influence of the nobility in shaping the political, social, and cultural landscape of the period. The primary focus is on the interrelationship between the nobility's socio-political functions and their contributions to the cultural life during the Delhi Sultanate (12th–16th centuries). The research is qualitative in nature, employing a variety of historical sources and a comparative sociological framework. By utilizing both

primary and secondary sources, the research provides an in-depth examination of the nobles' socio-cultural roles, focusing on their political, military, and cultural influence. The sociological approach will provide insights into the social structure of the nobles, examining how their social status and identity were shaped by and contributed to the broader cultural and religious transformations of the era.

The principal primary sources for this study include royal chronicles, Persian texts, and administrative documents written during or shortly after the Delhi Sultanate period. Key texts include *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* by Ziauddin Barani, *Ibn Battuta's Rehla*, Minhaj Siraj's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* Amir Khusrau's *Khazian al Futuh*, *Nuh Siphir* and other contemporary Persian works. Analysis of architectural structures, such as mosques, forts, and tombs, built or patronized by nobles, will offer insights into their cultural and political influence. A range of secondary sources including scholarly books and journal articles will be consulted. Important works by historians such as S.B.P Nigam's *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, Iqtidar Ahmad Siddiqui's *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delhi*, Muhammad Habib's *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, Vol. II, R. Nath's *History of Sultanate Architecture* will provide critical context and interpretations of the political, social, and cultural roles of the nobles.

The present thesis is divided into four chapters that highlight the different Socio-cultural aspect of the nobility in Sultanate period.

1.7 CHAPTERIZATION

Chapter 1: Dynamics of Court Culture

This chapter examines the multifaceted dynamics of court culture in the Delhi Sultanate (13th–16th centuries), presenting the royal court as a pivotal site of political authority, cultural expression, and social hierarchy. It explores how the court functioned not only as a center of administration but also as a stage where power was performed and legitimized through elaborate rituals, regulated etiquettes, and symbolic displays. Influenced by Persianate and Islamic traditions, yet shaped by local Indian contexts, the Sultanate court developed a hybrid cultural aesthetic.

Central to this analysis are the ceremonial protocols, court rituals, dress codes, and royal etiquette that structured court life and delineated social hierarchies. These practices were not merely ornamental but served as mechanisms of control, projection of power, and consolidation of elite loyalty. Furthermore, by examining the sources of noble income and the economic structures that underpinned their courtly lives, this chapter sheds light on the material conditions that sustained elite culture. This dimension is essential to understanding how nobles-maintained influence not only through military loyalty but through cultural authority, soft power, and symbolic capital. Various sources like Ibn Batuta's *Rehla*, Zia ud Din Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi* Amir Khusrau's work *Khazain-ul-Futuh* are contemporary accounts of court life, political ideology, and administrative practices. These works describe court rituals, sultan authority, class hierarchy and the cultural richness of the court.

Chapter 2: Festivals, Ceremonies and Mode of Entertainment

This chapter explore cultural life of the Sultanate nobility in India which was marked by a rich tapestry of festivals, ceremonies, and entertainment that reflected the fusion of Islamic traditions, Persian influences, and local Indian customs. The chapter investigates both religious and secular celebration ranging from Islamic festivals like Eid and Muharram to seasonal events, royal weddings, and investiture ceremonies highlighting their political, symbolic, and diplomatic significance. It also discusses the elaborate organization of courtly feasts, the etiquette governing participation, gift exchanges, and the aesthetics of food, dress, and music that accompanied such gatherings. Ceremonies, including coronations, royal weddings, and public audiences (*Durbar*), were grand affairs that reinforced the political and social hierarchies of the time. These events were characterized by elaborate rituals, public displays of wealth, and the participation of the court and nobility. Additionally, it also explores various forms of entertainment such as music, dance, poetry recitals, and hunting, wrestling, games such as *Chogans* (polo), dices which were integral to their social and cultural life. Musical instruments like *duff*, *nar*, *Chang*, *Rubab* were also used by them. Parties, convivial and drinking parties, qawwali and story tellers, dancers, jugglers and other entertainers seems to be sources of recreation of the nobility. This chapter

contributes to the broader thesis by showing that entertainment was not a peripheral aspect of court culture, but a core medium through which power, identity, and social cohesion were performed and negotiated. By exploring leisure as a site of cultural production and elite self-fashioning, the chapter adds a vital dimension to our understanding of the Delhi Sultanate's political culture. It also helps challenge narrow administrative or military readings of the period by revealing the sophistication and plurality of noble life. Ultimately, this chapter enriches the historiography of Indo-Islamic court culture by integrating the study of aesthetics, ritual, and everyday elite practices into the analysis of power and governance. Together, these festivals, ceremonies, and modes of entertainment played a vital role in the Sultanate's court culture, highlighting the interplay of power, religion, and cultural expression.

Chapter 3: Household and Domestic Life

The household and domestic life of the nobility during the Sultanate period were marked by a blend of luxury, strict social hierarchy, and cultural practices that reflected the wealth and status of the ruling class. While the Sultanate court has been studied primarily as a site of political power, this chapter shifts the lens to the domestic sphere, examining how noble households functioned as spaces of cultural production, identity performance, and socio-political continuity. The domestic arrangements of the nobility were designed to reflect their power and prestige while also adhering to the cultural and religious norms of the time that include their palatial mansions, style of architecture, food, clothes, jewelry etc. The noble household functioned not only as a physical space for residence but also as a site of power, patronage, cultural reproduction, and gendered authority. By analysing the structure, management, and rituals of noble domestic life, this chapter seeks to uncover how the values, hierarchies, and cultural norms of the Sultanate elite were maintained and enacted in private spaces.

This chapter also include the architectural layout and spatial organization of noble residences, the material culture of the home (furniture, textiles, decorative arts). The chapter investigates culinary practices not only what the nobility ate, but how food

was prepared, served, and ritualized as part of hospitality and daily routine. The chapter also explores the role of the household in managing slavery, servitude, concubinage, and gender relations, including the lives of noblewomen, concubines, and attendants. It examines dressing practices, highlighting the fabrics, styles, and symbols embedded in noble clothing, and how attire reinforced status, gender, and cultural identity. It also engages with comparative insights from contemporaneous Islamic and Indic traditions to understand the hybrid nature of Indo-Persian elite households.

Chapter 4: Art, Architecture and Literature

This chapter explores the role of the Sultanate nobility in shaping and patronizing the cultural landscape of medieval India, with a focus on their contributions to art, architecture, and literature during the Sultanate period (13th–16th centuries). This chapter highlights the architectural development by nobles. The nobility, as key actors in the socio-political hierarchy, were not only administrators and warriors but also significant cultural patrons who influenced the artistic and intellectual currents of their time. Drawing upon court chronicles, architectural monuments, and literary works, this chapter investigates how the aesthetic tastes and political aspirations of noble elites were expressed through their patronage networks.

In architecture, noble families commissioned mosques, tombs, gardens, caravanserais, and public works that displayed both piety and prestige. They constructed buildings of both religious and secular nature. religious buildings include mosques, *idghas*, *namazgah*, *khanqas* etc. Secular buildings such as wells, step wells, *baolis*, canals, bridges, forts, canals for irrigations were also constructed. Beside this *sarais*, tombs and *madradas* were also built by them. These structures often reflected a blend of Persian, Central Asian, and local Indian styles, symbolizing the synthesis of cultures that defined the Indo-Islamic aesthetic. The buildings constructed by them were not merely utilitarian, but it symbolized the great valour of ruling class. Beside this it also provides employment to common people.

In literature, many nobles were patrons of poets, historians, and scholars, particularly in Persian—the language of high culture. They composed literature as well as gave

patronage to the intellectual class. As a result, literature on different subjects were composed such as *masnavi*, *qasida*, history, *farhang* literature ((Lexicographical work), *insha*, (letter writings), *fiqh* (religious literature), *fatwa* (Muslim jurisprudence), *tafsir* (Commentary on Quran), astronomy, astrology, mathematics, geology, metallurgy, architecture, music and numismatics. They were expert in medical science and alchemy. They also contribute in the field of craft and technology by inventing papers and artificial pearls. They promoted research in subjects like astronomy and astrology by installing labs and devices at their palaces.

In short, Nobles play a significant role in enriching the socio-cultural life in Delhi Sultanate. Nobles not only involved in administrative responsibilities but also enjoyed their lively social and cultural life in Indian and Perso-Islamic perspectives. Nobles were deputed in far flung area as governor, deputy governor and *muqtis*. By this they contact with regional people and also imbibed their local culture. Thus, they act as bridge between rulers and common people by transfusion of Persian culture and Indian culture. This composite culture has been seen in their marriages, ceremonies, festivals celebration etc. However, they act as connector of two cultures. They patronized men of high learning, architects, musicians, painters etc and by this a variety of literature is composed and compiled and number of monuments both public and private were constructed, which contribute in reconstructing their socio-cultural aspect.

Chapter 1

DYNAMICS OF COURT CULTURE

During the Delhi Sultanate, nobles often began their careers as slaves and rose to prominence through their merit and loyalty to their masters. As they advanced in ranks, they were awarded titles such as *Maliks*, *Khans*, and *Amirs*, reflecting their achievements and promotions. The highest rank among them was that of *Khans*, followed by *Malik*, *Amir*, and *Sipahsalar*s. The nobles' status and position within the Sultanate were closely tied to the land grants (*Iqtas*) and titles they received.²⁶ Their standing at the royal court was determined by various sources of income, which included salaries, land grants, gifts, bribes, and corruption. Nobles were integral to the royal court and all were expected to attend the court and show deference to the Sultan. Unfortunately, medieval historians often overlooked the intricacies of court culture, including the etiquettes, norms, and rituals of the Sultanate period. However, these ceremonial practices played a critical role in legitimizing the state's power and control, functioning as tools of political domination. The income sources of nobles were varied, encompassing salaries, land grants, gifts, rewards, and in some cases, even loans from merchants. Bribery and corruption were also common among many nobles.

A. SOURCES OF INCOME

Nobles' salaries were proportionate to their rank and position in the Sultanate. They were remunerated both in cash and kind. Sultans would also bestow costly robes and gifts based on a noble's rank and achievements.²⁷ The luxurious living standards of these nobles were a reflection of their substantial wealth, which was evident in their generosity in gifting, charitable donations, and extravagant parties. For instance, historian Barani notes that Malik Qutbuddin Alvi spent a large sum on his son's

²⁶ S.B.P.Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 105

²⁷ Ibid. pp. 159-169; Zia ud din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001, p. 144

marriage.²⁸ Malik Nusrat Subah, the '*Muqti*' of Kanod and Jaubala, was known for his charitable acts, though it often left him indebted.²⁹ Similarly, Malik Saifuddin Aibek, appointed as *sarjandar*³⁰ by Sultan Iltutmish, initially received a salary of three *lakh jitals* (copper coins), but after requesting a higher amount, he was appointed Muqta of another region.³¹ The early Khalji Sultans paid substantial salaries to their nobles. Amir Khusrau received a generous salary of 1200 '*tankas*' (silver coins), the same amount his father, Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, earned as an Amir in the armies of Sultans Iltutmish and Balban.³² However, Sultan Alauddin Khalji introduced a new policy that involved reducing the nobles' salaries in order to enhance the military's strength. Consequently, Amir Khusrau's salary was reduced to 1000 '*tankas*'.³³ Additionally, Alauddin's reforms included payments in cash, the abolishment of all land grants (including '*waqf*' and '*inam*' for religious institutions), as well as the cessation of land assignments.³⁴ The sole exception was Malik Kafur, the '*Naib-i-Sultan*', who was granted the '*iqta*' of Rapri as a mark of special honor.³⁵

'Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq' continued the practice of paying salaries in cash, setting the pay of nobles based on their rank and position.³⁶ Additionally, he introduced a pension system for former ruling nobles and '*Amirs*', such as Khawaja Khatir and Khawaja Muhazzab, ensuring they were financially supported after their active service. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq further innovated by paying one year's salary in advance.³⁷ Nobles were appointed either directly by the Sultan or through his representatives, and their salaries were determined and fixed based on

²⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Aligarh, 2005, p. 202; H.C.Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre Mughal India*, Delhi, 1986, p.135

²⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 204

³⁰ Chief of royal bodyguard.

³¹ Minhaj Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, ed Captain Nassau Lees, Mawlawis Khadim Hosain and Abd al-Hai, Calcutta, 1864, p.237; eng tr. Major Henry George Raverty, New Delhi, 1970, Vol. II, pp.729-730; S.P.B. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 160

³² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 210; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1971, p. 154

³³ Ibid., p. 210; S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 161

³⁴ Ibid. pp 284, 303; A.R. Fuller and A. Khallaque, *The Reign of Alauddin Khalji*, Calcutta, 1967, pp. 70-71, S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 161

³⁵ Ibid, p. 328; Iqtidar Ahmad Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi (13th-14th Century)*, New Delhi, 2006, pp. 105-106

³⁶ Ibid, pp. 435, 438, Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 128

³⁷ Ibid. p 426-427; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 127

their respective ranks.³⁸ In addition to regular payments, the Sultan was known for distributing substantial rewards on auspicious occasions.

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq appointed four 'Naibs' (also known as 'Shiqdars'³⁹), with their salaries ranging from twenty thousand to forty thousand gold 'tankahs'. The Sultan's *dabirs* (secretaries), who managed a staff of 300 scribes, received a salary of ten thousand gold 'tankahs'. 'Sadr-i-Jahan' and 'Shaikh-ul-Islam' were each granted a salary of sixty thousand tankahs, although they were not authorized to manage the expenses of their own armies. Nobles were awarded stipends based on their status and responsibilities. For instance, a 'Khan' could command ten thousand horsemen, a Malik commanded one thousand, an Amir led one hundred, and an *Isfahla* had less than one hundred. The allocation of 'Iqtas' for each noble was tied to their respective duties. Khans typically received one lakh 'tankahs', Maliks were allotted between fifty to sixty thousand gold *tankahs*, 'Amirs' received between thirty to forty thousand gold tankahs, and *Isfahls* earned around twenty thousand gold 'tankahs'.⁴⁰ Ibn Batuta records some significant appointments made by the Sultan. For example, Khudawandzada Ziya-uddin was appointed as Amir-i-Dad (Lord of Justice), a position that required him to sit in the Qazi's court and summon Amirs and other high-ranking officers when required. His salary was set at fifty thousand tankahs, in addition to several jagirs, a robe of honour, and a superior breed horse.⁴¹ Another notable appointment was that of Amir Bakht, who was given the title 'Saraf-ul-Mulk' as the head auditor general (Nazir-i-Nabat-i-Khass). He earned a salary of forty thousand gold tankahs and was also granted several villages.⁴² Additionally, 'Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq' appointed Ibn Batuta as the 'Qazi' of Delhi, offering him a salary of twelve thousand gold 'tankahs' along with 'Jagirs' that

³⁸ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, ed. A.S. Usha, Madras, 1948, p. 422; Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 163

³⁹ Head of an administrative unit *Shiqq*.

⁴⁰ Al Qalqashandi, *Subhul- Asha*, Eng tr, Otto Spies, *An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century* (being a translation of the Chapters on India), Aligarh, 1935, pp. 71, 91; Nigam, *Nobility*, p. 164; A.B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1976, p. 196; K.S. Lal, *History of Khaljis (1290- 1320 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 171

⁴¹ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr. H.A.R. Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Batuta(1325-1354)*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1993,p. 746(hereafter cited as *Travels*); Nigam, *Nobility*, p. 165

⁴² H.A.R.Gibb, *Travels of Ibn Batuta(1325-1354)*, Vol III, pp. 746-747; Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p.165

generated substantial revenue. Ibn Batuta was also presented with a ‘*Maghribi*’ robe of honour.⁴³ Malik Qabula, a noble during the Sultanate period, was known for his immense wealth, reportedly receiving around thirty-six lakhs gold ‘*tankahs*’ annually.⁴⁴ Shihab Sultani, also known as Nusrat Khan, who began his career as a slave of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, was appointed Governor of Bidar and received land grants generating one lakh gold *tankahs*.⁴⁵

In addition to these nobles, emoluments were also fixed for emissaries. Amir Ghyassuddin Mahmud of Baghdad, also known as “*Makhdumzada*”, arrived at Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq’s court as a representative of the *Abbasid Khalifa* (caliph) of Baghdad. He was assigned the territory of Kanauj, including the revenue of *Siri* and other areas, along with a grant of one lakh *tankahs*.⁴⁶ Sometimes, however, appointments were made without a fixed salary, and instead, *iqtas* were given to the nobles. These nobles, known as “*muqtis*”, were granted administrative control over regions. For instance, *Maulana Shahabuddin* received the *iqta* of “*Nausari*”, Malik Izzuddin Yahya became the *muqti* of “*Satgaon*”, Alp Khan, the son of *Qutlugh Khan*, was assigned the *iqta* of “*Gujarat*”, and Malik Pindar Khalji, also called “*Qadr Khan*”, was given the *iqta* of ‘*Lakhnuti*’.⁴⁷ During the reign of Sultan Firoz Shah, the salaries of the nobles were significantly increased. The Sultan categorized his nobles based on their rank and position, and would grant them eight, six, or four *lakhs* of gold *tankahs*.⁴⁸ Notable among these was Malik Sanjar Bdakshani, who was awarded eighty lakh *tankahs*, Malik-ul-Mulk Immaduddin, who received seventy *lakh tankahs*, and *Maulana Izzuddin*, who was granted *forty lakh tankahs*. ‘*Khan-i-Jahan*’, the *wazir* of Sultan Firoz Shah, received thirteen *lakh*

⁴³Ibid, Vol. III, p. 747; Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 165; Muhammad Basheer Ahmed, *Administration of Justice in Medieval India*, Karachi, 1951, p. 109

⁴⁴Ibid, Vol. III, p. 665

⁴⁵Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*. Eng tr., pp. 454,481,488; Ishwar Prasad, *A History of Qaranuh Turks in India*, Vol. I, Allahabad, 1974, pp. 145-146

⁴⁶Zia ud din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 496; Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, p. 165

⁴⁷Ibid, pp. 354-355; Yahya bin Ahmed Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Husain, Calcutta, 1931, pp. 99-100

⁴⁸Ibid, p. 402

tankahs for the maintenance of his troops, family members, and dependents.⁴⁹ He was also assigned the *iqta* of “*Samana*” as “*inam*” (gift). In a significant move, hereditary appointments were reintroduced by Firoz Shah. After the death of *Khan-i-Jahan*, his son succeeded him in the same post, enjoying the same privileges, including the right to carry an umbrella and elephants, just like his father had.⁵⁰

It is recorded that the salaries of the nobles were further increased during the reign of the *Sayyid* Sultans. However, when Bahlol Lodhi ascended the throne, he reverted to the practices of earlier rulers.⁵¹ A noble named Mian Zabarruddin, a military officer posted in Delhi, refused to accept any assistance or salary from Sultan Ibrahim Lodhi.⁵² Shah Abdul Qureshi, one of the prominent nobles of the Lodhi dynasty during the reign of Bahlol Lodhi, was granted the ‘*iqta*’ of Phulet in Muzaffarnagar district of U.P, which yielded one *lakh tankahs* annually.⁵³ If a noble was found guilty of any crime or misdeed, he was removed from his position, blacklisted, and never considered for any future posts. For example, Mian Malih Turk, who was found guilty of forcibly occupying someone’s land, had his ‘*iqta*’ confiscated, and he remained without employment thereafter.⁵⁴ At times, the Sultan did not extract the surplus revenue from a noble, allowing him to retain it. For instance, Malik Badruddin Bahlim was assigned the ‘*jagir*’ of seven *lakh tankahs* in a particular ‘*pargana*’, but the *jagir* yielded nine *lakh tankahs*. When he reported this to the Sultan, the Sultan allowed him to keep the extra amount.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Mohammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Nawal Kishore, Lucknow, 1865, Eng tr. John Briggs, *History of Rise of Muhammadan Power in India*, New Delhi, 1966, Vol. I, p. 133; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Lucknow, 1875, Eng tr. Barun De, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973, p. 107

⁵⁰ Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, ed. Maulavi Wilayat Husain, Calcutta, 1981, p. 297 Eng tr. R.C. Jauhri, *Medieval India in Transition, (Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)*, Delhi, 2001, pp. 171-175

⁵¹ Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. pp. 145, 147

⁵² Rizqullah Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ed. I.H. Siddiqui, Rampur, 2002, p. 76

⁵³ Ahmed Khan Akbar Shahi, *Shajra-i-Suhrawardi*, quoted by I.H. Siddiqui, *Composite Culture under the Sultan of Delhi*, New Delhi, 2012, p. 72

⁵⁴ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 63. Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Depotism*, Aligarh, 1969, p. 148

⁵⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., I.H. Siddiqui, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 65-66

Larger areas of land were granted to nobles to maintain their soldiers. ‘Sultan Sikander Lodhi’ once granted an ‘*iqta*’ to the noble Mujahid Khan for the maintenance of his contingent, but later doubled the amount assigned by the Sultan.⁵⁶

It is evident from various sources that while the nobles enjoyed handsome salaries and land grants, they also increased their wealth through gifts or awards. One can estimate the wealth of the nobles based on the gifts and awards they received. According to ‘Shihannuddin al-Umari’, gifts were either presented to the Sultan or received from him. These gifts included jewels, horses, saddles gilded with gold and silver, golden girdles, and cloths of various kinds. Nobles would also gift elephants to the Sultan, as it was considered a privilege of the Sultan.⁵⁷ Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq allotted eleven horses to Malik Saifuddin Gaddah, and a noble named Malik Bayazidi of Manikpur gave the Sultan a number of fine-breed horses. Similarly, Malik Mujir Abu Rija had presented many horses, gold, and jewels from his *iqta* to Malik Fakhruddin Ulugh Khan (who later became Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq).⁵⁸ Ibn Batuta also mentioned that on many occasions, nobles and merchants exchanged gifts, which were also given to the Sultan.⁵⁹ For instance, Malik Qutbul Malik, the governor of Multan, presented a slave, a horse, and almonds of Khurasan to Ibn Batuta.⁶⁰

Nobles regularly presented gold, silver, precious stones, elephants, fine-breed horses, perfumes, etc., to the Sultan. These gifts were given on several occasions such as after a hunting expedition, after a battle, during festivals, on the birth of a prince, after a victory over rebels or enemies, and more⁶¹. Nobles also offered gold and silver bricks to the Sultan, known as *Khisht*.⁶² Additionally, they presented him with gold and silver vessels. In one rare incident, Firoz Shah Tughlaq gifted six elephants

⁵⁶ Ibid, pp.76-77

⁵⁷ Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 429

⁵⁸ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Baroda, 1976, p. 78

⁵⁹ Khawaja Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-us Salatin*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, Bombay, 1977, p. 397

⁶⁰ H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta, (1325-1354 A.D)*, Vol. III, p. 605

⁶¹ Afif. *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 267-268

⁶² H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta, (1325-1354 A.D)*, Vol. III, p. 663.

to one of his nobles, Malik Ibrahim, Naib Barbak.⁶³ Horses with ornamented saddles, and camels were also gifted to nobles by Sultans Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Whenever nobles attended any royal court, they would present slaves to the Sultan. They also gifted Arab and Turkish horses, elephants, camels, robes, gold and silver vessels to the Sultan, in accordance with their status and resources.⁶⁴

When Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq transferred the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, he doubled the gifts and salaries of the nobles to assist them in constructing their houses in the new capital.⁶⁵ However, one noble, Mian Maruf Farmuli, never accepted any reward or present from the Sultan.⁶⁶ Despite their immense wealth and land grants, the nobles' extravagant spending and luxurious lifestyle compelled them to take loans. Barani also mentioned that nobles borrowed large sums at exorbitant interest rates from Multani merchants and the 'Sahus' of Delhi, who became wealthy as a result of the nobles' indulgence. Thus, the nobles were often deeply in debt.⁶⁷ Whenever a noble hosted guests or held parties, his functionaries would rush to the merchants to secure loans. Consequently, the nobles were perpetually in debt and unable to repay their creditors. Merchants from Sindh would provide thousands of gold *tankahs* in cash as loans, along with articles they wished to present to the Sultan.⁶⁸ Ibn Batuta also took a loan from the Sindhi merchants to buy gifts for the Sultan.⁶⁹

At times, nobles failed to repay the loans they took from the merchants. When a lender could not recover the loan, he would seek the Sultan's assistance. The method used for collecting debts was known as '*Duhai*' (a cry for help). The merchants

⁶³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 428-429; Eng tr., pp. 235-236; Shekh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D.)*, Calcutta, 1969, p.18

⁶⁴ Ibid pp. 267-269, 339,340

⁶⁵ Yahya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, ed Muhammad Hidayat Hussain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, Eng tr. H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1922, p. 237

⁶⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 181

⁶⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 120; Shaikh Abdul Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D.)*, Calcutta, 1969, p. 25; B.N. Luniya, *Life and Culture in Medieval India*, Indore, 1978, p.182; I.H. Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate; Urbanization and Social Change*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 45

⁶⁸ H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Batuta, (Travels in Asia and Africa)*, 1325-1354 A.D., Vol III, pp.184-185.

⁶⁹ H.A.R. Gibbs, *The Travles of Ibn Batuta*, Vol III, p. 411; Ishwari Parsad, *The History of Qaranah Turks in India*, Allahbad, 1936, p. 275

would stand before the Sultan's gate, blocking the entrance of the debtors and demanding their money. Sometimes the nobles would pay their debts, and at other times, the Sultan would intervene and pay the debts on behalf of the nobles. On occasion, nobles who had given loans to other nobles would choose to write off the debt. For instance, Mian Zianuddin once lent money to a noble, but later he wrote off the entire loan.⁷⁰ Khawaja Jahan Ahmad Ayaz took a large sum as a loan, but later, Khawaja Fakhr Shafi, the accountant general, prepared a list for recovery. However, Firoz Shah Tughlaq waived off all the loans upon the advice of 'Qiwam-ul-Mulk Khan-i-Jahan', the *wazir* of Firoz Shah Tughlaq.⁷¹

B. BRIBE AND CORRUPTION

Considering the lifestyle and high expenses of the nobles, it became evident that their salaries alone could not sustain them. As a result, they indulged in bribe and corruption, extracting large sums from dishonest means. This became an additional source of income for them, and they often misappropriated revenue, exploiting the common masses.⁷² Barani mentioned that the '*muqtis*' embezzled money, tampered with accounts, and extracted more than their specified share from the *iqtas*.⁷³ When the '*iqta*' system became hereditary under Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq, the nobles started increasing their yields, knowing that the land would not be transferred to anyone else.⁷⁴ The '*muqtis*' also took a keen interest in its economic progress to enhance their annual income. Revenue collectors, such as '*mutasarrifs*', '*amils*', and '*karkuns*', embezzled state money to accumulate wealth, while the common people endured miserable lives, and the officers amassed fortunes through wrongful means.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 73

⁷¹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 71-72

⁷² Ain-ul- Mulk Mahru, *Insha Mahru*, Ed. S.Abdur Rashid, Lahore, 1965, pp. 184-186; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 472-473; Muhammad Qammaruddin, *Crime and Punishment in the Delhi Sultanate*, (1206-1526), p. 150-152

⁷³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 431

⁷⁴ I.H.Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi*, pp. 170-171

⁷⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 292, Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 23-24, 195, Shaikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p.93

Several historians have documented instances of corruption during the Sultanate period. Contemporary historians like Afif revealed that even a gold *tankah* was taken as bribe from soldiers by the officials of the ‘*Diwan-i-Arz*’ to approve their horses.⁷⁶ His account also mentions that Kajar Shah, a mint supervisor, was found cheating in the royal mint. Upon the order of the Sultan, Khan-i-Jahan began an investigation, sparing the noble and blaming the artisans for the fault.⁷⁷ Zia ud-Din Barani noted that Qazis were also deeply corrupt. They took bribes and made judgments based on the desires of the culprits. He further criticized that greedy and mundane individuals were appointed as ‘*qazis*’, who distorted the meaning of Quranic texts to align with the wishes of the Sultan.⁷⁸ One of the prominent nobles of that time was Malik Shamsuddin Abu Rija, who held the position of ‘*Mustaufi-i-Mumalik*’ (Auditor General). He built his goodwill with the Sultan but ignored the welfare of the people, eventually beginning to accept bribes. Many nobles lodged complaints against him, but these had little effect. He employed various methods of corruption. When he was the governor of Gujarat, he was ordered to compensate merchants whose elephants died on their journey as presents. He exploited the royal decree by registering false information about the dead elephants and extracted huge amounts of compensation. When Malik Abdullah filed a complaint against him, Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq ordered an investigation. It was discovered that when Malik Shamsuddin Abu Rija had been the *naib* in Gujarat, he borrowed a large sum of gold ‘*tankahs*’ from the treasury, which was still unpaid. Upon searching his house, valuable items worth lakhs of gold tankahs were found, including three thousand gold *tankahs* in gold and a box full of golden spears.⁷⁹ Similarly, Malik Bhiran, the ‘*muqta*’ of Gulbarga under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, was exceedingly greedy. He coveted the *iqta* of Kohir, which was under Ali Shah. In his efforts to confiscate it, he attempted to bribe Qutlugh Khan, the governor of Daulatabad, offering him fifty percent of the revenue from Kohir if he supported his claim.⁸⁰ Likewise, Shamsuddin Damghani offered

⁷⁶ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 300-301; Eng tr., p.173

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 195-197

⁷⁸ Brani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 446

⁷⁹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 265; Mahdi Hussain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, p. 438

⁸⁰ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 726-727

hundreds of elephants, horses, slaves, and gold in exchange for the tax revenue of Gujarat.⁸¹

References, both direct and indirect, illustrate the immense wealth of the nobles during the Sultanate period. Their properties included orchards, villages, houses, and cash treasures. Amir Khusrau noted that changes in the financial condition of the nobles reflected an improvement in their finances compared to their earlier days. They spent vast sums on charity and welfare work. Some nobles even indulged in gambling. Historians have mentioned numerous nobles who possessed enormous wealth. Minhaj referred to the wealth of Malik Ikhtayar uddin Yuzbak, while Amir Khusrau spoke of the affluence of Malik Imadud Daula, and Ibn Batuta recorded the wealth of Malik Kabir.⁸²

Imad ul Mulk Bashir Sultani, a noble under the ‘*Tughlaqid*’ dynasty, owned property worth crores. The extent of his wealth can be gauged from the fact that at one point he required many hessian bags to store his cash. However, he abandoned the idea of using bags and decided to dig wells to store his wealth. After his death, his wealth was assessed, amounting to twelve crore gold *tankahs*, which raised suspicions, as it seemed improbable that such a sum could be extracted from Rapri, which was his holding.⁸³ Nine crore gold *tankahs* were transferred to the royal treasury, while the remaining amount was distributed among his sons and dependents. Although Firoz Shah was aware of the vast wealth of Bashir, he took no action against him and affirmed Bashir’s property as his own, as Bashir was his slave.⁸⁴ Afif records the wealth of a noble named Malik Shaheen Shahna, the ‘naib Amir-i-Majlis’ (Deputy Chief of the Court), who upon his death was found to have accumulated about fifty

⁸¹ Yahaya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, Eng tr., H. Beveridge, p. 132; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 117; Ali Muhammad Khan, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, Eng tr. M.F. Lokhandwala, Baroda, 1965, p. 32

⁸² Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 263; Eng tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881, New Delhi, 1970, p. 764; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, ed. Ahmad Dr. Habibuddin, *Writings of Amir Khusrau: 700 years after the Prophet*, Lucknow, 2007, Vol. III, p. 56; H.A.R. Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 665

⁸³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 439-444; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 93.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 241; Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate, A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999, pp.304, 306

lakh gold *tankahs*, along with other valuable items discovered in his vault. Underground wells with holes were found, which were used to hoard gold.⁸⁵

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq distributed lakhs of *tankahs* among his nobles, fostering an atmosphere of lavish living. He gifted Tatar Khan hundreds of elephants, thousands of horses, and a crore of gold *tankahs*. Likewise, Malik Sanjar Badakhshani received seventy lakh *tankahs*, and Malik ul Mulk Imaadudin was awarded eighty lakh *tankahs*.⁸⁶

C. TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Trade also served as a significant source of income for the nobles, who enhanced their wealth by investing their capital in trade and commerce. Ibn Batuta recorded the wealth of a noble, Malik-ul-Tujjar Tajuddin Kawlami, who amassed great wealth through trade. He exported materials to various countries in Asia and Africa. He was appointed as the governor of Cambay, from where he sent ships to other countries.⁸⁷ Mian Walid, a non-Afghan, worked under ‘Khan-i-Azam Lad Khan Sarang Khani’ (the *muqti* of Jaunpur) and accumulated immense wealth by establishing industries for perfumes and *Chuva* (glassware).⁸⁸

Some nobles also established their own *Karkhanas* (workshops-cum-storehouses). They engaged in trade with the help of their subordinates, providing them with capital to carry out transactions and collecting the profits. A Lodhi noble, Mujahid Khan, an *Iqtadar* during the reign of Sultan Sikander Lodhi, employed his officials by giving them twenty thousand *tankahs* to purchase grains during the harvest season, when prices were low, and sell them when prices increased.⁸⁹

Numerous references mention how the Sultan confiscated the property of nobles on various pretexts. Muhammad bin Tughlaq once confiscated the property of a noble

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 172; Kunwar Muhammed Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1971, p. 154; Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, (1206-1398 A.D.)* p. 166

⁸⁶ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, P. 133; Eng tr. by John Briggs, *History of Rising of Mohammadan Power in India*, New Delhi, 1966, p.235

⁸⁷ H.A.R. Gibb, *Travels*, Vol III, pp. 602, 723-734; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*; p. 137

⁸⁸ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr. I.H. Siddiqui, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 283-284; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 113

⁸⁹ Ibid., Eng tr., p. 80

worth 43,700,000 *mithqals* of gold when he discovered that the noble was addicted to wine.⁹⁰

D. NORMS OF ROYAL COURTS

The *nobles* played a crucial role in the royal court, where their presence was required whenever the *Sultan* granted a public audience. They were expected to attend court regularly and pay their respects. Among the *Sultans*, it was *Balban* who first placed great emphasis on courtly traditions and refined the customs of the *royal court*. His successors adopted and upheld the standards he had established. He modeled his courtly etiquette on the traditions of the ‘*Sassanids*’, setting the precedent for future rulers.⁹¹ Subsequent *Sultans* meticulously followed these established customs, ensuring order in matters of etiquette, decorum, seating arrangements, attire, and the duties of courtiers. The royal court was adorned with grandeur, particularly on significant occasions such as the *Sultan’s* birthday, coronation ceremonies, the reception of esteemed guests, victory celebrations, and the presentation of gifts (*nazrs*⁹²) by *nobles* and other dignitaries. During court sessions, the *Sultan* was always the first to ascend the throne, after which the *wazirs* positioned themselves in front of him. The *secretaries (dabir)* stood behind the *wazirs*, while the *chamberlains (hajib)* were positioned nearby, led by the *chief chamberlain (Kabir-ul-Hujjab)*. Behind them stood the *naqibs*, who were responsible for ensuring that proper courtly protocols were observed. High-ranking officials, including *qazis*, *khatibs*, *shaikhs*, *great amirs*, *envoys*, and commanders of the army, formally saluted the *Sultan* upon entering the council hall. The nobles were positioned on the *left* side of the throne, with their seating arrangements carefully determined according to their rank and status.⁹³

⁹⁰ Shihabuddin Al- Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001 p. 46

⁹¹ Hasan Nizami, *Taj-ul-Ma’athir*, Eng tr., Bhagwat Saroop, Delhi, 1998, p. 135; Zia ud din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 53-54; Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. Barun De, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 98-99

⁹² K.M.Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp.71-72

⁹³ Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr. Agha Mehdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, pp. 58-59; H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, Vol. III, p. 629; Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i- Firuzshahi*, pp. 277-281

The royal court was convened daily between the *Asr*⁹⁴ and *Maghrib*⁹⁵ prayers, with the presence of all *nobles* being mandatory.⁹⁶ If a *noble* was unable to attend, his designated representative would take his place. Adherence to the official dress code was strictly enforced. Every courtier, including *nobles*, *farashes*, *tashtdars*, and *khawajasaras*, was required to wear a complete outfit consisting of a *qaba* (a long tunic), *kulah* (cap), and *moza* (socks).⁹⁷ A significant tradition of the court was the presentation of the *khillat* (robe of honor), a prestigious attire bestowed upon *nobles* by the *Sultan*. This ceremonial dress typically included a *tunic*, a *white belt*, a gold-embroidered waistband, and a *Tatar cap*. Those who had not received this honor were required to wear a fur coat and fur cap. Attending *the royal court* without a head covering or cap was strictly prohibited.⁹⁸ *Court etiquette* and proper conduct were highly valued, and *nobles* underwent training in these matters. A renowned work, *Qabusnama*, authored by *Kaikus bin Iskandar bin Qabus*, was written as a guide to the customs and formalities of the *royal court*. New courtiers were assigned trainers to instruct them in courtly manners, ensuring they were well-prepared to rise through the ranks and assume prominent positions.⁹⁹ Sultans exhibited different approaches to their interactions with nobles. Iltutmish deeply respected the status of his *nobles* and displayed great humility towards them. Whenever he saw them standing before him with folded hands, he was overcome with such reverence that he would feel compelled to descend from his throne and express his respect by kissing their hands, sometimes even their feet.¹⁰⁰ In contrast, Bahlol Lodhi preferred a more informal setting. He chose to sit on a simple carpet while requiring his *nobles* to

⁹⁴ The 'Asr' prayer (Arabic: العصر صلاة, *Ṣalāt al-'Aṣr*) is the third of the five daily prayers (*ṣalāh*) in Islam. It is performed in the afternoon, after the sun has passed its zenith and before it starts to set. Begins in the late afternoon, after *Dhuhr* (the noon prayer) and before *Maghrib* (the sunset prayer).

⁹⁵ The Maghrib prayer (Arabic: المغرب صلاة, *Ṣalāt al-Maghrib*) is the fourth of the five daily prayers in Islam. It's performed just after sunset.

⁹⁶ Yahya Bin Ahmed Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 9; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, p.74

⁹⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 32-33; N.B. Ray, 'A Peep into the Delhi Court During the reign of Sultan Firuzshah', *Proc. I.H.C.*, Hyderabad, 1941, p. 315

⁹⁸ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. pp. 161-163, 279; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions*, p. 74; Jamini Mohan Banerjee, *History of Firuzshah Tughlaq*, Delhi, 1967, pp. 90-91

⁹⁹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 247-248; S.B.P. Nigam, Administrative Training of Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (120-1398), *Islamic Culture*, Vol. VII, No.2, April 1976, p. 91; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, p. 75

¹⁰⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i- Firuzshahi*, p. 137; Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics*, Delhi, 2002, p. 143

stand before him. He deliberately refrained from sitting on a throne or an elevated platform, maintaining a modest demeanor in his court.¹⁰¹ Ibn Battuta provided a vivid description of the royal camp court of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq, noting that the *Sultan* sat on a chair resembling a pulpit, adorned with silk embroidered in gold. The interior of the court tent was lavishly decorated with gilded silk, reflecting its grandeur. The *nobles* were seated on both sides of the *Sultan*, to his left and right. At the entrance of the tent, key officials—including the *naib*, *wazir*, *hajib*, and the officers responsible for the royal insignia—were stationed. These four individuals played an essential role in welcoming visitors and escorting them inside.¹⁰² For example Figure 1 and Figure 2 of Royal courts of Razia Sultana and Mohammad bin Tughlaq respectively.

Similar to the *Sultans*, *nobles* also held their own *courts*, where they conducted official proceedings and received their subordinates. When Malik Alp Khan convened a gathering of military commanders, he presided over the assembly from an elevated platform, while other court officials took their designated seats according to their rank and status.¹⁰³ Among the Tughlaqid nobles, Qutlugh Khan is known to have held a *bargah* (court), which featured two grand *dahliz* (porticos).¹⁰⁴ *Malik Ibrahim*, who served as *naib-i-barbak*, conducted his court in the central courtyard of the *royal palace*, where rows of *swordsmen* stood in attendance. Similarly, Malik Shamsuddin Abu Rija, the *mustaufi-i-mumalik*¹⁰⁵, presided over assemblies in the *diwan-i-wazarat* (finance department).¹⁰⁶ *Mian Ahmad Khan*, the *muqti* of *Jaunpur*, held his *darbar* in the *peshkhana* (public hall). Various officials, including *hajibs*, *naib parwana navis* (chancellery officers), *majumdars* (officers responsible for maintaining muster rolls), and *vakils* (representatives), occupied designated areas

¹⁰¹ K.A. Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1997, p.68; A. Halim, *History of the Lodhi Sultans of Delhi and Agra*, Delhi, 1974, pp. 53-113

¹⁰² Ibn-i-Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., Agha Mahdi, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, pp. 254-255; Agha Mahdi Husain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 132

¹⁰³ Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Ftuth*, Eng tr. Muhammad Habib under the title, *The Campaigns of Alauddin Khalji*, Madras, 1931, p. 74

¹⁰⁴ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, p. 477

¹⁰⁵ Auditor general or finance minister or head of the treasury. He is responsible for collecting taxes keeping records of revenue and expenditure, overseeing land grants and fiscal assessments, coordinating with provincial finance offices

¹⁰⁶ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 431, 455-56; Eng tr. p. 236-237, 248

within the *chabutra* (platform). The *hajib* was responsible for receiving petitions from the common people and addressing their grievances. Each official had a specific place assigned to him and was required to occupy his designated seat during court proceedings.¹⁰⁷

Persian court customs played a significant role in defining *etiquette* and protocol. Practices such as *sajda*, *paibos*, *dastbos*, and *zaminbos* were considered fundamental aspects of courtly decorum. Whenever a *noble* attended the *public darbar* of a *Sultan*, he was required to perform an act of prostration from a respectful distance.¹⁰⁸ *Sultan Balban* was the first to introduce *sajda* and *paibos* into royal court rituals, reinforcing the formalities of submission and reverence. Upon returning to the capital after a victorious campaign, *Sultans* were welcomed with elaborate ceremonies, during which *nobles* presented themselves in the royal court to perform *khakbos*.¹⁰⁹ This gesture was a mark of submission and respect. When a *noble* advanced to receive the *Sultan* or offer congratulations, he performed *dastbos*, symbolizing loyalty. *Paibos* and *zaminbos* were additional acts of reverence performed by *nobles* when they received an honorary appointment or sought an audience with the *Sultan*.¹¹⁰

On one occasion, Firuz Shah Tughlaq convened a grand assembly at Hissar Firozah, where all courtiers and nobles were summoned. Among them, *Khan-i-Azam*, Zaffar Khan from *Sonargaon* extended a warm welcome to the *Sultan* with great humility while occupying the seat of *hajib*. In the presence of the gathered nobles, he presented an *elephant* as a tribute and performed *paibos* as a mark of respect. In response, the *Sultan*, in an act of kindness, reciprocated by kissing his hands and granted him the honor of sitting on a golden chair.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 93-94

¹⁰⁸ M. Aziz Ahmad, 'The Central Structure of the Sultanate of Delhi, *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 18, 1944, p. 70

¹⁰⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 30-31, 142; Isami *Futuh -us-Salatin*, pp. 304, 322; Eng tr., pp. 481, 489, 500; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kinship*, p. 64. Abdullah Wasaf, *Tajriyat-ul- Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar*, Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 40-41; Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr. Major George Henry Raverty, pp. 683, 675, 834

¹¹⁰ Hasan Nizami *Taj-ul-Ma'athir*, Eng tr., Bhagwat Saroop, pp. 98-99

¹¹¹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp., 139, 141, 245, H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, Vol. III, pp. 747, 750-751; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr. Vol. II, pp. 598, 606, 610, 623-624

Despite these elaborate customs, the *ulema* of the time strongly opposed the influence of *Sassanid* traditions in courtly etiquette. Practices such as *sajda*, *paibos*, and *zaminbos* were met with disapproval by religious scholars.¹¹² During the reign of Ilutmish, Sayyid Nuruddin Mubarak Ghazani Shaikhul-Islam was a vocal critic of these customs, considering the act of *sajda* before the *Sultan* unlawful. Several *fatawa* texts from that period warned that if a *Sultan* commanded someone to prostrate before him under threat of death, it would be more virtuous (*afzal*) to refuse, as such an act could lead to *kufir* (infidelity). However, some legal texts suggested that if one performed *sajda-i-tahiyaat* (prostration of respect) out of fear of the *Sultan*, it would not necessarily be considered *kufir*.¹¹³

The nobles played a significant role in royal processions, accompanying the *Sultan* with their standards and insignias. It was customary for the *amirs* to follow the *Sultan* while the procession was led by the rhythmic sounds of drums, bugles, and haut-boys. Only chamberlains were permitted to ride ahead of the *Sultan*, while footmen and guides mounted on camels cleared the way. *Qazis*, *wazirs*, *amirs*, and foreign dignitaries rode on either side of the *Sultan*, ensuring an imposing and organized procession.¹¹⁴ During the reign of the *Lodhis*, when a *Sultan* traveled through any region, all *nobles* stood along the route to pay their respects.¹¹⁵ There were established protocols dictating how they should present themselves before the ruler—bowing deeply before him and, in return, receiving a robe of honor as a token of the *Sultan's* favor.¹¹⁶ Expressions of reverence extended beyond formal occasions. Whenever the reigning *Sultan's* name was mentioned, *nobles* instinctively bowed their heads as a gesture of respect.¹¹⁷ They demonstrated exceptional humility when receiving the *Sultan*, often going out of their way to meet him while bearing gifts such as horses, fruits, camels, and other valuable offerings. In recognition of their loyalty and devotion, they were honored with robes of distinction. The royal court of

¹¹² *Fatawa-i-Firuzshahi* as quoted by Zafar-ul-islam, *Fatawa Literature of the Sultanate Period*, Delhi, 2005. p. 65

¹¹³ *Ibid*, p. 66

¹¹⁴ Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, p. 36

¹¹⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr. p. 65

¹¹⁶ Hasan Nizami, *Taj ul Ma'athir*, Eng. Tr. pp. 269-270, 271; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr. p. 573

¹¹⁷ Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, p. 121; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 77

Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq followed these customs diligently.¹¹⁸ When Ibn Batuta arrived at the Sultan's court, *Amir-i-Hajib* Malik Firoz personally advanced to receive him.¹¹⁹ The *Sultan* greeted him warmly with a handshake, and in return, Ibn Batuta performed *dastbos* as a mark of deference. The *Sultan* honored his nobles with great generosity, often bestowing upon them robes of honor and even embracing them by kissing their foreheads. When *Qazi Sa'ad* entered the royal court, the *Sultan* himself descended from the throne to welcome him with great reverence, offering him a seat beside him as a gesture of esteem.¹²⁰

Upon the demise of a Sultan, it was customary for nobles to express their grief by removing their caps and ornate garments, donning black attire, tearing their clothes, walking barefoot during the funeral procession, and sleeping on the floor for a period of three months.¹²¹

Nobles frequently visited each other's residences on various occasions, extending politeness and courtesy during these interactions. Hosts would often offer their personal seats to guests as a mark of respect.¹²² Upon arrival at a noble's palace, visitors were welcomed by the host's officials, with greetings exchanged within established timeframes. Guests were provided seats positioned higher than those of the hosts, symbolizing honor.¹²³ Gestures such as touching beards and kissing signified affection and respect.¹²⁴ Hosts assisted guests in washing their hands before meals and offered fruits, betel leaves (*paan*), flowers, and perfumes.¹²⁵ During

¹¹⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 60, 160-161, Isami, *Futuh-us Salatin*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 630-631; U.N. Day, *Medieval Malwa*, Delhi, 1965, pp. 18-19

¹¹⁹ Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, pp. 125-126

¹²⁰ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr. *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Vol. II, pp.572-573

¹²¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 122-123; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr. p. 14; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 80

¹²² Khawaja Niamtullah bin Khawaja Habibullah al- Harevi, *Tarikh-i-Khanjani wa Makhzan-i-Afghani*, ed Syed Muhammad Imam-ul-Din, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1960, p. 140, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, New Delhi, 2001, Vol. V, p. 76; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 74

¹²³ Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* Eng tr. pp. 339; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, ed. Dr. Habibuddin Ahmad, *Writings of Amir Khusrau :700 after the Prophet a 13TH-14TH Centurey Legend of Indian Sub-continent: Based on annotated translation of his work Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, p. 193

¹²⁴ Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Husain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, p. 69; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India, (1206-1556 A.D.)*, p. 77

¹²⁵ Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul-Fawad*, Eng tr., Zia ul Hasan Faruqi, New Delhi, 1995, p. 117; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 75; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 287; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-*

ceremonial functions, a visiting noble would be received at a distance by the host; both would dismount from their horses, remove their canopies, and approach each other warmly.¹²⁶ Historical accounts mention that when *Khan-i-Jahan* proceeded to his office with his entourage, he instructed them to refrain from playing drums and clarions near Imad-ul-Mulk's residence. *Khan-i-Jahan* would stand before Imad-ul-Mulk's house, and together they would proceed to the Sultan's palace.¹²⁷

When Imad-ul-Mulk and *Khan-i-Jahan* met, they would dismount, with Imad-ul-Mulk bowing to touch *Khan-i-Jahan*'s feet, and *Khan-i-Jahan* reciprocating the gesture before embracing. *Khan-i-Jahan* would also present embroidered robes as a gesture of goodwill.¹²⁸

Individuals who committed offenses were expected to present themselves before the Sultan with humility, adhering to specific protocols. Rebellious nobles appeared bareheaded, with turbans draped around their necks.¹²⁹ Amir Khusrau noted that offenders were made to stand near the area designated for footwear.¹³⁰ Some Sultans, like Jalal-ud-Din Khalji, adopted lenient attitudes toward errant nobles. On one occasion, when Malik Chajju and his associates were brought before the Sultan, he ordered their chains removed, provided them with fine garments, and offered them food from the royal kitchen. These practices and etiquettes highlight the structured and hierarchical nature of noble interactions and courtly life during the Sultanate period, reflecting a blend of respect, tradition, and authority.¹³¹

Royal *farmans* were received with profound reverence. Upon receiving a *farman*, nobles would bow their heads in the direction of the Sultan as a sign of respect. It is noted that during Sikander Lodhi's reign, nobles would hasten several *kos* to receive

Khusravi, ed. Vol. III, pp. 85-86; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 5-6; Nizamuuddin, *Tabaqat-i- Akbari*, pp. 151-152.

