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FOREWORD

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that I present the inaugural issue of the Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ) to the global community of scholars, researchers, and students. Named in reverence to the towering legacy of Allama Shibli Nomani — a scholar whose intellectual contributions transcended boundaries of language, discipline, and geography — this journal aspires to carry forward that same spirit of rigorous, cross-cultural inquiry.



SNAJ was conceived from a simple but pressing conviction: that meaningful scholarship should not be confined by the language in which it is written, nor by the discipline from which it emerges. India's intellectual tradition has long thrived at the confluence of languages — English, Hindi, and Urdu among them — and it is this confluence that our journal seeks to honour. By welcoming original research across the humanities, social sciences, education, and emerging interdisciplinary, multilingual fields, we hope to build a genuinely inclusive platform for academic dialogue.

As Chief Editor, I have had the privilege of witnessing the dedication of our editorial board, reviewers, and contributors, whose collective commitment has shaped this first issue. Every article herein has passed through a rigorous double-blind peer review/ indexed process, and each is assigned a Crossref indexing, registered DOI, reflecting our unwavering commitment to academic integrity, originality, and permanence in the global research ecosystem.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed reviewers, editorial board members, and the scholars who entrusted us with their research. It is through their collective effort that this journal has moved from vision to reality. I also invite researchers, academicians, and students from across disciplines and linguistic traditions to consider SNAJ as a home for their scholarship in the issues to come.

It is my sincere hope that this journal will serve not merely as a repository of research, but as a living, evolving conversation — one that bridges languages, disciplines, and generations of scholars in pursuit of knowledge.

With warm regards,

Dr. Mohammad Zahid

Chief Editor
Shibli National Academic Journal (SNAJ)

Polity, society and culture in the age of shift: Indo-Persian sources¹

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Abstract: This paper examines the political, social and cultural transformations of late Mughal India through the lens of Indo-Persian sources. Moving beyond the binary of “decline” versus “cultural efflorescence,” it argues that the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are better understood as an age of shift, in which authority moved from the imperial centre to regional powers, courtly nobility, and eventually to European trading companies. Drawing on chronicles, akhbarat, malfuz literature, lexicons, travelogues and poetry in Persian and Urdu, the paper traces changing hierarchies of birth and status (Ashraf, Kam-aseel, Razil), the rise of powerful courtiers and eunuchs, the migration of culture from court to regional centres, the emergence of commissioned Persian writings under the East India Company, and the linguistic absorption of European words and idioms into Indo-Persian usage. The paper also considers non-literary and technical Persian sources and the later impact of print and lithography, situating these developments within a broader reassessment of eighteenth-century Indo-Persian historiography.

Keywords: Indo-Persian sources; Late Mughal history; Eighteenth century decline; Persian historiography; Regional courts; Akhbarat; Malfuz literature

In last few decades, earlier thesis on fast changes emerged in post-Aurangzeb period are relooked and two pictures are largely painted, i.e. weak governance of the Post-Aurangzeb monarchy, emergences of regional powers, marauding and looting of Indian wealth by Nadir Shah and Shah Abdali (who was invited by Shah Waliullah)² and capturing pan-India power by alien/European- English forces who came as traders and became masters. It is not a myth that India’s economy was like a shining gold. In 1664, as per the Akhbarat, (Bikaner) dated 16th

¹Prof. Chander Shekhar, Dept. of Persian, faculty of arts, Delhi university. This paper was originally preseted in a work shop in London School of Economics in June, 2017. It was not sent for publication earlier anywhere. Apart from Persian and Arabic there are some specimen cited from the contemporary Urdu sources too.

² For detail, see *Maktubat-e Shah Waliullah* who provides a detail as a factsheet in his invitation to Shah Abdali. For detail on Shah Abdali’s marauding and looting, see an untapped Persian source, *Gulshan-e Sadiq* of Shakir Khan, Khuda Bakhsh Lib. Ms.

May, 1664 (RY10), the total revenue, according to Rai Lal Chand, one Arab, 6 crore and 70 lac. (Equal to \$11,478,000 USD) (i.e. approx. 11.5 billion in 1664) And only three lac rupees additionally were spent. On this report, Aurangzeb sternly stated that expenditure must be met according to the receipt.

