7
Society, Culture and Economy in the Sultanate of Delhi

7.1 Indo-Muslim Culture and Society in India

The Delhi Sultanate ruled the heartland of the Indian Subcontinent where the non-Muslims, most notably the Hindus, were in over-whelming majority, and the Muslims constituted a mere fraction of the population. According to an estimate, there were less than half a million Muslims in 1200, and the figure rose of 15 million in 1600.[1] Since the Muslim population during the Sultanate era was very scanty, the social base of the Sultanate was quite weak. The Muslim rule was quite precarious, yet the Muslim rulers successfully managed to rule India for centuries.

The racial and ethnic composition of the Muslim society during the Sultanate era was very diverse. The ruling elite of the Sultanate was chiefly composed of the migrant Muslims and their descendants, whereas the Indian population was predominantly Hindu by faith. There were two distinct social groups of the Muslims in the Indian society: the *ashraf* (the 'high-born', i.e. the descendants of the migrants to India), and the *ajlaf* (the 'low-born', i.e. the new converts). The *ashraf* were predominantly composed of the ruling elite, which included the Turks, Tajiks, Arabs, Persians, Afghans and the Mongols (new Musalmans), and they were largely settled in big cities and garrison towns. The *ajlaf*, on the other hand, consisted of the Indian converts or the masses. As mentioned earlier, due to the discriminatory policies of the Sultanate, not only its social base remained narrow, the processes of cultural and social assimilation and integration were also considerably retarded.

The racial and ethnic diversity of the Muslim population in India made the Indian culture very diverse and composite, consisting of multiple shades and colours. The cultural traditions of the Muslims were a blend of varied cultures including Turkish, Persian, Afghan and Arab. However, the elite culture was largely influenced by Turco-Persian elements. The language of court and administration was Persian. In addition to the above, owing to the marauding of West and Central Asia and Persia by the Mongols, there was a continuous flow of Persians as well as culturally 'Persianized' Muslims into India, which kept the ruling elite and Indian Muslims of the urban areas in general, Persianized.[2] However, the food culture was largely Turkish.

The Turco-Persian aspects of the elite culture were gradually diffused in the society by the ruling elite. The ruling elite kept their social distance from the Indian Muslims, since these locals were considered to be socially and culturally inferior to the migrants. This social and cultural exclusivity of the ruling elite adversely affected the process of cultural assimilation of the elite in the Indian society. Nonetheless, it is true for north India, since the South presented a different picture. For instance, in cultural terms the Muslim community of Mappilas of the Malabar Coast in the present-day Kerala was more connected to Arabian Islam than the Indo-Persian Islam.[3]

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[1] *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, art. "Islam in South Asia" by Bruce B. Lawrence (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 281.
[2] Anjum, "Nature and Dynamics of Political Authority in the Sultanate of Delhi," 40.
[3] *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., art. "Mappila" by R. E. Miller, Vol. 5 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 459.

Muslim intellectuals and scholars like Amir Khusrau (d. 1325) contributed to cultural synthesis in the Indian society. His father was a Turk, but his mother was an Indian lady, and unlike the ruling elite of the day, he was proud of his Indian roots. As a musician, he tried to blend the Persian and the Indian musical traditions, and as a poet, he tried to mix Persian and Hindavi or local Indian words in his poems.[4] As mentioned above, the ruling elite of the Sultanate were predominantly Turks, Tajiks, Persians and Afghans, and their cultural expressions and patterns were Turco-Persian. Though almost all of the Sultans of Delhi were born in India, they made no systematic attempt to bring about cultural assimilation of the royalty and ruling elite, and the Indian masses. It was the Sufis, and more notably, the Chishti Sufis who shouldered the task of cultural assimilation of the migrants and indigenous folk, and thereby bridged the yawning gulf between the rulers and the ruled by their contribution in the realm of language and culture.[5] It will be discussed in detail in this section later.

