DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS-HISTORY

SEMESTER -II

SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF INDIA (C.A.D.-1206-1757)

ELECTIVE-204

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

Society and Culture of India (C. A.D. 1206 – 1757)

BLOCK-1

BLOCK-2

BLOCK – 2 SOCIETY AND CULTURE OF MEDIEVAL INDIA FROM 1206 TO 1757 AD

Introduction to Block

UNIT – 8 Domestic Sovereignty - Women's Agency in Turko-Mongol Tradition Role of women in the harem of Delhi Sultanate.

Unit – 9 Domestic Sovereignty - Imperial Women and the establishment of Mughal Rule, Harem and Sovereignty Role of women in harem during Mughal empire

Unit -10 Mughal Marriages with Rajput women Hindu royal and Muslim royal fusion marriages in Mughal imperial harem.

Unit 11 Nur Jahan's role in court politics and Jahanara's role in trade and politics Nur Jahan's control over Mughal power and politics. Jahanara's role in Mughal harem and expansion of European trade.

Unit 12 Manliness in Mughal Court Culture: Body and Emotions – Norms of Masculinity; Love, Erotic and Devotion in Mystical Thought.Muslim male sexual erotica in Mughal imperial harem, man to woman relationship, man to man relationship, sexuality in Sufism

Unit – 13 Women and Gender in Everyday Life: Gender Relations in the Household; Women and the laws, Women in Economic Activities; Crimes against Women, Marginalized women – Prostitutes and Entertainers from 1206 to 1757. Role of women in everyday normal harem during Mughal rule, crime against women, role of bad women in society like marginalized women like prostitutes and nautch girls.

Unit – 14 - Gender relations in the 18th Century

Erotic history of 18th century Mughal India – Female Homosexual Poetry, Sexual concoctions to enhance sex life, Sexual discipline

UNIT 8 - DOMESTIC SOVEREIGNTY - WOMEN'S AGENCY IN TURKO-MONGOL TRADITION

STRUCTURE

8.0 OBJECTIVE

To know about the role of women in domestic sphere in Sultanate era.

To know about how women control politics from harem in Sultanate era.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The Delhi sultans has establish their sultanate on 1206AD by Qutab ud din Aibak a slave of Mohammad Ghori. They ruled upto 1526 AD. Five dynasties ruled in Delhi sultanate ie Slave, Khilji, Tugluq, Syed and Lodhi. The only women who ruled in Delhi sultanate was Razia sultan whose contribution became worthy for women because the status of was not good during this period.

8.2 SOCIO CULTURAL

Women always played an important role in the social and cultural life of a Society. They looked after the family and managed the household. They had their own role in marriages, religious ceremonies and festivals. Women lay and carry on the customs and traditions in society with regard to education and learning and various other cultural activities women made their own contributions. A woman as a mother occupied a pious and honourable place in medieval society. The pain and suffering which she undergoes at the time of the child birth and the sacrifices which she make in the up bring up of her children speaks of her selfless love. Amir Khusrau, placed mothers on a high pedestal by proclaiming that no child is born without a mother. The first lesson of a child starts in his mother's lap. A mother plays a dominant role in budding up the character of her children. She is the foremost teacher. If the mother is good, gentle, and God fearing the children will naturally inherit these virtues. Generally a mother's chief concern revolves reduces around the welfare and upbringing of her children in a proper manner. This is also evident for the account of the poet historian Amir Khusrau.

In the Hindu Society, Sati was quite common but during Muslim rule it was ordained that no widow could be ferried to burn herself against her will. In the Muslim Society their position was different. They were given due respect and honour and their requirements were attended to with Sympathy. Sultan Iltutmish is re-reported to have allowed widows to avoid the benefit of "Iqta" (Land grant) given to their husbands.' But Sultan Balban Stopped this practice and extended monetary assistance to them.s Sultan Mohammad-bin Tughlaq also worked for the welfare of the widows. Charity houses were setup in his empire which were entrusted with the task of providing relief and benefits. Sultan Firuz Shah Tughluq was also much concerned about the welfare of the widows. During the Lodi period, Muhtasibs were entrusted the task of finding suitable match for the widow. This is how the state attempted to improve the status of widow. Thus, especially arrangement for widow re-marriage proved to be boon for them.

Sultan Sikander Lodi had great reverence for Niamat Khatun, the widow of Qutb Khan Lodi. Niamat Khatun joined Sultan Sikander Lodi's Camp while he was busy in the fortification of Narwar fort in 1508 A.D. The Sultan treated her with due respect and honour. To show his reverence to Niamat-Khatun, Prince Jalal Khan (Niamat Khatun was his foster mother) was assigned the jagir of Kalpi, besides 120 horses and 15 elephants. He was provided with a huge sum of money and was entrusted by Sultan Sikandar Lodi to take Niamat Khatun to Kalpi where she was to be given all comforts. Sultan made all these special arrangements in consideration and sympathy for the widow of Qutub Khan Lodi. The seclusion of women continued to be in force during the Sultanate Period.

The public appearance of women and their equal participation along with men in various spheres of life was not deemed congenial in the early medieval society. Ismaili advocated for complete seclusion of women and considered those women pure and moral who observed Purdah. Amir Khusrau, harped on the same string with the help of a number of metaphors and similarities. The renowned poet considered Purdah (veil) is the best ornament of women which should be religiously observed. The place of women was home, which provided the security and enabled them to lead a moral life. Such was the spirit of the age. In practice things were slightly different, for we find women of the middle class without purdah when they attended their duties. Ordinary women came out to fetch water from tanks, well and rivers, women generally moved in groups when they visited these places.

In the royal household purdah was generally strictly observed. Raziya ardently followed this custom in the beginning of her reign but in order to conduct the state affairs she discarded her veil. The movement of women in places was restricted probably to preserve the integrity and chastity of women. It was with this aim that Sultan Firuz Tughluq and after him, Sultan Sikander Lodi had put some restriction on women for visiting tombs. Though a life of women was not free from seclusion and segregation but

they were not entirely confined to their house. In order to participate in various activities women came out of their homes. Their prime mode of transport was the palanquin or the dola and chariots. A palanquin was used as a means of transport by both men and women. But the one carrying women had silken curtain which symbolized that it was an era of Purdah and seclusion for women.

Ibn Battuta, has vividly described the dola of Makhdama-i-Jahan, the mother of Sultan Mohammad-bin-Tughluq. It was in the shape of a cot, knitted by Silken threads, covered by bent sticks with bamboo projecting on either sides. The common women as well as women of royalty used palanquin in order to move from one place to another. Marriage was an occasion of Jubilation and celebration during the sultanate also. Due to the dowry system, the expenditure incurred at the time of marriage of a girl, marred the very sanctity of the institution. To the royal household marriage served political purpose too. In setting marriages generally the parents played an important role and the prospective bride and bridegroom hardly had any say Even in the royal household. The final verdict of the parents was upheld the emotional set back which prince Khizr Khan had to face in the beginning, and his marriage with Alp khan's daughter was primarily because of his mother, Malika-i-Jahan's insistence. Efforts were made to provide financial relief to the parents for the marriage of their daughters.

During the reign of Sultan Balban. Fakhruddin Kotwal made arrangement to provide dowry for the poor girls. It was estimated that dowry of about one thousand girls was provided by this benevolent noble. In this context the contribution of Sultan Firuz Shah Tugluq remains unsurpassed. The Sultan was greatly moved by the sorrow and misery of the common masses especially on the question of dowry. Thus he established a department known as "Diwani-i-Khairat"' under the supervision of Sayyid Amiri Miran, who was entrusted with the task of providing relief to the financially handicapped parents. The needy parents sought the help

of this institution. The ingenuity of the case was examined and provisions were granted according to the needy for this purpose. Three degree of grants were available-first, second and third, after investigating the applicant's plea grants were bestowed upon them which was either 50,30 or 20 Tankas.

Divorce was instrumental in breaking the social contract of marriage, women were divorced and often they were accepted again as wives. Qazi Nasiruddin divorced his wife, who was later accepted by his disciple as his wife. In Multan, the period of waiting after divorce was not followed. A different custom existed in Multan. The husband without divorcing their wives, brought about matrimonial alliance of their wives with other men. Widow remarriage too were prevalent in the early medieval society.

Among the various means of amusement playing musical instruments was quite popular with the females. They were skilled in playing instruments like vina, Sitar, flute, Majamir, tabla and Sarangi. Singing, painting, riding were the other popular means of their entertainment. Amir Khusrau^s maintaining singing and dancing as items of amusement has warned women not to patronize them, for it also bring ill fame to them. Women also took delight in playing polo, chess chaupal. Swimming was also popular amongst women. The activities of the women mainly centred around household chores. They took keen interest in spinning, weaving, sewing, cooking and in serving food. Isami has stressed that the place of women was the home instead of wearing the crown they should take interest in spinning and weaving. Amir Khusrau, also considered spinning to be the chief activity of women. They should be able to spin "dupatta" for themselves. Even if they were wealthy women should not abandon the task of spinning and weaving. Women went to Hauz, rivers and wells^s to fetch water in pitchers for household chores. Cooking and serving of food was another duty of the females. Some of them prepared delicious dishes for which they were often rightly rewarded. Asad Khan an influential noble of Sultan Sikander Lodi, was so much pleased after eating that tasty dish of fresh

green leaves cooked by a common women that he rewarded her with a plate full of gold coins.

Hindu women who were well versed in household duties sought employment at low wages in the house of Muslims. This depicts the pitiable condition to which they were reduced and were called upon to earn their livings in a hard way. They often helped their husband in the fields where they especially looked after cattle. A part from the household chores women also worked in different capacities. As guard they looked after the harem's security, whereas they were employed inside the Harem to keep a record of its income and expenditure.

The dresses of women were governed by the social status and individual taste. The Muslim women dress comprised of kurta along with shalwar (or lungi) and had a will the women of Doab were seen wearing lahanga angiya and chola. The garments of women were generally made of cotton, wool, silk and leather. The women of Malwa wore transparent clothes which generally had fine work of gold. Paicha-i-shalwar Khastak-i-Izar, Niganda, Dotah, Kulah, Dastar were also popular dresses amongst the females The public women generally wore tight and transparent clothes.

EDUCATION

Education has been deemed to be a radiant light which illuminates the inner hidden qualities and talents of man. Education was considered important in every period for men and women for result of its building up their personality as well as for making them useful for the society at large. This is also required for socio economic development of the people.

There are historical evidence to suggest that during the sultanate period many women were educated, though they mostly belonged to upper class family, and the princesses of the royal families were educated by learned teacher. But the details regarding the mode of Education is insufficient. Amir Khusrau asserted that the women of royalty should be well versed in the use of arms,

the emergence of Razia as an accomplished sultan indicates that princesses were subjected to military training along with primary education.so She was an accomplished poetess and could recite the Holy Quran correctly. Thus being a women of literary taste, she stood for the cause of its propagation. She patronized men of letters and Madarsa-i-Nasiriya at Delhi became the centre of learning during her reign. Prior to Raziya, Mah Malik popularly known as Jalalud-Duniyauddin, the grand daughter of Alauddin Jahansaz created a place for herself in literary field. She earned fame specially because of her excellent writing. Bibi Razi, the wife of Sultan Mahmud Sharqi of Jaunpur contributed much in the literary field. She extended patronage to learned men's and opened a number of Madrasas and colleges. Provision of stipend for students and teachers were made by her to encourage the cause of education. The Sharqi Sultanate of Jaunpur become an important Centre of Education during her life time. Except the reference of Ibn Battutah of separate institution (in the Southern Coastal Hinwar) for girls. There does not seen to be any such arrangement during the Sultanate periods and appears that the task of educating girls was entrusted to private tutors. Still another evidence of Qanun-i-Islam (by Jafar Sharif) indicates the present of female Maktab.

An elaborate procedure was laid down when girls commenced their schooling before attending the "Maktab" . The relationship between the teacher and pupil was based on love and cooperation. Gifts from students and their parents were accepted by the teacher before starting a new lesson and especially when the Holy Quran was read out once. The day was the occasion of jubilation and celebration. Holiday for half a day was granted in the whole maktab when any student completed the reading of the Holy Quran. Various subjects were taught to the girls which included the use of shields wrestling and musical instruments along the dancing, sewing, weaving and crafting. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khalji (1463-1500 A.D.) of Malwa was particular about educating the women of his harem. Tutors were engaged to

educate the royal princesses. During his reign about seventy women were so well versed in the Holy Quran, that they recited the whole of it, at a stretch, while the Sultan wore his garments.

8.3 POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTROL FROM HAREM

The earliest reference of a lady who participated in political activities in the Sultanate period is that of Shah Turkan. She was originally a Turkish female slave who rose to the status of chief queen of Sultan Iltutmish by dint of her merit and charm.

During the reign of her husband, Sultan Iltutmish she patronized men of letters and gave liberal gifts and grants to Maliks, and to Ulama and Sufis. This made her popular not only in the Social circle but also made her effective in the political arena. She enjoyed the support of a section of nobility. It was with their co-operation that she succeeded in setting aside the will of Sultan Illutmish thereby, securing the throne for her son, Ruknuddin Firoz who was elevated to the throne on 6th June, 1236 A.D. Apart from her ambitions and intriguing nature she stepped into prominence because of the incompetence and pleasure loving temperament of her son. Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz. The Sultan threw himself in merry making activities ignoring completely the affairs of the state. This led Shah Turkan to interfere in the day-to-day administration of the Sultanate. She concentrated all power in her hand and even issued royal orders (Farman) in her name. Shah Turkan's prime objective was to keep the throne safe and secure for Sultan Rukhnuddin Firoz. This brought her in conflict with the son of Sultan Iltutmish Qutbuddin, a promising young prince of talents and merit. It was at her instigation that prince Qutbuddin, was blinded and finally put to death, in order to suppress any opposition from his side against sultan Ruknuddin Firoz. Thus further antagonized not only the

state officers but also the provincial governors of the Sultanate who broke out in revolt against the tyrannical and oppressive rule. Malik Ghiyasuddin Mahmud the governor of Awadh, Malik Izzuddin Mohammad Salari, the Governor of Multan and Malik Alauddin, the governor of Lahore presented a united opposition to the Sultan. In order to secure her position she had to deal with Raziya. The eldest daughter of Sultan Iltutmish. Raziya depended the crisis by inciting the masses of Delhi against the oppressive measures of Shah Turkan. The latter sought to imprison Raziya to curb her activities.

Unfortunately Shah Turkan's conspiracy against the princes failed miserably. The people of Delhi at Raziya's instigation brought an end to Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz's short reign by taking Shah Turkan in confinement when the Sultan was busy in suppressing the revolt at Kilukhari. The Sultan's return could not revive his power, for Raziya was already elevated to the throne.

Raziya Sultan

Raziyya Sultan (1236-1240) played a significant role in political during the Sultanate period. Her accession to the throne in the year 1236 A.D marked a new era in the history of Delhi Sultanate. The elevation of a lady to the throne Delhi Sultanate has importance mainly in view of the fact that those days society was considered quite conservative. Now Raziya, was elevated. Moreover, she was nominated by his father (Sultan Altamash, as his successor because of her merits and talents. He found his sons incompetent and saw in her the quality befitting a ruler. Sultan Iltutmish was confident that she would shoulder the responsibility of the state in a better way than his sons. Her major achievement lay not only in quelling the opposition or curbing the disruptive forces but in creating an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. She toned up the administration and provided a new vigour to the Turkish rule. She took charge of the government in a situation when Delhi Sultanate was facing internal as well as external crisis.

The power of the nobility reached to tits height, after the creation of 'core of forties' by Sultan Iltutmish. This group intervened in every issue of political importance, especially in the question of succession, it was this class which became an impediment in the accession of Raziya. The financial condition of the Sultanate was deplorable as Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz had drained out the state treasury by his extravagance. The provincial nobles, taking full advantage of the weak Sultan (Sultan Ruknuddin Firoz) grew rebellious and threw off their yoke.

Finally Raziya's path was cleared not only by providence but by her endurance, valour and tactfulness she now turned into consolidate her position by making herself aware of even minute details of administration. In this respect her first task was to appoint her confident nobles in important offices so that when ever necessary in times of crisis she could depend in their loyalty and support. Thus Malik Kabir Ikhtiyaruddin Aitikin was assigned the province of Badaun' s who later occupied the post of Amir-i-Hajib. Malik Izzuddin Kabir was entrusted with the province of Lahore whereas Hindu Khan was appointed as the governor of Uchch and Malik Taysi, as the governor of Awadh. Khwaja Muhazzabuddin was bestowed the title of Nizam-ul-Mulk and was entrusted the office of vazir. Malik Saifuddin Aibak was appointed as the commander-in-chief of the army with the title of Qutlug khan, so after his demise Malik Qutbuddin Hasan Ghori was entrusted with this office.

Another important consideration which Raziya appears to have in her mind while making these appointments was to avoid the concentration of power in the hands of a particular section of nobility. This aimed to prevent them from forming a clique in the court for their selfish ends. Raziya embarked upon the policy of enlisting and patronizing non-Turkish nobles on whom she could bank upon in times of political crisis thus she patronized non-Turkish nobles to create a new force to serve her political ends. Jamaluddin Yaqut, the Abyssinian slave, received special consideration for being a non-Turk. He occupied the prestigious

office of Amir-i-Akhur. (The master of horses) which according to tradition was enjoyed by Turk nobles. This act of Raziya faced great opposition from Turkish nobles who were being deprived of their privileges and rights by the Sultan.

The next step of Raziya was to establish place and order within the Sultanate. She turned her attention towards Ranthambhor, a region which was a constant source of trouble since the days of Sultan lltutmish. After the demise of Sultan lltutmish the Chauhans under the leadership of Vagbhatta. Threw off the royal yoke and besieged the fort of Ranthambhor. Raziya dispatched Qutbuddin Hasan Ghori to fight the rebellious Rajputs. The royal army broke the siege, and freed the Muslims held up in the fort. Raziya while conducting State affairs set a new pattern she gave up Purdah^s and wore long robe) turban instead of using traditional feminine dress. She openly rode on elephants. Raziya presided over the proceeding of the court, and dispensed justice in on impartial manner. Another Important campaign during the reign of Raziya was undertaken against Gwalior in March 1238 A.D. The siege proved to be a long drawn out affair without any results. During the combat, Minhaj along with other prestigious personalities joined Raziya's Camp. On 19th March 1230 A.D it was through the Mediation of Min haj al-Siraj that a settlement was finally reached between the two combating parties. The Sultan thereby assigned the post of Qazi of Gwalior to Minhaj who was also given the charge of the Madarsa-i-Nasiriya, at Delhi.

Role of Malik -i-Jahan Political Life in the Khalji Dynasty During the Khalj Dynasty

Malik-i-Jahan, the wife of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji^s wielded authority as wife, mother and mother in law. As wife of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji, she enjoyed complete influence over her husband's. Not only this, amongst the nobility also Malika-Jahan commanded a respectable status. The extent of her influence can be illustrated by the episode. Once when Sultan

Jalaluddin Khalji expressed his wife to adopt the title of "Al Mujahid Sabiullah" (The fighter in the path of Almighty) he sought his consort's (Malika-i-Jahan) advice. Not only this he also requested her to speak on his behalf to the nobles to propose the title to him in the court. Since Malika-i-Jahan commanded a lot of respect amongst the nobles she found no problem in gaining their consent, it was at her persuasion the nobles proposed the Sultan to accept the title^s (Al Mujahid Sabiullah) but later on the Sultan himself declined to accept it.

She played an Important role in straining Sultan Alauddin Khalji's relations not only with his wife but also with his father in law, Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji. She poisoned the Sultan's ears against Alauddin and also convinced him of his intriguing and ambitious nature who aim at carving out an independent principality for himself. Perhaps, it was her insistence, upon this fact, which created a feeling of suspicion in the mind of Sultan Malik-i- Jahan made things worse for Sultan Alauddin Khalji when she incited her daughter (Sultan Alauddin Khalji's wife) to ignore her husband. She was responsible for creating misunderstanding between Alauddin and his wife. Alauddin was placed in a miserable condition but she never complained the Sultan the misdeeds of Malika-i-Jahan, it seems that he did not want to hurt the sentiments of his humble father in law. But Sultan Alauddin's earnest desire was to settle down at a far of peace so that he could remain away both from his wife and his mother-in law's. Malika-i-Jahan played the most treacherous role of a mother in politics especially after the death of Sultan

Jalauddin Khalji, laying aside the claims of Arkali Khan (her elder son) for throne who was then at Multan she supported Qadr Khan and enthroned him, with the title of Ruknuddin Ibrahim. This act caused dissatisfaction amongst the nobles who were opposed to Qadr Khan. They preferred a mature, experienced and brave heir, like Arkali Khan. Blinded by ambition and desire for royal authority Malika-i-Jahan who lacked both patience and Intelligence completely ignored the power of the nobles, she concentrated all powers in her

hands and practically ruled in the name of her son. She heard petitions and issued decrees. To gain support of a section of nobility Malika-i-Jahan provided them with important offices and assigned territories to them. But this liberal attitude of her's could not case the situation. She did not possess the requisite intelligence and skill to handle the political crisis smoothly. Sultan Ruknuddin Ibrahim became a puppet in her hand who too was incompetent to handle the situation. Not only did the nobles oppose the royal authority but her son Arkali Khan too watched his mother's actions with dread and stayed back at Multan. The nobles whom she had attempted to win over to her side changed their camp and extended their support to Alauddin Khalji.

Hard pressed from all corners Malik-i-Jahan was left with no alternative but ask help from her elder son Arkali Khan. She 84 and accepted her mistake in elevating Qadr Khan to the throne and asked to be pardoned for her foolish act. Her petitions had no effect upon Arkali Khan who did not respond to her every of help. The situation had gone beyond his control and it was not possible to check Alauddin's action. Taking advantage of the strained relations between Malika-i-Jahan and Arkali Khan, Alauddin Khalji marched forward with case. The strained relations between Sultan Alauddin Khalji and his wife were further complicated by the uncharitable attitude of his mother-in law, Malik-i-Jahani. Afraid of Public disgrace and reluctant to hurt Sutlan Jalaluddin Khalji, Alauddin Khalji did not openly protest against undesirable activities of his wife and mother-in-law. But in his heart of hearts Sultan Alauddin Khalji felt very dejected. This was the main cause of his remaining away from his wife and mother in law. The fact that Sultan Alauddin Khalji himself had a haughty and uncompromising temperament can also not be over looked in this context.

Role of Makhdama-i-Jahan and Khudavandzada in Tugluq Period.

The Tughluq Dynasty witnessed the political influence of Makhdama-i-Jahan and Khudavandzada, the mother and Sultan Mohammad-bin Tughluq respectively. Makhduma-i-Jahan, the wife of Sultan Ghiyasuddin Tughluq (1320-25 A.D.) and mother of Sultan Mohammad-bin-Tughluq (1324-51 A.D.) was a virtuous, benevolent and charitable woman. She was held in great esteem by her son, Sultan Mohamamd-bin Tughluq who took particular care in looking after her welfare. The Sultan sought her able advice not only in the management of the royal household but also on various political issues. It was through her timely intervention that the marriage of Raasti, daughter of Sultan Mohammad-bin-Tughluq was solemnized with Shaikh Fathuah-bin-Shaikh Auhaduddin Nagori, , the grandson of Baba Farid in 1327-28 A.D. at Daultabad.

Makhduma-i-Jahan enjoyed considerable influence in political spheres. She received envoys and royal guests at court. Amongst them, one was Ibn Battutah, the African Traveller. In the absence of the Sultan, she welcomed Ibn Battutah, hosted a lavish banquet to grace the occasion. She received gifts and presents from the guests and distributed them to others with an open hearts with an open heart. A separate department was organized which kept an account of her gifts and grants. Being a women of charitable disposition, she maintained a number of inns for the comfort of the Travellers which were run by state exchequer. Her acts of charity were a boon for several families which survived merely because of her help. Sultan Mohamamd-bin Tughluq's death (20th March 1351 A.D.) plunged Delhi Sultanate into great confusion and chaos it was further aggravated when the deceased.

Sultan's eldest sister Khudavandzadai intervened in the matters of succession. Being in the royal lineage she put forward the claims of her son, Davar Malik to the throne against Firuz Shah Tughlug, she desired to achieve her ends by being harsh to the nobles. This hostile attitude of Khudavandzada infuriated the nobility who opposed her claims. The nobles made it clear to

her that at such critical hour there was need of a competent person on the throne who could save the sultanate from disruption for this purpose Davar Malik seemed too immature in comparison to Firuz Shah. But Khudavandzada was firm in her stand and pressed the claims of her son for succession. She cared for his interest more and was least concerned about the welfare of the Sultanate.

In order to avoid a civil war, Malik Saifuddini an influential noble of the court, made efforts to pacify Khudavandzada's Stubborn attitude. He succeeded in his attempts and she withdrew her agitation. Thus she could not procure the throne for her son. The nobles assigned him the office of Naib Barbaki. Khudavandzada yielded to the wishes of the nobles, in favour of Firuz Shah, yet in her heart of hearts she longed to place her son on the throne. Firuz Shah left no stones unturned in maintaining cordial relationship with his aunt, Khundavandzada, he considered it proper to be coroneted by her. Since then Sultan Firoz Shah made it a point to pay visit to Khudavandazada every Friday after evening prayer. Thus the Sultan continuously expressed his gratitude's and paid his respect. During these visits Sultan Firuz Shah and Khudavandzada sat on the same carpet and discussed issues of importance. It was after taking betel leaf from her that the Sultan came back to his palace. During these meeting Khudavandzada's husband, Khusrau Malik stood beside them and her son Davar Malik Sat behind her mother. It shows that she enjoyed great respect and privilege.

It appears that she asserted herself in presence of her son and husband. As noted earlier Khudavandzada had never abandoned the idea of placing her soon upon the throne. She was just looking after the right moment. She along with her husband organized a conspiracy against the Sultan to get rid of him at the time when he visited her. For this purpose the armed guards were asked to stay in the nearby chamber and at Khudavandzada's signal they were to attack the Sultan. Firuz Shah was completely unaware of this whole plot. As usual he went to visit Khudavandzada but the

timely gesture of Davar Malik upset the plan and Firuz Shah escaped unhurt. The armed guards were arrested and they confessed their guilt. Even though her attempt to kill Firuz Shah ended in failure the Sultan continued to treat Khudavandzada with consideration and granted her a fixed allowance. Her scheming husband, Khusrau Malik was deported while Davar Malik was ordered to visit the Sultan every month attired in a robe and slippers. His property and wealth was confiscated to the state treasury. The ambitious and conspiring Kudavandzada met an unhappy end. Perhaps if she had not schemed against sultan she would have had a smooth and luxurious life. But her unwise act undid her better prospects.

The Role of Bibe Raji in Sharqi Kingdom of Jaunpur:

A lady who played a significant role in the politics of the Sharqi kingdom was Bibi Raji. She was the guiding force not only during her husband's reign but also after his death. She was the daughter of Sayyid Sultan Mubarak Shah and was known for her intellect and charitable disposition. During the reign of her son (Sultan Hussain Shah Sharqi) she assumed all powers in her hands and looked after the welfare and well being of her subjects. Bibi Raji was married to the crown prince Mahmud Sharqi This marriage was solemnized to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the Sayyid rulers of Delhi and the Sharqis of Jaunpur in 1427 A.D. When the Sayyids were over thrown by the Lodis, Bibi Raji felt humiliated and wanted to avenge the defeat by acquiring the throne of her ancestors. For this purpose, she compelled her husband, who was earlier reluctant to undertake the expedition against Lodis. It was on her behest that Sultan Mahmud Sharqi marched against the army of Delhi and fought the battle of narela in the year 1452 A.D.

Luckily, the tables turned in the favour of Sharqis who defeated the Lodis. Qutb Khan was taken captive and brought to Delhi, where he was treated generously chiefly because of further to mourn the death of all her sons in quick succession. This

was the turning point in Bibi Raji's behaviour. She now brought about a coup degracesio (peaceful revolution with the support of the nobles by elevating Husain Shah Sharqi to the throne. Malik Mubarak Gung and Malik Ali Gujarati accompanied the new Sultan to oppose Sultan Mohammad Sharqi who was killed in the most dramatic manner. It was Bibi Raji, who had planned his fall cleverly. She bribed one of his guards who removed the head of the Sultan's arrows. Thus rendering him handicapped he could fight only with his sword, so was easily killed.

Sultan Husain Shah respected his mother and acted on her experienced advice. She died at Etawah in the year 1477 A.D. The Sultan felt very sad. Even Sultan Bahlol Lodi mourned at her demise for she enjoyed great respect in his heart. Originally belonging to the Sayyid dynasty. Bibi Raji became a renowned queen in the Shaqi Kingdom by the dint of her wisdom and tact she was instrumental in getting a peace treaty signed thereby enabling Item to live in peace. After her husband's demise the manoeured to depose the tyrant Sultan. Mohamamd Sharqi had great skill. She was then responsible for elevating Sutlan Husain Sharqi to the throne and such was the influence of Bibi Raji in the political areas of Sharqi Kingdom of Jaunpur.

The Role of Bibi Khunza During the reign of Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi, his Chief queen Malika-i-Jahan. Bibi Khunza was an ambitious and intriguing woman. She also wielded political authority. The Sultan passionately loved his wife and she often persuaded her husband to fulfil her desire. Bibi Khunza threatened husband that in the event of his failure to pursue Sultan Bahlol Lodi she would herself lead the army against Delhi to over throw Sultan Bahlol Lodi. It appears that she could not put up with the idea of Sultan Bahlal Lodi ruling Delhi Sultanate because she was the daughter of Sultan Alauddin Alam Shah, the last Sayyid Sultan (1445-51). As such she considered it her right to occupy the throne of Delhi. For this reason she continuously instigated Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi to overthrow Sultan

Bahlol Lodi to retrieve the throne of her ancestors. Discussing the situation with Malik Shams Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi avoided a war against Sultan Bahlol Lodi.

However it was Bibi Khunza's persuasion which ultimately led Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi to undertake the campaign against Sultan Bahlol Lodi. With a strength of 140,000 cavalry-men and 1400 elephants he went to capture Delhi in the year 1473 A.D. This armed conflict ended in disaster as Sultan Sharqi's army was defeated. A large booty fell into the hands of Sultan Bahlol Lodi which also included Bibi Khunzai who had accompanied Sultan Husain Shah Sharqi to the battlefield.

The influence of women in the political sphere during the Sultanate period varied according to their personality, family connections, political situation and the character of the sultan. As Sultan's wife, mother or sister they often played an important role in matter of succession, was and peace. By virtue of their tact, intelligence and diplomacy, they often strengthened the Sultanate. But sometimes impelled by their ambition, intriguing and self seeking nature, their participation in political issues created more problems for the Sultanate.

Role of Shams Khalun under the Lodis

During the Lodi period a number of women influenced the political affairs of the time, the first lady who participated in politics during the Lodi period was shams Khatun, the chief wife of Sultan Bahlol Lodi. She commanded a place of honour in the Sultan's harem. The Sultan loved her and always tried to fulfil her desires. During Sultan Bahlol Lodi's struggle with Mohammad Shah Sharqi of Jaunpur, his brother-in-law, Qutb Khan was taken as captive. Soon sultan Bahlol lodi sought for peace treaty and after entering into terms with sultan Mohamamd Sharqi returned back to Delhi.

On reaching Dan Kaur he received a letter from his wife Shams Khatun urging him not to opt for a cease fire and not to relax until and unless her brother was freed from the clutches of

Sultan Mohammad Sharqi. These words provoked Sultan Bahlol Lodi who at once retraced his steps back to wards Jaunpur to meet Sultan Mohammad sharqi with greater force. Now his prime objective was to free Qutb Khan, his brother-in-law from captivity. Thus it was the intervention of Shams Khatun which led Sultan Bahlol Lodi to march once again to Jaunpur. She became the cause of re-opening the war with Sharqi ruler, though the Sultan had earlier entered into a peace treaty to end it.

During the Lodi period, Bibi Ambha, the daughter of a Hindu goldsmith and the wife of Sultan Bahlol Lodi also played a significant role in the political life. She was an accomplished woman known for her charm and pleasant manners. Her long black hair and rosy cheeks stole the heart of Prince Bahlol Lodi who was then the governor of Sir Hind. Though She was a Hindu girl but after his occasion to the throne Sultan Bahlol Lodi married her. Along with beauty Bibi Ambha had a sharp intellect. She took part in politics by pressing the claims of her son to the throne after the death of Sultan Bahlol Lodi (July 1489 A.D.) She opposed Isa Khan Lodi (son of Tater Khan Lodi), and pleaded the nobles to extend their support in favour of her son, Nizam Khan. However, Isa Khan, openly rebuked her saying that what a gold smith's son had to do with the throne. This hurt the nobles and khan-i-Khanan Farmali especially objected to such a harsh treatment towards the Sultan's widow. Not only did this subdue Bibi Ambha's opponents but also made the nobles, extend full support to her enthroning Nizam Khan Sultan under the title of sultan Sikander Lodi. Thus it was through tact and perseverance that Bibi Ambha got the support of the nobles. She easily suppressed the opposition and won the throne for her son.

In the year 1452 A.D. when Sultan Mahmud Sharqi, the ruler of Jaunpur, besieged the fort of Delhi, at the instigation of his wife (Bibi Raji) to defeat the lodis. Bibi Mattu (the wife of Islam Khan Lodi) played an important role in that critical situation, it was her tact, intelligence and presence of mind which out witted Sultan Mahmud Sharqi. She made a wise plan to deceive

the enemy as Sultan Bahlol Lodi was in Sirhind and the number of males in the fort were few. She ordered the women in the fort to dress up like men and asked them to take their position on the rampart of the fort.

Role of Ladies in Religions Life

During the period under review reference are found of a number of ladies who were known for their piety and religious outlook. Some of them had even developed Spiritual powers and could perform acts of miracle.

Bibi Zulaikha

the mother of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya, was renowned for the piety and Saintly life. She had full faith in her prayers and always depended upon the mercy of Allah. Once she had nothing to eat for herself and for her son but she was not perturbed and calmey said "we are Allah guests today. The next day she received a huge quantity of grain in gift from a generous person. That is low her prayers were granted. When once her female servant fled away, she found it difficult to employ another one. As usual she prayed to god for her return. Saying that she would not place her clock (daman) on her head till god listened to her . She wailed a waited for a Divine miracle. Surprisingly enough, the whereabouts of maid was traced and the very next day she returned back to resume her services. Paying tributes to his mother, Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya remarked that there was a unique relation between her and Allah because, Allah always fulfilled her desires and wishes. She possessed unique intuition of foreseeing the future in her dreams. It was by virtue of her initiation that she prophesied that one day her son would earn great fame and honour as a saint. These words came true after the demise of his mother. When she was on her death bed. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was very much disturbed because he was still too young to face the life all alone, when he expressed his concern that after her death who would look after him, she took his right hand into hers, and said to God "I am handling him over to you".These events

show that Bibi Zulaikha had full faith in God who in return always granted her prayers. Whenever she desired anything, or faced any crisis she recited an eulogy (Durood, special praises of Prophet) Five hundred times in prayer and her needs were fulfilled. It was Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's mother who had sown the seeds of God's love in his heart. The had great reverence for her. After her death he used to visit her tomb regularly and recited 'Fatiha' 'Darood' and prayers for the place of her soul.

Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji disturbed the routine of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya by asking him to came and pray in the royal mosque. Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya refused to abide by the royal orders as he loved to offer his prayers in the mosque, near his house. The Sultan who threatened him of dire consequences. Hardly, was this event forgotten when the Sultan again ordered Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya along with others to come and boy obeisance to him on every first day of the new moon. This placed Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya in a fix because it clashed with his regular visit to his mother's grave. Sitting by the side of his mothers grave, he prayed for being rescued from the ruler. Amazingly enough, his prayers were answered when there occurred a Sudden political turmoil which brought the assassination of Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Shah Khalji. These events show the mystic power which both the mother and the son possessed. They always turned to God for his mercy in times of crisis.

Bibi Auliya

Another famous lady of the period was Bibi Auliya who lived during the reign of Sultan Mohammad bin-Tughluq. She was a gentle and a kind hearted lady. The Sultan held her in great Esteem. Sufis also had deep regards for her. Thus due to her piety and virtues she became a cherished personage. She had a number of Children who owned their leanings to Sufi doctrines to their mother. Foremost among them was Shaikh Ahmad.

Bibi Sara

Bibi Sara, was the mother of Shaikh Nizamuddin Abul Mund who was known for her genial and religious bend of mind. She observed strict Purdah and it was well known that no male had ever seen her in her private life. Devoted to prayers and religious pursuits she was believed to have possessed miraculous mystic power. It did not rain in Delhi for long and the inhabitants of that place prayed to Allah for relief. But there was no respite. So the Shaikh took the help of his mother and holding her "damaan prayed to the Almighty to send rain in no time a miracle happened. There was sudden showers of rain which provided relief to the agency of the people of Delhi.

Bibi Raasti

Bibi Raasti was the wife of Shaikh Sadruddin Arif and mother of Shaikh Rukhnuddin Abul Path. She was a pious and religious minded woman. She used to read the whole Quran daily. Her strong faith in Sufi doctrines incited her to become the disciple of Shaikh Bahauddin Zakariya. Once when she was pregnant she visited the sheikh who treated her in an extra ordinary manner than ever before. Bibi Raasti was quite surprised at his behaviour and enquired about the cause of it. The Shaikh explained to her that it was a humble tribute to her because she was going to be the mother of a great saint too.