- In 4th decade of 18th C. Nadir Shah, the Persian ruler, carried away an astronomical amount of wealth from Delhi after his invasion in 1739. The plunder is generally estimated to be worth **70 crores of rupees (Rs 700 million)** of the 18th-century currency, with some estimates suggesting a value up to \$10 billion USD in today's terms. The massive booty included cash, gold, silver, precious stones, and the celebrated Peacock Throne, which was so substantial that Nadir Shah exempted his own people from taxes for three years. (he could invade as the Mughal rule had declined too much).

Just after a gap of 20 years, Ahmad Shah Abdali (also known as Ahmad Shah Durrani) conducted multiple invasions of India in the 18th century, with his fourth invasion in 1756–1757, including the sack of Delhi, being the most significant in terms of plunder. Contemporary estimates indicate he carried away tens of millions, potentially up to 300 million, rupees in wealth.

These developments resulted with more severe consequences in late 18th and 19th centuries. Enormous changes, especially in the political, societal and cultural fronts are reflected in various types of sources in Persian, Urdu and vernacular languages.

There are different outlooks to see the fast emerging changes on all fronts, one may call it downfall-which was not a total collapse, but a shift in power, first reined by regional powerful groups and later by non-Indians. In this manner, it was a truly an age of shift because even though, the political or courtly developments have been always a part of court politics³ yet one observes the swift change in above vistas with much more speed in these two centuries.

³Of course, these unabatedly continued in the time of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. There are certain hand written letters of DaraShukoh, his wife NadiraBano Begum and Aurangzeb in Bikaner State Library, addressed to Mirza Raja Jai Singh. The letters of the first two are in a very pleading language seeking the complete support against Aurangzeb and Shah Shuja. Mirza Raja Jai Singh accepted the royal order of Shah Jahan and reached to the fort of Munger and forced Shuja to flee from there. But when, Mirza Raja Jai Singh was asked to reach Agra to support DaraShukoh, he, on the pretext of blocking way of retreat of Shah Shuja to Munger, continued his stay there. But in reality, he was observing the changing wind of the war of succession. Amongst other letters, addressed by Aurangzeb to Mirza Raja Jai Singh in the same period depict that Aurangzeb's skillful way of appeasement by appreciating in a highly eulogistic manner the kind of building and orchards, especially the vineyard, having Fakhari grapes which Aurangzeb especially mentions, constructed by Mirza Raja Jaisingh at Burhanpur. These all textual witness reveal that still the crown prince or the king were at the helm of the affair but in post Aurangzeb period the commanding power slipped downwards to the nobility (Bikaner Archives, Rajasthan, Jaipur collection).

The consequences of the shift of power or downfall/decline of central authority or the set-convention of rulers and ruling class have been also attributed to the *Aseel*, *Kam-aseel*, *Ashraf*, or nobles and plebeians. These differential parameters are not limited to Persian sources of Indian history and can be found as elsewhere too. In Islam, theoretically one may read the multiple counsels on equality, but our sources reveal how the *Razil* or *Kam maya* or *doon* or the down trodden, people of low birth or bad origin were always selectively targeted in the imperial system. This was not only in the Mughal period but was evidenced from the very beginning of Islamic rule in India. Even those who embraced Islam and were native to the Indian subcontinent were never considered to be of equal status and were not given the same opportunities. This can be seen through a critical study of *AdabulHarb*⁴ which in the course of highlighting the essential qualifications of a Wazir, Alim and the Rasul or Ambassador seems to become a normative manual. Perhaps, in the court of Balban these qualifications were strictly followed. Ziauddin Barni too followed *Fakhar-e-Mudabbir* in projecting the laid down characteristics for the appointments on the higher and middle level royal establishment from the elite class only. He eulogizes Balban on following these parameters strictly and provides detail on a case in which one *Mahiyar*, a new convert to Islam was introduced to become the revenue officer in the Iqta of Badoun. Sultan Balban got furious on introducing the non-Iranian newly convert. He summoned all the elite ministers and warned them not to repeat such a blunder. He also ordered an investigation to find out people of “low birth and non-origin” and weed them out of all important positions. Sarcastically, one of his ministers who wanted also to weed out the *Kam Asil* from the elite nobility, said: *Don’t give pen to a low-birth, as it will empower him, but out of his instilled ignorance he can use the stone of Ka’ba for cleansing after urination*”. (TF, , Aligarh)⁵