¹²⁶ Afif, *Tarik-i-Firuzshahi*, P. 237; Yahya, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 56-57; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions*, p. 269

¹²⁷ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. p.242

¹²⁸ Ibid. p.142

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 61; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 28; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p.79

¹³⁰ Prof. Syed Hasan Askari, *Amir Khusra, As a Historian*, Patna, 1992, p. 31

¹³¹ Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as Told by its own Historians* Vol. III, p. 139; Abdul Qadir Ibn-i-Mulk Shah Al-Badauni, *Muntakhab ut- Tawarikh*, ed. Maulvi Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, 1868; Eng tr. George S.A. Raning, Calcutta, 1973, p.232

the royal *farman*. The *farman* was placed on a dais with great honor, and the addressed noble would stand beneath it, holding the *farman* with both hands, then placing it upon his head and eyes. If the *farman* was intended for a specific noble, it was read to him privately; if it concerned others, they were summoned to hear it collectively. Presenting gifts to the Sultan was a customary practice on various occasions.¹³² These gifts varied widely, including horses, camels, elephants, slaves, and precious metals.¹³³ When an individual of equal status presented a gift, the Sultan would shake hands and even embrace him, subsequently bestowing a robe of honor in return. Nobles presenting gifts at court awaited their turn according to rank. The *Amir-i-Hajib* and his deputy appeared first, followed by the *Khas-i-Hajib* with his deputy, then the *Wakil-i-Dar* (court secretary) with his deputy, and finally the *Saiyyid-ul-Hujaib* and *Sharaf-ul-Hujjab*.¹³⁴ If a high-status individual presented a gift, a citation summarizing his services, known as *Fasl-i-Mushabba*, was read aloud.¹³⁵

Historical accounts describe that upon Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq's victorious return to Firozabad, the capital was adorned with banners, and nights were celebrated as *Id*. The following morning, *Khan-i-Jahan* (the *wazir*) bowed before the Sultan, offering praises, followed by the presentation of his *nazranas* (offerings). Subsequently, gifts from Malik-ul-Sharq Malik Nizam-ul-Mulk (deputy *wazir*) were presented. Thereafter, other nobles, including *amirs*, *khans*, *ulemas*, and the general public, offered their gifts to the Sultan.¹³⁶ Provincial officials or *muqtas* brought substantial gifts, such as gold and silver utensils, including bowls and plates, as well as gold bricks known as *Khisht*. The Sultan's valets, called *Farrash*, held these gifts, and finally, elephants adorned with gold, bridled horses, and camels laden with money were presented.¹³⁷

¹³² Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng tr. Vol. II, p.463; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, ed. Vol. IV, pp. 188-191; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 77; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism*, Aligarh, 1969, pp. 32-33; Yusuf Hussain, *Indo-Muslim Polity*, Shimla, 1971, p. 178

¹³³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 32,108; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 160-268; Rashid, *Society and Culture of Medieval India*, p.78

¹³⁴ Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1992, pp. 92-93

¹³⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 32. 113

¹³⁶ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 290

¹³⁷ Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, p. 60; H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, p. 603

In the Delhi Sultanate, nobles were expected to present gifts to the Sultan after any absence from the royal court, regardless of prior permission. These offerings, known as *peshkash*, often included items such as horses, camels, and weapons.¹³⁸ The Raja of Bhatta sent an elephant, two horses adorned with fine garments, and tents to Khan-i-Azam Lad Khan as a *peshkash*. Silahdar Shaikh Muhammad facilitated the Raja's petition (*ariza*) to offer this tribute.¹³⁹ Conversely, Sultans bestowed various gifts and robes of honor upon their nobles, typically twice a year—once in summer and once in winter. Upon receiving a robe of honor, the *amir* and his entourage would proceed outside to accept it, paying homage in the Sultan's direction. Specific protocols were observed during the acceptance of royal gifts; nobles were required to bow, touching the ground with their right hand as a sign of respect.¹⁴⁰

The relationship between nobles and Sultans varied, ranging from devout loyalty to overt hostility. Jamal-ud-Din Yaqut, the superintendent of the royal stables during Razia Sultana's reign, became her close confidant and trusted advisor. Their association incited resentment among the Turkic nobility, who were opposed to Razia's rule and her favoritism toward Yaqut.¹⁴¹ Similarly, Malik Ibrahim, the *naib barbak*, demonstrated unwavering loyalty to Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq. He mirrored the Sultan's actions, such as observing voluntary fasts and abstaining from betel leaves when the Sultan did so. Tatar Khan, a senior noble of the Tughlaq dynasty, was instrumental in persuading Firuz Shah to ascend the throne.¹⁴² Despite his close relationship with the Sultan, Tatar Khan did not hesitate to admonish him. On one occasion, upon discovering the Sultan's intent to consume wine, Tatar Khan advised against it. Perceiving this as a breach of decorum, the Sultan reassigned Tatar Khan to Hisar Firuza to distance him from the court.¹⁴³ Imad-ul-Mulk Bashir Sultani, the

¹³⁸ Ibid pp. 603, 659-660; Sheikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 78

¹³⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 96-97

¹⁴⁰ H.A.R. Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 731; Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, pp. 64, 114; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 77

¹⁴¹ Abdul Qadir Ibn-ul-Mulk Shah al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, ed. Maulavi Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, 1968, Eng tr., George S.A. Ranking, Asiatic Society, Calcutta 1973. p. 120

¹⁴² Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng.tr. R.C. Jauhri, *Medieval India in Transition (Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)*, Delhi, 2001p. 236

¹⁴³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 429-430, Eng tr. p. 236

ariz-i-mamalik (army minister), was another devoted noble who enjoyed unrestricted access to the Sultan for consultations on state matters.¹⁴⁴

During the Delhi Sultanate, the conduct of nobles towards their subordinates varied significantly. Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji, prior to his ascension, was known for his leniency, refraining from punishing individuals or revoking their assignments. In contrast, figures like Malik Ibrahim, the *Naib Barbak* under Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, exhibited strictness. He would summon any *muqta* with outstanding dues, remove their turban, and only return it upon settlement of the debt. In the Sultan's absence, Malik Ibrahim remained in the royal palace in Delhi, showing great respect to Khan-i-Jahan by courteously walking a few steps to welcome him. Generosity among nobles was also evident.¹⁴⁵ Khan-i-Jahan Lodi ensured that the salaries and allowances of deceased servicemen were transferred to their sons, or in their absence, to close relatives.¹⁴⁶ Said Khan Yusuf Khail, a Lodi noble, provided his official, Mian Farmuli, with one lakh gold *tankahs* for his daughter's marriage, reflecting the nobles' benevolence towards their subordinates.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, Malik Hushamuddin Ughlabak, while serving as *Sipasalar* of Kol during Qutbuddin Aibak's reign, was notably generous to his soldiers. Malik Imadul Mulk, the *Rawat-i-Arz* under Balban, ensured that soldiers with weak horses received healthier ones and provided fifty *tankahs* for their upkeep.¹⁴⁸ Said Khan Yusuf Khail also distributed seven lakh *tankahs* among his troops during financial shortages and forgave their debts by tearing up the loan documents.¹⁴⁹

Conflicts among nobles occasionally arose, straining relationships. Amir Khusrau documented a dispute between Maulana Badr and Ainuddin Dabir, both esteemed scholars, who engaged in heated exchanges.¹⁵⁰ Many nobles maintained large harems and numerous slaves. The attachment to slave girls is exemplified by Malik Taghi's

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. Eng tr. p 239

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Eng tr., pp. 236-237

¹⁴⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p.80

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.77,88

¹⁴⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 115-116

¹⁴⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p. 90; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Aligarh, 1954, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, Delhi, 2001. p. 474; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 108

¹⁵⁰ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, ed., Vol. IV, pp. 197-198

rebellion; he defied Tatar Khan to protect a Gujarati slave girl he cherished. Ibn Batuta noted that nobles often kept slave girls in their company.¹⁵¹ Malik Hindu Khan showed deep affection for Sultan Iltutmish's slaves.¹⁵² Imad ul Mulk, once a slave of Sultan Firuz Shah Tughlaq, sought his own emancipation and, upon aging, freed approximately four thousand of his slaves, providing them with wealth to ensure their comfort in freedom. Nobles prioritized the education, nourishment, and attire of their slaves.¹⁵³ After training them in proper etiquette, they were presented to the Sultan. Mian Zainuddin, for instance, educated his harem members and slaves in prayer, Islamic teachings, and general education before assigning them responsibilities.¹⁵⁴

Amir Khusrau, in his work *Qiran-us-Sa'dain*, provides a detailed account of dining customs. Meals commenced with an assortment of sherbets and juices, followed by various breads, meats, and sweet dishes. The conclusion of the meal featured the distribution of betel leaves, or pan, among the guests.¹⁵⁵ Ibn Battuta and Shihabuddin al-Umari describe two categories of dinners in royal palaces: private and public. Select *Amirs*, such as Amir Hajib and *Amir-i-Majalis*, attended private dinners with the Sultan.¹⁵⁶ To honor a noble, the Sultan would place bread on a plate and present it to him; the noble, upon receiving it, would hold the plate in his left hand and bow, touching the ground with his right hand.¹⁵⁷ Public dinners were held in the council hall, where, upon the serving of food, all *naqibs* and their chief stood, praised the Sultan, and bowed before him, with movement or speech prohibited until the address concluded.¹⁵⁸ Sultan Bahlol Lodhi was known for his generosity, sharing his meals

¹⁵¹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 392-394; Riaz-ul-Islam., 'The Age of Firuz Shah', *Medieval India Quaterly*, Vol. I, July, 1950, p. 40; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 143

¹⁵² Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., p. 745

¹⁵³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 243

¹⁵⁴ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 74

¹⁵⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Qiran-i-Sadain*, ed. By Maulvi Muhammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918, pp. 183, 185; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate Urbanisation and Social Change*, New Delhi, pp. 69-70

¹⁵⁶ Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, pp. 64; Shihabuddin al Umari, *Masalik ul Absar fi mamalik-ul amsar*, Eng tr. Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdur Rashid and Moin-ul Haq, Aligarh, 1943, pp. 41-42; Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes and Catering Profession in Pre Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 59 no. 2, 1985, p. 126

¹⁵⁷ Ishwari Parasad, *History of Qaranuh Turks*, Allahabad, 1936, p. 303

¹⁵⁸ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, pp. 65-66

with anyone present. Similarly, Sikander Lodhi dined privately with nobles and *ulemas*.¹⁵⁹

Nobles received special privileges from the Sultans, adopting royal emblems like trumpets and flags. While black banners adorned with golden dragons were exclusive to the Sultan, nobles displayed banners corresponding to their rank: a Khan bore at least nine, and an Amir at least three. They were permitted to carry flags and beat drums during marches.¹⁶⁰ Ulugh Khan Balban, as Naib to Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud, maintained royal prerogatives, including *chatr*, *durbash*, *darat*, and elephants.¹⁶¹ Alauddin Khalji accorded special treatment to Malik Kafur, entrusting him with the army and instructing nobles to show him the same respect as the Sultan.¹⁶² Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji distinguished Khusrau Khan from other nobles, and Muhammad bin Tughlaq extended preferential treatment to Malik Kabir, appointing him as the Caliph's representative and addressing him as Qabul-i-Khilafati, allowing him to act as Naib in the Sultan's absence.¹⁶³

During the Delhi Sultanate, the festival of *Eid* was marked by elaborate ceremonies and displays of loyalty. *Amirs* would gather outside the palace gates, accompanied by trumpets, drums, and flags, to await the Sultan's appearance. The Sultan would bestow robes of honor upon various dignitaries, including *Maliks*, courtiers, foreign envoys, *naqibs*, *hajibs*, *qazis*, and even slaves, as a gesture of appreciation and recognition.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr. pp. 10,63-64; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, ed. M.Hidayat Hussain, Calcutta, 1939; Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V., New Delhi, 2001, pp. 41-42; Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India, New Delhi*, 1997, p. 96

¹⁶⁰ Al Umari, *Masalik ul Absar fi Mamlikul ul Amsar*, Eng tr., PP 43-46

¹⁶¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 26; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 159,160-164; Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics during 13th century*, Aligarh, 1966, pp. 150-151

¹⁶² Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., Vol. I, pp. 28

¹⁶³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 390-391; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, pp. 164-165; H.A.R Gibb, *The Travles of Ibn Batuta*, Vol. III, pp. 661-665

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.p. 663-666

E. Court Culture of the Delhi Sultanate and Contemporary Persian and Central Asian Islamic Kingdoms

The court culture of the Delhi Sultanate formed an integral part of the broader Persianate political and cultural tradition that extended across Iran, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Turkish rulers who established the Sultanate inherited administrative institutions, political ideologies, court ceremonials, and literary traditions from the Ghurids, Ghaznavids, Seljuks, Khwarazmians, and later the Ilkhanids and Timurids. Rather than creating an entirely new political culture, the Delhi Sultans adapted existing Persian models of kingship to the Indian environment while simultaneously incorporating indigenous traditions.¹⁶⁵

One of the most significant similarities between the Delhi Sultanate and the contemporary Persian and Central Asian Islamic kingdoms was the centrality of the Persian language. Throughout the Ilkhanid Empire in Iran, the Timurid courts of Samarkand and Herat, and the Delhi Sultanate, Persian functioned as the principal language of administration, diplomacy, historiography, and literary expression. Court historians such as Minhaj-us-Siraj, Zia al-Din Barani, Isami, and Amir Khusrau consciously wrote within the Persian historiographical tradition. The adoption of Persian connected Delhi intellectually with the larger Islamic world and facilitated the migration of scholars, administrators, theologians, and poets from Central Asia and Iran into India following the Mongol invasions.¹⁶⁶

The ideology of kingship likewise reflected strong Persian influences. Contemporary Persian courts regarded the ruler as the divinely sanctioned guardian of justice whose authority was reinforced through elaborate ceremonial practices. Sultan Ghiyas al-Din Balban consciously adopted this Persian conception of monarchy by emphasizing royal majesty, strict court discipline, and ceremonies such as *sijda* and *paibos*. These practices closely resembled the ceremonial traditions maintained in the

¹⁶⁵ Sunil Kumar, 'The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate', *Modern Asian Studies*, January 2009, pp. 48-50.

¹⁶⁶ Gavin R.G. Hambly, 'Delhi Sultanate I, Political and Cultural History', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, New York, 1994, Vol VII, pp. 242-244.

courts of the Ilkhanids and later the Timurids, where royal protocol reinforced the sacred and political authority of the sovereign.¹⁶⁷

Another area of comparison lies in the composition of the ruling elite. The courts of Persia and Central Asia consisted of military commanders, Persian bureaucrats, religious scholars, and literary figures who collectively sustained the political order. The Delhi Sultanate exhibited a similar structure, with Turkish military elites occupying the highest offices while Persian secretaries (dabirs), jurists, theologians, and scholars played indispensable administrative and intellectual roles. As Sunil Kumar has demonstrated, the Delhi court was neither ethnically homogeneous nor exclusively Turkish but incorporated Turks, Persians, Mongols, and other immigrant elites whose interaction produced a complex political culture comparable to other Persianate courts.¹⁶⁸

Patronage of learning and literature also constituted a common characteristic of these Islamic kingdoms. In both Timurid and Delhi courts, rulers and nobles competed to attract distinguished scholars, poets, historians, calligraphers, and theologians. Amir Khusrau's literary achievements under the Delhi Sultans parallel the patronage extended to Persian intellectuals in the Ilkhanid and Timurid courts. Royal patronage transformed courts into centres of scholarship where history, poetry, theology, philosophy, and music flourished under aristocratic protection. Such patronage enhanced political legitimacy while simultaneously projecting the ruler as the guardian of civilization and learning.¹⁶⁹

Despite these similarities, the Delhi Sultanate differed substantially from its Persian and Central Asian contemporaries because of the unique social environment of the

¹⁶⁷ Sunil Kumar, 'Court, Capital and Kingship, Delhi and its Sultan in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries CE', *Court Culture in Muslim World*, ed. Albrecht Fuesst and John Peter Hartong, New York 2011, pp. 123-125.

¹⁶⁸ Sunil Kumar, 'The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate', *Modern Asian Studies*, January 2009, pp. 45-47.

¹⁶⁹ Sunil Kumar, 'Court, Capital and Kingship, Delhi and its Sultan in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries CE', *Court Culture in Muslim World*, ed. Albrecht Fuesst and John Peter Hartong, New York 2011, pp. 128-130.

Indian subcontinent.¹⁷⁰ Whereas the Ilkhanids and Timurids ruled predominantly Muslim populations, the Delhi Sultans governed a largely non-Muslim society characterized by diverse religious, linguistic, and cultural traditions. Consequently, the Delhi court developed greater flexibility in accommodating local political elites, Rajput chiefs, Hindu officials, and Indian converts to Islam. Court culture gradually incorporated Indian ceremonial practices, artistic motifs, culinary traditions, and administrative experience without abandoning its Persianate foundations. This process created a distinctive Indo-Islamic political culture that differed from the more homogeneous Persian and Central Asian courts.¹⁷¹

Furthermore, the ethnic diversity of the Delhi nobility surpassed that of many contemporary Islamic kingdoms. Besides Turks and Persians, the Sultanate employed Afghans, Mongols, Abyssinians (Habshis), Indian Muslims, and occasionally influential Hindu officials. Such diversity produced factional competition but simultaneously enriched the court through multiple cultural traditions. Recent scholarship emphasizes that this heterogeneous elite became one of the defining characteristics of Delhi's political culture and distinguished it from many western Islamic courts.¹⁷²

The present study is informed by theoretical perspectives that view political authority as being constructed not only through military strength and administrative institutions but also through cultural practices, symbols, and ceremonial performances. The concept of symbolic power, as articulated by Satish Chandra provides a useful framework for understanding how the Delhi Sultanate nobility reinforced their authority through visible markers of status, including royal robes (khil'at), honorific titles, architectural patronage, ceremonial processions, gift exchange, and participation in court rituals. Such symbolic practices legitimized political authority, reinforced social hierarchy, and projected the prestige of the

¹⁷⁰ Peter Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 176.

¹⁷¹ Sunil Kumar, 'The Delhi Sultanate as Empire', *The Oxford World History of Empire: Volume Two: The History of Empires*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang, C.A. Bayly, Walter Scheidel, Oxford, 2021, pp. 571-576

¹⁷² S.B.P. Nigam, *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi, A.D. 1206-1398*, p. 112; K.S. Lal, 'Political Conditions of Hindus under the Khaljis', *Indian History Congress*, 1946, pp. 232-237

ruling elite.¹⁷³ Likewise, K.A. Nizami highlights the importance of ceremonies and public rituals in communicating sovereignty, suggesting that courtly spectacles were themselves instruments of governance and political legitimacy. the Sultanate court was not simply an administrative centre but also a space where political authority, cultural patronage, and elite identity intersected. Courtly institutions encouraged the patronage of Persian language and literature, religious scholars, artists, musicians, and architects, while ceremonial practices and codes of etiquette regulated relationships between the ruler and the nobility. By incorporating these perspectives, the study moves beyond a purely political narrative and examines the Delhi Sultanate within the broader framework of power, symbolism, and courtly culture, thereby providing a stronger analytical basis for understanding the socio-cultural role of the nobility.¹⁷⁴

Furthermore, the court culture of the Delhi Sultanate should be understood within the wider Persianate ecumene that linked Iran, Central Asia, and northern India through shared languages, institutions, political ideals, and literary traditions. At the same time, the Sultanate transformed these inherited traditions through continuous interaction with Indian society, producing a distinctive court culture that combined Persian political ideals with indigenous social realities. This comparative perspective demonstrates that the Delhi Sultanate was both a participant in the broader Islamic world and an innovator that contributed significantly to the development of Indo-Islamic civilization.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol III, P. 731; Satish Chandra, *Medieval India, From Sultanate to Mughals, Delhi Sultanat(1206-1526)* Vol I, New Delhi, pp.266-271

¹⁷⁴ K.A. Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 100; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 71-72, Yahya, Tarikh, p.9

¹⁷⁵ Richard M. Eaton, *India in the Persianate Age: (1000–1765)*, University of California Press, 2019, pp. 10-18,30-36

Chapter 2

FESTIVALS, CEREMONIES AND MODE OF ENTERTAINMENT

Feast, Festivals and ceremonies formed an essential part of the court culture in the ‘Delhi *‘Sultanate’*, celebrated with great fervor and symbolizing the connection between the ruling class and the aristocracy. These events highlighted the cultural exchange between the ‘Sultanate’s’ rulers, who often hailed from diverse cultural backgrounds, and the local populace. The nobles acted as intermediaries, bridging the gap between rulers and common people while reflecting the customs and traditions of the era.¹⁷⁶ Provincial nobles, although influenced by the customs of the imperial court, adapted these practices according to local political, economic, and cultural conditions. Governors and muqtis organized festivals and ceremonial gatherings that combined Sultanate traditions with regional customs. In provinces such as Bengal, Gujarat, Multan and Sindh, local artistic traditions, indigenous music, regional cuisine, and existing social customs often became integrated into aristocratic celebrations. Consequently, provincial festivities displayed greater regional diversity than those held in Delhi, illustrating the flexibility of Sultanate elite culture.¹⁷⁷

A. Feasting and Hospitality:

Feasts and banquets were central to the ‘*Sultanates*’ court culture, reflecting the royal prestige and setting social norms for dining and etiquette. These events, hosted by both the ‘Sultan’ and nobles, were organized on religious, social, and political occasions. Nobles often exceeded the ‘Sultan’ in hosting grand feasts, spending lavishly and inviting dignitaries, poets, and scholars. Feasting occupied a significant place in the social and political life of the Delhi Sultanate nobility. Although both court and provincial nobles organized lavish banquets as expressions of hospitality, generosity, and prestige, their feasting practices differed in terms of scale, purpose,

¹⁷⁶ Ziauddin Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi*. Eng tr., by H. M. Elliot, and John Dowson, Vol. III, Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1867, p. 67

¹⁷⁷ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, trans. Agha Mahdi Husain, Vol. III, pp. 686–687, 715–746); Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, Vol. III, pp. 562–563, 593–594, 600–665

participants, and cultural influences. These differences reflected the distinct political environments in which the two groups of nobles functioned.¹⁷⁸ Ibn Battuta described a feast by ‘Khudawandzada Qiyamuddin Malik Maqbul’, where dishes like ‘*sharbat*’ served in golden and silver vessels, sweet cakes (‘*khist*’ and ‘*sabuniya*’), and meat-stuffed pastries (‘*samusak*’) were prepared.¹⁷⁹ The meal began with a chamberlain proclaiming ‘*Bismillah*,’ and guests were served barley water afterward. Similarly, Barani noted that Malik Imad-ul-Mulk Rawat-i-Arz hosted annual feasts where nobles and officials were honored with robes and gifts, and a variety of dishes including goat meat, roasted mutton, and sherbet were served on dining carpets. Such gatherings fostered camaraderie and reflected the culinary sophistication of the period.¹⁸⁰

Hamid Khan, a Sayyid noble and ‘*wazir*’ to ‘Sultan Alauddin Shah’, once invited Malik Bahlol, a military commander, to his palace. The venue was elaborately decorated, and a variety of food dishes was served.¹⁸¹ After the meal, guests were offered a betel leaf wrapped in a pack. During ‘Ibn Batutas’ time as ‘*Qazi*’ of Delhi under Muhammad bin Tughlaq, he attended numerous royal and noble feasts. He described the lavish meals, music, and beauty at these gatherings.¹⁸² Once, while accompanying the governor of Sindh, Alaul-Mulk, he attended a journey meal where music and songs accompanied the feast. On a visit to ‘Amroha’, Ibn Batuta was warmly welcomed by ‘*Shaikh-ul-Islam*’, who hosted a grand feast at the Khanqah. He also noted the extensive kitchens maintained by the Sultan and the nobles for such occasions.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 120; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat*, Eng tr., p. 292; Habib and Nizami, *Comprehensive History*, Vol V, p. 639

¹⁷⁹ Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*. Eng tr., Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Baroda, 1976. P.107

¹⁸⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 99

¹⁸¹ Rizqullah Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 5-6; Khawaja Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, p. 140; Eng tr. H. M. Elliot and J. Dowson, *The History of India, As Told by Its Own Historians: The Muhammadan Period*, Vol. V, London 1877, p. 77; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 8; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Barun De, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1973, pp. 151-152

¹⁸² H.A.R Gibb, *Travles of Ibn Batuta (1325-1354)*, Vol. III, pp.601-602

¹⁸³ Opcit., Vol. III, p. 736; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi (13th -14th century)*, New Delhi, 2003, p. 145

Mushtaqi recall a feast hosted by Masand-i-Ali Khawwas Khan, a noble under both the Lodi dynasty and Sher Shah Suri.¹⁸⁴ Upon receiving news of the military commander Ahmad Shah Suris arrival, Khawwas Khan hurried to meet him and brought him and other nobles to his private hall. The feast began with handwashing, followed by *kebabs* and bread. The next round included beef soup, and then roasted ‘*dumba*’ was served. The final course offered a rich red and yellow mutton and chicken soup, accompanied by various birds, along with plain, salted, and sweet rice.¹⁸⁵ After the main course, milk and rice, along with a selection of sweetmeats, were served. For Hindu soldiers and officers were provided with vegetarian dishes, a special dish called ‘*Pakwan-i-Hind*’ was prepared alongside other offerings.. The meal concluded with betel leaves and perfumes to all guests.¹⁸⁶

Feasts were also organized by nobles and sultans to entertain foreign dignitaries. For instance, Rana Sangha hosted a feast for rebel nobles of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi and personally served them. Mian Husain Farmuli attended, but since he had never eaten in a ‘Hindu’ household, he avoided the meal on the grounds of fasting. As a gesture of friendship, he took a small portion of the food in his handkerchief. Nobles also invited ‘*Sufi*’ saints and their followers to dinner, often organizing *sama* (musical nights) for their spiritual enjoyment. One such gathering was hosted by ‘Qazi Hameedidin’, ‘Malik-ut-Tujjar’, in Awadh, where he invited several ‘*Sufi*’ saints to join the feast.¹⁸⁷

The feasts organized by the court nobles were closely associated with the ceremonial life of the imperial court. They were generally held on occasions such as royal victories, accession ceremonies, the appointment of high officials, diplomatic receptions, the celebration of *Eid al-Fitr* and *Eid al-Adha*, marriages within the

¹⁸⁴ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 146-147; Siddiqui, ‘Food Dishes and Catering Profession in Pre- Mughal India, *Islamic Culture*, Vol 59, No.2, 1985’, p. 129

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, pp. 162-164; Abdullah, ‘*Tarikh-i-Daudi*’, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol IV, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 161-163

¹⁸⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr. p. 198-199; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate; Urbanization and Social Changes*, New Delhi, 2009, p. 68

¹⁸⁷ Hamid Qalandhar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, ed. K.A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959, pp,10-11; Eng tr. Prof. Ishrat Husain and Dr. Hamid Afaq Siddiqui, Delhi, 2010, p. 190

ruling elite, and the reception of distinguished foreign envoys.¹⁸⁸ These banquets were characterized by extraordinary magnificence and strict court etiquette. The nobles dined in the presence of the Sultan or under royal patronage, where seating arrangements, order of service, and the presentation of food reflected the hierarchical nature of the court. Luxurious dishes prepared with costly ingredients, including fine rice, roasted meat, kebabs, aromatic pulao, dried fruits, almonds, pistachios, saffron, and imported spices, symbolized aristocratic refinement and the prosperity of the Sultanate. Such feasts also provided opportunities for political consultation, the strengthening of alliances, and the display of loyalty to the Sultan.¹⁸⁹

In contrast, the provincial nobles organized feasts primarily within the context of regional administration and local society. While they celebrated the same Islamic festivals and important family occasions, their banquets generally involved local officials, military commanders, qazis, ulema, Sufi saints, village headmen, merchants, and influential zamindars. Provincial feasts were less elaborate than those held at the imperial court but nevertheless reflected the wealth and authority of the provincial aristocracy. The menu often combined Persian culinary traditions with regional food habits, demonstrating the adaptation of Sultanate culture to local conditions. Hospitality became an important means of cultivating loyalty among local elites and maintaining cordial relations between the provincial administration and the population.¹⁹⁰

The objectives of feasting also differed. At the royal court, feasts functioned as instruments of political representation and imperial grandeur. They emphasized the Sultan's generosity, reinforced social hierarchy, and projected the prestige of the ruling dynasty before nobles and foreign visitors. Participation in these banquets signified one's proximity to royal favour and one's position within the political hierarchy. Conversely, in the provinces, feasts primarily served administrative and social purposes. They strengthened relationships between governors and local elites,

¹⁸⁸ Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 68, Idem, *Food and Dishes*, p. 122. Ferishta mention that in 1377 A.D. Kharku, the Raja of Katehr invited Saiyid Muhammad, the governor of Badaon and his two brothers for dinner at his house, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., p. 265

¹⁸⁹ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol III, pp. 601-602. Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 145

¹⁹⁰ Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul- Majalis*, eng tr., 190; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., pp. 162-164.

promoted cooperation in governance, and enhanced the personal reputation of provincial nobles as generous patrons and protectors of their communities.¹⁹¹

Despite these differences, feasting remained a common feature of aristocratic culture throughout the Sultanate. Both court and provincial nobles regarded hospitality as an essential attribute of noble conduct. Banquets facilitated political communication, social interaction, and cultural exchange while reflecting the influence of Persian traditions adapted to the diverse social environment of medieval India. Thus, although varying in scale and function, feasts at both the imperial court and the provincial level contributed significantly to the consolidation of political authority and the cultivation of aristocratic identity.¹⁹²

FOOD OF THE COMMONERS

The diet of the common people was generally simpler and less varied than that of the aristocratic and affluent classes. Al-Idrisi, while describing the food habits of ordinary Hindus, mentions rice, chickpeas, beans, lentils, peas, fish, and meat. He also refers to the widespread use of coconut as a condiment and as an ingredient in beverages. Rice appears to have been one of the principal staples, accompanied by *sagi* and other vegetables prepared in a relatively simple manner. *Khichari* was another common preparation and was generally consumed without the ghee or butter that characterized the richer diet of the upper classes. Milk and expensive dairy products were largely accessible to the affluent sections of society.¹⁹³

Certain regional foods were particularly popular. Patasa or batasa, a light and spongy sweet prepared from sugar, was widely consumed in Punjab. In Bengal, the ordinary diet consisted predominantly of rice and fish, while wheat and barley were less commonly consumed. Brinjal curry was a popular preparation, as was rice soaked overnight in cold water and eaten the following day. Salt was also in considerable

¹⁹¹ Iqtidar Hussain Siddique, 'Food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, p. 119.

¹⁹² Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 29-30

¹⁹³ Ibid., pp 42-43; Ibn Battuta says that it was quite popular among the Indian Muslim who ate it for breakfast daily. Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 68; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 72

demand among the people of Bengal.¹⁹⁴ Amir Khusrau refers to *bhutta* (maize), which was apparently popular among the common people. Bengal was also known for *sukta*, a vegetable preparation made from different vegetables such as potato, unripe banana, and brinjal, combined with ginger and turmeric.¹⁹⁵

The diet of the ordinary Muslim population was similarly modest in comparison with that of the wealthy classes. Their staple foods included *nan* (fried bread), kabab (roasted meat), chicken, qima (minced meat), and rice or birinj, often accompanied by onions.¹⁹⁶ The dietary practices of Muslim Sufis and saints included a somewhat wider range of foods, such as *makiyan* (cooked fowl), *birinj pokhtan* (cooked rice), *shir birinj* or *kheer*, *dogh* or yoghurt, *nan*, *phirni* or *shirni*, *halwa*, and dry fruits such as pistachios. *Shorba*, a meat-based soup prepared with spices, was also consumed.¹⁹⁷

Thus, although the diet of the common people was generally characterized by simplicity and dependence on locally available staples, considerable regional variation existed in their food practices. The contrast between their everyday diet and the more elaborate cuisine of the higher classes highlights the relationship between food consumption, economic status, and social hierarchy in medieval Indian society.¹⁹⁸

The participation of ordinary people and lower social groups also varied according to the nature of these celebrations. Although elite ceremonies remained primarily exclusive events that reinforced aristocratic hierarchy, common people frequently participated indirectly. Artisans, musicians, dancers, cooks, entertainers, craftsmen, servants, stable attendants, guards, and labourers played indispensable roles in organizing and executing noble festivities.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁴ Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, pp. 42-43

¹⁹⁵ K.S. Lal, 'Food and Drink in Medieval India'. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol XXVIII, No. 2, 1952, p. 195

¹⁹⁶ Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, p.43

¹⁹⁷ Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 10-11; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 161-163; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 149

¹⁹⁸ Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, pp. 44

¹⁹⁹ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol III, p. 760; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 120; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 64; Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes' pp. 132, 136

B. Festivals:

Festivals occupied an important place in the socio-cultural life of the nobility under the Delhi Sultanate. They served not only as occasions for religious observance and social interaction but also as means of expressing political authority, aristocratic prestige, and cultural identity. Although both court and provincial nobles celebrated major Islamic festivals, the nature, scale, and objectives of these celebrations varied according to their political position and administrative responsibilities.

During the Sultanate period, festivals were celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy. The most significant festivals observed by the ‘Sultan’ and the nobles included ‘*Id al-Fitr*’²⁰⁰, ‘*Id al-Azha*’²⁰¹, ‘*Shab-i-Bar’at*’²⁰², and ‘*Muharram*’.²⁰³ In addition to these, other notable festivals such as ‘*Shab-i-Siyum*’, ‘*Shab-i-Qadr*’²⁰⁴, and ‘*Ashura*’ (the fasting day on the 10th of Muharram) were also recognized.²⁰⁵ The Persian festival of *Nouruz* was celebrated during this time as well. Additionally, ‘*Shab-i-Mairaj*’, commemorating the ‘Prophet Muhammad’s’ night journey to heaven, was observed with reverence.²⁰⁶

‘*Id al-Fitr*’ stood out as one of the grandest celebrations, marked by great enthusiasm. Historians provide detailed accounts of the festival and the celebrations surrounding it. Amir Khusrau wrote about how people would break their fast upon sighting the new moon and gather in joyous unity. He also mentioned the sound of drums being struck nine times to announce the arrival of Id, with people praying for a prosperous end to ‘*Ramadan*’.²⁰⁷ The court nobles, residing in or frequently visiting

²⁰⁰ *Id-al-Fitr* is one of the most important Islamic festivals, marking the end of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting. Celebrated on the 1st day of *Shawwal*, the 10th month of the Islamic lunar calendar. The name translates to the “Festival of Breaking the Fast.”

²⁰¹ *Id-al-Azha* the second major Islamic festival, often called the “Festival of Sacrifice.” It honours the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim (A.S) (Abraham) to sacrifice his son Ismail (A.S) in obedience to Allah’s command—a powerful symbol of faith, devotion, and surrender.

²⁰² Night of forgiveness. It is observed on 15th night in the month of *shaban* (eight Islamic month).

²⁰³ First month of Islamic calendar.

²⁰⁴ Holy night in the month of ‘*Ramazan*’

²⁰⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, ed. Dr. Hamiduddin Ahmed, *Writings of Amir Khusrau, 700 After the Prophet A 13th-14th Legend of Indian Sub-Continent: Based on annotated translation of his work Ijaz-i-Khusravi* Vol. IV, Illinois, 2007, pp. 324-325

²⁰⁶ Prof. Syed Hasan Askari, *Amir Khusrau: As a Historian*, Patna 1992, p. 58

²⁰⁷ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p.306.

the imperial capital, celebrated festivals under the direct patronage of the Sultan. These celebrations included congregational prayers, formal audiences (darbar), the exchange of gifts, the distribution of robes of honour (khil'at), royal banquets, and charitable donations. Court nobles attended these ceremonies according to their rank and status, thereby reaffirming their loyalty to the Sultan and their position within the political hierarchy. The Sultan, along with nobles and courtiers, would attend the 'Idgah' (a mosque for Id prayers), where they performed the two rakats of the 'Id' prayer ('dogana').²⁰⁸ On this day, the markets were beautifully decorated, and children wore new, fine clothes. 'Gulabdarān' vessels filled with rosewater were used to sprinkle water on guests, adding to the festive atmosphere.²⁰⁹ People exchanged gifts and offered valuable presents to their loved ones. The celebrations continued with the sixth day of 'Id', known as 'Shesh Id', when special white cakes (ruqaaq) and a sweet dish called 'Halwa-i-Shakar' Pech were prepared.²¹⁰ On this day, nobles would join the Sultan in a royal procession, displaying their respective insignia. During Muhammad bin Tughlaq's reign, nobles like Mubarak Khan, Bahram Khan, Malik Firoz, Malik Mujjir, and Malik Qabula accompanied him to the 'Idgah', where they all participated in the Id prayers and greeted each other in celebration. Contemporary chroniclers such as Zia al-Din Barani and Shams-i Siraj Afif emphasize that participation in these ceremonies reinforced the authority of the Sultan and strengthened the bond between the monarch and the ruling elite. Royal festivals also provided opportunities for diplomatic receptions, the honouring of distinguished nobles, and the public display of imperial wealth and magnificence.²¹¹

In contrast, the provincial nobles celebrated the same religious festivals within the framework of provincial administration and local society. As governors and military commanders, they organized Eid prayers, distributed alms, arranged public feasts,

²⁰⁸ Hameed-ud-Din, 'Indian Culture in the Late Sultanate Period: A short Study' *East and West*, Vol 12, No. 1 (March 1961), p. 33; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol IV, p. 306; S.H. Askari, 'Khusrau's Work as Sources of Social History', p. 156.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.306; S.H. Askari, 'Life and Condition as Depicted in Risail-i-Ijaz-i-Khusravi, *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol .X, No. I, August, 1967, p.73.

²¹⁰ Ibid Vol. I, p. 198; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio, Cultural Life of Nobility under Delhi Sultanate*, Aligarh, 2015, p. 49

²¹¹ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, p. 60-61; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 346; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D)* Calcutta, 1969, p. 122; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 81

and received local officials, religious scholars, Sufi saints, and influential landholders. While these celebrations reflected the ceremonial traditions of the imperial court, they were generally less elaborate and were adapted to regional customs and available resources. Provincial festivals emphasized social cohesion and administrative cooperation rather than imperial grandeur. By participating in local celebrations and extending patronage to religious institutions, provincial nobles strengthened their relationship with the local population while simultaneously representing the authority of the Sultan.²¹²

'Id al-Azha', also referred to as *'Id-i-Qurban'*, was the second major festival during the Sultanate period. This festival, observed on the 10th of *'Zilhijja'*, marks the sacrifice made by Prophet Abraham and his son Ismail.²¹³ Minhaj Siraj recounts that during Balban's tenure as *'naib'* to Sultan Nasiruddin Muhammad, he performed the *Id* prayer at a madrasa ground in *'Jallundhar'*, accompanied by his associates.²¹⁴ On this day, a large number of animals—sheep, lambs, camels, and goats—were sacrificed, and the meat was distributed among friends, family, relatives, the poor, beggars, and others in need. One of the *'Lodhi nobles'*, *'Masnad-i-Ali Azam Humayun Sarwani'*, is noted for hosting a particularly extravagant celebration of the *Id* festival, spending a significant amount of money. Reports suggest that nearly three thousand animals were slaughtered and their meat distributed among family, friends, and the impoverished.²¹⁵

In addition to *'Id-ul-Fitr'* and *'Id-al-Azha'*, *'Amir Khusrau'* provides detailed accounts of other important festivities. The first twelve days of *'Rabi ul-Awwal'*, particularly the twelfth, were dedicated to *'Milad-i-Nabi'*, the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birth.²¹⁶ During public festivals, processions, charitable

²¹² Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p. 91, 160-165; Hameed-ud-Din, *'Indian Culture'*, p. 33; Siddiqui, *Food Dishes'*, p. 122

²¹³ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio, Cultural Life of Nobility under Delhi Sultanate*, p. 49

²¹⁴ Minhaj-u-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., Major George Henry Raverty, New Delhi, 1970, p. 210; S.M Jaffer, *Education in Muslim India*, Delhi, 1973, p. 41

²¹⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 91; Hameed-ud-Din, *'Indian Culture in the Late Sultanate Period'*, *East and West*, Vol. 12 No. 1, March 1971, p.33; Siddiqui, *'Food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre Mughal-India'*, p. 122

²¹⁶ Agha Mahdi, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, p. 143; Sheikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India, (1206-1556 A.D)* p. 122

distributions, and religious celebrations, sections of the urban population gathered as spectators or beneficiaries. During this period, charity was given to the poor, and feasts were held. Nobles, depending on their status, organized large feasts and distributed food to the less fortunate.²¹⁷ Ibn Batuta himself on several great occasions distributed food among the poor. For instance, Khawwas Khan celebrated ‘*Milad-un-Nabi*’ in Jaunpur, where he distributed *halwa* (a sweet dish) and *sherbet* (a sweet drink) made from 400 ‘*maunds*’ of refined sugar to the poor. Additionally, he gave silver ‘*tankahs*’ (coins) to each beggar.²¹⁸ ‘Khawas Khan’, another ‘Lodi noble’, once arranged a grand feast for his army of 30,000 to 40,000 *sawars*, even though they were stationed in a desolate area facing food shortages. Despite the scarcity, he managed to serve dishes such as mutton soup and a variety of other foods.²¹⁹ Similarly every year on the death anniversary of the Prophet of Islam, Mian Zainuddin, a lodhi noble spent two thousand tankas daily for twelve days on food preparations.²²⁰

A Lodi noble, Mian Zainuddin, spent large sums of money on food preparations over a span of twelve days. Each day, he allocated 2,000 *tankahs* for the provision of meals to both the poor and the wealthy. On the first and last days of the period, his expenditures on a variety of delicious foods were doubled.²²¹ Another noble, Masand-i-Ali Azam Humayun Sarwani, marked the occasion in a similar way to his observance of ‘*Id-al-Adha*’. He distributed two thousand copies of the ‘*Quran*’ annually, along with money, to students. Meanwhile, Main Farmuli also contributed by giving cash to those in need.²²²

Nobles during the ‘Sultanate’ period also commemorated the death anniversaries of ‘*Sufi*’ saints. A royal *parwana* from the reign of Firoz Shah Tughlaq sheds light on how nobles celebrated the ‘*Urs*’ (death anniversary) of these saints. For example, ‘Ala Khan’ sent a communication to the muqta and karkuns of the ‘*Sandila*’ region,

²¹⁷ Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, Eng tr., p. 198

²¹⁸ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 165

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 160-161

²²⁰ Ibid., Eng tr., pp. 75-78.

²²¹ Fazeela Shah Nawaz, *Socio-Cultural*, p. 50; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 167-168

²²² Ibid. pp. 160-161; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 72; Siddiqui, ‘*Food Dishes*’, p. 122

informing them that the 'Mauza Dahakwa' village in that area had been assigned as a source of funding for the expenses of the 'Urs' of 'Hazrat Shaikh Farid al-Haq'.²²³ The revenue from the village taxes and collections was allocated for this purpose.

The 'Lodi nobles' were particularly generous when it came to celebrating the 'Urs' of their ancestor, 'Shaikh Muhammad Salman', a non-Afghan Sufi buried in Afghanistan. They would often offer *fatiha* (It is a prayer for mercy and forgiveness for the departed soul) for his soul and prepare sweet dishes when they had to take part in battles.²²⁴ 'Nobles' also visited 'Suft' shrines as a mark of respect. For example, Mian Zabarruddin frequently visited the '*Qadamgah-i-Hazrat Risalat Panah*', where the footprints of the Prophet were kept. He also made it a point to visit the shrine of 'Hazrat Sultan-ul-Mashaikh Nizamuddin Auliya' every Wednesday, where he held a '*sama*' (musical gathering) on the banks of the Yamuna River.²²⁵

In addition to other festivals, '*Shab-i-Bar'at*' was celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm. It was regarded as a day of blessings and fell on the 14th of '*Shaban*', with the night preceding the 15th also known as '*Shab-i-Bar'at*'. On this night, people made offerings and prayers for deceased loved ones. It was a time for sending salutations and supplications, believed to be as numerous as the prayers of the month of '*Shaban*'. The night was seen as a time when divine decrees for the upcoming year were made, ensuring what was necessary for life's sustenance, which is why it was also called '*Shab-i-Bedari*', or the night of awakening. 'Amir Khusrau', in his '*Ijaz-i-Khusravi*', refers to this night as '*Lail-i-Mubarak Barat*', highlighting the significance of prayers and vigils.²²⁶

During '*Shab-i-Bar'at*', four temporary structures were erected, named *Alang-i-Khass*, *Alang-i-Malik Naib Barbak*, *Alang-i-Malik Ali*, and *Alang-i-Malik Yaqub*. These structures were adorned with drums and musical instruments such as '*tablas*' and '*damamas*', and the area was so brightly illuminated by countless earthen lamps

²²³ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 82,85

²²⁴ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio Cultural*, p. 52

²²⁵ Abaas Khan Sarwani, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ed. Imam al Din, Dacca, 1964, p. 98; Siddiqui, *Composite Culture*, pp. 84-85

²²⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khuravi*, Eng tr. p. 304; Prof Sayed Hasan Askari, *Amir Khusrau*, p. 39

(*chirag*) and torches (*mashal*) that it resembled daylight. On the banks of the Yamuna, boats were decorated with lamps, creating a beautiful reflection on the water. The beating of drums and the playing of bands continued for three consecutive nights—13th, 14th, and 15th of ‘*Shaban*’. People from all walks of life, including royal families, nobles, officials, and commoners, gathered to witness the lights and fireworks at ‘*Kaushak-i-Nujul*’, the place of illumination, at the Firozabad palace. Lamps were also sent to mosques for lighting. Amir Khusrau himself lit lamps in his house and prayed.²²⁷ The event also included boat races on the Yamuna, organized by nobles in honor of the occasion. Despite Islamic law prohibiting fireworks, the celebration followed traditional Indian customs similar to the Hindu festival of ‘*Shivratri*’, with night vigils and fireworks being common elements in both. This indicates the blending of cultural practices and traditions between Hindus and Muslims, as well as between locals and foreigners.²²⁸

While Islam is not an ascetic religion yet the value of fasting as a discipline and good deed is clearly recognized and it is said that “The very smell of the mouth of a keeper of fast is more agreeable to God than the smell of musk”²²⁹. Penitential fasting was highly commended by Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) himself. Every Muslim is obliged to fast during the whole month of Ramadan. The month of ‘*Ramadan*’ was a time of fasting for the people, where they refrained from eating during the day and broke their fast in the evening with various drinks and foods, such as *fuqqa*, bread, and sweet treats like ‘*Zaliba-i-Nabat*’ (jalebi), ‘*lozina*’ (a confection made from almonds), and fresh fruits²³⁰. During *Iftar*²³¹ and *Sehar*²³², food was often distributed to the poor and needy. ‘Mian Zainuddin’, for instance, shared the same dishes with

²²⁷ Ibid., p. 304; Prof Sayed Hasan Askari, *Amir Khusrau*, p. 4

²²⁸ Yusuf Hussain Khan, ‘Social and Economic Condition in Medieval India’, *Islamic Culture*, January, 1956, Vol. 30, Hyderabad, p. 7; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, pp. 89-90

²²⁹ James Hasting, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. V, New York, 1995, p.764. Hughes, Thomas Patrick *A Dictionary of Islam*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1995, pp.124-125

²³⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 226-227; Kishori Saran Lal, *History of the Khiljis (1290-1320 A.D.)* New Delhi, 1980, p. 50

²³¹ *Iftar* is the evening meal with which Muslims break their fast during the holy month of Ramadan. The word "Iftar" comes from the Arabic word "fatr" (فَطَرَ), meaning "to break" or "break the fast."