Check your progress –

1. Write about the role of women in politics from harem.

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2. Write about the religious contribution by women.

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8.4 LETS SUM UP

During the sultanate period, social status of a woman, both in Hindu and Muslim communities was very low. She was regarded as the property of men. Females belonging to the nobility observed purdah and were rarely allowed to go outside the house. Firuz Shah Tughluq, (1309-1388) prohibited women from even visiting holy shrines. It was believed that if women went out, they might get involve in immoral activities.

As a custom, rulers and nobles married many women and kept slave girls in a place called harem. Their women, while not always getting a very good treatment from them, were considered as their honour. The Rajputs, especially after being defeated in wars, killed their wives and slave girls in order to save their honour. Whenever a war took place, the defeated enemy's wealth and all their belongings were distributed equally among the triumphant army, and even the women folk of the enemy were treated as war booty.

Women had no freedom and were suppressed. Peasant women had to work at home as well as in the fields. Their life was very hard and without love and respect. Among the Hindus, the custom of 'sati' was common in which a widowed woman had to immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre. However, women belonging to the nobility had some privileges; they could get education at home and enjoyed some freedom. However, there have been women who got the opportunity to play important roles in politics and the administration.

8.5 KEYWORDS

Khairat – Donations

Khatoon – Female

Yateemkhana – Orphanage

8.6 QUESTIONS REVIEW

1. Write about the life of Razia Sultana.

2. Write about Shah Turkan.

8.7 SUGGESTED READING

Ahmad, Basheer Muhammad: The Administration of Justice in Medieval India, Karachi, 1951.

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Ali Sayeed Ameer: Islamic History and Culture, Delhi, 1978.

Ali Yusuf Abdulah: Medieval India, London, 1932.

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section– 8.4

2. Section– 8.4

UNIT 9 - DOMESTIC SOVEREIGNTY - IMPERIAL WOMEN AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUGHAL RULE, HAREM AND SOVEREIGNTY

STRUCTURE

9.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the composition of Mughal Harem

To learn about the control of the Mughal Harem on Mughal politics

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Mughal Empire was established in India in the 16th century. It was one of the biggest, most organized and centralized Empires of its time. It was a huge establishment which embodied several institutions within it. Similar to Mansabdari and Jagirdari the Harem was also one of the most important institutions. In fact, it was the most secure place in the Mughal

establishment. The term Harem or Haram is derived from Arabic Harem which means sacred or forbidden. In Turkish the same is called as Seraglio and in Persian the word Zenana is used. In Mughal sources a Harem is also referred to as Harem sarah, Haremgah, Zenana and Raniwas. The Rajputs called it as Zenana dyodhi.

9.2 IMPERIAL MUGHAL HAREM AND POLITICS

The main inhabitants here were the women members of the Emperor's family. It included his various wives, mothers, step mothers, foster mothers, sisters, daughters and cousins. Several second line of relatives also resided here. The Mughals were known to provide shelter to needy relatives. Thus, royal and noble women from different countries sought refuge with the Mughals. They too were provided quarters here. In addition, young princesses were also lodged in the Harem quarters until they attained maturity. They were under the supervision of their mothers and grandmothers. No outside men were allowed inside. The composition of Harem has been a subject of some debate amongst the scholars. The contemporary sources refer to a large number of women within the Mughal Harem. The main source of information for us is the accounts of European travellers who were much engrossed by fantasy and rumours. Their account of the Harem thus contains exaggerations. This is also because these foreign travellers had no access to the Harem establishment. Some sporadic information is available in the biographies of Jahangir and Babur. The only source to contain detailed information about the Harem is Gulbadan Begum's Humayun Namah. However the text only covers Babur, Humayun and early part of Akbar's reign.

Composition

The composition of the Mughal Harem was heterogeneous with women from various nationalities and ethnicities residing there. Besides the respected members of the family, it also had concubines, dancing girls, singing girls, servants, slave girls, women officials and guards. The Eunuchs who were guards also had access to the Harem as did the

women fortune tellers. They were the main past time of the royal ladies. As already mentioned, the Harem was a specially guarded and secure place. An array of officers and guards were appointed to look after its security. Only women were allowed inside the Harem premises. There were three circles of security. The innermost circle consisted of female guards. Mostly Habshis, urdbegis and tartar women were employed in this capacity. They were considered as good soldiers. They used Bows-Arrows and short daggers. They were further divided into groups guarding different sections of the Harem. A particular group was responsible for the security of the Emperor's chambers. The second layer consisted of trustworthy Eunuchs. They were called as Khwaja sarah. The head of this group was given a title Aitmad or Aitbar Khan. The third layer consisted of Rajput soldiers in the employment of high nobles. They were posted at a considerable distance from the Harem. On the four directions of the Harem important nobles and ahadis were kept ready to assist the security at Harem. The size of the Harem was modest during the reigns of Babur and Humayun. The peripatetic nature of the kingdom in those days limited the size of the Harem. Similar to all other Mughal institutions, Akbar's accession to throne also led to major changes in the structure of the Harem as well. The settled nature of Mughal kingdom and the expansion of its geographical boundaries contributed as well. Habitation within the Harem, its security and rituals became an elaborate affair.

According to Abul Fazl there were 5000 women in Akbar's Harem. Not all of them were his wives. Jehangir, on the other hand, had 300 wives and around 1000 women resided in his Harem. The social structure of the Harem was hierarchical in nature. The important members of the Harem were the mothers and the wives of the Emperor. The Emperor himself resided inside the Harem from time to time. Every inmate tried to gain his attention. Pleasing the Emperor was the gateway to power and prestige within the Harem. Generally, his mother was the first lady of the Empire. She was also consulted by the Emperor on important issues including forming political policies. Nur Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal were the exceptions. The Mughal Emperors respected their mothers greatly. Babur as well as Akbar waited upon their mothers especially when they

came home after travelling for long distance. It was she who first visited the emperor after his coronation. This was also the case on occasions of celebrations like festivals and birthdays.

In addition, foster mothers and wet nurses were given a similar position as the Emperor's mother. This was in keeping with the central Asian tradition where foster mothers were considered as equal to a mother. It is said that Akbar was closer to Maham Anaga, one of the four women who breast fed infant Akbar, than his own mother. For a short while Maham Anaga also acted in the capacity of Akbar's chief advisor after Bairam khan's exit from Mughal politics.

Next in importance were the chief or principal wives of the Emperor. The Emperor had several wives from different ethnic and religious background. In order to strengthen their political position, the Mughals entered into several strategic matrimonial alliances with different polities. The importance of a particular wife depended upon the relative importance of her natal kingdom in the Mughal political structure. In addition, the proximity to the Emperor and a share in his affection also decided the status of the wife in question. Nur Jahan and Mumtaz mahal were two such queens who were highly influential not only within the Harem but in the politics as well. The princesses from the defeated clans and smaller kingdoms generally formed the section of lesser wives and accorded lesser position compared to the chief queens. They are referred to as Mahals and Bais. Nonetheless there was scope for them to rise above in the hierarchy of the Harem especially if they gave birth to a male child.

Next to the wives were the concubines known as Kaniz, Sarkar and Paristar. Though officially they were inferior to the other inmates of the Harem, they enjoyed many privileges by the virtue of the affection they were able to earn from the Emperor. Some of Babur's concubines became recognized ladies of his Harem while one of Humayun's concubines occupied the position of Akbar's wet nurse. Several of them gave birth to royal children like Bibi Salima and Bibi Daulat shad who gave birth to Akbar's daughters while princes Murad and Daniyal were both born of his concubines. Similarly, Shahryar and Jahandar, two of

Jehangir's sons were born to concubines. Shahjahan was served in his last days by his two favourite concubines, Akbarabadi Mahal and Fatehpuri Mahal. Aurangzeb was very fond of one Udaipur mahal. Thus, it can be said that though the political status of the natal kingdoms played an important part in determining the status of women in the hierarchy of the Harem there were other ways through which lesser women could gain Emperor's affection and thus augment their own position. These were the main inhabitants of the Harem. Other than these categories there were dancing and singing girls. These women were meant to entertain the inmates. Several Begums had personal dancing and singing girls who were given as gift. Possessing them was a status symbol.

Harem Administration and Security

Besides the royal inmates and the security personnel a large number of administrative staff also lived or moved about within the Harem complex. The Emperors ensured that the Harems were administered efficiently and the necessities of the inmates were taken care off. The staff too consisted of only women. They were divided into three categories; high, middle and lower strata. Internal administration was under the charge of women official called as Daroga. She was directly appointed by the Emperor. Such women were well qualified, intelligent, capable and belonged invariably to high noble families. The importance of this post can be gauged by the fact that Nur Jahan's mother Asmat Banu Begum occupied this post for some time. Even Jahangir praised her efficiency. The prime duty of this official was to keep the Harem in order. She had several officers under her charge known as Mahaldars. They acted as supervisors, but their main duty was to keep an eye on the inmates. They reported directly to the Emperor. They were also the link between the Emperor and the various report writers like Waqianawis (public news writer) and Khufiya nawis (secret news writer). The Mahaldars also directed the above writers according to the wishes of the Emperor. There were separate supervisors for the dancing and singing girls. More mundane staff like Tahawildars and Ashrafs also existed. Tahwildars were in charge of the Harem accounts. All inhabitants including the royal women had to apply to them for money and other

necessities which were met with in accordance with their salaries and maintenance. Ashrafs were the store keepers.

Physical structure of the Harem

The Mughal women lived amidst great beauty and luxury. The Harem was a fort complex divided into quarters called as Mahals or shabistan-i-Iqbal and Shabistani-Khas. It is evident from the remains of these buildings that not all inmates were provided with a Mahal. The position an inmate had in the social hierarchy must have decided her residential status too. Generally a Mahal consisted of space for a royal lady's retinue like servants, slaves, singing and dancing girls. The servants and slaves too lived within the precincts of the Harem. The place where they lived was called as chowk. The concubines similarly lived in separate quarters known by the week days when the Emperor visited them like Ayitvar and Shanivar (Sunday and Saturday) [Mukherjee,28-29]. The Harem buildings were grand like other Mughal buildings. Some were made of marble with gold engravings and gem studded. Persian carpets covered the floor and beautiful decoration of mirrors, chandeliers and lamps adorned the living quarters. Gardens and water falls were the hall mark of the Mughal Harem complex.

Harem and Court politics

Contrary to the popular image of purdah clad secluded women, Mughal women participated in court politics at a high level. Mothers and sisters played a decisive role in determining the political status of their sons and brothers especially during the wars of succession. This trait was more visible during the earlier phase i.e., Babur and Humayun's reign where many negotiations were required in order to help the Mughal Empire to survive. It was the women then who played an important role. As the enemies happened to be within the clan and part of the family the role of women was enhanced. Their negotiations were generally effective. Certain women like Maham Anaga and Nur Jahan were far more powerful than others. It was their capability and intelligence which allowed them to exploit a particular political situation to their advantage. Early in Akbar's reign, in order to rid himself of Bairam Khan's

powerful tutelage Akbar sought Maham Anaga's help. With the help of her clique consisting of her son and son-in-law she was able to remove Bairam Khan from the position of power and herself occupied that position for a short while. Similarly, Nur Jahan too became powerful with the aid of her family consisting of her father and brother. They were high nobles and held important posts in Jahangir's reign. They together formed what is referred to by some scholars as Nur Jahan Junta. She sought to extend her influence to the next generation by marrying her daughter Ladli Begum (an offspring from Nur Jahan's first marriage) to Shahryar, one of Jehangir's sons. Her position was compromised because of Shahjahan's marriage to Mumtaz Mahal, Nur Jahan's niece because of which her brother no more supported her pretensions to power. Nur Jahan was perhaps the most powerful women in the history of Mughal Empire. During Jahangir's reign she enjoyed paraphernalia equal to her husband. She took part in political decision making, stuck and circulated coins in her own name and granted public audience. The above were the privileges of kingship which the Mughals guarded closely. Through this we can gauge the amount of influence she had on Jahangir.

Another area where the royal women were effective was negotiating on behalf of rebels seeking Emperor's pardon. In 1582 Akbar's mother interceded on behalf of two erring officers who were then pardoned. Nur Jahan similarly obtained pardon for one erring Mansabdar. Jahanara was instrumental in the Court providing stipends and allowances to several individuals. Certain royal queens also enjoyed administrative powers. In case of Nur jahan, Mumtaz Mahal and Jahanara, they had the privilege of issuing royal orders like Hukms and Parwanas. Several documents bearing their seals have been found. These orders were next only to Farmans issued by the Emperor. In addition, the royal seals were kept in the custody of the chief queen. This made the queen a very powerful person in the Empire. Many senior women like Akbar's mother and Jahangir's mother heard petitioners and brought their grievances to the Emperor's notice [

Harem and Economic activities

The women of Mughal Harem had varied interests. It seems that they were high level merchants too. Several of them dabbled with mercantile activities, both international and domestic. Jehangir's mother owned a large fleet of ships plying enroute to Mecca. Jeddah was a port which functioned as an exchange market between Africa, Arabia and Europe. The largest of this fleet named Rahimi. It plied between West Asia and Persian Gulf. Nur Jahan too was a clever businesswoman. She was a patron for European East India Companies. She simultaneously invested in the merchandise of Portuguese and English. She regularly paid courtesies to Portuguese. Her friendship with the English is well known. In 1627 she granted an order exempting the English Company from paying transit duties. The English Ambassador, Thomas Roe, refers to her as his solicitor and is full of admiration for her. Jahanara was another royal lady who invested heavily in overseas trade. She had ships named Sahebi and Ganjwar through which she traded with the ports of West Asia and Persian Gulf.

In addition engagements in domestic trade and the Jagirs granted to these women contributed towards their income. Generally all royal and dependant women in the Harem were given maintenance. Certain influential and important women were granted Jagirs for maintenance as well as gifts. Nur Jahan was bestowed large Jagirs like Toda near Ajmer, Bharuch and Surat in Gujarat. Jahanara too had big Jagirs which yielded good income. According to Manucci Jahanara received three million rupees annually from her Jagirs. They employed Nazirs or Gumasthas to look after the affairs of their Jagir. Other than the Jagirs they also received annual maintenance and presents worth lakhs of rupees. In 1628 Shahjahan granted 16 lakh rupees and 2 lakh ashrafis to Mumtaz mahal. Jahanara received 10 lakh rupees and one lakh ashrafis as annual allowance. This was over and above the cash gifts they received on festivals and celebrations.

Charity works

The income obtained from various sources was not wasted by these women. Infact, it was put to use for noble causes like building public utility constructions and patronizing artisans. Mughal royal women

involved themselves in philanthropic activities. Many Mosques and Idgahs were built at their direction. Humayun's tomb was built by his first wife Bega Begum. She also commissioned construction of a Serai. Maham Anaga built a Masjid-cum-Madrasa, Khair-ul-Majlis in Agra in 1561. Gardens too were laid down at their instructions. Nur jahan supervised the construction of three tombs; that of her father Itmad-ud-Daula at Agra, that of Jahangir at Shahdara and her own tomb at Lahore. She also got several gardens laid in Lahore and Agra. Jahanara is credited with the construction of two mosques in Kashmir and Agra. She also built many serais and markets. Bridges were built and wells were dug at the behest of the Mughal women. Roshan Ara Begum, Shahjahan's other daughter, Zeb-un-Nisa and Zinat-un-Nisa, Aurangzeb'a daughters contributed in similar ways. Nur Jahan was exceptionally generous. She is credited with several charitable works. She regularly financed marriages of young women and supported orphans. Many Karkhanas were also patronized by these women. Here, the artisans produced different kinds of textiles, carpets, perfumes, Jewellery and other articles of luxury meant for royal consumption. Many such enterprises were supported by particular women. For instance, Nur jahan supervised production and designing of royal textiles according to her taste. She is also credited with the invention of rose ittar or perfume.

Cultural Life

Contrary to popular belief the Mughal women did not lead a secluded life. Although Purdah (veil) was prevalent it did not prevent the women from participating in the activities of the outside world. These women contributed significantly towards practicing as well as patronizing literary and artistic activities. The Harem was a lively place which witnessed regular celebrations. Festivals like Id-ul-Fitr, Shabb-i-barat, Dussehra, Diwali, Holi, Raksha Bandhan, Nauroz, etc were celebrated with pomp. Victories, coronations and important days were also celebrated in similar manner. Fairs and bazaars were also held within the harem premises.

The Mughal women received religious and non-religious education. Several of them made important literary contributions. Gulbadan Begum wrote Humayun Namah, a first-hand account of Mughal Harem up to Akbar's time. His mother Hamida Banu Begam wrote some books and collected manuscripts. Jahanara who had Sufi inclinations wrote several Risalas (religious Pamphlets explaining tenets of a particular order) on mysticism and spirituality. Her Risala-i-sahibiya was well known. Munis-ul-Arwah, a biography of Muin-ud-din Chishti was popular in contemporary times. Following her Zeb-un-Nisa also accepted Sufi way of life. She too wrote several Risalas with the pen name Makhfi

The Mughal Harem has been a subject of much debate amongst scholars. Some have painted it as a place where the Emperor could gratify his sexual pleasure. Some others saw it as a beautiful prison where women were imprisoned for ever. However, recent research has shown that women of Mughal harem were not ignorant of the outside world. They had easy access and connection with people outside. Not only that these women also participated enthusiastically in the political, economic and cultural activities of their times. At times they were decisive and influential in such roles. Exceptionally capable women like Maham Anaga, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal and Jahan Ara could become de facto rulers or at least influence the Emperors on important matters. Thus, the Mughal Harem was far more complex and dynamic than what was understood earlier.

IMPERIAL MUGHAL WOMEN

Khan-i-Azam Mirza Aziz Koka says; "a man should marry four wives; a Persian to have someone to talk to; a Khurasani woman for his housework; a Hindu for nursing his children; a woman from Mawar-un-Nahr or Trans-oxiana, to have someone to whip as a warning to the other three."2 It is undoubtedly very essential to mention about the literary labors of some of the Mughal princesses. The daughter of Babur, Gulbadan Begum, who was a talented lady and wrote the Humayun Namah, which is still considered an authority on the life and times of his brother Humayun. Sultana Salima, Humayun's niece, and Jahan Ara, the talented daughter of Shah Jahan, were all accomplished

scholars, and they took keen interest in art and literature. Zaib-un-Nisa, the daughter of Aurangzeb was a gifted poetess, who wrote under the pen name of makhfi, the hidden one. She was well versed in Arabic and Persian and her diwan bespeaks of her remarkable talents.3 As far as Mughal harem is concerned no nobleman, historian or scholar, not even an Allama like Abul Fazl, could enter the harem, meet with Queens and Princesses, discuss their problems and write about them. Most of the Persian chroniclers were official historians: and their entire force of narration was the Emperor. The harem was for His Majesty's personal pleasure and his women remained far too removed from the chronicler's official notice. Therefore, their references to the seraglio of the royalty and nobility are based on their observation from a distance and not on intimate personal knowledge.

Maham Begum

Babur, by his seven legitimate spouses had seventeen children, of whom eight died in childhood. Maham Begum, who bore Humayun and four other children, and Gulrukh Begum, who also bore five children, were perhaps his favorite wives. In fact, among all of his wives the one Babur truly loved was Maham, his chief wife; he called her Maham which means 'my moon.' She was the most favorite wife of Babur, "of whom it was said that she was to Babur what Ayisha (R.A.T.A.) was to Hazrat Muhammad" (S.A.W.). Humayun the eldest son of Babur, was born on March 6, 1508 A.D. to Maham Begum; in this way Humayun's blood was the result of a mixture of the Central Asian with that of Maham Begum, a Persian lady. S.M Ikram says that by sect she was an Ithna Ashariyah. Abul Fazl says she was of a noble Khurasan family, and like Hamida Banu Begum, was of the line of Shaikh Ahmad Jami if implies blood-relationship on the father side. Another four children were born to her and unfortunately all died in infancy. They were Barbul, Mihr Jahan, Isan-daulat and Faruq.

Among prominent concubines of Babur were Gulnar Aghacha and Nargul Aghacha, both of them were gifted by Shah Tahmasp of

Persia. However, Maham was supreme, and had well defined rights over other inmates. Maham Begum, used to sit by the side of her husband on the throne, she was powerful, moody and spoilt and it seems Babur denied her nothing. It is worth of noticing that "Babur speaks of his favorite wife, Maham Begum's edict as a farman.

Hamida Bano

Begum Hamida was to be known as Maryam Makani in tribute. She was Persian racially, and was from the province of Khurasan, but had lived with the Chaghatais' so long that she was fully immersed in their culture and mores. Hamida Bano Begum was a daughter of Syed Ahmad Jam, known as Zindah Pir, at Bhakkar. There is confusion about the father's name of Hamida Begum: Gulbadan called her the daughter of Mir Baba Dost, Jauhar calls her the daughter of Hindal's Akhund. Abul Fazl does not give the name of her father but calls him Muazzam, who was with her at Pat. Mir Masum states that she was the daughter of Shaikh Ali Akbar Jami, who was one of the pillars of Mirza Hindal. Nizamuddin Ahmad says that Ali Akbar was father of Mu'azam. Therefore, Baba Dost and Ali Akbar might be identified as the names of one man. Hamida was related to Banu Agha who was the wife of Shihab-ud-Din Ahmad Nishapuri and was a relative of Maham Anaga (Akbar's foster mother). Humayun's another wife Haji Begam also had claim to descent from Ahmad Jami, so that the saint's posterity was numerous in Akbar's Court, and included the Emperor himself.

Anarkali

Anar-Kali was a woman who is declared by a historical legend to have been loved by Jahangir and put to death for the privilege. Anarkali was the title given to Nadira Begum or Sharf-un-Nisa, one of the favorites of the harem of Akbar. She was indeed one of the most beautiful maiden of Akbar's Court, due to her extraordinary gorgeousness and her crimson skin, Akbar used to call her Anar-kali (pomegranate bud). It would be a truism to state that in the palace circles, private lives of the princes and their love affairs were

subjected to critical scrutiny, and sometimes girls proved a source of discord between father and son, and brother and brother, in a love den like the Mughal harem. One such case is that of Anarkali.

According to the story popular among the European travelers of Jahangir's era, Anarkali had been a wife of Akbar and as suggested by Finch, the mother of Daniyal. Jahangir then Salim, had taken notice of her and had incurred the wrath of his father for climbing up into the bed of Anarkali, his father's most beloved wife. Later tradition said that Anarkali was Akbar's lover not his wife and it has further suggested that she supported Salim during his Allahabad revolt and that perhaps because of this, there were political reasons as well for Akbar's displeasure with her. As Finch noted much more subtly, she was the wife of his father "with whom it is said Shah Selim had to do." Latif's version, based perhaps on popular legend, says simply that one day, in the year of 1598 A.D. while the Emperor Akbar was at Lahore in an apartment looking glasses with the lovely Anarkali attending on him, he saw her reflection in the mirror responding to a loving smile of Prince Salim. Salim was then thirty, youthful and handsome, and Akbar fifty-seven. The ageing monarch's jealousy was also fired by the fear of Salim's political ambitions, as he was so eager to ascend the throne that his relations with Akbar had become strained since 1591 A.D. but when in 1599 A.D. Akbar was affected by a severe attack of colic, he was convinced that Salim had attempted to poison him through the Persian royal physician Hakim Humam. In this atmosphere of mutual suspicion the smile of Anarkali prompted Akbar to think that there was some sinister conspiracy and he ordered her to be buried alive. William Finch and Edward Terry also aver that relations between Akbar and Salim had become strained because of Anarkali. According to Finch, Salim's love for Anarkali could not be kept secret for long and Akbar ordered her to forsake the Prince. When she declined, in any event, Akbar had become very angry at the liaison or suspected liaison between his wife and his son. Therefore, Akbar ordered her to be entombed vertically alive, and so she died near about in 1598 A.D. Salim was overcome with grief at her death and in token of his

love had built for her a sumptuous tomb of stone in the midst of a four-square garden richly walled, with a gate and divers rooms over it. The popular version says that Anarkali was placed alive in an upright position and that the wall was built up around her brick by brick. This atrociously cruel, even cynical, but typically medieval punishment turned the Anarkali's episode into a legend. Salim felt intense remorse at her death, and on becoming Emperor he had an immense sarcophagus of pure marble raised over her sepulcher in 1615 A.D. at Lahore.

Qurishi Khanum-e-Tabrizi

Her original name was Fasiheh Baligheh. She belonged to Tabriz, and came to stay in India during the reign of Jahangir. She was very affable and kindly and she held a high position in India. But reasons of her migration are unknown. She was a poetess.

Jamileh Esfahani

Her original name was Fasiheh or Maliheh but was known as Jamileh. Her origin and birth place was Esfahan. She was extremely accessible and eloquent. In the early youth she was concubine of Khwaja Habibullah Tarkeh. Some poets attributed Khwaja Habib's verses to her. After the death of Habibullah, she migrated to India in the reign of Jahangir in search of good fortune. She passed her life as a poetess. She was very beautiful as she was her name and her pseudonym Jamileh (the beautiful one).

Nur Jahan

The history of Nur Jahan is, in part, a story of ambition, power, military skill, and courtly endurance. Unlike other prominent women of the medieval period Raziyya Sultana, Rani Durgavati, Chand Bibi, Mumtaz Mahal and Rani Lakshmi Bai; Nur Jahan can easily be distinguished from any other comparable women. However, by the exceptional good fortune of her circumstances, she happened to be married to the most powerful man in India, and she happened to live at a time of great cosmopolitan and international diversity. Moreover, her relationship with her husband Jahangir appears to

have been exceptionally intimate, its complex structures giving rise to many of the policies and achievements now known singularly to be Nur Jahan's family. As far as her role as Mughal Empress is concerned, her personal abilities extended well beyond politics and economics into the areas of art and architecture, literature and religion, travel and gardening and were such that the range of contributions she made to Indian culture remains almost unparalleled by any other person today. And off course, her interest in jewellery, about her textile designs, about her verses she wrote with superb wit and imagery, and about her boundlessness and munificence of her charity, it all endure as a dynamic and indisputable undercurrent in the Mughal heritage of India.

The Mughal Empire was one of the largest centralized states known in pre-modern world history. In sixteenth and seventeenth century A.D. the Mughal Empire remained a dynamic, centralized and multifaceted organization. One of the most fascinating figures of Mughal India, around whom fact and fiction have woven a labyrinth of zenith and romance, was indeed the Empress Nur Jahan. She remains the only Queen in the history of Sub-continent, whose name was struck on the coin alongside that of the Emperor. Nur Jahan ruled not only over the heart, but also over the Empire of Jahangir, and these were two very difficult territories to keep under control simultaneously. For the heart of Jahangir was just as fuller of contradictions as the kaleidoscopic country of India. To keep him happy and India peaceful were both jobs for a statesman, and that's why most of the historians accused Nur Jahan of being shrewdly power-hungry. Jahangir owes his long years of a peaceful rule to Nur Jahan just as much as he owes his ill health and frailty to his habit of alcohol abuse.

Nur Jahan's Early Life

Nur Jahan's Persian grandfather had been in the service of Shah Tahmasp and had died in Yazd laden with honors. His heir, however, soon fell upon evil days so that his son, Mirza Ghiyas-

ud-Din Muhammad, was forced to set out from Tehran for India with his family. It was on this journey, at Qandahar

In 1577 A.D. that his wife Asmat Begum gave birth to a daughter, who was named Mehr-un-Nisa (moon of the woman), a name which her future title of Nur Jahan has almost brought into oblivion. Mirza Ghiyas got success to have some jagir (property) from Akbar and on account of his hard work and honesty;he rose to the high position of diwan (chamberlain) of Kabul. He rose further in rank, and continued in service later during Jahangir's reign with the title Itimad-ud-Daullahor 'pillar of the state.' In 1594 A.D. at the age of seventeen, Mehrunnisa was given in marriage to Ali Quli Khan Istajlu, a Persian adventurer. Ali Quli had been a safarchi, or table attendant, to Safawid monarch Shah Ismail-II of Persia, but on the event of Persian king's assassination had fled through Qandahar to India.

Ali Quli, after rendering good military service, had been attracted to Salim's staff, and was rewarded by the title of Sher Afgan (tiger-slayer) for his gallant conduct during a hunting expedition. Later on, he was also bequeathed with a high-ranked important post in the province of Bengal. But in a little while, Jahangir came to know that Sher Afgan was an insubordinate and disposed to be rebellious. Consequently, Qutub-ud-Din Kokultash, the foster brother of Jahangir, and the new Governor of Bengal, was directed to chastise him. When Qutub-ud-Din went to carry out orders, he was killed by Sher Afgan who himself was put to death by the attendants of Qutub-ud-Din. In 1607 A.D. Sher Afgan's widow Mehr-un-Nisa and her little daughter Ladli Begum (the pampered one), was brought to Agra as royal detainees. When she was merely a noblewoman at Court, and until she was thirty-four years old, there was nothing in her life that gave an indication of how famous, or powerful she would eventually become. Beni Prasad says that; "no gift of nature seemed to be wanting to her (Nur Jahan). Beautiful with the rich beauty of Persia, her soft features were lightened up with a sprightly vivacity and superb loveliness." She possessed as oval face, close lips, ample forehead and large blue eyes.

In March, 1611 A.D. Jahangir remained struck to saw Mihr-un-Nisa in the New Year's feast, later on, soon he saw her in the palace of Salima Sultana Begum, where she was residing. This time Mehr-un-Nissa, dressed in the usual white, was present in the hall to receive him. A faint, bashful smile on her face conveyed to Jahangir more than what any words could tell. After a few throbbing moments, the monarch asked if she would marry him. "A subject has no choice", replied the future Queen of Hindustan.Thus, Jahangir married her on May 25, of the same year. Afterwards, Jahangir proclaimed her a partner in his powers and gave her the title of "Nur Mahall" (light of the palace) and later on, she was given the title of "Nur Jahan"(light of the world). Undoubtedly, she proved to be the light of the Emperor's eyes. Her inclusion in the harem introduced a new force into the life of the Mughal Court. "Slowly but steadily she spread her influence to every nook and corner."

The marriage of Jahangir with Nur Jahan in 1611 A.D. was one of the most romantic and important events in the history of the Sub-continent. For fifteen years she stood forth as a strong and the most striking personality in the Empire. She soon became Jahangir's last and most influential wife. "The facts, however, indicates that far from being an evil genius hovering over Jahangir, she was his guardian angel." Nur Jahan was a good wife and a Queen whose patronage explored and utilized the structures of power available to her without straining their integrity.

How far Jahangir was Responsible for the Murder of Sher Afgan?

There has been a lot of controversy regarding the circumstances of the death of Sher Afgan and the marriage of her widow Mehrunnissa with Jahangir. Most of the historians are of the opinion that Prince Salim (Jahangir) love Mehr-un-Nisa and he was responsible for the murder of her husband Sher Afgan. This love story has a lot of prominence in Indian history. Dr. Beni Prasad, the author of his monumental work on Jahangir writes that Prince Salim had never seen Mahr-un-Nisa before 1611 A.D. He maintained that no contemporary Persian source supported the view that Jahangir as a prince had desired to marry

Mahr-un-Nisa, or Jahangir in any way, was responsible for the murder of Sher Afgan.

Likewise, the contemporary European travellers and missionaries are also silent on this point. Thus, it was purely an accident during the execution of an administrative issue in which Sher Afgan and Qutub-ud-Din, both were killed in a rival situation.

Nur Jahan's Personality and her Dimensional Role

Nur Jahan complemented Jahangir's shortcoming in so many ways. She had a perfect balance between mind and heart. Jahangir writes about his beloved wife Nur Jahan with emotion; that Nur Jahan Begam, whose skill and experience are greater than those of the physicians, especially as they are brought to bear through affection and sympathy, endeavored to diminish the number of my cups, and to carry out the remedies that appeared appropriate to the time, and soothing to the condition. Manucci says; "Nur Jahan succeeded in making the king drink less than he had done formerly, and after many entreaties he agreed that he would not drink more than nine cupfuls."

Jahangir further says; "she by degrees, lessened my wine, and kept me from things that did not suit me and food that disagreed with me." Commenting upon Nur Jahan, K.S Lal writes "she had won his heart with her devotion.Nur Jahan married Jahangir at the 'old' age of 34. She gave him no heirs; in fact, she gave him no children. Yet Jahangir loved her so deeply and obsessively that he transferred his powers of sovereignty to her. With her natural beauty she combined the most fascinating manners and high intellectual attainments. Her quick wit, charming and refined conversation, elegant manners, graceful and dignified deportment and keen intelligence made her a most welcome companion in the circle of the ladies of rank and the royal family. Nur Jahan was fluent in many languages and was an excellent conversationalist. She came from a family that had a strong background in literary and scholarly accomplishments. She wrote poems and prose and opted the pseudonym of 'Makhfi' (the veiled one) as a poetess.

Nur Jahan was a glimpse of the tremendous influence of the Mughal women had in the imperial harem. They were physically confined behind the walls of a harem, lived behind a veil, and they could be thought of as being inconsequential in the country's politics or even in their own social circles. The ladies of the Harem did not generally participate in outdoor games both because of parda (veil) and the physical exertion involved. As a Queen, Nur Jahan did not observe parda, her portraits too are probably after her own model. "Nur Jahan is probably the lone example among harem women who shot tigers and lions." She challenged the social and cultural conventions of her day and pushed them to the greatest limits with out breaking them. Nur Jahan had a preference for representational art perhaps reflecting the more emblematic art in her homeland of Persia, and also brought new subject matter into the Mughal Empire. She combined her artistic ideas with influences from the secular subject matter coming in from Europe creating many new paintings with subject matter that had not previously been rendered in Mughal India. Nur Jahan was a woman of great distinction and many interests; she was excelled at playing musical instruments and singing. Her accomplishments made her an irresistible companion and her taste extended beyond the patronage of painting and architecture to the designing and creation of new patterns in palace interiors, room-decorations, gold ornaments, brocades, carpets, lace, gowns and dresses so that the fashion in women's clothing adopted in her time were still in vogue.

Women's clothes also went through a change at this time because of Nur Jahan, who was responsible for bringing in a number of new materials and styles from all over the world. These new materials were for both the royalty and the populace. Many new patterns and stitches were invented by Nur Jahan. A particular brocade of pattern called nur-mahali, do-dami, panchatolia for orhnis (veils), badha, and kinari are still famous. One such custom that is still current in India and Pakistan is the white floor cloth commonly known as 'farsh-i-chandani'(white floor sheet).The thrust of Nur Jahan's innovation was on providing something that could be used by the rich and the poor

alike. She was careful to bring out and introduce items that not only had a large group appeal to but they were relatively inexpensive.

Jahangir was a lover of fashion and new designs. His clothes and turbans are said to have been extremely more elaborate and luxurious than any of the other previous Emperors. The new fashions and designs that he wore are accounted for during the time of his life with Nur Jahan. Nur Jahan was fond of arranging great feasts and had become a model for the royal ladies, on another; she cared for the poor and the dispossessed, and made the cause of orphan girls especially her own. She was supposed as a social worker and said to have been the asylum to all sufferers and a generous patron of many needy suppliants, especially of dowry less girls. Through her influence the Court of the great Mughal was filled with great nobles from Persia.

Nur Jahan's mother Asmat Begum also invented 'itr-e-gulab' (rose perfume) which was named 'itr-e-Jahangiri'and has been erroneously regarded as Nur Jahan's invention. The Persian influence on the Mughal architecture, as in other spheres of contemporary life, had been mounting with the domination of Mirza Ghiyas Beg and his daughter, the Queen Nur Jahan, in the Court.

Jahangir's Court, particularly under the influence of his imperious consort, Nur Jahan, patronized a culture, no doubt eclectic in character, in which the foreign, especially the Persian element predominated. She supported and illustrated wall-carvings in the buildings with the different types of patterns and styles of embroidery. She was also responsible, almost single-handedly, for the many artistic, architectural, and cultural achievements of the Jahangir era. Her cultural and artistic achievements derived largely from the immense resources at her command. But they were also, in equal measure, due to her unflagging energy and the keenness of her aesthetic vision. Jahangir fell in love with it even more deeply with his Queen Nur Jahan that he was to make the famous gardens of Nishat and Shalimar. The most alluring and

influential of all the arts of Nur Jahan, however, was the most ephemeral, that of gardening.

Villiers Stuarts has ranked Nur Jahan along with Babur as the best and most prolific of all those who inspired and designed Mughal gardens, and even goes so far as to call Nur Jahan herself "the greatest garden lover of them all. "Her artistic achievements include Nur Mahal Sarai at Jalandhar, the Mughal gardens of Kashmir and Agra, and the tomb of her father Itmad-ud-Daullah, also in Agra. Nur Jahan built this tomb after her father's death in January 1622 A.D. It took six years to finish the tomb and 1.35 million rupees (1,350,000) to pay for it. She built it in her father's gardens on the east bank of the Yamuna (Jamna) River across from Agra. Tomb of Itamad-ud-Daullah is indeed the most gorgeously decorated monument of the Mughals. It was the first example of the use of white marble embellished with the precise inlay of precious stones into the surface of marble facing, and technically said to be ahead of even the construction of Taj Mahal. Nur Jahan also created many different gardens throughout the Empire, both public and private; unfortunately, majority of them are not left for viewing in present time. Keeping a garden healthy and tended for five hundred years is a task that could not accomplished easily. All that remains are accounts of what they would have looked like and what species they may have contained. Nur Jahan created a tradition in the gardens design of using water to accentuate the layout with fountains, pools and channels.