Quite contrary to the popular belief, the South Asian Muslims did not constitute a homogeneous or monolithic community.[6] The north Indian Muslims, for instance, were predominantly Hanafite in their legal-juristic orientation, but the Mappilas in the South followed the Shafa'i School of *fiqh* or Muslim jurisprudence. The popular culture of the Indian Muslims, who had converted to Islam, was also very diverse. For instance, the cultural expressions of the Bengali Muslims were very different from those of their co-religionists living in the Punjab or Kashmir. In fact, the Indo-Islamic traditions were quite diverse. The local cultural traditions of various areas and regions were greatly reflected in the life style, social customs, and even the religious practices and traditions of the Indian Muslims. In other words, the religious practices of the local Muslims were embedded within the particular sub-cultures of South Asia. The social and religious identities of the common people were quite fluid, though the social identities were strongly developed among the elite.[7]

7.2 Relationship of the Muslim Rulers with the Non-Muslim Subjects

After the conquest of Sindh and Gujarat by Muhammad ibn Qasim, the Hindus and the Buddhists were granted the same status as the *ahl-i kitab* (People of the Book), and treated as *dhimmis* like the Jews and the Christians in the near East. It was done in accordance with the Hanafite School of Sunni Law or *fiqh*, which was liberal in its approach towards the non-Muslims.

The Muslims rulers of India did not try to interfere in the religious practices of the Hindu population through their state directives. They tolerated the Hindus as long as they did not threaten the political authority or the stability of the Sultanate of Delhi. The Muslim rulers also made attempts to win over the Hindu population. Sultan Shihab al-Din Ghauri's gold coins, for instance, bore the image of goddess Lakshami.[8] As a concession to the Hindus, the Brahmans or the priestly class of the Hindus was exempted from the imposition of *jizyah* or poll-tax which was levied on the non-Muslims. Moreover, the Muslim armies demolished

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[4] K. A. Nizami, *Tarikhi Maqalat* (Delhi: Nadwat al-Musannifin, 1966), 45-78.
[5] Tanvir Anjum, *Chishti Sufis in the Sultanate of Delhi: From Restrained Indifference to Calculated Defiance* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011), 106.
[6] Richard M. Eaton, "Introduction", in *India's Islamic Traditions, 711-1750*, ed. Richard M. Eaton (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003), 2.
[7] Cynthia Talbot, "Incribing the Other, Inscribing the Self: Hindu-Muslim Identities in Pre-colonial India", in ibid., 102.
[8] A. D. Muztar, "Non-Muslims under the Sultans of Delhi: (1206-1324)", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Vol. XV, No. 4 (October 1978), 46.

only those temples which lay on the path of moving military frontiers. The temples lying within the Muslim states were viewed as protected state property, and were left unmolested. Temple desecration rarely took in times of peace. It is important to bear in mind that the Mlim rulers had not introduced the practice of temple desecration in India for the first time; there were similar practices among the warring Hindu states and rival Hindu kings.[9]

Some of the Hindus were also granted high official positions by them. Muhammad ibn Qasim's adviser was the Hindu prime minister of Raja Dahir named Sayakar. One of the military commanders of Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq was a Hindu named Nanak. The Muslim kings on the whole followed a conciliatory policy towards the Hindu subjects. The system of self-government in rural areas which existed in Indian villages and small towns even before the establishment of the Muslim rule was continued by the Muslim rulers, and the customary law was not disturbed by them.

Recent works on South Asian history have revealed that there existed dynamic patterns of engagement between the Hindus and the Muslims.[10]

7.3 Development of Languages and Literature

Before the advent of the Muslims in India, Sanskrit was the only language used for religious and literary purposes among the Hindus, whereas the Buddhist literature was recorded in Pali language, spoken in north-east parts of India such as Bihar. After the advent of the Muslims, Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages were also introduced in India. Later, Urdu also developed as a result of the interaction of the migrants with the local Indian population. What follows is a brief discussion on these languages:

Arabic was the official language of the Umayyad and later the Abbasid Empire. After the Arab conquest of Sindh and Gujarat, when these areas were annexed to the Umayyad Empire, Arabic became the official language and was used for administrative purposes. Arabic was also used for religious and literary purposes. The coastal regions of India, where the Arab traders used to come for commercial purposes, proved to be more fertile ground for the development of Arabic language owing to the Arab influence. Moreover, the local courts in Gujarat and Deccan also patronized Arabic language.[11] During the Sultanate era, the use of Arabic remained confined to religious purposes. That was why, *tafsir* and *hadith* literature was generally produced in Arabic language.

Turkish language was of Mongol origin, and its use was limited to the ruling elite. Though many Sultans of Delhi were Turk, they adopted Persian instead of Turkish as the language of court and administration. During the Sultanate era, literary achievements in Turkish language were not many as compared to Persian.