²³² *Sehar* (also spelled *Suhoor* in Arabic) is the pre-dawn meal before fajr prayer that Muslims eat before beginning their fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

the poor that he enjoyed himself.²³³ The first ten days of Muharram, the first month in the Islamic calendar, were observed as sacred in commemoration of the martyrdom of Husain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, at Karbala. The ‘*Ashura*’ (day of mourning and remembrance)²³⁴ was solemnly observed on the tenth day of ‘*Muharram*’, with many people fasting on this day.²³⁵ Nobles and others would distribute charity to the poor and beggars during this time. Ibn Batuta recounts his own act of charity, where he gave 100 *maunds* of flour and an equal amount of meat to the less fortunate. Mian Sulaiman Farmuli also distributed cash to those in need on ‘*Ashura*’, as well as on the death anniversary of Prophet Muhammad and during the month of ‘*Rajab*’ (the seventh month in the Islamic calendar).²³⁶

In addition to Islamic festivals, Iranian festivals were also celebrated during the Sultanate period. One such festival was ‘*Nauroz*’, the Persian New Year, which was celebrated with great enthusiasm. Central Asian immigrants introduced ‘*Nauroz*’ to India during their early conquests of ‘North India’.²³⁷ It fell on the first day of ‘*Farwardin*’, the first month of the ‘Persian’ calendar.²³⁸

Amir Khusrau vividly describes the celebration of ‘*Nauroz*’ in a rose garden, highlighting the beauty of the season, fresh flowers, music, songs, and wine, as well as the joy of celebrating with friends and family.²³⁹ To mark the occasion, pavilions were erected, and nobles, khans, and other dignitaries participated in the festivities. Poets and singers also joined in, often composing poetry in praise of the Sultan and other nobles. ‘*Nauroz*’ was a festival enjoyed by all social classes, lasting for nine days. Devout individuals also celebrated it by hosting grand gatherings and arranging for qawwals (Sufi songs) to perform religious music. ‘Shaikh Ghulam’, a noble during the reign of ‘Sultan Sikander Lodi’, organized a feast on ‘*Nauroz*’ to celebrate

²³³ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 74

²³⁴ It marks the martyrdom of Imam Hussain ibn Ali, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), at the Battle of Karbala in 680 CE

²³⁵ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 845; Askari, *Amir Khusrau, As a Historian*, pp. 40-41; Hameed-ud-Din, ‘Indian Culture in the Late Sultanate Period’ *East and West*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1961, p. 33

²³⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr. p. 86

²³⁷ Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 65

²³⁸ Abdul Qadir Ibn-i-Mulk Shah al-Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Eng tr., George S.A. Ranking, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973, Vol. II, pp. 261-262

²³⁹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khuravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, pp. 307-308; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions*, p. 73; Siddiqui, ‘Food Dishes’ p. 124

the arrival of spring (*'Majlis-i-Jashn-i-Bahar'*). He invited nobles, family members, dignitaries, poets, musicians, and singers to the event, which lasted for several days. When the entertainers could not hold the audience's attention, 'Shaikh Ghulam' himself sang in a melodious voice to keep the festivities alive. The celebration of 'Nauroz' gave the nobility and the ruling elite an opportunity to showcase their wealth and generosity.²⁴⁰ The traditions established by the nobles and princes of the 14th century Delhi Sultanate were enriched by the introduction of new ideas, which undoubtedly enhanced the grandeur and significance of the occasion.²⁴¹ Although there is little evidence that the Delhi Sultans officially celebrated Hindu festivals, many rulers adopted pragmatic policies that allowed local religious festivals to continue. Moreover, interaction between the Sultanate elite and indigenous society, particularly through Sufi traditions and provincial administration, facilitated cultural accommodation and the gradual emergence of a composite Indo-Islamic culture. Despite Islamic law prohibiting fireworks, the celebration of *Shab-i-Barat* followed traditional Indian customs similar to the Hindu festival of '*Shivratri*', with night vigils and fireworks being common elements in both. This indicates the blending of cultural practices and traditions between Hindus and Muslims, as well as between locals and foreigners.²⁴²

C. WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, AND LIFE-CYCLE CEREMONIES

Marriage ceremonies among the nobility of the Delhi Sultanate were not merely domestic celebrations but also significant social and political events. Both court and provincial nobles used marriages to strengthen kinship networks, consolidate political alliances, and enhance their social prestige. However, the scale, ceremonial splendour, and political significance of these occasions differed considerably.

The most important ceremony was marriage. Marriage ceremonies were celebrated with great zeal in which every high rank as well as low rank noble spend lavishly. At

²⁴⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 110-111; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 65

²⁴¹ Fazeela Shanawaz, *Socio- Cultural life of Nobility*, p. 54

²⁴² Yusuf Hussain Khan, 'Social and Economic Condition in Medieval India', *Islamic Culture*, January, 1956, Vol. 30, Hyderabad, p. 7; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, pp. 89-90

the royal court, marriages of noble families were celebrated with exceptional magnificence under the influence of Persian court traditions. Wedding ceremonies were marked by elaborate processions, luxurious banquets, the exchange of costly gifts, expensive garments, jewellery, horses, and slaves. Distinguished nobles, members of the royal household, foreign ambassadors, and eminent religious scholars often attended these celebrations. Royal patronage frequently enhanced the prestige of such marriages through the presentation of robes of honour (*khil'at*) and valuable gifts by the Sultan. These ceremonies functioned not only as family occasions but also as public demonstrations of aristocratic wealth, political influence, and royal favour.²⁴³ Marriage alliances among the court nobility frequently carried political significance. Families of influential amirs and high-ranking officials sought matrimonial alliances with other noble households to strengthen their position within the court and to establish enduring networks of mutual support. Such alliances often enhanced access to royal favour and facilitated appointments to important administrative or military offices. In some cases, marriages linked noble families directly with the ruling dynasty, thereby elevating their political standing. Consequently, marriage became an instrument through which political authority and aristocratic influence were consolidated within the imperial elite. They perform several rituals in marriages. The marriage ceremony of Qutbuddin Aibek and daughter of Malik Tajuddin Yalduz, governor of Kirman, was celebrated with great splendor.²⁴⁴ Malik Aitmar Turk also spent one lakh of *jital* on the marriage ceremony of his daughter. In the marriage ceremony of Prince Shadi Khan with the daughter of Alp Khan, the governors of every province were invited.²⁴⁵

There are several rituals and rites of marriages. Before marriage, *Nikah* (*Nikah* is the Islamic term for marriage and refers to the formal contract between a man and a woman to be legally and spiritually united in marriage under Islamic law) was to be performed. After that, *Jalwa* in which bride and groom had to meet face to face in presence of relatives and family member and then *rukhsati* in which bride has to go

²⁴³ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i- Khusravi*, Vol V, pp. 221-224; Aksari, *Amir Khusrau*, p. 57; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p. 118; Siddiqui, *Composite Culture*, p. 86

²⁴⁴ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 110

²⁴⁵ Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul-Fawad*, Eng tr., p. 134; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p.65

to with groom in which people scattered money and flower to them. Ibn Batuta gave the references of marriage of an Arab noble Amir Saifuddin Gaddah with the sister of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.²⁴⁶ The marriage was celebrated in red palace known as *Kushak-i-Lal*.²⁴⁷ Malik Fathullah, *shawanawis* (in charge of arrangement for feast), was appointed by the Sultan as overall in charge. The ceremonial aspects of these weddings reflected the refined culture of the Persianate court. Distinguished guests included principal amirs and foreigners, members of the royal household, leading military commanders, judges, scholars, Sufi shaikhs, poets, and foreign ambassadors were present night and day.²⁴⁸ Banquets were carefully organized according to rank and protocol, while musicians and poets entertained the guests through performances that celebrated the generosity and prestige of the host. Such ceremonies reinforced the hierarchical structure of the court by visibly distinguishing high-ranking nobles from lesser officials. Two nights before marriages, women of royal palace came to red palace, surrounded the bridegroom Amir Saifuddin, and installed him on a cushion. They applied henna on his hands and ladies on the back sing sung songs and danced.²⁴⁹ After henna ceremonies, bridal party also reached at palace, where bride and bridegroom meet with each other face to face. A mock fight was also organized as a mode of entertainment in which in case of defeat, they had to pay thousands dinar to bride's party. On the wedding day, a blue silk robe embrioded with jewels and *turban*, was brought to Amir Saifuddin Gaddah. Mahr (money paid to bride at the time of marriage) was also given to bride.²⁵⁰ He said that although rulers and ruling elites followed central Asian culture but they also followed Indian customs in the wedding such as applying henna on the hand and foot of bride and bridegroom, their false struggle to enter the bride's house, scattering of gold dinars on guests, betel given to bride groom by bride.²⁵¹ Persian customs significantly influenced these ceremonies, particularly in the use of richly embroidered garments, expensive jewellery, decorated horses, perfumes, carpets, silk canopies, and lavishly

²⁴⁶ H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 686-689

²⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 74

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 86; Siddiqui, '*Food and Dishes*', p. 121

²⁴⁹ Ibid, Vol. III, pp. 686-687; Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, pp.79-80

²⁵⁰ Amir Khusaru, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol III, p. 93

²⁵¹ Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 233

furnished reception halls. Such displays of luxury were intended not merely to celebrate the marriage but also to demonstrate the family's prestige within the aristocratic hierarchy.²⁵² Afif likewise records the importance of ceremonial receptions, gift-giving and the distribution of presents according to social status.²⁵³ There are several references of other rites and ceremonies of marriages like ornamentations by the bride, bride's dresser, *takht-i-arusi* and *hajla*.²⁵⁴

On wedding evening, bride and bridegroom had to sit on a high pulpit in the audience hall. Bride was dressed in decorated brocade hangings covered with precious jewels. She extended betel to bridegroom. Gold dinars were thrown as *nisar*. Following the Indian custom, drums, bugles and pipes were sounded outside the palace gate while female musicians were singing inside. On *rukhsati*, the bridegroom mounted on horse while bride sat in a palanquin and dinars were thrown upon them. Whenever they crossed the houses of amirs or noble of rank, he came out and scattered them gold and silver coins.²⁵⁵ On the next day, robes and gold and silver coins were sent by bride to all the companions of bridegroom. The Sultan presented a horse with decorated saddle, bridle and a purse of silver coins to them. Malik Fathullah, the in charge of this ceremony also presented silk robes and purses to the women and musicians.²⁵⁶ Women were the dominating elements during the marriage ceremony. They took part in all ceremonies during the marriage, singsongs and rode on horseback in the bridal procession.²⁵⁷

In contrast to the highly elaborate ceremonies associated with the imperial court, marriages among provincial elites appear to have been shaped more strongly by local social and political circumstances. While the essential Islamic framework of marriage remained common, regional practices could influence the organization and social

²⁵² Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, A.D. 1325–1354, trans. H. A. R. Gibb, vol. III, p. 747; Gavin R. G. Hambly, "Delhi Sultanate i. Political and Cultural History," *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, VII, no. 3 (1994), pp. 242–250.

²⁵³ Shams-i Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, trans. John Dowson, in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. III, pp. 75, 77, 84–85.

²⁵⁴ Askari, *Amir Khusrau; As a Historian*, p. 35

²⁵⁵ H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 688–689; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 133

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 690

²⁵⁷ Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 133; K.N. Chitnis, *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, Delhi, 2005, p. 83

character of wedding celebrations. Feasting, hospitality and the exchange of gifts provided important occasions for displaying wealth, status and social connections. Ibn Battuta's account of aristocratic feasting illustrates the importance of hospitality and the relationship between food, social rank and elite sociability.²⁵⁸ Ibn Battuta records the marriage of two daughters of the 'wazir' Khawaja Jahan Ahmad Ayaz (Turk by race) with the two sons of 'Khudawand Zaadah Qiwanuddin' (Iranian immigrants to the court) arranged by Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq. In the absence of Wazir, the Sultan with his royal retinue reached the residence of the wazir. Grand Qazi read the statement of the dowry. Thus, Sultan handed over all the things specified in the dowry agreement to the qazi.²⁵⁹ Festivities during the marriage ceremony of the son of Shaikh Ghuran, a non-Afghan noble of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi, lasted for several days. Mushtaqi records the generosity of the nobles that on marriage ceremony of his son, 'Shaikh Ghuran' paid seventy thousand *tankahs* to the singers. At the time of '*Rukhsati*', he distributed one hundred and fifty horses, four elephant and twenty ass-loads of cloth including silk fabric among the people.²⁶⁰ However, it is evident that the marriage ceremonies were solemnized on different Islamic, Iranian and Indian customs and traditions, which shed light on the composite culture of Sultanate society. The political objectives of marriage likewise differed. For the court nobility, marriages primarily served to reinforce aristocratic alliances within the imperial administration and secure influence at the Sultan's court. Matrimonial relationships often became an important means of navigating court politics and ensuring continued access to royal patronage. For provincial nobles, marriage alliances frequently strengthened relationships with influential regional families and local political elites, thereby contributing to administrative stability and social integration. These marriages facilitated cooperation between the Sultanate administration and local landed.²⁶¹

²⁵⁸ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 742–747).

²⁵⁹ H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III. p. 692; M.Athar Ali, 'Nobility under Muhammad bin Tughlaq' in *Medieval India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society and Culture (Collected essays of M. Athar Ali)*, Delhi, 2006, p. 32

²⁶⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr. p. 118; Siddiqui, *Composite Culture under the Sultans of Delhi*, p. 86; Idem, *Delhi Sultanate; Urbanization and Social Change*, p. 68

²⁶¹ Ibn Battuta. Eng tr., H.A.R Gibb, *The travels of Ibn Battuta, A.D. 1325–1354*, Vol. III, pp. 742–747

The arrangement of marriages for poor girls constituted an important aspect of the charitable activities undertaken by the Delhi Sultanate nobility. Following the example of the Sultans, many nobles provided financial assistance to economically disadvantaged families to enable them to perform the marriages of their daughters with dignity. The establishment of the *Diwan-i-Khairat* under Firoz Shah Tughlaq institutionalized such public welfare measures, reflecting the state's commitment to social assistance. According to the anonymous author of the *Sirat-i-Firozshahi*, people from different parts of the empire regularly visited the city mosque at Firozabad, which served as the headquarters of the *Diwan-i-Khairat*, to seek financial aid for marriage expenses.²⁶²

In addition to state-sponsored charity, individual nobles actively contributed to this philanthropic practice by providing dowries and other essential household items to poor families. Such assistance often included clothing, jewellery, bedding, household furniture, and other necessities required for the establishment of a new household. This tradition of charitable support continued during the Lodhi period. The chronicler records that Mian Zain-ud-Din, the *muqti* of Badaun, generously arranged the dowries of poor brides by providing jewellery, clothes, cots, bedding, and even palanquins, thereby ensuring that impoverished families could solemnize marriages with honour and social respectability.²⁶³

In 'Sultanate period', nobles also enjoy not only these festivals but also ceremonies. There are different ceremonies for different occasions. Usually the birth of child, particularly that of a son, provided an opportunity for rejoicing in the family and in the court was an occasion for great pomp. A number of tiny cradles were usually prepared in advance to receive the small guest.²⁶⁴ Birth of the male child was celebrated and he is welcomed with great joy and presents.²⁶⁵ Mahru mentioned that he congratulated one of the noble on the birth of a son to him by writing a letter. In

²⁶² Afif, *Tarikh*, pp. 395-51; Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Firozshahi*, p. 245; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 144.

²⁶³ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 72; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng tr., pp. 471-472; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 58; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 16-17.

²⁶⁴ Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul-Fuad*, Eng tr. Zia ul Hasan Faruqi, New Delhi, 1995, pp.305-08

²⁶⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. V, p. 251; Askari, *Amir Khusrau*, p. 57 Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p.17

another letter he congratulated his son Imad ud Din on the birth of his grandson Nizam-ul-Mulk Mahru.²⁶⁶ Astrologers were asked to prepare the horoscope and make prediction about the future of the Child.²⁶⁷ In the Muslim family immediately after the birth of a child the customary azan was recited in its ear.²⁶⁸ After the period of ceremonial impurity was over among the Muslims, the rite of *Aqiqah* or sacrifice was performed.²⁶⁹ Usually in the 7th year a Muslim child was circumcise and the occasion was celebrated with great rejoicing and entertainments.²⁷⁰

Ceremonies of funereal were also observed in Sultanate period. On the death of Sultan Balban when his bier was brought out of the '*Kushak-i-Lal*', Khans, Maliks and all other courtiers walked behind. When the bier was brought to the burial ground at Darul-Aman, Malik Fakhruddin (the kotwal), torn his clothes and throw dust on his head. They distributed food for the peace of the soul of deceased Sultan.²⁷¹ The grandees of the state in far-flung areas also observed the mourning. Bughra Khan, *muqti* of *Lakhnauti* tore his garments in receiving the news of Balban's death. Then he sat in seclusion and mourned for a week beating his head.²⁷² When Imad-ul mulk, the muster master of Sultan Balban died, Hindu Rais also came in funeral with bare heads.²⁷³ On hearing the news of his death, 'Qadr Khan' threw his cap torn his dress and cried bitterly. He then went into seclusion and set in mourning for three days and nights. ²⁷⁴ On the death of a Khalji noble Alp Arsalan, an old man put his head in the prostration and then prayed for the departed soul.²⁷⁵

Upon the death of a Sultan or noble, condolence ceremonies were held. Nobles would offer letters of sympathy and visit the deceased's household to express their

²⁶⁶ Mahru, *Insha-i-Mahru*, Letter No. 70, pp. 46-47

²⁶⁷ Khawaja Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr., Agha Mehdi Hussain, *Futuh-us- Salatin* or *Shahnama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977 p. 151

²⁶⁸ Shaikh Sikandar, *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, (ed.) S.C. Misra and M.L. Rahman, Baroda, 1961, p.211.

²⁶⁹ E. Denison Ross, *An Alphabetical list of the feasts and holidays of the Hindus and Muhammadans*, Calcutta, 1914, p.98

²⁷⁰ Abul Fazl, *Akbarnama*, Vol. I, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1877, p.248

²⁷¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 122-123

²⁷² Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng tr. pp. 314, 319-320

²⁷³ Amir Khusrau, *Kulliyat-i-Khusrau*, p. 48

²⁷⁴ Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 415

²⁷⁵ Hamid Qalandhar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, Eng tr., p. 102

condolences.²⁷⁶ If a noble was on an expedition and a relative passed away, other nobles would visit his camp to convey their sympathies. Occasionally, nobles would send a representative to the home of the deceased to offer condolences.²⁷⁷

Ibn Batuta wrote in his account that it was a tradition to visit the grave of the deceased on the third day after burial. On this day, the grave would be covered with carpets and silk cloths, and a variety of flowers would be spread across it. Fruit trees, such as orange and lemon trees, were also placed near the grave. Guests were offered *julep* (a sweet, flavored drink), and betel was served to them. Prayers were recited, and the Quran was read for the peace of the departed soul.²⁷⁸

D. GAMES AND LEISURE

In addition to these religious ceremonies and celebrations, the nobles of the Sultanate period took great interest in games and amusements. Due to their high social standing, wealth, and position, they led lives of luxury. Several games were enjoyed by the nobility, such as hunting, *chaughan* (polo), wrestling, archery, chess, *nard* (backgammon), *turi* (a game of skill), *qammarbazi* (gambling with dice), and pigeon flying.

Games were divided into two categories: indoor and outdoor. Among indoor games, chess was particularly popular. Sultans and nobles alike had a deep interest in chess. Malik Ahmad Chap, a Khalji noble and naib amir-i-Hajib, was known for his enthusiasm for chess.²⁷⁹ Once, during a Rajput rebellion in the province of Mian Muhammad Farmuli, he ordered his army to march while he remained engrossed in a chess game. His officials visited him at intervals to inform him of the situation, but he was so focused on the game that he paid little attention. When news of the battle

²⁷⁶ Insha Mahru, Letter no. 13 (condolence letter sent by Shihabuddin Daula, muqti of Badaon, on the death of Tughlaq Shah). pp. 25-27

²⁷⁷ It is mentioned that when Sultan Husain Sharqi's mother, Bibi Raji at Etawah in 1478 A.D. Sultan Bahlol conveyed his condolence to him through Qutb Khan Lodi and Kalyan Mal. In the same year, Husain visited Badaun to offer condolences on the death of Sultan Alauddin. See Muhammad Habib and K. A. Nizami, *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, New Delhi, 1982, p. 681

²⁷⁸ H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 739; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 80; Mahdi Husain, 'The Social Life and Institutions with Special References to the Hindus in the Days of Muhammad bin Tughlaq', *Proc. I.H.C.*, Bombay, 1947, p. 297

²⁷⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 156, 179, 185, 190, 203

reached him, he abandoned the game, though he completed it later after returning from the battlefield.²⁸⁰ Amir Khusrau, in his work '*Nuh Sipihr*', also mentioned chess (*shatranj*), highlighting how it helped alleviate stress and provided a pleasant diversion. He noted that the game had Indian origins and was widely played. However, he also pointed out that many people tried to master it, but few ever succeeded in fully grasping its intricacies.²⁸¹

In addition to the previously mentioned indoor games, other popular games among the nobles included dice, *nard*, *gira bazi*, and *kabatain*.²⁸² Gambling, known as *qammarbazi*, was also commonly enjoyed. When *Balban* served as a provincial governor under Sultan *Nasiruddin*, he was known to have a strong inclination towards gambling. During the *Lodi* period, gambling became so prevalent that a dedicated gambling house, *qammar khana*, was even established.²⁸³ 'Malik Kafur' was particularly fond of a game called *turi*, similar to backgammon or dice.²⁸⁴ *Chaugan* (polo) was the most popular outdoor sport played by both the Sultans and their nobles during the Sultanate era.²⁸⁵ Swift Arabian horses were used for the game, known for their speed and agility, so much so that they did not require any whipping while playing with the ball on the polo ground.²⁸⁶ The game's popularity continued throughout the *Lodi* dynasty. During the reign of *Alauddin Khalji*, both soldiers and nobles were passionate about *chaugan*, with their involvement in the game leading to rivalry.²⁸⁷ On one occasion, while Sultan *Sikander Lodi* and his nobles were playing polo, Haibat Khan's stick struck 'Sulaiman Khan', the son of Darya Khan Sarwani,

²⁸⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., pp. 96, 101; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism*, p. 129; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 104

²⁸¹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khuravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, pp. 192,290; Idem, *Nuh Siphir*, ed. Muhammad Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1949, pp. 169-170; Eng tr., R. Nath and Faiyaz Gawaliari, Jaipur, 1981, p. 60; Syed Sabahuddin Abdur Rahman, *Amir Khusrau as a Genius*, Delhi, 1982, p. 96

²⁸² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 162; Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 75

²⁸³ Ibid, pp. 46, 131, 162,167; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng.tr., Vol. IV, pp. 203,264,290; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 38; Mushtaqi also mentioned that gambling was prohibited by a Lodi noble, Daulat Khan Lodi; Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics*, p. 156; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 104

²⁸⁴ Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., pp. 190-191

²⁸⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 113-114; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, pp. 2, 37

²⁸⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. III, pp. 100, 121

²⁸⁷ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, pp. 37, 38,42; Iqtidar Ahmad Siddiqui, *Some Aspect of Afghan Despotism*, p. 31. Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, Eng tr., p. 65

leading to an open conflict. *Khan-i-Azam Lad Khan*²⁸⁸, a noble of the *Lodi* dynasty, was also known for his love of the game.²⁸⁹

Shikar (hunting), although initially intended for military training, became a favored form of entertainment among the nobles and a means to display their courage and valor.²⁹⁰ The Sultans were particularly fond of hunting expeditions and were often accompanied by *Maliks*, *Khans*, and *Amirs*.²⁹¹ On these trips, servants and slaves who carried provisions, tents, canopies, and other necessities joined them. *Potters* and attendants were also part of the entourage, ensuring the smooth running of the expedition, other nobles or friends were welcome to join the hunt²⁹²

The Delhi Sultanate established a well-organized and efficient hunting department. Nobles with a strong interest in hunting maintained their own hunting operations.²⁹³ Under *Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq*, the post of *Amir-i-Shikar* (Chief of the Hunting Department) was given to *Malik Dilan*, with *Malik Khizr Bahram* serving as his deputy.²⁹⁴

There were certain protocols to be followed during a hunting expedition. ‘Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq’, for example, was accompanied by prominent nobles such as Tatar Khan, Malik Safdar, Malik Hoshang, Nasiruddin, Lala Bahadur, Lala Karana, Sar-i-Dawatdar, and other officials like Malik Shadi Satlia, Malik Mukhlis-ul-Mulk, Malik Daulat Shah Butmari, and Malik Maqbul.²⁹⁵ The *Wazir*, *Qazi*, leading *Amirs*, and other significant dignitaries of the state also joined the Sultan on

²⁸⁸ Niamatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghan*, pp. 187-188; Eng tr., Roy, p. 79; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 58-59; Eng tr., p. 463; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 163; Eng tr., p. 366; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 317, Eng tr., p. 417-418; Ferishta, *Tarik-i-Ferishta*, p. 182

²⁸⁹ Abdullah, *Tarik-i-Daudi*, p. 84; Eng tr., p. 475; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 90; Eng tr. p. 96

²⁹⁰ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio- Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 61

²⁹¹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 318-320, 322-323, 325; H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 752-755; Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, pp. 435; Eng tr., Vol. III, pp. 663-664; Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta (A Muslim Traveler of 14th Century)*, Sydney, 1986, p. 201; K.P. Sahu, ‘Hunting as a Pastime during the Turko-Afghan Period’, *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. XIII, no.1 August, 15, 1970, Ranchi, p. 41

²⁹² Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 182; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 102

²⁹³ Shihabuddin Al-Umari, *Masallik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol III, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 579-580

²⁹⁴ A Turkish noble, Malik Qattal had his Mir-i-Shikar. Hamid Qalandhar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 147-150; Eng tr., pp. 109-111

²⁹⁵ Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng tr., 663-664

these expeditions. The nobles' tents were pitched some distance away from the Sultan's, with their tents being white and decorated with blue embroidery, while the Sultan's tent was red.²⁹⁶ Amir Khusrau describes the hierarchy of the hunting officials, noting that the chief of the hunt was known as *Shikarbak* or '*Mir-i-Shikar*'. The drummers, called '*tablabaz*', played an important role in the expedition, using their drums to scare and drive the birds. *Hawks* and *falcons* were then released to hunt the birds. *Tajuddin* and *Qiran-i-Malik* were the chief sportsmen of the hunt.²⁹⁷

Malik Tajuddin Sanjar Kurek Khan was an exceptionally skilled archer, known for his precise aim, ensuring that no animal in the hunt could evade his arrow.²⁹⁸ The *Shamsi* noble, Malik Alaaddin Kishli Khan, had a deep passion for hunting, and his hunting expeditions gained widespread recognition across *Hindustan* and *Khurasan*.²⁹⁹ During his time as a noble, 'Sultan Balban' was also an avid hunter. He took significant measures to protect designated hunting grounds and even appointed an "*Amir-i-Shikar*" to oversee their maintenance and ensure their exclusivity. At times, hunting grounds served as locations for political assassinations and revenge.³⁰⁰ A notable incident occurred when *Wazir Khawaja Mahdi* and his allies were ambushed and killed by a group of rival nobles during a hunting trip in the fields of "*Hauz-i-Rani*".³⁰¹ On another occasion, *Alaaddin Khalji* granted a noble permission to conduct a hunting expedition in the *Amroha* district.³⁰²

Sultan Alaaddin Khalji once issued a '*farman*' to the Tughlaq Shah was his noble that Sipah Salar Nasiruddin Rajab has been killing a large number of lions in his hunting pastime. This *farman* was taken by Tughlaq Shah as an indirect admonition and threat.³⁰³ The author also referred that Firoz Shah Tughlaq haunted a large

²⁹⁶ H.A.R Gibb, *Travels*, Vol III, pp. 752-754; Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh-ul-Asha*, Eng tr. Otto Spies, An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century, Aligarh, 1935, pp. 75-76; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 74; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 102; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, pp. 146-147

²⁹⁷ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol II, pp. 60-69; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 101-102.

²⁹⁸ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 258; Eng tr., Vol II, p. 756; Dharam Pal, The Influence of the Slaves in the Muslim Administration of India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol 18, 1944, p. 413

²⁹⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 113-114

³⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 54-55; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., p. 99

³⁰¹ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 70

³⁰² Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 189; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Eng tr., Vol. I, pp. 267-268

³⁰³ Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Firozshahi*, p. 43

number of Gawazan (elk) and Kotah. Seeing this his foster mother made a provoking statement and said that, “ The Killing of such species of games did not reflect much excellence nor was it occasion for boasting or glorying for the son of the deceased *Sipah Salar*, Nassiruddin Rajib, who never vaunted even when he killed hundreds of wild beasts including ferocious tigers and lions. When he found a pack of lions he rushed upon them alone and drove them off”.³⁰⁴

Nobles went on hunting expedition along with harem. Mian Zabarruddin went to a village named Malcha along with Harem.³⁰⁵ One of the Lodi noble Said Khan Yusuf Khan Lodi was fond of hunting.³⁰⁶ Another noble of Lodi dynasty, Haibat Khan, was known as wolf-slayer (*gurg-andaz*) as he killed wolf with his arrow.³⁰⁷ Mian Farmuli was so much interested in hunting that spend three month in year only for hunting expedition. He killed wild buffalos, wolves with spears and tiger and lions with arrows.³⁰⁸

Nobles also participated when a Sultan went on hunting expeditions. Naib Barbak were appointed by Sultan to lead the equestrians towards the hunting circle. On one side Malik Ibrahim, a noble of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq, was posted to lead the equestrians and on the other side Malik Imad ul Mulk was appointed to lead the equestrians.³⁰⁹ The hunting lines were drawn by the troops and behind them marched the chiefs of the respective contingents. Sultan rode and chased the animals along with the nobles and horsemen.³¹⁰ Afif gives details regarding the hunting of elephants by Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq accompanied by other nobles such as Khan, Amir, Malik's other army men.³¹¹

³⁰⁴ Ibid., pp. 43

³⁰⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 76; Eng tr., p. 79

³⁰⁶ Ibid., Eng tr., 88; Abdullah, ‘*Tarikh-i-Daudi*’, Eng tr., p. 472

³⁰⁷ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng tr., p. 33. He received this title *gurg andaz* once he killed two wolves with one arrow in Bayana.

³⁰⁸ Mustaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., pp. 102-103; Niamtullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, Eng tr. Roy, p. 127; Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism*, pp. 130-131

³⁰⁹ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility*, p. 64

³¹⁰ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 321-326

³¹¹ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 64; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 167-169; Anonymous, *Sirat-i- Firozshahi*, pp. 45-51

There are other outdoor games such as wrestling. Afif recorded that it is most popular game which was played on the occasion of Id. Isami also mentioned about (*Pehlwan*) Qadr Khan in the company of Ulugh Khan.³¹² Archery and elephant fight was the other favourite outdoor games of the nobles under Delhi Sultans.³¹³ Asad Khan, Bhikhan Khan, Daulat Khan and Qutb Khan and Ahmad Shah Bhatti were famous in hunting expedition.³¹⁴ Similarly a group of prominent nobles, Ruknuddin Hamza, Izzudin Bakhtiyar, Nasiruddin Mardan Shah, Badruddin Sanqar Tigin and Malik Ahmad Chap, a Jalali noble was expert in archery.³¹⁵

E. PARTIES AND COURTLY ENTERTAINMENT

During the Sultanate period in India, the nobility enjoyed a life of opulence and grandeur, where lavish parties and extravagant gatherings were an integral part of courtly culture. These celebrations, often held in the grand palaces or lush gardens, were characterized by an exquisite blend of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian traditions. Whether it was a *majlis* (a formal assembly), a *mehfil* (a gathering for music and poetry), or a *jashn* (a festive celebration), these events offered the nobility an opportunity to indulge in fine dining, elegant performances, and intellectual exchanges.

‘Sultan Muizzuddin’ sometimes held very elegant gatherings and parties (*baratab wa aish*) in which he distributed gifts among his nobles. Qutbuddin Aibek also distributed gifts amongst his nobles.³¹⁶ Shamsi noble also participated in these types of cheerful parties organized by Sultan Iltutmish.³¹⁷ The nobles spent lavishly on these types of assemblies and wine parties. Shamsi nobles compete with each other in organizing these types of parties.³¹⁸ *Rawat-i-Arz* of Sultan Balban, a shamsi noble

³¹² Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 367; Isami, ‘*Futuh-us-Salatin*’, p. 396; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 100

³¹³ Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. II, p. 756; Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 113-114, 202, 203; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat*, p. 23; Eng tr. Vol. I, pp. 50

³¹⁴ Ahmad Yadgar, ‘*Tarikh-i-Shahi*’, p. 111

³¹⁵ Hasan Nizami, ‘*Taj-ul-Ma’asir*’, Eng tr., Bhagat Saroop, Delhi, 1998, pp. 304-305; Barani, *Tarikh*, pp. 66, 202

³¹⁶ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 138-139

³¹⁷ Hasan Nizami, ‘*Taj-ul-Ma’asir*’, Eng tr., pp. 301-302

³¹⁸ Fazeela Shah Nawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility under Delhi Sultans*, p. 65

was famous for his hospitality. He joyfully greeted them and entertained them in his parties.³¹⁹ Malik Amir Ali Sarjandar known as Hatim Khan organized wine parties in which he gave charity in state of intoxication, which was noticed by Sultan Balban.³²⁰

Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji also paid a lot of interest in these types of parties. He organized grand parties and invited all *Maliks*, *Khans*, *Amirs* as well as other courtesies. His pleasure parties (*Majlis-i-aish*) was adorned with incomparable courtiers (*nadims*), beautiful girls and life giving musicians. He laid down all his kingly pride in his parties. He even asked his nobles to put off their court dress and, take of their turbans and socks and sit comfortably in their *baarani* (a type of dress which was worn by nobles when they were at their homes).³²¹ His close nobles were Malik Kara Beg, Malik Nusrat Subah, Malik Izzuddin Ghorī, Malik Kir, Malik Kamaluddin Abul Mali, Malik Naseeruddin Kohrami, Malik Saduddin Mantaqi.³²² Amir Khasa and Hamid Raja were famous *ghazal* reciters. Amir Khusrau presented his poetry to Sultan and Sultan was so pleased with his ghazals that he gave him plenty of gifts.³²³ Muhammad Shah Changi was famous musician and he played harp (*chang*), while Futuha and Nusrat Khatun were famous singers, Nusrat Bibi and Mehr Afroz was famous dancers and Yilduz was the chief *saqi*, under whose guidance *saqi* (who served wine) worked in his court.³²⁴

Nobles organized parties to commemorate victory such as Ulugh Khan had through a party when he got victory on Mongols.³²⁵ Malik Gurshap who was later known as Sultan Alaaddin Khalji also arranged such parties and entertained nobles and other companions there.³²⁶ Malik Tajuddin Kuchi, *iqtadar* of Awadh and Malik Fakhruddin Kuchi, *dadbek* of Sultan Jalauddin Khalji, were famous for arranging the

³¹⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 115-116; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 16

³²⁰ Ibid., pp. 119

³²¹ Fazeela Shanawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility*, pp. 65-66

³²² Ibid. p. 66

³²³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 120

³²⁴ Ibid, pp. 198-200; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 140; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, pp. 90-91; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 64; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 99

³²⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, Eng tr. Muhammed Habib, The Campaign of Alaaddin Khilji, Madras, 1931, pp. 24-25

³²⁶ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr., p. 410

parties at their own palaces. Malik Ahmad Chap, *naib-i-Amir Hajib* of Sultan, invited *nadims* and singers of Sultan Jalaluddin's convivial assembly at his place and awarded them with one lakh *tanka*hs. A large number of horses and caps were given to nobles as a gift.³²⁷

Nobles drew inspiration from the lives and ways of the Sultans in the social and Cultural attitude and activities. Thus, they became the victim of the habit of wine drinking and frequently organized wine parties. They even did not hesitate to drink in the company of the Sultans and their companions.³²⁸ Balban when he was a noble (*Khan*), was addicted to wine drinking and also fond of parties (*jashan*). He invited prominent nobles like *Maliks*, *Khans*, and well-known personages, his friends, *nadeems*, singers and dancers were invited by him in these festive assemblies. He presented horses and robes to his guests. He decorated assembly hall with carpets, cloths and colorful *Khawans*, gold and silver vessels. *Jashan* was arranged between *zahr* and *asr*.³²⁹

Isami gives a vivid description of a banquet (*bazm*) (بزم) organized by 'Sultan Alauddin Khalji' and a number of nobles like Malik Qiran, Malik Izz Yaghan Khan, Khudawandzadah Qirba also joined Sultan in these drinking parties. Singers and dancers were also present there to entertain the guests with their melodious songs and music.³³⁰ Sultan Alauddin then gave up drinking in order to maintain moral of court culture but drinking parties were still organized by nobles on a large scale.³³¹

Once 'Bughra Khan', attended the wine party of Malik Chajju. Amir Khusrau presented his ghazal in that party. Being pleased with his verses, Bughra Khan

³²⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 141; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, pp. 137-138; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 91; Kishori Saran Lal, *History of Khaljis (1290-1320 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 22.

³²⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 90, 119, 120, 291; Isami, '*Futuh-us-Salatin*', Eng tr., Vol. II, pp. 331, 477-478; A.B. Panday, 'An Enlightened Despot of the 13th Century', '*Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1947, p. 312

³²⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 32, 45-46, 67; Nizamuddin and Ferishta also mentioned that Balban was addicted to wine in his youth. See Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 97; Ferishta, *Tarikh*, Eng tr., p. 141; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 51. Habibullah, op. cit., pp. 137, 313

³³⁰ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr., Vol. II, pp. 490-491; Lal, *History of Khalji*, p. 276

³³¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 15-16; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, 161; Lal, *Khaljis*, p. 75

presented him a dish of thousands of silver tankahs. Malik Chajju was so much annoyed with Amir Khusaru on accepting his gifts. He tried to win back his favour but Malik Chajju did not forgive him and transferred his services to Bughra Khan.³³²

Sultan Muizuddin Kaiqubad also organized such large convivial parties. Nobles were also invited in these wine parties. His period witnessed tenfold rise in the price of wine.³³³ It was noted that both son of Balban was so much indulged in wine and pleasure that Balban called his son Bugra Khan and make him oath that he would not indulge in these wine parties and also gave up wine.³³⁴ Many Tughlaq nobles were fond of drinking. Malik Taghi, Malik Shadi and Malik Aziz were fond of drinking wine.³³⁵ There is almost no information regarding the convivial life of Sayyid nobles.³³⁶ Lodi nobles were very fond of these parties which are adorned by music and wine.³³⁷ But Daulat Khan Lodi, muqta of Lahore, followed the holy law (*Shariyat-i-Sharifa*) to the extent that in his vilayet wine, pork, prostitution and gambling were strictly prohibited.³³⁸

The nobles that were legalized by ‘Qazi Hammidudin Nagauri’ and ‘Qazi Minhaj Siraj’ organized some parties during their Qaziship of Delhi.³³⁹ It was mentioned that once prince Muhammad (son of Balban), muqti of Multan, organized a *sama* party in his assembly and invited Shaikh Usman and Shaikh Kadwa, son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya.³⁴⁰ In this *Sama*, Arabic *ghazals* were sung *nadim* used to recite the verses of previous poets.³⁴¹ Isami mentions that Qazi Sa’ad had a *qawwal* Mahmud in his

³³² Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics*, p. 158

³³³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. pp. 129-130; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 84; Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics*, p. 156-157

³³⁴ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 92

³³⁵ Ibid, Eng tr., p. 260; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr., Vol II, pp. 620; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 140

³³⁶ Yahya Bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, Eng tr., H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1992, pp. 179, 204, 211; Nizammudin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, pp. 132, 147, 148

³³⁷ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi* or *Tarikh-i-Salatin-Afghana*, pp. 109-110; Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol V., p. 33

³³⁸ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 85

³³⁹ Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul-Fua'd*, p. 239; Eng tr., p. 426; Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehlavi, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Delhi, 1332 A.H. Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. VI, Allahabad, 1984, p. 79

³⁴⁰ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of nobility*, p. 68

³⁴¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 68

services who sang fascinating songs. He sang song in parties on the qazi's order.³⁴² Story tellers were also an important part of these parties. Story tellers were also invited by nobles just to pass their leisure time. A Tughlaq noble 'Khan-i-Azam Lad Khan', used to listen to the *Shahnama* or *Iskandarnama*.³⁴³

F. DANCE AND MUSIC

Dance was also an important mode of entertainment. Sultans and nobles of Delhi Sultanate gave patronage to art of dance. Classical dance, which was combination of Central Asian as well as Indian dances, was also prevalent during Sultanate period. Slave girls were trained in classical dances and it fetched a higher price.³⁴⁴ These slave girls were sold on higher prices. Merchants move from one city to another with these dancing girls for sale.³⁴⁵ Jashn were held at the time of birth of male child. Iranian and Indian dancing girls dance in these parties.³⁴⁶ The famous dancer of that time was Nusrat Bibi and Mehr Afroz.³⁴⁷ In the marriage party of amir Saifuddin, male and female singers and dancers (*ahl-i-tarab*) were engaged under the guidance of head musician, (*amir-ul-mutribin*) Shamsuddin Tabrizi.³⁴⁸

A prominent Lodi Ahmad Khan, son of Jamal Khan Sarang Khani, *muqti* of Jaunpur had a dance hall named as '*Talim-Khana-i-Akhara*'. In this party he along with his associates was entertained by music and dance. A group of girls dancing, decked with jewels, dressed in embroidered silken clothes with quick moves holding lit earthen lamps in their palms.³⁴⁹ Despite of supposed legal ban on music it formed an essential part of the festivities and source of entertainment and always occupied a distinct place in the social and cultural life of the nobility under the Delhi Sultans.

³⁴² Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 119-120; Eng tr., Vol II, pp. 232-234

³⁴³ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 96; I.H. Siddiqui, 'Ikhtisan's History of Tughluq Sultans in the Basatin-ul-Uns' *Persio-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Condition of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 96-97

³⁴⁴ Shihabuddin Al Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar fi Mamluk-ul-Amsar*, Eng tr., (Joint) Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Moin-ul-Haq, Aligarh, 1943, pp. 51-52; Siddiqui, *Composite Culture*, p. 84

³⁴⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 80, 203

³⁴⁶ Amir Khusrav, *Nuh Siphir*, Eng. tr. R. Nath and Faiyaz Gwaliari, Jaipur, 1981, pp. 379-382

³⁴⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 119-200

³⁴⁸ Agha Mahdi, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Eng. tr., pp. 78-79

³⁴⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. Eng. tr. p. 93

They listened and patronized music.³⁵⁰ *Ghunyat-ul-Munya* a book on music and dance was composed on the order of a ‘Tughlaqid noble’, this show the interest of nobles in music and dance.³⁵¹ Malik Nusrat Subah patronized a number of musicians, singers and artists.³⁵²

Amir Khusrau discussed music in his *masnavis*. He praised Indian music so much that in among his ten instances of Indian superiority, mentions in *Nuh Sipihr*, one is Indian music.³⁵³ In *Hasht Bahisht*, he mentioned about the qualities attributed by a skilled musician. He mentioned that a skilled musician is who had all four instruments and twelve melodies at the tip of his fingers.³⁵⁴ In ‘*Ijaz-i-Kusravi*’, he praised popular musicians like Turmati Khatun, Akhlaq and Khalifa Husain. Turmati Khatun was a great artist and was in charge of all Indian and Iranian court musicians. He also mentioned a number of technical terms and different varieties of sounds, songs and modulations. He mentioned instruments like *chang*, (harp), *rabab*, *nai* (flute), *daff*, *udd* (lute), *dohal-i-hindi* (drum), *dholak-i-zanan*, *barbat* (similar to lute), *qanin* (dulcimer), *raud*, *ajab raud*, *tabal*, (drum), *jalali* (grelots or clinker), *buq* (horn).³⁵⁵ Amir Khusrau also referred a song competition between him and Indian musicians.³⁵⁶ Sultan Ghyasuddin Tughlaq banned music during his reign as it was not permitted in *Sharia*, but later on his successors like Muhammad bin Tughlaq promoted and patronized music. Music was played and songs were sung at his court.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁰ Dr. M. Qamaruddin, *Society and Culture in Early Medieval India (712-1526)*, Delhi, 1985, p. 79.

³⁵¹ Mrs Khursheed Nurul Hasan, ‘Ghunyat-ul-Munya-(The Earliest Persian Manuscript on Indian Music)’, *Proc.I.H.C.*,1961, pp. 177-179

³⁵² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshai*, Eng. tr., p. 204

³⁵³ Amir Khusrau, *Nuh Siphir*, Eng. tr., p. 61; Lal, *Khaljis*, p. 337

³⁵⁴ Amir Khusrau, *Hasht Bahisht*, ed. Syed Sulaiman Ashraf, Aligarh, 1918, p. 34

³⁵⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng. tr., Dr Habibuddin Ahmad, Vol. II, pp. 275-291; Idem, *Qiran-us-Sadain*, ed. Maulavi Muhammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918, pp. 177-182; Lal, *Khaljis*, pp. 335-336; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 115; Professor Sayed Hasan Askari, ‘Historical Value of Basatin-ul-Uns (A Rare Manuscript of 14th Century)’, *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XVIII, Sec II, Patna, 1962, p. 21

³⁵⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 180

³⁵⁷ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng. tr., p. 78; Shamsuddin Tabriz appointed as head musician known as *Amir-ul-Mutribin*; Professor Dharma Bhanu, ‘Promotion of Music by Turko-Afghan rulers in India’, *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 29, No. 1, 1955, p. 19

Ibn Batuta, *Qazi* of Delhi, was also fond of music and liked to travel in the company of singers. The singers used to entertain him with music on his way from ‘Amroha’ to Delhi.³⁵⁸ In the court of Sultan Sikander Lodi there was a galaxy of musical stars. He purchased slaves who were skilled musicians and were expert in playing Indo-Persian musical instruments; Chang, Qanun, tambur and vina.³⁵⁹ Nobles appointed officials to interview the artists of their competence. Miran Saiyyid Ruhullah and Sayyid Ibn al-Rasul, ‘*Sarparda-i-Khas*’ (private chamber) were appointed by Sikander Lodi to interview artists of various backgrounds.³⁶⁰

‘Mian Taha Farmuli’ was a famous artist in the field of music.³⁶¹ It is said that once a musician playing a *rurdbin* at his gate and Mian heard it from inside of his house. He sent his servant to ask the musician why he had removed the eight strings? When people examined, they came to know that really the eight string was missing.³⁶² ‘Shaikh Gulam’ was one of the excellent musicians of that time. Once he got seriously ill as he was deprived of music. Then singers were called and upon hearing melodious songs Shaikh took to ecstasy and fainted. When he regained his senses he was quite well. He himself was also possessed a melodious voice. Once he arranged a party to celebrate the spring season. He invited expert musician and singer. Though they sang and play music very well but did not impress anyone there. Then Shaikh found it ineffective, he sat in the center of the assembly and sung a pathetic assembly in such a melodious voice that everyone was so impressed by his singing.³⁶³

Regional diversity further shaped aristocratic culture. Nobles stationed in frontier and provincial regions inevitably interacted with local elites, merchants, religious leaders, and artisans. These interactions encouraged the incorporation of indigenous customs into aristocratic festivities. Marriage celebrations, seasonal festivals, hunting expeditions, and public entertainments often reflected local traditions alongside Persian-Islamic ceremonial practices. Such cultural adaptation demonstrates that

³⁵⁸ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 762; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 120

³⁵⁹ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng. tr., p. 48

³⁶⁰ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 71

³⁶¹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*. Eng tr., p. 193

³⁶² Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 71-72. Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 193

³⁶³ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 119

Sultanate court culture was not entirely uniform but evolved differently across the empire's diverse regions.³⁶⁴

Thus, the engagement in political, administrative, and military affairs of the state, nobles some time took the repose from the tiresome life and enjoyed leisure. Festivals, ceremonies, games and other mode of entertainment were important feature of their socio-cultural life of the nobles of Delhi Sultans. They celebrate each festivals and occasions with great zeal and a huge amount was spent on them. Numerous kind of rich dishes were served in a prescribed manner. Apart from this they took great interest in games. They enjoyed other modes of entertainment like music, singing, acrobats, storytellers and convivial parties in which they invite other nobles and friends and were sources of fun and entertainment for the rulling class. Apart from this these parties or events served to strengthen the bonds between the rulers and the ruling aristocracy.

³⁶⁴ Hambly, Gavin R. G. "Delhi Sultanate i. Political and Cultural History." *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, pp. , 242–250.

Chapter 3

HOUSEHOLD AND DOMESTIC LIFE

The nobility during the Sultanate period in India enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle characterized by opulent palaces, extravagant banquets, lavish clothing, and a rich cultural milieu. As rulers or high-ranking officials in the Sultanate hierarchy, they had access to vast wealth, resources, and privileges, allowing them to indulge in a lifestyle befitting their ranks and status. Nobles resided in grand palaces and fortified mansions, often adorned with intricate architectural details, lush gardens, and ornate courtyards. These palaces served as symbols of their wealth and power, providing them with luxurious living quarters, reception halls for hosting guests, and spaces for administrative and leisure activities.

A. PALATIAL RESIDENCES:

Nobles resided in grand palaces and fortified mansions, often adorned with intricate architectural details, lush gardens, and ornate courtyards. These palaces served as symbols of their wealth and power, providing them with luxurious living quarters, reception halls for hosting guests, and spaces for administrative and leisure activities. There is very less information regarding their exact locations. However, there are few references which suggest that none of the nobles lived in the precinct of the royal quarter rather they constructed their residences in peripheries.³⁶⁵ Whenever a city was founded by the Sultan, a portion of the projected city had allotted to the nobles by the Sultan where they built their houses.³⁶⁶ A number of newly founded cities like Kilokheri,³⁶⁷ Tughlaqabad,³⁶⁸ Daulatabad,³⁶⁹ and Hissar Firuza³⁷⁰ attracted the

³⁶⁵ Al-Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Moin Ali, Aligarh, 1943, pp. 14-15

³⁶⁶ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr R.C. Jauhari, *Medieval India in Transition, (Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)*, Delhi, 2001., pp. 91-92

³⁶⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 130.; Amir Hasan Sijzi, *Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad*, Eng, tr Zia -ul Hasan Faruqi, New Delhi, 1995., p. 285. Kilokheri was established earlier by Jalaluddin Khalji of the Khalji dynasty, serving as a royal residence and symbol of emerging Khalji authority

³⁶⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr A.R. Fuller and Khalaque, *The Reign of Alauddin Khalji (Translated from Barani's Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)*, Calcutta, 1967., p. 450 Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq founded Tughlaqabad as a massive military stronghold to consolidate his power and defend Delhi.

leading nobles to settle down there. Sultan himself along with architect carved out the plan of city of Daulatabad. He made separate colonies for nobles, where all the royal dignitaries like Wazir, Ulamas, Qazis, Sufis, army officials resided.³⁷¹ Separate arrangements were made for them such as bazaars, mosques, public bath, flour mills, ovens etc.³⁷²

Nobles in urban centers live in luxurious mansions or townhouses. These residences were typically located in affluent neighborhoods and featured spacious interiors, ornate decorations, and amenities such as courtyards and gardens. Malik Majd-ul-Mulk, father of Zia-ud-Din Barani, the naib of Arkali Khan, built a palatial building at KiloKhari away from royal mansions.³⁷³ Malik Tirmizi, the kotwal of Delhi, constructed the Badaon gate at Delhi and constructed his mansion there.³⁷⁴ During the time of Sikander Lodhi the nobles constructed their houses in the premises of royal residences.³⁷⁵ Changes occurred at the time of Ibrahim Lodhi, when Shaikh Muhammad and Shaikh Jamal, prominent nobles of that time were permitted to reside inside the fortification.³⁷⁶ The residence of Qiwan-ul-Mulk was located near the western gate of palace. The residence of Khawaja Jahan was on the upper portion of Palace *Hazar Sutun* (thousand Pillar) in Delhi.³⁷⁷ Houses of nobles situated near the royal palaces and were constructed almost after the royal pattern, featured spacious interiors, beautiful decorations, and furnished with expensive furniture and vast courtyards and gardens.