The Empress

Nur Jahan was not formally a partner in sovereignty; she was neither enthroned nor crowned but she took an active part in the politics of the empire and became quite powerful; her influence can be felt in every segment of her era. In fact, she was the real sovereign, the power behind Jahangir's throne. She was able to influence political decisions, coins, designs in materials, architecture, the structure and layouts of gardens, traded with foreign countries, owned ships that plied the Arabian Sea routes and many other aspects of Mughal life. In contrast to them, Nur Jahan was off course, mother to orphans of the

poor, a leader of female society, generous to the needy people, and ambitious too. Her ambition to rule the Empire and her intrigues to safeguard her dominance created troubles during the last few years of Jahangir's reign. To some extent; the reaction to the rise of the family of Nur Jahan, the rivalry among princes, and groups of Court nobles, all helped to shake the stability of the Mughal Empire.

Nevertheless, she proved herself more than a match for the ablest personnel and politicians of her age. At the death-bed, just a few days before her death, on a night Nur Jahan suffered a spasm of cutting pain in her belly, and Hakim Shakurullah was called. Aware perhaps that her end was near, Nur Jahan refused to take any medicine

On the next day October 6, 1645 A.D. in the city of Lahore, the angels of death did the proud act of taking soul into their possession of a woman unparalleled in the history of Hindustan. Queen Nur Jahan Begum was seventy-two years of age when she departed.1Shah Jahan respected the wishes of her illustrious step-mother. She was laid to rest in a modest grave near the tomb of her husband at Shahdara near Lahore. She was buried in the mausoleum which she had erected during her lifetime to the west of the enclosure containing the remains of the late Emperor Jahangir, near the tomb of Yamin al-Daullah Asaf Khan, the Khan Khanan and commander-in-chief. Both Nur Jahan and her daughter Ladli Begum are buried in parallel graves of the tomb, while, Nur Jahan herself lies in a bare and simple grave.

Qandahari Mahal

Qandahari Mahal was the daughter of Mirza Muzzaffar Husain Safawi, who was a grandson of Shah Ismail and was Governor of Qandahar. Mirza Muzzaffar having some problems with the Safawid ruling authorities and perceiving the Uzbek pressure to capture Qandahar was forced to capitulate on terms to surrender it to the Mughals. Therefore, as Akbar who was keenly waiting for any chance to capture Qandahar, immediately sent Shah Beg Khan Arghun, Governor of Bangash, to take prompt possession of Qandahar, and though, as in all his undertakings, Muzaffar wavered at the last moment and had

recourse to trickery, he was obliged by the firm and prudent behavior of Shah Beg Khan. In this way Qandahari Mahal had to leave her native place to visit India in the company of her father and came to India during Akbar's reign near about in the end of 1595 A.D. when her father and her four brothers, Bahram Mirza, Haider Mirza, Alqas Mirza and Tahmasp Mirza and 1000 qazilbash soldiers arrived in India. Muzaffar Khan received from Akbar the title of Farzand (son), and was made a Commander of five thousand, and received Sambhal as Jagir (property), "which is worth more than all Qandahar.

Mirza Muzaffar Husain had exchanged the lordship of Qandahar for a high rank and splendid salary in the service of Akbar. His younger brother Mirza Rustam, also immigrated to India in Akbar's reign and rose to eminence under Jahangir. The Mughal Emperors made the most of this opportunity of ennobling their blood by alliance with the royal family of Persia even through a younger branch. Muzaffar found everything in India bad, and sometimes resolved to go to Persia, and sometimes to Makkah. From grief and disappointment, and a bodily hurt, he died in 1008 A.H. (1599 A.D.). After his death, Qandahari Mahal was married to Shah Jahan in 1609 A.D. Jahangir writes in his Tuzuk that "previously to this I had the daughter of Mirza Muzaffar Husain, son of Sultan Husain Mirza Safawi, ruler of Qandahar, betrothed to my son Sultan Khurram, and on this the marriage meeting had been arranged, I went to the house of Baba Khurram and passed the night there."

Qandahari Mahall gave birth in 1020 A.H. (1611 A.D.) to Nawab Parvez Banu Begum. Her three sons remained in India i.e. Bahram Mirza, Hayder Mirza and Ismail Mirza who rose to dignity under Shah Jahan. The Ma'asir Alamgiri mentions her other two sons, Alqas Mirza and Tahmas Mirza. The Mughal Emperor made the most of this opportunity ennobling their blood by alliance with the royal family of Persia even through a younger branch. Therefore, two daughters of Mirza Rustam were also married to the Princes Parviz and Shuja. Rustam's son had become a high grandee with the title of Shah Nawaz Khan. One daughter of Shah Nawaz named Dilrus Banu

was betrothed to Aurangzeb in 1637 A.D. and next year another daughter was married to Murad Buksh. After the death of Qandahari Begum, a mausoleum called Hauz-i-Kalan at Agra was built for her memory.

Mumtaz Mahal

Arjumand Bano Begum, later known as Mumtaz Begum, was the daughter of Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jahan, and Wazir (Prime Minister) of the Empire of Jahangir. She was Ithna Ashari by conviction; Persian through parentage, this Mughal Queen lived like a Hindu Princess. She was married to Prince Khurram in April, 1612 A.D. She was as exquisitely lovely as her wonderful aunt Nur Jahan. Mumtaz Begum remained as Queen just for three years, but, she was indeed one of the greatest women to have appeared on the Mughal stage. Unlike Nur Jahan or her own daughter Jahanara, who was the fourth important women in Shah Jahan's life, Mumtaz Begum remains a mysterious, shadowy figure. She is better known because of her association with the Taj; she possessed a pure and generous heart. Her cheerfulness was imperturbable. She preserved patience under the direst sufferings. She had a lofty sense of conjugal duty. She surrendered her mind and soul to her husband who loved her as never wife was loved. She sustained Shah Jahan in his sufferings, wanderings and exile and also in his flight from place to place in the inhospitable regions of Telingana, Bengal, Rajasthan and the Deccan.

Emperor Aurangzeb was Shah Jahan's third son with Mumtaz Mahal. On his accession to the throne, Shah Jahan awarded two lakhs of ashrafis and six lakhs of rupees to Her Majesty the Queen, Arjumand Bano Begam; and ten lakhs of rupees was fixed as the annual allowance for that Queen of the Age. She enjoyed the title of Malika-i-Jahan (the Queen of the world), but she was always been popularly known as Mumtaz Mahal (exalted of the palace), a title bestowed on her by Shah Jahan on his accession.

Mumtaz Mahal participated in the affairs of the state. She was entrusted with the custody of the Royal Seal. The state documents

were sent into the harem and it was her privilege to affix the Royal Seal on them. Shah Jahan usually consulted her on private as well as state affairs. She also advised the king in some matters in which she was personally interested. For example, when Shah Jahan wanted to punish Saif Khan, the Governor of Gujrat, whose loyalty he suspected; Mumtaz Mahal interceded on his behalf because he was the husband of her sister to whom she loved so much. Therefore, Shah Jahan relieved the rigors of the imprisonment of Saif Khan. In Shah Jahan's Court the Persian aristocracy, through the Queen Mumtaz Mahall, was imbued with Persian ideas of grace and luxury carried almost to the point of over-refinement and exaggeration.

The Empress was hostile towards the Portuguese of Hugli. Manoel Tavers, a resident of Hugli, had let down Shah Jahan while he was in rebellion against Jahangir. Tavers took advantage of his helpless position had seized some of his richly laden boats and carried away some of his female servants including two slave-girls of Mumtaz Mahal. This and similar other insults rankled deep in the hearts of the royal couple. According to Mannuci, when Shah Jahan became Emperor his feeling of revenge was kindled by Mumtaz Mahal's resentment who had shared the humiliation.

Shah Jahan indeed was greatly interested in women. Bernier corroborates him and remarks that Shah Jahan had weakness for the flesh. And knowing his propensities some wives and daughters of the nobility placed themselves or had to place themselves at the service of the king. The intimacy of Shah Jahan with the wives of Jaffar Khan and Khalilullah Khan was the talk of the metropolis. Afterwards, Jaffar Khan and Khalilullah Khan, the Persian nobles, whose wives Shah Jahan had violated, avenged their humiliation by surreptitiously siding with Aurangzeb in the War of Succession. Mumtaz Mahal had been properly educated and was highly cultured. She was adept in the Persian language, and her perception towards poetry was of excellence, and was also a poetess herself. Jahan Ara, her daughter, was also a good poetess and a prose writer. She wrote Monis-ul-Arwah, which is one of her worthiest piece of scholarly work. She was a

generous lady, her benevolence provided dowry for many needy girls. On her recommendation many persons received help and scholarships. She used to place before the king cases of the helpless and the destitute for royal favor. Hakim Rukna Kashi was given more than twenty thousand rupees on her recommendation. She also favored and patronized a renowned Sanskrit poet, Vanshidhar Mishra.

Mumtaz Mahal passed away on June 7, 1631 A.D. After her death the rank of honor was transferred to her eldest daughter, Jahan Ara Begum, on whom Shah Jahan bestowed the title of Sahibatuz Zamani. She also enjoyed the title of Badshah Begum, but was commonly known as Begum Sahiba. As if this was not strenuous enough, in her nineteen years of married life Mumtaz Mahal gave birth to fourteen children bringing forth one issue almost every year. Both these factors combined shattered her health and she died in the process of giving birth to the last one; a tragic climax to the life. Later on, she was permanently reburied in Agra and Shah Jahan built over her grave the most magnificent mausoleum in her memory to which the world has known as Taj Mahal. Loyalty won Mumtaz the beautiful trophy that is Taj Mahal. Mumtaz Mahal is rightly called the Lady of the Taj. The Taj Mahal is one of the wonders of the world and is a noble monument of conjugal love and fidelity.

Sati Khanum

She was from a Mazandaran family of Persia, and she was sister of Talib Amuli who in the reign of Jahangir received the title of Malik-ush-Shuara (Poet Laureate). She came to India during Jahangir's reign. After the death of her husband Nasir, the brother of Hakim Rukna of Kashan, she entered the service of Mumtaz Mahal, the wife of Shah Jahan. She was adorned with an eloquent tongue and knowledge of etiquette, and knew house-keeping and medicine. She was an accomplished woman, achieved position far beyond the ones the other servants did, eventually reached the rank of muhrdari (sealer). As she knew the art of reading the Holy Quran and was also

acquainted with Persian literature; therefore, she was appointed as instructor to the Jahan Ara Begum (Aurangzeb's eldest daughter) and so attained a high distinction.

After the death of Mumtaz Mahal, the Emperor in appreciation of her merits made her head of harem. As she had no child she adopted her brother's two daughters after his death. The elder one was married to Aqil Khan, and the younger to Zia-ud-Din styled as Rahmat Khan, who was a nephew of famous Hakim Rukna Kashi. In the 20th year of Shah Jahan's reign (1648 A.D.), when the royal residence was at Lahore, the younger daughter of whom the Khanum was very fond unfortunately died. The Khanum went home and mourned her death for some days. After that Emperor sent for her and placed her in quarters that he had in the palace and personally came to see her there and offered her consolation. She after discharging the duties connected with the presence of the Emperor surrendered her soul to God.

The Emperor gave from the treasury Rs.10, 000 for her funeral and burial, and ordered that her body should be kept in a coffin placed in a temporary grave. After a year and odd it was carried to Agra and buried in a tomb west of the sepulcher of the Taj Mahal in the Jilaukhana Chauk.

Dilras Begum

Dilras Begum was the daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan, the son of Mirza Rustam Safawi. She was betrothed to Aurangzeb in 1637 A.D. and next year her sister was married to Murad Buksh. On April 15, 1637 A.D. Aurangzeb arrived at Agra for his marriage. Shah Jahan wrote him a most loving invitation in verse to come and see him quickly and without ceremony. Next day the prince had audience of his father. The royal astrologers had fixed May 8, the date of the marriage. In the preceding evening was the ceremony of henna-bandi or dyeing the bridegroom's hands and feet with red juice of the henna. Following the Indian custom, the bride's father sent the henna in a grand procession of the male and female friends of his house, servants and musicians. With the henna came an infinite variety of presents, a costly full-dress

suit for the bridegroom, toilet need ments, embroidered scarfs for his kinsfolk, perfumed essence, sugar-candy, huge quantities of confects, dried fruits, prepared betel-leaves, and fire-works.

Aurangzeb combined in him the blood of a Turk, a Mongol, a Persian, a Transoxian and a Hindu, and the virility of Aurangzeb was due to this intermixture of these bloods. He had a numerous progeny. His principal wife, Dilras Banu Begum, bore him five children: (1) Zeb-un-Nisa Begum, born at Daulatabad, on February 15, 1638 A.D. died at Delhi on May 26, 1702 A.D. She wrote Persian odes under the pen-name of Makhfi or the concealed one. But this pseudonym was used by many other poets. (2) Zinat-un-Nisa Begum or surnamed Padishah Begum, born October 5, 1643 A.D. at Aurangabad. She died at Delhi on May 7, 1721 A.D. (3) Zubdat-un-Nisa Begum, born at Multan on September 2, 1651 A.D. Died in February, 1707 A.D. (4) Muhammad Azam, born at Burhanpur on June 28, 1653 A.D. slain in the war of succession following his father's death on June 8, 1707 A.D. (5) Muhammad Akbar, born at Aurangabad on September 11, 1657 A.D. died in an exile in Persia about November, 1704 A.D. and buried at Mashhad.

Check your progress

1. Discuss the life of Qandahari Begum.

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2. Discuss about the life of the women in Auranzeb's harem.

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9.3 LET'S SUM UP

The Mughal ladies spent their entire lives inside the emperor's harem. A feeling of awe and mystery even today fills one's mind when one hears of

the Mughal harem. Many things have been written and many things have been guessed about the life of Mughal ladies. The manner in which the Mughal women spent their lives, their places of residence, their food and clothes, purdah and religion, pleasures and pastimes, learning and education and even their love and resentments, have always remained matters of interest to many. The Mughal women were no ordinary women. They were royal women. And therefore, their social life was certainly very much different from that of the ordinary women of the medieval times.

9.4 KEYWORDS

Ferishta – Saviour angel

Masih – Saviour Guardian

Waqiya – Incident

Hoor – Beauty

9.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the life of Mumtaz Mahal.
2. Discuss about the life of Hamida Bano.

9.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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9.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section – 9.3

2. Section – 9.3

UNIT 10 - MUGHAL MARRIAGES WITH RAJPUT WOMEN

STRUCTURE

10.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the Rajput marital alliances with Mughals.

To learn about the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim cultures

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The evolution of relations between the Mughals and the Rajputs during the reign of Akbar can be placed within more than one historical context. They can be seen in terms of the expansion of Mughal territorial control and State power, the evolution of Akbari religious policy, and the mutual need for some kind of a political accommodation on the part of both the Rajputs and the Mughals. It is also possible to look at the obverse of this, as Norman Ziegler has done, and look at the constitution of Rajput

identity in the context of Mughal suzerainty. However, on the whole, historiographical focus on this has not been adequate. The study of Mughal-Rajput relations is particularly important because it illustrates, among other things, the incorporation of a distinct – though not homogeneous – cultural group within the larger matrix of Mughal state power, and this involved many different levels of control and accommodation. The identity of the Rajputs is by no means unambiguous, barring the fact of geographical location – in and around Rajputana.

10.2 RAJPUT WOMEN IN MUGHAL HAREM

The question of the origins of the Rajput principalities and families has remained a matter of controversy. Among recent explorations of Rajput identity is an extremely rich study by Kolff, who points to certain otherwise neglected features of the evolution of Rajput identity, as it came to be understood in the Mughal period. Kolff locates the origins of this in the transition made by pastoralist bands of fighters to a measure of landed status between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries. Ties of solidarity were constructed between these kin groups, and they came to occupy the title `Rajput' ( literally `son of a king'). The emphasis on genealogy as a form of legitimation in the Mughal state, argues Kolff, provided a context for the construction of elaborate, caste-based (specifically kshatriya) origin myths, replacing the open-status and socially mobile nature of Rajput hierarchies. Unilineal kin bodies came to be recognized as the sole constituents of Rajput social identity. However, Kolff argues that a variety of North Indian peasant groups and tribal elites, often constituting a mobile pastoralist soldiery, kept alive the traditions of the older Rajput character.

Using North Indian folk poetry and ballads as a source, Kolff highlights the importance of military service (naukari) as one of the loci of Rajput identity, and thus places this history within the wider context of the evolution of the military labour market in North India. Certain geo-political factors spurred the Mughal rulers to seek lasting arrangements

with the Rajputs. First, Rajputana was strategically located: if not controlled from the Centre, it might make the Mughal state vulnerable to attacks both from the North West Frontier and from Malwa. Second, the areas towards the north and south of Rajputana were fertile, and potentially a source of substantial revenue. This area was criss-crossed by important trade routes running between Gujarat and the north Indian plain.

Finally, Rajputana also contained a number of formidable forts, legendary for their capacity to withstand sieges, such as Chittor and Ranthambhor. According to many historians, including J.F Richards, the (generally) accomodative and transactional nature of Akbar's relations with the Rajputs (as well as the need to develop permanent relations in the first place) was determined by the revolt of Uzbek nobles in 1564. It became important for Akbar to substantially reconstitute the nobility (a reconstitution that is a recurring feature of medieval North Indian history, right from the time of the Sultanate). By the 1580s, there was a substantial Rajput contingent in the nobility. This evidently was of much administrative and symbolic significance. However, the narrative of the evolution of the Mughal nobility by no means exhausts the narrative of Mughal-Rajput relations, even at the level of elite relations. To put it in somewhat schematic terms, the growth of a Rajput stratum within the nobility reflects an aspect of the continuing negotiation between the Mughal State and the landed North Indian ruling class. It is significant that in many Persian sources of this period, the terms `Rajput' and `zamindar' are often used interchangeably.

Both Kolff and Ziegler have stressed the centrality of land to Rajput identity, in both material and symbolic / emotional terms. Satish Chandra has classified the history of Mughal-Rajput relations under the Akbari dispensation into three broad phases. The first phase, beginning with the early years of Akbar's reign and lasting up to 1572, was a period where tentative and somewhat tenuous linkages with the Rajputs were established. Rajput chiefs – in particular the Kachhwahas - in this period became allies of the Mughal state in their existing role as the rulers of their principalities, and were not expected to perform military service outside Rajputana.

The second phase, between 1572 and 1578, saw the extension of Rajput military service to the Mughals, which now transcended the frontiers of Rajputana. Rajput chiefs thus began to emerge as the military bulwark of Mughal rule, something which corresponds with Kolff's insights into the evolution of the military labour market.

The third phase, from 1578 to the end of Akbar's reign, saw the extension of Rajput military functions, including their deployment in the battle against Akbar's own half-brother, Mirza Hakim, in the east in 1580. This was also the period of significant Rajput incorporation within the Mughal mansabdari system. The Kachhwahas remained the most significant support group within Rajput clans. It is important to remember, however, that Mughal-Rajput relations do not present an undifferentiated picture of accommodation and collaboration although, as Ziegler rightly points out, the Rajput policy of the Mughals was one of their more notable successes. This was also, after all, a period of rapid expansion of Mughal State authority, a process that exacted significant human costs, and exacted them brutally.

Among the more violent and conflictual narratives of Mughal-Rajput relations is the Akbar's campaign against Udai Singh of Mewar, the siege of Chittor in 1567 and Ranthambhor in 1569, and the prolonged campaign against Rana Pratap. Satish Chandra points out that Rajput struggles against Mughal hegemony had less to do with ethnic identity than with the desire for local independence. S. Inayat Ali Zaidi explains Mughal-Rajput relations in terms of the drive for enhanced resources. Thus, there existed a tension from the beginning between the attempt to reach a mutually beneficial compromise with the Rajput chiefs and the search for revenue, often through coercive measures. Very often, a heavy peshkash was levied upon these chieftains, and sometimes annual tributes were demanded. This links up, naturally, with a wider question: the dual objectives of accumulation of authority and amicable arrangements where the Rajputs were concerned. This problem was negotiated by a range of practices. In sum, these amounted to the creation of Rajput interests in the efficient functioning of the Mughal empire.

Thus, the Mughals sought to allay resentment of harsh tribute exactions by constructing a sort of class solidarity between the imperial State and the Rajputs in the matter of exploitation of the peasantry. Further, and very importantly, Rajput chiefs became jagirdars. The patrimonial property of Rajputs was recognized as their jagirs – and increasingly as watan-jagirs, or non-transferable holdings. Thus, the rights and privileges of Rajput chiefs were substantially continued, with the difference that privileges that were earlier independent now became imperial endowments. This went hand in hand with the standardization of the Mughal revenue system, imperial currency, and imperial tolls. In this context, the growing induction of Rajputs into the mansabdari system can be seen as an attempt to absolutize service in the Mughal court as the highest possible aspiration, as chiefs began competing for higher mansabs.

Norman Ziegler is one of the few historians to have studied the ways in which Rajputs negotiated their changing position. He chooses to tackle this problem by examining the question of loyalty. Loyalty, for Ziegler, has certain very definite, and fairly tangible associations in the Rajput context. The concept of loyalty, at the cornerstone of Rajput polity, was based on kinship, marriage alliances and land. Each of these bases for loyalty became the subject for complex and gradual transactions between Mughal sovereignty and Rajput `honour' and legitimacy. Initially, the organization of the Mughal court was devised in such a manner that the coterie of each Rajput nobleman was formed from among his own kinsmen, and thus familial ties were not disrupted by imperial service.

Marriage alliances were the first technique of incorporation applied systematically by Akbar in his `Rajput policy': these served to subordinate individual Rajput ruling clans, but also to do so within an ideological frame that was acceptable within Rajput society, since marriage networks (sagas) also constituted a powerful focus of both legitimacy and loyalty. Gradually, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, argues Ziegler, kinship ties were supplemented and then partially overtaken by the growth of relationships of patron and client, service and exchange, that provided a space within which imperial service was ideologically acceptable. Service, as Kolff has pointed out,

was an integral part of Rajput self-picturing, and the Mughals, it can be argued, provided one possible focus for such service, which was, in a peculiar way, both contractual and deeply ideological. Land retained its mythic and symbolic connotations in Rajput society, but on the land too there was a transformation of the basis of social relationships, which came to be bureaucratized in ways similar to the Mughal model with the sophistication of administrative procedures. The issuance of written titles or patos to villages was modelled on Mughal prototypes.

As the studies of Ziegler and Kolff demonstrate, the construction of Mughal-Rajput relations was a two-way process, and had roots both in the drive to power of the Mughal state (and the qualifications of this drive), and in a history of Rajput identity formation that was anterior to this. In the making of these relations, both the Mughals and the Rajputs acted upon each other's motivations, practices and ideologies. The eventual emergence of more or less steadfast Rajput loyalty to the Mughal cause was partly a measure of the latter's successful hegemony, but it also had more complicated moorings.

MUGHAL – RAJPUT MARITAL ALLIANCE

The harems of the Mughal emperors consisted of a large number of women and in it lived women of different races, provinces and communities. Manucci stated that there were "within the palace two thousand women of different races.'" Apart from Muslim women, there were Hindu women including Rajput ladies, and even Christian women in the harem of the Mughal emperors. The harems of Babar and Humayun were modest in size. But from Akbar's time onwards the Mughal harem became an elaborate affair having a large number of women. Akbar's harem has approximately 5000 women. The harems of Jehangir, Shahjahan and the puritan Aurangzeb were also very large. According to Hawkins, Jehangir had "three hundred wives where four be chief as queens." According to Terry's estimates Jehangir 's harem consisted of "four wives, and concubines and women beside enough to make up their number a full thousand."

Akbar's Queens:

Some of the prominent queens of Akbar were: Ruqaiya Begam who was the daughter of his uncle Hindal and was his first wife,-' Salima Sultan Begam who was his cousin and previously the wife of Bairam Khan, and after Bairam Khan's assassination was accepted by Akbar as his wife;" and the Rajput princess of Amber, Harkha on Jodha Bai, the daughter of Raja Bihari Mai, and the mother of Akbar's first son Salim.' Some other Rajput wives of Akbar were (i) the daughter of Kanhan, the brother of Rai Kalyan Mat of Bikaner," (ii) the daughter of Rawal Har Rai of Jaisalmer;' iiij) the sister of Rana Udai Singh of Marwar" and (iv) the princesses of Merta and Dungarpur. Apart from these, Akbar also married Bibi Daulat Shad, and the daughters of Abdullah Khan Mughal and Miran Mubarak Shah of Khandesh."'

Jehnngir's wives:

Jehangir had many wives including Hindu wives. They were Man Bai, the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber and the grand daughter of Raja Bihari Mai, and she was the mother of Jehangir 's eldest son Khusrau," the daughter of Rai Singh of Bikaner;' Jodh Bai, or Jagat Gosain, the daughter of Mota Raja or Udai Singh and granddaughter of Raja Maldeva of Marwar and she became the mother of Khurram (Shahjahan); Raj Kumari Karamsi, the daughter of Keshav Das Rathor; a daughter of Jagat Singh, eldest son of Raja Man Singh, a daughter of Rawal Bhim, brother of Rai Kalyan Mai of Jaisalmer, Kanwal Rani, the daughter of the ruler of little Tibet, and the daughter of Ram Chandra Bundela. Some other wives of his were Sahib-i-Jamat, the daughter of Khw^aja Hassan, cousin of Zain Khan Koka; Nur-un-Nisa Begam, sister of Muzaffar Hussain; Saliha Banu, daughter of Qasim Khan; and the daughters of Mubarak Chak and Husain Chak of Kashmir. There Were many more. But his chief and most prominent queen was his last wife, the beautiful talented and charismatic Nur Jahan Begam.

Shahjahan's wives:

Shahjahan had as his wives among others the daughter of Mirza Muzaffar Husain Safawi, the daughter of Nur Jahan's brother Asaf Khan known as Arjumand Banu Begam, and the daughter of Shahnawaz Khan. But it is a very well-known fact that he never loved or adored anyone

more than Aqumand Banu Begam, later known as Mumtaz Mahal, the lady of the Taj.

Aurangzeb had four waves. Dilras Banu Begam was his chief queen though he was not much attached to her. His other wives Aurangabadi Mahal, Navab Bai and Udipuri Mahal were inferior wives.

Secondary Wives

The daughters or relatives of Indian princes who were married to Mughal princes mostly as a part of diplomatic dealings or because of defeat of the girl's family in battles or wars against the Mughals, were generally considered as secondary waves or inferior wives. As we have seen, from the times of Akbar, practically all the Mughal emperors married Hindu princesses and princesses from other Indian States. These secondary wives known as Dais and Mahals enjoyed a position lesser than the main wives. In spite of that, some secondary wives, especially some Rajput princesses came to occupy positions of great respect and honour in the Mughal household. Jodha Bai gave Akbar his first son. Man Bai's son was Khusrau and Jagata Gosain was the mother of Shahjahan.

Tlie mothers of the Mughal emperors were held in highest respect and most of them were given lofty titles. Akbar's mother Hamida Banu Begam had the title of Maiy'am Makan meaning "Mary of both Worlds". Jehangir's mother Jodha Bai got the title of Maryam-uz-Zaman meaning "Mary of the Universe". Shahjahan's mother Jagat Gosain was called Bilqis Makani meaning "the Lady of Pure Abode". Jehangir gave the title of Shah Begam to his first wife Man Bai after she gave birth to his eldest son Khusrau.

Rajput guards, from Akbar's time onwards, were stationed some distances from the eunuch guards. On the gates of the palace porters were posted.

Religious Life

While talking about the life of Mughal ladies, the usual picture that comes to one's mind is a life spent in pleasure and merriment surrounded by all the luxuries and comforts that life could offer. Any serious aspect is not usually associated with their lives. But, amidst all the merriment

and enjoyment, there was a serious side of their lives as well, like their interest in religious activities. The ladies belonging to the Mughal royal family were introduced to the doctrines of Islam quite early in their lives. Religious education was a must in the learning process of the princesses and other ladies connected to the royal family from an early ago. Learning the Quran was considered of highest importance and almost all the Mughal princesses had good knowledge of it. Aurangzeb's eldest daughter Princess Zeb-un- Nisa became a Hafiz at the age of seven when she learnt the Quran by heart. Aurangzeb's two other daughters Zinat-un-Nisa and Badr-un-Nisa also learnt the Quran by heart.

The Mughal harem had in it women from many cultural and religious backgrounds. There were many Hindu women including Rajput ladies. The Mughal emperors, especially Akbar, allowed his Hindu ladies to practise their own faith inside the harem. Akbar's first Rajput wife Jodha Bai, the princess of Amber is known to have kept up her Hindu ways of worship even after her marriage to a Muslim king. In Agra fort, the Jahangiri Mahal bears testimony of Sun worship, fire and Havan Kund.

Because of the liberal religious policies of the Mughal emperors like Akbar, both Muslim and Hindu festivals started being celebrated at the Mughal court. The Mughal emperors celebrated Muslim festivals like Id-ul-Fitr, Id-e-Qurbaan, Shabb-i-Barat, Barawafat and Muharram which was later banned by Aurangzeb. They also adopted and started celebrating Persian festivals like Nauroz and Gulab Pash. The Hindu festivals celebrated by them were Dussehra Diwali, Holi, Raksha Bandhan', Janamashtami and Shivaratri. In the celebration of these festivals the Mughal ladies also participated in the gaiety and festivities. They sometimes even arranged feasts on such occasions. Nur Jahan Begam arranged grand feasts on the occasion of Shab-i-Barat. Offering of special prayers also formed an essential part of the festival days. Special Prayers of thanks were also offered on other occasions like victories in wars, campaign, coronations, etc. We know from Gulbadan Begam's accounts that the ladies of Babar's harem offered prayer of thanks when the news of Babar's victory at Panipat reached them through a certain Khwaja Kilan.

Dress-

Apart from the bodice, jacket and close-fitting trousers, the Mughal ladies wore the jagulfi, "a sort of empire-gown fastening at neck and waist, opening between the fastening and permitting a glimpse of tine breasts and with long tight winkled sleeves and long flowing skirt" reaching down to the ankles." This garment in course of time was adopted by the Rajput and other women as an imitation of it or with modifications. Sometimes a short under petticoat was worn below the skirt of the outer robe, usually slit open in front. Both Hindu and Muslim ladies covered their heads with an orhni or dupatta which Manucci describes as a sheet of gold cloth of different types and colours. This cloth "hung down on both sides ns low as the knees" and was sometimes made of white calicos. Sometimes the Mughal ladies covered their heads with a shawl or mantilla made of the finest materials and dyed in delicate colours

When it came to colours, the Muslim women preferred white dresses, either plain, "or wrought with gold flowers" The other colour popular among both the Hindus and the Muslims was red. Sometimes the garments were made of "certain linen stamped with works of sundry colours (in spots) but all upon red.

The Mina Bazaar in an elaborate form was introduced at the Mughal seraglio by Akbar as a source of entertainment for the harem ladies, but it was not his own invention. These fairs were first instituted by Humayun and the first of its kind were held on boats near the king's palace after the mystic feast." This custom is said to have been borrowed by the Mughals from Turkistan and Transoxiana where such bazaars were held once or twice a week in every village, but there women as well as men participated in the buying and selling. The Mina Bazaar was an exclusively women's affair and not open to the general public. Here beautiful stalls were set up by the royal ladies and other harem women and also the wives and daughters of the nobles, who acted as traders, to sell a variety of commodities ranging from handicrafts, jewellery, cloth, brocades, fruits, flowers, etc. Rajput ladies also participated in these.

Only the emperor, royal princes and privileged nobles could enter the bazaar as buyers. The commodities were sold at sky high prices and the return went for charitable purposes. A lot of mock bargaining was also done. Sometimes the emperor and the princes landed up paying double for a single commodity. The women who sold these articles were very charming and beautiful, and quite skilled at the art of conversation and therefore became good sellers.

Matrimonial Alliances of Akbar

Akbar -was a farsighted man and he knew very well that to make his foothold strong in India, he had to take the help of the powerful Rajput rulers of that time. The Rajputs 'were chivalrous, dauntless and very good at war and the use of arms. Therefore, their help and support were sought by Akbar for the stability and expansion of his Empire. Akbar tried many measures to 'win over the support of the Rajput chiefs. The foremost among those was establishing matrimonial alliances with them. Apart from the diplomatic factor, these alliances reveal Akbar's broadminded nature and the feeling of universal tolerance that softened his heart. The Rajput princesses who came into Akbar's harem were not converted into Islam by force. Even if some of them took up Islam, they were all given freedom of faith and belief. In the royal harem they could practise any religion they pleased. The relatives of these Rajput ladies were given high posts in the Mughal administration. Hindu festivals were celebrated in the Mughal court side by side with Muslim festivities. Akbar’s Rajput wives helped him a lot in politics.

Hindu/Rajput Wives

The first Rajput lady whom Akbar married in 1562 A.D. was Jodha Bai, the eldest daughter of Raja Bihari Mai of Amber. Jodha Bai occupied a very important place in Akbar's harem. She had the good fortune of becoming the mother of Salim, the future emperor. Soon after her marriage with Akbar, her father. Raja Bihari Mal, was given the highest rank of the official aristocracy, as a mansabadar of 5000 horses. Later, her brother. Raja Bhagwan Das was given the title of Amir-ul-Ulema and her nephew. Raja Man Singh, was appointed a mansabdar of the rank of 7000. This status during Akbar's time was enjoyed only by his sons

Salim and Daniyal. Akbar married the niece of Raja Maldeo of Jodhpur in November 1570 A.D. " He also married the daughter of Rawal Hari Rai of Jaisalmer. Te relatives of these Rajput princesses were also given high ranks like mansabs above 1000, but none of them could achieve the status that the house of Amber held under Akbar. Akbar's policy of concluding matrimonial alliances with Rajput princesses did not limit itself to his own marriages alone. They extended to his eldest son and successor Salim as well.

The first Hindu wife of Salim was Man Bai, daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber, who was then the governor of Punjab. This marriage took place on February 13, 1585 A.D, and was conducted in both the Hindu and Muslim styles. This marriage brought great wealth to Akbar in the form of dowry. Man Bai was a very beautiful lady and her fidelity and sincere devotion to Salim won for her a special place in Salim's heart. She was given the title of Shah Begam after the birth of her first son Khusrau. The second Rajput wife of Prince Salim was Jodh Bai, better known as Jagat Gossain, daughter of Udai Singh or Mota Raja and Rani Manrang Devi of Gwalior. The marriage took place at Mota Raja's palace on January 11, 1586 A. D. Salim, it seems, fell in love with Jagat Gossain at a function which he attended with his mother. Though his parents were a bit reluctant, yet this marriage was finalised by Hamida Banu. The dowry was fixed at seventy five lakh tankas. Jagat Gossain is famous in history' as the mother of prince Khurram who later became the next Mughal Emperor Shahjahan. This marriage also proved of benefit to both the sides. After the marriage, Udai Singh was given the title of 'Raja' and a mansab of 1000 'zat'.'' The brothers and nephews of Jagat Gossain were also given royal favours. With the Mughal help, Udai Singh crushed the vassals of Marwar into submission and got much wealth in the form of tribute. Akbar too received the full co- operation of Udai Singh in his political endeavours. Udai Singh was appointed to manage the affairs of Lahore in 1592 A.D.

The third Hindu wife of Salim was a Bikaneri princess, the fifteen year old daughter of Rai Singh of Bikaner. The marriage was performed at Fatehpur Sikri on May 28, 1586 A.D. The dowry was Rs. 2,50,000. The fourth Rajput wife of Salim was the daughter of Rai Kalyan Mai of

Jaisalmir whom Jehangir married in 1587 A.D. She had the title of Malika-i-Jahan." In 1591 A.D. Salim married Rajkumari Karamsi (Karamnasi), the daughter of Raja Keshava Das Rathor. She was Salim's fifth Hindu wife. The sixth Hindu wife of Jehangir was Kanwal Rani, daughter of the ruler of little Tibet. This marriage was a total diplomatic affair. The Tibetan chief offered his youngest daughter in marriage to Salim in order to avert Akbar's attack on Tibet."

The seventh and eighth Hindu wives of Salim came into his harem after the death of Akbar and when Salim became the next Mughal Emperor Jehangir. In 1608 A.D. Jehangir married the daughter of Jagat Singh, who was the eldest son of Raja Man Singh of Amber. This marriage was the outcome of Jehangir's interest and initiative. He gave Jagat Singh 80,000 rupees as marriage present. From the port of Cambay, a European tapestry of unparalleled beauty was also sent to Jagat Singh. The marriage took place in the house of Mariam Zamani (Jodha Bai). Among the other articles of dowry, Man Singh, the bride's grandfather, gave sixty elephants. The eighth and last Hindu wife of Jehangir was the daughter of Ram Chand Bundela, whom he married in 1609 A.D."