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[9] For a detailed discussion, see Richard M. Eaton, "Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States", in *Beyond Turk and Hindu: Rethinking Religious Identities in Islamicate South Asia*, eds. David Gilmartin and Bruce B. Lawrence (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000), 246-81.

[10] See, for instance, Finbarr B. Flood, *Objects of Translation: Material Culture and Medieval 'Hindu-Muslim' Encounter* (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2009).

[11] Muhammad Siddiq Shibli, "Languages and Literature," in *Islam in South Asia*, eds. Waheed-uz-Zaman and M. Saleem Akhtar (Islamabad: National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research, 1993), 203.

Persian remained the major literary and official language of India for more than eight centuries till it was replaced by Urdu in 1835. The Ghaznavids and Ghaurids popularized Persian language in India, and also made it their court language. Literary achievements in Persian surpass any other language spoken by the Muslims in India. Poetry and prose was composed in Persian. Apart from poetry, a number of literary genres in Persian flourished in India. These include: (i) *insha* (epistle-writing, i.e. official letters and other official writings); (ii) historiographical writings by historians such as Minhaj al-Siraj Juzjani, Zia al-Din Barani and Shams Siraj Afif; (iii) *tazkirah* literature (biographical dictionaries of poets and Sufis such as *Siyar al-Awliya* by Amir Khurd); (iv) *malfuzat* literature (record of Sufi conversations and discourses held in their *khanqah*s such as *Fawaid al-Fuad*, i.e. the conversation of Chishti Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya recoded by Hasan Sijzi Dehlavi; and (v) books on Sufi theory such as *Kashf al-Mahjub* (The Revelation of the Hidden) written by Saiyyid Ali Hujwiri (d. 1077), popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh. (*Kashf al-Mahjub* was the first book on Sufism which was written in Persian language).

Urdu language started becoming popular in India in the sixteenth century during the reign of Mughal Emperor Akbar. During the Sultanate era, development of Urdu was in its nascent phase, and it was referred to as 'Hindavi'. It emerged as a result of the interaction of the migrants from Persia and Central Asia with the local Indian population. That is why it is a blend of Turkish, Persian and Sanskrit/Hindi words. Later on, Urdu/Hindavi became the literary successor of Persian.

The contribution of the Sufis in evolving a common medium of communication in a multi-cultural, multi-racial and multi-ethnic society cannot be overstated. While examining the role of Sufis in the development of Urdu language, Mawlawi 'Abd al-Haqq (popularly known as Baba-i Urdu) argues that most of the Sufis of India were acquainted with the local dialects, and they freely used them,[12] in contrast to the ruling elite, who had deliberately impeded the process of cultural assimilation and integration by maintaining a distance from the people. It is recorded that Khwajah Muin al-Din had learnt Hindustani language in Multan, and it was only after getting acquainted with the indigenous medium of communication, that he settled in Ajmer.[13] Similarly, Khwajah Muin al-Din's disciple Shaykh Hamid al-Din Suwali and his family members, who lived in a remote town of Suwal in Nagaur, used to converse in Hindavi language.[14] According to the fourteenth-century hagiographer, Amir Khurd, Baba Farid could speak the local language.[15] The Chishti Sufis played a significant role in the development of Hindavi language and literature during the times of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, whose two eminent disciples, Amir Khusrau (d. 1325) and Amir Hasan 'Ala Sijzi (d. 1328) in particular, contributed to the development of Hindavi language and literature. Amir

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[12] Mawlawi 'Abd al-Haqq, *Urdu ki Ibtida'i Nashonuma mein Sufiya'e Karam ka Kam*, (The Contribution of Sufis in the Early Development of Urdu Language) (Karachi: Anjuman Taraqqi-'i Urdu Pakistan, 1986 rpt.), passim. For the role of the eminent Chishti Sufis of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the development of Urdu, see 9-25.

[13] S. M. Ikram, "*Khwaja-'i Khwajgan*", Karachi (1972), 99, as cited in Muhammad Aslam, *Malfuzati Adab ki Tarikhi Ahammiyyat* (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, University of the Punjab, 1995), 339.

[14] Shaykh Farid al-Din Mahmud, *Surur al-Sudur*, MS, Mawlana Azad Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, *Farsi Tasawwuf*, no. 21/161, f. 8.