³⁶⁹ Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Futuh-us-Slatin or Shahnama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977, Vol. III, pp. 690-691. Muhammad bin Tughlaq, undertook the ambitious project of shifting the capital to Daulatabad (formerly Devagiri), aiming to achieve better control over the Deccan, although the experiment ultimately proved unsuccessful.

³⁷⁰ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. , p. 91. Firoz Shah Tughlaq founded Hisar Firoza as part of his policy of agricultural expansion and administrative decentralization, emphasizing irrigation and rural development.

³⁷¹ Shihabuddin Al-Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar fi Mamalik ul Amsar*, Eng tr. (Joint) Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdul Rashid, Moin-ul Haq, Aligarh, 1943, pp. 31-32

³⁷² Ibid, p. 33

³⁷³ Zia ud Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, History of India as told by its own Historians, New Delhi, 2001, p. 209

³⁷⁴ Ibid, Eng tr., Fuller and Khalique, p. 63

³⁷⁵ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol IV, New Delhi, 2001, p. 446

³⁷⁶ Rizqullah Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr. Iqtadar Hussain Siddiqui, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999, p.182

³⁷⁷ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 63-65

The houses of nobles were spacious consisting of drawing rooms, baths, water tanks, courtyard and sometime a library. Houses were decorated with expensive hangings and beautiful curtains. Separate apartments were built for women.³⁷⁸ The houses were plastered with different color and sometime coating of gold and silver appeared on the walls. Various types of figures of different objects were painted on the walls and ceiling of houses.³⁷⁹ It was observed that painters of that time used to paint pictures of animal and other images on furniture, curtains, and tents and on walls of houses. When Firoz Shah Tughlaq become Sultan of Delhi, he ordered to erase all the images from houses and palaces.³⁸⁰

As the plan and architecture of features of the houses in considered, generally nobles constructed two stories houses with *Suffa-i-taq* (vaulted halls), *Hauz-Khana* (pool of water), *ab-khana* (bathroom or privy), *Kitab-Khana* (library), *sahan* (courtyard), *Dahliz* (threshold), *rawaq* (portico) and lofty pillars and elevated facades.³⁸¹ The houses had one or two *dalans* or small halls with rooms and open courtyard bounded by a wall. Sometimes, courtyard had *dalan* on all the four sides.³⁸²

Materials used in buildings were stones and bricks with wooden roofs. Floors are paved with white stone like marble. Stone was prized for its durability and was commonly used for foundations, walls, and decorative elements. Bricks were often used for constructing walls, arches, and domes, contributing to the characteristic architecture of the period. Lime mortar, made by mixing lime, sand, and water, was commonly used as a binding material for masonry construction during the Sultanate period. It provided strength and stability to walls and was also used for plastering and rendering. Nobles also use marble and other precious stones for decorative purposes, such as inlays, carvings, and mosaic work. These luxurious materials were imported

³⁷⁸ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 205, 217. Dr. Abha Rani, *Tughlaq Architecture of Delhi*, Varanasi, 1991, p. 61

³⁷⁹ Sheikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1226-1556)*, Calcutta, 1969, p. 58

³⁸⁰ Firoz Shah Tughlaq, *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. Azra Alavi, Delhi, 1996 pp., 27-28; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions*, p. 207

³⁸¹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, Eng tr. Dr. Habibuddin Ahmad, *Writings of Amir Khusrau, 700 years after the Prophet: A 13th-14th Century Legend of the Indian sub-Continent: Based on annotated translation of his work Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, pp. 57-61, 87-89. Syed Hussain Askari, *Amir Khusrau: As a Historian*, Patna, 1992, p. 57

³⁸² Ibid, pp. 87-89

or sourced from quarries and were reserved for embellishing the most opulent residences.³⁸³ Earlier single or double storied houses were constructed but when the cities were expanded, new buildings were constructed. Now multi storied buildings, sometimes three or four storied buildings were constructed with a winding staircase on one side.³⁸⁴

Nobles in the Sultanate period often enjoyed spending time in gardens and pavilions, which served as places for relaxation, entertainment, and social gatherings. These outdoor spaces were meticulously landscaped and adorned with fountains, pools, and lush vegetation. Nobles sometimes stayed in the rent house. Amir Khusrau provided the details of the house of Majdud-Daula in which *Sipahsalar* Iftakaruddin, uncle of Khusrau was staying on rent. Slave girls were appointed for collection of rent.³⁸⁵ He mentioned that at the entrance of house there was a lavish garden like a corner of paradise. He further said that there are lofty halls and walls with twelve arches corresponded the twelve towers of the Zodiac, a large *Hauz-khana* and a *kitab khana* which was fully equipped and decorated with calligraphy inscriptions.³⁸⁶ There were *Serais*, (guest house) generally built in the compound of the mansions.³⁸⁷ Once, Ainul-Mulk Mahru requested the Qazi of Pattan for arrangement of a rent house in that city.³⁸⁸

Mosques often played a central role in urban planning and were situated in close proximity to the residences of nobles. Nobles, like many members of society during this period, were devout Muslims who adhered to the five pillars of Islam, including daily prayers. Having a mosque nearby made it convenient for them to fulfill their religious obligations without having to travel far. Having a mosque in close proximity to their residences could also serve as a symbol of their piety and devotion to Islam. It also served as social hubs where members of the community congregated

³⁸³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., pp. 154-55

³⁸⁴ Al Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., 14-15, 35- 36; Mahdi Husain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1969, p.164

³⁸⁵ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, pp. 87-89

³⁸⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., pp.87-89; Ashraf, *Life and Condition*, pp. 75-76

³⁸⁷ Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, pp. 69, 87-88; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, pp. 223-224

³⁸⁸ Mahru, *Insha-i-Mahru*, Letter no. 27, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Lahore, 1965, pp. 60-61

not only for prayers but also for social gatherings, religious education, and communal activities. Najmuddin Jilani, a noble of Cambay, had built a spacious house and a *masjid* in Cambay.³⁸⁹ Ibn Batuta also built a mosque near his house in Delhi.³⁹⁰ Shaikh Shihabuddin, *Sahib-i-Diwana-i-Mustakharaj*, made a unique house. He excavated a cave and with that he constructed chambers, store rooms, bath and an oven. He stayed in that cave, praying for about two years.³⁹¹

Sometimes governors used their residential mansions for administrative purposes too. Ibn Batuta met Qutubul Mulk, the governor of Multan at his residence where he sitting on a large carpeted dais and was reviewing his provincial army. The commanders were standing on the right and armed men on the left side. Troops passed before him and he review them and enrolling archers, horsemen and troopers.³⁹²

The decoration of houses of nobles during the Delhi Sultanate period reflected a synthesis of Islamic, Persian, Central Asian, and Indian artistic influences, resulting in richly ornamented interiors and exteriors that showcased the wealth, status, and cultural sophistication of the noble families. Some common features of decoration in houses of nobles during the Delhi Sultanate are calligraphy and inscriptions, from the Quran or other religious texts, often adorning walls, doorways, and arches. Geometric designs were another hallmark of Islamic art and decoration. Houses often showcased elaborate woodcarvings in doors, windows, screens. Textiles and fabrics were used to add warmth, color, and texture to the interiors of nobles' houses. Richly embroidered fabrics, such as silk and velvet, might be used for curtains, cushions, beddings, pillows, colorful carpets and wall hangings, adding a touch of luxury to the living spaces.³⁹³ Gold and Silver ornamented bedsteads and silk mattress were

³⁸⁹ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn Batuta*, Baroda, 1976, p. 274

³⁹⁰ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr H.A.R. Gibb, *The Travles of Ibn Batuta,(1325-1354)*, New Delhi., 1993, Vol. III, p. 760

³⁹¹ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of the Nobility Under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 76

³⁹² Ibid, p. 76; H.A.R Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, p. 189

³⁹³ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881, New Delhi, 1970, p. 318; Barani *Tarikh-I-Firuzshahi*, pp. 32, 117; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. III, p. 68; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 10; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 320

used.³⁹⁴ They used long chairs with silk cushions. Curtains were made up of *zarbaft* and silk. Candle stick and lamps were used for lightening purpose.³⁹⁵ During the rainy seasons they used to sleep on roof in *Khurmaqah*, a cubicle and cots (*palang*) were used.³⁹⁶

As there means of transport is considered, horses are their top priority. They brought horses of fine quality from Central Asia. Horses were also used in games such as *chaugan* (polo). Nobles even carried their load on horses. Azam Humayun Sarwani had forty-five thousand sawars and also had maintained large *paigah* (stables).³⁹⁷ Malik Ikhtayar-ud-Din Madhu, in charge of the fort, had thirty horses of fine breed.³⁹⁸ Lodhi noble Said Khan Yusuf Khail Lodhi has one hundred and twenty horses.³⁹⁹ They even got huge grant for purchase and maintenance of horses. Nobles some time give horses as gift to Sultan and vice versa. Sultan Sikander gifted one hundred horses to Mian Muhammad.⁴⁰⁰ Other mean of conveyance that was used by nobles were palanquin (*dula*). These *dula* were used for shorter distance.⁴⁰¹ These were carried by slaves or *kahars* (palanquin bearers).⁴⁰² Mostly noble's wives used to travel in these palanquins and were covered rich trappings. Tatar Khan (Tughlaq noble) used to cover palanquins of slave girls and *harem* ladies with silk curtains.⁴⁰³ For long distance *palki* was used. Nobles were accompanied by retainers like horsemen, footmen, horn blowers, torch bearers etc.⁴⁰⁴ Khushrau Khan used to travel in *palki* from Deogir to Delhi.⁴⁰⁵ Journey from Delhi to Lahore, Delhi to Patan, Delhi

³⁹⁴ K.M.Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, P. 129

³⁹⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 32; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, pp. 141, 144

³⁹⁶ Ibid, p. 117, Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 643, 685; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 35,72,80

³⁹⁷ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 84

³⁹⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng. tr., p. 554; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*. p. 172

³⁹⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 84

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, p. 86

⁴⁰¹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p. 176; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, Eng tr., p. 266; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 7-69; Nizamuddin *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 136; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, pp. 126, 137; Ibn Batuta, *Rehla* Eng tr. H.A.R. Gibbs, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 688; M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslim*, London, 1967, P. 219

⁴⁰² Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., H.A.R. Gibbs, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta*, Vol III, p. 740

⁴⁰³ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Condition of the People of Hindustan*, p. 173-174

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid, pp. 267-268

⁴⁰⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, p. 184, 400, Abdul Qadir ibn Mulk Shah Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 212, Eng tr. George S.A. Ranking, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973, Vol. I, p. 286, Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 90; Eng tr. Barun D, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973, p. 198

to Mabar was performed in *palki*.⁴⁰⁶ It is also mentioned that sometimes these *palkis* were gifted by Sultan as a reward. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq gifted an ornamented *palki* to Khawaja Jahan.⁴⁰⁷ Similarly, Malik Shamsuddin Damghani governor of Gujarat got a silver *palki* from Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq.⁴⁰⁸ Ibn Batuta received a *dola* from Sultan's mother Makhdum Jahan which was ornamented with silk cloth and bamboo wood. The *dola* was carried by eight kahars (palanquin bearers).⁴⁰⁹ Camels and elephants were also used as mean of transport.⁴¹⁰ Sultan or high ranked nobles, Khans, Amir, or wazirs only used camels.⁴¹¹ For long distance journey via rivers boats were used as means of transport. Small boats were known as *ghurabs*.⁴¹² Ibn Batuta mention that he took a five day trip to reach the delta port of Lahiri⁴¹³ (on the bank of western branch of river Indus 40 miles from Thata) with governor Ala-ul-Mulk. He also mentioned that there is a separate cabin for governor in the ship.⁴¹⁴ Minhaj Siraj mention that when he leave for India from Khurasan he reached Uchch by a boat.⁴¹⁵ A Lodhi noble, Nasir Khan Nuhani after his marriage ceremony went to his house with newly wedded wife in a boat.⁴¹⁶

B. FINE CLOTHING AND JEWELLERY

The dressing of nobles in the Sultanate period was not merely a matter of fashion but a reflection of their social standing, cultural heritage, and individual identity. The dressing of nobles in the Indian subcontinent exemplified a rich tapestry of cultural influences, blending indigenous styles with Persian and Central Asian aesthetics.

⁴⁰⁶ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 137

⁴⁰⁷ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 62

⁴⁰⁸ Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Hussain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1931; Eng tr. H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1992, p.139

⁴⁰⁹ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 740; Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, p. 122; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Changes*, Delhi, 2007 p. 54

⁴¹⁰ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravai*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p.138; Al Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar* Eng tr., p. 35; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, p. 173. Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India, (1206-1556)*, Calcutta, 1969, p. 60

⁴¹¹ Al-Umari, *Masalik*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p. 35

⁴¹² Amita Paliwal, 'The Port of Lahari Bandar and the English in the Seventeenth Century' *Indian History Congress*, 1999, Vol. VI., p 332

⁴¹³ Ibid, p 333

⁴¹⁴ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, p. 10; Ibn Batuta, *Travles*, Vol. III, p. 601, 602. H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Batuta, (Travels in Asia and Africa) 1325-1351 (Selection and Translation by)*, Delhi, 1992, p. 186.

⁴¹⁵ Minhaj-i-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 144

⁴¹⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p. 50

Nobles adorned themselves with luxurious fabrics such as silk, brocade, and fine cotton, reflecting their affluent status and refined taste. It was below the dignity of nobles to wear linen. Dresses were made up of imported stuff of China and were manufactured in *Karkhanas* of Delhi. Fine and costly clothes form the garments of nobles. They wore fine silken cloaks in public and loose shirts in private. Nobles wore *Kulah* and *pag* (turban) and costly robes. *Qaba* (a long coat with sleeves and buttons and open at the front) and *Dakla* were worn in winter and silken were used in summer.⁴¹⁷

Nobles wear different clothes on different occasions. Noble's dresses were classified into official or formal for public occasions and private wear. The official dress consisted of *Kulah* (head dress) which is generally made up of brocade and studded with tiara and pearls. Tunic was also worn made up of brocade, silk and velvet with white belt. *Khilat* was mostly preferred for public occasions.⁴¹⁸ Private dresses of nobles include short Indian turban called *pag*, tunics of velvet and silk, ordinary shirts and trousers of fine muslin.⁴¹⁹ Dresses of high ranked nobles were referred as *jama*, *Jama-i-Rangeen*, *saropa* or *qaba –o-qadha* (head to toe dresses) which consist of *Kulah* (cap), *Kamar safaid* (white waist) and *qaba-i-zarbaft* (garment with golden embroidery).⁴²⁰ Malik Fakhruddin, a noble under Balban who was Kotwal of Delhi, used to change a new dress daily, which consist of *qaba yakta*, (summer dress), *pirahan* (shirt or upper garments), *izar* (pajama) and *dastarcha* (handkerchief).⁴²¹

The type and modes of dresses worn by ulemas and religious person were *dastars* (turbans), and *ammamas*. The other clothes worn by them were *Pairhan*, *qaba*, *abaya* (a kind of cloak or coat), *jubba*, (a species of uppercoat resembling a skirt), *rida* (mantle), *saravil* (a sort of drawer of trouser like pajamas), *shalwar* (baggy trousers),

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, p. 273, Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, Eng tr. Prof Ishrat Hussain, and Dr, Afaq Siddiqui, Delhi, 2010, p. 140; Al-Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Moin-ul-Haq, 1943, pp. 30, 39; Dr, Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure in Ancient and Medieval India*, Delhi, 1973, p. 143

⁴¹⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 33. K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 210, 221; Riaz-ul-Islam, 'Age of Firoz Shah', *Medieval India Quarterly*, July, 1950 p. 39

⁴¹⁹ Amir Khusrau, *Duwal Rani Khizar Khan*, ed. K.A. Nizami, Delhi, 1988, p. 301; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, p. 210

⁴²⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p.136; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 34, 36, 91

⁴²¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, PP. 33, 117, Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 434. According to Mutahar it was some sort of cloak studded with gold.

lungi (a cloth passed around the waist and thigh), *barani* (raincoat), *dotai* (a kind of double cloth) and *qamarband* (waist band) was also worn by them⁴²². Amir Khusrau also mention about the cap with tree buttons and gold embroidered headgears.⁴²³ Some caps were so light weighted that they could be blown off with light breeze while some are so heavy that they had better thrown on ground.⁴²⁴ During Lodhis Sultans caps were made up of velvet and brocade.⁴²⁵

Amir Khusrau mention few dresses and made sarcastic remarks about them like *Jama-i-yak-shiqqadar* (long and heavy garments from backside) which ward off whole hill of snow, *yakta-i-bahraman* (red coloured upper garment without lining which was very delicate like water), *yakta-i-hari* (silken dress) which resembles like rays of sun, *yakta-i-parnan*, a green, thin and delicate garments like the feather of flies; the *devagiri* garments, white and fine like spider's web, *yakta-i-awadi* which had become sugar coloured and stained on account of moisture.⁴²⁶

Sultan Alauddin Khilji imposed high regulations on purchase of costly cloth from *Sarai-Adl* such as *tasbeih* (prayer beads used by Muslims as counting aid in reciting 99 titles of Allah), *tabrizi*, (cloak) embroidered cloths with gold threads, Indian Silk, Chinese silk, *Kamkhabs*, *sushtar*, *Hariri*, *bhiram*, *deogiri* and other stuff without obtaining a license from the superintendent of the market.⁴²⁷ During the time period of Firoz Shah Tughlaq, he forbade the dresses made up of Silk and gold brocade. He even instructed the nobles to forbid the practice of painting of images on dresses.⁴²⁸

⁴²² Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. I, p. 21; Eng tr., Vol. IV, pp.126, 196; Minhaj, *Tabaqat*, pp. 319, 320; Mushtaqi *Waqiyat*, p. 43

⁴²³ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr. Dr. Habibuddin Ahmad *Writings of Amir Khusrau: 700 years of Prophet A 13th-14th Century Legend of Indian-Sub Continent*, Based on annotated translation of his work, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. III, p. 97

⁴²⁴ Ibid, Eng tr., Vol. IV, pp. 132, 143

⁴²⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 5-6; Khawaja Nimatullah, *Tarikh-i-Khan Jahani wa Makhzan-i-Afghani*, Eng tr., Roy, p.32; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, also known as *Tarikh-i- Salatin-I-Afghan*, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol.V, New Delhi, 2001 p.8; Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. Barun De, pp. 151, 152

⁴²⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. I, pp. 177-178; Askari, ' *Amir Khusrau: As a Historian*, Patna, 1992, p. 152

⁴²⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., Fuller and Khallaque, p. 115; Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., P. 176; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferista* also known as *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi*, Eng tr. John Briggs, *History of Rise of Muhammadan Power in India*, New Delhi 1966, p. 203

⁴²⁸ Firozshah Tughlaq, *Futuh-i-Firozshahi*, Eng tr. Azra Alavi, Delhi, 1996, p. 203

No one is allowed in the royal court without headgear and boots.⁴²⁹ Balban never allowed his nobles to attend his private audience without *mozas* (stockings).⁴³⁰ Generally, two type of shoes were used by nobles *nalain-i-siyah* (black shoes) and *paaye-zaar* (hard shoes).⁴³¹ Shoes and boots were made by *kafshdoz* (boot-makers).⁴³²

It was mentioned in the accounts that the dresses of army officers, *Khans*, *Maliks*, and others consisted of Tartaric gowns, *taklawat* and Islamic *qabas* (shirts) of Khwarizm, which was buckled on the waist and turban made up of fine muslin. They also put on coat made up of *jukh* or *banat* (type of silk), in white color. They wore caps of square shape ornamented with jewels and mostly with rubies. They tie their hair with silk tussles. They used gold and silver belts to bind their waists. They girt their sword only when they are travelling and not in residence.⁴³³

Usually, the *wazir* did not girt the belts like soldiers but they let down one end of turban in front of them like *sufis*, while the *Qazis* (judges) wore gown called *farajiyat* that resembles an Arabic garment called *durra*, a loose coat made of red fur. Sultan used to gift the clothes to nobles and their families twice in a year. For this purpose, four thousand silk embroiders were engaged in the royal *karkhanas* during the time of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.⁴³⁴ Sultan Aluddin Khalji presented a gold embroider brocaded robe (*jama-i-zardozi*) with a lion embroider over it and a gold *qamarband* which was around half man weight to Malik Fakhruddin Kotwal.⁴³⁵ Beside this they also embroidered imported cloths from China and Iraq. It was also observed that no one among nobles dare to wear *alsi* (cotton cloth imported from Russia) except whom the Sultan gifted those clothes. They make short shirts like the

⁴²⁹ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 163

⁴³⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., Fuller and Khallaque, p. 64; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Kusravi*, Vol. I, p. 21; Afif, *Tarikh*, Eng tr., p. 280

⁴³¹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 189-192

⁴³² Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Kusravi*, Eng tr., Vol IV, p. 132

⁴³³ Al- Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., p. 60; Al Qalqashandi, *Subh-ul-A'sha*, Eng tr. Otto Spies, *An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century, (Being a translation of the chapters on India)*, Aligarh, 1935, pp. 69-70; Moti Chandra, *Cosmetics, and Textiles*, P. 143

⁴³⁴ Ibid, Eng tr., p.39; Siddiqui, Ikhtisan's History of Tughlaq Sultan in the Basatin-ul-Uns, in *Persio-Arabic source of Information*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 118-119

⁴³⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., Vol III, p. 171. Hasan Nizami, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., p. 82

coats of Baghdad or *nasafis*⁴³⁶ (an Egyptian shirt from neck to knee). Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq bestowed a silk robe with picture of lion on it to *Khudawandzada* Zia-ud-Din, Amir-i-Dad. A tag was attached inside the dress which show the amount of gold used in its embroidery. Similarly, he also gifted a *mirhabi* robe to Ibn Batuta when he was *qazi* of Delhi.⁴³⁷

Many of the nobles who strictly followed *sharia* wear white clothes (*jama-i-safed*). It was mentioned that wearing white dresses are confined to royal blood and nobles.⁴³⁸ Khan-i-Azam Ahmad Khan is mentioned to have put on white clothes and also sprinkled rose perfumes on them. *Jama-i-Khwab* (night dress) of Khan-i-Azam was made of fine and coloured *malmal* (muslin).⁴³⁹

There are number of varieties of silken stuff generally termed as (*qamash*, *aqamasha* or *qamash-i-abresham*) worn and used by nobles.⁴⁴⁰ These include *atlas* (satin),⁴⁴¹ *barad*,⁴⁴² *bhiram*⁴⁴³ and *cheenee*, *kirpas*, *dara-i-baf* (white, fragile as a spider web)⁴⁴⁴, *kamkhab* (brocade silk)⁴⁴⁵, *katan* (silk like moonlight)⁴⁴⁶, *kataan-i-rusi* (linen from Russia),⁴⁴⁷ *khazz* (super fine quality of coarse silk)⁴⁴⁸, *Parniyan* (painted silk)⁴⁴⁹, *qasab* and *sushtar* (Iranian costly silk)⁴⁵⁰, *tabrezi* and *zarbaft* (brocaded silk).⁴⁵¹ Beside these varieties of silk, other kind of clothing material of cotton, woolen, linen are also mentioned in various chronicles. There are also references of

⁴³⁶ Al- Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., P. 52; Moti Chandra, *Costumes, Textile, Cosmetic and Kafur*, p. 142

⁴³⁷ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, PP. 675, 746-747

⁴³⁸ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., p. 85; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 90

⁴³⁹ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 72, 91

⁴⁴⁰ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultan*, Aligarh, 2015, p. 82

⁴⁴¹ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 316

⁴⁴² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 310

⁴⁴³ Ibid, p. 311

⁴⁴⁴ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol.IV, p. 85. Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 311

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid, p. 125

⁴⁴⁶ Amir Khurau, *Nuh Siphir*, ed. Mohammad Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1949, Eng tr., R. Nath and Faiyaz Gwaliari, Jaipur, 1981 p. 68 Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p. 210

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid, Vol. IV, p. 86

⁴⁴⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*, pp. 310-311

⁴⁴⁹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, p. 85

⁴⁵⁰ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 80; Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 311; Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 53

⁴⁵¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 462; Hamida Khatoon Naqvi, 'Some Varieties of Silken Stuffs in Persian Sources C.1200-1700', *Indian Journal of History of Sciences*, Vol 18, No. I, 1983, pp. 122-129

gold work, embroidery and painting. Deba (brocade), *Zarbaft* (cloth of gold threads), *zardozi* (embroidered cloths), *atlas* (dull colored satin), *mushajjar* (a kind of painted silk cloth), *daq* (a kind of costly silk painted and then embroidered), *Kirpas* (a kind of fine silk from China), *aksun* (a kid of black colored brocade silk)⁴⁵², *parcha* (cotton cloths), *malamal* (muslin), *qad-i-rangeen* (colored cloth) and *qamash* (silk).⁴⁵³

C. CUISINES AND FINE DINNING TRADITIONS

Nobles of Sultanate periods were fond of varieties of food and dishes. The food they consumed is not just meal but extravagant displays of wealth, power, and refinement. A large staff was maintained by the nobles to look after the kitchen management. They were valet, the cooks, *daradavia* (the running footmen), *abdariya* (the water bearer), the sherbet dispenser, the betel givers, the chamberlains and heralds. The main chef received the patronage from the nobles.⁴⁵⁴ The dining carpets of the nobles consisted of number of dishes which they placed before any guests.⁴⁵⁵ Mainly the food was prepared by flour, meat, milk, sugar and ghee. Amir Khusrau mentioned the list of delicious dishes that were served on the table of nobles. The *barra-i-biryani* (fried and roasted meat), ribs of goat was served with *pulao* (a dish consist of rice and meat cooked with butter, spices and honey), *abgosht* or *yakhini* (soup of meat), the head of goat which was cooked intact known as *buz musallam*, *murg musallam* and hilly *dumba*. He also mentioned variety of birds cooked in royal kitchens which include, fowls, *waji* (quail), *tihoo* (a small bird), *charz* (a bird whose flesh is very tender).⁴⁵⁶ Mushtaqi also mentioned some of the dishes like *do- piyaza* curry of meat and onion, *yakhni dumba* (mutton soup), *sar-i-gospand* (brain cury), pickles⁴⁵⁷ and

⁴⁵² Amir Khusrau, *Matla-ul-Anwar*, Lucknow, 1984, p. 55

⁴⁵³ Al Umar, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng tr., p. 52; Mushtaqi, *Waqiyat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 19,34, 91, 93

⁴⁵⁴ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, p. 142; Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 160; Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes, and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 59, no, 2, 1985, pp. 132-136

⁴⁵⁵ Iqtidar Husain Siddiqui, 'Food, Dishes, and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, p. 122, 124-125., Khaliq Ahmed Nizami, *Some aspect of Religion and Politics in India*, Delhi, 2002, p. 159

⁴⁵⁶ Amir Khusrau, *Qiran-us-Sadain*, ed., Maulvi Muhammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918, p. 184; Professor Sayed Hasan Askari, *Amir Khusra, As a Historian*, p. 50, Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes, and Catering', pp. 125

⁴⁵⁷ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* Eng tr., p. 87

*sag*⁴⁵⁸. Similarly, other dishes like *Kabab*, (roasted meat), *Yakhni* (meat soup), *buz-i-khasi*, (roasted meat of castrated goats), *Shorba-i-zard* (yellow soup), *Shorba-i-lal* (red soup), chicken, partridges and several other birds, chicken and quails were also prepared.⁴⁵⁹ Among Indian foods there are vegetarian food like fried rice, *puris* (fried breads), *gulgula* (sweet dish), *kadi* (curd curry), *mangauri* (containing moong dal, green chana, cumin seeds tomato, green chilies), *bara* (rice flour pancake), *phulauri* (small puffed cake of fruits and pulse fried in oil or ghee), *mangauchi* (fritters of moong dal), and *suhaali* (sweets).⁴⁶⁰

Foods were prepared in big utensils (*deg*)⁴⁶¹ and were served in trays, *khwans*,⁴⁶² plates and bowls. Gold, silver utensils, brass, and glass vessels were also used.⁴⁶³ Ceramic and chinaware bowls were also used for consuming food.⁴⁶⁴ Gold vessels like *tashtari*, *alamhai-i-zar kasheeda*, *baadli* and *badaltaaq* were used in parties and feasts.⁴⁶⁵ Coloured dishes, goblets, water pots, leather and earthen pots, wooden or metal spoons were commonly used.⁴⁶⁶ *Musharrabah* (jugs), *tasht*⁴⁶⁷ (ewers), *kasa* (drinking vessels), *surahi*,⁴⁶⁸ *jamdan*⁴⁶⁹ are used for drinking water, milk, wine or *sherbet*. Beautiful vases were used for keeping betel leaves called as *bargdan*.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Amhed Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, or *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghan*, Eng tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V, New Delhi, 2002, p. 59

⁴⁵⁹ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi*, p.85

⁴⁶⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 162-164; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 161-163

⁴⁶¹ Askari, *Amir Khusru, As a Historian*, pp. 147-149; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 78

⁴⁶² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 32; Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, ed. A. S. Usha, Madras, 1948; Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Futuh-us-Salatin or Shahnama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977, p. 434

⁴⁶³ Ibn Batuta, *Travles*, Vol. III, pp. 607-608; Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 59, no. 2, 1985, pp.124-125

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 608; Firoz Shah Tughlaq, *Futuh-i-Firozshahi*, p. 16; Eng tr., p. 27; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng tr., p. 58

⁴⁶⁵ Minhaj-i-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng. tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881; New Delhi, 1970. p. 316

⁴⁶⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p.1641. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng tr., pp. 161-163

⁴⁶⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 63; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., pp. 162-164

⁴⁶⁸ Amir Khusrau, *Matla-ul-Anwar*, Eng tr., p. 127

⁴⁶⁹ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 25

⁴⁷⁰ Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change* New Delhi, 2009.p. 81

Aftaba (washbasin), *Khushbudan* (perfume cases) and *Kafurdani* (camphor vessels) were also used by them.⁴⁷¹

Among the drinks, milk and sherbet was served before the meal, and *fuqqa* (drink made up of water, barley and dried grapes) was served after the meal. Nobles adopted the habit of betel chewing from their Indian counterpart. Thus, betel leaves were served after the meal and were prepared with costly ingredients and were considered as substitute of wine.⁴⁷² Nobles used to gift betel leaves to each other on different occasions.⁴⁷³ Dry fruits were also served after the meals.⁴⁷⁴ There is also mention of *Sherbat-i-asir* (grape wine), *Sherbet-i-naishkar* (sugarcane wine), and simple sherbet of water and honey.⁴⁷⁵ Various types of breads and cakes such as *Khubz*, *qurs*, *nan*, *nan-i-maidah*, *nan-i-tanduri*, *nan-i-tanuk* (thin fine nan), *nan-i-turi*, *kak*, (biscuits or dried bread), sweet cake, *ruqaq* (thin round cakes) and *tutmaj* (thin slice of vermicillies) were also prepared.⁴⁷⁶ *Sabuniya* or *Sabuni* cakes were prepared with mixture of almonds, honey and sesame oil. Similarly, cakes were made with dough and sweets were stuffed inside the cake and on the top a sweet cake was placed which was known as *khisht* (brick shaped) which is made of flour, sugar and ghee.⁴⁷⁷

Nobles were also found of desserts. Desserts consist of fresh fruits, almonds, dry grapes, sweets, walnuts, guava, melon, mangoes and many more ingredients.⁴⁷⁸ Different varieties of sweets such as *halwa* (a kind of sweet meal made of flour, ghee

⁴⁷¹ Al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, Eng tr., p. 376; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 80-82

⁴⁷² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 247; Sheikh Adur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 50; Al Umari, *Masalik ul Absar*, Eng tr., p. 56; Siddiqui, 'food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 59, no. 2, 1985, pp. 130-131

⁴⁷³ Isami, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng tr., Vol. III, p. 721

⁴⁷⁴ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr. p. 85; Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 65, 116; Ibn-i-Batuta, *Travels*, Vol III, pp., 608, 671

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, Vol III, p. 95; Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng tr., p. 25

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid, Vol III, p. 92, Hamid Qalandar, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, ed. K. A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959; Eng. tr. Prof Ishrat Hussain and Dr Hamid Afaq Siddiqui, Delhi, 2010, pp. 10-11; Ismai, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Futuh-us-Salatin or Shanama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977.p. 434; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., pp. 162-164

⁴⁷⁷ Amir Khusrau, *Qiran-i-Sadain*, ed. Maulavi Muhammad Ismail p. 184; Ibn-i-Batuta, *Travels*, Vol III, pp. 607, 608; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Changes*, pp. 70-71; Askari, *Amir Khusrau, As a Historian*, p. 50

⁴⁷⁸ Zia ud Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 32. Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 150

and sugar)⁴⁷⁹, *paludah* (a kind of flummery or sweets)⁴⁸⁰, *shakkar-paich* (a kind of sweet made of rice or wheat and sugar and wrap with sugar)⁴⁸¹, *zaliba-i-nabat or jalaibi*⁴⁸², *ghulalakkari*,⁴⁸³ (a sweet made up of rose and sugar, same as gulkand), *shir-i-brinj*⁴⁸⁴ (pudding made of rice cotton seeds and milk) and *halwa-i-gajar*⁴⁸⁵ was also prepared. Various types of fruits were imported in India from Khwarizm, Khurasan and other part of central Asia such as grapes, water melon, and pomegranates and were considered as luxurious items.⁴⁸⁶

D. MATRIMONIAL RELATIONS

Matrimonial relations among nobles in the Sultanate period were multifaceted, serving political, social, and strategic purposes, and playing a significant role in shaping the dynamics of power and influence within the ruling elite. Marriages were often used to solidify political alliances between different noble families or between nobles and the ruling Sultan. By marrying into powerful families, nobles could strengthen their own positions and gain support in the political arena. Sultan's sisters or daughter were married to high rank nobles. Qutbuddin Aibak married two of his daughters one after the other to Malik Nasir-ud-Din Qabacha, and third daughter to Iltutmish.⁴⁸⁷ Similarly two daughters of Yalduz married to Qutbuddin Aibek and Malik Nasir-ud Din Qubacha.⁴⁸⁸ Iltutmish married one of his daughters to Ulugh Khan (Balban).⁴⁸⁹ After this marriage a *durbash* (two branched baton) was conferred upon him and was also engaged in administrative work. Both Sultan Nasir-ud-Din Mahmud and Sultan Masud were his son-in-law and his son Bughra khan was

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 115-116; Amir Khusrau, *Qiran-i-Sadain*, p. 184; Ibn Batuta, *Travles*, Vol III, pp. 761, 757

⁴⁸⁰ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. II, pp. 177, 517; Askari, *Amir Khusrau, As a Historian*, p. 51.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 196

⁴⁸² Ibid., Vol. IV, Eng tr., p. 305

⁴⁸³ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility*, p. 87

⁴⁸⁴ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, Eng tr., p. 199

⁴⁸⁵ Sijzi, *Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad*, Eng tr., pp. 236-237, Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 50, 75

⁴⁸⁶ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 547; 594-595; Al Umari, *Masalik ul Absar*, Eng tr., p. 49; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 59, 92; Siddiqui, 'Food Dishes and Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 59, no. 2, 1985, p. 135

⁴⁸⁷ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., pp 529-530; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Eng tr., p. 90; Nizamuddin *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 27; Eng tr., p. 61; A.D. Khan, *A History of Sadarat in Medieval India (Pre-Mughal period)*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1988, pp. 67-68

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, pp. 411,418; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* Eng tr., pp. 79-80; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 92

⁴⁸⁹ Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., pp. 85

married to only daughter of Nasiruddin Mahmud by a second wife.⁴⁹⁰ After the death of Iltutmish, Malika-i-Jahan married Malik Qutlugh Khan who then become *muqti* of Awadh after this alliance.⁴⁹¹ Malik izzudin Balban (Yuzbak) was son in law of Malik Qutlugh Khan. He was appointed as the *Naib Amir-i-Hajib* by Sultan Nasir-ud-din Mahmud.⁴⁹²

To enhance their socio-political position, the below ranked nobles make matrimonial relations with high ranked nobles as well as with royal family. Razia Sultan was married to governor of Tabarhinda (Bathinda), Malik Ikhtayaruddin Altuniya.⁴⁹³ Malik Bahuddin Tughril of Bayana married his daughter to Malik Tajuddin Arsalan Khan.⁴⁹⁴ And malik Chajju married his daughter to Kaiqubad.⁴⁹⁵ A daughter of Alauddin Khilji was married to Ghazi Malik (later Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq).⁴⁹⁶ Malik Kafur was married to the mother of Prince Umar, who was third wife of Sultan Alauddin.⁴⁹⁷ Amir Bakht married to sister of Muhammad bin Tughlaq and was given the province of Chanderi.⁴⁹⁸ Malik-ul- Hukama and Amir Sifuddin Gaddah were married to two of the Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq's sister.⁴⁹⁹ Malik Nizam-ul-Mulk entitled Malik-ush-Sharq (deputy prime minister) was married with Sultan Firoz Shah's sister.⁵⁰⁰ Son of Malik ul-Ulama, and son of Shaikh ul Islam were married to

⁴⁹⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 23; Amir Khusrau, Eng tr., *Qiran-i-Sadain*, p. 18; A.B.M. Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1961. p. 136

⁴⁹¹ Minhaj-i-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 702; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 131; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 72

⁴⁹² S.B.P. Nigam, 'The Life and Career of Qutlugh Khan, the Step father of Sultan Nasiruddin Mahmud', Proc, *Indian History Congress*, Ranchi, 1964, p. 23

⁴⁹³ Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., Vol. II p. 749; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 85; Eng tr., p. 121; Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 32; Eng tr., p. 77; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 68

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid, Eng tr., Vol. II, p. 767. A.D. Khan, *A History of Sadart in Medieval India, (Pre Mughal Period)*, Delhi, 1988, Vol. I, p. 97

⁴⁹⁵ Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* Vol. I, Eng tr., p. 221; Yahaya bin Ahmed Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Husain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1931; Eng. tr., H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1992. Eng tr., p. 51

⁴⁹⁶ K.A.Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1997, p. 85

⁴⁹⁷ Mohammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng. tr. John Briggs, *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India*, New Delhi, 1966, p. 123

⁴⁹⁸ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, p. 113; Ibn Batuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (1325-1354)*, Vol. III, p. 729

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 730

⁵⁰⁰ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., R.C. Jauhari, *Medieval India in Transition (Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)* Delhi, 2001, p. 164

the daughters of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.⁵⁰¹ Maulana Yusuf who become 'Dawar ul Mulk' married royal princess during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughlaq.⁵⁰²

Sultan Alauddin Khalji put restriction on nobles to form any matrimonial alliance without the royal consent.⁵⁰³ The primary purpose behind Alauddin Khalji's restrictions on noble marriages was to prevent the nobility from forming alliances that could challenge his authority. By limiting the ability of nobles to marry and form matrimonial alliances, he aimed to weaken their power bases and maintain greater control over the state. Having two wives were common among nobles. Malik Ghursap (later Alauddin Khalji) had two wives one was daughter of Jalal ud Din Khalji and other was sister of Malik Alp Khan.⁵⁰⁴ Ibn Batuta, who was Qazi of Delhi had married with the sister of Sharif Ibrahim, the court official *Kharitadar* (Keeper of pen and papers) and second wife was sister of governor of Hansi and Sarsati.⁵⁰⁵ He kept a large number of slave girls too. During his stay at Maldives, he even married the daughter of wazir Sulaiman.⁵⁰⁶ Azam Malik Bayazidi Bistami, who was married to the daughter of Sultan's sister was given the governorship of Kara.⁵⁰⁷

Divorce among the nobility was governed by Islamic law, which provided guidelines and procedures for dissolution of marriage. It is mentioned in the *fatawa* literature. Many scholars noted the incident of divorces in nobles household. Sometimes infertility or incompatibility led to divorce in couple. Nobles were found of wine and girls. In the state of intoxication, they divorced their wives. Sultan Iltutmish daughter was married to Prince Muhammad. In the state of intoxication, he gave divorce to his wife by blurting out the word *talaq* three times. When he gain consciousness, he felt

⁵⁰¹ Ibn Batuta, Eng. tr., *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (1325-1354), Vol. III, p. 688

⁵⁰² Yahaya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* p. 98. Eng tr., H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1992, p. 100

⁵⁰³ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. Vol. III, p. 181; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 109

⁵⁰⁴ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 229; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, pp. 182,190; Eng tr., 247, 256

⁵⁰⁵ Ibn Batuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (1325-1354), Vol. III, pp. 718-719; Ross e. Dunn, *Adventures of Ibn Batuta (A Muslim Travels of the 14th Century)*, Sydney, 1986. p. 207

⁵⁰⁶ H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Batuta (Travels in Asia and Africa), 1325-1351 A.D. (Selection and Translation)* Delhi, 1992, pp. 249-250

⁵⁰⁷ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 488; Ibn Batuta, Eng tr., *The Travels of Ibn Battuta*, Vol. III, p. 686

sorry for that. According to Sharia, he could not hold her back unless she married to someone else and then divorced by him. She was again married to Shaikh Sadrrudin Arif, son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. But when the Shaikh was asked to divorce, he refused and said that she had sought shelter in his house from that disloyal man. This incident led to the bitterness between *muqti* and the saint.⁵⁰⁸ Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Aetigin, naib of Sultan Bahram Shah, married the sister of Sultan who was divorced by the son of Qazi Nasiruddin.⁵⁰⁹

The dowry system was prevalent among nobles and the aristocracy, much like in other segments of society. However, it's essential to note that the dowry system was not uniform and varied based on regions, cultures, and individual families' socio-economic statuses. Marriages were often strategic alliances aimed at consolidating power, wealth, and influence. Dowries played a crucial role in these alliances. The giving of a dowry by the bride's family to the groom and his family was a common practice. The dowry typically included cash, jewelry, land, livestock, or other valuable assets. When *sipahsalar* Ali Usman have accepted forty thousand tankahs in dowry, the saint Shaikh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri exclaimed and said to him that when his son would have daughter then he will also fetched forty thousand tankahs.⁵¹⁰ There is no dowry system in Maldives and during his stay in Maldives, Ibn Batuta married four times one by one.⁵¹¹

E. HAREM AND SLAVES

The Sultanate period, a time of great political, cultural, and social development, witnessed the rise of powerful noble households that played crucial roles in the governance and cultural life of the society. Central to these households were the harems, complex institutions that housed the wives, concubines, children, and

⁵⁰⁸ Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr., p. 104; Khalique Ahmad Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 242

⁵⁰⁹ Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., Vol. I, p. 192.; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 95

⁵¹⁰ Sheikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D.)*, p. 131

⁵¹¹ H.A.R Gibb, *Ibn Battuta (Travels in Asia and Africa)*, 1325-1351 A. D. (Selection and Translation by), Delhi, 1992, pp. 249-250; Victor S. D'Souza, 'A Unique Custom Regarding Mahr (Dowry) observed by certain Indian Muslims of South India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 29, October 1955, pp. 273-274

attendants of the noble patriarch. Far from being mere domestic quarters, harems were dynamic spaces where cultural production, social stratification, and political maneuvering intersected. The study of harems within noble households offers valuable insights into the broader societal structures of the Sultanate period. These institutions were reflective of and instrumental in shaping the social hierarchies, gender roles, and power dynamics of the time. The roles and statuses of women within the harem, the internal organization and daily life, and the broader cultural and political significance of these institutions are critical areas of inquiry that illuminate the multifaceted nature of noble life during this era. Although it is difficult to determine the size and institution of the harem maintained by the nobles under the Delhi Sultans yet scattered references highlight the fact that the institution of harem and slave girls, in a large number, was maintained by the nobles. Thus, harem institution emerged as significant feature of the household of the nobles.⁵¹² Khan-i-Jahan Maqbool, wazir of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq maintained a large *harem* with large number of beautiful girls. He was fond of women thus there were about two thousand women present in his harem. To avoid the stress of state affairs, nobles used to enjoy with women.⁵¹³

Khan-i-Azam Lad Khan, son of Ahmad Khan Sarang Lodhi maintained large *harem*. It was mentioned that tailors were deployed in large numbers and silken garments were stitched day and night for ladies in the *harem*. Ladies observed strict *purdah*. Officials were appointed to run the institution of harem. A *hajib* was appointed at the gate of harem, then a *pardadar* was appointed and *khwajasara* was posted at the inner gate of *harem*. Inside the inner gate there was also appointed an old lady to look after the inner affairs of harem. To convey the message inside harem, the *hajib* passed it to *pardadar*, then *pardadar* passed it further to *khwajasara*, and finally to

⁵¹² Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., pp. 234-235

⁵¹³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 399-400; Eng tr., p. 223; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, 'Khan Jahan Maqbul' *Encyclopedia on Islam*, Leiden, 1978, Vol. IV, pp. 1019; K.A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, Aligarh, 1956, p. 13; Tapan Rai Chaudhari and Irfan Habib, *The Cambridge Economics History of India*, Vol I, Delhi, 2004, p. 90.

the old lady who then passed it to the concerned women.⁵¹⁴ The kitchen establishment and all other daily necessities were looked after by *khwajasara*.⁵¹⁵

Slave girls were also kept in harem as concubines. The nobles took large number of slave girls with them even when they were on military expeditions and even on hunting expeditions.⁵¹⁶ Mian Zabaruddin took his harem everywhere he went.⁵¹⁷ Ibn Batuta liked the slave girls more than his wives and always kept them in his company.⁵¹⁸ Nobles sometimes become rival of each other for slave girls.⁵¹⁹ They spent lavishly on slave girls. Jalal Khan Lodi, muqta of Kalpi, Dilawar Khan son of Masand-i-Ali Mian Bhua spent lavishly on slaves girls. Dilawar Khan spent two and a half lakh tankahs annually on flowers and perfumes for women of his harem.⁵²⁰ Ahmad Shah Bhatti, Lodi nobles presented a gift worth ten thousands rupees to his slave girl.⁵²¹ Masand –i-Ali Azam Humayun Sarwani used to send copies of quran inside his harem for daily recitation. ⁵²² Mian Zainuddin provided training to his harem women and slaves, and duties were assigned to them after the training. It included religious training, arts like music and dance; etiquettes of serving meals to guests, many of them were trained in martial arts.⁵²³ Ahmad Khan son of Jamal Khan Lodi had maintained large harem and also had maidservants who look after his household chores.⁵²⁴

F. POSITION OF WOMEN AMONG THE SULTANATE NOBILITY

Women always played an important role in the socio-cultural life of a society.

Women of sultanate period not only centered their activities around household chores

⁵¹⁴ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 89

⁵¹⁵ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., p. 98; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi (13th- 14th Centuries)*, New Delhi, 2006. p. 267

⁵¹⁶ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, p.90

⁵¹⁷ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, Eng tr., 78

⁵¹⁸ Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, pp. 687-679

⁵¹⁹ Mahdi Hussain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, p. 290; Riaz-ul-Islam, 'Age of Firozshah' *Medieval India Quarterly*, July, 1950., p. 40

⁵²⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., p. 87; Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng tr. Eng. tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, New Delhi, 2001, p. 475

⁵²¹ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, p. 22

⁵²² Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 83

⁵²³ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 90

⁵²⁴ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 59,88

but also in socio-cultural and religious development. Women get negligible attention in historical work especially in the socio-cultural development in Sultanate period. They took keen interest in propagation of education, in developing various skills like weaving, pottery etc. Beside this they were also trained in the use of swords, shield, wrestling, musical instrument etc. They also took keen interest in religious activities and were known for their religious and spiritual positions. Women of royal families participate in political affairs of the state also and assume important positions.⁵²⁵ Amir Khusrau placed mother on the highest rank by proclaiming that no child is born without mother and the first lesson of a child starts from a mother's lap.⁵²⁶ As a mother she plays an important role in building up the character and morals of her children. She is the first teacher and if she inherits good value, she will incorporate these values in her children.⁵²⁷

During sultanate period, many women pursue education and most of them belong to upper class family. Women of the royal families were learning by the private and highly learned teacher. Amir Khusrau said that women of royal background should also well trained in the use of swords and other martial activities along with primary education.⁵²⁸ Raziya Sultan was one of the examples of women who possessed both education and arms training. She patronized many scholars, poets as well as *Madarsa-i-Nasiriya* at Delhi became the center of great learning during her reign.⁵²⁹ Mah Malik who was popularly known as Jalal-ud-Duniya Din, the granddaughter of Alauddin Jahan Saz created a place for himself in the literary because of her excellent writings. Bibi Razi, one of the queen in Jaunpur, and wife of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi contributed a lot in this field. Several *Madrasas* and colleges were opened by her. Jaunpur became an important centre of learning during her lifetime.