These matrimonial alliances with the daughters of Hindu rulers, especially the Rajput chief went a long way in strengthening the roots of the Mughal Empire in India. The Mughal administration got efficient officials and generals. Many battles were successfully won and many important and fruitful measures were introduced in the Mughal administration. Moreover, the downy that these princesses brought with them, enriched the royal treasuries. These Rajput and Hindu Chiefs also benefited through these marriages. With the Mughal help they could conquer new lands and stabilise their political positions. Their prestige and dignity were enhanced.

The Mughals brought with them their own ideas of gardening. This new style developed in Persia and Turkistan was characterised by "artificial irrigation in the form of channels and' tanks and dwarf waterfalls ... and the plan involved a series of terraces on slopping ground, usually numbering eight to correspond with the eight divisions of the Quranic paradise; but sometimes seven to symbolise the seven planets. The main

pavilion was built on the topmost terrace and sometimes of the lowest terrace in order to enable the occupant to have an uninterrupted view of foliage and the water-fall." After coming to India the new Mughal style of gardening developed quickly. The water became the central motive and quite a few now flowering shrubs, fruits and vegetables were introduced."' The Hindu influence in gardening came with Akbar's marriage to Jodha Bai (Mariam uz Zamani), the Rajput princess of Amber.'

10.3 CULTURAL SYSNTHESIS

In pre-Mughal Hindustan, a large harem was the trend of the time, and the history of the Mughal Emperors reign will be treated incomplete in the absence of a detailed knowledge of the life and contribution of the Non-Muslim ladies who entered into the Mughal Harem. The arrival of these Non-Muslim ladies symbolized a new era in Mughal History as it paved the way for the cultural syntheses of Hindus and Muslims, resulting in social fusion of the two cultures. It also gave the country a line of remarkable sovereign, it secured to four generations of Mughal emperors the services of some of the greatest generals and diplomats that medieval India produced. More than the political and economic gains was the harem's contribution to culture. The Mughal harem consisted of both Muslim and non-Muslim queens. The dwellers of the harem comprised Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Irani, Turani,' Portuguese and women of many other European nationalities. Harem ladies belonged to all the region of the country. They spoke and thereby indirectly taught their spouses and others the various local languages and acquainted them with the regional cultures of the country. Through them Indian dance, music, painting and other fine arts of various schools and states influenced the Mughal art and vice-versa. They patronized scholars. Akbar at the very beginning of his reign very well realized that for the stability, solidarity, expansion and perpetuation of his rule, the co-operation and active support of the majority of population i.e., Hindus especially the Rajputs was very essential. As Akbar was shrewd and farsighted diplomat,

he adopted various methods to win the hearts of Rajput, like matrimonial alliances with the Hindu ruling families. The matrimonial alliances of the Mughal Emperors with Rajput princesses started only during the reign of Akbar, when he married Bharmal's eldest daughter Harkha. On the 8th Jumadi-l Awwal, Akbar went on pilgrimage to the blessed tomb of Khwajah Muin-ud-din Chishti. At Deosa, midway between Agra and Ajmer, he received Raja Bihari Mall. Perhaps through Chagtai, Khan Raja Bihari Mall expressed his keen desire to strengthen the bond of friendship and services between him and Emperor by offering his eldest daughter in marriage to him. He made the arrangements for the marriage in the most admirable manner and brought his fortunate daughter to this station and placed her among the ladies of the harem.

The marriage took place at the town of Sambhar in 1562. This marriage was a significant event in Medieval Indian History. Bharmal was hard-pressed and wanted to save his family and state from ruination. Man Singh, the son of Rajah Bhagwant Das, the heir of Rajah Bihari Mall was made a permanent servant. The little principality of Amber became prominent. The alliance also secured solid and loyal support of Kachhwahas and helped in the expansion and stability of the Empire. Abul Fazl writes, "His Majesty for matrimonial alliances with princes of Hindustan, and of other countries; and secures by these ties of harmony the peace of the world". In the same way in the continuation of this policy, in November 1570, while the emperor was encamped at Nagaur, Chandra Sen, son of Raja Maldeo of Jodhpur and Kalyan Mai, Raja of Bikaner, with his son Rai Singh paid homage to him. They entered in to friendly alliance. Akbar married Kalyan Mai's brother Kohan's daughter' and took Rai Singh in his service.'

Again, Rawal Har Rai, the ruler of Jaisalmer wished that his daughter, who was chaste, secluded one, might be exalted by being included among Akbar's female servants." He offered the Emperor the hand of his daughter Nathi Bai. Akbar sent Bhagwan Das to bring Dola of Jaisalmer princes (Nathi Bai) to the royal camp of Nagor. Consequently, the policy saw a gradual change and with passage of

time marriage with Rajput houses became fewer. It was not limited to Akbar's own marriage but extended to those of his son and his successor's. Abul Fazl informs us that Raja Bhagwan Das offered the hand of his daughter Man Bai to prince Salim. On 13 February 1585, the marriage took place at bride's residence according to Hindu and Muslim customs. Akbar himself led the 'barat' to Raja's mansion. A sum of 2 crores of tankas was fixed as marriage settlement for bride (mehar) Bhagwant Das gave a rich dowry. There were feasts and all kinds of enjoyments.'

The gifts given by Mariam Zamani and Salima Sultan Begum to bride and the bridegroom were valued at twelve and eight lakh rupees respectively. Other senior ladies did not log behind. This marriage was significant in more than one respect. It was not a dola marriage, i.e., the one which on account of inferior social status the bride is brought to the bridegroom's house and the wedding takes place there. And secondly the marriage was solemnized according to Hindu and Muslim customs.' Finally, the marriage was a great success. By her personal charm and duration Man Bai won the affection of Salim, who warmly reciprocated her feelings, and sincerely mourned her premature death in 1604, giving up food and drink for four days. Jahangir describes the sad event: "His (Khushrau's) mother, while I was prince, in grief at his ways and behaviour and the misconduct of her brother Madho Singh, killed herself by swallowing opium".

In the hope of getting additional favours from the imperial throne, like the ruler of Amber and Bikaner, Udai Singh also decided to strengthen his friendly relations with Akbar by giving his daughter in marriage to Prince Salim. This marriage was celebrated in a modest, matter of fact manner. Jagat Gosain, also known as Jodha Bai, was hardly fifteen when she caught the eye of Salim at a function attended by his mother and other senior ladies. He immediately proposed for marriage with her. Akbar and Jodha Bai hesitated to give their consent, but the intercession of Hamida Banu on Salim's behalf carried the day. The wedding took place on 11 January, 1586. Akbar did not accompany the 'barat to Raja Udai

Singh's palace and the presents given to the bride by the Mughal family disappointed the Rajput chief Salim however, gave her after the wedding seven pieces of priceless Persian jewellery which, to some extent, made amends for the slight she suffered at the hands of the Padshah and Mariam Zamani. Immediately after this marriage Akbar bestowed a mansab of 1000 upon Udai Singh and the high sounding title of 'Raja' was also conferred upon him.

Dr. H. Geotz writes that "this marriage was purely a political affair, and Jodh Bai, not being the missionary of the ideology like Maryam-uz Zamani, played a decisive role". The marriage served very well the cause of the house of Marwar. Marwar's alliance would have broken down much earlier under the strain of growing religious estrangement of Jahangir and Shahjahan had not been bound to it by the bonds of blood relationship. Salim's infatuations were short lived. Jagat Gosain was soon relegated to the back seat. The prince's new heart flame was the sixteen year old daughter of Rai Singh of Bikaner, who was known all over Rajasthan for her dash and equestrian skill. At fifteen she killed a tiger with a single shot from the back of her famous horse Swaran Rath. A Bikaner princess in the harem of Akbar helped Salim to acquire the object of his fancy. In 1586 Rai Singh married his daughter to prince Salim. The prince accompanied by his father, brother and grandees went to Rai Singh's palace for the solemnization of the wedding'. The dowry given by Rai Singh was estimated to be of the value of two and a half lakh rupees. The daughter of Rai Kalyan Rai of Jaisalmer was the first to come in 1587 A.D. She was so liberally endowed with all the charms of a high placed woman that Salim gave her the title Malika-i Jahan. Classical music was the art she excelled in Salim would often spend hours listening to her soul stirring renderings of Hindi ragas in the privacy of the royal family were admitted to these functions. It is often stated that in Jaisalmer that once the Malika took three and a half hours to round off a rendering of 'Malkaus' and that when she finished Salim was in a trance, completely submerged in the enchanting ups and downs of the melody. As a reward, he presented her a rare ruby that once belonged to Sutlan

Ibrahim Lodi. The Malika in faithfulness to her art, laid the precious stone at the feet of her husband with the words, "Your Highness's love and appreciation are rewards enough for me". Salim was delighted with her response. He ordered new palace to be built for her and named it Rag Mahal.

Prince Salim's next Rajput wife was Raj Kumari Karamnasi, daughter of Raja Keshav Das Rathor. The wedding took place in 1591 AD., just before Akbar sent a diplomatic mission, headed by Abul Faiz Faizi to the Sultans of Deccan. The Emperor gave his consent, hoping that the alliance would strengthen the religious and political unity he was working for. Another Hindu wife of Jahangir was Kanwal Rani, daughter of the ruler of little Tibet. This marriage was a total diplomatic affair. The Tibetan chief offered his youngest daughter in marriage to Salim in order to avert Akbar's attack on Tibet." The other wives of Jahangir were a daughter of Jagat Singh, the eldest son of Raja Man Singh, and a daughter of Rawal Bhim, the brother of Rai Kalyan Mai of Jaisalmer. Jahangir's marriage to the daughter of Jagat Singh was the outcome of his interest and initiative. He gave Jagat Singh 80,000 rupees as marriage present. From the port of Cambay, a European tapestry of unparalleled beauty was also sent to Jagat Singh. The marriage took place in the house of Mariyam Zamani. Among the other articles of dowry, Man Singh, the bride's grandfather, gave sixty elephants. The other Hindu wife of Jahangir was the daughter of Ram Chand Bundela, whom he married in 1609 A.D.

These matrimonial alliances with the daughters of Hindu rulers, especially the Rajput chiefs went a long way in strengthening the roots of the Mughal Empire in India. The Mughal administration got efficient officials and generals. Many battles were successfully won and many important and faithful measures were introduced in the Mughal administration. Moreover, the dowry that these princesses brought with them enriched the royal treasuries. These Rajput and Hindu chiefs also benefited through these marriages. With the Mughal help they could conquer new lands and stabilize their political positions. Their prestige and dignity were enhanced. The

coming of non-Muslim women in Mughal harem was of great importance as they influenced Mughal politics immensely. The matrimonial alliances with Rajput princesses gave the country a line of remarkable sovereigns and it also secured to four generations of Mughal emperors the services of some the greatest captains and diplomats that Medieval India ever produced. These alliances secured solid loyal Rajput support to the Mughal throne and became important cause of the empires expansion and stability. Moreover, these marriages threw careers especially in imperial services open to talented Rajputs irrespective of caste, creed and sect. Naturally, the strength and manpower of the Indian empire was multiplied manifold.

A farman was issued by Maryam Zamani in favour of one Mudabbir Beg to restore his Jagir which was usurped by one Suraj Mai at the pargana Chaupala (the modem Moradabad) in sarkar of Sambhal. According to H. Geotz, Salim's marriage with Mota Raja Udai Singh's daughter was purely a political affair, and Jodh Bai, not being the missionary of the ideology like Maryam-uz Zamani, played no decisive role.

With the influx of Rajput women, Hindu culture in its varied aspects spread in the seraglio as in his own harem Akbar accorded freedom to his Rajput queens and their maids servants to observe their religion and also to conduct the Hindu worship such as the sacred offering of fire (Havana) accompanied by the chanting of Vedic mantras (bhajands) daily. Abul Fazl writes that in the mansions of Fatehpur Sikri the Hindu queen's daily performed homa etc. These princesses though admitted to Islam, were allowed to worship the Hindu deities as is evident from the inspection of the buildings of Agra and Fatehpur Sikri where they lived. The dwellers of the harem gave it a secular character. Through them music, painting and other fine arts influenced Mughal art and vice-versa. Many queens constructed places of religious worship and public utility. A Sanskrit inscription from the Bhuteshwar Temple of Jaisalmer, published by Dasharatha Sharma, records that the temple was erected by Parvati, a maid servant of Princess Nathi Bai, daughter of Hari Raj, ruler of

Jaisalmer. The Princess, married Akbar, had gone to Jaisalmer to see her ailing father Hari Raj and it was then that her maid servant had built the temple. Garden and well had been built by the order of Maryam Zamani in the pargana of Jusat. The weighing ceremony tuladdi, worship of horse (ashvapoojand), celebration of Dashahera, Deepawali with the rituals of gambling, Holi, Rakshabandhan,, became very popular among the Mughals after these matrimonial alliances. The killing of animals and cooking of meet on certain days was restricted. Even number of pigs and dogs were kept in the harem for the purpose of worship.

Akbar's marriages with Hindu princesses provided the means for bringing Hindu teachers to the religious discussions in the imperial presence and for coaching the royal princes in Indian philosophy and thought. In Akbar's time Hindu saints of Pranami and Radhavallabhi sect were frequently associated with the Mughal government Rani Rup Manjari, one of the Hindu wife of Akbar, was a follower of Shri Gosain Ji. The princesses were brought up according to the Indian tradition in which the glory lay both in serving the master as well as in suffering in silence. The devotion of these princesses to their royal husbands was exemplary. The response of the Mughal royal family was equally nice. They treated their Rajput wives with respect and affection, more so because there princess came from loyal and respectable families of rulers . The non-Muslim ladies who entered the royal harem lived like Muslims and after death were buried in the Muslim cemeteries; still during their life time they practiced Hindu religion as would appear from the inspection of building of Agra-Fatehpur Sikri and Allahabad in which these ladies resided, as well as the testimony of Muslim historians like Abul Fazl and Badaoni. The Sultans of Delhi had also married Rajput princesses by they never accorded the same status to them as was enjoyed by the Rajput wives of the Mughals. The Kachhwaha princess enjoyed some privileges which were ordinarily derived to the Muslim member of the royal harem.

Daniyal, when he was only one month old was sent to Amber to be brought up under the care of his maternal grandmother, the wife of

Bhar Mal. Not only were Akbar's wives treated with respect and affection but their relatives also had position of confidence rarely enjoyed by the in-laws of any Sultan of Delhi. For example, after the conquest of Orissa, when Raja Man Singh came to pay his respects to the emperor at Lahore, Akbar ordered that the "Prince Royal (Salim) should go out to meet him and bring him to the king's presence. The order was carried out, and that chosen servant (Man Singh) obtained honour. The fathers, brothers, nephews and cousins of Rajput princesses who were married to Akbar or his Shahzadds were appointed to high posts. The baits of mansab was dangled before them which appeared more attractive to them their own states.

In short, in the Mughal harem the proud Rajput ladies maintained their identity and important position. Rajput women had much taste to relinquish their customs and too much vanity to adopt foreign attitudes, and if Rajput and Persian cultural influences did not always come into open clash; they always did strive for supremacy. The Rajput princesses were much better placed than most others of this category.

The Mughal Emperors, the masters of unlimited power and wealth, liberally bestowed upon them the coveted titles according to the qualities of the recipient and high honours according to their merit. By doing so they not only pleased them but also raised their status among their counterparts in the harem. Ordinarily, a title denoted the attribute inherent in her personality. The daughter of Raja Bharmal, was given the title of Mariyam-uz Zamdni. Man Bai, the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das, Jahangir's wife gave birth to Khusrau. The birth of Khusrau gave his mother a new, prestigious status. The Emperor bestowed upon her the title Shah Begum, by which appellation she came to be styled thereafter. Her monthly honorarium was increased from one to two lakh rupees, and the compliment of slave and eunuchs in here palace was doubled. In thankfulness, the Emperor, according to Abul Fazl, opened the gates of his treasury and closed them only when the needs of the poor had been fully met. Jodh Bai, alias Jagat Gosain, the daughter of

Mota Raja Udai Singh, married to Jahangir was known for her intelligence, sweet voice and ready wit so she was honoured with title of Bilqis Makani posthumously by her husband. The daughter of Rawal Bhim (her name is not known), brother of Rai Kalyan Rai of Jaisalmer, was bestowed the title of Malika-i Jahani. Equal consideration was shown by Emperor Akbar to his Rajput in-laws. As a result of Bharmal's daughter's marriage with Akbar, Bharmals was honoured with the mansab of 5000 zat and sawars which was in fact the highest honour given to any person besides the royal princes. In 1585, the daughter of Raja Bhagwan Das of Amber's marriage took place with Prince Salim. Immediately after the marriage, Bhagwan Das was granted a mansab of 5000 zat.

It is said when Bhagwan Das was seeing off his daughter he said to Akbar; "'Mohari re beti thare mahlon ki cheri, ham bandh ghulam re (My daughter in the maid of your palace and we are your slaves)". At this Akbar replied promptly, "Thari re beti mahare mahlon ki rani, turn sahib sardar re (Your daughter is the queen of our palace and you are (our) great lord)".*^ Mota Raja Udai Singh's daughter Jodh Bais' marriage to Akbar's heir apparent prince Salim was solemnized at the bride's residence in 1587. Immediately after this marriage Akbar bestowed a mansab of 1000 zat upon Udai Singh which was later on raised to 1500 zat. Outside the Mughal harem, the Hindu woman had played a significant role during this period.

Check your progress –

1. Write about the Hindu wives of Jahangir.

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2. Discuss about the religious freedom of Rajput wives in Mughal harem.

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10.4 LETS SUM UP

The first Rajput girl in the Mughal zenana was a daughter of Raja Bharmal of Amber, known variously as Jodha Bai, Hira Kunwai or Harkha Bai, who was married to Emperor Akbar. Given the secular image of Akbar, the marriage has been presented as an inter-religious affair. Movies and television serials have romanticised this particular pair, but the reality, in general, was different. It is noteworthy that Mughal chronicles do not record Hindu names of Rajput wives; they know them only by their Muslim titles. While the Rajput wives in the Mughal harem would probably have met their male blood relatives, it is unlikely that they ever visited their parental home.

10.5 KEYWORDS

Zenana – Part of house to seclude women

Purdah - Pardah or purdah is a religious and social practice of female seclusion prevalent among some Muslim communities in South Asia.

Deorhi – Vestibules

10.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Describe the Rajput marital alliances of Akbar.

2. Discuss how Rajput alliances produced a symbiotic culture.

10.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

J.F RICHARDS: THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

2. ALAM & SUBRAHMANYAM (eds.) : THE MUGHAL STATE

3. D.H.A KOLFF: NAUKAR, RAJPUT AND SEPOY

4. SATISH CHANDRA: MEDIEVAL INDIA, PART TWO

10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section– 10.3.2

2. Section– 10.3.2

UNIT 11 - NUR JAHAN'S ROLE IN COURT POLITICS AND JAHANARA'S ROLE IN TRADE AND POLITICS

STRUCTURE

11.0 OBJECTIVE

To know about the role of Nur Jahan in Mughal politics

To know about the role of Jahanara in Mughal court.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Empress Nur Jahan was the most powerful woman in 17th Century India. She played an unprecedented role in running the vast Mughal empire. Historian Ruby Lal explains why the history of her leadership is important to understand today. She was named Mihr un-Nisa at birth and was later named Nur Jahan (light of the world) by her husband, the

Mughal emperor, Jahangir. She was born only a few decades after Queen Elizabeth I, yet she ruled a territory far more diverse than that of her British counterpart.

Jahanara Begum defied all stereotypes of being a Mughal princess. Her life neither revolved around the men of the family nor did she spend her days in the harem as a woman was expected to. She was the eldest daughter of Emperor Shah Jahan and the older sister of Prince Dara Shikoh and Emperor Aurangzeb. She became the First Lady (Padshah Begum) of the Mughal Empire at the tender age of 17 after her mother's death.

11.2 NUR JAHAN 'S ROLE

Many women of the Mughal era are known to history by name. Although secluded behind carved marble screens or by covered haudas when they went out, women of the Mughal families are available now to contemporary Indian culture as personalities of substantial education, considerable power and enduring charisma. This is due in large measure to the wealth of detail and the historical immediacy of the written sources of the period, whether they be Persian, Sanskrit, or European language. One of the women whose person has achieved some stature through this process of cultural reification is Nur Jahan, last wife of the emperor Jahangir(r. 1605-1627), who came to the throne with their marriage in 1611 and whose virtual domination over court and imperial affairs lasted until Jahangir's death in 1627 and her own exile to Lahore. Nur Jahan was born Mihrunnisa in the city of Kandhar as her family travelled from Tehran to Akbar's court in Agra in order to better its political and economic fortunes.

Mihrunnisa was originally married to a Turkish adventurer, who had been given the title Sher Afgan "tiger slayer" by then prince Salim and with whom she had one child, a daughter Ladli. Sher Afgan died in a political struggle in Bengal in1607 and Mihrunnisa returned to the Mughal court with her daughter to live out four years of relative anonymity under the watchful care of one of the elder women of

Akbar's harem, Ruqayya Sultan. Then, at the Nauroz bazaar of 1611, Jahangir spied the thirty-five year old widow and made immediate plans to marry her. This event took place a few months later. At that time Jahangir was increasingly under the influence of alcohol and opium, and Mihrunnisa (to be given the title Nur Mahal "light of the palace" on the occasion of her second marriage and Nur Jahan "light of the world" in 1616) quickly took control of the channels of decision and influence. The immediacy of this pre-eminences recognized by William Hawkins, an early English trader at the Mughal court, who noted already in 1611 that he had "to seek out for jewels fitting for the kings, new paramour" in order to win favour with the emperor.

Nur Jahan was soon established as the central figure of consequence in a powerful configuration of rule, called the "faction" by the English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe, which included herself, her father Itimaduddaula, her brother Asaf Khan, and her step son Khurram (Shah Jahan). The extent of her control both through the faction and on her own has been given in a famous passage from the Iqbalnama: "Day by day her influence and dignity increased....No grant of lands was conferred upon any woman except under her seal....Sometimes she would sit in the balcony of her palace, while the nobles would present themselves, and listen to her dictates. Coin was struck in her name...On all Farman's also receiving the Imperial signature, the name of' Nur Jahan, the Queen Begam,' was jointly attached." The uses, and perhaps abuses, of power by Nur Jahan were legendary and appeared in every arena in which she lived and worked. Using as a model increasingly far-reaching concentric circles (mandalas or fields of power),we will examine several examples of Nur Jahan's influence at court and in the countryside, maintaining throughout that while she used every channel available to her through which to exert and manipulate power, she never overstepped the boundaries of propriety given to Muslim women, on the one hand, and to sovereigns over Indian life on the other.

Life with Jahangir

The Iqbatnama passage begun above continued with a statement by Jahangir that, as he "bestowed the sovereignty on Nur Jahan Begam,"

he himself required "nothing beyond a ser of wine and half a ser of meat." This sentiment pervaded all accounts of the private life of Jahangir and Nur Jahan in which the empress was depicted as nurse, governess, and dominatrix terrible. Jahangir was in part responsible for the widespread perception of her as having almost complete control over his personal life, for he routinely used his memoirs (the Tuzuk-i Jahangiri) to discuss such things as his illnesses, which he did with great intimacy, and then to declare that he told such things only to Nur Jahan "than whom I did not think anyone was fonder of me."

That Nur Jahan ordinarily acted as personal physician to her husband is confirmed in the memoirs for the year 1621 where Jahangir described the habitual care she gave in trying to reduce his cups of wine, to get him to accept the advice and medication of the court physicians, and even to make substantial medical decisions on her own based on his responses to care to date. Her "skill and experience are greater than those of the physicians.... She, by degrees, lessened my wine, and kept me from things that did not suit me, and food that disagreed with me."

Knowing that Jahangir himself made such references to her high visibility in the attentive care given his body makes it easier to accept the similar accounts of contemporary Dutch traders. Francisco Pelsaert was a senior factor for the Dutch East India Company stationed in Agra from 1620 to 1627. His normally concise narrative fairly bloom s when describing the daily life of Jahangir and, turning to the moment when the emperor was to go to bed, he noted that Nur Jahan and some female slaves came to him to "undress him, chafing and fondling him as if he were a little child."

Subdued and made responsive by drink Jahangir had become easily malleable to those around him: "...his wife, who knows so well how to manage him that she obtains whatever she asks for or desires gets always 'yes,' and hardly ever 'no,' in reply."? Pieter van den Broecke, Pelsaert's superior while in India and from whom he may have derived his own contemporary account, embellished this same

story and went on to suggest that Jahangir" suffered in his mind because he found himself too much in the power of his wife and her associates....She did with him as she liked, his daily reward being pretended love and sweet words, for which he had to pay dearly."

The portrayal of Nur Jahan's influence over Jahangir in his own personal habits was elaborated by the next generation of European sources. Niccolao Manucci, originally from Venice, arrived in India in 1656 at the inauguration of Aurangzeb's rule and, from either street bazaar gossip or court whispers, devised an elaborate account of Nur Jahan's hold over her husband. "It was enough for the queen to deny him a drink of wine to drive him to tears," he stated, "and to dry them you had only to present him a glass well filled with liquor." More specifically, Manucci noted that Nur Jahan succeeded in getting Jahangir to agree to drink less, down to nine cup full, as long as they were offered by her own hand. The report continued, however, by describing what would happen when Jahangir wanted more and Nur Jahan held the line: "When he saw that the queen would not give ear to his words, he fell into a passion, laid hold of the queen and scratched her, she doing the same on her side, grappling with the king, biting and scratching him, and no one dared to separate them. "That these accounts have original support from passages in the Tuzuk suggest that there must have been some truth to at least the general tenor of the stories. Jahangir's own remarks were probably grounded in his pride at Nur Jahan's skill and attentiveness; the Dutch narratives in the need to pass on all information found in the local contemporary marketplace; and Manucci's story in a love of embellishing material, now many decades old, spun from many threads.

The Khusrau Affair

Nur Jahan was involved almost daily in the intrigue at court, whether in the established palaces at Agra and Lahore, in more temporary settings such as Mandu, or in camp while travelling. She took on cases of promotion and demotion, allocation of jagirs , trade decisions, and marriage negotiations, for example, with such ease that most

sources of the time assumed that she was the only one really making decisions. Said the Iqbalnama: "At last her authority reached such a pass that the King was such only in name". While most statements about her power were like this one in that they gave only a general description but no specific case examples, the case was played out in some detail: that of the political disenfranchisement of Jahangir s eldest son Khusrau as hinted at by Jahangir and as stated more openly by Roe. From Jahangir's perspective, there had been trouble with Khusrau for along time. Late in the reign of Akbar, Salim had become impatient for the throne and, in the breach that had occurred between him and his father, the eldest son (or grandson) had become a serious contender with serious courtly backing. Although Salim eventually reconciled with Akbar and mounted the throne upon his father's death in 1605, Khusrau continued to entertain imperial designs and in 1606 went into revolt against Jahangir. Jahangir successfully quelled the sedition, humiliating or executing all the perpetrators, and from then on kept Khusrau under what amounted to house arrest until the son's death in1621 in the Deccan while under the supervisory care of his brother Shah Jahan.

Jahangir's own accounts overdevelopments with Khusrau indicated clearly his paternal worry over "the unhappy affair of Khusrau." They showed his "concern for the physical well-being of his son: "I ordered him not to be kept in the fort like a prisoner, but that they should provide everything necessary for his comfort and convenience in the way of eating and clothing." And they also showed the firmness with which Jahangir wanted filial submission: "As his appearance showed no signs of openness and happiness, and he was always mournful and dejected in mind, I accordingly ordered that he should not come to pay his respects." Late in the imprisonment, Jahangir relented and, in the spirit of forgiveness, said: "I accordingly sent for him and bade him salute me." Khusrau's death, however, noted a full half year after it actually occurred, was recorded in one sentence, simply that he had died from a disease of colic pains." No mention was made of the murderous affair that Jahangir probably

suspected it really was. If we had relied only on Jahangir, nothing would be known of Nur Jahan's involvement in the Khusrau affair. For this, we must go to the travel memoirs of Thomas Roe who was present at the court from 1616 to 1618. His account implicated Nur Jahan explicitly as the author of the "impudent boldness in a faction that dare attempt anything."

Nur Jahan, he argued later in 1616, was party to a plot to ally Khusrau with her brother Asaf Khan, to the ultimate detriment of the former, and in this acted with "witt and subtilty." Although the alliance was made and Khusrau's deceptive "liberty" effected, it did no good for him in the end for these very same people and, in particular Nur Jahan, were involved in persuading Jahangir to let Shah Jahan take Khusrau to the Deccan with him, presumably for safekeeping but (as all knew) for a quick end, far from the watchful eyes of the Mughal durbar. In spite of how suspect Nur Jahan may be as the pivotal engineer in the oppressive court machinations against Khusrau in the latter part of his life, we must understand her role in the intrigues around him not necessarily as malevolent actions towards him but as actions protective of her own family's interests. Khusrau had rejected Nur Jahan's overtures for marriage to her daughter Ladli and, while part of her support of hostilities towards him may stem from motives of revenge, most reflected her attempts to clear the way for whoever her son-in-law should be, in the hopes of gaining the throne and thus ensuring the continued presence of her family at the centre of power for at least one more generation. By happenstance, that son-in-law would turn out to be Shahryar, a weak off-spring of Jahangir and a concubine, who would die in the succession struggles following the death of Jahangir. Nur Jahan's efforts here, then, would be for naught.

Martial Prowess

While many Mughal women attended their ailing husbands and worked the channels of power with adroitness, Nur Jahan added to these what appears to be the unique achievements of skilful marksmanship, military strategy, and tremendous courage in battle.

We focus here on two somewhat unrelated expressions of this in her life: her skill in shooting rifles, and her physical involvement in countering the rebellion of Mahabat Khan. We first hear of Nur Jahan's facility with the rifle in a 1616 passage from the Tuzuk in which Jahangir noted that she had used a gun to shoot a large bird, the likes of which in size and colour had not ever been seen before. The next year Nur Jahan offered to kill tigers with her gun if Jahangir so ordered-which he did. "She shot two tigers with one shot each and knocked over [i.e., killed] the two others with four shots." The unusual aspect of this feat was not so much her accuracy, which Jahangir would in fact go on to make much of, but that Nur Jahan shot from inside a hauda mounted on the back of an elephant. How she managed so many good shots without causing the tigers to spring or move was a great marvel to Jahangir. The final Tuzuk account took place in 1619. Jahangir had taken a vow of non-violence "that I would not injure any living thing with my own hand" and, when his party was faced with an approaching tiger, had to call on Nur Jahan to kill it, which she did with one shot. Jahangir remarked here again on the two unusual features of her action: that Nur Jahan's elephant was so well controlled that it did not get scared of the tiger ("An elephant is not at ease when it smells a tiger, and is continually in movement, and to hit with a gun from a litter is a very difficult matter"), and that Nur Jahan needed only one shot when Mirza Rustam, Jahangir's best marksman," "has several times missed three or four shots from an elephant."

Nur Jahan's skill with a gun and her courage in the face of real physical danger were exhibited in a second context, that of the river battle during the rebellion of Mahabat Khan. Mahabat Khan had been an old colleague and friend of Jahangir's who had been involved in imperial affairs for almost all the years of the emperor's reign. In 1626, however, a year before Jahangir died, Mahabat Khan acted on decades of repressed feelings of hostility towards the throne and took Jahangir and his party captive while encamped on the bank of the Jumna river. After long hours of feinted actions and secret negotiations, most master-minded by Nur Jahan, a river battle ensued.

At the high point of the battle, after the search for passable fords had proved hopeless, Nur Jahan plunged into the river on elephant back to join the volley of arrows as those imperial troops not yet captured tried to move upriver to free Jahangir. By the account of the Iqbalnama, Nur Jahan fought well and most bravely, but her most famous act was to save one of her own party. "The Begam Nur Jahan had in her litter the daughter of Shahriyar [her own granddaughter], whose anka or nurse was the daughter of Shah Nawaz Khan. The anka received an arrow in her arm and the Begam herself pulled it out, staining her garments with blood." Nur Jahan's own elephant suffered blows to the side, but the entire party survived and returned to the royal camp. Eventually Mahabat Khan gained control of all of the imperial retinue, but was tricked out of dominion several months later, again in almost full measure by the stratagems of Nur Jahan. The Dutch trader van den Broecke, being present at the time, made much of the battle in his accounts, saying that Nur Jahan's pre-eminence was due to "her great bitterness" on account of which "she wanted to show her woman's courage to Mahabat Khan. "In comparison to others on her side , including her brother Asaf Khan who retreated almost immediately, Nur Jahan "fought longer and bravely, and would have gladly rallied their retreating troops." Once captured by Mahabat Khan Nur Jahan suffered tremendous indignities: "When formerly Nur Jahan Begum used to ride out, with people playing and singing before her, she was received by everyone with marks of excessive honour and reverence, evenlike a goddess. This was forbidden by Mahabat Khan."

Nur Jahan went on, however, to recover her place and, through her own devices, to regain control of the throne for Jahangir for the last year before his death. It is noteworthy that the European rendering of Nur Jahan's part in these military campaigns, both mental and physical, highlighted the ways in which she wanted to expand the repertoire of activities available to woman; memorable here is that throughout she showed a "woman's courage."

Architectural Interest

By the luck of history, Nur Jahan's time on the throne coincided with a tremendous upswing in the Mughal arts. While it would be convenient to argue, as some havedone," that she was the one primarily responsible for the great profusion of buildings, gardens, paintings, and decorative arts that now began to grace Mughal life with new standards of luxury and elegance, it is safer to conclude that, although her influence was ubiquitous in the arts, documentation of that influence is in many cases hard to find. Nevertheless, if we turn to perhaps the easiest field, that of architecture, we can certify in a number of instances (here, two) the great confluence of influences she brought together in her own buildings: e.g., the Nur Mahal Sarai in Jalandhar and the Itimaduddaula tomb in Agra. In late l620,the vakils of Nur Jahan completed a large rest-house for travellers (sarai) in Jalandhar along the route from Agra to Lahore. There is no doubt that Nur Jahan was both the chief designer and financial patron of this building, known as the Nur Mahal Sarai, for both an inscription on the building itself and a notice in the Tuzuk confirm it: "On the 21st of the same month I took up my quarters at Nur-saray. At this spot the Vakils of Nur Jahan Begam had built a lofty house, and made a royal garden. It was now completed.

"The sarai was substantial, with large carved gateways, many compartments for travellers, a bathhouse, and a mosque. In terms of the contributions Nur Jahan made to Mughal architecture through it, it was also substantial. Nur Jahan combined two types of ornament in this building. On the one hand were traditional Islamic arabesques, of both the geometric and organic variety, which covered in continuous pattern whole panels of the two-dimensional surface. This ornamentation, which saw an expression of the divine in repeated abstract patterns of nature, paid homage to Nur Jahan's own Shiite theological back-ground. Interspersed between these panels, on the other hand, were some which housed representational images reflective of both her cultural origins in Persia and her new-found religious milieu of Hinduism. The tree of life, for example, and the guldasta (or purnakalasha), pot filled with flowers, were images reminiscent of Persian iconography, while mahout-driven elephants,

human figures, and peacocks indicated influence from the Hindu arts. In the particular panel given here, the winged cherubs above the lower arch may have reflected images of angels currently coming in on European prints and drawings to the Mughal studios. Jahangir miniatures of this period, in fact, were just beginning to show such figures which were clearly patterned after European prototypes. The surface on the Nur Mahal Sarai, then, reflected a design direction in Mughal arts which synthesized the abstractions of Islamic art with the naturalism and representationalism of Hindu art. Nur Jahan, we argue, was positioned strategically at the confluence and, with self-conscious direction, facilitated the integration. Turning now to the tomb of Itimaduddaula in Agra, we find a number of decorative conventions introduced under her aegis. Begun in1622, this building was completed by1628 and had as its financial and artistic patron, according to all traditions, the daughter of the man who was honoured by it. With this tomb, Nur Jahan introduced not only the full scale use of marble as a building clad, but also the full scale use of a sophisticated style of stone inlay known in Persian as parch in kari and in Italian as pietradura. In this technique, the marble surface was incised with a design and carefully cut pieces of semi-precious stone (e.g., agate, onyx, cornelian, mother-of-pearl) were then set in place. In addition to these innovations of technique were innovations of design as well. In the spirit of honouring the Persian origins of her father, Nur Jahan included in her representational imagery, first of all, such Safavid derived elements as the wine flask/rosewater ewer, covered cups, flower-filled pots, fruit trays (with grapes and pomegranates), and cypress trees.

Second, she introduced the widespread use in architectural ornament of the single flower, isolated out of the continuous background of Islamic arabesque and placed against an empty white ground. Many attribute this fascination with the single flower to the 1620 Mughal trip to Kashmir during which Jahangir, Nur Jahan, and Shah Jahan were introduced to the floral extravaganza of the spring time valley in the north. This single flower motif would become one of

the most recognized motifs of Mughal art, and would be played out to beautiful extreme in the decoration of the Taj Mahal.