[15] Baba Farid is recorded to have uttered a sentence in Urdu: "*Ponun ka chand bhi bala hota hae*" (the crescent is also small). Saiyyid Muhammad Mubarak 'Alawi Kirmani alias Amir Khurd, *Siyar al-Awliya*', (comp. in 1351-82 A.D.), ed. Chiranji Lal (Delhi: Muhibb-i Hind Press, 1302 A.H./1885 A.D.), 183.

Hasan composed *ghazal*s (love songs) in Hindavi language, whereas Amir Khusrau wrote Hindavi couplets and riddles, and also mixed Hindi and Persian poems.[16]

The development of Hindavi was not confined to north India alone. Two Chishti Sufis, Shaykh Burhan al-Din Gharib (d. 1443), a renowned *khalifah* of Shaykh Nizam al-Din, and Saiyyid Bandahnawaz Gesudiraz, introduced and popularized the Hindavi language in the Deccan. Gesudiraz's work, *Mi'raj al-'Ashiqin* (The Zenith of Divine Lovers), is considered to be the first prose work in Hindavi language. In addition, he also learnt Sanskrit language, and was well-acquainted with the Hindu mythology as well.[17] Highlighting the linguistic and phonetic features of Hindavi used by the Sufis, Yusuf Husain maintains that "the metres used by them are mostly Hindi, and occasionally Persian. The rhyming of all words, whether of Hindi or Arab or Persian origin, is based on their similarity of sound, as they are pronounced by the inhabitants of this country."[18] It is important to note that the Chishti Sufis used Hindavi language for the purpose of preaching as well. It seems that from the very beginning, it was a definite policy of the Sufis to employ the Hindavi language for preaching.[19] They realized that they could not reach the common people through Persian language, which was the language of the court, or the official language in the Sultanate. They found Hindavi to be the most suitable medium for communication and preaching among the local population. Similarly, the Sufi folk literature provided a vital link between Hindus and Muslims, since the abstract Sufi doctrines were translated in easily comprehensible and appealing form through this literature, which became popular among the illiterate Hindus and Muslims alike.[20]

7.4 Education

In the beginning of the Muslim rule in India, the mosques served as schools where Quran, *hadith*, *tafsir* and *fiqh* were taught to the students. In addition to the mosque-schools, the Sufi *khanqah*s also served the similar purpose of imparting religious education to the people, in particular related to Sufism. Apart from religious subjects, people not only learnt Arabic and Persian languages, they were also taught basic arithmetic, geometry, orthography, literature, history, ethics, logic, rhetoric, astronomy, botany and medicine.

During the Arab rule in Sindh, many of its cities, especially Mansurah and Debul, became the centre of Muslim learning, such as Quranic studies, *hadith* studies and *fiqh* studies. Debul was the largest centre of Quranic studies and *hadith* literature in Sindh, and a number of renowned scholars were engaged in teaching in Debul during the Arab rule. The knowledge

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[16] Yusuf Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture* (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 103.

[17] Saiyyid Muhammad Akbar Husayni, *Jawami' al-Kalim*, (*malfuzat* of Saiyyid Bandahnawaz Gesudiraz) ed. Muhammad Hamid Siddiqi (Kanpur: Intazami Press, 1356 A.H./1937 A.D.), 119.

[18] Husain, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, 108.

[19] A similar observation about the Sufis' role in Bengal seems worth-citing here: according to Asim Roy, the Sufis of Bengal were able to "break the religio-cultural domination of the orthodox, who, by virtue of their cultural orientation and elitist approach, had not allowed the local Bengali language to become the vehicle for the dissemination and diffusion of Islam—without realizing that their use of a foreign medium was thwarting the spread of the religion in Bengal." Idem, "The *Pir* Tradition: A Case Study in Islamic Syncretism in Traditional Bengal" in *Images of Man: Religious and Historical Process in South Asia*, ed. Fred W. Clothey (Madras: New Era Publications, 1982), as cited in A. R. Saiyed, "Saints and *Dargahs* in the Indian Subcontinent: A Review", in *Muslim Shrines in India*, ed. Christian W. Troll (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 251.

[20] Richard M. Eaton, *Essays on Islam and Indian History* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), see chap. 8, "Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam", 189-99.

and scholarship of the Sindhi scholars was acknowledged by the Muslim scholars in other parts of the Muslim world.