⁵²⁵ Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, pp. 185-186

⁵²⁶ Dehlavi, Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol VI, Allahabad 1984, tr. Maulana Subhan Ahmed and m. Fazil, Delhi, 1914, p. 283, 284; Rizvi, S.A.A., *A History of Sufism in India*, New Delhi, 1978, Vol I, p.403 404

⁵²⁷ Nand, Lokesh Chandra, *Women in Delhi Sultanate*, Allahabad, 1989, pp. 165,166

⁵²⁸ Siraj, Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, ed. Captain Nassau Lees, Mawlawis Khadim Hosainabd al-Hai, Calcutta, 1864, Eng tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881; New Delhi, 1970, vol I, p.637

⁵²⁹ Jaffar, S.M., *Some Cultural Aspect of Muslim rule in India*, Peshawar, 1939, pp.85,86

Separate institutions were established (Maktab) for girls' education.⁵³⁰ Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din Khilji of Malwa took keen interest in education of royal ladies. During his reign about seventy women of his harem were well versed in the Holy Quran and ahadiths.⁵³¹ Ibn-i-Batuta gave references of girl's *madrassa* in coastal area Hinwar. The girls were educated by a private tutor. Another evidence of (*Qanun-i- Islam*) by Jafar Shareef also gave references of female *maktab*. A ceremony was laid down when girls started their schooling or before attending the *Maktab*.⁵³²

The activities of women mainly centered on household chores. They took keen interest in cooking, sewing, spinning and weaving. Isami has stressed that place of women should be at home. Instead of wearing crown and take part in political activities she should take interest in spinning, weaving and other household chores.⁵³³ Even the wealthy women of that time should not abandon the task of spinning and weaving clothes. Women went to rivers to fetch water in pitchers for washing and cooking. Cooking food and serving it is the duty of females. Some of them even got reward of making tasty dishes. Asad Khan one of the noble of Sultan Sikander Lodi was so much impressed after eating the dish cooked by a common lady that he rewards him plate of gold coins.⁵³⁴ Women also help husbands in the field where they look after the cattle. They also work as guard for Royal Harem where they keep a record of income and expenditure and also look after Harem Security.⁵³⁵

Women also enjoy various means of amusements. Playing musical instrument is one of the popular mean. They were skilled in playing Vina, sitar, table, flute, and

⁵³⁰ Law, Narendra Nath, *Promotion of Learning in India during Mohammadan Rule*, Delhi, 1973, p.200

⁵³¹ Ibid, p.143

⁵³² Jafar Sharif, *Qanun-i-Islam*, Eng tr., William Crooke, *Islam in India, or, The Qnn-i-Islam; The Customs of the Musalmns of India*, Calcutta, 1921, pp. 53-54

⁵³³ Isami, *Fatuh-i-Salatin*, ed. A. Mahdi Hussain, Agra, 1983, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi, Vol II, 1976, pp. 129, 130

⁵³⁴ Nand, Lokesh Chandra, *Women in Delhi Sultanate*, pp.208, 209

⁵³⁵ Halim, Abdul, *History of Lodi Sultans of Delhi and Agra*, Delhi, 1924, p.229

sarangi. Apart from this the other mode of entertainment was painting, singing, horse riding. They even play chess, *chaupal*, polo and swimming.⁵³⁶

Women also take active part in politics. The earliest references of the woman who participate in politics is Khudavanda-i-Jahan Shah Turkan. She was a Turkish slave and rose to status of queen of Sultan Iltutmish.⁵³⁷ Another royal woman who played a significant role in politics was Raziya Sultan. She was nominated by her father Sultan Iltutmish as his heir because of her qualities as a ruler which were not seen in her brothers. Her accession to the throne started a new era in Sultanate period. She not only curbed the disruptive forces but also made atmosphere of peace and tranquility. She took the charge of Sultanate when it was facing internal as well as external crisis. She took every possible step in controlling the situation and Delhi Sultanate reached its zenith.⁵³⁸ Malik-i-Jahan was one of the most powerful women in Delhi Sultanate. She was the wife of Sultan Jalal-ud-Din Khilji and mother-in-law of Sultan Alauddin Khilji. She took keen interest in politics and sometimes her interference led to many problems in state as well as in personal life of Sultan.⁵³⁹ Makhdama-i-Jahan was mother of Sultan Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. She was a benevolent, virtuous and charitable woman. She enjoyed considerable influences in political sphere. The Sultan took her advice in every political issues.⁵⁴⁰

The status of women in Sultanate period is quite interesting. From look after the household and doing manual work to participate in political affairs we can see a lot

⁵³⁶ Rashid, Shaikh Abdur, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1026-1556)*, Calcutta, p. 131; Pandey, A.B., *Society and Government in Medieval India*, Allahabad, 1965, pp.202, 203; Nand, Lokesh Chandra, *Women in Delhi Sultanate*, Allahabad p.206

⁵³⁷ Aziz Ahmad, Mohammad, *Political History and Institution of the Early Turkish Empire of Delhi*, New Delhi, 1972, pp.188, 189

⁵³⁸ Sirhindi, Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah, *Tarikh-i- Mubarak Shahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Husain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1931, Eng tr. K.K.Basu, Karanchi, 1977, Eng tr. H. Beveridge, Delhi ,p. 23; Al-Badauni, Abdul Qadir Ibn-i-Mulk Shah, *Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh*, ed. Maulvi Ahmed Ali, Calcutta, 1868, Eng tr. George S.A. Ranking Asiatic Society Calcutta 1973, p. 119, Nizamii, Khaliq Ahmed, *Some Aspect of Religion and politics During 13th Century*, p.136; Siraj, Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, ed. Captain Nassua Lees, Mawlawis Khadim Hosain and Abd al- Hai, Calcutta, 1864, Eng tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881, New Delhi,,pp.232

⁵³⁹ Barani, Zia, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, tr. Elliot and Dowson Vol III p. 156 *Khazain-ul-Futuh* ,p.38

⁵⁴⁰ Barani, Zia, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, tr. Elliot and Downson, Vol III, p.274; Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Rehla of Ibn-i- Batuta*, Gayakwad Oriental Series, Baroda, 1976 Eng Tr. H.A.R.Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Batuta (1325-1354)* , Vol I, II, III, New Delhi,p. 118 ; Parsad Ishwar, *History of Qurauna Turks in India*, India Press, Allahabad, 1936, p.318

of variation. As women were not allowed to move freely in public place beside this, they were allowed to run the state as in case of Raziya Sultan. Art and craft play an important role in women's life. Spinning, weaving and stitching were even done by royal ladies.⁵⁴¹ Education played an important role in their life. There is not much information of imparting education to common women, but royal ladies pursued religious education and beside these other subjects were also taught to them which include use of swords, wrestling, horse riding, and music instruments. Thus, the education of Hindu and Muslim girls, in that period, was mainly confined to the royal families and the well to-do classes. The growing curtailment of their freedom, consequent upon the introduction of the Purdah system, was largely responsible for the decline in their education. Women coming from the poorer sections of society had hardly any time and opportunity to read. No wonder, if the vast mass of Indian women, particularly those living in the rural areas, remained illiterate.⁵⁴²

G. MODE OF TRANSPORT

During the Sultanate period, horses were the main means of transport.⁵⁴³ Nobles also carried their loads on horses while the common people used oxen.⁵⁴⁴ Nobles possess large number of horses of different breeds. Malik Ikhtiyaruddin Madhu, in charge of the fort, had thirty horses of fine breeds.⁵⁴⁵ Said Khan Yusuf Khail Lodi has one hundred and twenty horses in his *paigah* (stable) and once he presented all these horses to his officer Saddu Khan.⁵⁴⁶ While Azam Humayun Sarwani had forty-five thousand *sawars* and maintained separate stables for the horses of different colours and breeds.⁵⁴⁷ Another Lodi noble is mentioned to have been granted annual allowance of one lakh *tankahs* for the purchase of horses. The nobles also received horses from Sultan as gifts. Once Sultan Sikandar Lodi bestowed one hundred horses

⁵⁴¹ Minhaj-i Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, trans. H. G. Raverty, Vol. I (London: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1881), pp. 635-637

⁵⁴² Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, p. 145

⁵⁴³ Mir Khurd, *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, p. 180; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 69, 82, 86, 97

⁵⁴⁴ Al-Umari, *Masalik-ul-Absar*, Eng. tr., p. 35; Joginder K. Chawla, 'Mode of Transport during the 13th and 14th Centuries', *Proc. I. H. C.*, Patiala, 1998, pp. 255-256

⁵⁴⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 554; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi (13th- 14th Centuries)*, p. 172

⁵⁴⁶ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 84

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86

upon Mian Muhammad.⁵⁴⁸ Besides horse, camels were also used by the nobles⁵⁴⁹ It is mentioned that possessing of few varieties of camels was the privilege of only Sultans and high ranked nobles, Khans, Amirs or wazirs.⁵⁵⁰

Generally, camels were used to carry their goods⁵⁵¹ The other means of conveyance commonly used by the nobles under the Delhi Sultans was dula or decorated palanquin. Besides horses, camels and elephants, dula was used for short distance journey.⁵⁵² According to Ibn Battuta, every person of status possessed the palanquins. The *kahars* (palanquin-bearers) were engaged by officers to carry them from place to place⁵⁵³. It is also noticed that to cover long distance journey, nobles used *palki* that was dignified means of conveyance.⁵⁵⁴ Sultan Jalauddin Khalji sent Malik Chajju from the capital city to Multan in a palanquin. The other nobles in a *palki* sent Khusrau Khan from Deogir to Delhi.⁵⁵⁵ Journeys were performed in a *palki* from Mahar to Delhi,⁵⁵⁶ Delhi to Lahore,⁵⁵⁷ and from Patan to Delhi.⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 96

⁵⁴⁹ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng. tr., Vol. IV, p. 138; Al-Umari, *Masalik ul Absar*, Eng. tr., p. 35; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 173; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, p. 82; Sheikh Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 60

⁵⁵⁰ Al-Umari, *Masliik-ul-Absar*, Eng. tr., p. 35; Joginder Chawla, 'Mode of Transport during 13th-14th Centuries', *Proc.1.H.C.*, Patiala, 1998. p. 255

⁵⁵¹ Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng tr., p. 24

⁵⁵² Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng. tr., Vol. IV, p. 176; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 492; Eng. tr., p. 266; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng tr., pp. 67-69; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 59; Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 136; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, pp. 126, 137; Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta (A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century)*, Sydney, 1986, p. 201. Noble's bride was carried in a palanquin by slaves to the palace of the noble. For details see, Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 688; M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims*, London, 1967, p. 219; Khawwas Khan reached the royal court seated himself in a *palki*. Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, Eng. tr., pp. 69, 78, 81-82; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, pp. 59-60

⁵⁵³ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 740; Afif also mentions that the distance from Delhi to Firozabad was five *kos*. The means of conveyance were the human carriers. A regular service of carts, camels and horses shuttled daily between these two places at fixed hours. *Kahars* were available with *doli*. The fare of cart was four *jitals*; of oxen six *jitals*; of horses twelve *jitals* and of *doli* half *tankahs*. *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 136; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 59. Barani also mentions that for long distance journey *kahars* were commissioned. *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 400
Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 400; Al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 212; Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 286; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 90; Eng. tr., p. 198

⁵⁵⁴ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 184; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 60; Chawla, 'Mode of Transport', p. 257; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 61

⁵⁵⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 400; Al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 212; Eng. tr., Vol. I, p. 286; Nizamuddin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 90; Eng. tr., p. 198

⁵⁵⁶ Khawaja Abdul Malik, *Isami, Futuhat-i-Salatin*, Eng. tr., p. 469

⁵⁵⁷ S. H. Askari, 'Bihar in the Time of the Last Two Lodi Sultans', *Proc. I H. C.*, 1955, p. 155

These palanquins of nobles were covered with rich trappings and were surrounded by retainers like equestrians, footmen, horn-blowers, torchbearers, musicians and servants. Drums were also beaten during the procession of a noble.⁵⁵⁹ Palanquins with curtains were also used to carry their women.⁵⁶⁰ Nobles like Tatar Khan (Tughlaqid noble) used covered palanquins for his slave girls and dola of harem ladies were covered with silk curtains.⁵⁶¹ Afif referred an ornamental carriage which was sent by Sultan Firoz Shah for Khwaja Jahan, while Malik Shamsuddin Damghani got a silver palanquin from Sultan Firoz Shah when he was appointed the governor of Gujarat.⁵⁶²

A very graphic description of a palanquin sent by Makhdum Jahan, Sultan's mother, is given by Ibn Battuta that the dola (palanquin) which resembles a cot had its roof made of braids of silk or cotton and on top of these there was a covered piece of wood made of bamboo. Eight men carry the palanquin in two lots of four, who rest and carried it in turn. Usually the *kahars* (palanquin-bearers) used to carry it.⁵⁶³ The nobles also used boats as a means of transport.⁵⁶⁴ For the long-distance journey via riverboats were preferred by the nobles. When Minhaj set out for India passed

⁵⁵⁸ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Eng tr., p. 137

⁵⁵⁹ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 267-268

⁵⁶⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 542; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr., p. 492; Amir Khusrau, *Duwal Rani Khazir Khan*, pp. 233- 254; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, pp. 329-335; Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., *Agha Mahdi Husain, Rehla of Ibn Battuta* pp. 990, 122; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 137; Paul Losensky and Sunil Sharma (tr.), *In the Bazaar of Love: The Selected Poetry of Amir Khusrau*, Delhi, 2011, p. 111; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions*, pp. 208-209; H.C. Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre-Mughal India*, Delhi, 1986, pp. 176- 177; Tatar Khan Farmuli's son was bringing his wife from his father-in-law's house. On reaching the edge of the river they put the palanquin on board the boat. Ahmad Yadgar, *Tarikh-i-Shahi*, Eng tr., p.53. He also mentions that a noble carried his lady in a tam, (a chariot similar to tanga), Ibid., p. 24; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 47, 49, 72; Nimatallah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, Eng. tr., (*anecdotes from Waqiat*), p. 148

⁵⁶¹ Ibn Battuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 740; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, pp. 173-174

⁵⁶² Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 132; Eng. tr. p. 139

⁵⁶³ Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (1325-1354)*, Vol. III, p. 740; Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, p. 122; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, p. 54; Verma, *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre-Mughal India* p. 176

⁵⁶⁴ Minhaj mentions Malik Yuzbak used a boat for his return journey to Lakhnauti. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 172, 263; Eng. tr., Vol. II, p. 764; Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, p. 370; Eng. tr., pp. 571; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 110, 122, 144, 248. Here he referred to the rumour of sinking a boat carrying a noble's son. Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 42; Eng. tr., p. 39; Abdullah Wassaf, *Tajriyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar*, Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001, p. 41; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 163; Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 94; Rashid, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 60

through Ghazna and Multan and he reached Uchch in a boat.⁵⁶⁵ After reaching India, Ibn Battuta took a five-day boat trip down the great river to the delta- port Lahiri in the company of governor Alaul-Mulk. He describes the governor's ship that had a separate cabin for the governor.⁵⁶⁶ Ferishta mentions that when Malik Mubarak Khan was intimated the advance of the army of Timur, he embarked with his family and treasures in two hundred boats prepared for the purpose and proceeded down the river.⁵⁶⁷ A Lodi noble, Nasir Khan Nuhani, after the completion of marriage ceremony went to his house with his newly wedded wife in a boat and thus palanquin was placed in the boat.⁵⁶⁸

The household organization of the Delhi Sultanate nobility exhibited significant similarities with those of contemporary Islamic polities, while simultaneously incorporating several indigenous Indian customs through continuous cultural interaction. The nobles of the Delhi Sultanate largely adhered to the Persianate-Islamic model of aristocratic domestic life, characterized by extended households, hierarchical family organization, the employment of numerous servants and slaves, and the maintenance of separate domestic quarters for women. These practices closely resembled those prevalent in the Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt and the Ilkhanid courts of Persia, where noble households functioned not only as family residences but also as centres of political authority, social prestige, and administrative management.⁵⁶⁹

Marriage among the Delhi Sultanate nobility, like that in other medieval Islamic societies, was primarily a political and social institution. Marital alliances strengthened kinship networks, reinforced political loyalty, and enhanced aristocratic status. At the same time, prolonged interaction with Indian society encouraged the incorporation of local ceremonial traditions into Muslim marriage celebrations.

⁵⁶⁵ Minhaj-i-Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, p. 144; Mumtaz Ali Khan, *Some Important Persian Prose Writings of the 13th Century A.D. in India*, Aligarh, 1970, p. 121

⁵⁶⁶ Ibn Battuta, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta* (1325-1354), Vol. III, pp. 601-602; Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, p. 10; H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta (Travels in Asia and Africa)*, 1325-1351 A. D. (Selection and Translation by), p. 186

⁵⁶⁷ Ferishta, *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, p. 156

⁵⁶⁸ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaq*, p. 49; Eng. tr., p. 50

⁵⁶⁹ Gibb, *Ibn Battuta*, p. 189

Although Islamic law regulated the contractual aspects of marriage through nikāḥ and mahr, several customs associated with gift exchange, wedding festivities, and ceremonial processions reflected adaptation to Indian cultural practices. This demonstrates that the social life of the Sultanate nobility developed within a broader process of Indo-Islamic cultural synthesis rather than remaining exclusively Persian or Central Asian in character.⁵⁷⁰

The position of women within noble households also reflected both continuity with Islamic traditions and adaptation to local conditions. Elite women generally observed purdah and resided within segregated domestic spaces, a practice common throughout the medieval Islamic world. Nevertheless, they exercised considerable influence over household administration, supervised servants and slaves, managed domestic finances, and occasionally participated in charitable and educational activities. Similar patterns may be observed among elite Hindu households, where women, despite restrictions on public participation, exercised authority within the domestic sphere and contributed significantly to family management and social continuity.⁵⁷¹

Child-rearing practices further illustrate the convergence of Islamic and Indian traditions. Astrologers were asked to prepare horoscopes and make prediction about the future of the child. Noble children were educated in accordance with Islamic principles through instruction in the Qur'an, Persian language, literature, etiquette (*adab*), and religious sciences. Muslim children usually began their primary education with a formal ceremony commonly known as hismillakluini or the makhlab ceremony. When a child attained the age of four years, four months and four days, the parents performed the ceremony with great splendour and zeal. At an hour fixed in consultation with an astrologer, the child took his first lesson from the

⁵⁷⁰ Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 134; Ibn Batuta, *Rehla*, p. 202, Gibb, *Ibn Batuta*, pp. 249-250; Victor S. D'Souza, 'A Unique Custom Regarding Mahr (Dowry) observed by certain Indian Muslim of South India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol 29, October 1955, pp. 273-274

⁵⁷¹ Nand, Lokesh Chandra, *Women in Delhi Sultanate*, pp.208, 209; Halim, Abdul, *History of Lodi Sultans of Delhi and Agra*, Delhi, 1924, p.229

teacher, However, the sons of the nobles and other higher classes were generally placed in charge of private tutors or '*Ustads*' for their elementary education.⁵⁷²

Sons destined for military and administrative service additionally received training in horsemanship, archery, and statecraft, reflecting practices common across the wider Persianate world. At the same time, prolonged residence in India encouraged familiarity with local languages, customs, and social etiquette, enabling members of the nobility to function effectively within a culturally diverse society.⁵⁷³

Domestic labour within noble households was performed by an extensive body of servants, slaves, attendants, artisans, and retainers. Similar patterns existed throughout contemporary Islamic courts, where large domestic establishments symbolized aristocratic prestige and political authority. In the Delhi Sultanate, however, these domestic institutions increasingly incorporated Indian servants and local administrative personnel, demonstrating the gradual localization of elite household organization. Consequently, the noble household evolved into an institution that reflected both Islamic courtly ideals and the realities of governing a culturally diverse Indian empire⁵⁷⁴

A comparison with contemporary Indian society reveals both similarities and differences. Elite Hindu households also emphasized patriarchal authority, extended family organization, arranged marriages, and the preservation of family honour. However, differences remained in matters relating to inheritance, marriage law, and religious observances. While Muslim nobles regulated family life according to Islamic jurisprudence, Hindu aristocratic families continued to follow customary laws derived from Dharmashastra traditions. Nevertheless, sustained interaction between these communities facilitated the exchange of social customs, ceremonial practices, culinary traditions, clothing styles, and forms of domestic etiquette,

⁵⁷²Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, p. 125

⁵⁷³Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol V, p. 251; Askari, *Amir Khusrau*, p. 57; Isami, *Futuh-us-salatin*, p. 151;

⁵⁷⁴ K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, PP. 194-198

contributing to the gradual emergence of a distinctive Indo-Islamic aristocratic culture⁵⁷⁵

Thus, the household and domestic life of the Delhi Sultanate nobility cannot be viewed merely as an extension of Persian or Central Asian traditions. Rather, it represented a dynamic synthesis of Islamic institutional norms and Indian social practices. This cultural interaction distinguished the Delhi Sultanate from many contemporary Islamic states and laid the foundation for the more elaborate Indo-Islamic court culture that reached maturity during the Mughal period. This comparative perspective broadens the understanding of noble domestic life by placing it within the wider context of medieval Islamic civilization while simultaneously highlighting the unique historical developments that occurred in the Indian subcontinent.

Thus, it may be concluded that nobles were in a position to live extravagantly because of their immense wealth. They resided near the royal palaces and built their houses on the pattern of the royal palaces. Some of them even lived in the rented houses. The architecture and the engineering skills have been mentioned, though meager, by Amir Khusrau and Ibn Battuta which tend us to believe that the noble's houses were double storied, well furnished, contained vaulted halls, *hauz*, bathroom or privy, library, courtyard, threshold and portico with lofty pillars, painted walls and high doorways. They possessed palatial houses with all necessary comforts, costly and attractive furniture, carpets, gold and silver utensils. They used to wear expensive dresses of silk, gold embroidered, brocaded and even sometimes studded with precious stones, jewels and pearls. Varieties of dishes were served to them on their dinning carpets. These dishes were served to them in a prescribed manner in gold, silver, glass and even in chinaware utensils. The harem institution and slave-girls as a part of noble's household reveals the fact that the nobles maintained slave-girls in larger number. Because of these slave girls, harem expanded with their busy domestic life and enhanced house-hold establishment. Moreover, we find indication

⁵⁷⁵Kishori Parsad Sahu, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, p. 184-192; K.M. Ashraf, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, PP. 182-196

of polygamy, widow remarriage, docile husband, divorce and, above all, the practice of harsh dowry system prevalent among the nobles.

Chapter 4

ART, ARCHITECTURE AND LITERATURE

The nobles of the Delhi Sultanate, though primarily entrusted with administrative and military responsibilities, emerged as significant contributors to the cultural and intellectual life of the period. Nobles in Sultanate period not only performed their administrative functions but their role extended far beyond governance, as they actively participated in and promoted the development of art, architecture, and literature. Both literary and epigraphic evidences clearly indicate that the nobility played a crucial role in shaping the socio-cultural landscape of medieval India.

In the field of architecture, the nobles undertook extensive construction activities, following the royal tradition as a means of expressing power, prestige, and piety. Their contributions can broadly be categorized into religious and secular structures. A well organised department existed during that period under the chief architect who was known as *Shahna-i-Imarat*. There was famous chief architect at that time was Malikzada Ahmad bin Ayaz and Malik Ghazi under the Tughlaqs.⁵⁷⁶ They were responsible for building mosques, idgahs, tombs, and temples, as well as cities, forts, palaces, wells, stepwells, canals, and other public utility works. These constructions not only fulfilled religious and administrative needs but also contributed to public welfare. The architectural style that developed under their patronage reflects a synthesis of indigenous Indian and Islamic elements, giving rise to the distinctive Indo-Islamic tradition.

Beside this, they also patronage to the men of learning, thus contributed very much in the field of literature, science and craft. Nobles themselves were well versed in different branches of science and literature and composed many works in Arabic Persian, Awadhi etc.

⁵⁷⁶ Abdul Qadir al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, ed. Maulvi Ahmed Ali, Calcutta, 1868 Eng tr. George S.A Ranking, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1973, pp. 227,237; Ibn-i- Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr. A.R. Gibb, *the Travels of Ibn-i- Batuta*, Vol. III, pp. 654-655; Zia-ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i-FiruzShahi*, ed. Sir Sayeed Ahmed Khan, Aligarh, 2005, pp. 424,454,457

A. ARCHITECTURAL CONTRIBUTION

Architectural development done by nobles can be classified mainly into two branches

- a) Religious Buildings
- b) Secular Buildings

a. Religious Buildings

Nobles took keen interest in the constructional activities and build buildings both of religious and secular nature. They followed the royal practice of building construction as it also signifies their valour and status. The inscription at eastern gate of Chaurasi Khamba mosque at Kaman shows that the mosque was constructed by Malik Bahaauddin Tughril.⁵⁷⁷ (Figure 3 and 4). As the Mosque in Kaman had been built in 1204 (making it the oldest extant Delhi Sultanate Mosque in its original state) with reused material from the spoils of Hindu and Jain temples. Daulat Shah Muhammad Al Butamari, the prominent *Tughlaqi* noble is said to have constructed several buildings especially the Jami Mosque at Cambay in 1325. It is the fusion of Indo Islamic architect. It has spacious designs and illustration at walls that increase its beauty.⁵⁷⁸ In 1321 he constructed another mosque at Baroch with regional architectural influence.⁵⁷⁹ The Khilji noble Malik Naib constructed a Jami Mosque at Deogir. The Jami Masjid at Bulandshahr was constructed by Muhammad Jalal who was the *Muharrir* (secretry) to Mahmud, who was a kotwal of that area.⁵⁸⁰

The mosque is of considerable size on Arabian style by using material from Jain and Hindu temples. Another noble Malik Muffarih Sultani, *Dawadar-i-Khas* and *Naib-i-*

⁵⁷⁷ Mehrdad Shokoohy & Natalie H. Shokoohy, 'Hisar Firuzah (Sultanate and Early Mughal Architecture in district of Hisar, India)' *Monograph on Art, Archeology and Architecture-South Asian Series*, London, 1988.p 115; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Bombay, 1956, p. 19

⁵⁷⁸ Zia-ud Din Ahmed Desai, *Indo Islamic Architecture*, Delhi, 1970. p. 19; E.B. Havel, *Indian architecture: its Psychology, Structure and History*, London, 1913, pp. 51-52; Mahdi Hussain, *Six Inscription of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq Shah*, *ELAPS*, 1957-58, pp. 29-34

⁵⁷⁹ James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Islamic architecture*, London, 1891, p. 537; Desai, *Indo Islamic Architecture*, p.19; Jas Burgess, *Muhammeden Architecture in Gujarat (Broach, Cambay, Dholka, Champir, Mahmudabad)*, A.S.I., *Western India*, Vol VI, Varanasi, 1971, pp. 20-22

⁵⁸⁰ Khawaja Abdul Malik Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr. Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Futuh-us Salatin or Shahnama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977, p. 514

'*iqta*' of Cambay constructed Jami Masjid at Dholka which is known as Tanka Masjid.⁵⁸¹ The mosque has Indian type entrance porches with Indian style roofs and colonnades and have open pillared prayer hall. It has very rich and varied carving on its pillar and ceilings.⁵⁸² During the governorship of Malik-ush Sharq Ruknuddin Qutlugh a Jami Masjid at Dholka in Gujarat was erected by Qazi Hilal Khan with the help of Abdul Karim as an architecture in 1333 A.D.⁵⁸³ Malik Taj ud Din Sanjar constructed Jami mosques at several places. Epigraphic record confirms the construction of a jami mosque at Hansi by Tajuddin Mir Miran Salari who was the commander in chief. Similarly, inscription from Lakhnauti dated 1267 A.D. records the construction of a Jami Mosque by Ikhtiyaruddin Firoz as governor.⁵⁸⁴

Another remarkable mosque was reconstructed by Firoz of Dhansur, Siphasalar, when Malik Dailan was the deputy administrative officer of Ladun. This mosque was originally a colonnade building round a central courtyard, a plan usually referred as Arab type.⁵⁸⁵ A Jami Mosque was also constructed at Irich by Qazi Zia Ud Din, who was brother of Khan-i-Junaïd, a *jagirdar* of Delhi in 1412 A.D. ⁵⁸⁶ Jami mosques were constructed by Tughlaq nobles Zafar Khan Farsin in Junagadh Gujarat, Malik-Ush Sharq Malik Nizamuddin in Patan in 1357-58 A.D. Miyan Firoz, son of Malik

⁵⁸¹ Zia ud din Ahmed desai, *Arabic, Persian and Urdu inscription of west India : A Topographical List* pp. 9-14

⁵⁸² Havel, *Indian Architecture*, p. 52; Desai, *Indo Islamic architecture*, p. 19; Fergusson, *Indian and Eastern Architect*, p. 53

⁵⁸³ Mahdi Husain, *Six Inscriptions of Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq*, EIPAS, 1957-58, PP. 40-42 ; Desai, *Indo Islamic Architecture*, p. 20; Havell, *Indian Architecture Its Psychology, Structure and History*, London, 1913, p. 52; James Fergusson, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1891, pp. 537-538

⁵⁸⁴ Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i- Nasiri*, Eng tr. Major Henry Raverty, London, 1881, New Delhi, 1970, p. 755; *Inscription belongs to the Mamluk Period. Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1913-14, pp. 34-35; Qeyamuddin Ahmad, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription of Bihar (A.H. 640-1200)*, Patna, 1973, pp. 11-13

⁵⁸⁵ A. Chigtai, 'Some inscription from Jodhpur State, Rajputana', EIPAS, 1949-50, pp. 18-19; for Malik Dailan, see, Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 527; Afif *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp.115-117. He was Shiqqdar of Hissar Firozah and then chief of hunt under Firoz Shah Tughlaq.

⁵⁸⁶ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Mumbai, 1970, p. 25; Cunningham, *Archeological Survey of India Report, (Tour in Bundelkhand and Malwa- 1871-72; Central Provinces, 1873-74 by J.D.Beglar)*, Varanasi, 1966, pp. 32-339 (Hereafter cited as ASIR)

Muhammad Lutfullah Afghan had constructed a Jami Mosque at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh⁵⁸⁷

Beside mosques and Jami mosques, *Idgahs* and *Namazgahs* were also constructed by the nobles at a considerable scale. Malik Saifuddin Daulat Wad'din Yusuf Khani constructed *Idgah* at Jajmau during the reign of Ala ud Din Khilji. Later Malik Kafur also constructed a *Idgah* at Rapri in U.P. construction of these *Idgah* were very beautified and walls and bricks were ornamented.⁵⁸⁸ Daulat Khan Bhutmari is said to constructed *Idgah* at Baroach. Malik-ul-Umara Tajud-Daulat wa'din Malik Hoshang son of Malik Kamaluddin Gurg constructed an *Idgah* at Jalor.⁵⁸⁹ During the governorship of Zafar Khan, another *Idgah* was constructed by Kamal Hamid at Mosampura. Similarly, a *Namazgah* was also constructed at Dalmau, Railbariely (U.P) by Malik-us- Sharq Tajuddin during the reign of FirozShah Tughlaq.⁵⁹⁰

Like mosques, tombs were also built by nobles displayed a fusion of Indo Persian architecture. Malik Sher Khan who was cousin of Balban had built a tomb in Bhatnir. Similarly, Fakhruddin Kotwal also constructed a mausoleum at Delhi.⁵⁹¹ Tomb of Shaikh Alauddin Yusuf was constructed by Ghiyasuddin Muhammad at Jajmau (U.P). A tomb was also constructed at Bari Khatu by Malik-ul-Umara Saifuddin Daulat wa Din.⁵⁹² A large number of tombs were also constructed by Tughlaqid nobles. A leading example was the tomb of Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul Telingani (Figure 5) He started the construction of tomb but was completed by his son. Its structure was in octagonal form and it was the first octagonal tomb in Delhi that was built in 1368A.D. The pattern of this tomb was taken from Arabian architect especially in

⁵⁸⁷ Iqtidar Hussain Siddique, *Composite Culture under the Sultan of Delhi*, Delhi, 2012 p. 89; for Zafar Khan, see Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 583; Nizaamuddin *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 115 *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VIII, 1876, p. 182

⁵⁸⁸ *Epigraphia Indica (Arabic and Persian Supplement)*, 1964, pp. 3-4; Daya Ram Sahni, *Annual report of ASI, 1929-30*, Delhi, 1935, p.6

⁵⁸⁹ *EIAPS*, 1964, PP. 3-4, *EIPAS*, 1972, PP. 12-17, *EIM*, 1935-36, P.49

⁵⁹⁰ *EIPAS*, 1962, pp. 37-38; *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (Archaeological Survey of India)*, 1955-57, Appendix C. no. 23

⁵⁹¹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 65, 118, Nizamuddin Ahmed *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. P. 102; Ferishta, *Tarikh-i- Ferishta*, Eng tr. John Briggs, Delhi, 1966, pp. 71,78

⁵⁹² Ziauddin Ahmad Desai, *Published Muslim Inscription of Rajasthan*, Jaipur, 1971, p. 30 *ARIE*, 1961-62, Appendix-D, no. 314

Dome of Rock.⁵⁹³ Zafar Khan as the governor of Gujarat had built a tomb of saint Makhdum Chirag-i-Hind during Firuz Shah's reign. Khizr, son of Nasrullah who was the Kotwal of the Badaun district, constructed tomb of saint Hazarat Badruddin.⁵⁹⁴

Lodhis marked a new development in tomb buildings. The tombs built by them were inside the walled garden. Malik Firuz Muhammad Lutfullah constructed dome over the shrine of Shaikh Jalal ud Din Makhdum, Panipat, Haryana. Daultat Khan Lodhi also constructed a tomb near Delhi.⁵⁹⁵ Alam Khan son of Mujahid Khan, a *muqti* constructed a tomb at Tahangarh, Swaimadhopur, Rajasthan.⁵⁹⁶

Minars were also constructed by nobles during Sultanate period.. Epigraphic evidences shows that a *minar* was constructed by Ulugh Khan Balban.⁵⁹⁷ It was built during the reign of Sultan Nasir-ud Din Mahmud. It was possible serve as a pillar of victory. Masand-i-Ali Nizam Khan constructed a *minar* during the reign of Ibrahim Lodhi. It was known as Ukha *Minar*, Situated at Sultankot (Bharatpur district, Rajasthan). Started by Ibrahim Lodhi, it probably didn't reach the height he must have envisaged, even if it was later 'finished' by Nizam Khan, son of Mujahid Khan, by the order of the Shadow of God (King). The Ukha Minar (or the Usha Minar) lies north-east of the Ukha/ Usha Mandir/ Masjid some 30 feet away. The circular tower converges with a height of 12.5 m with the base diameter of 8.40 m and the apex diameter of 7.92 m. Built in red sandstone (one of the two export commodities of Bayana tract, with indigo being the other), the tower has a pretty monotonous layering of finely-cut stones. The entrance on the south-west leads to a spiral staircase (unfortunately locked during the visit). The Minar was left unfinished when Babur attacked the region. The Minar is entered through a beautifully carved doorway and has 69 steps to the top where the Muazzin would summon the faithful to prayers. The doorway has a painted arch, filled with inscriptions having Quaranic

⁵⁹³ Ram Nath, *History of Sultanate Architecture*, New Delhi, 1970, p.84; Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, p. 25; Abha Rani, *Tughlaq Architecture of Delhi*, 1991, p.51

⁵⁹⁴ A. Furher, *Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur*, pp. 65-66; *ARIE*, 1960-61, Appendix-D no, 224

⁵⁹⁵ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol, II, p. 137; *ARIE* 1963-64- Appendix-D, np. 297; *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*., 1920-21, pp. 7,10

⁵⁹⁶ *ARIE*, 1963-64, Appendix d, no 314; *ASIR*, Vol XX, p. 91; Desai, *Published Muslim Inscriptions of Rajasthan*, Jaipur, 1971, no 283, pp. 75-76

⁵⁹⁷ *EIM*, 1909-1910, NO. 205; Desai, *PMIR*, p.48, no 151; Cunningham, *ASIR*, Vol. XX, pp. 73-74; *EIM*, 1913-14, PP. 22-23; A.B.M, Habibullah, *Foundation of Muslim rule in India*, 1961, p. 299

verses, and is in an amazingly well preserved state. The long inscription above the doorway gives the name of Shah Ibrahim bin Sikander Bahlol Shah, with the date A.H. 926, which was the fourth year of Ibrahim's reign. (Figure 6 and 7)

It is very important to note that among all religious buildings such as mosques, *Idgah*, *Namazgah*, and tombs that were constructed many Jain temples were also renovated and constructed. Samar Singh a great Jaina of Patan repaired the famous Satranjaya temple in Palitana with the permission of Khiljis. Many Jain works praise Alp Khan, the governor of Gujarat during the Khilji period for his donations and permissions for constructing temples.⁵⁹⁸ Inscription shows that a temple in Kalyani was damaged and Shiva Linga was broken when rebellion of Bahauddin Gurshap. Locals approached Ahmed Janjeri, the governor of Kalyani and sought his permission for its repair.

b. Secular and Public Welfare Buildings:

Nobles in Sultanate period not only involve themselves in construction of religious buildings but also built various secular structures like cities, bridges, wells, step wells, canal, forts, inns etc. There were several references which depicts town building activities of nobles. Malik Sher Khan founded the city of Bhatnir. Malik Bahauddin Tughril founder the strategic city at Sultankot in the territory of Bayana and made it his headquarter.⁵⁹⁹ Malik Zafar Khan, Tughlaqid noble, had founded a city Zafarabad on the bank of Gumti River at Jaunpur district and named Shahr-i-Anwar.⁶⁰⁰

To fulfil the military needs, the nobles even made efforts to build strategic forts. Malik Husamuddin Iwaz Husain Khalji, a Shamsi noble, had constructed the fort of Basankot.⁶⁰¹ Malik Sher Khan, cousin of Balban, had built several forts and a lofty

⁵⁹⁸ K.H.Kamdar, 'Samar Sungh, A Great Gujrati at the Court of Delhi about A.D. 1321'. *Proceedings and Transactions of the Seventh All India Oriental Conferences*, Baroda, 1933, pp. 629-632; C.B. Sheth, *Jainism in Gujarat (A.D.1100TO 1600)*, Bombay, 1953, p,179; Mahdi Hussain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, pp. 351-316; S.C. Misra, *Rise of Muslim power in Gujarat from 1298 to 1422*, New Delhi, pp. 315-316

⁵⁹⁹ Hasan Nizami, *Taj-ul Ma'athir*, ed. Syed Amir Hussain Abidi, Eng tr. pp. 201-202

⁶⁰⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 65; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 148; Furher, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. II, Varansi, 1969, p. 185

⁶⁰¹ Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr., p. 161

cupola in Bathinda and Bhatnir. These two places soon developed as important towns of Delhi Sultanate.⁶⁰² Early in the 14th c. Ghazi Malik, muqta of Dipalpur, constructed in lower Sind a new fortress named Ghazipur.⁶⁰³ Isami also referred to Ulugh Khan later Muhammad Bin Tughlaq who ordered Ahmad Ayaz (Shahna-i-Imarat) to construct a fort at Afghanpur. Malik Shamsuddin Abu Rija was ordered by Sultan Firoz Shah to build a fort at Firozpur.⁶⁰⁴ Malik Mujir Abu Rija was given the charge of repairing the fortress of Kalanaur.⁶⁰⁵

A bilingual Inscription dated 1444. A.D. describe that Khan-i-Azam Khaqan-i-Muazzam Majlis-i-Ali Azam Khan (son of Mubarak Khan) constructed the fort of the town of Fathpur (Bharatpur, Rajasthan).⁶⁰⁶ Khan-i- Azam Zafar Khan, son of Wajih, muqti of Gujarat constructed a string fort at Mangrol in 1400 A.D. Mittha bin Umar and Sahib bin Munawwar who was Shiqdar and Dabir respectively constructed the fort during Ibrahim Lodhi. ⁶⁰⁷ Haji Khan constructed the city wall and gate at the instance of the Lodhi governor, Darya Khan Nuhani. Epigraphical records shows that a Lodhi noble Malik Mukhlis Daud Khan has constructed the fort (hisar) at Tajpur Basahi in Saran district Bihar in 1373 A.D.⁶⁰⁸

Nobles also constructed palatial buildings. Ulugh Khan Balban constructed a palace palace when he was a noble. Similarly, Malik Majd-ul-Mulk (the father of Zia Barani) who was naib of Arkali Khan built a palatial building at

⁶⁰² Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 65; Eng tr. Vol. III, p. 109; Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 42; Eng. tr. p. 102; Ferishta, *Tarikh*, p. 71; K.A. Nizami, *Royalty in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1997, p. 148

⁶⁰³ Afif, *Tarikh-i- Firuzshahi*, p. 251; S.H. Hodivala, *Studies in Indo Muslim History*, Vol I, Bombay, 1957, pp. 133-134; Peter Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999, p.127

⁶⁰⁴ Isami, *Fatuh-i- Salatin*, Eng tr. Vol. II, pp. 630-631; Al Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, p. 248; Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* Eng tr, p. 130

⁶⁰⁵ Isami, *Futuh-us Salatin*, pp. 423-424; Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 101; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 245

⁶⁰⁶ *ARIE*, 1978-79, Appendix-C, no. 108

⁶⁰⁷ *EIAPS*, 1962, PP. 32-37; *ARIE*, 1954-55, Appendix-B, no 513; *Inscription was found from Moti Masjid, Aligarh and is now preserved in Indian Museum, Calcutta*, *ARIE*, 1952-53, Appendix-C, no. 17

⁶⁰⁸ W.H. Siddiqui, *Lodhi and Sur Inscription from Bihar and Uttar Pardesh*, *EIPAS*, 1967, PP. 26-27.; Qeyammuddin Ahmad, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscription*, pp. 57-59; Z.A. Desai, 'A Tughlaq Inscription from North Bihar', *Nalini Kantha Bhattasala Commemoration Volume*, Dacca, 1966. pp. 201-203

Kilokhari.⁶⁰⁹ Inscription from West Bengal referred to the endowments to the Khanqahs. The *Khanqas* were used for travellers and resident places of sufis and saints. Malik Zainuddin Majdul-Mulk, *muqti* of Bihar under Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, had a constructed a Khanqah for Shiekh Sharfuddin Yahya Maneri.⁶¹⁰ Ibn Batuta witnessed a Khanqah on the way to Bhakkar, built by Kishlu Khan, during his governorship. Zia -ul Haq, governor of Bihar, built a Khanqah during the reign of Mahmud Shah. It was completed in 1396-97. Khawaja Jahan Ahmad bin Ayaz, the Wazir, constructed a hospice at Palam.⁶¹¹ Sijzi mentioned that Nizamuddin Kharitahdar had built a Khanqah for Shaikh Burhanuddin Ghaznavi.⁶¹²

Nobles frequently constructed wells, step wells, lakes, canals and tanks for irrigation as well as for the use of common people and travellers. An inscription from Rajasthan records the construction of a well, tank and a mosque in the time of Malik Bahauddin Tughril. Inscription from Bayana records the clearance and re-digging of a well during the time of Balban and governorship of Nusrat Khan, *muqtis* of Bayana.⁶¹³ During the time of Iltutmish the construction of a well was renewed by the governor Malik Qutlugh Aibek. *Ijaz-i- Khusravi* records the construction of a well by Ainuddin, the *dabir*.⁶¹⁴ A well for drinking water was constructed by Mubarak Khan Nuhani during the reign of Sultan Sikander Lodi.⁶¹⁵ A well was constructed by Haji Ismail, Son of Usman Shirazi, for public use. A well was also excavated at Bediban during the governorship of Izzudin Malik-ul-Umara.⁶¹⁶

The nobles built a lot of *baolis* consisting of more than one storey. These *baolis* were constructed in cities, towns and along the highways. Ibn Batuta in his travels account refers to a number of step wells that he found in different parts of north India. These

⁶⁰⁹ Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 178, 209; Yahya mentioned that when Balban was a Khan he laid the foundation of a fortress at Makar-Kachauri and renamed it.; Kishore Saran Lal, *History of the Khiljis(1290-1320 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 17

⁶¹⁰ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 538-39; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp. 330-331; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p.64; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 45

⁶¹¹ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 603, Vol. II, p. 383; *EIAPS*, 1961, pp. 32-33

⁶¹² Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul Fua'd*, Eng tr. pp. 188-189

⁶¹³ *ARIE*, 1955-56, P. 161; Appendix- D, no. 320; Desai, *PMIR*, p. 96, no. 303; *ASIR*, Vol. XX, p. 56

⁶¹⁴ Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i- Khusravi*, Eng tr., Vol. IV, p. 197

⁶¹⁵ Ibn-i- Batuta, *Rehla*, Eng tr., p. 44; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kinship*, pp. 270-71

⁶¹⁶ Qeyamuddin Ahmed, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian of Bihar* pp. 30-32; *EIM*, 1915, P. 17; *ARIE*, 1975-76, Appendix-D, no, 114

were mostly constructed in cities, towns and along the highways. Ibn Batuta also referred to a number of step wells that were found in northern Indian when he travelled there. Ibn Batuta gave a detail description of step wells in the territorial unit of Kol that is modern Aligarh.⁶¹⁷

Malik Kafur Sultani had constructed a stepwell known as Jhalar *Baoli* in Bayana during the reign of Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji.⁶¹⁸ It is made up of red sand stone, surrounded by a colonnade with four domed entrances at four corners. During the time of Malik Kamaluddin Ahmed Khiram, another step well was constructed by Bamdev, son of Nathu, at Rajasthan.⁶¹⁹ A step well was also built at Batihagarh by Jalaluddin Ahsan Hussaini under the governorship of Juljin.⁶²⁰ Malik Muzzafar who was governor of Baroda had constructed a well along with mosque at Karakhadi and Moka Mehta and his son was appointed as trustee of the endowment.⁶²¹

Lodhis also took lot of interest in construction of step wells. Orav baoli near Taleti *darwaza* was built by Lodhi noble Khan-i- Khan Farmuli as there was a bilingual inscription that shows its evidences in Vijaymandirgarh in Bayana, Rajasthan.⁶²² (Figure 8). Similarly Malik Abul Fath Muhammad constructed a *bain* at Chanderi and Mutam Khan also constructed it at Bayana during the time of Sikander Lodhi.⁶²³ Several step wells were built by Khawaja Sera of Sikander Lodhi in Delhi. It was built by chisel dressed stones and lime mortar⁶²⁴ However a lot of wells and step wells were constructed by nobles in the area of Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Daulatabad and Maharashtra.

⁶¹⁷ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of nobility during Delhi Sultans*, 2015, p. 162; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kinship*, pp. 270-271

⁶¹⁸ Desai, *PMIR*, P. 44, no. 137; *EIM*, 1917-18, pp. 38-40, Rajeev Bargoti, *Bayana, A Concept of Historical Archeology*, Jaipur, 2013, p. 110

⁶¹⁹ *EIPAS*, 1955-56, PP, 57-60; Desai, *PMIR*

⁶²⁰ Fazeela Shanawaz, *Socio-Culutral Life of Nobility*, p. 162; Mahdi Hussain, *Six Inscription*, *EIPAS*, 1957-58. pp. 35-38

⁶²¹ Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 158. Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility* p. 162

⁶²² *Corpus Inscriptionum Bhavnagari: a Selection of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions*, Collected by Antiquarian Department, Bhavnagar State, Bombay, 1889, p. 29; Rajeev Bargoti, *Bayana*, pp. 101, 138

⁶²³ *EIAPS*, 1955-56, pp. 122-123; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of nobility during Delhi Sultans*, p. 163

⁶²⁴ Sir Sayeed, *Asar-ul- Sanadid*, Eng tr, R. Nath, Nath, R., *Monuments of Delhi (A Historical Survey)*, Delhi, 1978. p. 44; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 272

In 1211, A.D. a *hauz* at Palwal was constructed by Badruddin Sanqar. Epigraphic records shows that Masud who was son of Umar Khalji during the reign of Iltutmish built a tank in Bhari Khatu in Nagaur Rajasthan.⁶²⁵ As Tughlaq Sultans were engaged in constructing lakes and tanks in Delhi and Daulatabad, the *muqtas* seems to have equally been participated in the constructional works of public utility in their respective provinces. Under Firoz Shah Tughlaq a hauz was constructed by Malik Maruf, Sayyid-ul- Hujjab. An inscription at Bhari Khatu had referred that Malik Firoz bin Muhammad has ordered to Tajjuddin Daulat Waddin Khalaful Mulk to built a fairly large tank which was named as Firoz Sagar.⁶²⁶ Qutlugh Khan constructed a water reservoir which was called Hauz-i-Qutlugh Khani at Daulatabad which was later completed by his brother.⁶²⁷

Important development took place with the construction of canals during the Delhi Sultanate. Not only the Sultans but their nobles also took interest in it. Big as well as small canals were led off from the rivers for irrigation. Earliest references of the construction of a large and deep artificial canal comes Amir Khusrau. Ghazi Malik (governor of Dipalpur) constructed a canal which was cut from Ravi. It irrigated the areas between the rivers Ravi and Jhelum.⁶²⁸ Likes Firoz Shah, some of his nobles also seems to have improved water resources in their '*iqtas*'. His wazir Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul took measures to create conditions favourable for socio-economic growth in his 'iqta' through the construction of a number of canals, sarais (inns) and bazaars.⁶²⁹ An important Sanskrit inscription of the reign of Sikandar Lodhi records the construction of a bridge (*setu*) by a Muslim official of Sultan Sikandar Lodhi in 1491 A.D. out of his virtuously-earned treasures.⁶³⁰ At Badaon, inscription recorded

⁶²⁵ Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 261; *EIAPS*, 1966, pp. 6-7

⁶²⁶ Desai, *PMIR*, p. 30, no. 92; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, pp. 263; Qeyammuddin Ahmad, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian of Bihar* (A.H. 640-1200), p. 31; Edward Thomas, *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, Delhi, 1976, p. 136; *EIAPS*, 1964, p. 136

⁶²⁷ Abha Rani, *Tughluq Architecture of Delhi*, Varansi, 1991, pp. 66-67; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kinship*, pp. 263-264

⁶²⁸ Amir Khusrau, *Tughlaqnama*, ed. S. Hashmi Faridabadi, Aurangabad, 1933.p. 63; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 272

⁶²⁹ Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 275

⁶³⁰ Ibid, p. 89; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of nobility during Delhi Sultan*, p. 165

the construction of canal by Tughlaq noble Khawaja Jahan-ush Shar in 1395A.D.⁶³¹ Similarly letters in Insha Mahru has clearly indicated the interest of nobles in digging of canals for welfare of people as well as for cause of Allah.⁶³² (Figure 9)

Due to their patronage, several religious buildings such as mosques, *idgah*, *Namazgah*, temples etc as well as other secular buildings like step wells, *baolis*, canals and tanks were constructed for common people use. This is also indicative of the fact that the nobles of Delhi Sultans wanted to earn the goodwill of the people. Both Hindus and Muslims religious structure were constructed as well as secular buildings for the welfare of both these community.⁶³³

B. Literary Contribution

The Delhi Sultanate period marks a significant phase in the intellectual and literary history of medieval India, in which the nobility played a central and dynamic role. Beyond their administrative and military obligations, the nobles emerged as important contributors to the growth and dissemination of knowledge. Their involvement in literary activities was twofold—first, as authors and scholars themselves, and second, as patrons of learning who encouraged and supported men of letters.