Third, Nur Jahan translated the domestic women's arts of carpet design and embroidery into more permanent forms in the tomb: on the floor of the upper pavilion, around the two cenotaphs, we see floral arabesques suggestive of carpet patterns designed, say oral traditions, by Nur Jahan, and inside arches and along lower dados we find carved relief suggestive of embroidery designs created by Mughal women in their leisure. Not only was the carved relief imitative of the three-dimensional quality of embroidery, but the white-on-white effect suggested the style of chikan kari, embroidery said to have been brought to India by the Mughals from Persia. These examples from architectural ornament illustrate the power of Nur Jahan, in that she had available to her and made exceptional use of whatever channels of imperial expansionism she found to hand. More than this, however, they illustrate that one of the tremendous freedoms given to her was a freedom to experiment visually, to make unusual associations and conjunctions of discrete iconographical elements. With this freedom, Nur Jahan made a statement about the great value of syncretism: not only between cultural and religious traditions, but between artistic media as well.

Controlling Overseas Trade

It seems to have been quite common for noble women to engage in trade within regular commercial channels, whether they be bazaars held in various palace spaces to which tradesmen and women would come, or established market places on lands owned and operated by palace women. Pelsaert, for example, described just such a one belonging to Nur Jahan outside of Agra: "Here the officers of Nur Jahan Begam, who built their sarai there, collect duties on all these goods before they can be shipped across the river.

"The Mughal period, however, saw substantial shift in the way this commerce was carried out. As India was increasingly placed at the threshold of European mercantilism in its outreach to Africa, the Middle East, and all parts of Asia, Nur Jahan again found herself well-

positioned historically: in both the timing of her reign and in the office she occupied, she was poised to take advantage of the new openness to foreign goods, in terms of controlling what came in and went out and of negotiating trading contracts to govern such commerce. While none of her trading activities were mentioned in Jahangir's memoirs, they were mentioned in some detail in the documents preserved from the first official English embassy to the Mughal court, particularly those penned by Thomas Roe. Although Roe had arrived in India early in the fall of 1615, he did not make it to Jahangir's court until January of1616 because of changes within his party and an extended sickness of his own. When he did arrive, he was immediately confronted with the power of the women around Jahangir: "not only did his women watch within" all doings at court, but they "guard him with manly weapons."

To his great surprise, moreover, his official credentials could not be officially accepted until arrangements had been made "to show his [Jahangir's] queen the seal;" it was only when Nur Jahan approved the documents that Roe could stay at court and carry out his negotiations. Roe never saw Nur Jahan, as she was protected from foreign view by parda, but he felt her influence in all he did. She was eventually able to procure for herself the official sponsorship of English trade and, in October of 1617, Roe was notified by a servant of Nur Jahan's "that she had moved the Prince [Shah Jahan] for another Firman that all our goods might be in her protection, and that she had obtained it, and was ready to send down her servant with that, to see and take order for our good establishment; that she would see that we should not be wronged." With this Nur Jahan officially became the "Protectresse" of the English.

Although Roe was not successful in procuring the trading contracts with the Mughal government that he had come for, the passage of goods which ensued was substantial. Whatever trade was to happen had to be primed with the constant flow of gifts into the hands of the imperial family and, as Roe knew from the beginning, the most significant recipient was Nur Jahan: "If the Queen must be presented (which I will not advise too, and doe purpose, as well out of necessity as judgment

break this Custom of daily bribing)...[a list of things] are here rich presents."

Roe knew that the fate of his efforts in India depended on the good will he could generate with gift and, although he tried to stem the court's insatiable requests, he complied with regular offerings of paintings, prints, and drawings (the most favoured gift) to Jahangir, and mirrors, embroidery, gems, coaches, and beaver hats to Nur Jahan. Many gifts turned out to be unsuitable leather that decayed, steel knives that rusted, horses and dogs that fell sick, and woollens (except in red) that proved too hot but the indomitable Roe kept on experimenting until he found the most pleasing items. The trade which Roe so desperately wanted was primarily in cotton textiles and indigo dye. By the time the English embassy came Mughal women, especially Jahangir's mother Maryam zamani and Nur Jahan, were running their own ships in the sea channels which trafficked with the Middle East and Africa. Unlike the Dutch who were interested for the most part only in spices, the English wanted to sell Indian textiles and dyes in the markets across Europe and in other parts of Asia and Africa.

To do this they had to offer Indian merchants (and the Mughal court)something desirable in return and, since most English goods were unsuited to the Indian environment, they had to fall back on whatever silver bullion they could procure in Japan which was a most welcome item in India. The silver almost always ended up in imperial hands, and it is not clear at this early date if any of the European goods actually brought in for trade ever reached non-noble buyers.

Nur Jahan's role in the early years of international trade with the English was substantial, for not only did she control the Indian goods run out in her own ships in the Arabian Sea, but she regulated the vacillations of interest and disinterest that marked the Mughal posture at this time. On a regular basis she bought goods through the agents of the English. In October of 1617, for example, Roe told his factors in Surat: "I have ordered your Factory to sell to the servants of

Noormahall and her brother whatsoever may be spared," (Mand repeated letters written to the East India Company during these years by factors like John Browne in February of 1617, James Bickford in March of 1617, and a group letter of November 1621 all stated clearly that Nur Jahan was a major buyer of English goods. There is good reason to believe, as well, that Roe's ultimate failure at sealing his trading contracts may have been due to Nur Jahan's control behind the throne.

Aside from matters of mismatched diplomatic etiquette and problems over what goods would vent well in India, Nur Jahan's only interest was in procuring elegant luxury items for the court. India did not need European goods the way Europe needed Indian cottons and dyes; Nur Jahan recognized this and used it to best advantage. In these ways, Nur Jahan had a visible hand in the many reaches of power which flowed out from her: her husband' s private toilet, intrigue at the court, Mughal military matters, imperial architecture, and international trade. Her hand was felt elsewhere as well, in areas not covered here: international diplomacy with wives of foreign rulers, Mughal garden design, and the formation of official policy on religion. There were many avenues to power available to her and she used them all; but she did not abuse them in ways any different from other courtiers. Her actions in all cases were motivated by two things— her protective love of her own Persian family, and her love of fine, elegant things and both loves enriched Mughal culture tremendously.

11.3 JAHANARA'S ROLE

Jahanara Begum was born in Ajmer and brought up in Agra. She was taught by many tutors, including Mumtaz Mahal's secretary, Sati-un Nissa, who was known for her knowledge of the Qur'an and Persian literature. She was often found playing chess with her father Shah Jahan. Jahanara was her father's preferred child and he bestowed upon her titles such as 'Begum Sahib'. She was allowed to live in her own palace, outside the confines of Agra Fort. French traveller François Bernier

wrote: “Shah Jahan reposed unbounded confidence in his favourite child; she watched over his safety, and so cautiously observant, that no dish was permitted to appear upon the royal table which had not been prepared under her superintendence”. Italian traveller Niccolao Manucci, who visited India during that period, wrote: “Jahanara was loved by all, and lived in a state of magnificence.”

People often referred to Jahanara Begum as Faqirah (ascetic) due to her devotion to Sufism. She suggested that she and her brother Dara Shikoh were the only descendants of Timur to truly embrace Sufism. She commissioned translations and commentaries on many works of classic literature.

Jahanara was the disciple of Mullah Shah Badakhshi, who initiated her into the Qadiriyya Sufi Order in 1641. She made such progress on the Sufi path that Mullah Shah would have named her the successor in the Qadiriyya, but the rules didn’t allow it. Her book Risālah-i-Sāhibīyahwas was based on the life of her spiritual mentor, Mullah Shah.

In 1644, two days after Jahanara’s thirtieth birthday, her garments caught fire and she was seriously burnt. None of the court physicians could heal her and this greatly distressed the emperor. She was cured by the mendicant named Hanum.

The same year, she went on a pilgrimage to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti’s shrine in Ajmer. Within a year of the accident, she had completely recovered. In gratitude, Jahanara built the shrine’s marble pavilion known as Begumi Salam and wrote Mu’nis al- Arwā – Moinuddin Chisti’s biography that is acclaimed for its literary craftsmanship.

Although Jahanara had openly sided with Dara Shikoh during the succession wars, she reconciled with Aurangzeb once he became the emperor. Aurangzeb crowned her as the First Lady and increased her allowance from ₹10,00,000 to ₹17,00,000. She was given a grand mansion in Delhi where Aurangzeb would spend hours conversing with her. Jahanara’s position in the court as a power broker was secure enough to occasionally argue with Aurangzeb and have certain privileges that other imperial women did not possess. She disagreed with Aurangzeb’s strict regulation of public life and staunch Islamic beliefs.

She even advised against his decision in 1679 to restore the Jazia tax on non muslims, which she said would alienate his largely Hindu subjects. Upon Mumtaz Mahal's death, half her property worth ten million was given to Jahanara. The royal seal was entrusted to her and her annual stipend was raised from ₹6,00,000 to ₹10,00,000. Which Aurangzeb then increased to ₹17,00,000 under his reign.

Upon her recovery after her fateful accident, she was also given the revenues of the port of Surat. Jahanara was allotted an income from a number of villages and owned gardens including, Bagh-i-Jahanara, Bagh-i-Nur, Bagh-i-Safa. The Pargana of Panipat was also granted to her. Her jagir included the villages of Farjhara, Achchol and the sarkars of Doharah, Safapur and Bachchol.

THE COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY JAHAN ARA BEGUM:

There is a story behind how English trade expanded in India due to Jahanara's illness due to a major fire accident which nearly burnt her down. The Emperor held an eight days' feast at court. The Princess was weighed against gold, which was distributed amongst the poor, and Jewels were taken round her head thrice and given away. On the first day of the feast Shahjahan presented her with a hundred and thirty pearls, estimated at five lacs of rupees, for a pair of bracelets. On the next day she received a costly Sarpech, an ornament for the head, which had a large diamond and a pearl pendant. These rich and valuable gifts were accompanied by other precious Jewellery, and gold and silverware. The port of Surat also, which had a revenue of five lacs, was assigned to the Princess on this auspicious occasion. The stream of the Emperor's bounty ran free, and the princes and the grandees of the court were also honoured by khillats, titles and promotions in their ranks ; while the physicians and the surgeons naturally enough got the largest share of rewards and distinctions. Hakim Muhammad Da'ud received the rank of, Commanding two thousand foot and two hundred horse, With a robe of honour, an elephant, a horse With a gold saddle, and a gold mohur

weighing five hundred tolas, and a rupee of equal weight specially minted for the occaston. Hakim Mumin, and Hakim Maslhu-z-zaman, who was called from Lahore, were also handsomely rewarded. ' Arif a slave, whose ointment had been useful In healing the wounds, was weighed against gold, and favoured With a robe of honour, a horse, an elephant, and seven thousand rupees In cash.

The story of Gabriel Boughton's coming to Agra to treat the Princess is, true although eminent modem writers have disputed Its authenticity. The Indian historians of the period have agreed in mention that the accident took place on the 27th Muharram, 1054 A.H. (corresponding to the 6th April, 1646 N.S.), and the celebrations of the recovery were held on the 5th Shawwal, 1054 A.H. (corresponding to the 6th December, 1644 N.S.), after eight months and eight days had passed from the date of the acctdent. We are further told by 'Abdu-l- Hamid, the court chronicler, that physicians and surgeons had been brought from different parts of the empire to treat the Princess, and according to Khafi Khan and Muhammad Sallha, European doctors were also employed. In addition to this, Hedges' Diary quotes a letter from the Surat factory to the Company, In which It IS related that Boughton had been sent across from Surat to Agra at the special request of Asalat Khan, who was very much pleased at this service rendered by the factory, and did his best to push the Company's Interests in court.

The letter is dated the 3rd January, 1645, and It can be safely assumed that Boughton must have left for Agra some time in 1644, many months earlier than the 3rd January, 1645 ; otherwise, the Surat factors could not report. Asalat Khan's patronage of their Interests at court to the Company on this date during the illness of Jahanara he was present at the court, as we know from the fact that when Aurangzeb came from Burhanpur to enquire about the Princess, Shah Jahan deputed him to receive the prince It is quite In the fitness of things that Asalat Khan, a trusted servant of the Emperor, should have With his permission sent for a capable European surgeon from Surat.

These are in brief the facts which to our mind prove that Boughton must have come to Agra to treat the Princess. When this part of the story is

proved, the latter part of It, that Boughton on the recovery of the lady did not accept any fee for himself but secured for hrs countrymen the right to trade free of duties In Bengal, is not at all Improbable. In 1644 the servants of the Company were discussing the prospects of a profitable trade In Bengal, and had referred the matter to the Court to London. At this moment, Boughton's request was not an act of patriotism only, but a matter of political necessity. Moreover, in view of the facts, We are Inclined to think that Boughton prayed for a grant of the right to trade free of customs In the whole Mughal empire rather than in Bengal only.

In 1636 the practise of the Courten's Association had brought the Surat factories into disgrace With the Mughal Emperor, and deprived them of all those privileges and rights which Roe's treaty had conferred on them. Boughton coming direct from Surat could not forget the bad plight of the factory with which he was so closely connected, and, therefore, instead praying for a grant for Bengal only, he would have rather prayed for a grant for the whole empire.

In 1650 we find the Company's servants trying to get a nishan—an order from a Governor—through Boughton from Prince Shuja', who was then the Governor of Bengal. If the Imperial farman had been for Bengal exclusively, there would have been no necessity of securing the nishan from Prince Shuja', for such a nishan would really be a reaffirmation of the general orders of the Emperor by a provencial governor. In 1652, we hear that they have secured a nishan from Prince Shuja', and this document, a wrongly dated copy of which is still extant, speaks of an Imperial farman according to which the English were allowed to trade free of duties and customs to the whole Mughal emptre. This probably is the farman granted by Shah Jahan at Boughton's request make things more clear.

The Nishan or Letters Patent of the most magnificent Prince Shuja, given the sixth month In the year of Hejira one thousand sixty-six, In the 28th year of the Emperor Shah Jahan, his glorious reign.

This nishan clearly shows that the Imperial farman referred to In It, which most probably had been granted at the request of Boughton, did

not allow the English to trade free of duties In Bengal exclusively, but in the whole Mughal empire, the suspicion as regards the authenticity of Boughton's story arose from a mistaken notion of the date of the Princess s accident. Stewatt and Orme have placed it in 1636 A.D. Dow and several other writers, however, while speaking of Boughton's obtaining the farman in 1636, make no mention of the Princess's accident in this connection. Sir Henry Yule does not find any record of Boughton's coming to Agra earlier than the letter of the Surat factory, which has been quoted above, and, therefore, he remarks, It (the story) has become the staple of the popular historian. It appears had access to the Muntakhabu-l-lubab of Khafi Khan, in which the accident has been mentioned as taking place In 1053 A.H. (1643-44 A.D.), and he approaches very near the solution of the problem, but the force of Yule's opinion seems to have been too much even for his penetrative mind, and he dismisses the subject.

During Shahjahan's reign, his eldest daughter Jahan Ara Begum was the sole royal woman who showed any interest or participated whole-heartedly in the prosperous trade and commerce of those times. Jahan Ara's mother (and Shahjahan's favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal), though an influential lady of the Royal Court and the seraglio, did not evince any interest in commerce and trade. But there stands a flourishing and prosperous place after her name, Mumtazabad, wich Shahjahan had built to immortalize her memory after her untimely death. This city of Mumtazabad was built in twelve years, 1631-1642 AD at a cost of 50 lakhs of rupees and apart from many buildings, had also many markets and inns. Inns and buildings were also built by many other private merchants. But other than the name, Mumtaz Mahal did not contribute anything else to it. In the course of time, the city of Mumtazabad merged with the older city of Agra, but the most famous of all its buildings, the world- renowned, Taj Mahal, still stands there. Another wife of Shahjahan, Akbarabadi Mahal seems to have built a sarai . But it was only Jahan Ara Begum who participated actively and contributed largely towards the economy of those days.

REVENUES GENERATED THROUGH SARAIS, JAGIRS AND RIVER

AND SEA - PORTS :

The famous caravan sarai known as the caravan sarai of Begum Saheb or the Begum Sarai , was built by the Princess Jahan Ara. It was built in Delhi and many foreigners like The've not, Tavemeir, Bernier and Manucci speak of it in their accounts. Provisions was made in it, for adequate safety of travellers and merchants, the gates being closed at night. This caravanserai was in fact built to accommodate the wealthy Persian, Uzbek and other foreign traders and merchants . The Begum Sarai was destroyed after the Sepoy Mutiny . This Sarai, no doubt, with its special amenities encouraged merchants to carry on commerce and trade between different places through Delhi. Princess Jahan Ara, like Nur Jahan before her, built caravansarais and market places, engaged in sea trade and on the whole took an active interest in commerce and trade. Again, like Nur Jahan Begam, she owned many jagirs, the revenues of which came to her, apart form the annual allowances given to her by her doting father and the gifts that she received from other sources. Some of her jagirs were Panipat, Achchol , Bachchol, Saiipur ,Dohraba , and Farjahara .

The revenue of the flourishing Surat port was given to the Princess for her expenditure of betel which she provided for her entire household, and the revenue of the Sarkar of Dohraha was given to her for the maintenance and upkeep of her gardens. The Pargana of Panipat yielded an annual revenue of one crore dams. Since princess Jahan Ara had great influence in her father's administration, many people, even foreigners tried to please her through valuable gifts and presents in order to gain favours with her. The Dutch sought her mediation and intervention to solve their problems. The English too tried to please her with gifts like broad cloth, embroidered materials, mirrors, perfumed oils, cabinets etc. Tavernier speaks of presenting the Princess with many gifts.

FOREIGN TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Jahan Ara Begum invested all her wealth wisely in conducting a flourishing foreign trade and also got back in return huge profits. She owned a large number of ships and established friendly commercial relations with the Dutch and the English. Their friendly co - operation helped her to carry on an extensive trade and make huge profits" Manucci estimated her income to 30 lakhs of rupees a year apart from the precious stones and jewels owned by her. The largest and the most famous of Jahan Ara Begum's ships was the 'Sahebi' after Begum Saheb, a very popular title given to Jahan Ara Begum. This ship was constructed at Surat, from where it operated and embarked on many voyages. It was customary for the Emperor himself to appoint the captain, the crew and other officials of the ship such as Darogha and Munshrif. But Princess Jahan Ara, once was known to have left the appointment of the captain and the crew of her ship to her officials. But in the next year she herself made the appointment of the Darogha of the ship and Muhammed Raji was given the post. This ship was employed to assist Haj pilgrims as well as for gains. The 'Sahebi', on her maiden voyage on 29 th November 1643 AD was reserved for pilgrims to Mecca and Medina. Jahan Ara also issued orders that every year 50 koni of rice was to be dispatched by the ship for distribution among the needy and destitute of Mecca. Pilgrims were not charged any fare, but they were warned against carrying the merchandise and cargo of other merchants in their own names.

Merchants with their cargo were also permitted to travel on it though the 'naul' (or freight) collected from them was given away in alms. The Princess's cargo that was carried on this vessel was worth 10 to 15 thousands of rupees. The goods were usually shipped to Jeddah. The Treasurer of the ship was- in charge of keeping in his custody the amount received form the freight and also the money got from the sale of the Princess's cargo. The ship's captain was given instructions to bring as many horses as he was able to procure at Jeddah, Arabia, The Sahebi' is known to have operated till 1663 AD. Gunjawar, another ship, which was originally owned by Shahjahan and given to Princess Jahan Ara in December 1629 A.D. along with valuable goods like instruments, drugs, fabrics, precious stones etc. This ship also operated form Surat.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MARKET PLACES AND BAZAARS :

To Princess Jahan Ara Begum goes the credit of building two famous market places, one at Delhi and the other at Lahore. These market places became the most important commercial centres of those cities where merchants came even from foreign lands with their merchandise. In Lahore Jahan Ara Begum supervised and planned the building of the Chowk Sarai Bazaar. The famous Chandni Chowk built around 1650 A.D. in Delhi was also a contribution of Princess Jahan Ara. "It is situated opposite the Lahore Gate of the Red Fort, Delhi. There was a pool in the centre of the Chandni Chowk, fed by the water of Ali Mardan's canal flowing near by. On moonlit nights the whole complex and the pool shimmering in silvery moonlight gave it its name Chandni Chowk." At each end of the Chandni Chowk there was a magnificent ornamented gate. During the time of the Mughals, Chandni Chowk was a famous, flourishing and bustling trade-centre, "Where traders came from all parts of Hindustan and also from abroad. Each shop specialized in a particular commodity. There were jewellery shops selling exquisite ornaments and rare gems and pearls. There were fruit shops selling choicest fruits from Afghanistan and Kashgar. Some shops sold fine wines, some sold ornamented hookahs and decoration-materials. There were shops even selling different kinds of birds and pet animals. Many of the articles sold here were rare and costly. The wealthy and the nobles often visited the Chandni Chowk for shopping." Chandni Chowk continues, ever today, to be one of the busiest commercial centres of the capital, Delhi.

Check your progress –

1. Write about Jahanara's role behind expansion of English trade.
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2. Write about the sarais built by Jahanara for trade.
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11.4 LET'S SUM UP

Nur Jahan was the 20th and last wife of the fourth Mughal emperor, Jahangir. She was the most prominent and powerful empress in the history of the Mughal Empire. Strong, witty, well-educated, and charismatic, Nur Jahan was also beautiful, and hence held the attention of Jahangir in spite of being married to another man, Sher Afgan Khan. After her second wedding with Jahangir, Nur Jahan started controlling the affairs of the state and got involved in everything pertaining to the empire. In fact, she was called by some historians as the 'power behind the throne' during Jehangir's reign. She became the most prominent empress of the empire, and the only Mughal empress to have a coin struck in her name. She was also the only empress to have commanded such honour from the emperor. Nur Jahan is also known for her bravery and weapon-wielding skills. During her reign, poets would praise her for her marksmanship and willingness to hunt down ferocious tigers. As a patron of arts and architecture, Nur Jahan commissioned many famous structures and edifices.

Born in 1614, Jahanara lived a life outside the conventional role of a Mughal princess —as an exemplary poet, writer, architect, engineer and painter, especially in an era where the lives of Mughal women were largely confined within the walls of the zenana.

11.5 KEYWORDS

Sarai – Inns

Munshrif – Overseer

Daroga – In Charge

11.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about Nur Jahan's role in Mughal politics.

2. Write about Jahanara's role in Mughal trade and commerce.

11.7 SUGGESTED READING

Niccolao Manucci, Travel through Mughal India, Lahore: Historical printers, 1976

Banarsi Prasad Saksena, History of Shahjahan of Delhi. Lahore: Book traders

Jahangir, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol.1. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2001

Saqi Mustad Khan, Maasir-i-Alamgiri, (Calcuta: Royal Asiatic Socieyt of Bengal, 1947)

11.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section – 11.4
2. Section– 11.4

UNIT 12 - MANLINESS IN MUGHAL COURT CULTURE: BODY AND EMOTIONS – NORMS OF MASCULINITY; LOVE, EROTIC AND DEVOTION IN MYSTICAL THOUGHT

STRUTURE

12.0 OBJECTIVE

To know about the manliness in Mughal court culture.

To know about love and eroticism in mysticism.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

The period between 1550 and 1800 witnessed the beginning of a collision of cultures in South Asia perhaps greater than the Himalayas themselves. The process of Islamic conquest of Hindu lands had begun centuries before, and in the early sixteenth century the Portuguese

established a ‘maritime empire’ in the Indian Ocean that ignited a long, confrontational process of European colonization. In 1526, the Mongol dynast Babur defeated the Sultan of Delhi and established the Mughal Empire. By the death of the Sultan Aurangzeb in 1707, Mughal rule reached its zenith after the conquest of southern India, but not without intense Hindu/Muslim struggle. Early Mughal rulers, unlike Aurangzeb and later British colonials, largely tolerated the Hindu culture they encountered in South Asia, particularly with regard to gender variance and eroticism. Homoerotic poetry and artwork appear to have flourished in the Mughal period; even prescriptive Sanskrit sexual literature was translated into Persian for the subcontinent’s new rulers’ erudition and enjoyment. Mughal invaders have been called ‘hedonistic’ by James Saslow — their artwork, poetry, and even translated sex manuals celebrated human sexuality.

In the earliest phase of Sufism, that of the ascetics, celibacy was favored by many who believed marriage, family, and other social relationships would distract them from absolute devotion to God alone. The early Sufis denied themselves all physical comforts, reduced their worldly possessions to an absolute minimum, and deprived themselves of sleep in order to pray and recite the Qur'an at night. Credit for transforming Sufism into an ecstatic love mysticism is usually given to a woman, Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya, who lived in Iraq and died in 801.

12.2 MANLINESS IN MUGHAL COURT

Mehmed Kalpaklı, Walter Andrews, and Khaled El-Rouayheb have studied the nature or the implications of sexual relationship among men in Istanbul as well as the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. Kathryn Babayan and Afsaneh Najmabadi have read Safavid and Qajar literature and visual arts through the lens of gender and power politics. Together these scholars have successfully highlighted the relevance of this methodology particularly in its application to the narrative sources that comprise the bulk of our documentations for the period (except for the Ottoman case of course), and it is to subject to such an approach a brief, but crucial, period in Mughal history and historiography that the

present article now proceeds. Not long after the founder of the Mughal Empire Babur died in, his son Humayun entirely lost the kingdom he had recently inherited. In the spring of , the Afghans of South Asia regrouped under the formidable Sher Shah of the Sur clan and defeated the Mughal forces in two key battles. Crushed and abandoned, the desperate Humayun had to trek across north India and Afghanistan into Safavid domains, with whose help the prince was able to return several years later and only managed to restore the dynasty in Hindustan in. Many reasons are given in order to account for Humayun's failure – the fact that he had to share the kingdom with his uncooperative brothers, the unusual ability of his arch-nemesis, as well as a number of mistakes on his own part.

All these factors are no doubt important. Nevertheless, when reading the sources from these early years of the Mughal Empire one cannot help but notice the stark contrast between Babur and Humayun, not simply in military matters (after all Babur too made plenty of errors), but in the ability of the father to control and manipulate language and the son's utter helplessness in this regard, at least early on in his life. Perhaps it was no coincidence that Humayun, unlike his imperial forerunner, neglected to write his own memoirs, nor did he commission historians to chronicle his life, as did his successor Akbar.

Babur had inherited a sophisticated Timurid culture of political manipulation of visual and literary arts, and had gained invaluable experience by years of fighting and losing, living in an unpredictable world full of possibilities. His fate was not predetermined. Rather he was the author of his own life, literally. He inscribed himself on paper and on the leaves of the 'book of the world' in order to ensure success. Humayun on the other hand lived in an overly determined universe, whose course he would try to guess at by augury or astrology, and with whose unalterable stability he would try to transfix the environment around him. Humayun appears to have been much less interested in inter-human communication, and the rigidity and inflexibility with which he believed all signs to be endowed, made it much more difficult for him to manipulate by writing people's perception of him. The results were disastrous. In what follows, it will be argued that Humayun's

indifference or failure to realise the importance of exerting direct control over his image had dire consequences.

Chroniclers such as Bayazid Bayat and Jawhar (men of relatively low military rank in Humayun's camp) consistently compared the emperor with his rivals, including his brother Kamran and his Afghan enemy Sher Shah, in such a way as to suggest that Humayun had fallen short specifically in fulfilling gender roles appropriate to a warrior king, particularly regarding the categories of violence (exerting violence, withstanding violence or hardship in general and knowing the appropriate time for withholding violence)and politics of sexuality (self-control, marriage, and conquest). The analysis will begin with a long passage from the memoirs of the Mughal soldier Bayazid Bayat, a passage that embodies well all the issues alluded to above. The scene is extracted from Bayazid's narrative of the battle of Qipchaq (1550) where Humayun's brother Kamran still managed to free himself from the clutches of his opponent in spite of major disadvantages.

The first thing to note is that Kamran fights but Humayun does not. While the Mirza climbs the ridge, shoots arrows, and charges at the standard-bearers, the king gives orders to others without personally involving himself in the fray. Now, Bayazid suggests that those who did not fight Kamran were either able but refused to do so or otherwise simply lacked the necessary strength .They were no match for him, we are told. One can infer then that soldiers such as the author of this episode must have thought Humayun was a more frail prince than Kamran, since he was not fighting but obviously did not lack the will or motivation to fight. It should come as no surprise that this distinction could have gendered, even sexual, undertones. Humayun's own words in the passage bear this out. He describes Mast Ali Qurchi's valour in terms of "manliness" (jav¯anmard¯ ı). In turn Humayun's apparent lack of courage might be considered unmanly. Incidentally, it should be noted here that "unmanly" need not imply effeminacy, because, unlike modern perceptions, the strict binary opposites of male/female do not occur exclusively in the texts of these periods (though I shall return to this point when discussing the cross-dressing of Kamran's women folk). Rather, the masculine attributes of soldiers would have included

aggressiveness and bravery, some sense of mercy, and the ability to bear with pain and hardship. Against these we encounter in the "unmanly" a kind of pathetic weakness (zab¯un¯ ı) which may be manifested in the inability to exact revenge as well as a love for fineries and comfort. In the martial environment of power politics in the first half of the sixteenth century (a carry-over from the military patronage system of the previous centuries), kings were expected to possess the characteristics of the former. And yet consistently, we find Humayun described as a lover of luxury who fights much less than his adversaries and perhaps forgives too much.

It should be clear why, time and again, Kamran was able to muster so much support among the soldiers in the dynastic tug-of-war with his brother. For one (and there are of course many more military, social, and political reasons), he had fulfilled the gender roles of the warrior king. That bravery and aggression were viewed as similar qualities present in a masculine warrior might seem self-evident ,though supporting examples do not occur as frequently as one might expect. Perhaps it was taken for granted by the sources. Bayzid does indeed praise the Safavid supporters of Humayun in the battle of Qandahar for" undertaking several manly sword fights against the infantrymen of the fort, many of whom [the defenders] were thrashed".

Suja, the author of the near-contemporary Rajasthani epic Chhanda Rau Jetsai Rau expresses the sentiment by comparing belligerent warriors to ferocious beasts of prey such as boars or tigers. Some years earlier, Babur had regularly used the adjective 'manly' (mard¯ana) to describe brave commanders particularly as they had "soundly struck down" (yakhshı bastı) their foes. Thus in one sense, to be manly meant to be able to inflict violence on one's enemy. But at the same time it was equally important as a sign of masculinity to be able to tolerate pain and hardship. It is in this sense that Bayazid commends a number of Humayun's emirs for showing "utmost manliness and leadership" by fighting while bearing five or six injuries each inflicted by swords and maces.

The Afghan historian Abdullah, who wrote the Tarikh-i Davudi, describes a march of Sher Shah in the maddening summer heat of Bengal favourably where Sher Shah and his men dressed in full armour could tolerate with cheerful aspects the hardships of their journey. In this case Abdullah explicitly credits Sher Shah's willingness to set the example of endurance for his men. One might add here the famous episode in the Baburnama when, during a snowstorm on a march to Kabul, Babur refuses to take shelter in the comfort (far¯aghat) of a warm cave along with his commanders but rather sleeps in the snow side by side with his soldiers to prove his manliness (muruvvatliq) and comradeship (hamjahatliq).

In sum, a second important attribute of masculinity was the ability of tolerate pain and hardship, and in this, it was especially important for the leader to act as the model, embodying an ultimate manliness expressed out of one's free choice and not necessity. Finally, in addition to possessing the gift for committing or withstanding violence, the male warrior could be expected to withhold it against a helpless counterpart out of clemency and magnanimity. It was in this sense that Babur's daughter Gulbadan remembered her father's forgiveness of the subdued but formerly rebellious Khusraw Shah, which to her betokened the signs of his manliness (mard¯ ı and muruvvat). Similarly, Gulbadan recalled the hospitality offered by the Safavid king Shah Tahmasp to the exiled Humayun as a sign of the shah's muruvvat. Magnanimity and forgiveness were therefore a third aspect of masculinity, at least for warriors. It is worth noting that all three gender roles for fighting men outlined above involve an orientation towards violence or pain, whether in inflicting it, bearing it, or withholding it. Now, when one compares the actions of the two brothers and rivals Humayun and Kamran, one is struck by how much Kamran excelled in performing the appropriate gender roles while his brother did not. Even in his eventual defeat and punishment (he was blinded), Kamran was remembered by the memoirists Bayazid and Jawhar, both loyal soldiers in Humayun's camp, as the epitome of these male virtues . Bayazid recalls the order of Humayun to blind Kamran with a great deal of respect for the victim. He remembered how Kamran had begun throwing punches at the men

commissioned with the blinding, because he had thought they had come to execute him.

When he discovered their charge he submitted to it with such self-control that Humayun's men returned and "proclaimed the utmost bravery that they witnessed in the Mirza". Jawhar,who personally took part in the blinding, tells us that Kamran did not utter a sound as his eyes were poked fifty times with the need leand only complained at one of the men who had sat on his knees. Twice in this brief passage did Jawhar qualify Kamran's resilience with the adjective "manly" (mard¯ana). Thus in the accounts of both Jawhar and Bayazid, we see the image of Kamran as a tireless warrior who could bring down ruin on his enemies but could put up with pain while maintaining total poise. What Kamran apparently lacked in mercy was less of a slight against his manliness since, as it will be shortly argued, too much clemency could be considered a sign of weakness. This is very much Humayun's problem who is described as in many respects the opposite of Kamran.

Humayun fails to regularly take the field himself (as compared to Kamran, Babur, or even SherShah),and of ten he seemed to contemporaries as one who was too interested in comfort and luxury. Both Gulbadan and the historian Khvandamir were with Humayun in his first days of reign, and they both describe his lavish coronation feasts attended by "youths, pretty girls, and beautiful women". These activities need not have necessarily merited censure had they not been considered to have had as often ing effect on the warrior king. One starts to have suspicions regarding Humayun when one of his courtiers calls him "a delicate king"(p¯adsh¯ah¯ ı lat .¯ ıf). Or when during a march plagued by cold and hunger ,Bayazid recalls how Humayun had asked one of his men to sit down and "recite" so that Humayun could put his head on the man's lap and fall asleep.

This is precisely the opposite behaviour of Sher Shah or Babur who were seen as always participating in events shoulder to shoulder with their men and comrades and bearing their hardship with exemplary fortitude. No wonder that later Afghan historians attribute a telling statement to Sher Shah who predicts victory over Humyaun and scorns

him as a "pleasure-seeking (‘ayy¯ash) and comfort-loving (far¯aghat d¯ust) king". Avoidance of battle and hardship due to an unmanly and softening way of life could prejudice people against a king even as he was a bit overgenerous in clemency and magnanimity. One is struck by how many times Humayun forgives Kamran after getting the upper hand on him. But the inability to exact revenge on one's enemy could have a deteriorating effect on one's image. The clearest example of this problem is stated by the Afghan historian Ahmad Yadgar.

While writing about the early days of the Lodi dynasty and Sultan Bahlul's usurpation of the throne from his rival ‘Ala al-Din, Ahmad Yadgar declared the latter simply unfit to rule because, "‘Ala al-Din was ill-favoured by a pathetic weakness [zab¯un bakht], had a serene countenance and nature, and possessed a bashful constitution. He had nothing to do with kingship". The implication is of course that kings ought to be energetic and audacious. The author especially resented how the prince's ill-favoured and pathetic weakness enfeebled his resolve for revenge (intiq¯am). Thus, Humayun's repeated pardon of Kamran would eventually be held against him. The frankest denunciation occurs in Gulbadan's memoirs where she recalled numerous commanders telling the king to choose between his clemency towards his brother and kingship: "If you desire the goodwill of your brother, then give up kingship. If you wish to be a king, give up brotherhood".

Thus, regarding the three male virtues of warriors outlined above, viz. aggression, fortitude, and clemency, Kamran best embodied the first two, while Humayun only managed to exceed in the third which in turn cast a further shadow on his masculinity(similar to‘Alaal-Dinabove). But being unmanly was not necessarily the same as being "effeminate" in this period. What exactly characterised the emasculate?

In modern times the binary opposite pairs of active/passive (assuming a sexual encounter between two men) are often used to distinguish the "masculine" and "unmanly" males. While there are some hints suggesting this in the sources, passivity is too inadequate a concept for describing a man who fails in his male gender roles. Essentially what Humayun does is to act as if he were still in a stage of immaturity. He

loses the power of the adult male. This is evidenced in Humayun's being described as the beloved in a love relationship (even if poetically and fictively), but also in his engagement in sexuality for the sake of pleasure but not for its functional utility (in the case of a king these would be siring a male offspring and improving one's political position). As we shall see Humayun is not very successful in the politics of sexuality.

To begin, Bayazid provides two examples in which Humayun is described as a beloved by another male–an occurrence that may appear at first perfectly innocuous. For example, when Humayun fled in disgrace from India and Afghanistan to the Safavid domains, Shah Tahmasp sent a document demanding from his officials the performance of all the requirements of royal hospitality towards the exiled Mughal prince. In this letter, as reproduced in Bayazid's history, the Shah at one point compares Humayun to a beloved for whose company the Shah has been intently desirous. Some pages later Tahmasp describes Humayun as a "noble and colourful flower from the flowerbed of kingship and delicacy, moonfaced and angelic". Whatever Shah Tahmasp's intentions may have been, one can safely state that such qualifiers were quite similar to the ones used by the likes of Sher Shah in mocking Humayun. But, even Kamran had on a few occasions assumed a position towards his brother that was very similar to that of Shah Tahmasp. For example, Bayazid tells us that after being blinded by Humayun, Kamran compared his situation to a lover who has been wounded by his haughty beloved. But even early on, when Humayun had ascended the throne and given the governorship of certain provinces to Kamran, the latter had sent the new Mughal emperor some presents and an ode in which Humayun had been compared to the archetypal beloved of Persian, Arabic, and Turkish poetry Layli and Kamran to the lover Majnun.