Under the Ghaznavids, Lahore became a leading centre of Islamic learning, where many scholars came from other parts of the Muslim world and settled. The Sultans of Delhi paid special attention to education among the Muslims. Sultan Iletmish established educational institutions or *madrassah*s for promoting education among the people. In Uch, *Dar al-Ulum-i Firuziyyah* was a famous centre of learning, where Qazi Minhaj al-Siraj Juzjani was appointed as Principal. Under Sultan Nasir al-Din Mahmud, *Madrassah Nasiriyyah* in Delhi was a famous educational centre. Later, Qazi Minhaj joined it as a Principal. During Sultan Balban's reign, Shams al-Din Mustaufi wrote a book on medicine. Under the Khalji Sultans of Delhi, special arrangement for the education of girls was made. During Sultan 'Ala al-Din Khalji's reign, there flourished famous physicians in the Sultanate of Delhi. Most famous among them were Mawlana Badr al-Din, Mawlana Hamid Mutris, Man Chandra, Raja Jarrah and Ilm al-Din Kahhal.

Under the Tughluq Sultans of Delhi, there were more than one thousand *madrassah*s in the city of Delhi alone. Among them, *Madrassah-i Firuzshahi* was the leading educational centre. Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq was himself a great scholar of *fiqh*, maths, logic, rationalism, philosophy, medicine and calligraphy.[21] His contemporary physician, Zia Muhammad wrote his book on medicine in 1329-30. Other famous medicinal works *Tibb-i Firuz Shahi* and *Rahat al-Insan* were composed during the reign of Sultan Firuz Tughluq. Similarly, great work on medicine titled *Tibb-i Sikandari* was composed under Sultan Sikandar Lodhi, and it became a standard text-book on medicine. Sultan Sikandar Lodhi, who was himself a poet and an accomplished scholar, established *madrassah*s in the length and breadth of his Empire.[22] In 1504, he founded the city of Agra, which eventually grew in a university-town.[23]

The Bahmani King of Deccan, Sultan Firuz (r. 1397-1442) not only patronized scholars in his kingdom but he was himself interested in various branches of knowledge. Hakim Hashim Gilani was a famous astronomer associated with the Bahmani court. The famous Bahmani minister, Mahmud Gawan, had established a very big college in Bidar. Similarly, the independent ruler of Kashmir Sultan, Zayn al-Abidin Budshah (r. 1420-70) was himself a great scholar as well as a patron of scholars. Under him two great works on medicine were written by physicians.

During the thirteenth century, the Sultanate of Delhi became a safe place of refuge from the Mongol invasions. After the Mongol invasions in Iraq, Persia and Central Asia, and particularly after the fall of Baghdad in 1258, many scholars migrated to India and made it their permanent abode. These scholars were welcomed by the Muslim rulers. Many leading scholars received royal stipends, though there were also some who had refused to be the state beneficiaries and were content with their limited means of livelihood. The minister for religious affairs was also responsible for awarding *jagir*s (land grants) or stipends to the *ulama* and scholars engaged in teaching.

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[21] Muhammad Abul Qasim Hindu Shah Farishtah, *Tarikh-i Farishtah*, Urdu trans. Mawlawi Muhammad Fida Ali Talib, Vol. II (Hyderabad: Dar al-Taba Jami'ah 'Uthmaniyyah, 1926), 10.
[22] Khan, *Glimpses of Medieval Indian Culture*, 76.
[23] S. M. Jaffar, *Education in Muslim India: Being an Inquiry into the State of Education during the Muslim Period f Indian History (1000-1800 A.C.),* (Delhi: Ahmad Publishers, 1936), 56.

7.5 Music and Painting

Music greatly flourished in the Sultanate era. The Arab, Persian and Central Asian Muslims had rich heritage of music. In India, the Arab, Persian and Central Asian musical traditions were synthesized with the local Indian musical tradition, and gave birth to distinct Indo-Muslim music.

During the Sultanate era, though music was disapproved by some of the *ulama*, the Sufis, particularly the Chishtis, sought ecstatic inspiration in music, and also popularized it in the Muslim society. *Qawali* (Sufi music) emerged as a form of folk devotional music that became very popular among the people. Amir Khusrau (d. 1325), the famous poet and music composer, and a disciple or *murid* of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Awliya, contributed a lot to the development of Indo-Muslim music, and particularly *qawwali*. He invented musical instruments and also modified a number of existing musical instruments. He improved *sitar*, which was a combination of the old Indian instrument *vina* and the Iranian *tambura*. He devised *tabla* by splitting the instrument called *pakhawaj* into two parts. He added two strings to *iktarah* (one-stringed instrument) to make it *sehtarah* (three-stringed instrument).[24] Moreover, he was the first musician to synthesize Persian and Indian tunes, and even invented many new melodies or *rag*s.