A notable feature of this period was the prominence of Persian as the court language, which became the primary medium for literary and scholarly expression. Nobles, being well-educated and culturally inclined, composed a wide range of works in Persian and Arabic, and in some cases engaged with regional languages. Their writings covered diverse subjects such as history, poetry, religious sciences, law (*fiqh*), administration, medicine, astronomy, and even technical fields like metallurgy and numismatics. This reflects not only their intellectual versatility but also the expanding horizons of knowledge during the Sultanate period.

⁶³¹ Furher, *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Varansi, 1969., Vol. II, p. 23; for Khawaja Malik Sarwar see, Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 338; Yahya, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 146

⁶³² Mahru, Ain-ul-Mulk, *Insha-i-Mahru*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Lahore, 1965

⁶³³ Siddiqui, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the life and Condition of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 33-34

Equally significant was the patronage extended by the nobles to scholars, poets, translators, and intellectuals from different parts of the Islamic world and India. This patronage facilitated the translation of important works from Arabic and Sanskrit into Persian, making knowledge more accessible to a wider audience. It also encouraged the compilation of original texts, thereby enriching the literary tradition of the time. The interaction between diverse cultural and intellectual traditions under noble patronage fostered an environment of creativity and scholarly exchange.

Thus, the literary contribution of the Sultanate nobility was not limited to mere production of texts but extended to the creation of a vibrant intellectual culture. Their role as both creators and patrons significantly shaped the literary and scholarly landscape of the period. This section seeks to analyze these contributions in detail, highlighting the importance of nobles in the development of medieval Indian literature.

The literature composed during Sultanate period was broadly divided into two categories

- a) Literature composed by Nobles
- b) Literature composed under the patronage of nobles.

a. Literature Composed by Nobles

The foremost was Majd-ul-Mulk Bahauddin al-Jamji who came to India during Qutub-ud-Din Aibek. Awfi praised his literary genius and generous nature. Once a poet came to his court praise him by saying few couplets and expecting reward, Jamji respond in his couplet that if he had come earlier, he would receive a good amount for his poetry. Qazi Ruknuddin Samarqandi who was a scholar and poet. He was so intelligent that Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khilji appointed Him *Qazi* of Lakhnauti. When he was in Bengal he met with yogis and learned Sanskrit from them. Then he translated *Amritkund*, a Sanskrit yoga work into Persian and named it *Hauz-ul-Hayat*

with the help of Bhoj, a local Brahman. Later he also translated his work into Arabic language and named it *Mirat-ul- Maani fi Idrak-i-Alam-i-Insani*.⁶³⁴

Malik Tajuddin Reza, he was one of the most famous poets during the time period of Iltutmish. He was also mention as Taj Dabir alias Reza. When Caliph of Baghdad sent robe of honour to Sultan Iltutmish, he recited a qasida commemorating the occasion and his work was really appreciated.⁶³⁵ He also composed verses in praise of Sultan Iltutmish which has been put on the gate of fort. He also wrote *Qasidas* in the praise of Sultan Rukkundin Firoz and his wazir Malik nizamuddin Mahmud Junaidi.⁶³⁶ Shamsuddin *Dabir* was also one of the famous poets of Sultanate period. In early period he was associated with a famous saint Shaikh Faridudin Ganj-i-Shakr belong to Chishti Silsila. He composed and recites *qasida* in his name. He later on attained the title of *Malik-ul-Kalam* during Sultan Nasiruddin. Amir Khusaru even mentioned him in his work and write *qasida* in his name.⁶³⁷

Amid Loyaki was a poet during the reign of Balban, who conferred upon him title of *Fakhr-ul-Mulk*. He held high office but did not perform well so he suffered disgrace due to this. Later he joined company of Prince Muhammad, son of Balban who was at Multan and a lot of literary men were present in his court. He was known as *Qasida Nigar*.⁶³⁸ Maulana Ziauddin Sunnami was a scholar in religious sciences, particularly *tafsir* and *Fiqh*. He held the post of *Muhtasib* since the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khilji to Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq.⁶³⁹ He wrote *Nisab-ul Ihtisab*, a treatise to censure public morality in Arabic language on mature and maintenance of

⁶³⁴ Nabi Hadi, *A History of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 52-54; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 519-520; Abdur Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 171-172

⁶³⁵ Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul Fua'd*, Eng. tr. Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, New Delhi, 1995, p. 68; Sayyed Sabah-ud-Din Abdur Rahman, *Glimpses of Indo- Persian Literature, Indo Iranica*, Vol. X, June 1957, p.3; Qammaruddin, *Society and Culture in Medieval India*, p. 72

⁶³⁶ Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah Qawwas, *Farhang Farhang-i-Qawwas*, ed. Dr. Nazir Ahmad, Rampur, 1999, pp. 54,55,148; Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* Vol. I, pp. 67-69; Nizamudin Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Eng tr. Vol. I, pp. 68,72

⁶³⁷ Badauni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Eng tr. Pp. 134-135; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 166; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo- Persian Literature*, p.556

⁶³⁸ Badauni, *Muntakhab*, Eng tr. Vol. I, pp. 98, 138-141; Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo-Persian Literature*, pp. 106-107

⁶³⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 356; Zain- Badr Arabi, *Ma'dan al- Marani, Bihar Sharif*, 1884, Vol. II, p. 117; Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, pp. 697-698; K.A. Nizami, *Salatin-i- Dehli ke Mazhabi Rujhanat*, Delhi, 1981, PP. 277-278; Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 144

public morals. His book is divided into sixty-four chapters. He explained the significance and objective of *hisab* and duties of *Muhtasib*. His work has been taken as reference in several judicial works such as *Fatawa-i-Firozshahi* of Firoz Shah Tughlaq and *Fatawa-i-Hammadiyah* which are compiled in sixteenth century.⁶⁴⁰

Maulana Raziuddin Hasan al- Sahani was a native of Badaon and started his administrative career as deputy account officer *Naib-i- mushrif* in Kol later known as Aligarh. He was a compiler of collection of hadiths known as *Mashariq-ul-Anwar*.⁶⁴¹ Qazi Kamaluddin Jafri, a *qazi* of Badaun, has compiled a book on *fiqh* entitled *Munfiq*.⁶⁴² Thakkura Pheru, a mint officer of Sultan Ala-ud-Din Khilji, stands out as a writer on a wide range of scientific subjects. His popular works were *Khataragaccha-yugapradhana-catuhapadhika*, *Jyotisara*, *Dravyaparikha*, *Vatusara*, *Dhatupatti* and *Ganitasarakaumudi*.⁶⁴³ Although it was not known when he joined the royal services but he mentions Alauddin Khilji and then Ghiyas ud Din Tughlaq. After completing *Dravyaparikha*, Thakur Pheru occupied a high position in Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah,s mint at Delhi.⁶⁴⁴ *Dravyaparikkha* was a book written by Pheru on numismatic in 1318 A.D. His work contains the chronology of coins in Delhi from its foundation under Tomars to the early fourteenth century. It distinguished different coins on the basis of weight and material content. He mentioned that he wrote this work by his direct experience of various types of coins when he was working as mint officer in Delhi. This work also acted as a catalogue which describes the history of Delhi Sultanate. It contained a detail description of name, provenance, weight, metal content and exchange value of the currency.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴⁰ Zafar-ul-Islam, *Fatawa Literature of the Sultanate Period*, Delhi, 2005, pp. 8-9

⁶⁴¹ Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 151,162; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p.56; Nizami, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics*, pp. 162-163

⁶⁴² Sijzi, *Fawaid-ul Fua,d*, pp. 225, 236-237; Nizami, *Some Aspects of Politics and Religion*, pp. 179-180

⁶⁴³ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of Nobility*, p. 125

⁶⁴⁴ Fazeela Shahnawaz, p. 126; Pushpa Parsad, 'The Jain Community in the Delhi Sultanate', *Proc. I.H.C.*, Mysore, 1993, p. 225

⁶⁴⁵ G.H. Khare, 'Dravyapariksa of Thakkura Pheru a Study' *Journal of Numismatic society of India*, Vol. 28, 1966, pp. 25-27. Finbarr Barry Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu Muslim'' Encounter*, New Jersey, 2009, p. 254; Peter Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 279

Vastusara was written on architecture and Iconography. This work was completed in 1315 A.D. it is divided into three chapters. This was primarily based on the temple architect. This work shows that both jains and Jaina temples architecture were of similar shape and structure. This work also shed light on the fact that Hindu religious architecture was neglected during this period.⁶⁴⁶ *Rayanaparikkha* gave detail description of gems, precious stones pearls, their size, colour, origin, qualities, medicinal values etc. *Dhatupati* was written on metallurgy.⁶⁴⁷

Kabiruddin, son of Tajuddin Iraqi was the court historian of Sultan Ala-ud Din Khilji. He is to have excelled in the skills of a secretary (*Dabir*) and in composition. He wrote *Fathanama* (Victory Record) in various volume. He also wrote another historical account which was known as *Tarikh-i-Alai*.⁶⁴⁸ Qazi Safi al Din Buhair was a great scholar in Islamic science. Amir Khusrau even mentioned him in his work *Ijaz Khusravi*. He had composed a qasida in the art of *Qalb-al Lisanian* which was amazing art.⁶⁴⁹

Ikhtisan was a noble of Ghiyas-uddin Tughlaq who accompanied him in the expedition of Lakhnauti was the author of *Basatin-ul-Uns*, *Sadr-i-Ala*.⁶⁵⁰ His name was Ahmad Hasan Abdusi also entitled as Taj ul Mulk. His work was Hindu tale which was written in Persian style. He was appointed as Diwan-i- Insha by Ghiyas ud Din Tughlaq during his eastward expedition.⁶⁵¹ When he returned from this expedition, he came to know about this tale of romance between prince of Ujain and

⁶⁴⁶ V.S. Agarwal, *A Note on Medieval Temple architecture. The Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society*. Vol. VXi, 1943, pp. 112-117; Lal, *Khiljis*, p. 333; K.A. Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 158

⁶⁴⁷ B.M Chintamani, 'Notices of Thirteen MSS in Prakrit with special references to their Scientific and Technological Content, *National Commission for the compilation of History of Sciences in India, Indian National Science Academy*, New Delhi, 1971, Vol. VI, No. II, p. 170

⁶⁴⁸ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, pp, 14, 361; Dr. Ghulam Sarwar Niazi, *The life and Works of Sultan Alauddin Khalji*, Lahore, 1990, p. 127; Kishori Saran Lal, *History of the Khaljis (1290-1320 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980, p. 341; Kishori Saran Lal 'Cultural Activity During the Reign of Alauddin Khilji', *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. 25, Part. I, 1947, p. 60

⁶⁴⁹ *Qalb-i-Lisanian* It is Shifting of two languages, is an art of writing which implies that if one goes through the writing from top to bottom, it is in Persian. Conversely, if the same is pursued from bottom to top, it is Arabic, it is a very rare art, very difficult to employ. Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Eng tr. Vol. III, P.74

⁶⁵⁰ Mahdi Hussain, *Tughlaq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1963, p. 8; K.A. Nizami, *Supplement to Elliot and Dowson's History of India*, Vol III, Delhi, 1981, P. 71; Rashid *Society and Culture*, p. 171; Peter Jackson, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 153

⁶⁵¹ Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 171; Habibullah, *Re evolution of Literary Sources*

Princess of Kashmir. He composed it in Persian Muslim style.⁶⁵² Ikhtisan was appointed to the post of *Dabir-i-Khass* during the reign of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and received the title of Taj from the Sultan.⁶⁵³ Qasida mentioned in *Basatin* testifies the fact that at an early age of twenty-six, Ikhtisan was an accomplished scholar and a bilingual poet of Arabic and Persian and had acquired sufficient proficiency in Arabic prose and poetry. His poems and *qasida* were quoted by *Tazkira* writers and Muhammad Bihamid Khani in his *Tarikh* which proves that Ikhtisan held the position of an established poet as well as a writer.

Rafi, was also a man of learning. A work on lexicography, known as *Dastur-ul-Afazil- fi-Lughat-il-Fazail* was written by him.⁶⁵⁴ During the transfer of capital he was forced to migrate from Delhi with hardships to Daultabad the new capital. Rafi narrates the reason for the compilation of *Dastur-ul-Afazil*. Rafi started his work which explains the difficult words of Persian for the use of migrants who came from Delhi to Daulatabad in Deccan.⁶⁵⁵ In compilation of *Dastur-ul-Afazil*, Rafi consulted various Diwans of classical poets as well as the dictionaries of different language, such as *Tazi (Arabic)*, *Turki*, *Mughli*, *Pehlavi*, *Parsi*, *Afghani*, *Jahudi*, (Hebrew), *Tarsai* (Christian's), *Nusrani* and the dialect, spoken in the Hejaz and Transoxiana.⁶⁵⁶

Tatar Khan who was an adopted son of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlaq was governor of Zafarabad. He was a poet and used to compose verses. He also composed verses for Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Sultan honoured him with gift.⁶⁵⁷ Another most prominent writer as well as poet of that time was Malik Shamsuddin Abu Rija who got the title of Ziya-ul-Mulk Mustanf-i- Mumalik under Sultan Firoz Shah. He

⁶⁵² Aksari, *Historical Value*, pp. 2-5; Siddiqui, 'Ikhtisan's History of the Tughluq Sultans in the Basatin-ul-Uns', in *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information*, Delhi, 1992pp. 96-97, Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 178

⁶⁵³ Siddiqui *Ikhtisan History*, p. 91

⁶⁵⁴ Isami, *Futuh-us Salatin*, p. 923; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo- Persian Literature*, p. 219;

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid, p.924; A.D. Khan, *A History of Sadarat in Medieval India (Pre-Mughal period)*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1988,p. 173

⁶⁵⁶ For details of sources, see Rafi, *Dastur-ul-Afazil*, pp. 56-57

⁶⁵⁷ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr, p. 219; Fazeela Shahnawaz, 'A critical appraisal of Tatar Khan's literary Contribution', *Aspect of Indian History*, ed. N.R Farooqi and S.Z.H Jafri. New Delhi, 2013, pp. 189-194

composed *qasidahs* and even proclaimed himself superior over Shaikh Sa'adi of Shiraz.⁶⁵⁸

Ibn Batuta, the Qazi of Delhi, was a Moorish traveller who wrote a long ode in praise of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq and present to him. His work *Rehla* is a valuable document for understanding every aspect of fourteenth century India.⁶⁵⁹ Malik Qabul Qara Khan compiled a legal digest for guidance of *qazis*. It was titled as *Fatawa-i-Qara Khani* by him. He was a jurist during Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq.⁶⁶⁰ Qazi Abid was appointed as Qazi by Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq. Beside his religious duties, he also used to compose verses. He also composed verses from Arabic translations.⁶⁶¹ Qazi Zahir Dihlavi was a brilliant poet during the later days of Tughlaq dynasty. Sultan Mahmud Shah patronized him. He had pen down a qasida in eulogy of Sultan Mahmud. Badaoni also praise him and said that noother poet could rise to his position.⁶⁶²

Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi served as a courtier of Saiyyid Mubarak Shah. He pen down a book and present it to Sultan as a token of gratitude *Tarikh-i- Mubarak Shahi*. This work covers every aspect of history as it was a primary and eyewitness account of that period.⁶⁶³ Masnad-i- Ali Mian Bhua was wazir of Sultan Sikander Lodhi. He brought various books from Transoxiana related to different subjects. He even invited scientists from Khurasan, Iraq, Central Asia and Transoxiana. His interest was in the field of medicine; thus, he compiled *Tibb-i-Sikander Shahi* which is of a great value.⁶⁶⁴ He also compile *Ma'adan al Shafa Sikandar Shahi* and for its compilation he consulted various Sanskrit classic work such as *Ja Deskarat*, *Ras*

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid, pp. Eng tr. 247, 268-269; Jamini Mohan Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, Delhi, 1967, p. 181; R.C. Jauhri, 'Learning and Literature during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388 A.D.)', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. LVI, no. 4. October 1967., p. 246 Riaz-ul-Islam, 'Age of Firuz Shah', *Medieval India Quarterly*, July, 1950, p. 33

⁶⁵⁹ Ibn Batuta, *Travels*, Vol. III, p. 750; Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo-Persian Literature*, p.139

⁶⁶⁰ Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 180; Nazir Ahmed, 'Three Little Known Persian Poets' pp. 43-44

⁶⁶¹ Ibid, p. 183; Badaoni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, Vol. I, p. 257

⁶⁶² Badaoni, *Muntakhab*, Vol I, Eng tr.pp. 367-365; Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo Persian Literature*, p. 182

⁶⁶³ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 133

⁶⁶⁴ Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo- Persian Literature*, pp. 191-192; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 171-172; Chopra, *The Rise, Growth and Decline of Indo-Persian Literature*, pp.56-57

Ratnako, *Suaangdhar* and *Chhintama* etc. He also studied Ayurveda and synthesised with *Tibb-i-Unani*. He used terms and names of medicines, herbs, plants and translated into Persian. If its translation is not found in Persian it is written as it is in Persian script.⁶⁶⁵

b. Literature Composed by the Noble's Patronage

Nobles under the Delhi Sultans possessed power and wealth thus they extend their patronage to scholars, poets and intellectuals. During the thirteenth century, Persian was a court language and a lot of work was translated into Persian from Arabic under the patronage of Delhi Sultans and their nobles. Muaiyid-i-Jajarmi Abul Ma'ali was patronised by Junaidi, to use simple language in his translation of Al Ghazali's work on religious sciences *Ihya-i-Ulum*.⁶⁶⁶ Jajarmi records that in India there is a large number of Persian knowing intelligentsia, so Junaidi, wazir of Sultan Iltutmish instructed him to translate *Ihya-i-Ulum* into Persian. He praised his Patron Nizam-ul-Mulk Junaidi for his benevolence and munificence to Scholars.⁶⁶⁷

Awfi was also patronised by Junaidi. His full name was Sadid-ud-Din Mohammad al Awfi. He composed *Lulab-ul- Albab*, and dedicated it to Ain-ul-Mulk Ashari, wazir of Qubacha. Other work compiled by him was an encyclopaedia of literature *Jawami-ul-Hikayat wa Lawani-ur-Riwayat*. This work was dedicated to Malik Nizam-ul-Mulk Junaidi, wazir of Sultan Iltutmish.⁶⁶⁸

Shams Moin was a poet as well as prose writer. He was patronised by *Naib-i-Mumalik* Malik Qutbuddin Hasan Ghuri and served him as his *nadeem-i-Khaas*. According to Barani, Shams Moin was one of the most distinguished prose writers and compiled volumes on the life and achievements of his patron Malik Qutbuddin

⁶⁶⁵ Mian Bhua, *Ma'adan al-Shafa Sikandar Shahi*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1877, pp. 2-3,8; Siddiqui, 'Masnad-i-Ali Mian Bhua: A Scholarly Statesman of Medieval India', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XX, No. 3, 1967, pp. 38-39; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio Cultural Life of Nobility*, p. 133

⁶⁶⁶ Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo Persian Literature*, p. 360; Siddiqui(ed), (ed), *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Learning*, Delhi, 2003, p. 83; Chopra, *Rise, Growth and Decline of Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 2010, p. 57

⁶⁶⁷ Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, p. 169; Idem, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Conditions of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992, pp. 48-49

⁶⁶⁸ Badaoni, *Muntakhab*, Eng tr. pp. 220-221; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo Persian Literature*, pp. 99-100. Muhammad Awfi, *Juwama-ul Hikayat*, Eng tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 155; R.M. Chopra, *Rise, Growth and Decline of Persian Literature*, p. 108

Hasan Ghauri.⁶⁶⁹ He was later patronised by Malik Alauddin popularly known as Malik Chajju. He even composed Qasida in praise of Malik. Shams Moin is reported to have approached the court singers and made them to sing his qasida at nauroz celebration. Barani also quotes the couplet of his qasida his hi work. Malik Chajju was so impressed that he gave him a stable of horses in reward.⁶⁷⁰

Kamal Kalim Nagauri was the compiler of a Persian work on *Fiqh* known as *Majmu-i-Khani*. This work was dedicated to Ulugh Qutluh-i-Azam Muazzam Bahram Khan who was the tutor of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq and also governor of Daulatabad. Although a lot of work was written in Arabic and it is difficult for common people to understand it so he has written it in Persian language. He also mentioned that he consulted around one hundred thirty work on *Fiqh* and *Fatwa* for the compilation of *Majmau-i-Khani*.⁶⁷¹ Malik Tatar Khan, the leading noble under the Tughlaq Sultan, was known for his patronage for compilation of his two famous works i.e *Tafsir-i-Tatar Khani* and *Fatwa-i-Tatar Khani*.⁶⁷² For the compilation of *Tafsir-i-Tatar Khani*, Tatar Khan used to extend his patronage to number of learned men. He organized a council of writers to prepare tafsir of Quran. For this work he consulted all the commentary on Quran and consulted various *ulemas*.⁶⁷³ Thus, this work consisted of differences in the interpretation of the Quran within *sunni* creed. He included different interpretations of *ulemas*. However, it was written by a board of *ulemas* on his instruction. The author of *Nuzhat-ul-Khawahir* said that it is written by Tatar Khan himself.⁶⁷⁴ K.A. Nizami is of that view that the work of Tatar Khan,

⁶⁶⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 113; Siddiqui (ed.) *Medieval India*, pp. 52-53

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 113; Siddiqui, *Medieval India*, pp. 53-57; K.A. Nizami, *Some aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 155

⁶⁷¹ Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, pp. 292-293; Nizamuddin Ahmed, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, p. 117; Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, p. 106; Nizami, *Supplement to Elliot and Dowson's History of India*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1981, p. 122

⁶⁷² Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 140

⁶⁷³ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, Eng tr. p. 220; Muhammad Habib and Nizami, *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, New Delhi, 1982, p. 613; R.C. Jauhari, 'Learning and Literature during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388 A.D.)', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. VLI, no. 4, October 1967, p. 246

⁶⁷⁴ Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 392; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 174-175; Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural life of nobility Under the Delhi Sultans*, p. 137

Fatawa-i-Tatarkhani is one of the most important works on *fiqh* which surpassed all other work on this subject.⁶⁷⁵

The learned men of central Asia and far-flung regions came to Delhi and showed their utmost interest in religious and secular sciences especially in the science of astronomy and astrology. Although the astronomy was condemned by the orthodox *Ulemas* but Amir Khusrau considered nothing short of blasphemy in the practices of astronomy. Being a rational theologian, Minhaj was also free from such influences and considered it as cultural pursuit.⁶⁷⁶

Astronomers and astrologers from both the communities i.e Hindu and Muslim were patronized by the nobles under Delhi Sultans following the Indian Tradition. Amir Khusrau took interest in astronomy and astrology. Thakur Pheru, mint minister of Alauddin Khilji wrote *Jyotisara*, a manual on astronomy in 1315 A.D. Siraji Khurasani mentions the astrolabe in one of his qasida composed in praise of Ziauddin Muhammad, son of Nizam-ul-Mulk Junaidi.⁶⁷⁷

One of the Lodi noble, Daulat Khan Lodi, was deeply interested in this subject. He even made an astrolabe in his palace. He got placed a *kursi* (astrolabe) with a wooden rod for calculating the correct time. He even engaged skilled men for record the shadow of rod on the *kursi* and engraved it on the astrolabe. Another noble Mian Sulaiman Farmuli also had a rod fixed on *Kursi* (astrolabe) at his palaces for calculating the time.⁶⁷⁸ Nobles were also engaged in art of calligraphy. Mian Taha was one of the famous calligraphists of that time. He was expert in inscribing and cutting paper and cloths. He also has mastery in ovary work. He even made a cap of ovary for Sultan Sikander Lodhi.⁶⁷⁹

⁶⁷⁵ K.A. Nizami, *Studies in Medieval Indian History*, p. 58

⁶⁷⁶ Minhaj Siraj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, pp. 331-332; Amir Khusrau, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. IV, Eng tr. p. 188; Afif, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, p. 258

⁶⁷⁷ Siraj Khurasani, *Diwan-i-Saiyid Siraju'd-Din Khurasani* (known as Siraja), Prof. Nazir Ahmad (ed.), Aligarh, 1972., p. 304; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate*, p. 128.

⁶⁷⁸ Mushtaqi, *Waqiat*, pp. 85-86, 198, 200; Iqtidar Hussain Siddiqui, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, p. 132

⁶⁷⁹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, Eng tr., p. 56; Nimatallah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, Eng tr. Roy, p. 122

C. MUSIC AND MUSICAL PATRONAGE

Music constituted an integral component of the socio-cultural life of the Delhi Sultanate nobility. Courtly entertainment, religious devotion, diplomatic receptions, weddings, festivals, and victory celebrations frequently included musical performances. While orthodox religious scholars occasionally expressed reservations regarding music, many rulers and nobles actively patronized musicians, singers, and poets, recognising music as an important expression of refinement, prestige, and cultural sophistication.⁶⁸⁰

The patronage of music extended beyond the imperial capital. Provincial governors and influential nobles maintained their own courts where musicians, poets, and performers found employment and artistic encouragement. These regional centres contributed to the diffusion of Indo-Persian musical traditions throughout northern India and encouraged interaction between local musical practices and Persian courtly culture. Such exchanges gradually enriched the cultural diversity of the Sultanate and prepared the foundation for the remarkable musical developments witnessed during the Mughal period.⁶⁸¹

Among the most celebrated figures associated with the musical culture of the Delhi Sultanate was Amir Khusrau, whose first patron was Balban's nephew Alauddin Kishli Khan better known as Malik Chajju later he was patronized by Bughra Khan, governor of Bengal under Sultan Balban.⁶⁸² His contributions profoundly influenced the development of Indo-Persian musical traditions. A distinguished poet, scholar, and musician attached to the courts of several Delhi Sultans, Khusrau played a significant role in introducing Persian musical elements into the Indian tradition. His works promoted cultural interaction between Persian and Indian musical practices and enriched the musical environment of the Sultanate. Malik Amir Ali Sar-i-Jandar,

⁶⁸⁰ Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat*, Eng tr., Vol I, p. 140; Nizami, *Royalty*, p. 64; Siddiqui, *Authority and Kingship*, p. 99, Satish Chandra, *Medieval India*, Part One, pp. 173-174

⁶⁸¹ Isami, *Futuh-us-Salatin*, Eng tr., Vol II, pp. 490-491; Lal, *Khaljis*, p. 276; Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 58

⁶⁸² Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 113; *Dibacha-i-Gurra-ul-Kamal* pp. 70-71 as quoted by K.A. Nizami (ed.) *Duwal Rani Khiza Khan*, Aligarh, 1988, p. 9

muqtiof Amroha and Awadh during the time of Balban took him in his services. Amir Khusrau Composed a poem *Asp-Namah* in his praise.⁶⁸³

The Chishti Sufi order further contributed to the diffusion of music through the practice of *samāʿ*, devotional musical assemblies intended to inspire spiritual reflection. Noble patronage of Chishti saints and khanqahs facilitated the popularity of *qawwali*, in which Persian, Arabic, and Hindavi poetry were performed in musical form. Amir Khusrau was the most devoted disciple (*murid*) of the renowned Chishti Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya. Under Nizamuddin Auliya's spiritual guidance, Khusrau composed Persian and Hindavi poetry that reflected themes of divine love, devotion, and humanism. The participation of nobles in such gatherings demonstrates that music occupied an important place not only within courtly entertainment but also within religious and intellectual life. Prince Muhammad (son of Balban), *muqti* of Multan, organized a sama party in his assembly and invited Shaikh Usman and Shaikh Kadwa, son of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya.⁶⁸⁴

Shams Moin a distinguished poet enjoyed the patronage of the naib-i-mumalik (regent) Malik Qutbuddin Hasan Ghuri and serve him as *nadim-i-khaas*. Shams Moin compose *qasida* in praise of Malik Alaaddin popularly known as Malik Chajju. Shams moin along with court singer recite his *qasida* at *nouroz* celebration. Malik Chajju gave the singers ten thousand tankahs while Shams Moin got a full stable of horse in reward.⁶⁸⁵ Siraj Khurasani reached Delhi from Makran during the reign of Iltutmish and attained reputed position. He composed *qasida* in praise of his patron Malik Nizamul-Mulk Junaidi yielded important information about his achievements and noble qualities.⁶⁸⁶ Azizuddi bin Abdullah, popularly known as Mutahhar of Kara was a known poet during the reign of Sultan Firoz shah. Most of the *qasida*

⁶⁸³ Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 118; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 156; Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 156

⁶⁸⁴ Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 169; Sijzi, *Fawa'id-ul-Fua'id*, Eng tr., p. 426; Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 180

⁶⁸⁵ Barani, *Tarikh*, p. 113; Nizami, *Some Aspect of Religion and Politics*, p. 155; Siddiqui (ed.) *Medieval India*, pp. 53-57

⁶⁸⁶ I.H. Siddiqui, 'Life and Poetry of Siraj Khurasani (A 13th century's Indo-Persian Poet)', *Indo Iranica*, Vol XXXVI, Dec, 1973, no. 4, pp. 1-6; Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo Persian Literature*, pp. 104

composed by him were in praise of Sultan Firoz shah and his successor Nasiruddin Mahmud Shah.⁶⁸⁷ Bihamid Jhani called him Khatm-ush-Shura (the last of the great poets).⁶⁸⁸ *Ghunyat-ul-Munya* (Pleasure of Desire) an earliest testimony of Indo-persian aristocratic patronage on Indian music during medieval period was composed by anonymous author but it record the name of Sultan Firoz Shah and his noble Malik Shamsuddin Ibrahim Hasan Abu Rija, the then governor of Gujarat and praised his patron for his literary taste and support of scholars.⁶⁸⁹

Explaining the reason for the compilation of this work on music, the author records that his patron Abu Rija, to ease the pressure of administrative work, found relief in listening to Persian *samāʿ* and Hindi *sarod*. His companions sometimes enquired from him the meanings of the complex verses, which he used to explain in detail with great elegance.⁶⁹⁰ Thus, Abu Rija asked the author to compile a work on the intricacies of music and, for that purpose, brought together a group of singers and musicians, a large number of experts of the Hindi language, players of different musical instruments, and exponents of various forms of music. The author further consulted numerous Indian books on music such as *Bharata*, *Sangit-Ratnakara*, *Sangit-Ratnavali*, *Sangit-Binod*, *Sangit-Mudra*, *Satanak*, and *Raga Avarna*. In this work, the author confines himself to an exposition of Indian music, for he had already discussed the Arabo-Persian musical system in an earlier book based on the Arabic work *Farid-ul-Zaman fi'l-Maʿarefat-i-Ilham* (Unique of the Age regarding Knowledge of Melodic Modes). The *Ghunyat-ul-Munya* deals with *ʿilm* (theory), *ʿamal* (practice), and *adab* (etiquette) of Indian art, music, and dance.⁶⁹¹

The work is not only an important treatise on musical theory but also a valuable source for cultural history. It reveals the widespread popularity of Sanskrit works on music, musical instruments, and musical forms among the ruling circles of the

⁶⁸⁷ Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo Persian Literature*, p. 182; Idem, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 443

⁶⁸⁸ Bihamid Khani, *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, Eng tr., p.23

⁶⁸⁹ Anonymous, *Ghunyat-ul-Munya*, pp. 3-4; Nizami, *Supplement*, p. 130; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*,

⁶⁹⁰ Khursheed Nurul Hasan , ‘Ghunyat-ul-Munya (the earliest manuscript on Indian Music)’, *Proc I.H.C.*, Delhi, 1961. pp. 177-179

⁶⁹¹ Anonymous, *Ghunyat-ul-Munya*, pp. 3-4; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, p. 109

fourteenth century. It also provides evidence that musical assemblies at the royal court, where music and dance were essential features, continued despite religious prohibitions. The Sultans, nobles, and Sufi saints all cultivated an appreciation for music.⁶⁹²

Mian Bhua, the learned wazir of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, encouraged scholars to translate important Sanskrit works into Persian. Similarly, Umar bin Yahya al-Kabuli, who served under Mian Bhua, was commissioned to compile a comprehensive work on classical Indian music known as *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*, based entirely on Sanskrit sources.⁶⁹³ Umar bin Yahya had mastered Sanskrit and consulted works such as *Sangit Ratnakar*, *Sangit Sangrah*, *Ud Bharat*, *Sudha Nidhi*, *Sangit Samassaya*, *Sangit Kalpataru*, and *Sangit Matanga*. After years of systematic research, he completed *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi* in about 1514 A.D., consisting of seven chapters devoted to musicology.⁶⁹⁴

Both *Ghuniyat-ul-Munya* and *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi* deal with music and dance and demonstrate the authors' mastery of these subjects. The writers of these musicological treatises not only translated Sanskrit works into Persian but also incorporated explanatory observations on musical concepts and performance practices, thereby facilitating cultural exchange between the Indian and Persian traditions.⁶⁹⁵

Thus, music functioned as far more than a form of entertainment. It represented an important medium through which the Delhi Sultanate nobility expressed political authority, social prestige, religious devotion, and cultural refinement. Noble

⁶⁹² Anonymous, *Ghuniyat-ul-Munya*, Introduction, p9; Khursheed Nurul Hasan, 'Ghuniyat-ul-Munya' pp. 178-179

⁶⁹³ Yahya al-Kabuli, *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*, pp. 13–14; Nabi Hadi, *History of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 194; Siddiqui (ed.), *Medieval India*, p. 108; P. N. Ojha, "Some Light on Promotion of Scholarship and Learning under the Tughlaq Sultans," *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. V, No. 2, January 1968, pp. 66–67.

⁶⁹⁴ Yahya al-Kabuli, *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*, pp. 14–15; Nabi Hadi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, p. 624; Nazir Ahmad, "The *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Lodi Shahi*: A Unique and Exhaustive Book of the Time of Sikandar Lodi (1489–1517)," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 1953, pp. 210–225; Rashid, *Society and Culture*, pp. 109–110; Siddiqui, *Masnad-i-Ali Mian Bhua*, pp. 36–37.

⁶⁹⁵ Fazeela Shahnawaz, *Socio-Cultural Life of Nobility under Delhi, Sultan*, pp. 142-143

patronage enabled the interaction of Persian and Indian musical traditions, contributing significantly to the evolution of the composite Indo-Islamic culture that became one of the defining characteristics of medieval India.

D: VISUAL ARTS AND PAINTING TRADITIONS

The Delhi Sultanate marked an important phase in the evolution of visual arts in medieval India by facilitating the introduction of Persian artistic traditions into the subcontinent. Although few paintings from the Sultanate period have survived due to the fragility of manuscripts and the limited patronage of large-scale pictorial art, Persian manuscript illustration, calligraphy, illumination, and ornamental design gained prominence through the migration of scholars, artists, and craftsmen from Central and West Asia.⁶⁹⁶ Courtly patronage encouraged the production of illuminated manuscripts, decorative book arts, reflecting a synthesis of Islamic aesthetic principles with indigenous Indian artistic traditions. These developments laid the foundations of an Indo-Persian visual culture that extended beyond architecture and literature into the broader realm of artistic expression. The interaction between Persian techniques and indigenous Indian aesthetics encouraged the emergence of distinctive schools of painting characterized by refined manuscript illustration, portraiture, naturalistic representation, and decorative elegance.⁶⁹⁷

The history of painting in the Sultanate period is obscure compared with its architecture. This is primarily due to the non-availability of any surviving specimens for at least the first hundred years of the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Equally surprising is the absence of illuminated books, an art carried to supreme height in the Islamic world by 1200. Literary references are found related to murals as a flourishing art form during the rule of the Delhi Sultanate. The earliest reference to murals in the Sultanate period is in a *qasida* (*Tabaqat-i Nasiri*) in praise of Iltutmish, on the occasion of the gift of *Khila't* from the Caliph in 1228. The verses

⁶⁹⁶ Digby, Simon. "The Literary Evidence for Painting in the Delhi Sultanate." *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares* (Varanasi) 1 (1967): 47–58

⁶⁹⁷ Finbarr Barry Flood. "Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India." *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, Vol. 36, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1–39.

in this composition make it clear that human or animal figures were depicted upon the spandrels of the main arch raised to welcome the envoy of the Caliph.⁶⁹⁸

This tradition of painting was not confined to the murals alone. In a reference relating to the entertainment parties thrown by Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji (1316-20), mention is made of a profusely painted open-sided tent: the decorations would therefore appear to be on painted cloth.⁶⁹⁹ A 14th century Hindi poem *Chandayan* written by Maulana Daud in 1379-80, which describes the painted decoration of the upper rooms of the house where Chanda, the leading lady of this poem, sleeps with her female companions. An actual painting from one of the illustrated manuscripts of this poem belonging to the 15th century and showing the bedchamber of Chanda, on the walls of which are painted scenes from the Ramayana.⁷⁰⁰ (Figure 10)

Calligraphy was the most revered art in the Islamic world and was used as a decorative feature both on stone and on paper. In the hierarchy of craftsmen, a calligrapher was placed above the illuminator and painter. However, The earliest known calligraphy was copy of the Quran is dated 1399. It was calligraphed at Gwalior, and has a variety of ornamental motifs, derived both from Iranian and Indian sources. A rare example of a dated Bihari Qur'an, as completed by the scribe Mahmud Sha'ban in Gwalior in 801 (1399). The geometrical frontispiece of this manuscript seems to be in the Sultanate style and suggested prominent features of the Delhi ateliers in the 14th century. The work produced here is in line with the Iranian tradition. The script used in the headings and inscriptional panels of the Quran is invariably Kufi. The illumination of geometrical frontispieces was the specialty of this school.⁷⁰¹ (Figure 11)

The Indo-Islamic traditions established during the Delhi Sultanate exerted a lasting influence on the cultural and intellectual history of South Asia. Through the

⁶⁹⁸ Minhaj-us-Siraj Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, Eng tr. H. G. Raverty, Vol. I , pp. 625–627

⁶⁹⁹ Digby, Simon. "The Literary Evidence for Painting in the Delhi Sultanate." *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares* (Varanasi) 1 (1967): 47–58

⁷⁰⁰ Badauni, *Muntakhab*, Vol. I, Eng tr., p. 333; Fazeela Shahnawaz, Historical Importance of the Indo-Sufi Masnavi Chandyan of Maulana Daud in *The Legacy: New Trends*, Omprakash Srivastav (ed.), Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany, 2013, pp. 177-185

⁷⁰¹ Finbarr Barry Flood. "Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India." *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, Vol. 36, no. 1, 2019, pp. 20-22

patronage of the sultans and the nobility, Persian language, literature, architecture, calligraphy, education, and artistic traditions became deeply embedded in the region's cultural fabric. Architectural innovations such as arches, domes, minarets, monumental gateways, and decorative calligraphy introduced a distinctive Indo-Islamic aesthetic that was subsequently adopted by later dynasties. Persian emerged as the principal language of administration, diplomacy, and literary culture, while scholars and poets such as Amir Khusrau, Minhaj-us-Siraj, Zia al-Din Barani, and Isami established a rich intellectual tradition that continued to inspire later generations. The synthesis of Persian, Central Asian, and indigenous Indian artistic elements also laid the foundation for a distinctive Indo-Islamic cultural identity that transcended political boundaries.⁷⁰²

The influence of these traditions extended well beyond the Delhi Sultanate and continued to shape South Asia for centuries. The Mughal Empire inherited and refined Sultanate artistic and architectural practices, while the Deccan Sultanates, the Bengal and Gujarat Sultanates, the Kashmir Sultanate, and later the Awadh and Hyderabad states adapted these traditions to their own regional contexts. Indo-Islamic architectural forms, Persian literary culture, calligraphic traditions, courtly etiquette, educational institutions, and manuscript production remained integral to the cultural life of South Asia until the colonial period. The evolution of languages such as Urdu, the continued patronage of Sufi institutions, and the persistence of Indo-Islamic artistic and architectural forms in mosques, tombs, gardens, and palaces further demonstrate the enduring legacy of the Delhi Sultanate. Thus, the Indo-Islamic traditions established during the Sultanate period were not confined to medieval India but became a defining component of South Asia's cultural heritage, influencing successive dynasties and regional societies well into the modern era.⁷⁰³

To conclude, nobles not only show their participation in administrative work but they showed keen interest in art, architecture and literature. They followed the footsteps of

⁷⁰² Gavin R. G. Hambly 'Delhi Sultanate I Political and Cultural History' , *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. VII, Fasc. 3, December 15, 1994, pp. 242-250

⁷⁰³ Finbarr Barry Flood. "Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India." *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* pp. 31-32; Ebba Koch, *Mughal architecture*, Vienna, 1990, pp. 41-43

their rulers and made tremendous progress in these fields. They built buildings palaces, forts, mosques, *idgahs* canals, water tanks, wells step wells for public use. Beside this, nobles also show keen interest in literary activities. They composed literature in religious as well as secular science. Many nobles patronised many men of learning and significant work on different subjects were produced. These subjects included *masnavi*, *qasida* (Panegyric), history, *insha* (letter writing), *Fiqh* (Religious literature), *tafsir* (commentary on Quran), *Fatawa* (Muslim Jurespudence), *tibb* (medicines), astronomy and astrology, mathematics, mining, metallurgy, music, numismatics etc. Thus, nobles not only take part in administrative responsibilities but contributed much in the field of art and literature and innovators in the field of science and craft. The nobles of the Delhi Sultanate were not only administrators but also key figures in the cultural, intellectual, and architectural development of the period. Their patronage and personal contributions to various scholarly and artistic fields ensured the flourishing of both religious and secular knowledge, leaving a lasting legacy that shaped the region's history.

CONCLUSION

The nobility of the Delhi Sultanate played a crucial role in politics, administration, and cultural development. They influenced military affairs, economic policies, and patronized art, literature, and architecture. Their grand residences, festivals, and scholarly contributions shaped the Indo-Islamic identity. Nobles sponsored mosques, forts, stepwells, and literary works, fostering intellectual exchanges. However, their growing autonomy and rivalries weakened central authority, contributing to political instability. Despite this, their patronage laid the foundation for later advancements, particularly under the Mughals. Their legacy endures in historical texts, architectural wonders, and cultural traditions that continue to influence South Asia today. Nobles often began as slaves and ascended through ranks based on merit and loyalty. Titles such as *Maliks*, *Khans*, and *Amirs* signified their rank, with *Khans* being the highest. The Sultan relied heavily on these nobles for governance, military operations, and courtly affairs. Their influence extended beyond administration to shaping political, economic, and cultural aspects of the Sultanate.

Salaries, land grants (*Iqtas*), and other income sources, including bribes and corruption, primarily determined the financial status of nobles. Salaries were paid in both cash and kind, with the amount varying by rank. Sultan Alauddin Khalji reduced salaries to strengthen the military, while Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq introduced an advance salary system. Land grants were an important means of rewarding nobles, often granted in exchange for military service or administrative duties. Some nobles received vast estates that provided them with significant revenue, allowing them to maintain lavish lifestyles. However, others found themselves financially strained despite holding prestigious titles, as administrative costs and expectations of generosity took a toll. Many nobles invested their income in properties, charitable works, and personal luxuries, reflecting their wealth and social status. Nobles were appointed based on their rank and responsibilities, with positions such as *Amir-i-Dad* (Lord of Justice) and *Nazir-i-Nabat-i-Khass* (Head Auditor General). Many nobles commanded troops, and their salaries reflected their military importance. Some were granted *Iqtas*, providing them administrative control over regions, often leading to

hereditary appointments under Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq. These appointments were crucial for maintaining governance and ensuring the Sultan's authority over vast territories. The delegation of power to nobles helped streamline administration but also led to instances of abuse, as some officials exploited their positions for personal gain. Loyalty to the Sultan was essential for securing and retaining these positions, leading nobles to compete for royal favor. Those who lost favor with the Sultan risked demotion, exile, or even execution, emphasizing the precarious nature of noble status.

The wealth of nobles was evident in their extravagant gifts to the Sultan, which included gold, jewels, horses, and elephants. Nobles also hosted lavish feasts, engaged in charity, and took loans to maintain their status. Merchants played a crucial role in providing loans, sometimes leading to financial crises among nobles. Wealth was not just a sign of prosperity but also a measure of influence, as nobles who demonstrated generosity often secured greater respect and privileges. Bestowing valuable items upon the Sultan was a customary practice, strengthening political ties and reaffirming loyalty. In return, nobles received honors, land grants, and increased responsibilities, reinforcing their status within the court. However, extravagant spending sometimes led to indebtedness, forcing nobles to seek financial assistance from merchants, traders, and moneylenders. To sustain their luxurious lifestyles, nobles engaged in bribery and corruption. They embezzled revenue, tampered with accounts, and exploited their positions. The *Muqtis*, responsible for revenue collection, often misappropriated funds. Corruption became deeply entrenched in the administrative system, with officials using their positions for personal enrichment. Bribes were exchanged for appointments, military commands, and judicial favors, undermining the efficiency of governance. Even religious and legal officials were sometimes involved in corrupt practices, further eroding trust in the administration. Some Sultans attempted reforms to curb corruption, but enforcement was challenging due to the influence of powerful nobles. The persistence of bribery and mismanagement contributed to financial instability within the empire, ultimately weakening the Sultanate's authority. Nobles increased their wealth through trade, investing in businesses, and establishing workshops. They engaged in domestic and

international trade, exporting goods to different regions. Some nobles, such as Malik-ul-Tujjar Tajuddin Kawlami, amassed great wealth through commercial ventures. Trade was an essential aspect of noble finances, supplementing their incomes from state salaries and land grants. Many nobles owned ships, warehouses, and marketplaces, ensuring steady revenue from commerce. They often collaborated with merchants and traders, providing capital for business ventures in exchange for a share of the profits. This involvement in trade also enhanced their political influence, as economic control translated into greater power. However, competition among nobles sometimes led to conflicts over trade monopolies and taxation rights.

The Delhi Sultanate followed strict courtly traditions influenced by Persian customs. Balban formalized court etiquette, introducing rituals such as *Sajda* (prostration) and *Paibos* (kissing the Sultan's feet). Nobles attended court regularly, dressed in prescribed attire, and followed hierarchical seating arrangements. These protocols reinforced the Sultan's supremacy, ensuring that nobles remained subservient. Violations of court etiquette were considered serious offenses, sometimes leading to reprimands or punishments. The formality of the royal court extended to speech, gestures, and even the way nobles approached the throne. Special robes, headgear, and ornaments were used to signify rank, with specific rules governing attire for different occasions. The emphasis on courtly rituals highlighted the structured and hierarchical nature of noble interactions. Nobles played key roles in royal processions and diplomatic ceremonies, offering gifts and demonstrating loyalty. They adhered to structured etiquette, ensuring order within the court. Some Sultans, such as Iltutmish, displayed humility, while others, like Bahlol Lodhi, maintained a more informal court. These processions were grand affairs, highlighting the wealth and power of the Sultanate. Nobles were expected to participate in these events, often bringing elaborate offerings. The positioning of nobles within the procession reflected their rank, with higher-ranking officials given prominent places. Such ceremonies were not just political events but also opportunities for nobles to strengthen their standing within the court.

Nobles engaged in alliances and rivalries, occasionally leading to disputes. Some, like Tatar Khan, maintained close relationships with the Sultan, while others faced

exile or demotion due to conflicts. Nobles were known for their generosity, providing financial assistance to subordinates and soldiers. However, competition for power sometimes led to betrayals, feuds, and assassinations. Family ties played a crucial role in noble politics, with many positions passing down through generations. Some nobles formed factions to increase their influence, often aligning with different royal contenders during succession disputes. These rivalries sometimes resulted in civil wars, affecting the stability of the Sultanate. Despite conflicts, nobles remained integral to the administration, serving as key advisors and military commanders.

Nobles maintained large harems and owned numerous slaves, whom they trained in etiquette and administration. They spent extravagantly on feasts, gambling, and luxury items. Some, like Imad-ul-Mulk, accumulated vast wealth, stored in underground vaults. The opulent lifestyle of nobles was a reflection of their immense wealth and social status. Grand palaces, decorated with exquisite furnishings, served as symbols of their prosperity. Lavish banquets featured exotic foods, music, and entertainment, attracting guests from across the empire. Their homes were often centers of cultural exchange, where poets, artists, and scholars gathered. However, maintaining such a lifestyle required continuous income, leading some nobles into financial difficulties. The nobility of the Delhi Sultanate played a crucial role in administration, military affairs, and court culture. Their power was derived from land grants, salaries, and their relationship with the Sultan. However, corruption, bribery, and extravagant lifestyles often led to financial instability. Courtly traditions, wealth accumulation, and interactions with the Sultan shaped their influence within the empire. Despite their privileges, nobles faced challenges such as political intrigue, military campaigns, and economic pressures. Their ability to navigate these complexities determined their long-term success and survival. The legacy of the Sultanate's nobility is reflected in the governance structures and social hierarchies that persisted in subsequent dynasties. Ultimately, the role of nobles was both a pillar of strength and a source of instability within the Delhi Sultanate.

The study explores the cultural and social life of nobles and rulers in the Delhi Sultanate, focusing on festivals, ceremonies, and entertainment. These events were not only occasions for joy but also played a significant role in strengthening the bond

between the ruling elite and the common people. Nobles acted as intermediaries, bridging the gap between the rulers and the populace, reflecting a mix of Persian, Central Asian, and Indian customs. The grandeur of celebrations, from feasts and processions to musical performances and games, highlighted the opulence and power of the ruling class. Festivals and ceremonies served political purposes as well, allowing rulers to demonstrate their generosity and secure the loyalty of their subjects. The involvement of nobles in organizing these events helped reinforce their social status and political influence. Additionally, these occasions provided an opportunity for cultural exchange, blending traditions from different regions into the evolving courtly culture of the Sultanate.