To be described as a beautiful and delicate flower, or simply a beloved, by another king did certainly entail a manipulation of gender roles. However, modern anachronisms can severely mar our understanding of sixteenth-century love relationships between males, and so a brief detour must be undertaken. In spite of its continuous usage by prominent scholars of the field, we know by now that modern terms such as bisexual or homosexual are completely inappropriate for describing pre-

modern sexuality. The concepts simply did not exist. In general, while an older man's love for a youth was perfectly acceptable, sexual contact, and particularly sodomy, was condemned. The famous case of Babur who openly expressed his love for a camp boy (leading to Babur's spiritual madness without any sexual contact with the boy) and his simultaneous censuring of sexual relations between some Timurid princes and certain youths are well known.

But how would such relationships translate into the realm of political power? Najmabadi tells us that being the beloved (the role in which Humayun was placed above) was nothing shameful, whereas El-Rouhayeb claims that it was since it would imply that the beloved was the "passive" member in such a pairing. In the Indo-Persian and Central Asian sources, at least among the fighting men (headed by the king) certain social hierarchies and restrictions figured significantly into the equation. Let us take the example of Babur's uncle Mahmud Mirza whom Babur reviles for his vices ("fısq") among which was his sexual predation towards young men. "He kept a lot of catamites ("chuhra"), and in his realm whenever there was a comely, beardless youth ("amrad"), he did everything he could to turn him into a catamite".

Here, it is clear that the transition from the amrad to chuhra was a deplorable one, but at least as much for the older male (Mahmud Mirza) as for the younger. In other words, the passive vs. active distinction seems to not apply here. But of course there is another element to Mahmud's Mirza's personification that seems to have been overlooked by scholarship. Mahmud Mirza embodied a potential threat towards Babur himself. Militarily, Babur recounts that after his father's death in June of 1494, his two uncles led a two-pronged attack on their late brother's territory. Babur recounts that his older uncle Ahmad Mirza (whom Babur describes as an upright man) was eventually convinced to leave his nephew and turned back towards his own holdings, dying along the way due to an illness. Mahmud Mirza on the other hand had continued to pose a threat and had captured the fortress of Akhsi which had been left in charge of Babur's younger brother Jahangir Mirza, and then become lord of Samarqand the Timurid capital. Now, coupled with

this threat of Babur's political subjugation by his uncle was the possibility of a sexual dominance as well.

For Babur clearly states that Mahmud Mirza's love for beardless youths was not checked by any social taboos and even extended to his own family. We are told that Mahmud Mirza "Turned his sons'...milk-brothers into catamites. He even demanded the service of his own milk-brothers' sons". Milk-brothers and sisters were individuals who had shared the same wet-nurse and were considered as brothers and sisters in a number of social and legal arenas (for instance, they were forbidden to marry). Babur's uncle's hounding of his own milk-brothers' sons practically amounted to the pursuit of his own nephews, an idea that the twelve-year old Babur had clearly found rather troubling. Here we get a glimpse of the social implications of sexual relations between older and younger men from the perspective of a potential victim. As a king as well as a family member, Babur seems to have considered it parallel to the threat of political domination and resented it. But in addition to sexual advances, even the expression of non-sexual love towards kings appears to have been blameworthy in the eyes of some. We know for example, that love of an older men for a youth would have been considered acceptable, even commendable, if it fell within the ritual of gazing on beauty which would in turn sublimate the lover towards the ultimate love of God. For example, Babur himself openly proclaims his love for the camp boy which in turn had led to his walking in ecstasy in alleyways and fields, suggesting his succumbing to a divine (Sufi) madness that such passions should have aroused in him. And yet, this same Babur goes out of his way to criticise the poet Hilali for having composed a book in which a young prince had been described as a beloved by a Sufi mendicant.

It is a sudden shift of tone for Babur to rebuke Hilali for seemingly doing what he himself had done a few pages before. But on closer inspection, the differences between the two become more apparent. Babur had described a camp boy, a social inferior as a beloved. Hilali however had transgressed a social hierarchy. The transgression of status has secondary implication of describing the male king in the language previously reserved for women. Finally, combining the contraventions of gender

and status, the king had been described a prostitute – a woman of the lowest social status. We can see here that relegating young royals to the position of the beloved, even in a non-sexual and avowedly mystical setting (though significantly involving an impudent usage of sexual language), could be considered inappropriate. The only places, it seems, where one could appropriately praise a young king as a beloved, would have been in cases where the king stood for the divinity. Take the case of the young Lodi Sultan Sikandar for example. Sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Indo-Persian histories record an anecdote about him and an old Sufi master who had fallen in love with him.

On one level, the story is about the miraculous powers of the shaykh and his ability to defy human limitations when in love. But clearly, Sultan Sikandar's distrust of the whole thing is quite real and his reaction very severe. It is true that the shaykh escapes both punishments (the next day, we are told, he was found dancing in the bazaar). But nevertheless, the story assumes that some sort of outraged response from the young prince would be perfectly natural. How then does the story reconcile this apparent breach of etiquette (i.e. describing a young prince as the object of a non-sexual love relationship)? By making Sultan Sikandar divine.

There is an episode that appears in all these early Afghan histories (Yadgar, Mushtaqi, and Abdullah) where the Sultan is described as a mysterious horseman who brings justice to those who are wronged and even brings a dead man to life. It is thus only in such situations, when the king is virtually divine, that the earthly love of an older man towards a younger boy (intended as the gateway to loving God) can be extended to princes. This is precisely how Humayun is eulogised by poets in the only text commissioned by him in the early days of his reign. Khvandamir the author of the Qanun-i Humayuni quoted a number of verses composed by a panegyrist in honour of the young king that did describe him as a beloved but wrapped up the poem by celebrating his near divinity. "Why do people's eyes", so it runs, "not have the power to bear looking at him, if not because divine light shines out of his forehead?"

To return then to our original problem, namely Humayun's depiction as the beloved by Shah Tahmasp and Kamran, the resulting effect is no

compliment to the king since he is described or perceived as divine neither by the two royals nor by Bayazid, the author of the text in which the verses occur. These comparisons then contributed to Humayun's presentation as unmanly. "Unmanliness" as immaturity, as a kind of being unripe as contrasted to the adult male, had further manifestations beyond one's portrayal as the male beloved. It extended to one's sexuality as well. It is precisely here that we can see how irrelevant modern categories of sexuality are in this period. Unmanly does not mean effeminate, nor does it extend to sexual preference for men. The difference between the masculine and the not-yet-masculine lies in the function, not the direction towards a particular gender, of sexuality.

First and foremost, the adult male was expected to use sexuality for social gain (in terms of gaining offspring or political alliances),where as the unmanly man engaged in it mainly for pleasure. In addition to this there existed a further nuance of successful sexual prowess for men, which was generally condemn by the sources of the period, and yet, one can find evidence not far beneath the surface, that, at least among some soldiers, wife-stealing was looked upon favourably. But let us begin with sexuality for pleasure. It was considered more appropriate for a warrior-king to avoid it. Afghan chroniclers narrate a particularly relevant anecdote regarding Sher Shah and Humayun that was clearly meant to serve as a character contrast in favour of the former. It involved the capture of the incredibly beautiful daughter of a Raja who had been defeated by Sher Shah's soldiers. "Sher Shah took a look at her and said, 'She is a sure disaster. We shouldn't keep her here. If I keep her here I will be negligent of worldly affairs. Nor is she appropriate for my age. We should send her to Humayun Padshah'. When Humayun Padshah saw her, he did not leave his house for two months".

This episode is perhaps a clear sign of ad is trust of female sexuality. But it also highlights the broader motif of unnecessary luxury (involving the obvious objectification of the woman) that Sher Shah had generally denounced. Humayun, unlike Sher Shah,is seen incapable of the personal discipline required of him to avoid the captured woman's beauty and therefore succumbs to a joyous stupor that distracts him from more important responsibilities. This is a matter of sexuality of course but it is

also related to agendered identity involving self-control, prioritising fighting, and acting in a manner commensurate with one's adult years – all qualities required in the male warrior. Humayun, consistent with his image, again fails to fulfill them. A much clearer expression of these occurs in an episode again involving Sher Shah. Abdullah tells us that once, when Sher Shah was watching a parade of horsemen, a youth appeared who handled his horse excellently provoking the admiration of all. Yet, to the surprise of everyone, Sher Shah set the young man's salary extremely low. When questioned about his strange decision Sher Shah asked the horseman to draw the bow. After several attempts he proved to be completely incapable of handling his weapons.

Here we have a soldier who has all the trappings of a warrior but is in fact something of a fake. He uses his horse (sign of his rank and position) as a means of engaging in frivolous sexuality. He is quite unlike the adult male Sher Shah who not only avoids such distractions, but is a good judge of character and can see right through the young man's sham. When it comes to the real task of a warrior however, i.e. wielding his weapon, the man fails utterly. The parallels between Sher Shah's imposter horseman and the emperor Humayun are quite noteworthy. For he too approaches sex for mere pleasure and is not very keen at fighting (or tolerating hardship). Moreover, here we see the determining quality that makes Humayun's behaviour particularly inappropriate. While Sher Shah's horseman is a young man, thus merely and literally immature (for after all Sher Shah still retains him even if at a lower rank), Humayun is an adult male acting unlike his age. This is the crucial distinction in gender roles, not between effeminate and manly, but between not-yet-man and adult male. Now,a second aspect of Humayun's flawed sexuality, besides his over emphasis on pleasure, is that even his marriages prove politically unsuccessful or lack luster. In this Humayun and Kamran are complete opposites. Humayun's marriage to Hamida Begam, who later bore the emperor Akbar, is a good example of this. Jawhar, Gulbadan, and Bayazid all tell us that while Humayun was on the run with Sher Shah on his trail, his commanders abandoning him one after another, he reached the environs of Qandahar.

At this point, rumours spread that Humayun's last loyal brother Hindal was going to desert him as well – a rumour that much troubled Humayun but was finally proved false after Hindal's arrival. It was against this background that the marriage took place. The story goes that Humayun saw Hamida Begum at a feast and when he expressed interest in her to Hindal , he was met with strong protestations from his brother. Jawhar specifically states that Hindal intended to marry her himself. Humayun,we are told, went ahead with his design and took Hamida Begum to wife, at which point Hindal angrily abandoned his brother. Now, both Jawhar and Gulbadan, writing years later at the behest of Akbar's ministers, retroactively treated this wedding as a blessed event that led to the emperor's birth, but it is indeed noteworthy that neither author suppressed the political cost of the marriage which would have seemed a glaring error at the time (when hardly anyone could have predicted the creation of a future emperor out of the union). In other words, Jawhar and Gulbadan make it clear that as far as his contemporaries were concerned, even when Humayun pursued sexuality in a manner suitable for an adult male, his marriage had nevertheless failed to serve him well politically. When the ceremonies were being held in 1541, the wedding would have seemed a failure in terms of the politics of sexuality as it led to the further breakup of Humayun's army and the loss of his only supportive brother.

Quite to the contrary, Kamran was remembered as a master of successful manipulation when it came to the politics of sexuality. Not only did Mughal historians write of his ability to isolate Humayun and consolidate his own power through marriage-alliances with various emirs, even some Afghan historians remembered him as a champion of sexual politics. Ahmad Yadgar records an episode from the early years of Babur when a number of disenchanted Lodi emirs come to the Timurid Padshah and invite him to invade India and free the land from the tyrannical yoke of Sultan Ibrahim. The author tells us that the meeting coincided with Kamran's wedding ceremonies which were celebrated with so much pomp that"the Afghans saw the magnificence and audaciousness (s .awlat) of the Mughal government/fortune (dawlat) and were quite astounded".43 The feast was concluded, so goes the story, with a good

omen suggesting the longevity of Mughal rule in South Asia. Now, while the story bears clear backward projections from the seventeenth century, what is of particular significance here is that it is the marriage of Kamran and not Humayun that is remembered as the symbol of dynastic power and audacity (s .awlat), again reinforcing the image of the former as a male with successful sexuality. Nor is the sense of aggressiveness in the word "s .awlat" (which can also be translated as ferocity) coincidental. For one gets the impression from the sources that, at least for a male warrior, attaining a wife was sometimes equated with conquest – even if others condemned such predatory acts. What is suggested here is that the correlation of brashness and sexuality for which Kamran is noted in the anecdote above, would raise his esteem in the eyes of some of the warriors for whose service Mughal princes vied so frantically throughout most of the sixteenth century.

The following anecdote common to many of the Indo-Persian Afghan histories encapsulates this point. Both Abdullah and Ahmad Yadgar narrate a story in which an Afghan soldier abducts the wife (or beloved) of a merchant (or shepherd) during a campaign. When the man finally finds his wife, she actually rejects him and refuses to go back with him, even going so far as to inform her new husband of their visitor's true intentions. Finally, after a failed attempt by the merchant/shepherd to make off with his wife, the Afghan dies through some twist of fate, and the original pair is reunited. Perhaps the point of this story was to affirm proper social order, namely, that regardless of her desire, the rightful place of a woman is with her husband or that kidnapping is a deed worthy of reprimand. But clearly these points had to be made with an implicit "in spite of" – viz. Afghan horsemen should not snatch away people's wives in spite of the fact that these women prefer the company of their captors. The story, as it is told, presupposes the currency of a viewpoint, perhaps merely a fantasy, that tried to justify stealing women by male warriors. It would be precisely among such men (warriors) that a commander known for his aggressive sexuality would find acceptance and praise. Kamran was remembered to have been such a king, while Humayun cut quite another figure.

It is time to consider the final element of the long anecdote quoted at the beginning of this article narrating the battle between Humayun and his brother Kamran. The reader may recall that, in Bayazid's words, "the Mirza's women and daughters also wrapped turbans around their heads and came out with the men". Ostensibly, this particular detail was meant to give even more credit to Kamran for having won the skirmish even though his troops were numerically inferior and had to resort to including women in their ranks. More deeply still, this aspect of the narrative can be pursued further along two lines: a) transvestitism and b) victory as sexual conquest of women.

Not only did the Indo-Persian chronicles of the sixteenth century condone voluntary transvestitism with unfailing consistency (and almost every instance of cross-dressing occurs in a martial context), they actually praised it. For instance, Abdullah reproduces an anecdote regarding the siege of Delhi during the reign of Sultan Bahlul Lodi in which the wife of the Afghan lord Islam Khan "dressed a group of women in men's clothing and sent them to the battlements" because there were not enough men in the fort.

The transmitter of the report seems to have been quite impressed by the Bibi's resourcefulness. In the reverse direction, we possess a narrative regarding Sher Shah passing off a group of his warriors as women who after gaining entrance into a fortress felled the guards and opened the gates for the whole army to get in. Clearly, transgender dressing was considered a praiseworthy act in times of dire need during combat. Now, on closer inspection, it will become apparent that both examples cited above rest on a common social assumption – viz. it is inappropriate for women to be accosted by men. In the first instance, women dress as warriors in order to prevent the fall of the city and their subsequent capture. In the second case, men pretend to be women, exactly because the male guards are supposed to leave them alone. The defenders fall for this trick and as a result lose their city and their women folk. There is thus an element of irony in both anecdotes, an irony that only makes sense if the capture of an enemy is equated with the conquest of women. The textual evidence amply supports this statement. Conquest is often equated with sexual union between a male (the conqueror) and a female

(conquered). This metaphor extends to the linkage between a fortress and the (elite) women residing in it. In such a system, the capture of defeated women was considered almost a right of the victor and shameful only for the captives and their men folk. That military conquest is expressed in sexual language is perhaps not surprisingly at all. In the sixteenth-century sources one often comes across the expression "to embrace the bride of kingship" in describing the crucial victory of a contender for power. Related to this way of thinking is the equation of women with a fortress or city – the ultimate core, so to speak, for the protection of whom the entire defensive effort would be focused. The example given above regarding the Afghan women who fought during the siege of Delhi already indicates this association. The following anecdote, dated to the early years of the Lodi dynasty, sums up these points quite well but also points out an extra feature – that the status of these women reflected directly on them and their male relatives. Afghan historians report that while the Lodi Sultan Bahlul was away from Delhi in the early years of his reign, the Sharqi Sultan Muhammad along with a Lodi lord named Darya Khan besieged the city.

Darya Khan, so goes the story, was ashamed and turned against his master, driving him away from Delhi. What this episode demonstrates is the association of women's honour with a fortress or town. The capture of the town implies the capture of the elite women who reside there in. Finally,it is the responsibility of the relatives of the potential captives to protect them. The actual right of Sultan Mahmud to take away these women is not contested. Indeed, in the militarised politics of the mid-sixteenth century in South Asia, the role of warrior kings had particular gendered overtones. Exerting, withstanding, and properly withholding violence were crucial "manly" attributes of leaders.

Moreover, control over one's sexual desires and their channelling into marriage for procreation and alliances were considered vital for such monarchs. Humayun's portrayal as falling short of meeting the requirements of his role, as often expressed by men in his camp who wrote about the events, might have been either a cause of his unpopularity, or perhaps an effect of his defeat (i.e. later retro jected into the narrative of the events to justify them). In either case, the sources tell

us much about particular conceptions of masculinity in the period. Moreover, the results of the focus on the "gendered aspect" of the conflict between Humayun and Kamran can actually be placed in a broader comparative context regarding the rise of the early modern empires of West Asia. Regardless of how important a role one might ascribe to the function of gunpowder in the formation of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal polities in the sixteenth century (as did Marshall Hodgson),there is little doubt that a significant transition took place in all three domains between the war band in the formative stages of each polity to a bureaucratic absolutist "state" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Scholars such as Andrews/Kalpaklı, Babayan and O'Hanlon (cited above) have argued that this transition involved some sort of manipulation of gender and sexuality, in other words, the imposition by the emperor (be he S¨uleyman the Magnificent, Shah Abbas, or Akbar) of discipline and control on the bodies of men at court. It seems reasonable to suppose that the conflict between Humayun and Kamran in the Mughal Empire signaled in part a disorderly transitional stage away from the war band led by Babur (where as seen above the ruler was expected to lead by example and for the most part follow the same norms of gender roles and sexuality). In essence, Humayun may have been trying to project forward to a separation between the king and his warriors, whereas Kamran (and perhaps Sher Shah) were appealing to the tradition, a status quo that was on the verge of extinction. If so Humayun was not entirely successful particularly as he failed to communicate this transition effectively. Following O'Hanlon, it was left to Akbar to bring about this change successfully.

12.3 LOVE AND EROTICISM IN MYSTIC THOUGHT

First, and most simply, to examine the subject diachronically would require a familiarity with over 1,300 years of writing and artistic and intellectual development. Two, there is quite a range of expression of the topic in the history of Sufism, such that a unified distillation would

distort the tradition. Prophet Muhammad, as the starting point of Islamic mysticism; Rabi'a, as the founder of the theme of Sufi love; al-Hallaj, whose writings are the locus classicus of impassioned union; al-Ghazzali, as the clear-headed systematiser and reconciler of mysticism with orthodoxy; Ibn al-Farid, as the composer of what is perhaps the greatest erotic love poem in all of Sufi literature; Ibn al-'Arabi, as the supreme philosopher of the erotic in the Sufi tradition; and Rumi, as the exponent of love best-known to the West. The earliest foundation of the theme of the erotic in Arabic poetry predates Islam. Poetry was the primary form of literature, indeed, the main form of artistic expression, of the jahiliyya period, circa 500-622 C.E. While there were a few different types of poetry, the qasida, or ode, was the only finished type. The qasida tended to have a fairly invariant structure: a nomad would stumble upon the remains of a desert camp and sing of its desolation. His loneliness would inspire him to recall his fondness for those who had once encamped there, and he would describe with great nostalgia the strength of his affection for his beloved and not infrequently would describe her in detail. This section of the poem is called the nasib, "erotic prelude."

Ibn Qutayba describes the nasib: here the poet (virtually always male) "bewailed the violence of his love and the anguish of separation from his mistress and the extremity of his passion and desire." Part of the poet's motivation in including this was to "win the hearts of his hearers... since the song of love touches men's souls and takes hold of their hearts." After the nasib, the poet would praise his camel and the fortitude of the Bedouin people, and following all of the above would begin the body of the ode, usually a panegyric to his patron or a tale of battle. The qasida was so central to Arab culture that, as one modern scholar wrote, "the image of the poet weeping at the memory of his lost love is considered the main expression of pre-Islamic literature's concern with matters of love and sexuality."

It was the revolutionizing influence of Muhammad that inspired the development of a spiritual side to erotic poetry. Unlike founders of certain other religions, Muhammad figures relatively little in the theme of erotic mysticism. He was sometimes an object of love for the later Sufis, and certainly was often a focus of mysticism. "The Western

student of Islam," writes Annemarie Schimmel, "will be surprised to see the strong 'mystical' qualities attributed to [Muhammad.]" And, she continues, one element of Islam that Orientalism has tended to overlook is "that quality of mystical love that his followers feel for him." However, his influence in themes of the erotic is much more limited than that of the founders of some other religions is for their followers.

The Qur'an elevates love to one of its central themes. In it, Muhammad writes numerous times of the promise of Allah's love for those who lead righteous lives and the threat that love will be withdrawn should his followers be unrighteous. Besides this divine Platonic love, the Qur'an also speaks of earthly, interpersonal love in a few different contexts. It declares that Allah has united the disunified peoples of the earth using the bond of love: "for ye were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, ye became brethren..." It also describes love as the bond solidifying marriage: "He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquillity with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts)," (30:21) and the energy that motivates humans to reproduce: "It is He Who created you from a single person, and made his mate of like nature, in order that he might dwell with her (in love)... [and thus] He giveth them a goodly child." (7:189-190) There is only one mention in the Qur'an of things erotic, namely in the story of Joseph and his master's wife Zulaika where "(with passion) did she desire him, and he would have desired her." (12.24) The ladies of the cities later gossip that he had "inspired her with violent love." (12:30) Nothing comes of their mutual desire, though, and this particular incident in the tale of Joseph appears not to have inspired mystical interpretations. It was left to the later Sufis to connect the themes of mysticism and the erotic. The mystical thought of the first century or so following the Prophet was inspired by the same elements in religion that motivated Muhammad.

Muhammad, postulating rather that it must have grown out of relations with Nestorian and Monophysite Christians, mystical Judaism, or even Buddhist and Hindu influences. It was in the writings of Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801) that the mysterium fascinans began to take precedence over the mysterium tremendum.

.Rabi'a is credited as being the first to introduce the theme of love into Sufism--not just the pious love of God and the brotherly, tranquil love of one's fellow Muslims, but an impassioned love whose only goal is unity with God. Though Rabi'a's love of God and God only could be quite coldly ascetic at times--she was even said to have shut her windows to the flowers in spring in order not to be distracted--history treated her well. In a religion and an age where the role of women was anything but positive, where one text was careful to define Rabi'a as a "man" before praising her and others went so far as to declare women to be created from the sediment of the sins of demons, Rabi'a's name quickly became a synonym for praiseworthy womanhood. To this day a woman is praised by being called a "second Rabi'a," and the poet Jami said that "if all women were like [Rabi'a] then women would be preferred to men." Rabi'a was, first and foremost, a lover of God. This love for God was so absolute that she refused to compromise it by loving another human, even the Prophet himself.

However, though she clearly introduced the theme of love, she does not seem to have used much symbolism of love in her poetry. Her descriptions of love tend to be very chaste. It was the next major Sufi figure, al-Hallaj, who seems to have inherited most profoundly Rabi'a's legacy. He was much less meticulous about using traditional and non-sexual imagery, and was more explicit about the goal of union. The love which inspired Rabi'a was, in Schimmels' words, a disinterested love, a love "for which God has not asked and for which He will not recompense the lover." This sense of God's love was strengthened in the thought of many later Sufis, such as Abu'l-Husayn an-Nuri (d. 907), who spoke of being a lover ('ashiq) of God and felt a love so overwhelming that the orthodox considered him likely to be tempted to commit blameworthy acts. To defend himself against those who objected that a self-sufficient entity couldn't feel the sort of longing implied by passionate love ('ishq), Nuri stated that the lover is kept at a distance from God. This passionate love was taken to its logical conclusion, namely the union for which passion longs, by Nuri's contemporary, Husayn ibn Mansur al-Hallaj (d. 922). Rabi'a seems to have loved a God who was an other, a being who

created her and yet was distinct from her. al-Hallaj, though, often has been interpreted as loving a God who was identical with himself.

According to Massignon, al-Hallaj's writings represented a marked distinction from other, non-religious poetry of the time. The ideal of Baghdadian high society at the time, he states, was the search for ecstasy, often inspired by what he terms femmes de luxe, women who were "professional idols of beauty" who functioned "to stimulate people's desire for aesthetic diversion." The presence of human beauty could be used to inspire an awareness of divine beauty, as if one's attraction to the human object could intentionally be shunted to, or transmuted into, an attraction to the divine object, or God.

This seemingly is for the sake of titillating the mystic and tricking him into being attracted to a Godself which the mystic rationally understands must ultimately remain inaccessible. However, al-Hallaj distanced himself from the above trend: in no place does he use imagery that could be misconstrued as referring to human sexuality. "The mystery of loving union," writes Schimmel, "is celebrated in verses free of any trace of the symbolism of profane love." al-Hallaj's care in not to using profane imagery seems not to have saved him from the misunderstandings of the orthodox.

The figure of al-Hallaj was quite fresh in the mind of a mystic who followed him by two centuries, Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali (d. 1111). In many ways al-Hallaj made mysticism quite suspect in the eyes of much of the Muslim community, a status al-Ghazzali was determined to rectify. And he succeeded: he is regarded not only as the reconciler of orthodoxy and the heterodox Sufism, but has even been called "the greatest Muslim after Muhammad." Their similarity is especially marked in their approaches to the interface between sexuality and mysticism. al-Ghazzali, like Augustine, was emphatic about the good of sexuality and marriage when practiced in their proper ways, and the evil of both when misused. The structure of marriage as created by God has another necessary component: desire. "God created appetite as a deputy responsible for encouraging people to marry." However, it was clear to al-Ghazzali that human desires often become ends in themselves.

"Marriage was made permissible for this reason [procreation], not for the sake of satisfying one' appetites. If this love does not "conquer a man's heart and possess it wholly," or at least "predominate in the heart over the love of all other things," then the mystic is in "spiritual danger. As regards the erotic poetry which is recited in Sufi gatherings, and to which people sometimes make objection, we must remember that, when in such poetry mention is made of separation from or union with the beloved, the Sufi, who is an adept in the love of God applies such expressions to separation from or union with him. al-Ghazzali is here defending mysticism against the complaints of those who, believing all Sufis to be as heterodox as al-Hallaj, objected to discussions of union with God. This comes out quite clearly in his epilogue to the Ninety-Nine Beautiful Names of God, where he exhaustively explains what al-Hallaj might and might not have meant by declaring his soul and God's to be united. al-Ghazzali manages to criticize al-Hallaj without actually disagreeing with him. He concludes that al-Hallaj had not been blasphemous, but rather only unwise in proclaiming a mystical truth that could be misleading to the uninitiated.

The mystics reach a "higher stage" where, instead of beholding visions, "they come to stages in the 'way' which it is hard to describe in language; if a man attempts to express these, his words inevitably contain what is erroneous." What these mystics really achieve, he says, is "nearness" (qurb). They may call it inherence (hulul), union (ittihad), or connection (wusul), but these are all erroneous. They were to be its snare through which it might know the wonders of God's handiwork"--and blameworthy if motivated by worldly satisfactions only.

There are two figures from the thirteenth century who must be discussed together. Though the philosophies of the Egyptian poet 'Umar Ibn al-Farid (d. 1235) and the Spanish theosophist Muhyiuddin Muhammad Ibn al-'Arabi (d. 1240) are quite dissimilar, they do share other similarities besides mere contemporaneity: each has attracted the fascination of Westerners to a great extent, and, more pertinent, each uses allegories of the erotic to an extent unmatched by almost any other Muslim mystic. Ibn al-Farid is, after al-Hallaj, the mystical poet of the Arabic language who has attracted the most attention by Orientalists.

In his odes, which Schimmel says "unquestionably form the climax of classical Arabic mystical verse," he sings some of the most direct and romantically heartfelt love poetry to be found in the whole of Sufism. The earliest source within Islamic history of the erotic poem is, as mentioned above, the prelude to the qasida, the subject of which was the poet's earthly love, his celebration of her beauty, his longings for her, and a mourning of her absence

.As we have seen, the early Sufi expressions of love tended to focus on a love that was spiritual only, even though the uninitiated often misunderstood it to be a naturalistic one. Ibn al-Farid's writings bridged the two extremes of chaste and sensual love, and this is perhaps a part of the reason that they achieved such popularity: both the mystic and the wordly person could find meaning and aesthetic pleasure in his poetry. His greatest work, the Ta'iyyatu'l-kubra, or "Lesser Ode rhyming in 'T'," is the greatest example in Sufi literature of such love poetry. It can be read both as a mystical text and as a celebration of earthly courtship. It is likely, though, that the intent of the author was to glorify the divine, not the earthly, lover. As Schimmel points out, "the greatest mistake we can make" in interpreting this poetry is to assume that the poets are "liberties and wild, love-intoxicated characters who had nothing to do but sing about beautiful girls or boys and about very worldly pleasures in the wine-house." This interpretation of the Ta'iyyatu'l-kubra is suggested by the fact that Ibn al-Farid once said that "Had I wished, I could have written two volumes of commentary on every verse of it."

Though the "common person" may have read his verses simply as love poetry, many of his fellow mystics shared his understanding of the work. Ibn al-Farid's commentator Nabulusi explained that in every erotic description, whether the subject thereof be male or female, and in all imagery of gardens, flowers, rivers, birds and the like [Ibn al-Farid] refers to the Divine Reality manifested in phenomena, and not to those phenomena themselves. The lengthy Ta'iyyatu'l-kubra (761 verses) uses the device of a running narrative interspersed with dialogue to describe the phases of mystical experience through which one passes in attaining oneness with God, and describes the nature of that oneness. Though it may seem a lengthy presentation, this poem will be seen later to be very

relevant to Bahá'u'lláh's writings. The poem opens in a way reminiscent of the jahiliyya poetry: the narrator complains of his sufferings in the path of seeking his beloved, his loneliness, and his longing to be with her

It would obviously be incorrect, from an objective standpoint, to connect the theme of the erotic with the use of feminine imagery, for that would reduce the interpreter to a standpoint of androcentric chauvinism. It must be acknowledged, though, that Ibn al-Farid's audience, both then and now, was and is likely to interpret the text in such a way; that is, to see it as erotic if but for no reason other than that the motifs are feminine. This is largely because such motifs are unusual. The use of feminine symbols will not be seen as no more unusual than the use of masculine imagery, because masculine imagery, e.g. God as He and the poet a man, is the norm. The feminine pronoun immediately calls attention to itself, especially if that pronoun refers in places to God. One might remark that there is a considerable amount of mystical Arabic poetry which employs hiya and ha, but in the vast majority of these instances the pronoun refers to a grammatically feminine object, such as nafs, the soul. Its application to God, though, is not one motivated by grammatical necessity.

Ibn al-'Arabi also had one encounter with a woman that, though Merkur states was imaginal only, seems to have been particularly influential on his thought. A shaykh had a daughter, "a particularly lissome young girl," and Ibn al-'Arabi states that he "observed with care the noble endowments that graced her person." He "took her as a model for the poems in the present book, which are love poems." She became a conscious inspiration for much of his work, for he soon says "whatever name I may mention in this work, it is to her that I am alluding."[89] This sensual attraction Ibn al-'Arabi felt for women was not merely confined to his imaginal visions, for he elsewhere celebrates physical intercourse. "When a man loves a woman, he seeks union with her, that is to say the most complete union possible in love, and there is in the elemental sphere no greater union than that between the sexes." The high status in which Ibn al-'Arabi places physical charms and sex should not be interpreted to mean that his interests were lascivious. On the contrary, his intention is tantric; that is, he elevates sex to a spiritual practice and goes so far as to found, if implicitly, his entire cosmology on the model

of sexuality tayyib to mean, not "good" as normally translated, but "sweet-smelling," thus giving the meaning as "sweet- smelling women (tayyibat) are for sweet-smelling men.

Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi al-Balkhi (d. 1273). Rumi is known as the most prolific writer of love poetry in the Muslim world, and he, too, often speaks of love as being the main force animating his life and spirit: '"Tis the flame of Love that fired me, 'Tis the wine of Love inspired me." There is a certain polarity within Rumi's writings. On the one hand, his life and his thought were filled with the experience of love. He had a relationship with Shamsuddin Tabrizi, who seems to have been both his shaykh and his friend and peer. They were so close that at certain meetings they would embrace each other and fall at each other's feet, so in love with each other "that one did not know who was lover and who was beloved."

Rumi sings of his love of Shamsuddin in verses which Schimmel describes as being so full of love, longing, happiness, and despair that they "have never been surpassed in their sincerity." In places he speaks of what could be seen as human love in quite positive terms: "May these vows and this marriage be blessed. May it be sweet milk, this marriage, like wine and halvah... May this marriage be full of laughter, our every day a day in paradise." However, the love to which Rumi refers is a very austere one. His verses about the tender, warm aspect of love are comparatively rare, writes Schimmel. Instead, Rumi preferred to speak of love as being only for the strong and those willing to suffer . When Rumi does speak of human relations, his overall tone seems to be too negative to refer to it as "erotic." "The fire of sensuality pulls us to hell," he writes. "Its remedy [is] "the light of religion... The sensuality of sex drags you back." Elsewhere he implies that he is denouncing, not just animal desires of the sort that al-Ghazzali condemns, but rather that he is warning against any sensuous desire inspired by the earthly realm: "He who craves sensuality is polluted, he who craves the intellect is pure." Rumi emphasizes this emotional asceticism in his praise of the angels. He points out that, in some Islamic theology, the animals are ruled by sensuality whereas the angels, ruled by intellect, are entirely devoid of any sensuous motivation. Humanity, though, is comprised of half of

each, and the mystic's goal is thus to rid himself of any and all sensual impulses and foster only the intellectual.

Check your progress –

1. Write about Rabia' s opinion on erotic Sufism.
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2. Discuss the philosophy of Rumi.
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12.4 LETS SUM UP

Exploring some of the ways in which gender identity and norms for manhood were important in the political and religious discourses of Mughal north India. A concern with the meanings of manhood ran through these discourses and their antecedents in the wider world of medieval Perso-Islamic political culture, constructing important and enduring links between kingship, norms for statecraft, imperial service and ideal manhood. Reviewed in detail the ways in which one high imperial servant inherited, developed and reflected on these themes, and related them to his own personal experience. Examines some of the normative literature associated with these shifts, and suggests that one of their consequences may have been to intensify the strains in Mughal service morale associated with the last decades of the seventeenth century.

Conceptual projection from the source domain of the experience of erotic love to the target domain of desire for the unification with God has yielded rich metaphorical entailments. Kövecses defines metaphorical entailments as the "rich additional knowledge about a source mapped onto a target". For example in POLITICS IS WAR metaphor knowledge such as war heroes can be added to structure political debate or argument as producing war heroes (politicians).

 The relationship between the mureed and God is a passionate love (ishk) relationship.

 God is the beloved.

 The mureed is the lover. Intensive yearning for God is lustful and passionate longing for a beloved.

 Rejoicing the presence in intimacy with God without fearing seclusion from him is experiencing the pleasure of being in an intimate presence with the beloved.

 Unionwith God is sexual union of two lovers.

 The pleasure (ladhdha) of being with God, looking at him,and union with him is the sensual pleasure of looking at a beloved and having sex with him.

 Desire for union withGod is desire for sexual intercourse

 Lustful desires(hunger, thirst, anger, and weakness in lust and love) that worry the heart of a mureed and prevent him from absolute presence with God is Physical obstacles that covers the body of the beloved preventing the lover from perfect viewing of his beloved.

 Obstacles (the body) that prevent the mureed from absolute rejoicing with God is a dress that covers the body of the beloved denying the lover strong and perfect pleasure of the sexual intercourse with his beloved.

 Separation from God is a separation from a beloved.

 Feeling jealousy towardGod is feeling jealousy toward a beloved

Hiding the secret of the Divine love is hiding the secret of a love relationship.

Enduring hardship for the sake of God is enduring hardship for a beloved.

The spiritual quest for the Divine is a journey to pursuit the beloved.

 Persevering in worship is preparing the self to meet a beloved in the best state

12.5 KEYWORDS

- Ishk – love
- Mureed – disciple
- Abstract desires -The abstract desire is most often revealed to the reader at the crisis point in the story. This is the point at which the character may at last be close to achieving his or her concrete desire, and yet desperately conflicted about doing so. This is where the character most reveals herself to us.
- Conceptual metaphor – target domain
- Embodiment hypothesis - In philosophy, embodied cognition holds that an agent's cognition is strongly influenced by aspects of an agent's body beyond the brain itself.

12.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the masculinity in Mughal court during Humayun's time.