In addition to the Sultans of Delhi, Sultan Husain Sharqi (d. 1500), the last king of Jaunpur, not only patronized musicians but he himself was a great music composer, who invented a number of *rag*s. That is why he is remembered in history as 'the musician King of Jaunpur'. Similarly, Sultan Zayn al-Abidin Budshah, the ruler of Kashmir, was also a great patron of music and had considerable command over musicology.

Painting flourished under the Sultans of Delhi and the kings of independent kingdoms during the Sultanate era. Both animate and inanimate figures were painted on the walls of the palaces. Painting of this era was influenced by the Baghdad School of the thirteenth century. Sultan Firuz Tughluq, however, discouraged painting of human figures. He ordered the removal of curtains and paintings with human images from the walls of his palace.[25]

7.6 Indo-Muslim Architecture

The architectural traditions of the Arabs, Turks, Persians and Afghans mingled with the local Indian architectural traditions to give birth to Indo-Muslim architecture. Nonetheless, the Indo-Muslim architecture was primarily a fusion of the forms and techniques of the Persian and Indian architecture.[26] The types of buildings constructed by the Muslims in India include mosques, forts, gardens, palaces and houses, bridges, *khanqah*s (Sufi dwellings) and tombs. Important features of these constructions were arches (*mihrab*), minarets (*minar*) and domes (*gumbad*). These buildings were built with bricks of baked clay, red stone, limestone and different types and colours of marble, whereas precious and semi-precious stones were used for inlay work done for decorative or ornamental purposes. Glazed pieces of small tiles put

[24] Muhammad Aslam, *Salatin-i Dehli aur Shahan-i Mughalia ka zauq-i mousiqi* (Lahore: Department of History, University of the Punjab, 1992), 21. For details see Chapter 3 on Amir Khusrau, 19-27.
[25] Shams Siraj Afif, *Tarikh-i Firuzshahi* (*Manaqib-i Firuzshahi*) Urdu trans. Mawlawi Muhammad Fida Ali Talib (Hyderabad: Dar al-Taba Jami'ah 'Uthmaniyyah, 1938), 254.
[26] Margaret Prosser Allen, *Ornament in Indian Architecture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 373.

together to form large motifs or designs are called 'pietradura' work. Calligraphy was also developed by the Muslims in India. Many buildings had calligraphic inscriptions on stone cenotaph or commemorative plaque.

The early architectural remains of buildings and monuments built by the Arab rulers after the conquest of Sindh and Gujarat bore an Arab influence. Muhammad ibn Qasim constructed mosques in all the conquered territories. These mosques were used for religious as well as administrative purposes. Remains of these mosques have been found at Bhanbore in Sindh and Mansurah (near present day Multan).

The architecture of the Ghaznavids in India was simple and distinct owing to naked brick construction. However, like the early Arab architectural monuments, the Ghaznavid buildings no longer exist. Early Turkish Sultans of Delhi paid special attention to architecture. The construction of Qutb Minar, built in red stone near Delhi, was started by Sultan Qutb al-Din Aybeg but it was completed during the reign of Sultan Iletmish. Adjacent to Qutb Minar is the famous Quwwat al-Islam Mosque, which was also built by Aybeg. The mosque and the Minar have beautiful inscriptions of Quranic verses. Sultan Iletmish constructed mosques in Badaun and Ajmer, and built a water storage tank called *hauz-i Shamsi* in Delhi. He also built *kushak-i firuzi* (Blue Palace) in Delhi, while his son Sultan Nasir al-Din Mahmud had constructed *kushak-i sabz* (Green Palace).

Sultan Ala-al-Din Khalji erected the famous *Alai darwaza* (Alai Gate) in 1305, which is a splendid specimen of Turkish style of architecture.[27] It is highly ornamented with Quranic inscriptions in red stone. The Sultan also constructed the city of Siri near Delhi, where he shifted his capital. The new city was fortified with strong stone and brick walls. He also built a bridge over the Gamberi River in Chitor in 1303 with grey limestone.