As a result, about 300 personnel who were from the above groups were removed from various positions. One may also find certain treatises, like *Risala-e-aiyyar ulHasab* by Shaikh Muhib Ali, an A’lim of Shah Jahan’s time. It is said there had been one from Fakhre-Mudabbir too but not traceable yet. The aforementioned text is a part of *Majma’ulAfkar*⁶, a work by unanimous compiler of late 18th c. It deliberates on the variety of subjects related to the authenticity of one who considers himself as a person of elite birth. Similarly, when many people of low birth/

⁴Fakhr-e-Mudabbir, *AdabulHarb*, Ed.SuhailiKhansari edition, Tehran, 1364, V & VIth, pp. 128-150

⁵ “TF, P. 38, Kolkatta, 1862

⁶*Majma’ulAfkar*, ed. ChanderShekhar, published by National Mission for Manuscripts, New Delhi, 2016, two vols.This treatise having 23 pages.

origin or *Kam-aseel* started claiming to be from the elite class in 18thc, it led to reactionary works from many writers who also included a warning to exhort such false claimant and reiterated the characteristics of the high birth or the blue-blooded nobility. Amongst these writings is a *Mirzanama* of Shah Jahan's period⁷ and similar tones can be found in many superb sarcastic poetical compositions of Zataali.

Amongst the resultant effects of the shifts in political fortunes, the men or women not only shifted from central court to the nobility, as mentioned in the *Muraqqa-e-Dehli* with regard to Noor Bai, many others migrated to other regional patrons. Travelogues by the writers and poets of other regions, like Nawab Dargah Quli Khan revealed the true picture of the transition –both within the court and the effect outside the court on society and culture. The demonstration of culture which was once the monopoly of the royal court has moved out to the local populace or the lower nobility. Though one may say that the transition is from kingship to the nobility too, as one can ascertain from the case of Noor Bai, the famous dancer of Muhammad Shah's court.⁸

Similar case of migration can be read in the preamble of Rag Darshan of Karim Khan, son of Khushhal Khan. Karim Khan shifted from the Mughal court in Delhi to Hyderabad in late 18th c and same was the case of the family of Chanda Bibi Mahlaqa Bai, whose mother shifted from Delhi first to Burhanpur, then to Aurangabad and finally to Hyderabad where the luck of the newly born girls Chandabibi shined to its great height. She was amongst the royal personage of her time who was even conferred a large piece of land, incidentally today occupied by Osmania University and its colleges.

In the introduction of our English translation of *Muraqqa-e Dehli* of Dargah Quli Khan⁹, we had argued that a careful analysis of the text clearly bears out the fact of cultural efflorescence during the later phase of the eighteenth century. But recent critical studies, led to a need for reconsideration of these ideas, especially when we contrast cultural excellence with material decline. It is also necessary to discuss the theory of 'shift or decline', both in the society and

⁷Anonymous writer's treatise from 17th c, for detail see, Aziz Ahmad, *The British Museum Mīrzanāma and the Seventeenth Century Mīrza in India*, Vol. 13 (1975), pp. 99-110 Published by: British Institute of Persian Studies

⁸Munshi Abdul Karim in his *Bayan-e-Waqai* also provides an interesting anecdote related to the dance performance by Noor Bai in the grand farewell function organized in honour of Nadir Shah. He was so enamoured by the beauty of the said damsel, he commanded that she will also accompany her to Iran. Listening this command, She fell ill and had severe dysentery. Muhammad Shah pleaded Nadir Shah to leave her aside and can choose any one else.

⁹Dargah Quli Khan, *Muraqqa-e Dehli*, Eng. Transl. Chandershekhar & Shama Mitra Chenoy, Deputy Publications, New Delhi, 1989, p. xxxv (Introduction)

court. The epitome of the centralization of power shifted from the emperor to the powerful nobility, for instance, the kingmakers Syed Brothers, Nizam Ali Khan AsafJah II, Qamruddin Khan, to name a few. In the later period power devolved into the hands of powerful nobles like Ghaziuddin Khan and the newly minted power grabbers-the eunuchs. According to 'Ain-e-Akbari, the eunuchs were referred to as *Khwaja seras*', and they were the guards posted outside the *Harem* i.e. inner apartments of the Emperor. It is interesting to note that their influence was already on a rise from the end of the 17th c. and powerful eunuchs, like Bakhtawar Khan, (author of *MiratulAlam*), Javed Khan, Almas Beg, etc. not only rose to power but held on to it for a long time.