2. Describe eroticism in Sufism.

12.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Bayazid Bayat, Tadhkira-i-Humayun wa-Akbar,. (ed.) Muhammad. Hidayat Husain, Calcutta, 1941

Ruby Lal, Domesticity and Power in the Early Mughal World (Cambridge,2005)

Rosalind O'Hanlon, "Manliness and Imperial Service in Mughal North India", Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, vol.42, No.1 (1999)

12.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section – 12.4

2. Section– 12.4

UNIT 13 - Women and Gender in Everyday Life: Gender Relations in the Household; Women and the laws, Women in Economic Activities; Crimes against Women, Marginalized women – Prostitutes and Entertainers from 1206 to 1757.

STRUTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVE

To learn about the gender relationships in households

To learn about the women and law in medieval India

To learn about the marginalized females of medieval India

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Medieval Indian history spreads over 500 years. It is predominantly the history of Muslim rulers. Muslims appeared in India as a warrior class. Their rule in India is divided into two Eras; The Era of Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Era. The only woman who had ever occupied the throne of Delhi was Razia Sultan. Gulbadan Begum was a woman of exceptional poetic talent who wrote Humayun-namah. Nur Jahan and Jahan Ara took an active part in the state affairs. Nur Jahan was the greatest Muslim queen of India. She was the very embodiment of beauty and military valour. Mumtaj Mahal a princess of a rare beauty combined with superb intellectual talents and aesthetic tastes.

13.2 WOMEN IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

India has also produced heroic women such as Chandbibi, who appeared on the ramparts of the fort of Ahmednagar dressed in male attire; Tara Bai, the Mahratta heroine who was the life and soul of Mahratta resistance during the last determined onslaught of Aurangazeb; Mangammal, whose benign rule is still a green memory in the South, and Ahalya Bai Holkar, to whose administrative genius Sir John Malcolm has paid a magnificent tribute. The Moghul princesses of course played a notable part in the court life of Agra and Delhi. Jehanara, the partisan of Dara Shikoh, Roshanara, the partisan of Aurangazeb, Zebunnissa, the daughter of Aurangazeb, whose poems (under the pen name of Makhfi) have come down to us, and others represented the culture of the court.

Jija Bai, the mother of Shivaji, was a devoted mother, who was strong-willed and autocratic at home, but subordinated herself to the interests of her son. During the medieval period the social life of women underwent great changes. Dependence of women on their husbands or other male relatives was a prominent feature of this period. Devoid of avenues of any education, having lost the access to Stridhana or dowry, they virtually became the exploited class with disastrous results for themselves and the nation. Indian women were politically, socially, and economically inactive except for those engaged in farming and weaving. Political subordination includes the exclusion of women from all important decision-making processes.

With the advent of Muslims in India, the social movement of Indian women was restricted. They were prohibited to attend public functions and were not free to participate as men's equals in religious functions. Another social evil that existed in society during this period was child marriage. These child brides were denied all intellectual, physical, and spiritual development.

Similarly, most of the women were made to believe that their ideal place was the home. Thus, they were persuaded by circumstances to accept their inferiority and secondary position. Men being providers, women became dependent on them economically for their subsistence except for the labour classes, where both men and women participated in subsistence farming and other occupations.

Many social evils like female infanticide, Sati, child marriages, Purdah system, or zenana (the seclusion of women), developed during the middle ages due to the political instability of Northern India, especially due to various invasions. Polygamy came into practice. Muslim rulers in India had large harems. Thus, women came to be regarded as instruments of sensual satisfaction. Even among the Hindus there was no limit set to the number of wives a man could take, and a Muslim man could have as many as four wives.

Islam also made the husband the head of the family and insisted that a wife should obey all his commands and should serve him with utmost loyalty. Another social evil that existed in medieval India was female infanticide. This particular system was prevalent among Rajputs and other high castes. Even among the Muslims this custom existed. This social evil originated from the belief that only the birth of a son could make salvation possible for parents as only a son had the privilege of performing Samskaras.

The son began to be considered as the maintainer of the race. Purdah gained popularity with the advent of the Muslims. The Purdah system existed among Kshatriyas in the period of Dharma Sastras. Dowry system was a common phenomenon. It actually meant "Stridhana" which included gifts, ornaments, property, and cash presented to her by her father or her relatives. But in the medieval period the term acquired

special significance. It meant money or "Dakshina" which was actually presented to the bridegroom along with the bride. In Vedic times it ensured some sort of security for her. During the Middle Ages, the term "Stridhana" acquired huge dimensions. The Hindus and Muslims favoured this custom of dowry. This in a way contributed to female infanticide, as it became a heavy burden on the poor. The birth of girls came to be seen as a misfortune by the majority of the population.

The condition of the Hindu widows became more miserable during the medieval period. Rigidity of caste system denied them the right to freedom and social mobility. A widow was secluded from society and was devoid of any worldly pleasure. The condition of the Muslim widow was slightly better owing to the fact that she could marry after a certain lapse of time following her husband's death. Jauhar refers to the practice of voluntary immolation by wives and daughters of defeated warriors, in order to avoid capture and consequent molestation by the enemy.

The practice was followed by the wives of defeated Rajput rulers, who are known to place a high premium on honor. The feudal society of the time encouraged "Sati" which meant self-immolation of the widow. The Devadasi system was prevalent among the Hindus. Under the Devadasi system women were the brides of gods. But they were supposed to entertain kings, priests, and even members of the upper classes.

Bhakti movements which flourished during the medieval age gave rise to a new class of man and women who cared little for gender bias. This liberal stream to some extent widened the horizon of women. Female poet-saints also played a significant role in the Bhakti movement. Nonetheless, many of these women had to struggle for acceptance within the largely male dominated movement. Injustices and the patriarchal order itself were not a major focus of these poet-saints.

Akkamahadevi, also known as Akka or Mahadevi was a bhakta from the southern region of Karnataka and a devotee of Shiva in the 12th century CE. Mirabai, or Mira is said to have been born into a ruling Rajput family. Mirabai's poetry tells of her vision of Lord Krishna when she was a child.

In medieval India most of the women's took active part in politics, like Raziya Sultana, daughter of sultan Iltutmish, she successfully led her Delhi administration for four year (1236-1240),similarly Chand Bibi, daughter of Husain Nizam Sahis, the thirst sovereign of Ahmadnagar, the Mughals many time try to capture the Ahmadnagar but Chand bibi took the leadership of Ahmadnagar and made a gallant and successful resistance to the Mughal army led by Akbar's son prince Murad, but ultimately the Mughals could not capture the city during the life time of Chand Bibi, Nur Jahan, wife of Mughal emperor Jahangir. She took over the administration from her husband in the 1620s, Tara Bai wife of Rajaram, she carried on the administration of the Maratha kingdom in the name of her minor son, under her leadership the Marathas began to raid the imperial territories of Berar, Gujrat and Ahmadnagar, Rani Ahalya Bai become the ruler of the Holkar state, she was one of the most successful leader of that period.

The beginning of the medieval era, when the Muslims arrived from abroad, especially from the Middle East in India. Mr. Ashraf states about the status of Indian women, "The Muslim brought with them different laws of inheritance and divorce and an entirely different from family life." In one respect Hindu and Muslim society agree in giving a distinct preference for a male over a female. A son is always preferred to a daughter, and among the sons, preference goes to the first-born. Another common feature of both social systems is a certain love and regard for parents, which is reciprocal; for parents in their turn is very solicitous and unduly affectionate"… „The functions and the position of a woman were distinctly subordinate and in the long run came to be understood as the service provider to make and depend upon him in every stage of life…

From her birth to her death, the position of a woman in the house was most unpleasant. Religion and other ameliorating spiritual movements gave her all the consolation they could have in reconciling her to her fate; but they too carefully excluded her from every position of power, even from a place in their inner hierarchy." However, the same scholar writes about the status of women in different religions, "The main function of a woman, according to Hindu ideas, was to bring forth a

male, and if she happened to give birth to a son, people honored and looked after her… The Muslim tradition with regard to women varied according to the country.

The Turks in general gave their women a fair measure of freedom. The Persian woman was in a better position as compared to her Indian sister. In Hindustan, the Muslim followed the older traditions of the ancient Persians, which put the women in an inferior position…. People began to put a much-exaggerated value on the chastity of women, exactly in the same measure as they encouraged its absence among men."The status of the women in the society remained same from the beginning of the Mughals in India. However, Srivastava states about the status of women in the medieval society on the eve of Ghazanvi"s invasion, "Another evil which can be traced in its exaggerated form to this period was the devdasi system. Every important temple had a number of unmarried girls dedicated to the service of the deity. This bred corruption and temple prostitution become common"4

M P Srivastava opines that the position of women in early medieval period and Sultanate period, "No woman had an independent status. As a daughter, women lived under the wardship of her father, as a wife under the tutelage of her husband and as a widow under the care of her eldest son…. Nevertheless the Shastras laid down that the woman was socially and spiritually inferior to man." Further, he states about the status of women during the Sultanate period,"Due to the fear of Muslims, new rules were made to enforce early marriage at the age of seven or ten and at the most twelve years"… (The) „Two system child marriage and Purdah brought about the segregation of girls and degradation in the condition of Hindu women during the medieval period." However, Dr. Lal observes about the status of women in the Sultanate era, " With the Muslim conquest the position of Indian women suffered a setback. After the fall of every city, and sometimes even in times of peace, women suffered every kind of privation,…Jauhar and Sati, already prevalent in Hindu society began to be practiced on a large scale in times of war. In times of peace parda (seclusion) and Child marriage were considered to be good safeguards… Life of women was restricted in Muslim society; Firoz Tughlaq and Sikander Lodhi forbade the pilgrimage of women to

the tomb of saints." The same author also further states: "But the conditions could not have been the same everywhere and at all times. In the 15th century Sultanate there were many Muslim women like Bibi Matto, Niamat Khatun, Shams Khatum, Bibi Raji and Bibi Khunza, who were accomplished and wielded influence of the Court and in the country‟s life…

The position of Hindu women was equally good… there is a mention of many talented Hindu women interested in art, philosophy and religion in the 15th century… her husband was her lord, her master and her God…" Therefore, the scholar not only mentions the status explains of Hindu as well as Muslim women of India but also mentions the cruel tradition and found in the society which worsened the status of women in the society: e.g. Sati system, Jauhar, child marriage, female infanticide and other social restrictions like Purda in the society. In this period, the women also had to a work hard for the daily living in her family life. Before Mughals times, a scholar states about the status of women, early marriage prevailed and matches were arranged by parents and no dowry was settled. There was no divorce. Widows were not allowed to marry. They had to choose between life-long widowhood or burning themselves in flames." However, the "custom of Sati prevailed but women seem to have enjoyed a position of dignity and honour. Many of them were well-educated. They composed poems and could explain the works of great poets and dramatists. They knew music and dancing and some of them practiced even wrestling. A women once interviewed Deva Raya on behalf of temple and secured from him the grant of village.‟‟‟‟. ... "But some kings did not allow women to visit the tombs of holy men.‟‟‟‟

The effects were observed due to the mutual relations of the Hindus and Muslims in the society of early medieval India e.g. In the social life that both Hindus and Muslims lived mutually like the good neighbor as well as adopted their customs and traditions of one another.

Several Hindus, especially small Hindu tribes adopted Islam due to repressive policies of Delhi Sultanate rulers. The custom of child marriage, sati, system of Harems and Royal slaves became prevalent due to matrimonial alliances among the Muslims and the Hindu women, and

at that time the etc. became more prevalent and also the popular especially in the elite people. There were number of many beautiful women i.g. Married women, prostitutions and maids, etc..lived in royal places due to the prevalent Harem system. E. D. Havells states,"Indian women were prized above all others in the Muslim slave-market on account of their beauty and graceful manners. Ala-ud-din himself was captivated a Rajput princess, Kamla Devi, the wife of the Raja of Gujrat, "who for beauty, wit, and accomplishments was the flower of India"". He took her into his harem, and his attachment to her gave a touch of romance to the annals of his reign."

Therefore, the scholars observe the status of women was unsatisfactory and miserable in the society of 16th century. As Sher Singh states, "condition of women was not much better than that of the unhappy Sudra… The Muslims had imprisoned their women within the four walls of the house. Open air and other outside gifts of nature were either denied to them or only a closely guarded participation was allowed under a thick covering of Burqa. The birth of a daughter in a family was a sign of misfortune. The idea had led to female infanticide. Sati-widow-cremation was practiced. Muslims too in the days of Jahangir are said to be the following (it must be in very rare cases) this vicious custom."

The status of women was not good in 16th and 17th centuries, particularly in the north-west India especially in the Punjab where they were "treated as the dregs of the society." The women was not independent at any stage of her life in the medieval society and she „lived strictly as a daughter under her parents… moreover, she got respect and honor in the family only if she bears give birth to a son of her husband". Where the "birth of a girl was never looked upon with a favour and several high castes, such as Rajput practiced female infanticide… polygamy existed… Another evil…. Was slavery. Prostitution was rampant and the profession of dancing girls who quenched the thirst of the greedy and lustful eyes was profitable… "

The women were deprived of her rights in the society in medieval period e.g. the change from honor to disgrace, deprived of the right of

inheritance of property, from freedom to bondage, neither entitled to divorce nor for adoption, prevention from widow re-marriage, custom of Sati, child marriage where people marry their minor daughters to the aged persons. The widow‟s status became miserable and their remarriage was impossible at that time. The female children were pressurized for compulsory early marriage. Mr. K. Singh states, "In ancient India women occupied a very honorable place in society. But momentous changes took place during medieval period.

The outstanding change has been the change from freedom to bondage and from honor to disgrace. Custom of Sati, child marriages and prohibition of widow remarriage were widely prevalent… she was deprived from the right of inheritance of property." Dr. Prasad mentions the status of women in various communities in medieval period, "The king and his courtiers led extravagant lives. They maintained large establishments and their harems contained numerous women. Drink was a common vice and many nobles died of it.

The life of Hindus still moves in traditional grooves. Child marriage, widowhood and Sati were still prevalent among them. The Mughals tried to remove these evils but with little success. The Hindus were simple in their habits and hated ostentation though the womenfolk were fond of jewels and ornaments. The Brahamanas still loved learning and worked for social improvement." A great impact traditions as well as customs of the Hindus on the Muslims and vice-versa was observed at that time in India e.g. mutual matrimonial relationship between the Hindus and Muslims, conception of the caste system, custom of polygamy system, dowry, problem of the concept of untouchability, conversion of religion e.g. Hindus to Muslims, the Pardah system, Rajput Jauhar customs for the women, royals harems of the Mughals and other communities, Sati system, and women and children slavery system etc. that reflect the main features mostly unhealthy in human in the medieval society. These aforesaid system influenced greatly the status of women in the medieval Indian society.

Though the women had some respect in the society, yet she was considered to be lower in the status than the man as she was completely

dependable on her husband‟s property. Though she acted as housewife and confined in the inner circle of the house yet sometime she was consulted on some important family matters. During the medieval period Bhakti Movement played a pivotal role in favor of the women to improve their pitiable condition. The Sikh Guru had endeavored to uplift the status of Indian women. "No doubt women are (were) contributing remarkably in every arena of human life, but contribution of the society and government towards the cause of gender equality is (was) in question… Large proportion of women have (had) to suffer acute inequalities, deprivation and injustice. Increasing physical violence against women in the form of rape, dowry, murders, tortures, wife beating, female foeticide and infanticide are (were) all reflection of the feeble position of women in family and society. Hypocritical action can (could) be seen in the society.‟

The Sikh Gurus and their scriptures have shown that "Our Guru has condemned this evil of infanticide and forbade Sikhs from having any association with families indulging in female infanticide (Kuri Kaur),… The social evil of dowry should be curbed… Sikh Gurus were against the veiling system because they wanted that women should not be kept in seclusion… Women Empowerment and girl‟s child education is of paramount importance because literacy leads to confidence, self-respect, awareness and sensibility."

Thus we may conclude that there were significant transformations in the society of Mughal period as Akbar‟s enlightened policy of religious tolerance and social reforms influenced greatly the minds of Hindus and Muslims which created harmony and fraternity in the Indian society at that time. Preaching of the Sikh Gurus also greatly influenced the society and developed an atmosphere of harmony advocating for widow remarriage, an equal rights as well as status for the women in the Indian society.

13.3 WOMEN AND LAW AND CRIMES

The popularity of early marriage increased during the medieval period, stemming from the desire to protect girl children being coveted by the

foreign invaders. This custom is mentioned by European travelers like Manucci' and Tavernier' who visited India. Akbar' issued a fiat that no marriage should be performed before puberty. It was, however, normal for girls to be married off at an age of between nine to twelve, i.e., before they attained puberty, right up to the early twentieth century. The question of marriage by choice did not arise. The custom of dowry remained, as hitherto, of the bride's parents voluntarily gifting ornaments and occasionally cash to their daughters at the time of marriage. There was no prior negotiation of the extent of gifts to be given at the time of marriage, nor was it demanded. The right to divorce and widow remarriage seems to have almost disappeared in the second millennia, though, occasionally such cases are known to have occurred, especially among the lower castes. In marriage, the obligation of fidelity was enjoined on both the parties along with love, care, and mutual maintenance. The custom of polygamy, though known earlier, becomes common among the ruling classes.

Purdah came into existence under Muslim influence. A woman did not inherit her husband's wealth but was supposed to be cared for by her son. The concept of the mother being considered as sacred and worthy of worship continued from the Vedic age and women had a position of respect. There were many rishis like Vishnu and Yajnavalkya, who recognized the right of a widow to her husband's property. This was occasionally practiced in the south but rarely in the north. The concept of stridhan becomes very conspicuous, and it was supposed to consist not only of the gifts received by woman at the time of her marriage but whatever was given to her by her maternal and other relatives during her married life. Many jurists propounded that the husband's gifts of landed property to the wife also formed part of her stridhan. Her right to alienate this property by sale or gifting it to her parents' family was however chaIlenged. If the widow did not have children, it was expected that it should go to the husband's collaterals.

The custom of sati is first mentioned among the Brahmins before the birth of Christ, but was not really considered to be the wife's religious duty. Some women, overcome with grief, voluntarily committed suicide by throwing themselves on their dead husband's funeral pyre, like Madri,

the wife of Pandu, the father of the Pandavas, as mentioned in the Mahabharata. The Kshatriyas did not follow this because their uncertain existence would have meant a lot of child widows. After the eighth century, this custom becomes much commoner. In Kashmir, we even hear of mothers, sisters, servants, and ministers committing sati with the rulers in the Rajatarangini? Contemporary literature of Bana, Kalidasa, and Bhasa shows that it was popular among royal families. This custom was also commonly practiced in Rajasthan by women of the royal family and many others, as also among the Nayaks in South India.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; this custom was also occasionally practiced by the lower castes in north India. However, at no stage of India's history was sati a common practice and was certainly nowhere near universal. We have some figures from 1815 to 1828 indicating that it was miniscule." Throughout the medieval period, there were exceptions to the rule as far as the lower status of women was concerned. In many princely families, both Muslim and Hindu women were highly educated and often took part in governing their States during the minority of their children, and this has happened frequently in the Jaipur State. Women took interest in the defence of their husbands' States. We have the example of the celebrated Tara, wife of Prithviraj, an heir-apparent to the throne of Chittor, who lost her life in a battle with a Muslim ruler.

Upper class women occasionally exercised their right to choice in the selection of their husbands. In the seventeenth century, there was a famous case of Charumati of Kishangarh in Rajasthan who was betrothed to Aurangzeb by her brother but who refused to marry him and instead sent a message to Maharana Raj Singh of Udaipur to rescue and marry her. We also have evidence of women scholars both in Rajasthan and throughout the rest of the country, like the famous poetess Mira of Chittor, and of Andal in the South. Among the Muslims, we find the highly cultivated Nurjahan, Mumtaz Mahal, Jahanara Begum, and Roshanara Begum taking a great interest in charitable works, in the construction of sarais or rest-houses by the roadsides, in feeding the poor, and in constructing mosques, mausoleums, and gardens.

WOMEN AND ECONOMICS

During the medieval period and later, both in the north and south, women of the royal and aristocratic classes had a certain degree of economic independence through their large dowries and the jagirs bestowed on them by their husbands. Both Maharaja Man Singh of Jodhpur" and Maharana Bhim Singh of Udaipur" gifted jagirs to their wives. Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jaipur gifted e jagir to his daughter Chandra Kunwar in Jaipur.'? The Maharanis of Udaipur, Jodhpur, and Kotah, from their own resources constructed temples, gardens, and bawris to provide drinking water. Women from the poorer families worked as agricultural labourers, cultivators, handloom weavers, spinners, and made handicrafts. Many of them took to domestic employment or became singing and dancing girls. By the end of the millennium we find that, in general, women enjoyed a much higher position in the scriptures and in religious rituals than in practice, their position gradually becoming one of complete dependence on and subservience to men. It would be true to say that it was generally a question of class that determined the status of a woman.

Judicial System in Medieval India

After the disintegration of the Harsha empire a veil of obscurity descends on the history of India which does not lift till the Muslim invasion. The country was divided once more into small kingdoms. But this did not result in any great change in the judicial system which had taken roots during the preceding thousands of years. The standards and ideals of justice were maintained in each kingdom, in spite of political divisions, the unity of civilization was preserved, and the fundamental principles of law and procedure were applied throughout the country. This one is indicated by the fact that the great commentaries on law like Mitakshara and Shukarneeti Sar were written during this period and enjoyed an all-India authority. But the establishment of the Muslim rule in India opened a new Unit in our judicial history. The Muslim conquerors brought with them a new religion, a new civilization, and a new social system. This could not but have a profound effect on the judicial system.

The ideal of justice under Islam was one of the highest in the Middle ages. The Prophet himself set the standards. He said in the Quran, "Justice is the balance of God upon earth in which things when weighed are not by a particle less or more. And He appointed the balance that he should not transgress in respect to the balance; wherefore observe a just weight and diminish not the balance". He is further reported to have said that to God a moment spent in the dispensation of justice is better than the devotion of the man who keeps fast every day and says prayer every night for 60 years. Thus the administration of justice was regarded by the Muslim kings as a religious duty. This high tradition reached its zenith under the first four Caliphs.

The first Qadi was appointed by the Caliph Umar who enunciated the principle that the law was supreme and that the judge must never be subservient to the ruler. It is reported of him that he had once a personal law suit against a Jewish subject, and both of them appeared before the Qadi who, on seeing the Caliph, rose in his seat out of deference. "Umar considered this to be such an unpardonable weakness on his part that he dismissed him from office." The Muslim kings in India bought with them these high ideals. It is reported by Badaoni that during the reign of Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq the Qadi dimissed a libel suit filed by the King himself against Shaikhzada Jami, but no harm was done to him. (This however did not prevent the Sultan from executing the defendant without a trial).

Individual Sultans had very high ideals of justice. According to Barani, Balban regarded justice as the keystone of sovereignty "wherein lay the strength of the sovereign to wipe out the oppression". But unfortunately the administration of justice under the Sultans worked fitfully. The reason was that the outstanding feature of the entire Sultanate period was confusion and chaos. No Sultan felt secure for a long time. One dynasty was replaced by another within a comparatively short period, and the manner of replacement was violent. Consequently, the quality of justice depended very much on the personality of the sovereign. As a modern writer says, "The medieval State in India as elsewhere throughout its existence had all the disadvantages of an autocracy-everything was temporary, personal,

and had no basic strength. The personal factor in the administration had become so pronounced that a slight deviation of the head from the path of duty, produced concomitant variations in the whole 'trunk'. If the King was drunk 'his Magistrates were seen drunk in public'. Justice in not possible without security, and the Sultans of India never felt secure. Consequently, the democratic ideal of government preached by Islam was obscure in India. During the Sultanate, Islamic standards of Justice did not take root in India as an established tradition, unlike the judicial traditions of ancient India which had struck deep roots in the course of several thousand years and could not be uprooted by political divisions. Under the Mughal Empire the country had an efficient system of government with the result that the system of justice took shape. The unit of judicial administration was Qazi-an office which was borrowed from the Caliphate. Every provincial capital had its Qazi and at the head of the judicial administration was the Supreme Qazi of the empire (Qazi-ul-quzat). Moreover, every town and every village large enough to be classed as a Qasba had its own Qazi. In theory, a Qazi had to be "a Muslim scholor of blameless life, thoroughly conversant with the prescriptions of the sacred law. According to the greatest historian of the Mughal Empire, "the main defect of the Department of Law and Justice was that there was no system, no organization of the law courts in a regular gradation from the highest to the lowest, nor any proper distribution of courts in proportion to the area to be served by them. The bulk of the litigation in the country (excluding those decided by caste, elders or village Panchayats mostly for the Hindus) naturally came up before the courts of Qazis or Sadars."

This view is not accepted by other writers. On the appointment of a Qazi, he was charged by the Imperial Diwan in the following words: "Be Just, be honest, be impartial. Hold trials in the presence of the parties and at the court-house and the seat of Government (muhakuma). Do not accept presents from the people of the place where you serve, nor attend entertainments given by anybody and everybody. Write your decrees, sale-deeds, mortgage bonds and other legal documents very carefully, so that learned men may not pick holes in them and

bring you to shame. Know poverty (faqr) to be your glory (fakhr)." But due to lack of supervision and absence of good tradition, these noble ideals were not observed. According to Sircar, "all the Qazis of the Mughal period, with a few honorable exceptions, were notorious for taking bribes. The Emperor was the fountain source of justice. He held his court of justice every Wednesday and decided a few cases selected personally by him but he functioned not as an original court but as the court of highest appeal. There is overwhelming evidence that all the Emperors from Akbar to Aurangzeb took their judicial function seriously and discharged their duties Jahangir made a great show of it and his Golden Chain has become famous in history.

The weakness of Indo-Mohammedan Law, according to Jadunath Sircar, was that all its three sources were outside India. "No Indian Emperor's or Qazi's decisions was ever considered authoritative enough to lay down a legal principle to elucidate any obscurity in the Quran, or supplement the Quranic law by following the line of its obvious intention in respect of cases not explicitly provided for by it. Hence, it became necessary for Indian Qazis to have at their elbow a digest of Islamic law and precedent compiled from the accepted Arabic writer. . . . . Muslim law in India was, therefore, incapable of growth and change, except so far as it reflected changes of juristic thought in Arabia or Egypt."

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire collapsed within two generations. The provincial Governors and Faujdars arrogated to themselves the status of sovereigns and awarded punishment for criminal offences in their own names. A relic of this usurpation of the Emperors' power is the name Faujdari given to criminal trials even today. After the conquest of Bengal by the British the process of replacement of the Mughal system of justice by the British began. But it took a long time. In fact, The Sadre Diwani Adalat continued to function till it was replaced by the High Courts. The Mughal judicial system has left its imprint on the present system, and a good part of our legal terminology is borrowed from it. Our civil courts of first instance and called Munsifs, the plaintiff and the defendant are termed Muddai and Muddaliya and

scores of other legal terms remind us of the great days of the Mughal Empire.

13.4 MARGINALISED WOMEN

Sultanate Period

The Delhi Sultanate was a Delhi based Muslim kingdom that stretched over large parts of India for 320 years. (1206-1526) Qutb-ud-din Aibak, a former slave of Muhammad Ghori, was the first Sultan of Delhi and his dynasty conquered large areas of Northern India. The state set up by the Turks towards the end of the 12th century in Northern India developed into a powerful and highly centralized state, which for some time, controlled almost the entire country. There was a definite growth of trade in country and also the growth of towns and town life. The Sultan and his chief nobles enjoyed a standard of living which was comparable to the highest standard in the world at that time. Due to the rapid expansion of the empire, large salaries and allowances were given to the nobles by Sultans.

The nobles tried to imitate the Sultans in ostentatious living. They had magnificent palaces to live in. They were surrounded by a large number of servants, slaves and retainers. They were so degraded that they didn't feel any shame in keeping concubines and prostitutes in their houses. They didn't scruple to trample on the sanctity of the harem and turned their homes into private brothels. The nababs and Muhamedan nobleman who could afford the luxury kept harems, people by young girls of good beauty, who ministered to their pleasures. There was little difference between such harems and modern brothels. Harem was reserved for the satisfaction of lust of a single man and brothel is visited by succession of men. In Muhammedan period many of prostitutes were foreigners and were slaves recruited from Persia, America and even Europe. There was great demand for these foreign girls. These prostitutes procured from the Christian and other non-Muhammadan races were forced to declare themselves converted. It was customary

with nabobs to present some of the women to their favorite countries and friends.

The women were regarded at chattels to be sold, presented or hired out by her owner. Among the Shia Muhammedans there was a custom of hiring wives for a certain period. At the end of the period the woman was free to accept any other man as her protector. This type of woman was nothing but a legalized kept mistress.

Clandestine Prostitution

Clandestine prostitution was a silent feature of prostitution in Mohmadan period. The women of the Muhammedan nobility were generally corrupt and carried on love intrigues. The motive was mainly satisfaction of lust. Secret prostitution became general among the women living in the vicious atmosphere of the harems.

Prostitution in South India

Under a series capable rulers, Vijaynagara emerged as the most powerful and wealthy state in the South during the first half of the fifteenth century. In Vijaynagara the prostitution was much in vogue. H. M. Elliot describes it as, "Behind the mint is a sord of Bazar. . . There are several brothels within these seven fortresses and revenues from them amount to 12000 fanams, go to pay the wages of the policemen." The Vijaynagar empire as late as the fifteenth century, organized prostitution for the benefit of the state. Abdur Razzak visiting Vijaynagar in 1442 A. D. observes:"Opposite the darab–khaneh (the mint) is the house of the Governor, where are stationed twelve thousand soldiers as a guard, who receive every day a payment of twelve thousand fanom, living on the receipts of the houses of prostitution. The magnificence of the palaces of this king, the beauty of the young girls collected therein, their allurements and their coquetry surpass all description. Behind the darab–khaneh is a sort of bazaar. On the two sides are ranged chambers and estrades. Immediately after the midday prayer they place before the doors of the chambers, which are decorated with extreme magnificence, thrones and chairs on which the courtesans seat

themselves, youth Good looks, good qualities and liberality are the chief and most natural means of making a person agreeable in the eyes of others but in the absences.

Each of these women is bedecked with pearls and is dressed in costly ornaments. Any man may enter their locality and select any girl that pleases him, and take his pleasure with her. Anything that he carries with him is delivered into the keeping of those engaged in the service of the houses of prostitution, and if anything is lost these latter are responsible for it." The conditions of Vijaynagar are described by a number of foreign travelers. Paes, an Italian spent a number of years at Krishna Dev's courts. According to Peas, dancing girls were also summoned during the feasts. "For these feasts are summoned all the dancing–women of the kingdom, in order that they should be present and also the captains and kings and great lords with all their retinues. . ." The sacred prostitution in the institution of devdasi has been referred to by Al Beruni.

Mughal Period

During the period (1526-1707) the Mughal Empire was ruled by Akbar, Jahangir, Shahajahan and Aurangzeb. During the period it had to face many political and administrative problems, but in economic and social spheres, the period from the advent of Akbar to the end of the seventeenth century, there were important social and economic developments. Many European traders and travelers came to India, and some of them have left accounts about the social and economic conditions of the country. The Mughal nobles received salaries which were extremely high by any standards. There expenses were also very high. They maintained a large train of servants and attendants and a large stable of horses, elephants etc. Many of them maintained a large harem of women.

Akbar the illustrious Mughal emperor, maintained a seraglio in which there were 5000 women, and it had a separate staff of women officers who looked after its management. Akbarmade some regulations so that

the services of prostitutes might not be available very easily to the public. The prostitutes were confined to a place outside the capital city.The nobles followed the king's example and spent lavishly on mistresses and dancing girls. The Governors fill and adorn their mahals with beautiful women and seem to have the pleasure house of the whole world within their walls.

In Mughal period the concubines and favorite slave girls led a pleasant life. They spent their time in decking their beautiful person and in displaying or increasing their powers of fascination. To become the favorite woman was their highest ambition. A favorite woman lived in splendor, while a woman who displeased the master might even be killed.

Eunuchs

Eunuchs or Hijras were entrusted with keeping guard over the women in a harem. Some of the lewd nobles practiced sodomy and the eunuchs were notorious for this shameful practice. Sodomy was common among the Mughal nobles. Aurangzeb tried to stop the evil but he could do nothing.

Dancing Girls

A large number of girls were attached to the Mughal courts for dancing and singing. The Mughal kings were great patrons of fine arts of music and dance, which flourished during their regime. Many a time the prostitutes were employed as dancers and singers in public social and religious functions. Some of them were highly accomplished ladies, adept in various arts and skills such as music, poetry, sorcery and spying. The Rajput states had employed the services of some of these public women for singing and dancing in the royal courts. Some others were fortunate enough in attracting the attention of the princes perhaps because of the unusual beauty or their exceptional accomplishment in some arts, and were accepted by the princes in their harem.

They lived there as the concubines and enjoyed a privileged position. A few of them were very loyal to the king, even going to the

length of burning themselves to ashes after the death of their kings. Women even accompanied the Mughal army and moved with them from place to place for the entertainment of the army personnel.

Anarkali

Anarkali was a famous dancing girl of Akbar's court. Salim(Jahangir) fell in love with her. Akbar noticed their love affair. He decided to remove the girl and condemned her to death. Jahangir built her tomb at the outskirts of Lahore.

Lal Kunwar

Lal kunwar was a famous concubine of emperor Jahandarshah of Delhi. She was allowed to display the Imperial umbrella, the emblem of royalty and March with drums beating as if she had been the Emperor in person.

Nur Bai

Nadir Shah, the king of Persia, who plundered Delhi and massacred its inhabitants, was conquered by Nur Bai. She was dancing girl of Delhi. Nadir Shah was highly fascinated by her music that he paid her Rs. 4500 and wanted to take her Persia with him. But she avoided him.

In Mughal age Akbar was against this practice and took steps to check prostitution. There was a separate caste that followed this profession. In the reign of Shah Jahan, they enjoyed much freedom and were in great numbers. In the society, prostitution was regarded as a disgrace though some of the meaner sort adopted it and lived in separate quarters out of the city. When Aurangzeb became the ruler, most of his rules were directed towards the prohibition of prostitution. But he failed. Prostitution received greater couragement from the rich and well to do section of the people. Hindu rajas like Baz Bahadur, the ruler of Malwa and Raja Indrajit Singh, ruler of Orchha were great patrons of prostitution.

Early European Society in India

In Mughal period there was a number of ports and towns from which brisk trade between India and the outer world was carried on. India not only supplied food stuffs, such as Sugar, rice etc. to many countries of southeast and west Asia, but Indian textiles also played a very important role in the trade of the region. The Portuguese came to India during the end of the fifteenth century. During the seventeenth the Dutch, the English and later the French came to India for purposes of trade. Portuguese remained at Goa and also at Daman Diu, The English spread their trade in North India. The entry of Europeans into India profoundly altered the socio–economic and political milieu. The presence of sailors in port towns new rendered the climate morally vulnerable. After their long and dull some voyage they wanted to have some relaxation during their halts in ports and they got the pleasure by attending dance parties and visiting places of interest. They also used to visit houses of prostitutes which were like honeycombs in areas adjoining seaports.

The Portuguese

In the beginning of the seventeenth century Goa was a centre of Portuguese civilization in India. The Portuguese's society in Goa became greatly debased. The gambling houses were run under the patronage of the Government and were the resort of dancing girls. Many of Portuguese women had started for India as the intended wives of officials in Goa, for the Portuguese Government, in its concern for the morals of its employees in the East, used to send out annual batches of women who had failed to find husbands at home and that the obedient officials might not cavil at such trifles as lack of physical attraction, send with them substantial dowries. These women, however, as often as not were provided by fate with other husbands in other parts of India, their ships being captured by Musulman pirates and themselves dispatched to the slave market at Surat. Some of these Portuguese captives brought to Surat. Some were bundled into the harems of local officials and never heard again.

The French

There were many French in India and most of them took concubines. General De Boigne an European adventurer of the 18th century had two concubines. He took one woman to Paris and embraced the Catholic religion. She resided till her death under the name of Mrs. Bennet. Her son Aly Bux became afterwards Count Charles Alexander–Benoit De Boigne.

The British

The moral condition of the East India Company's servants was at the lowest ebb. Almost all unmarried and even married one kept native concubines. The Company was deeply disturbed over some recent unsuitable marriages of Englishmen in Madras. Many of these kept slave-girls as mistresses. Henry Crittleton, a Company's officer, kept a Brahmin mistress called Raje and in his will he refers to her wit obviously sincere gratitude and devotion leaving to her all his property. General Pater was so fond of his mistress Arabella that when,on her death, the chaplain refused to bury her in consecrated ground, he has herbody interred in a field and then built a Church over it, the Church of St. Mary's,so that in spite of Chaplain she should lie in consecrated ground. These were men of means, but many a poor sailor and soldier showed a similar affection for his mistress. The Sailor Jemes Buller left his slave–girl, Noky her freedom and fifteen Arcot rupees a month and William Stevenson left his Maria a third of his estate provided she remained virtuous. When the sailors were called away on a long voyage or the soldiers ordered in land they generally left their girls with some friends in Calcutta there were few unmarried men without a mistress. They often kept Indian women. Many of the English merchants became half–Indianised enjoyed a nautch and from the frequent references to 'country music' did not dislike Indian music. They ordered dancing–girls from Lucknow and Delhi.