The Tughluq Sultans introduced a new style of architecture in India since the buildings constructed during that period had a fortress-like construction. Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq built the fortified town of Tughluqabad near Delhi. His tomb in Delhi is also a fortress-like structure, which resembles the tomb of the famous Suhrawardi Sufi, Shah Rukn-i Alam in Multan. Sultan Firuz Tughluq built the fortified towns of Firuzabad, Jaunpur, Fathabad and Hisar in addition to building a number of famous mosques. The architecture of Lodhi period is noted for the introduction of double dome. Moreover, the use of tiles was also reintroduced in this period.

In addition, there were regional styles of Indo-Muslim architecture as well with their distinct regional features. The Muslim rulers of Kashmir, Sindh, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal, Khandesh and Deccan also paid attention to erecting buildings that represented the influence of Islamic art of architecture.

7.7 Trade and Commerce

Trade and commerce in India underwent considerable progress from the fourteenth century onwards.[28] India had commercial or trade relations with a number of countries. Foreign trade was carried both by land and sea routes. Indian goods were not only exported to other

[27] Ahmad Nabi Khan, "Architecture," in *Islam in South Asia*, eds. Zaman and Akhtar, 276.
[28] Upendra Nath Day, *The Government of the Sultanate* (New Delhi: Kumar Brothers, 1972), 189; for details see Appendix A: Commerce and Trade of India During the Sultanate, 189-98.

countries such as Egypt, Syria, Arabia, Persia, the countries of East Asia and the Malay Islands, but also reached Europe, particularly the Mediterranean countries. India attracted traders from Western Europe as well. There is evidence of a group of Venetian traders who visited Delhi in 1338.[29]

There were many important ports on the Malabar, Coromandel and Concon Coasts such as Debul in Sindh, Baroach and Cambay or Khambayat in Gujarat, Thana in Maharashtra, Mangalore in Vijaynagar Empire, Seymore (modern Chaul) near Bombay, and Calicut in Malabar. These Indian ports also served as a link between the South East Asia and West Asian countries. Indian exports included food grain (wheat, millet, rice, pulses and oilseeds), goods of daily use, luxury goods, jewels, pearls, elephant tusks, medicinal herbs such as clove, pepper, spices, sugar, indigo, camphor, jute, and silk and cotton fabrics, etc. Important imports included luxury items and Turkish and Arab horses. Indian traders were famous for their integrity and honesty, and that was why they were respected and welcomed by the people of other countries. In addition to foreign trade, there was inland as well, which was generally carried by land routes.

7.8 Agriculture and Industries

Since India was largely an agricultural country owing to fertile land and availability of plenty of water, the Sultans of Delhi paid special attention to agriculture. Sultan Shams al-Din Iletmish established agriculture department for improving agriculture, and particularly irrigation. Sultan Ghiyath al-Din Tughluq paid special attention to agricultural reforms. He reduced agricultural taxes to $1/10^{th}$ of the total produce, and also ordered to dig canals for improved irrigation. Sultan Firuz Tughluq constructed a number of canals and small dams for irrigational purposes.[30] He also introduced agricultural reforms due to which agricultural production was considerably increased. However, the socio-economic system of the Sultanate was not 'feudal', and in the words of Irfan Habib, a renowned Marxist historian of Aligarh School, the economic system was a separate social formation different from the feudal economy.[31] The establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi accelerated the process of urbanization in north India.

The Sultans of Delhi also paid attention to industrial development. They established their own *karkhana*s (industries or workshops for crafts production), which were supervised by their eminent nobles.[32] Indian craftsmen and artisans were employed in these *karkhana*s for the production of various crafts. Famous Venetian/Italian voyager, Marco Polo (b. 1254-d. 1324) also praises India for its industrial development during the fourteenth century. Gujarat and Bengal were important textile centres where cotton and silk fabrics were prepared. Most of the fine varieties of textiles were of Persian or Arabic origin.

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[29] R. S. Lopez, "European Merchants in the Medieval Indies: The Evidence of Commercial Documents", *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 3 (1943), 174-80.
[30] Banerjee, *History of Firuz Shah Tughluq*, 118-19.
[31] Irfan Habib, "Economic History of the Delhi Sultanate—An Essay in Reinterpretation", *Indian Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1978), 287-303.
[32] Qureshi, *The Administration of the Sultanate of Dehli*, 69-70.