Feasts were integral to the court culture, often organized on religious, political, and social occasions. Nobles sometimes hosted grander feasts than the Sultan, inviting scholars, poets, and dignitaries. Meals were elaborate, including dishes like sherbet, stuffed pastries, roasted meats, and special desserts. Feasts symbolized prestige and were often described by travelers like Ibn Battuta, who detailed the luxurious meals, decorations, and entertainment. These gatherings were not only social but also served as platforms for discussing political alliances and strengthening relationships among nobles. Guests at such banquets were often showered with gifts, and musicians, poets, and dancers provided entertainment throughout the event. The choice of food, presentation, and seating arrangements reflected the hierarchical structure of society, ensuring that higher-ranking officials received the best treatment. Feasts also played an essential role in diplomacy, as foreign dignitaries were often entertained with lavish meals to display the Sultanate's prosperity and generosity. Islamic festivals such as *Id al-Fitr*, *Id al-Azha*, *Shab-i-Bar'at*, and *Muharram* were celebrated with great enthusiasm. *Id al-Fitr* marked the end of Ramadan, featuring grand feasts, market decorations, and processions where nobles accompanied the Sultan. *Id al-Azha* was significant for its animal sacrifices and widespread distribution of meat. Muharram, particularly the day of Ashura, was solemnly observed in remembrance of Imam Husain. The Prophet's birth anniversary (*Milad-i-Nabi*) was another major event, celebrated with charity, feasts, and Quranic recitations. Nobles hosted these gatherings, distributing food and money among the poor, reinforcing their role as

benefactors. The observance of these religious occasions was not only a demonstration of faith but also a means for rulers to display their piety and commitment to Islamic traditions. Nobles competed in organizing the most elaborate celebrations, often-funding mosque renovations or commissioning Quranic recitations for the public. Special prayers and sermons were conducted, where scholars and religious figures were invited to discuss the significance of each festival. Public participation was encouraged, ensuring that these events fostered unity and social harmony within the Sultanate.

Persian influences were evident in the celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, introduced by Central Asian rulers. Poetry recitations, music, feasts, and royal gatherings marked Nowruz. The festival strengthened social ties among nobles, allowing them to highlight their wealth. Despite Islamic opposition to some festivities, Persian traditions persisted alongside Indian customs. Hindu influences were also visible, as nobles participated in local celebrations, adopting elements such as decorative lamps and fireworks, particularly during *Shab-i-Bar'at*. These cross-cultural festivities illustrated the blending of Persian, Turkish, and Indian traditions within the Sultanate. Nobles used such events to gain favor with both Muslim and non-Muslim subjects, reinforcing their political authority. The fusion of traditions created a unique cultural identity that distinguished the Delhi Sultanate from other Islamic dynasties. Over time, Persian and Indian celebrations intertwined, influencing later dynasties in the subcontinent, including the Mughals.

Marriages among nobles were grand affairs involving extensive rituals and lavish spending. They followed a mix of Central Asian, Persian, and Indian customs. The *Nikah* was a formal legal contract, followed by celebrations including henna ceremonies, feasts, and music. The Sultan and high-ranking nobles often attended these weddings, presenting valuable gifts to the bride and groom. Marriage ceremonies were occasions for displaying wealth and strengthening political alliances. Women played a central role, organizing celebrations and performing rituals, including mock fights and the scattering of gold dinars. Marriage festivities lasted for several days, with each day dedicated to different rituals and gatherings. Elaborate clothing, jewelry, and embroidered fabrics were displayed to emphasize

the wealth and status of the families involved. Nobles arranged entertainment such as dancers and musicians to enhance the celebratory atmosphere. These ceremonies were carefully planned, and the success of a wedding reflected the host's power and social standing.

Funerals were solemn occasions marked by mourning and ceremonial gatherings. The death of a Sultan or noble led to widespread expressions of grief, with nobles tearing their garments and throwing dust over themselves. Mourning periods lasted several days, during which prayers and Quran recitations were held. Nobles frequently visited the graves of the deceased, offering flowers, fruits, and charitable donations in their memory. Funeral traditions combined Islamic practices with local customs, reflecting the composite culture of the Delhi Sultanate. The presence of high-ranking officials at a funeral signified the deceased's importance within the court. Condolence visits were common, with nobles and dignitaries offering their sympathies to the bereaved family. Some Sultans built elaborate mausoleums to commemorate prominent figures, further highlighting the significance of death rituals. Funerals also served as a moment for political maneuvering, as rival factions sought to capitalize on leadership transitions. The cultural life of the Delhi Sultanate's nobility was marked by a rich blend of Islamic, Persian, and Indian traditions. Festivals and ceremonies were not just moments of celebration but also political tools to reinforce loyalty and social hierarchy. Entertainment, whether in the form of music, games, or feasts, played a crucial role in the daily lives of nobles. The grandeur of these occasions reflected the ruling elite's wealth and power, shaping the Delhi Sultanate's cultural identity. Despite religious objections to certain forms of entertainment, the nobility continued to indulge in festivities that defined their elite status and strengthened their ties with the court and the people. These social and cultural activities helped nobles maintain their influence while also fostering unity among different communities within the empire. Over time, the traditions established during the Delhi Sultanate period influenced later dynasties, shaping the broader cultural landscape of medieval India. The balance between religious devotion and luxurious entertainment reflected the complexity of noble life, where power, faith, and extravagance coexisted.

Several historians provide a comprehensive review of the role of the nobility in the Delhi Sultanate. These historical sources include works by Shams Siraj Afif, Nizamuddin Ahmad, Abdul Qadir Al-Badaoni, Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah Ferishta, Khwaja Abdul Malik Isami, Amir Khusrau, Ziauddin Barani, and others. These historians highlight the political, military, cultural, and economic influence of the nobility. They explore how the nobility shaped governance, patronized arts and literature, and maintained their dominance through wealth, land grants, and strategic alliances. The historical analysis helps in understanding the complexities of noble power and its implications for the administration and stability of the Delhi Sultanate. Additionally, the review outlines how the nobility's roles evolved across different reigns, sometimes strengthening the empire and at other times weakening it due to internal conflicts. These historians also highlight the transformation of noble privileges from earned rewards to hereditary entitlements, which had lasting effects on governance.

The nobility significantly influenced cultural development through their patronage of architecture, literature, and the arts. According to Shams Siraj Afif, their support for Persian literary traditions and monumental architecture helped define the Sultanate's cultural identity. Abdul Qadir Al-Badaoni, in '*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*,' describes how nobles organized literary gatherings, fostering Persianate cultural dominance. Amir Khusrau, in '*Khazain-ul-Futuh*,' details how the nobility's funding of poets and scholars helped merge Persian and Indian traditions. Their architectural contributions, including mosques, madrasas, and public works, symbolized both their wealth and religious devotion, as seen in the works of Firuz Shah Tughlaq in '*Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*.' Nobles built grand structures such as tombs, gardens, and palaces, which served both aesthetic and political purposes, reinforcing their prestige. Their patronage extended to music and dance, bringing together cultural influences from Persia, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This cultural investment not only elevated their social standing but also created lasting artistic legacies that influenced later dynasties, including the Mughals. The nobles also funded the translation of Persian and Arabic texts into regional languages, facilitating knowledge dissemination among scholars and officials. Their contributions to

architecture and literature ensured that the Delhi Sultanate remained a center of cultural vibrancy despite political turmoil.

Nobles lived in immense luxury, highlighting their power through extravagant feasts, lavish clothing, and grand palaces. Afif describes how their garments were embroidered with gold and their residences adorned with intricate carvings. Nizamuddin Ahmad and Al-Badaoni emphasize the role of wealth in reinforcing noble status, with feasts, processions, and ostentatious displays of riches serving as political statements. However, their indulgence also contributed to economic disparities, creating a divide between the ruling elite and the common populace. Nobles spent vast amounts on personal luxuries, including jewelry, exotic animals, and fine textiles imported from Persia and Central Asia. Their feasts often included rare delicacies, and their palatial homes housed courtyards filled with fountains and lush gardens. They employed musicians, poets, and entertainers to host elaborate gatherings, reinforcing their image as patrons of culture and sophistication. The display of wealth was not merely a personal indulgence but a strategic assertion of power, ensuring that their authority was visibly unmatched. However, excessive spending also led to financial mismanagement, forcing some nobles to extract more revenue from their landholdings, which in turn strained relations with the peasantry.

Nobles not only governed but also acted as patrons of religious and educational institutions. Nizamuddin Ahmad notes that they funded madrasas and mosques, strengthening the Sultanate's Islamic identity. Minhaj-i-Siraj, in '*Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*,' highlights how Turkish slave-origin nobles were instrumental in stabilizing the Sultanate by promoting sharia law and Islamic scholarship. Their endowments ensured the proliferation of religious education, attracting scholars from different regions and reinforcing their legitimacy as protectors of Islamic traditions. Many nobles took pride in their role as custodians of faith, commissioning Quranic calligraphy, religious treatises, and theological debates. They supported Sufi orders, whose influence on society helped bridge the gap between rulers and subjects by fostering a sense of spiritual unity. Endowed mosques and madrasas became centers of learning, attracting students from across the Islamic world. Through their patronage, they contributed to the development of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence),

ensuring that religious law remained an essential part of governance. However, some nobles used religious endowments as a means to gain political legitimacy, often intertwining faith with personal ambition.

Despite their influence, the nobility also contributed to the Sultanate's weaknesses. Ziauddin Barani criticizes their moral decline, arguing that their increasing focus on luxury weakened governance. Political factionalism, as observed by Ferishta and Mushtaqi, created administrative challenges that destabilized the empire. The *iqta* system, initially designed to facilitate governance, eventually allowed nobles to amass independent power, leading to the decentralization of authority. This autonomy led to frequent conflicts between nobles and the central government, as some sought greater independence while others aligned with rival factions within the court. The power struggles weakened the Sultan's ability to enforce laws uniformly, resulting in governance failures. Corruption among nobles led to increased taxation and economic strain, further alienating the peasantry and merchants. Attempts to curb noble influence, such as Sultan Alauddin Khalji's economic reforms, faced strong resistance and were only partially successful. Ultimately, the unchecked power of the nobility played a role in the decline of the Delhi Sultanate, as internal divisions made it vulnerable to external invasions and dynastic changes.

The nobility of the Delhi Sultanate were powerful agents in politics, culture, and economics. Their contributions to governance, religious patronage, and artistic advancements left a lasting legacy. However, their increasing autonomy and extravagant lifestyles contributed to the weakening of the central authority. The review of historical sources reveals a complex relationship between the Sultan and his nobles—one of mutual dependence, competition, and eventual fragmentation that influenced the trajectory of the Sultanate's history. Their patronage of culture and administration was instrumental in shaping medieval India, their resistance to centralization created challenges that ultimately weakened the empire. Their impact is evident in the cultural and architectural landmarks that continue to be admired today. The historical accounts examined in this chapter highlight both the strengths and flaws of noble rule, providing insights into the broader dynamics of power and governance in the Delhi Sultanate. By balancing authority and ambition, the nobility

shaped an era marked by both grandeur and internal strife, leaving a multifaceted legacy that endured beyond their time.

The nobility during the Sultanate period in India led a life of luxury, marked by grand palaces, exquisite clothing, and a vibrant cultural atmosphere. As high-ranking officials and rulers, they had access to immense wealth, which allowed them to indulge in a lifestyle that symbolized their power and status. Their residences were lavishly decorated, reflecting their rank, and were often located in designated areas allotted by the Sultan in newly established cities. These residences were not merely homes but also served as administrative centers, places for social gatherings, and spaces that reinforced their influence in society. The chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the domestic life of the nobility, focusing on their homes, lifestyle, clothing, transport, food, and household structures. The nobles also played an essential role in cultural and artistic patronage, influencing trends in architecture, fashion, and urban planning. Their influence extended beyond the confines of their homes, affecting governance, economic policies, and social structures.

Mosques played a significant role in noble households, often being constructed near their residences. These religious structures served as places of worship, social gatherings, and centers for religious discourse. Nobles actively participated in religious activities, commissioning scholars and theologians to conduct discussions. Some nobles, such as Najmuddin Jilani and Ibn Batuta, built mosques near their homes, reinforcing their pious image. In some cases, nobles created underground chambers for solitary worship, reflecting a blend of religious devotion and architectural ingenuity. Many nobles also funded the construction of *madrasas* (Islamic schools), ensuring religious education flourished. They often invited renowned scholars and Sufi saints to their homes, seeking their blessings and guidance. Religious festivals were grand affairs in noble households, marked by feasts, charity, and public prayers. The nobility of the Delhi Sultanate enjoyed an opulent lifestyle marked by grand residences, extravagant feasts, fine clothing, and extensive household establishments. Their homes functioned as both private sanctuaries and political arenas, reinforcing their status and influence. While their cultural and architectural contributions were significant, their extravagant

expenditures and factional rivalries often weakened the stability of the empire. The noble class played a crucial role in shaping the socio-political and cultural fabric of the Sultanate, leaving behind a legacy of grandeur, wealth, and historical intrigue. Their residences, customs, and traditions continued to influence later dynasties, particularly the Mughals, who inherited and expanded upon their architectural and administrative legacies. Despite occasional efforts by Sultans to curtail their growing influence, the nobility remained a formidable force throughout the period. Their contributions to governance, culture, and religion cemented their place in history, though their excesses also played a role in the eventual decline of the Sultanate.

Nobles of the Delhi Sultanate were not only administrators but also played an essential role in shaping the artistic, architectural, and literary culture of the period. Literary and epigraphic evidence highlights their active participation in these fields, demonstrating their contributions to art, science, literature, and architecture. Nobles followed royal practices in construction and patronized men of learning, fostering an environment where knowledge flourished. They were proficient in various branches of science and literature, composing works in *Arabic*, *Persian*, and *Awadhi*, among other languages. Their patronage led to the development of a unique Indo-Islamic artistic and intellectual tradition that blended Central Asian, *Persian*, and Indian influences. Many nobles were themselves poets and scholars, writing texts that addressed theological, historical, and scientific subjects. The blending of cultural elements in their patronage reflected the cosmopolitan nature of the Sultanate, which was influenced by migrations and intellectual exchanges from across the Islamic world. Through their contributions, the nobles helped shape a distinctive Indo-Islamic cultural identity that persisted for centuries.

The architectural endeavors of the nobles can be classified into two main categories: religious buildings and secular structures. They constructed mosques, *idgahs*, *namazgahs*, tombs, forts, stepwells, and public welfare buildings, leaving behind a lasting architectural legacy. Their projects not only fulfilled religious and administrative functions but also symbolized their political authority and personal devotion. By sponsoring architectural endeavors, the nobles reinforced their loyalty to the Sultan while simultaneously securing their legacy. The aesthetic principles

seen in their constructions, such as symmetry, calligraphy, and geometric patterns, continued to influence later architectural developments, including those of the Mughal period. Nobles played a key role in constructing religious structures, particularly *Jami mosques* across different regions of India. Prominent examples include the Jami Mosque at Cambay, built by Daulat Shah Muhammad Al Butamari in 1325, which showcased the fusion of Indo-Islamic architecture. The Khilji noble Malik Naib constructed a Jami Mosque at Deogir, while Muhammad Jalal, secretary to Mahmud, built the Jami Mosque at Bulandshahr using materials from Jain and Hindu temples. Nobles such as Malik Muffarih Sultani, Qazi Hilal Khan, and Tajuddin Mir Miran Salari further contributed to mosque construction in Gujarat, Hansi, and Lakhnauti, blending *Arabian* and Indian architectural styles. Many of these mosques featured domed prayer halls, elaborately carved stone pillars, and inscriptions from the *Quran*. The fusion of indigenous and Islamic architectural elements led to the creation of a unique style that defined the Sultanate's religious structures. Over time, these mosques became centers of community life, fostering religious and educational activities. Apart from mosques, nobles constructed *idgahs* and *namazgahs* for large congregational prayers. Notable examples include the *idgah* at Jajmau, built during Alauddin Khilji's reign, and another at Rapri by Malik Kafur. These structures were adorned with beautifully ornamented walls and brickwork. Malik-ul-Umara Tajud-Daulat constructed an *idgah* at Jalor, while Kamal Hamid built one at Mosampura during Zafar Khan's governorship. These structures were designed to accommodate large gatherings, particularly during Eid celebrations. Many were constructed on elevated platforms, emphasizing their importance in communal religious observances. The architectural embellishments found in *idgahs* and *namazgahs* often reflected the regional styles and materials available at the time. Noble-sponsored tombs also reflected the synthesis of Indo-Persian styles. Examples include the tomb of Malik Sher Khan in Bhatnir and Fakhruddin Kotwal's mausoleum in Delhi. The tomb of Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul Telangani was the first octagonal tomb in Delhi, built in 1368, showcasing architectural elements inspired by the Dome of the Rock. Lodi nobles later introduced a significant innovation by situating tombs within walled gardens, a practice later continued by the Mughals. The design of these tombs incorporated intricate stone latticework (*jali*), massive

domes, and decorative calligraphy. Many tombs became pilgrimage sites, reinforcing the noble's religious and political legacy. The practice of commissioning tombs within gardens symbolized a blend of *Persian* and Indian burial traditions, reflecting notions of paradise in Islamic thought.

Nobles did not limit themselves to religious structures; they also constructed cities, bridges, wells, stepwells, canals, forts, and inns. Town-building activities included Malik Sher Khan founding Bhatnir and Malik Bahauddin Tughril establishing Sultankot. Zafar Khan built Zafarabad on the banks of the Gomti River. These cities were planned with markets, caravanserais, and administrative centers, making them hubs of trade and governance. Many noble-founded towns evolved into prominent commercial and cultural centers, attracting merchants and scholars. The presence of well-planned road networks and water management systems in these cities reflected the administrative foresight of the nobility. To fulfill military needs, nobles constructed strategic forts such as the Basankot Fort, built by Malik Husamuddin Iwaz Husain Khalji, and the fortress at Bathinda by Malik Sher Khan, cousin of Balban. These forts played a crucial role in defending frontier regions and securing trade routes. Many were built on elevated terrains, providing strategic advantages during battles. Fortifications often included watchtowers, moats, and intricate gateways that reinforced their defensive capabilities. Water management was a crucial concern, and nobles actively contributed to irrigation systems. They constructed *baolis* (stepwells) for public use, including the Jhalar Baoli by Malik Kafur Sultani in Bayana and the stepwell at Batihagarh by Jalaluddin Ahsan Hussaini. Firoz Shah Tughlaq's nobles such as Malik Maruf and Qutlugh Khan built tanks and reservoirs, ensuring water accessibility for the population. These stepwells not only served practical purposes but also functioned as social gathering places. The elaborate carvings and multi-tiered designs of many stepwells highlighted their artistic and engineering sophistication. Nobles frequently funded such projects to gain religious merit and solidify their standing in the community.

The cultural achievements of the Delhi Sultanate nobility laid the foundations of the Indo-Persian tradition that reached its fullest artistic expression during the Mughal Empire. The nobles of the Sultanate patronized Persian language, architecture,

literature, calligraphy, religious institutions, and decorative arts, creating a synthesis between Persian, Central Asian, and indigenous Indian traditions. The Mughal rulers inherited this cultural legacy and refined it through greater imperial patronage, technical innovation, and aesthetic sophistication. Rather than representing a complete break from the Sultanate, Mughal art and architecture should be viewed as the continuation and culmination of artistic processes initiated during the Delhi Sultanate.

The artistic and cultural foundations of the Mughal Empire were deeply rooted in the Indo-Persian traditions that emerged during the Delhi Sultanate. In the field of architecture, the Sultanate introduced many of the defining features of Indo-Islamic building traditions, including the extensive use of arches, domes, minarets, mosque architecture, and Quranic calligraphy combined with geometric ornamentation. These innovations are evident in monuments such as the Qutb Minar, Alai Darwaza, and the Tughlaq architectural complexes. The Mughal rulers inherited this architectural vocabulary and elevated it to a new level of refinement by introducing double domes, symmetrical planning, charbagh (four-part) garden layouts, extensive use of white marble, and the intricate pietra dura technique of stone inlay. Monumental structures such as Humayun's Tomb and the Taj Mahal thus represent the culmination of architectural principles that had their origins in the Sultanate period.

Similarly, the development of painting reflects a process of cultural continuity rather than abrupt transformation. During the Delhi Sultanate, Persian manuscript illustration and artistic traditions entered India through the migration of scholars, craftsmen, and artists from Central Asia and Persia. Although surviving examples of Sultanate painting are relatively limited, these early traditions laid the foundation for the evolution of Indo-Persian visual culture. Under the Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, imperial workshops (*kitabkhanas*) transformed these influences into one of the world's finest traditions of miniature painting. Mughal artists combined Persian compositional techniques with Indian artistic elements to produce highly sophisticated works distinguished by portraiture, realism, naturalistic representation of flora and fauna, and detailed depictions of courtly life and historical events.

The literary sphere likewise demonstrates the continuity of Indo-Persian cultural development. During the Delhi Sultanate, Persian became the principal language of administration, diplomacy, and elite literary expression through the patronage of the sultans and the nobility. Eminent scholars and poets such as Amir Khusrau, Zia al-Din Barani, Minhaj-us-Siraj, and Isami enriched Persian historiography, poetry, and court literature, thereby establishing a vibrant intellectual tradition in northern India. The Mughal rulers inherited this literary legacy and expanded it considerably through the patronage of richly illustrated historical chronicles, imperial biographies, poetry, translations of Sanskrit texts into Persian, and encyclopaedic works. This extensive literary production transformed the Mughal court into one of the foremost centres of Persian scholarship in the Islamic world.

A similar process of refinement is visible in calligraphy and the decorative arts. During the Delhi Sultanate, monumental inscriptions in elegant Arabic and Persian scripts, together with geometric patterns and arabesque motifs, formed the principal decorative elements of mosques, madrasas, tombs, and gateways. These artistic conventions reflected the aesthetic ideals of the broader Islamic world while adapting to local Indian craftsmanship. The Mughal period preserved these traditions but enriched them through more elaborate floral arabesques, exquisitely executed marble inlay (pietra dura), delicate jali screens, richly illuminated manuscripts, and highly refined calligraphic programmes integrated into architectural compositions. The result was an artistic synthesis that represented not a departure from Sultanate traditions but their fullest expression, demonstrating how the cultural foundations laid by the Delhi Sultanate were perfected under Mughal patronage. (Figures, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17)

The study of the nobility in the Delhi Sultanate reveals a fascinating intersection of politics, culture, administration, and artistic patronage. As a powerful class, nobles played a critical role in shaping the socio-political fabric of the empire. Their influence extended beyond governance, as they were also key figures in military affairs, economic policies, and cultural development. Beyond their political and military responsibilities, the nobles also played a vital role in shaping the cultural and intellectual landscape of the Delhi Sultanate. Their patronage extended beyond

governance, influencing art, literature, and architectural advancements that defined the era. Their lives were marked by immense wealth and status, reflected in their palatial residences, elaborate feasts, and luxurious lifestyles. However, they were not merely symbols of extravagance; they were instrumental in establishing administrative frameworks, ensuring political stability, and fostering artistic and intellectual advancements. One of the most significant aspects of noble life was their participation in courtly rituals, festivals, and entertainment. These events were not just sources of leisure but also strategic tools to reinforce their influence and maintain social hierarchies. The nobility's engagement in grand celebrations, religious observances, and literary gatherings showcased their commitment to both tradition and innovation. They used their patronage to support poets, musicians, and scholars, facilitating the synthesis of *Persian*, *Arabic*, and Indian traditions that defined the cultural identity of the Sultanate. This extensive patronage of cultural and architectural projects was made possible by the immense wealth accumulated by the nobles. Their financial power, derived from land grants, trade monopolies, and taxation, enabled them to sponsor grand artistic endeavors while also maintaining their luxurious lifestyles. However, this economic dominance also had darker consequences. As nobles sought to maintain their wealth and status, many engaged in bribery, corruption, and financial mismanagement, which gradually eroded the Sultanate's administrative efficiency and political stability. Despite the growing political tensions, nobles continued to assert their influence through elaborate public displays of wealth and power. Festivals, royal processions, and courtly rituals became essential tools for reinforcing their elite status and securing favor with the Sultan.

In conclusion, the nobles of the Delhi Sultanate were more than just administrators; they were patrons of art, architecture, literature, and governance. Their multifaceted roles ensured the prosperity and cultural vibrancy of their era. While their ambition and wealth sometimes led to political instability, their contributions laid the groundwork for the artistic and intellectual advancements that continued under subsequent dynasties, particularly the Mughals. Their imprint on history remains evident in the architectural marvels, scholarly texts, and cultural traditions that still

resonate today. While their ambitions sometimes led to instability, the nobles' contributions to administration, culture, and architecture laid the foundation for the Indo-Islamic traditions that flourished in later centuries, leaving a lasting imprint on the cultural and political history of South Asia, further developed many of their innovations and artistic influences.

The socio-cultural life of the Delhi Sultanate nobility becomes more meaningful when examined within the wider framework of the medieval Islamic world. Like the aristocracies of the Sultanate of Egypt, Empire of Persia, and the rulers of Central Asia, the nobles of the Delhi Sultanate exercised influence beyond military and administrative responsibilities. They functioned as patrons of architecture, literature, education, religion, and artistic expression, thereby shaping the cultural identity of their respective states. Nevertheless, the Delhi Sultanate developed distinctive characteristics because its ruling elite governed a culturally and religiously diverse Indian society. Unlike many contemporary Islamic polities where Persian-Islamic traditions predominated, the Sultanate nobility continuously interacted with indigenous Indian customs, resulting in the emergence of a composite Indo-Islamic aristocratic culture. This synthesis was reflected in architecture, ceremonial life, literary production, domestic practices, cuisine, and systems of patronage, distinguishing the Delhi Sultanate from its contemporaries.

The findings of this study also engage with important historiographical debates concerning the nature of the Delhi Sultanate. Earlier historians such as K. A. Nizami and Peter Jackson primarily examined the nobility from political and administrative perspectives, emphasizing its role in governance, military organization, and the consolidation of the Sultanate. K. M. Ashraf and Mohammad Habib, expanded this understanding by highlighting the social and cultural dimensions of medieval Indian society, while Satish Chandra explored the institutional development and political dynamics of the nobility. More recent scholarship by Sunil Kumar, Richard M. Eaton has emphasized cultural interaction, identity formation, and the processes through which Persian and Indian traditions converged to create a distinctive Indo-Islamic civilization. Building upon these scholarly interpretations, the present study argues that the Delhi Sultanate nobility should not be viewed solely as a political institution

but also as a dynamic social and cultural elite whose activities significantly influenced the evolution of medieval Indian society.

The principal contribution of this thesis lies in its comprehensive examination of the socio-cultural dimensions of the Delhi Sultanate nobility. Whereas earlier studies have generally focused on political history, military administration, or institutional development, this research adopts an interdisciplinary approach by integrating evidence relating to household organization, family life, women's roles, festivals, ceremonies, cuisine, architecture, literature, education, artistic patronage, and courtly culture. By analysing these interconnected aspects, the thesis demonstrates that the nobility functioned not merely as administrators of the Sultanate but also as active creators, patrons, and transmitters of culture. Furthermore, the study highlights the processes of cultural adaptation and synthesis through which Persian-Islamic traditions interacted with indigenous Indian practices, thereby contributing to the formation of a distinctive Indo-Islamic cultural identity.

In addition, this research draws together information dispersed across Persian chronicles, travel accounts, biographical literature, and modern historical scholarship into a single analytical framework. Such an approach offers a more holistic understanding of the everyday life, cultural practices, and intellectual contributions of the Sultanate nobility than has generally been available in previous studies. Consequently, the thesis contributes to the expanding historiography of medieval India by demonstrating that the socio-cultural history of the nobility is essential for understanding the broader processes of state formation, cultural exchange, and the development of composite traditions in the Indian subcontinent.

Therefore, the Delhi Sultanate nobility should be understood not merely as an administrative and military elite but as a significant agent of cultural transformation. Through their patronage of architecture, literature, education, visual arts, music, religious institutions, and courtly traditions, they shaped the cultural landscape of medieval India while simultaneously preserving and adapting the broader traditions of the Islamic world. Their legacy continued to influence subsequent political and cultural developments, particularly during the Mughal period, making the study of

their socio-cultural life indispensable to a comprehensive understanding of medieval Indian history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Aligarh, 1954; Eng. tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. IV, New Delhi, 2001.
- Afif, Shams Siraj, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, ed. Maulvi Wilayat Husain, Calcutta, 1891; Eng. tr. R. C. Jauhri, *Medieval India in Transition (Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi)*, Delhi, 2001.
- Afif, Shams-i Siraj, *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi*, Eng. trans. John Dowson, in H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as Told by Its Own Historians*, Vol. III, London, 1871.
- Ahmad, Nizamuddin, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*, Nawal Kishore edition, Lucknow, 1875; Eng. tr. Barun De, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973.
- Akhtasan Dehlavi, Mohammad Bin Sadr Taj Abdusi, *Basatin-ul Uns*, Edition and Annotations by Prof. Nazir Ahmad, New Delhi, 2010.
- Al-Andapatti, Maulana Alim bin 'Ala, *Fatawa-i-Tatarkhania*, ed. Qazi Sajjad Hussain, Dai'rul Ma'arif, Hyderabad, 1984.
- Anonymous, *Ghuniyat-ul-Munya*, ed. Shahab Sarmadee, Bombay, 1978.
- Anonymous, *Sirat-i-Firozshahi*, Facsimile edition, Khuda Bakhsh Public Oriental Library, Patna, 1999
- Arabi, Zain Badr, *Ma'adan al-Marani (Malfuzat)*, Bihar Sharif, 1884.
- Awfi, Muhammad, *Jawami'ul-Hikayat*, ed. Nizamuddin, London, 1929; Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. II, New Delhi, 2001.
- Al-Badaoni, Abdul Qadir Ibn-i-Muluk Shah, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*, ed. Maulvi Ahmad Ali, Calcutta, 1868; Eng. tr. George S. A. Ranking, Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1973.
- Badr Chach, *Qasaid-i-Badr Chach*; Hindi tr. S. A. A. Rizvi, in *Tughluq Kalin Bharat (1320-1351)*, Part I, Aligarh, 2007.
- Barani, Zia, *Tarikh-i-Firuzshahi*, ed. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Aligarh, 2005; Eng. tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India as told by its own Historians*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001; Eng. tr. A. R. Fuller and A. Khallaque, *The Reign*

of Alauddin Khalji (Translated from Barani's *Tarikh-i-Firozshahi*), Calcutta, 1967.

- Chelpi, Haji Khalifah, *Kashf-ul-Zunun*, Vol. I, Karachi, 1360 A.H./ 1941 A.D.
- Dehlavi, Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar* (A Treatise or biographical work), Matba-i-Mujtabai, Delhi, 1332 A.H.; Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. VI, Allahabad, 1984; Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlavi, *Akhbar-ul-Akhyar*, tr., Maulana Subhan Mahmud and M. Fazil, Delhi, 1990.
- Erskine, William T., *Memoirs of Babur*, 2 Volumes, London, 1921; Reprint Gurgaon, 1993.
- Ferishta, Muhammad Qasim Hindu Shah, *Gulshan-i-Ibrahimi* also known as *Tarikh-i-Ferishta*, Nawal Kishore Edition, Lucknow, 1865; Eng. tr. John Briggs, *History of the Rise of Muhammadan Power in India*, New Delhi, 1966.
- Haji al-Dabir, *Zafar-ul-Walih*, ed. D. Ross.
- Hasni, Syed Abdul Hai bin Fakhruddin, *Nuzhat-ul-Khwatir*, Vol. II, Hyderabad, 1350 A.H.
- al-Harevi, Khawaja Nimatallah bin Kh. Habibullah, *Tarikh-i-Khan Jahani wa Makhzan-i-Afghani*, ed. Syed Muhammad Imam al-Din, Asiatic Society of Pakistan, Dacca, 1960; Eng. tr. Nirodbhusan Roy, *History of the Afghans*, Santiniketan, 1958; Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V.
- Husaini, Muhammad Akbar, *Javami-al-Kalam* (Maljiizat of Shaikh Gesudaraz), Kanpur, A.H. 1356.
- Ibn Battuta, *Rehla*, Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Rehla of Ibn Battuta*, Gayakwad Oriental Series, Baroda, 1976; Eng. tr. H. A. R. Gibb, *The Travels of Ibn Battuta (1325-1354)*, Vol. I, II, III, New Delhi, 1993; H. A. R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta (Travels in Asia and Africa)*, 1325-1351 A.D. (Selection and Translation by), Delhi, 1992.

- Isami, Khwaja Abdul Malik, *Futuh-i-Salatin*, ed. A. S. Usha, Madras, 1948; Eng. tr. Agha Mahdi Husain, *Futuh-us-Salatin or Shanama-i-Hind*, Bombay, 1977.
- Jain, Pt. Bhagwan Das, *Jain-Vividh-Granthmala*, Jaipur, 1943.
- Jamali, Shaikh, *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, Matbaa-i-Rizvi, Delhi, 1311 A.H.
- Jamali, Shaikh, *Mathnavi-i-Mahr wa Mah*, ed. Husamuddin Rashidi, Karachi, 1974.
- Jarnali Sheikh, *Siyar-ul-Arifin*, MSS. Habibganj Collection, 22/ 11, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh.
- al-Kabuli, Umar bin Yahya, *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*, ed. Shahab Sarmadee, New Delhi, 1999.
- Khan, Mirza, *Tuhfat-al-Hind* (1675), ed. N. H. Ansari, Vol. I, Tehran, 1968; Vol. II, Persian Research Journal, Department of Persian, University of Delhi, 1983.
- Khan, Sir Syed Ahmad, *Asar-us-Sanadid*; Eng. tr., R. Nath, *Monuments of Delhi*, New Delhi, 1979.
- Khani, Muhammad Bihamid, *Tarikh-i-Muhammadi*, Eng. tr. Muhammad Zaki, Aligarh, 1972; Hindi tr. S. A. A. Rizvi, *Tughluq Kalin Bharat*, Part I, II, Aligarh, 2007.
- Khan, Ali Muhammad, *Mirat-i-Ahmadi*, ed. Syed Nawab Ali, Calcutta, 1928, Eng. tr., M. F. Lokhandwala, GOS, Baroda, 1965.
- Khurasani, Siraji, *Diwan-i-Saiyid Siraju'd-Din Khurasani* (known as Siraja), Prof. Nazir Ahmad (ed.), Aligarh, 1972.
- Khurd, Mir, *Siyar-ul-Auliya*, Delhi, Matha Muhibb-i-Hind, 1302 A.H./ 1883 A.D.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, 5 Vols, Nawal Kishore Edition, Lucknow, 1875-76; Ahmad, Dr. Habibuddin (Managing Editor), *Writings of Amir Khusrau: 700 years after the Prophet: A 13th-14th Century Legend of the Indian-Sub-Continent: Based on annotated translation of his work, Ijaz-i-Khusravi*, Vol. III & IV, Illinois, 2007.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Matla-ul-Anwar*, Nawal Kishore Edition, Lucknow, 1884.

- Khusrau, Amir, *Hasht Bahisht*, ed. Syed Sulaiman Ashraf, Aligarh, 1918.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Qiran-us-Sadain*, ed. Maulavi Muhammad Ismail, Aligarh, 1918.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Tughlaqnama*, ed. S. Hashmi Faridabadi, Aurangabad, 1933.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Nuh Sipihir*, ed. Mohammad Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1949; Eng. tr. R. Nath and Faiyaz Gwaliari, Jaipur, 1981.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Khazain-ul-Futuh*, ed. Muhammad Wahid Mirza, Calcutta, 1953; Eng. tr., M. Habib under the title *The Campaign of Alauddin Khalji*, Madras, 1931.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Wst-ul-Hayat*, ed. Fazal Ahmad, Bombay, 1308 A.H.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Duwal Rani Khazir Khan*, ed. K. A. Nizami, 1988; Rashid Ahmad Ansari, Aligarh, 1917.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Nihayat-ul-Kamal*, ed. Syed Yaseen Ali Nizami Dehlavi, Delhi, 1332 A.H.
- Khusrau, Amir, *Aina-i-Sikandari*, ed. Muhammad Said Ahmad Farugi, Aligarh, 1917.
- Mahru, Ain-ul-Mulk, *Insha-i-Mahru*, ed. Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Lahore, 1965.
- Manjhu, Sikandar, *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, ed. Salish Chandra Misra, Baroda, 1961; Eng. tr. Fazlullah and Lutfullah Faridi, Gurgaon, 1990.
- Mian Bhua, *Ma'adan al-Shafa Sikandar Shahi*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1877.
- Mulla Daud, *Chandayan*, ed. Mata Prasad Gupta, Agra, 1967; ed. Dr. Vishwnath Prasad, K. M. Institute, Agra, 1962; ed. Parneshwari Lal Gupta, Hindi Granth Ratnakar, Bombay, 1964.
- Muni, Jina Vijaya, *Thakkara-Pheru-viracita-Ratnapariksadi-sapta-grantha-samgraha*, Rajasthan Oriental Series, Jodhpur, 1961.
- Mushtaqi, Rizqullah, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, ed. I. H. Siddiqui, Rampur, 2002; Eng. tr. I. H. Siddiqui, ICHR, New Delhi, 1999.
- Mutahhar, *Diwan*, ed. Abdur Razzaq, Patna, 1998; Mutahhar, *Diwan-i Mutahhar*, Oriental College Magazine, Vol. XI, May 3, 1935.

- Nagori, Kamal Karim, *Majmu-i-Khani*, MSS. preserved in Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, University Farsia Fiqh, Zamima, no. 2; Subhanallah Collection, 297.3/ 15.
- Nagori, Al-Saeedi Qazi Hameeduddin, *Surur al-Sudur* (673 A.H./ 1274 A.D.), 21/ 168, MS. Habib Ganj Collection, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh
- Nizami, Hasan, *Taj-ul-Ma'asir*, ed. Syed Amir Hasan Abidi, New Delhi, 2008; Eng. tr. Bhagwat Saroop, Delhi, 1998.
- Pheru, Thakkura, *Rayanaparikkha: A Medieval Prakrit Text on Gemmology*, ed. Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, Aligarh, 1984.
- Pheru, Thakkura, *Dhatupatti*, ed. V. S. Agrawala, *The Journal of Uttar Pradesh Historical Society*, Vol. XXIV-XXV (1951-52).
- Pheru, Thakkura, *Ganitasarakaumudi: The Moonlight of the Essence of Mathematics*, Introduction, Translation and Mathematical Commentary by SaK.HYa (Sreeramula Rajeswara Sarma, Takanori Kusuba, Takao Hayashi and Michio Yano), New Delhi, 2009.
- Pheru, Thakkura, *Vastusara*, ed. Pt. Bhagwan Das, Jaipur.
- Qalandar, Hamid, *Khair-ul-Majalis*, ed. K. A. Nizami, Aligarh, 1959; Eng. tr. Prof Ishrat Hussain and Dr Hamid Afaq Siddiqui, Delhi, 2010.
- Al-Qalqashandi, *Subh-ul-A'sha*, Eng. tr. Otto Spies, *An Arab Account of India in the 14th Century*, (Being a translation of the chapters on India), Aligarh, 1935.
- Qawwas, Fakhruddin Mubarak Shah, *Farhang-i-Qawwas*, ed. Dr. Nazir Ahmad, Rampur, 1999.
- Quddusi, Ruknuddin, *Lataif-i-Quddusi*, Delhi, 1311 A.H./ 1894 A.D.
- Rafi, Hajib-i-Khairat Dehlavi, *Dastur-ul-Afazil-fi-lughat-il-fazail*, ed. Dr. Nazir Ahmad, Buniyad-i-Farhang, Tehran, Iran, 1353 Shamsi Hijra.
- Rizvi, Saiyyid Athar Abbas, *Aadi Turk Kaleen Bharat*, (Hindi) Aligarh, 2005.
- Rizvi, Saiyyid Athar Abbas, *Khalji Kaleen Bharat*, (Hindi) Aligarh, 2005.
- Rizvi, Saiyyid Athar Abbas, *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat (1320-1351 A.D.)*, (Hindi) Part-I, Aligarh, 2007.

- Rizvi, Saiyyid Athar Abbas, *Tughluq Kalin Bharat (1351-1398 A.D.)*, (Hindi) Part-II, Aligarh, 2007.
- Rizvi, Saiyyid Athar Abbas, *Uttar Timur Kaleen Bharat*, (Hindi) Vol. I -II, Aligarh, 2005.
- Samarqandi, Qazi Ruknuddin, *Hauz-ul-Hayat-AMU. Abd.*475.
- Samarqandi, Qazi Ruknuddin, *Mirat-ul-Ma'ani-AMV. Jawahir* 297.7/ 6.
- Sarwani, Abbas Khan, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi*, ed. S. M. Imam al-Din, Dacca, 1964.
- Sijzi, Amir Hasan, *Fawaid-ul-Fu'ad*, Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1312 A.H./ 1894 A.D.; Eng. tr. Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, New Delhi, 1995.
- Siraj, Minhaj, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, ed. Captain Nassau Lees, Mawlawis Khadim Hosain and Abd al-Hai, Calcutta, 1864; Eng. tr. Major Henry George Raverty, London, 1881; New Delhi, 1970.
- Sirhindi, Yahya bin Ahmad Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, ed. Muhammad Hidayat Husain, Asiatic Society Calcutta, 1931; Eng. tr. K. K. Basu, Karachi, 1977; Eng. tr., H. Beveridge, Delhi, 1992.
- Sharif, Jafar, *Qanun-i-Islam*, Eng tr., William Crooke, *Islam in India, or, The Qnn-i-Islam; The Customs of the Musalmns of India* , Calcutta, 1921.
- Tughlaq, Firoz Shah, *Futuh-i-Firuzshahi*, ed. Azra Alavi, Delhi, 1996.
- Umar bin Yahya al-Kabuli, *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*, ed. Shahab Sarmadee, New Delhi, 1999.
- Al-Umari, Shihabuddin, *Masalik-ul-Absar fi-mamalik-ul Amsar*, Eng. tr. (joint), Otto Spies, Shaikh Abdur Rashid, Moin-ul Haq, Aligarh, 1943; Shihabuddin al-Umari, *Maslaik-ul-Absar*, Eng. tr. I.H. Siddiqui, in *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information*, Delhi, 1992; Eng. tr. Siddiqui, I. H., and Qazi Mohammad Ahmad, *A Fourteenth Century Arab account of India under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq*, Aligarh, 1971; Eng. tr. Elliot and Dowson, *History of India*, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001.
- Wassaf, Abdullah, *Tajriyat-ul-Amsar wa Tajriyat-ul-Asar*, Eng. tr., Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, New Delhi, 2001.

- Yadgar, Ahmad, *Tarikh-i-Shahi* also known as *Tarikh-i-Salatin-i-Afghana*, ed. M. Hidayat Hosain, Calcutta, 1939; Eng. tr. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. V., New Delhi, 2001.

SECONDARY WORKS

- Abdur Rahman, Sayyed Sabah-ud-Din, *Amir Khusrau as a Genius*, Delhi, 1982.
- Agrawala, Vasudeva S., 'A Unique Treatise on Medieval Indian Coins', in H. K. Sherwani (ed.) *Dr. Ghulam Yazdani Commemoration Volume*, Hyderabad, 1966.
- Ahmad, S. "Court Customs and Nobility in the Sultanate Period". Vol. 1, *Historical Review Press*, United Kingdom, 2015.
- Ahluwalia, M. S., *Muslim Expansion in Rajasthan (The Relations of Delhi Sultanate with Rajasthan 1206-1526)*, Delhi, 1978.
- Ahmad, Muhammad Basheer, *Administration of Justice in Medieval India*, Aligarh, 1941; Karachi, 1951.
- Ahmad, M. G., *The Contribution of India to Arabic Literature*, Allahabad, 1946.
- Ahmed, Qeyamuddin, *Corpus of Arabic and Persian Inscriptions of Bihar (A. H. 640-1200)*, Patna, 1973.
- Alam, Muzaffar, *Competition and co-existence: Indo-Islamic interaction in Medieval north India*, in *India and Indonesia General Perspective*, ed. J. C. Heestennan and Peter James Marshall, Leiden, 1989.
- Alam, Muzaffar, *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, New Delhi, 2000.
- Ansari, Muhammad Ashraf, *Socio-Cultural Life of the Great Mughals*, ed. Jaweed Ashraf, Delhi, 2008.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, *Amir Khusrau: As a Historian*, Patna, 1992.
- Athar Ali, M., *Medieval India: Studies in Polity. Ideas, Society and Culture*, Delhi, 2006.
- Athar Ali, M., 'Nobility under Muhammad Tughluq', in *Medieval India: Studies in Polity, Ideas, Society and Culture*, Delhi, 2006.

- Ashraf, Kunwar Muhammad, *Life and Conditions of the People of Hindustan*, Delhi, 1971.
- Banerjee, Jamini Mohan, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, Delhi, 1967.
- Bargoti, Rajeev, *Bayana*, Jaipur, 2003.
- Bhandarkar, Shridhar R., *Report of a Second Tour in Search of Sanskrit Manuscripts made in Rajputana and Central India in 1904-05 and 1905-06*, Bombay, 1907.
- Bilquis, Maria, *Persian Literature in Sultanate Period*, Aligarh, 2008.
- Brij bhushan, Jamila, *Sultan Raziya (Her Life and Times: A Reappraisal)*, New Delhi, 1990.
- Brown, Percy, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, Mumbai, 1997.
- Chandra, Satish, *Medieval India*, Part I, New Delhi, 2005.
- Chandra, Satish. “*Medieval India: From Sultanate to the Mughals*”. Vol. 1, ‘Har-Anand Publications’, 1975.
- Chandra, Dr. Moti, *Costumes, Textiles, Cosmetics and Coiffure in Ancient and Medieval India*, ed. Dr. S. P. Gupta, Delhi, 1973.
- Chaudhri, Tapan Rai and Habib, Irfan, *Cambridge Economic History of India (C. 1200- C. 1750)*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 2004.
- Chitnis, K. N., *Socio-Economic History of Medieval India*, New Delhi, 2005.
- Chopra, P. N., *Social Cultural and Economic History of India*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1974.
- Chopra, R. M., *The Rise, Growth and Decline of Inda-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 2012.
- Commissariat, M. S., *History of Gujarat*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1938.
- Dar, M.I., *Literary and Cultural Activities in Gujarat under the Khaljis and the Sultanate*, Bombay, 1960.
- Day, U. N., *Medieval Malwa*, Delhi, 1965.
- Day, U. N., *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History*, Delhi, 1971.
- Dayal, Rai Bahadur Prayag and Mukherjee, Radha Kumud (eds.), *Descriptive List of Coins and Inscriptions Compiled by the United Provinces Historical Society*, Allahabad, 1936.

- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, *Indo-Islamic Architecture*, Delhi, 1970.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, *Published Muslim Inscriptions of Rajasthan*, Jaipur, 1971.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, *Mosques of India*, Delhi, 1979.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, *A Topographical list of Arabic, Persian and Urdu Inscriptions of South India*, Delhi, 1989.
- Digby, Simon, *War-Horse and Elephant in the Delhi Sultanate (A Study of Military Supplies)*, Oxford, 1971.
- Dr. Duljeet & P.C. Jain, *Indian Miniature Painting*, New Delhi, 2006.
- Eaton, R. M., “*The rise of Islam and the Bengal frontier, 1204–1760*”, ‘University of California Press’, California, 2003.
- Eaton, R.M., *India in the Persianate Age: (1000–1765)*, ‘University of California Press’, California, 2019.
- Flood, Finbarr Barry, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval "Hindu-Muslim" Encounter*, New Jersey, 2009.
- Fuhrer, A., *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Vol. II, Varansi, 1969.
- Fuhrer, A., *Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur*, Varansi, 1971.
- Fergusson, James, *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, London, 1891.
- Gilani, Manazir Ahsan, *Hindustani Musalmanon ka Nizam-i-Taleem wa Tarbiyat*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1944.
- Gordon, Stewart (ed.), *Robes of Honour*, New Delhi, 2003.
- Goswami, B. N., 'A Much-Loved Tale', *Spectrum, The Tribune*, Sunday, July 11, 2010.
- Habib, Irfan (ed.), *Medieval India I (Researches in the History of India), 1200-1750 A.D.*, Aligarh, 1992.
- Habib, Muhammad, *Politics and Society during the Early Medieval Period*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1981.
- Habib, Muhammad and Nizami, K. A. (ed.), *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. V, New Delhi, 1982.
- Habibullah, A. B. M., *Foundation of Muslim Rule in India*, Allahabad, 1961.

- Hadi, Nabi, *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 1995.
- Hadi, Nabi, *A History of Indo-Persian Literature*, New Delhi, 2001.
- Haig, Wolseley (ed.), *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1965.
- Halim, Abdul, *History of Lodi Sultans of Delhi and Agra*, Delhi, 1974.
- Hasan, Zafar, *List of Muhammadan and Hindu Monuments in Delhi Province*, Vol. III.
- Havell, E. B., *Indian Sculpture and Painting Illustrated by Typical Masterpieces*, London, 1908.
- Havell, E. B., *Indian Architecture: Its Psychology, Structure and History*, London, 1913.
- Havell, E. B., *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, Delhi, 1980.
- Hodiwala, S. H., *Studies in Indo-Muslim History*, Vol. I, Bombay, 1939.
- Husain, Agha Mahdi, *Tughluq Dynasty*, Calcutta, 1963.
- Husain, Agha Mahdi, *Rise and Fall of Muhammad bin Tughluq*, Delhi, 1972.
- Husain, Iqbal, *The Early Persian Poets of India*, Patna, 1937.
- Husain, Yusuf, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, Bombay, 1957.
- Husain, Yusuf, *Indo-Muslim Polity*, Simla, 1971.
- Islam, Riaz-ul, 'Age of Firuz Shah', *Medieval India Quarterly*, July, 1950.
- Islam, Zafar-ul, *Fatawa Literature of the Sultanate Period*, Delhi, 2005.
- Jaffar, S. M., *Education in Muslim India*, Delhi, 1973.
- Jackson, Paul, *The Way of a Sufi: Shafuddin Maneri*, Delhi, 1987.
- Jackson, Peter, *The Delhi Sultanate: A Political and Military History*, Cambridge, 1999.
- Jauhri, R. C., *Firuz Tughluq (1351-1388 A.D.)*, Agra, 1968.
- Joshi, Rekha, *The Reign of Balban*, Delhi, 1982.
- Kareem, Abdul, *Social History of the Muslims in Bengal (Down to A.D. 1538)*, Dacca, 1959.
- Khan, A. D., *A History of Sadarat in Medieval India (Pre-Mughal period)*, Vol. I, Delhi, 1988.
- Khan, Mohammad Ifzal-ur Rahman, *Rohilkhand Territory (Katehr) in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1995.