Check your progress –

1. Discuss about the nautch girls who entertained the Europeans.

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2. Describe about the marginalized women in medieval India.

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13.5 LET'S SUM UP

The position of women after the eighth to ninth century A.D., takes a turn towards greater orthodoxy and control of women as possessions. Whereas, in the Vedas the destruction of an embryo was considered to be very sinful, the custom of female infanticide crept into some sections of the society during the medieval period; but it was confined largely to t6e lower, uncultured, and very poor classes, and there too was considered to be abnormal behaviour and of rare occurrence. Most girls, were deprived of an education unless they happened to be members of the aristocracy or well-to-do business classes, or were born into the entertainment professions, i.e. courtesans and dancing and singing girls. The custom of early marriage first manifested itself among the lower classes members of which charged bride-price and therefore sought to marry off their daughters at a very young age. The popularity of early marriage increased during the medieval period, stemming from the desire to protect girl children being coveted by the foreign invaders. This custom is mentioned by European travellers like Manucci' and Tavernier' who visited India. Akbar' issued a fiat that no marriage should be performed before puberty. It was, however, normal for girls to be married off at an age of between nine to twelve, i.e., before they attained puberty, right up to the early twentieth century. The question of marriage by choice did not arise. The custom of dowry remained, as hitherto, of the bride's parents voluntarily gifting ornaments and occasionally cash to their daughters at the time of marriage. There was no prior negotiation of the extent of gifts to be given at the time of marriage, nor was it demanded. The right to divorce and widow remarriage seems to have almost disappeared in the second millennia, though, occasionally such cases are

known to have occurred, especially among the lower castes. In marriage, the obligation of fidelity was enjoined on both the parties along with love, care, and mutual maintenance. The custom of polygamy, though known earlier, becomes common among the ruling classes. Purdah came into existence under Muslim influence. A woman did not inherit her husband's wealth but was supposed to be cared for by her son. The concept of the mother being considered as sacred and worthy of worship continued from the Vedic age and women had a position of respect. There were many rishis like Vishnu and Yajnavalkya, who recognized the right of a widow to her husband's property. This was occasionally practiced in the south but rarely in the north. The concept of stridhan becomes very conspicuous, and it was supposed to consist not only of the gifts received by woman at the time of her marriage but whatever was given to her by her maternal and other relatives during her married life. Many jurists propounded that the husband's gifts of landed property to the wife also formed part of her stridhan. Her right to alienate this property by sale or gifting it to her parents' family was however chaIlenged. If the widow did not have children, it was expected that it should go to the husband's collaterals. The custom of sati is first mentioned among the Brahmins before the birth of Christ, but was not really considered to be the wife's religious duty. Some women, overcome with grief, voluntarily committed suicide by throwing themselves on their dead husband's funeral pyre, like Madri, the wife of Pandu, the father of the Pandavas, as mentioned in the Mahabharata. The Kshatriyas did not follow this because their uncertain existence would have meant a lot of child widows. After the eighth century, this custom becomes much commoner. In Kashmir, we even hear of mothers, sisters, servants, and ministers committing sati with the rulers in the Rajatarangini? Contemporary literature of Bana, Kalidasa, and Bhasa shows that it was popular among royal families. This custom was also commonly practiced in Rajasthan by women of the royal family and many others, as also among the Nayaks in South India. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; this custom was also occasionally practiced by the lower castes in north India.

13.6 KEYWORDS

Stridhan - Stridhana is a term associated with Hindu Law. The character of property that is whether it is stridhan or woman's estate, ... Stridhana, as defined by Yagnyabalkya is: 1) The wealth received by the women from her father, mother, husband.

Devadasis - A hereditary female dancer in a Hindu temple.

Mitakshara is one of the schools belonging to Hindu law.

13.7 QUESTION FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the role of women in medieval India.

2. Discuss about the legal rights of medieval women in India.

13.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

Lalita Dhar Parihar, WOMANAND LAW, From Impoverishment to Empowerment –A Critique, Eastern Book Publication, Lucknow, First Edition, 2011

Avinash Gadhre (2015),The Socio-Economic Status of Women in India Ancient to Modern

Era

Mishra.sham.kartik (2012) 'Women status and empowerment in India,' New Delhi

13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section – 13.5

2. Section– 13.5

UNIT 14 - GENDER RELATIONS IN THE 18TH CENTURY

STRUTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVE

To know about the gender and sexual philosophy of 18th century Mughal India.

To know about the sexual texts, of 18th century India

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Modern India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world. Excavations in the Indus Valley trace civilization there back for at least 5,000 years. India's cultural history includes prehistoric mountain cave paintings in Ajanta, the exquisite beauty of the Taj Mahal in Agra, the rare sensitivity and warm emotions of the erotic Hindu temple sculptures of the 9th-century Chandella rulers, and the Kutab Minar in Delhi.

14.2 WOMEN DESIRE IN REKHTI AND RITI TEXTS

Lesbianism or female homosexuality is the quality or state of intense emotional and usually erotic attraction of a woman to another woman. Homosexuality in women is also called Sapphism after the Greek lyric poetess Sappho who expressed love and passion in her poems for various people of both the sexes. She was born on the island of Lesbos. The two words 'Sapphism' and 'Lesbian' by the 18th century were adopted for female homosexuality drawing upon Sappho's works. However, the references to physical acts between women are few and subjected to debate in her poems. The idea that love could exist between people of the same sex thus was a subject of discussion even in the nineteenth century. The current understanding of Lesbian history is a product of twentieth century American and European theorists. This essay is an attempt to trace the challenge which lesbian history has posed to gender studies. Speaking from the margins, this history challenges the dominant gender narrative. At the same time, it acknowledges its own limitations through self-reflexivity. The experiences of the lesbians vary significantly depending on race, class, nationality, etc. The category lesbian itself is a construct with multiple variations. Hence, an attempt has also been made to locate it vis-à-vis other forms of alternate sexuality. A brief foray into the representation of lesbians in literature and cinema has also been made. And lastly, the demands of the lesbian community are seen in the larger context of the movement.

Feminist history had long debated in terms of heteronormativity which meant that physical normal relations were between the opposite sexes. The feminists for long spoke about only the rights of women versus men. The rights of a lot of women who were oppressed as well but not necessarily by the men was consciously shadowed. Just like the American Army policy of 'Don't Ask Don't Tell', these feminist historians also brushed the issue of lesbianism under the carpet. The proponents of alternate sexuality were thus completely silenced as

marginal voices of those who did not fit in this narrative, the deviants. Lesbian history developed in the 1980s and challenged this silence. It spoke about such diverse expressions of love, passion and sexuality like cross-dressers, romantic friends, student- teacher „crushes", butch/femme partners, transsexuals, trans-genders and many more. The first efforts in lesbian history were thus directed towards securing a place for the lesbians as a subject of history. This sort of recuperative or additive history had its own historical problems. The sources for study were few, mainly of the upper-middle class influential women. And even here, it did not receive the same attention as gay politico-legal movement. The category lesbian itself was contested because of the variations within it (like repressed lesbians who were married). Accepting a man as gay was much easier than accepting a woman as a lesbian.

History Of Lesbianism

Lillian Faderman"s deeroticization of lesbian relations as romantic friendships evoked a homo-social order showing a lesbian continuum. This was critiqued as ghettoization. Anything deviant from the heteronormative was to be categorized as something harmless just as Faderman tried to do.

The Straitjacket Of Identity

Lesbianism as a sexual category was and is still not the primary identity amongst many lesbians who instead appropriate race, class, age, ethnicity, and nationality as the primary identification. Hence, the theorization of lesbian-like behaviour is culture specific. In this way, the dominant western feminist approach to lesbianism was questioned and even subverted. Lesbian-like behaviour posed a challenge to the feminist historians to reclaim the unseen, and the unspoken so as to make feminist history representative of gender in its truest sense. Lesbian history itself needed to be more accommodative of the other non-normative behaviours. The trans-genders, transvestites, transsexuals, drags, inter-

sexual, bisexuals, and other such categories needed to be seen side by side with lesbians. These groups were on the periphery too and hence shared a common crisis of identity. A simple binary of straight-lesbian could not suffice to explain these other contentious identities. Faced with the same existential problems posed by law (adoption rights, same-sex marriages), religion, occupation and, medicine (health benefits), required that they be seen in a similar domain. All these categories could be clubbed together under alternative sexuality.

The Indian Case

In India, in the late eighteenth century a genre of Urdu poetry called Rekhti was popular. In this the poet used women's speech and talked about their world. Carla Petievich argues that Rekhti was a parody of love literature namely the ghazal by men. She further says that Rekhta another popular poetry form was different from Rekhti. While the former expressed love the latter Petievich argues was merely sexually suggestive bawdy poetry. But Ruth Vanita is of the opinion that Rekhti was very much in the tradition of riti kavya, medieval romances, and erotic treatises. It was an evolution of these earlier forms prevalent in Indian languages.

Rekhti depicted female sexual relations and its reception in the society. The very fact that it was popular and widely circulated shows that alternative sexuality of women was an acknowledged truth. Rekhti poetry was thus providing an alternative world to the women. It was both produced and consumed by the women. The society which had homoerotic male relationships was equally aware of the female sex relations as is clear from the terms in vogue around this time. Just like the ghazal there was ambiguity of gender in the compositions but it was to tease and not to express divinity as in the former. The obvious influence of Hindu traditions on rekhti as well as its erotic content, effeminate style led to its expurgation in late nineteenth century. The revulsion of homosexuality thus seems like a product of British colonization and the associated modernity. Indian mythology speaks of alternative sexuality.

The story of the birth of Bhagiratha (bhaga- vagina) as argued by Ruth Vanita drawing upon 14th century devotional texts from Bengal was the result of the union of two co-wives. The narrative texts often highlighted emotional bonds and thus the possibility of a lesbian relationship is explored here. But even the prescriptive medical treatises like the first century Sushruta Samhita make a case of a child born as a result of the mixing of fluids due to the intercourse between two women. The medical veracity is doubtful today but the very fact that such a thing was mentioned as early as the first century shows the existence of lesbians in India Vatsyayan‟s Kamasutra of the third century also legitimizes same sex love. Contemporary Indian cinema has also explored alternate sexuality. But apart from Deepa Mehta's Fire there is no portrayal of a lesbian relationship. Mehta's movie led to rioting because of the choice of names for her characters - Radha and Sita. But even here the relationship is shown to be less of a choice and more of trying to find alternative avenues because of an unhappy marriage. The gay question has been well addressed by movies like I am, My Brother Nikhil, Bomgay, Memories in March and Mango Soufflé. Indian audience is still reluctant to accept lesbianism on screen with the exception of a few sleazy commercial projects which nowhere come close to exploring the issue of lesbian identity. The portrayal of lesbians in the literary medium going back to Ismat Chugtai's Lihaaf (The Quilt) is more forthcoming about lesbians. But even this medium is more biased towards gay portrayal. In the twenty-first century with the LGBT movement gaining a stronghold and people with alternate sexuality openly declaring their orientation, it seems likely that more literature and cinema delving into these issues would be appreciated.

The reception of lesbianism in all its avowal in the Indian public sphere still has a long way to go. It is difficult to imagine a common universe for homo and heterosexuals in a patriarchal order that still justifies honour killings. Lesbianism in India has thus posed a challenge not only to the study of gender or feminist history but also to patriarchy and the hegemony of heteronormativity. But most importantly, lesbian history has forced us to rethink the assumption that identity is fixed and definable.

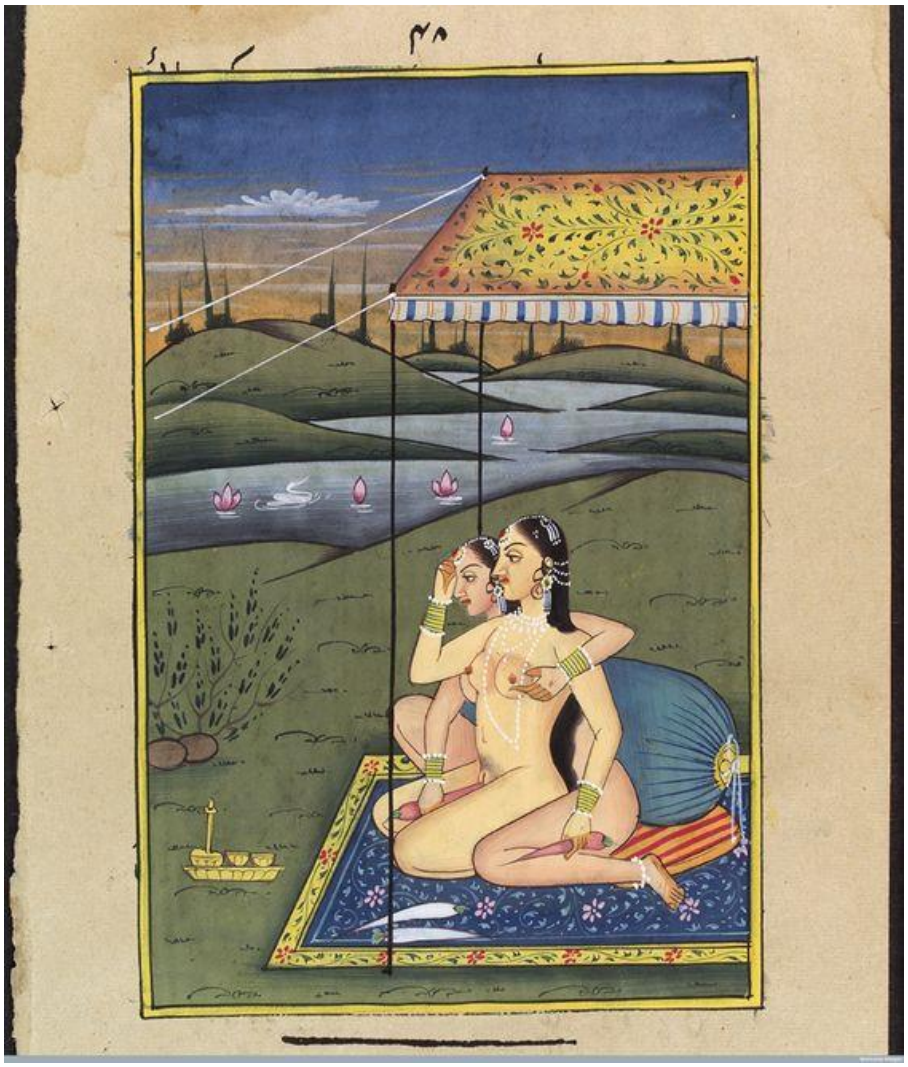

Image of 18th century Rekhti poem depicting female homosexualty of Mughal India.

14.3 SEXUALITY AND MEDICINE

Sexual intercourse is an important part of marriage in the Muslim faith, and medical works on the subject reflect that belief. A genre of medieval text known as kitab al-bah—books on the libido—explored both reproduction and eroticism as well as embryology, obstetrics, and paediatrics. Issues of sexual health were also addressed, with attention given to sexual disorders, impotence, and loss of desire. Authors also covered aphrodisiacs and substances that decreased libido. These treatises fascinated the British traveller and scholar Richard F. Burton, who collected copies for study in Britain. Burton also translated the great Mideastern classic One Thousand and One Nights, a work whose sexual frankness delighted lovers of Arabic culture—but scandalized Victorian England.

18th century Mughal miniature displaying sexual intoxication concoctions

SEXUAL INTOXICATION

OPIUM

According to Yule and Burnell, the word in origin is not oriental, but Greek, from which the Arabs took afün. The opium-poppy was introduced into China, from Arabia, at the beginning of the ninth century. Its earliest Chinese name is a-fu.yung, a representative of the Arabic name. The Arab afyün, is occasionally called afin which is incorrect. The Bengalis derived it from ahi-feno, 'serpent-home. Writing in c. 70 A.D., Pliny says that 'opium' had the power not only to provoke sleep, but kill the consumer in sleep if taken in a great quantity. He himself had known many persons meeting with death in this manner. In 1511 A.D., the Portugese General Alboquerque captured eight Gujarati ships having many rich stuffs, much merchandise and arfiunaa. It was also known as the 'milk of poppies' ' It was called 'amfion' by the Portugese, safion' by the Arabians, the Moors and the Indians, and 'opio' or opium in Latin q. Opium was taken from a black, bitter extract, informs Manrique4 Opium was made of 'sleepe balles of Poppie, and is the gumme which commeth

forth of the same, to ye which and it is cut up and opened', writes the Dutch traveller, Linschotenb. The English factor John Marshall who wrote his account in 1669, says : 'Tis a large white flower about I { yard from (the) ground. They sow the seed in October, and tis ripe in February. The flower closeth, and after a few days they cut 2 or 3 slits in the sides of it out of which cometh a white juice which they let dry, then wipe or scrape it, which is Ophium. Then they again slit it, till any juice will come out, which is not above 3 or 4 drops, and that which they preserve for seed, they cut not. Out of an acre of ground will not come above 40 or 50 seers, which sometimes is worth 700 or 800 rupees'.

Persons addict to the use of opium could not survive if they were deprived of it for four or five days. Similarly, those who took a big dose of the same for the first time. were sure to die as it was a kind of poison. Those who regularly consumed opium, always behaved as if they were half asleep. Garcia (1563 A.D.) knew a secretary of Nizam-ul-MuIk who consumed 3 tolas worth of opium every day and always kept sleeping or dosing, although when put to business, spoke like a man of letters and distinctions. Opium was mostly taken by manual workers to avoid the tedium of hard labour. The people of Malabar were particularly fond of opium and got it from Cambay in large quantities. Garcia is of the opinion that the opium of Cambay actually came from Malwal) . The Malabar people got it from the Dutch in exchange for pepper supplied to them from the East Indies. They used it rather 'very greedily' and took the quantity of a 'bigness of a pea'. This they took either with 'araq' or alone. Some had accustomed themselves to use 'amsion' every day, some every two or three days. Its use made them forgetful of everything else. The Malabars liked to eat opium before engagement with the enemy as it blurred their memory and filled them with vigour and energy' S. Pelsaert ,thought the same of the Rajput: who were excellent soldiers 'because the quantity of opium they ate excited them.

A letter written by an English factor, Oxenden, from Karwar on the Malabar coast to the East India Company on January I, 1666, reads : "The natives of those parts not being able to live without opium, which the? Now cannot have but from the Dutch, who have already brought into such esteem among them, that they have all the pepper which is the

growth of these parts in truck for it giving their ophium at such rates that the pepper comes in to them at lid and lid per pound"

: "Soon after he {Governor) called for a Mandelslo writes (1638-39) little golden cabinet, enriched with precious stones, and having taken out two drawers, out of one he took omon, or opium, and out of the other Bengi, a certain drug, or powder, made of the leaves and seed of hemp, which they use to excite luxury. Manrique observed that opium was used by the 'Orientals' to assist in the gratification of lust and lewdness, by increasing their sexual powerlt. His statement is endorsed by Linschoten who came to India much earlier, for it maketh a. He is of the opinion that they used it "most for lecherie man to bold his seede long before he sheddeth it, which the Indian women although much desire, that they may shed their nature likewise with the man : such as eat much thereof, are in time altogether unable to company with a woman, and wholly dried up, for it drieth and wholly cooleth mans nature that useth it, as the Indians doe themselves witnes"

Mughal princes and nobles were known in certain cases for their fondness for opium. According to John Marshall, the best opium came from Patna. That of Munghir was no goodi. Linschoten says that opium was brought from Cairo and Aden, and the opium that came from Cam bay and Aden was softer and reddish'

The English prosecuted a rich trade in opium and sent large quantities of the commodity from Surat to Persia, Arabia and Europe. Later on, the East India Company enjoyed a monopoly in the opium trade". The Dutch also carried on a flourishing trade in opium and enjoyed a monopoly on the Malabar coast". As these commercial activities in this trade continued in the reign of Aurangzeb, his orders prohibiting the use and sale of opium may have not been very effective". The large export and excessive use Of opium resulted in the increase of its price. It sold at Surat in 1609 from 80 to 120 mahmudis per maund'5. The Misri or Egyptian opium sold at 16 Mahmudis per seer.

18th century painting of an intoxicated Mughal lady.

POST

Post was well mixed up in water until a black bitter extract was formed. This solution enormously increased sexual power, though it destroyed natural strength and after two or three years rendered the person using it absolutely impotent and unfit for any kind of activity.

BHANG

The word is derived from Sanskrit bhäng. It meant the dried leaves and small stalks of hemp, used for intoxication, either by smoking or eating mixed up into a sweetmeat, i.e. majoon. The Arabs call it hashish. According to Birdwood, it consists of the 'tender tops of the plants after flowering'* Fryer calls bhäng a 'pleasant intoxicating seed mixed with Milk. He says further: "...the Plant of which Bang is made...grows as our Hemp, the Juice of whose Seed ground in bowl like Mustard-seed, and mixed with ether liquor, is that they equivocate with their Prophet instead of the Grape"". According to Alexander Hamilton, it was made 'of a Seed like Hemp-Seed, that has an intoxicating Quality. It had a seed like that of the hemp, though somewhat smaller and not so white. "Also the thing whereon it groweth is like Hemp, but it hath no substance whereof it make anything," says Linschotena.. Mentioning the qualities of bhäng, Lockyer, that being used "as Tea, it inebriates, or exhilarates them according to the quantity they take" Linschoten says that bhäig served

the same purpose as the 'Amfion. The Indians ate its seeds or its leaves after stamping them to stimulate their appetite. They, however, used it "most to provoke lust".

It was sold in market mingled with some powder of the leaves and the seeds together. In order to intoxicate a person they put green areca into it. Occasionally they mixed it with nutmegs and mace which also inebriated a person. The rich and wealthy people mixed it with cloves, amber, musk and opium which made them pleasant and forgetful. The workers and labourers could do their difficult and arduous jobs ' 'without once thinking of any pain ; but only laughing, playing, and sleeping quietly". It made the slaves forget their labour. It caused those who ate it ' 'to reele and look as if they were drunk, and half foolish, doing nothing but laugh and been drunk, as long as it worketh in their bodies". It was a certain "small comfort to a melancholy person" S'. He says further that the Portugese also used bhäig. The common women or whores used it when they meant to 'have a many companie, thereby to be lively and merrie. and to set all care aside."

According to him, it was first invented by captains and soldiers who had "layne long in the field, continually waking and with great travel" and desiring to seek comfort According to R. F. Burton, the "use of Bhang doubtless dates from the dawn of civilization, whose earliest social pleasures would be inebriants. Crawford John in his book, "Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries", opines that hemp, as a product of the Indian Archi- pelago, was first seen at Achin (Sumatra) by the observant William Dampier in 1688 "A new Voyage Round the World", William Dampier writes that he found in Ächin "a sort of Herb or Plam called Ganja or Bhang". "that if it is infused with any is reported of this Plant," he further writes, Liquor, it will stupefy the brains of any person that drinks thereof; but it operates diversely, according to the constitution of the person. Some it makes sleepy, some merry, putting them into Laughing fit, and others it makes mad ; but after 2 or 3 hours they come to themselves know it is much esteemed here, and in other places too whither it is Mandelson's observation of the mixed use of bhang and opium has been recordcd above".

Thomas Bowery, an Englishman, was in the East from 1669 to 1679 and wrote an interesting and informative account of his travels entitled ' 'Countries Round the Bay of Bengal''. While in Bengal, he, along with about ten of his companions, had an opportunity of enjoying bhäng. He has narrated the experience undergone by all of them. One of them, says he, sat down on the floor and spent the entire afternoon weeping bitterly. Another, overtaken by a certain fear, did 'runn his head into a Mortavan (martabän) Jarr, and continued that posture 4 hours or more, 4 or 5 of the number lay upon the carpets highly Complimenting each Other in High Termes, each man fancying himself no less than an Emperor. One was quarrelsome and fought with one of the wooden Pillars of the Porch, until he had left himself little skin upon the knuckles or his fingers. My Selfe and one Sat sweatings for the Space of 3 hours in Exceedinge measure''.

DHATÜRA

The word is from Sanskrit Dhattara.' It was a common herb that grew in almost every field. The leaf is sharp at the end. From the flower or blossom of this plant grew a bud, like that of poppy, containing small kernels or seeds resembling those of melon. The seeds, ground and mixed with meat, water or wine, created strange sensations in the persons who ate or drank the composition. It made him laugh without any understanding or induced him to sleep. Sometimes it made him sleep in a manner as if he were dead. He could continue in that condition for 24 hours. He regained consciousness only if his feet were washed with cold water. Garcia de Orta mentions the common use of this by thieves in India. It produced in the victim 'temporary alienation of mind, and violent laughter, permitting the thief to act unopposed'' '

' 'Garcias ab Horto makes mention of an herb called Datura, which if it be eaten, for 24 hours following, takes away all sense of grief, makes him incline to laughter and mirth.' According to Linschoten, the Indian and Portugese wives gave this herb frequently to their husbands whenever they were 'disposed to bee merrie with their secret lovers.' This enabled them to 'performed their lecherie together in his presence' and the poor fellow, in the meantime, kept 'sitting with eyes wide open, not

doing or saying anything, but laugh or grin like a foole, or a man out of his wits.' On coming to senses, he was under the impression that he was only asleep all the time." This is endorsed by the French traveller, Pyrard of Laval, who visited India during the reign of Jahangir. He writes that the women of the Indies made much use in their amorous designs of this herb which was called in Maldives as 'Moet 01,' i.e. 'Madman's herb' and in Jndia as dha:ura. Whenever they wished to 'enjoy their amours in all security,' they infused this herb in their beverages or in soup and gave it to their husbands. An hour later, they became giddy and insensible, singing, laughing and performing a thousand antics.' As they had lost ail consciousness, the wives made use of the time 'admitting whom they will, and taking their pleasures in the presence oi their husbands' who were aware of nothing. They remained under its influence for about six hours. They were overtaken by sleep and when they awoke they had the impression that they had been asleep all the time.

Men gave this drug to their women friends to have greater sexual pleasure, without the women detecting its use. When Pyrard was in Goa, 'many were found to have become pregnant without knowing whence this happened to them.' And all this had resulted as a consequence of this drug. An excessive use of dhatüra could result in the death of the person consuming it. Slaves and maid-servants, when bribed by soldiers and others, would administer the drink to their mistresses and sell them to those persons." Herbert Moll writes that occasionally dhalüra was drunk by some persons It intoxicated them like a strong liquor." after powdering it in water. Maid-servants used it for robbing their mistresses.' Slaves and servants administered the herb to their masters whom they robbed by breaking open their chests.'

TOBACCO

Mr. J.T. Platt, in his Dictionary of Urdu, Classical Hindi and English (London, 1884), says that the word tobacco is from the language of Hayti, and meant, 'first, the pipe, secondly, the plant, thirdly, the sleep which followed its use

According to Girolamo Benzoni, the use of tobacco was very prevalent in Gautemala and Nicaragua among the Indians in the middle of the

sixteenth century. He himself found the smell of tobacco very offensive. The author of Määsir-i•Rahimi makes us believe that tobacco came from Europe to the Deccan and from there to upper India, during the reign of Akbar. Soon it came in common use in the country. Writing in about 1605, Asad Beg says that he had found some tobacco in Bijapur. "Never having seen the like in India,' he brought some with him and prepared a handsome pipe of jewel work. When Akbar saw this pipe and its appurtenances in a tray among the presents brought for him by Asad Beg, he felt surprised and fascinated ; examined and then inquired about it. Khän-i-'Äzam told him that it was tobacco, known in Mecca and Medina, and brought by Asad Beg for him. Under the Emperor's orders, Asad Beg prepared the pipe for him and Akbar started smoking the same till his physicians stopped him from doing so. As Asad Beg had brought large supply of tobacco and pipes, he sent some to several of the nobles and thus the 'practice was introduced. After that the merchants began to sell, so the custom of smoking spread rapidly. Smoking seems to have become common in India in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The English traveller Robert Coverte presented half a pound of tobacco to a Mughal officer near Agra in 1609.59 In October, 1613, William Bidulph, an English factor, wrote to the East India Company that he had acquired the services of one mariner, Robert Clarkson who had attained special skill 'in making up of tobacco.' He was of the view that at Surat there was a great quantity of tobacco to be had 'at an easy rate' of about 12d. per pound 'all charges cleared aboard.' He was hopeful that it would prove a 'good commodity for England if the tediousness of the voyage did not spoil it. Another English factor informed the Company in his letter of November 9, 1613, that plenty of tobacco was available at Ahmadabad. He also referred to the expert knowledge of Clarkson in the matter of making tobacco. He thought it fit 'to put in practice, which I think will be the great benefit of the Company.'

Sir Thomas Roe had written to Pepwell at Surat to purchase for him a supply of tobacco 'sweet, but not very strong, some 4 pounds, not exceeding 12s. per pound.

The Portugese traveller Manrique was obliged to part with some money to enable the servants of kotwali at Thatta in Sind to smoke tobacco. He

had been taken to the kotwali on some suspicion." Edward Terry who was in India at the end of the second decade of the seventeenth century, found abundant growth and frequent use of tobacco in the country. The method of using tobacco here seemed to him strange, much different from that of the Europeans : 'for first, they have little earthen pots, shaped like our small flowerpots, having a neck, and open round top, out of the belly of which comes a small spout, to the lower part of which they fill the Pot with water ; then putting their Tobacco loose in the top, and a burning coal upon it, they, having first fastened a very small straight and hollow cane of reed (not bigger than a small arrow) within that spout, a yard or ell long, the pot standing on the ground, draw that smoke into their mouths which first falls upon the Superfices of the water, and much discolours it. And this way of taking their Tobacco, they believe, makes it much more cool and wholesome. The Tobacco, which grows there, is doubtless in the Plant ag good as in any other place of the world, but they not know how to cure and order it, like those in the West-Indies, to make it rich and strong.

Manucci saw the Burmese Ambassadors smoking tobacco through a long caned. On the Coromandel Coast people smoked bunco (bidi 2) or cheroot. Writing at about the end of the third quarter of the seventeenth century, the English traveller, Thomas Bowery, has given an account of this habit of the people there. This is perhaps the first reference to the word He says that the poorer sorts of inhabitants, viz. the Hindus and other Malabar people smoked their tobacco after a very 'mean' but 'original manner', 'Only leafed rowed up, and light one end, and holding the other between their lips, and Smoke until it is so far Consumed as to warmed their lips, and then leave the End away : this is called a bunco, and by the Portuguese a cheroote.

Bowery found the 'natives' on the Coromandel Coast smoking 'much tobacco'. Even 3 or 4 years old children were smoking there in those early days, He found this habit very 'frequent' among them. Charles Lockyer wrote in 1711 : For want of pipes the inhabitants of the Coromandel Coast smoked in buncos. 'A Bunco is a little Tobacco wrapt up in the Leaf of a Tree, about the Bigness of one's little Finger, they

light one end, and draw the Smoke thro' the are curiously made up, and sold twenty or thirty in a bundle'6S.

This was endorsed 15 years later by Valentijo. He found the people in the habit of eating areca nut and smoking tobacco. They did so after a meal and also on other occasions and regarded this as 'one of their greatest delights'. Women smoked with a 'Bungkos or dry leaf rolled up, and the men with a Gorregorri (a little can or flower pot) whereby they both manage to pass most of their time'. (By Gorregorri is meant Malay guri-guri, 'a small earthenware pot, also used for holding provisions70'.) According to Grose (1760 A.D.), Buncus was the 'tobacco leaf, simply rolled up. in about a finger's length and is of the same make as what the West Indians term as segar ; and of this the Gentoos chiefly make user' Fryer says that bunco, i.e. tobacco was the product of the Malabar coast' e.

Because of its harmful effects, Jahangir declared tobacco-smoking as an evil. He was convinced that its. Consumption created 'disturbance' in 'most' temperaments and constitutions'. Accordingly, he ordered in 1617 that 'no one should smoke it (literally draw it) . He had perhaps taken the cue from the Persian ruler Shah 'Abbas who had already issued strict orders against the use of tobacco in his country . Tobacco was not cultivated in Japan till 1605. In 1612 and 1615 the Japanese Emperor (Shogun) prohibited both the culture and use of tobacco.

In 1613, he ordered the apprehension of about 150 persons for carrying on trade in that commodity . By 1651, the law was so relaxed there that smoking was permitted, but only out.of doors '. Jahangir's order seemed to have failed in its objective. Rather, a flourishing trade, both internal and external, developed in tobacco. That naturally was consequent upon its increasing consumption. The English factory records bear testimony to the growing trade in tobacco after the Emperor's order of 1617. Tobacco culture started in different parts of the country. Besides other places, it was found in abundance in Masulipatam from where it was shipped to Persia , Mokha and other ports of the Red Sea and also to England. In order to discourage the increasing private trade in tobacco, the President of the East India Company in Surat was obliged to issue

orders that in no case "should tobacco be allowed to pester and fill up the ships""

Later on the Company enjoyed a monopoly of tobacco in Bombay". The price of tobacco in 1619 was 4 mahmudis and 18 Pice per maund. An unknown Persian author of the seventeenth century, has left an interesting account of the culture and use of tobacco in the days of Shahjahan. He says that when in the beginning, tobacco was imported from Europe, its 'rarity prevented it from coming into general use'. Its culture, however, became 'speedily universal almost into Hindostan'. Its produce within a short period after its introduction rewarded the cultivator 'far beyond every other article of Husbandry'. This was particularly the case during the reign of Shahjahan when the practice and habit of smoking pervaded all classes and ranks within the Empire. "Nobles and Beggars, Pious and Wicked, Devotees and Freethinkers, poets, historians, rhetoricians, doctors and patients, high and low, rich and poor, all! all seemed intoxicated with a decided preference over other luxury, nay even often over the necessities of life. To a stranger no offering was so acceptable as a Whiff and to a friend one could produce nothing half so grateful as a Chillum". The habit became so rooted that the confirmed smoker preferred to remain without food and drink rather than "relinquish the gratification he derived from inhaling the Fumes of this deleterious Plant ! Nature recoils at the very idea of touching the saliva of another person, yet in the present instance our Tobacco smokers pass the moistened Tube from one mouth to another without hesitation on the

Without one hand, and it is received with complacency on the other doubt the Hookah is a most pleasing companion; whether to the way worn traveller or to the solitary hermit. It is a friend in whose bosom we may repose our most confidential secrets ; and a counsellor upon whose advice we may rely in our most important concerns. It is an elegant ornament in our it gives joy to the bachelor in our public halls. The private apartments ; music of its sound puts the warbling of the nightingale to shame, and the fragrance of its perfume brings a blush on the cheek of the rose. Life in short is prolonged by the fumes inhaled at

each inspiration, while every expiration of them is accompanied with ecstatic delight."

Tobacco was brought to Europe in 1558 by Francisco Fernandes who had been sent to Mexico by King Philip II of Spain. The French Ambassador to Portugal, Jean Nicoti sent the seeds of the plant to Queen Catherine de' Medici. Nicot's name has been perpetuated in the scientific name of the genus Nicotiana. If the tobacco plant came to Europe through Spain, its use spread to the continent through England. Sir Walter Raleigh took a pipe of tobacco a little before he went to the scaffold and he came to know of its use from Ralph Lane. the first Governor of Virginia, and Sir Francis Drake. From then onwards the habit of smoking tobacco got rooted in England, from where it spread miraculously to the whole of Europe and became a general practice in the 17th century. By the end of the first decade of the century (1610 A.D.) the habit of smoking tobacco became quite common with the Turks who also had become 'incredible takers of Opium.' They took it through reeds 'that have joined unto them great heads of wood to containe it... ...they will take it in comers, and are so ignorant therein, that which in England is not saleable, doth passe here amongst them for most excellent'.

By 1616 tobacco came to be known for its 'miraculous omnipotence'. It became a general belief that it could cure all sorts of diseases... ...in all persons and at an times.... It cures the gout in the feet . It helps all sorts of agues. It refreshes a weary man, and yet makes a man hungry'. If one took it before going to bed, be could enjoy sound sleep. It awakened the brain and quickened the understanding of sleepy or drowsy persons. Such was the 'omnipotent power of Tobacco at that time.

Check your progress –

1. Write about the opium intoxication in India.
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2. Discuss about the Bhang intoxication in India.

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14.4 LETS SUM UP

Gender studies in 18th century Mughal India involves the sexual philosophy, orientation that was undergoing a silent revolution in the inside of harem of various higher class families, which includes, different modes of pleasure, concoctions and lifestyle changes under the garb of purdah, was witness to changes in social and cultural changes of Islamic India.

14.5 KEYWORDS

Rekhti – Urdu feminist homosexual poetry

Riti – Mannerism poetry

Javanmardi – Young fertile male

14.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the Rekhti and riti poetry.

2. Discuss about the various intoxications available as medicines for sexual upliftment.

14.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

Vanita, Ruth, Born of Two Vaginas: Love and Reproduction between Co-Wives in some Medieval Indian Texts, GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 11.4, 2005

Chapat bazi, dogana, zanakhi, sa‟tar,etc. Ruth Vanita, "Gender, Language and Genre: Hindus, Muslims, Men, Women and Lesbian Love in Nineteenth Century Urdu Rekhti Poetry," in her Gandhi‟s Tiger and

Sita‟s Smile: Essays on Gender, Sexuality and Culture (Yoda Press, New Delhi, 2005

14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Section – 14.4

2. Section – 14.4