- Khan, Mumtaz Ali, *Some Important Persian Prose Writings of the 13th Century A.D. in India*, Aligarh, 1970.
- Kumar, Sunil, *Emergence of the Delhi Sultanate*, New Delhi, 2007.
- Koch, Ebba, *Mughal Architecture*, Vienna, 1990.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, *History of the Khaljis (1290-1320 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, *Twilight of the Delhi Sultanate*, New Delhi, 1980.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, *Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*, New Delhi, 1992.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, *Muslim Slave System in Medieval India*, Delhi, 1994.
- Law, N. N., *Promotion of Learning in India during the Muhammadan rule by the Mohammedans*, London, 1916.
- Levy, Reuben, *The Social structure of Islam*, Cambridge, 1957.
- Losensky, Paul & Sunil Sharma (trs.), *In the Bazaar of Love: The Selected Poetry of Amir Khusrau*, New Delhi, 2011.
- Luniya, B. N., *Life and Culture in Medieval India*, Indore, 1978.
- Majumdar and Pusdkai-, *History and Culture of Indian People*, Vol. VI, Bhartiya Vidhya Bhavan, Bombay, 1952.
- Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *History and Culture of India (The Delhi Sultanate)*, Bombay, 1960.
- Mehta, J. L., *Advanced Study in the History of Medieval India*, Delhi, 1983.
- Mehta, Rustam J., *Masterpieces of Indo-Islamic Architecture*, Bombay, 1976.
- Mirza, M. Wahid, *The Life and Works of Amir Khusrau*, Delhi, 1974.
- Misra, S. C., *Rise of Muslim Power in Gujarat from 1298 to 1442*, New Delhi, 1982.
- M. Mujeeb, *Indian Muslims*, London, 1967.
- Mukherjee, Sujit, *A Dictionary of Indian Literature*, (One) (Beginnings - 1850), Orient Longman.
- Munshi, K. M., *History and Culture of Indian People (Delhi Sultanate)*, ed. R. C. Majumdar, Vol. IV, Bombay, 1960.
- Nath, R., *History of Sultanate Architecture*, New Delhi, 1978.
- Nath, R., *Monuments of Delhi (A Historical Survey)*, Delhi, 1978.

- Niazi, Dr. Ghulam Sarwar Khan, *The Life and Works of Sultan Alauddin Khalji*, Lahore, 1990.
- Nigam, S. B. P., *Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)*, Delhi, 1967.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture*, Allahabad, 1966.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics during 13th Century*, Aligarh, 1966.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Salatin-i-Dehli ke Mazhabi Rujhanat*, Delhi, 1981.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Supplement to Elliot and Dowson's History of India*, Vol. III, Delhi, 1981.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Royalty in Medieval India*, New Delhi, 1997.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics in India*, Delhi, 2002.
- Ojha, G. H., *History of Udaipur*, Vol. I., Jodhpur, 2006.
- Om Prakash, *Cultural History of India*, New Delhi, 2005.
- Prasad, Ishwari, *History of Qaranuh Turks in India*, Indian Press, Allahabad, 1936.
- Prasad, Pushpa, *Sanskrit Inscriptions of Delhi Sultanate (1191-1526 A.D.)*, Delhi, 1990.
- Qamaruddin, Dr. Muhammad, *Society and Culture in Early Medieval India (712-1526)*, Delhi, 1985.
- Qamaruddin, Dr. Muhammad, *Crime and Punishments in the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526)*, Delhi, 1992.
- Qureshi, Ishtiaque Husain, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Lahore, 1942.
- Rahman, Sayyad Sabahuddin Abdur, *Amir Khusrau as a Genius*, Delhi, 1982.
- Rani, Dr. Abha, *Tughluq Architecture of Delhi*, Varansi, 1991.
- Rashid, Sheikh Abdur, *Society and Culture in Medieval India (1206-1556 A.D.)*, Calcutta, 1969.

- Ross E. Dunn, *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta (A Muslim Traveler of the 14th Century)*, Sydney, 1986.
- Safavi, Azarmi Dukhat (ed), *Contribution of Persian language and Literature to the Composite Culture of India*, Aligarh, 2004.
- Sahu, Kishori Parsad, *Some Aspect of North Indian Social Life, 1000-1526*, Calcutta, 1973.
- Sandilvi, Shujat Ali, 'A Great Indian Patriot', *Amir Khusrau Memorial Volume*, New Delhi, 1975.
- Schimmel, A. “Islam in the Indian subcontinent”. ‘Brill Academic Publishers’, Leiden, Netherlands, 1980.
- Shah Nawaz, Fazeela, *Socio-Cultural Life of the Nobility under the Delhi Sultans*, 2015.
- Shekhar, Chander, *Indo-Persian Studies: Texts and Translations*, New Delhi, 2007.
- Sheth, C. B., *Jainism in Gujarat (A.D. 1100 to 1600)*, Bombay, 1953.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India*, Aligarh, 1969.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information on the Life and Conditions of the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 1992.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, (ed), *Medieval India: Essays in Intellectual Thought and Learning*, Delhi, 2003.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Authority and Kingship under the Sultans of Delhi (13th-14th Centuries)*, New Delhi, 2006.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Delhi Sultanate: Urbanization and Social Change*, New Delhi, 2009.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Indo-Persian Historiography up to the Thirteenth Century*, Delhi, 2010.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, *Composite Culture under the Sultanate of Delhi*, Delhi, 2012.
- Srivastava, K. L., *Position of Hindus under the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526 A.D.)*, New Delhi, 1980.

- Thomas, Edward, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, Delhi, 1967.
- Vatsyayan, Kapila, *Dance in Indian Painting*, New Delhi, 2004.
- Verma, H. C., *Dynamics of Urban Life in Pre-Mughal India*, Delhi, 1986.
- Wade, Bonnie C., *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art, and Culture in Mughal India*, New Delhi, 1998.
- Zaki, Muhammad, *Muslim Society in the Northern India during 15th Century and first half of the 16th Century*, Calcutta, 1960.
- Zil-ur-Rahman, Syed, 'Hindustan mein Tibb ki Farsi Tasneefat', in *Contribution of Persian language and Literature to the Composite Culture of India*, ed. Azarmi Dukhat Safavi, Aligarh, 2004.

Articles:

- Abdur Rahman, Sayyed Sabah-ud-Din, 'Glimpses of Indo-Persian Literature', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. X, No. 2, June 1957.
- Abdur Rahman, Sayyed Sabah-ud-Din, 'Amir Khusrau as a Genius', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXX, No. 1-2, March-June 1977.
- Agrawala, Vasudeva S., 'A Sanskrit Inscription of the Reign of Sikandar Shah Lodi', *Journal of U. P. Historical Society*, Vol. IX, July 1936, Part II.
- Agrawala, Vasudeva S., 'A Note on Medieval Temple Architecture', *The Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society*, Vol. VXi, 1943.
- Ahmad, S. "Court Customs and Nobility in the Sultanate Period". Vol. 1, *Historical Review Press*, United Kingdom, 2015.
- Ahmad, M. Aziz, 'The Imperial Majlis in the Early Sultanate Period', *Proc. H. C.*, 1941.
- Ahmad, M. Aziz, 'The Central Structure of the Sultanate of Delhi', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 18, 1944.
- Ahmad, M. Aziz, 'Epic and Counter-Epic in Medieval India', *Journal of American Oriental Society*, Vol. 83, No. 4, September-December, 1963.
- Ahmad, Nazir, 'The Labjat-i-Sikandar Shahi, A unique and Exhaustive Book on Indian Music of The Time of Sikandar Lodi (1489-1517)', *Proc. I. H. C.*, 1953.

- Ahmad, Nazir, 'Some Little Known Indo-Persian Poets of 13th Century', *Studies in Indian Culture*, Ghulam Yazdani Commemoration Volume, ed. H. K. Sherwani, Hyderabad, 1966.
- Ahmad, Nazir, 'Three Little Known Persian Poets of the Time of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XIX, No. 3, September 1966.
- Arunad, Nazir, 'The Dastur-ul-Afazil', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XX, No. 4, December 1967.
- Akbar, M. "The Influence of Persian Culture in the Sultanate Period: A Study on Clothing." *Delhi Historical Review*, Delhi Historical Society', Delhi vol. 42, no. 2, 2015.
- Ahmed, Qeyamuddin, 'Some unpublished Pre-Mughal Inscriptions from Bihar', *EIAPS*, 1968.
- Ahmed, Dr. Shaikh Ishtiaque, 'Emeers and Disciples of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya', *Journal of Subcontinent Researches*, University of Sistan and Baluchestan, Vol. 2, No. 4, Autumn 2010.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Bihar in the time of last two Lodi Sultans', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1955.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Medicines and Hospitals in Muslim India', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1957.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Historical Value of Basatin-ul-Uns (A rare manuscript of 14th century)', *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, Vol. XLVIII, Sec. II, Patna, 1962.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Historical Matters in Ijaz-i-Khusravi', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1964.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Life and Conditions as Depicted in Risail-i-Ijaz-i-Khusravi', *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. X, No. I, August, 1967.
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Hunting in India under the Early Turks', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 48/ 49, Golden Jubilee Volume 1917-1967 (1968).
- Askari, Prof. Syed Hasan, 'Historical Fragments Relating to Malik Bayyu & His Times', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1-2, March-June, 1982.

- Banerjee, Anil Chandra, 'Kingship and Nobility in the Fifteen Century', *Indian Culture*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1935.
- Bhanu, Prof. Dharma, 'Promotion of Music by Turko-Afghan rulers of India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 29, no. I, 1955.
- Bukhari, Saiyyad Yusuf Kamal, 'Inscription from Maner', *EIAPS*, 1951-1952.
- Bukhari, Saiyyad Yusuf Kamal, 'Inscription from Archaeological Museum, Ajmer', *EIAPS*, 1955-1956.
- Burgess, Jas., *Muhammadan Architecture in Gujarat (Broach, Cambay, Dholka, Champir and Mahmudabad)*, ASI, Western India, Vol. VI, Varansi, 1971.
- Chaghtai, Dr. Abdullah, 'Some Inscription from Jodhpur State, Rajputana', *EIAPS*, 1949-1950.
- Chaghtai, Dr. Abdullah, 'The Oldest Extant Muslim Architectural Relics at Lahore', *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. XII, 1964.
- Chintamani, B. M., 'Notices of Thirteen MSS in Prakrit with Special Reference to Their Scientific and Technological Contents', *National Commission for the Compilation of History of Sciences in India*, Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi, 1971, Vol. VI, No. II.
- Chauhan, D. V., 'Sanskrit Influence on Amir Khusrau', *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Vol. 51, No. 1-4, 1970.
- Chawla, Joginder, 'Mode of Transport during 13th-14th Centuries', *Proc. I.H.C.*, Patiala, 1998.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Arabic and Persian Inscriptions from Indian Museum, Calcutta', *EIAPS*, 1955-1956.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Inscriptions from the Museum of Antiquities, Junagarh', *EIAPS*, 1955-1956.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Inscriptions from the Victoria Hall Museum, Udaipur', *EIAPS*, 1955-1956.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Khalji and Tughluq Inscriptions from U.P.', *EIAPS*, 1964.

- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'A Tughluq Inscription from North Bihar', *Nalini Kantha Bhattasala Commemoration Volume*, Dacca Museum, 1966.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'The Indo-Islamic Architecture of Bihar', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXV, No. 3-4, 1972.
- Delvoye, Francoise 'Nalini', 'Indo-Persian Accounts on Music Patronage in the Sultanate of Gujarat', in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, New Delhi, 2000.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Before Timur Came: Provincialization of the Delhi Sultanate through the Fourteenth Century', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 47, No. 3, *Between the Flux and Facts of Indian History: Papers in Honor of Dirk Koljf*, 2004.
- Desai, Ziyauddin Ahmad, 'Abd al-Quddus Gangohi (1456-1537) The Personality and Attitudes of a Medieval Indian Sufi', *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, Vol. III.
- Dr. Duljeet & P.C. Jain, *Indian Miniature Painting*, New Delhi, 2006.
- D'Souza, Victor S., 'A Unique Custom regarding Mahr (Dowry) observed by certain Indian Muslims of South India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 29, October 1955.
- Digby, Simon. "The Literary Evidence for Painting in the Delhi Sultanate." *Bulletin of the American Academy of Benares* (Varanasi) 1 (1967)
- Flood, Finbarr Barry, "Before the Mughals: Material Culture of Sultanate North India." *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World*, Vol. 36, no. 1, 2019,
- Habib, Irfan, 'Slavery in the Delhi Sultanate, Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. XV, No. 1-2, 1988-89.
- Habibullah, A. B. M., 'Re-evolution of the Literary sources of Pre-Mughal History', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XV, Hyderabad, 1941.
- Hadi, Nabi, 'Minhaj-i-Siraj and his Tabaqat-i-Nasiri', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXVII, No. 1-4, 1974.
- Hambly, Gavin R. G., 'Delhi Sultanate I Political and Cultural History' , *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. VII, Fasc. 3, December 15, 1994,

- Hameed-ud-Din, 'Indian Culture in the Late Sultanate Period', *East and West*, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1961.
- Haq, Moinul, 'Kol (Aligarh) During the Rule of the Lodi Sultans', *Proc. I.H.C.*, Madras, 1944.
- Hasan, Mrs. Khursheed Nurul, 'Ghunyat-ul-Munya (the earliest Persian manuscript on Indian Music)', *Proc. I. H. C.*, Delhi, 1961.
- Hasan, Prof. Mohibbul, 'Introduction of the Hindustani Section of the Babur-nama', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XXIX, No. 1-4, 1976.
- Islam, Zafar-ul, 'Fatawa Literature as a Source for the Socio-economic History of the Sultanate Period', *Islamic Culture*, Hyderabad, no. 2, April 1986.
- Hasan, I. "Clothing and Society: A Cultural Analysis of the Delhi Sultanate Nobility." *Journal of South Asian History*, South Asian Historical Research Foundation', vol. 38, no. 1, 2020, pp. 112–130.
- Horn, Paul, 'Muhammadan inscription from the Suba of Dihli', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, 1894.
- Husain, Agha Mahdi, 'Social Life and Institutions with especial reference to Hindus' in the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq', *Proc. I. H. C.*, Bombay, 1947.
- Husain, Agha Mahdi, 'Six Inscriptions of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq', *EIAPS*, 1957-1958.
- Jauhri, R. C., 'Learning and Literature during the reign of Firuz Shah Tughluq (1351-1388 A.D.)', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. VLI, no. 4. October 1967.
- Khan, M. Anwar, 'Modern Afghan Researches on Lodis and Surs', *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 4, 1977.
- Khan, M. "Footwear and Attire in the Sultanate Period." *Journal of Indian History*, 'Indian Historical Research Council', New Delhi, vol. 43, no. 2, 2015, pp. 210–220.
- Khan, Yusuf Husain, 'Social and Economic Conditions in Medieval India', *Islamic Culture*, January 1956.

- Khan, M. S. "Iqta system and court etiquette in medieval India", 'Academic Publishers', 'Lahore' 2020.
- Khare, G. H., 'Dravyapariksha of Thakkura Pheru A Study', *Journal of Numismatic society of India*, Vol. 28, 1966, Vol. 28, 1966.
- Kumar, Sunil, 'Assertions of Authority: A Study of the Discursive Statements of Two Sultans of Delhi', in *The Making of Indo-Persian Culture*, ed. Muzaffar Alam, New Delhi, 2000.
- Kumar, Sunil, 'The Delhi Sultanate as Empire', *The Oxford World History of Empire: Volume Two: The History of Empires*, ed. Peter Fibiger Bang, C.A. Bayly, Walter Scheidel, Oxford, 2021.
- Kumar, Sunil, 'The Ignored Elites: Turks, Mongols and a Persian Secretarial Class in the Early Delhi Sultanate', *Modern Asian Studies*, January 2009
- Lal, Kishori Saran, 'Political Conditions of the Hindus under the Khaljis', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1946.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, 'Cultural Activity During the Reign of Alauddin Khilji', *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. 25, Part. I, 1947.
- Lal, Kishori Saran, 'Food and Drinks in Medieval India', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2, 1952.
- Mirza, M. Wahid, 'Some Arabic and Persian Inscriptions from the East Punjab', *EIAPS*, 1953-1954.
- Naqvi, Hamida Khatoon, 'Some Varieties of Indian Silken Stuffs in Persian Sources C. 1200-1700', *Indian Journal of History of Science*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 1983.
- Nazim, Dr. M., 'Inscriptions from Bombay Presidency', *EIAPS*, 1933-1934.
- Nigam, S. B. P., 'The Life and Career of Qutlugh Khan', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1964.
- Nigam, S. B. P., 'Administrative Training of the Nobility under the Sultans of Delhi (1206-1398 A.D.)', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. VLI, no. 2, April 1976.
- Nizami, Khalique Ahmad, 'Some Aspects of Khanqah Life in Medieval India', *Studia Islamica*, No. 8, 1957.

- Ojha, P. N., 'Some Light on Promotion of Scholarship and Learning under the Tughlaq Sultans', *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. X, No. 2, January 26, 1968.
- Pal, Dharam, 'The Influence of the Slaves in the Muslim Administration of India', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 18, 1944.
- Pandey, Avadh Bihari, 'An Enlightened Despot of the 13th Century', *Proceedings of Indian History Congress*, 1947.
- Rashid, Sheikh Abdur, 'Insha-i-Mahru or Tarassul-i-Ain-ul-Mulki', *Islamic Culture: The Hyderabad Quarterly Review*, Vol. XVI, no. 3, July 1942.
- Rawlinson, H. G., 'The Traveller of Islam', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. V, No. I, 1931.
- Roy, N. B., 'A Peep into the Delhi Court During the Reign of Sultan Firuz Shah', *Proc. I. H. C.*, Hyderabad, 1941.
- Sahay, Dr. B. K., 'A Note on the Study of Persian by the Hindus during Medieval Period', *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. X, No. 2, 1968.
- Sahu, K. P., 'Hunting as a Pastime during the Turko-Afghan Period', *Journal of Historical Research*, Vol. XIII, No. 1, Ranchi, August 15, 1970.
- Saksena, Ramsingh, 'Muslim Epigraphy in Gwalior State', *Indian Antiquary*, vol. 55, 1926.
- Sen, Asit Kumar, 'On Slavery in Medieval India', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1956.
- Shahnawaz, Fazeela, 'Celebrations of Feast and Banquet by the Tughlaqid Nobles', *Central India Journal of Historical and Archaeological Research (CIJHAR)*, Vol. 2, July-September 2013, No. 7, Neemuch (M.P.).
- Shahnawaz, Fazeela, 'Festivals, Festivities and the Tughlaqid nobles', *The Journal of Social Science and Humanity Research*, Vol. I, Part II, July-December 2013.
- Shahnawaz, Fazeela, 'Epigraphic Evidences for the Tughlaqid Nobles and their Constructional Activities in Rajasthan and Gujarat', *Proceedings of Rajasthan History Congress*, Vol. XXVII, Jodhpur, 2014.

- Fazeela Shahnawaz, Historical Importance of the Indo-Sufi Masnavi Chandyan of Maulana Daud in *The Legacy: New Trends*, Omprakash Srivastav (ed.), Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany, 2013.
- Sharma, R. "Noble Clothing in the Sultanate Period: A Cultural Perspective." *Journal of South Asian Studies*, South Asian Cultural Studies Press' Lahore vol. 45, no. 3, 2017.
- Shokoohy, Mehrdad, 'Hissar-i-Firuzah (Sultanate and Early Mughal Architecture in district of Hisar, India)', *Monograph on Art, Archaeology and Architecture- South Asian Series*, London, 1988.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Life and Times of Daulat Khan Lodi (1334-1414)', *Proc. I.H.C.*, 1960.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'The Nobility under the Khalji Sultans', *Islamic Culture*, Vol. 37, No. I, 1963.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Tarikh-i-Daudi, A Source of the Afghan History of India (1451 A.D.-1555 A.D.)', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XIX, No. 1, 1966.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Masnad-i-Ali Mian Bhua: A Scholarly Statesman of Medieval India', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. XX, No. 3, 1967.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Khan-i-Jahan Maqbul' *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Vol. IV, (New Edition), Leiden, 1978.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Food Dishes and the Catering Profession in Pre-Mughal India', *Islamic Culture*, vol. 59, no. 2, 1985.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Historical Significance of the Fourteenth century Farhang Literature', in *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information*, Delhi, 1992.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Ikhtisan's History of the Tughluq Sultans in the Basatin-ul-Uns', in *Perso-Arabic Sources of Information*, Delhi, 1992.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Social Mobility in the Delhi Sultanate', in *Medieval India I (Researches in History of India, 1200-1750)*, ed. Irfan Habib, Delhi, 1992.
- Siddiqui, Iqtidar Husain, 'Amir Khusrau: A Political and Social Thinker', *Indo-Iranica*, Vol. 60, Nos. 1-2, Kolkata, March and July 2007.

- Verma, B. D., 'Inscription from the Central Museum, Nagpur', *EIAPS*, 1955-1956.
- Yazdani, G., 'Inscription from Kalyani', *EIAPS*, 1935-1936.
- Yazdani, G., 'Seven Inscriptions from Baroda State', *EIAPS*, 1939-1940.

Catalogues and Reports :

- Sahni, Daya Ram, *Annual report of ASI*, 1920-30, Delhi, 1935
- *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (Archaeological Survey of India)*, 1886-1981.
- *Annual Report on Indian Epigraphy (Archaeological Survey of India)*, 1955-57.
- Cunningham, Alexander, *Annual Report (ASI)*, 1862-63, 1864, 1865, Vol. I, VII, VIII.
- Cunningham, Alexander, *Annual Report (ASI)*, Delhi, 1929-1930.
- Cunningham, Alexander, *Archeological Survey of India Report, (Tour in Bundelkhand and Malwa- 1871-72; Central Provinces, 1873-74 by J.D.Beglar)*, Varanasi, 1966
- *Epigraphia Indo-Moslemica*, 1919-20, Ed. G. Yazdani, M.A. Mysore, 1987.
- *Epigraphia Indica (Arabic and Persian Supplement)*, 1913-1920, Delhi, 1987.
- Hameed, Abdul, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscript in the Khuda Baksh O. P. Library*, Patna, 1994.

APPENDICES

Figure 1: Miniature painting of Razia Sultana holding court ("darbar") with identifying inscriptions, by Gulam Ali Khan, circa 19th century.

Source: Ministry of Culture, Government of India



Figure 2: Royal Court of Mohammad bin Tughlaq

Source: Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

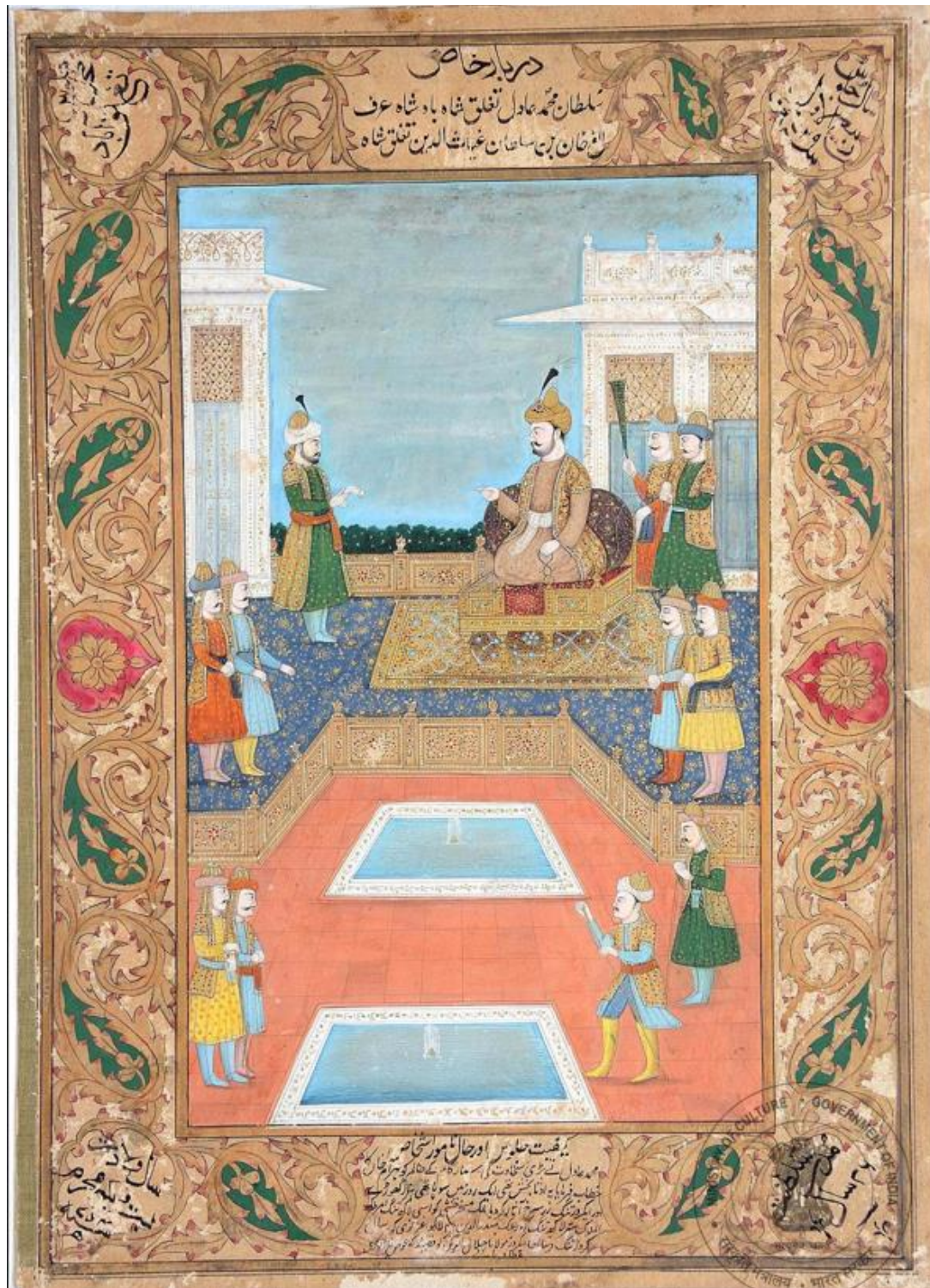


Figure 3: Chaurasi Khamba Mosque constructed by Malik Bahaauddin Tughril.

Sources: <http://hdheritagewalks.wordpress.com>



Figure 4 : Doorway

Source: <http://hdheritagewalks.wordpress.com>

Translation of Inscription on door: Tughril proclaims himself “the Great and Just Sultan and Prince of all Princes of the Turks, Arabs and Persians”



Figure 5: Tomb of Khan-i-Jahan Telangani wazir of Firuzshah Tuglaq.

Source: <http://www.theislamicheritage.com>

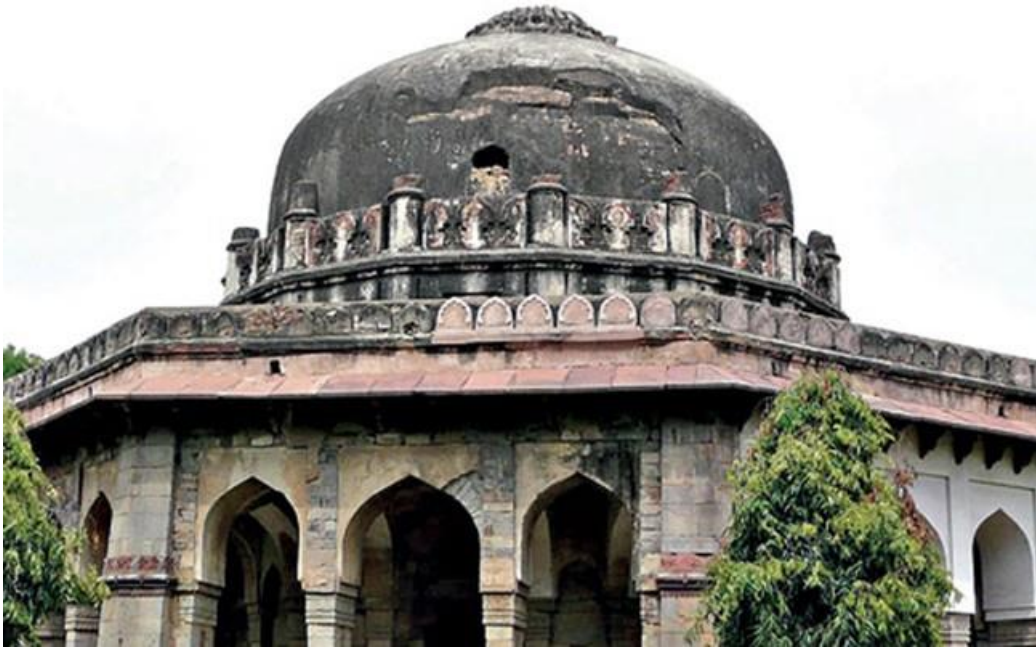


Figure 6 : Ukha Minar constructedt by Masand-i-Ali Nizam Khan

Sources: <http://hdheritagewalks.wordpress.com>

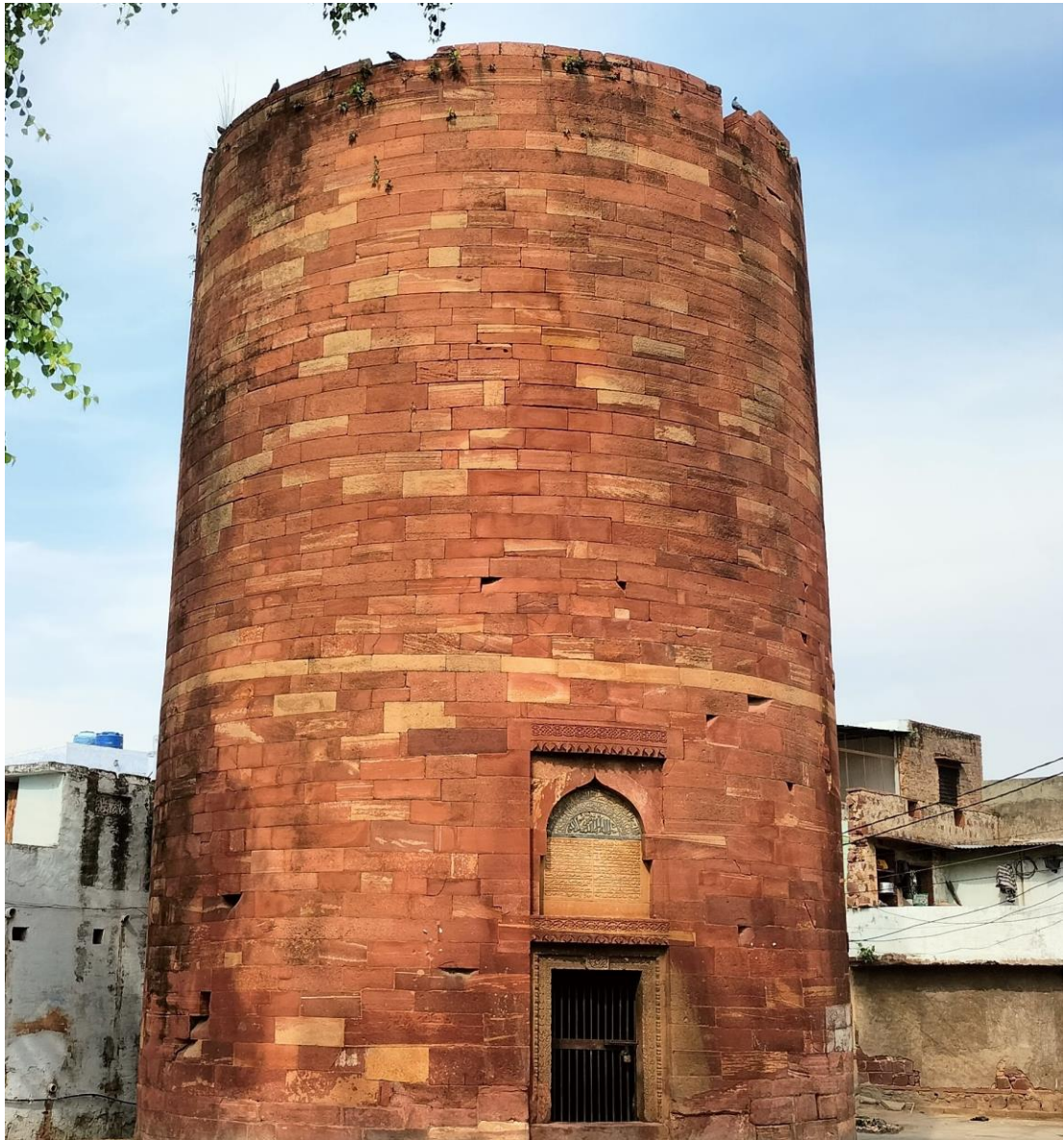
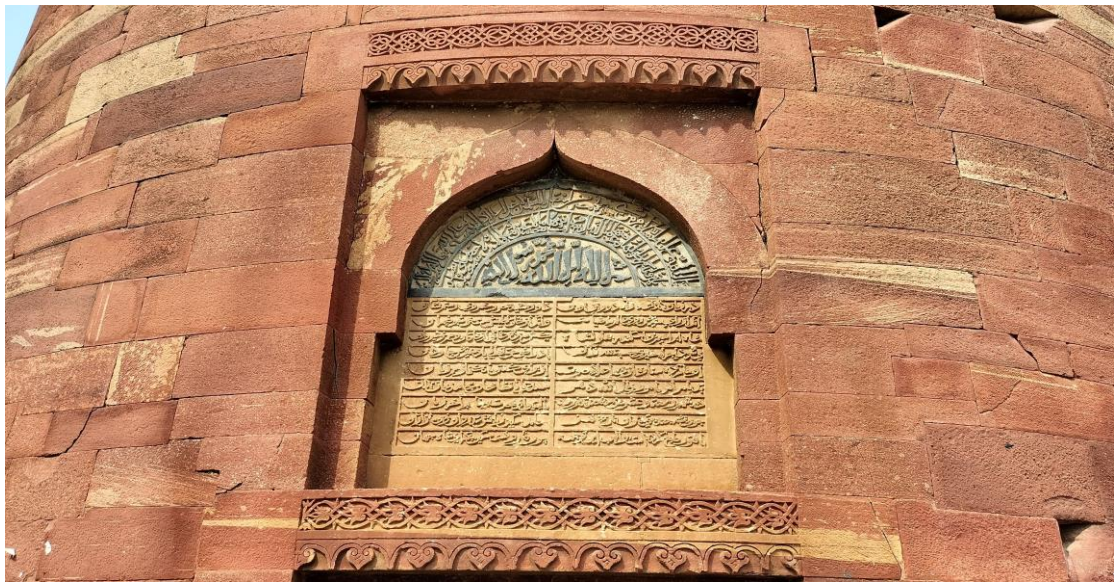


Figure 7: Doorway of Ukha Minar The long inscription above the doorway gives the name of Shah Ibrahim bin Sikander Bahlol Shah, with the date A.H. 926, which was the fourth year of Ibrahim's reign.

Source: <http://hdheritagewalks.wordpress.com>



The summary translation of the inscription is :

In the reign of the ruler of the world, Ibrahim shah, son of Sikander Bahlol Shah, this Minar was built for calling the faithful to prayer. It was finished by His Highness Nizam Shah, the son of Mujahid Khan, by order of the Shadow of God (King) in the year of Hijra 926.

Figure 8: Orav baoli in Bayana built by Lodhi noble Khan-i- Khan Farmuli

Sources: Rajeev Bargoti, Bayana, A Historical Archeology.

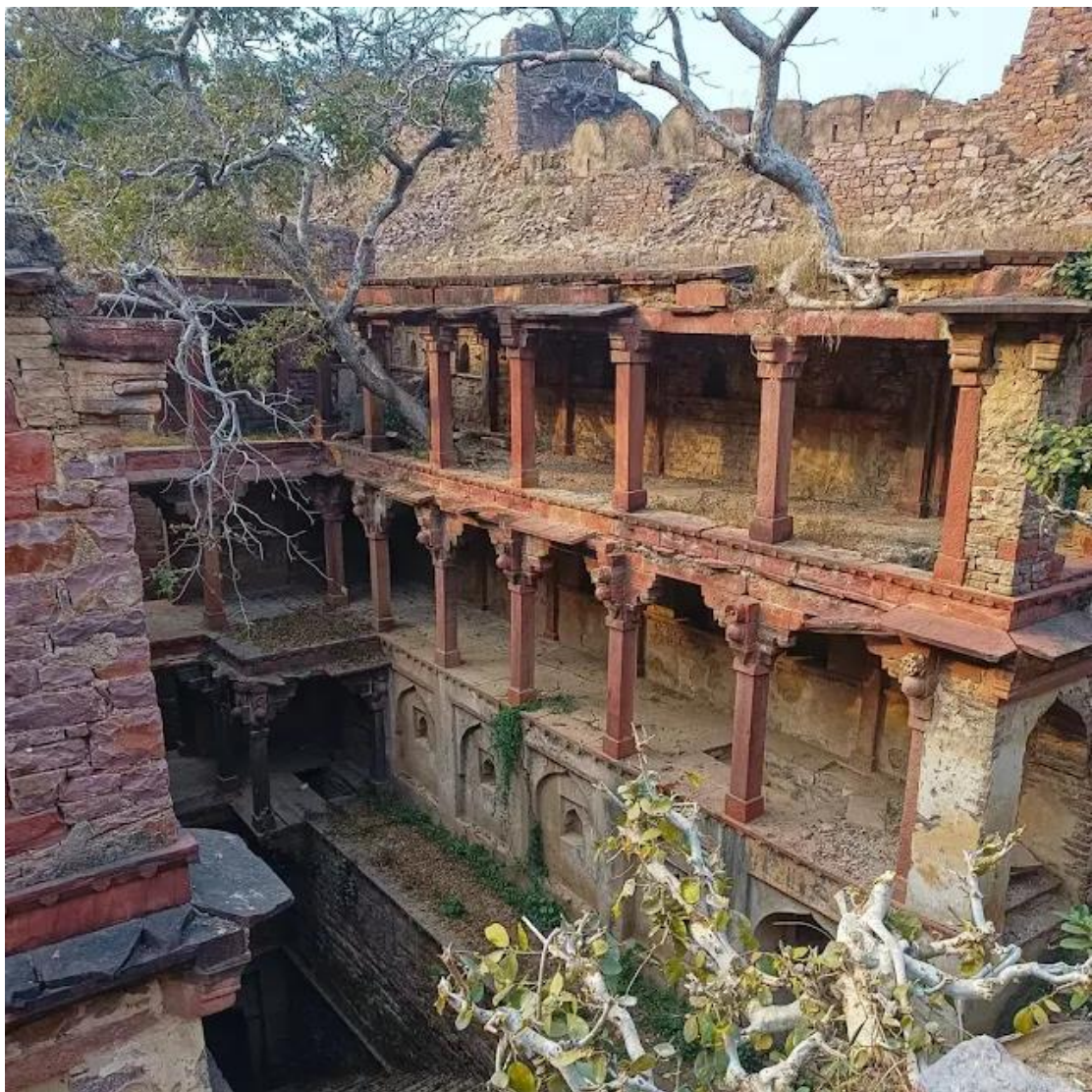


Figure 9. Letter of Ain-ud-Din Ain-ul Mulk Abdullah bin Mahru to Kamal Taj related to digging and repairing of Canal,

Source: Insha Mahru, Letter no. 114, pp. 204-205

بنام کمال تاج -

افضل ارباب الکفایت و اکمل اصحاب الدرايت کمال تاج که بکمال
کفایت و کردانی سرآمدۀ روزگار و نادرۀ ادوار فلک دوار است ، بداند
که مالک الملک تعالی و تقدس که به کمال حکمت حیات اشیاء در آب
نهاده است ، و حدائق نظام عالم را بزالل جرأت امرای وافر معدلت پرورش
داده ، تا بدین وسائط کافۀ رعایا و عامۀ برایا در امن و امان و ازدیادی

عمارت و زراعت که صلاح عالمیان بدان منوط و مربوط است روزگار
گذرانند -

غرض از ترتیب این مقدمات و تشبیب این کلمات آن است ، علی قلی
چنان باز نموده است که در مرمت جوی ناصرواه کار بسیار است و دیهای
مشائخ کبار و علمای شرح شعار و دیهای صدر الکفاة یعنی کمال تاج و دیگر
ملوک داخل است بکنایت و تعریض چنان معلوم می شود ، مگر صدق او
آنست که علماء و مشائخ در باب امتناع کنند - چون او مردی لشکری
است و بوی فقاہت به مشام او نرسیده ، این معنی نبشته است -

مقرر باد ، کندن انهار یعنی حفر لب آبها و جویها بر انواع است ،
چنانچه سیحون و جیحون و دجله و آب راوی و آب بیاس که حکم امثال
و اشباه آن بر بیت المال است - اگر در بیت المال وسعتی نباشد ، روا باشد
که اولو الامر بر خلق حکم کنند ، چه اصلاح بر این باز بسته و قول

امیرالمؤمنین عمر رضی الله عنه ”لو ترکتم لبعتم اولادکم“ برین مخاطب و حاکم است - اما انهار عامه که میان خلق مشترک است چون جوی ناصرواه و قطبواه و خضرواه و امثال آن ، بر اهالی و ارباب آن است ، و از مصرف بیت المال نیست - چنانچه برای تفهیم او علی قلی را روایات ارسال افتاده - چون همچنین باشد حاش الله که علماء و مشائخ جوئی که دیهای

ایشان دران داخل است ، و حفر آن در ذمه ایشان واجب ، ذره ای ازان انحراف کنند ، چه اگر ملوک حفر نکنند و مصرف آن خود بیت المال نیست ، مؤنت آن که تواند داد؟ خاصه درین وقت که در بیت المال وسعتی نه - پس به زراعت نقصان راه یابد ، و ضرر به عامه لاحق گردد - و اگر بعضی حفر نه کنند و بعضی بکنند مؤنت آن بعض بر بعض دیگر افتد و آن ”وضع الشيء فی غیر محله“ باشد - و تعریف ظلم همین کرده اند ، کما جاء فی اللغة : ظلم الشعرا إذا ابیض فی غیر حینه و محله -“

باید که این معنی چنانچه در قلم آمده است علی قلی را بگویند تا در کار حفر مبالغت نماید و هیچ دقیقه درین کار معیاری نامرعی ندارد ، تا از حق مثاب و ماجور شود و از ما محمّدت و آفرین یابد ، والسلام -

Translation:

To Kamal Taj

The most excellent among the people of capability and the most perfect among the possessors of wisdom, Kamāl Tāj who, through complete competence and skill, is adorned by the age and is a rarity of the revolving heavens should know that by the Exalted and Holy God, who through perfect wisdom has granted life to nations, and has nurtured the order of the world upon the balance of the conditions of rulers and the commands of justice, so that through these means all subjects and the common people may live in security, peace, and freedom. They may pass their lives in livelihood and agriculture, upon which the welfare of the majority depends and is connected.

The purpose of arranging these مقدمات (preliminaries) and dividing its principles is this: accordingly, as has been brought forth, in this renowned direction there are many matters of great and significant benefit, whose detailed explanation and

enumeration fall within the domain of the capable administrator such as Kamāl Tāj and other rulers, and thus its definition becomes clear. It should further be established that the construction of canals namely the excavation and regulation of riverbanks and water channels assumes various forms. Among these are the great rivers such as the Sayhūn (Syr Darya), Jayhūn (Amu Darya), the Tigris (Dajla), the Ravi, and the Beas. The proper management and regulation of such waterways are of utmost importance, for without balance and oversight, disorder inevitably arises. Therefore, it is incumbent upon those in authority (ulu'l-amr) to exercise governance and ensure regulation, as the welfare and reform of society are intrinsically dependent upon such organization and control.

The Commander of the faithful, Umar (May Allah be Pleased with him), said: ‘ If you were to abandon these duties, you would end up selling your children,’ This address is directed at the ruler. However, regarding public canals that are shared among the people the responsibility lies with the local residents and their owners; it is not an expense of the Bait al-Mal (Public Treasury). As has previously communicated to Ali Quli for his understanding, it is unthinkable that the scholars and elders, whose villages benefit from these canals and upon whom the duty of excavation and maintenance is mandatory should deviate from this even by an atom's weight. For the rulers do not undertake the excavation and the public treasury is not the source of funding who could bear this cost?. Especially at this time when public treasury lacks sufficient funds. Consequently agriculture would suffer and harm would befall the general public.

Furthermore, if some one refuse to excavate while others do, the burden of one group will fall upon the other. This would constitute “ placing a thing where it does not belong,” which is very definition of injustice.

It is necessary that this matter as written here be conveyed to Ali Quli so that he may exert the utmost effort in the excavation work. No detail of this standard task should be overlooked, so that he may be rewarded by God and receive praise and appreciation from us.

Peace be upon you

Figure 10: Painting of Laur-Chanda, 16th Century Source:

<https://rylandscollections.com/2016/04/29/the-laur-chand-an-indian-sufi-romance/>



Figure 11: Qur'an manuscript written in Bihari script, completed in Gwalior on (July 11, 1399) by Mahmud Shaban, ink and watercolor on paper.

Source:Photo: © the aga Khan Museum, AKM281

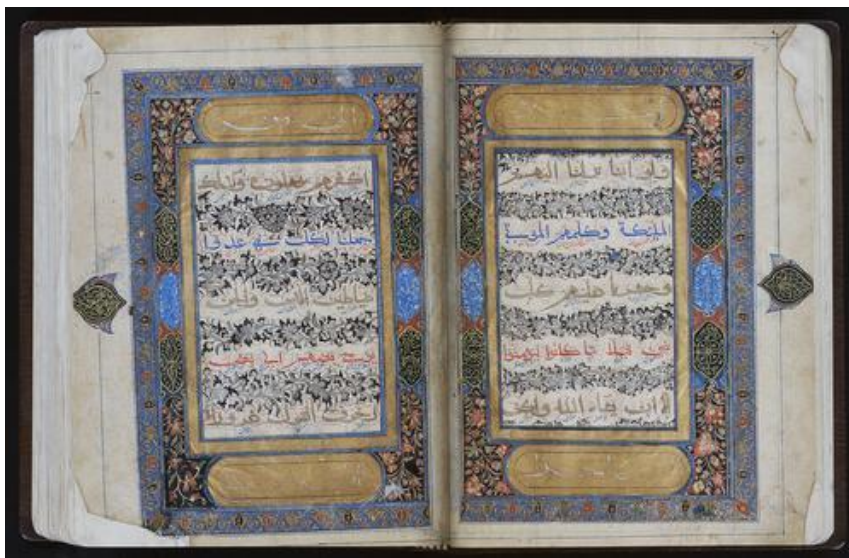


Figure12: Painting of Delhi Sultanate, Ghiyas al-din Khalji supervises his cooks;
Ni'matnāma, Mandu, ca. 1505,

Source: Photo: © The British Library Board, I.O islamic.



Figure 13: Detail of Calligraphy, in the Bara Gumbad, Lodi Gardens, Delhi,

Source: Finbarr Barry Flood



Figure 14: . Tomb of Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlaq, Tughluqabad, 1325.

Photo: David Haberlah, Wikimedia Commons, CC BY SA 3.0,



Figure 15: Mughal Painting, Timur handing the crown to Babur in the presence of Humayun, opaque watercolour on gold paper, by Govardhan, about 1628.

Source: Museum no. IM.8-1925. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London



Figure 16 Mughal Caligraphy on Akbar Tomb, Calligrapher Abdul Haq Shirazi

Source: (Source: <http://10yearitch.com>)



Figure 17: Tomb of Safdurjung, Mughal Architecture

Source: WordPress.com



LIST OF PUBLICATION

1. “Socio cultural role of Muslim women in the Sultanate Period”, Journal of Asiatic Society of Mumbai, ISSN: 0972-0766, Vol. 96, 2023, Page No. 173-177.
2. “Nobility of Delhi Sultanate and their Literary Pursuits: Case study of Minhaj al Din Siraj Juzjani”, Educational Administration Theory and Practice, ISSN: 2148-2403, Vol. 30, No. 5, 2024, Page No. 1950-1957.
3. “Architecture and Aristocracy: The Cultural Expression Of The Sultanate Nobility in Medieval India”, Testing, Psychometrics, Methodology in Applied Psychology, ISSN: 1972-6325, Vol. 32, No. S7, 2025, Page No. 1869-1872.

LIST OF CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

1. Presented a paper , titled. “Architectural Development by Nobles in Sultanante Period in Southeast Asia with Special Reference to India in, The International Institutes of Knowledge Management at the 9th International Conference on Arts and Humanities, Technology and Transformation, 2022.
2. Presented a paper, titled “Socio-Cultural Role of Muslim Women in Sultanate Period” in One Day International Multidiciplinary Conference, “Emerging Issues In Management, Information Technology, Sciences and Social Sciences in the Contemporary Global World, 2024.
3. Attended 1st International Conference 2021 on History and Archeology, Exploring Recent trends, Pattern and Contribution, on 07th to 09thJanuary 2022.
4. Attended a webinar on Inter-Regionality and Evolution of Western Deccan; Art , Religion and Society(Pauni, Ter and Nevasa, 300BCE- 300CE) held of March 26, 2022.

5. Attended Seminar on Revisiting Ashokan Inscription: Kingship and Jurisprudence organized by Asiatic Society for Social Science Research, 29th May , 2022.
6. Participated in International Multidisciplinary Research colloquium Jointly organised by International Benevolent Research Foundation (IBRF), West Bengal, Institute of Scholars and Academician (InScA) and Confederation of Indian Universities, New Delhi.