Shakir Khan, author of *Tarikh-e-ShakirKhani*, provides a list of almost 18 *khwajaseras*' holding various elite court positions till the time of Ahmad Shah. It is important here to note the precariousness of the ever-shifting power structures in the later Mughal period. For instance, in the 18th century, Javed Khan was amongst one of the most powerful eunuchs in Awadh but was brutally assassinated by NawabSafdar Jung on grounds of insecurities. The Nawab felt threatened because he was not consulted by the above-mentioned *khwaja sera* for the appointment of various important court positions. For instance, Javed Khan did not consult him for the appointment of two *subedars* to be posted in Punjab and Multan. Furthermore, Javed Khan was also a favorite of the mother queen, Qudsia Begam and the Nawab felt vulnerable in the face of the eunuch's burgeoning power.

It is also interesting to mention that this assassination was recorded by several contemporary accounts, and the tenor of the reportage suggests that this was a justified act on behalf of the said Nawab. For instance, the *Bayan- e Waqai*' of Abdul Karim khan, *Tarikh-e-AhmadShahi*, *Zikr-e-Mir* of Mir Taqi Mir, the renowned poet of 18th c. or *Tarikh-e-Muzaffari* of Muhammad Ansari, nephew of Shakir Khan, and some other work of this period vividly describe the aforesaid event. Not even one of them condemns the assassination but display a sense of relief on Javed Khan's tragic end. The topsy-turvy fluid political environment and the ever-changing hierarchies of power are depicted in the following verses of Urdu:

Aisewaisekaisekaise ho gaye,

Kaisekaiseaisewaise ho gaye.

(Free translation: Those who were ignoble reached the highest pedestal of power,

And those who were at the threshold of dignity tumbled down to the bottom.)

Or, Hatim (1699-1781) who highlights the rise of ignoble ones in the following verses:

Who jo thudeKoTaresteThe so is Daurmeinaaj

Hui(n)ye Hain Sahib e Mal o Mahal o Fil o Nishan

.....

Ai khudaKhub hi Khah Hai ye kisi ne misra

Yani Naimte Be Sagan Bakhshi wa Daulat be Khraran

(Those who yarned for parched grains once,

Today they are owners of property, places and elephants as mark of rank

How well someone has said this hemistich:

Thou bestowed riches on dogs and power to donkeys¹⁰)

Likewise, Inshaullah Khan 'Insha', an eminent poet of 18th c. writes:

Najibo (n) kaAjabkuch Hal hai is daurmein, Yaro

JiseBujho, yahikahtehai(n) Ham bekarbaithe Hain

(Free translation- Elites are in changed position and status today, every one of them says, we are sitting idly. i.e. they are out of job)

It is noteworthy, that even in that period of decay, one can still notice the show of pomp and wealth on the occasions of marriages. Although to be fair, it was not only Delhi, but the regional power centers who were more in the celebrative mood. Mobid Kashmiri¹¹ depicts the various occasion of celebrations, including the birth of male child in the elite family of Jugal Kishor. His

¹⁰In History of Urdu Literature, OUP, Delhi, Pp. 104-05, Mohd. S. translated the word 'Daulat' as affluence, but it is more appropriate to be translated to power, as per the context.

¹¹ Only two copies of his collection, one in Bhandarkar Institute of oriental studies, Pune and other in British Library, London

grandson, Kunwar Prem Kishore Firaqi son of Kunwar Anand Kishore, seeing disturbed state of affairs and decline in the dignity of nobility became a mendicant and wrote a sufic treatise. Another work on contemporary historical events composed by him, *Waqai-e-AlamShahi*¹² is a mine of information. There are many others who took to the life of mysticism in this period of decline. Similarly, many poets recorded the disturbed state of affairs in their poetic compositions. For instance, poets from first half of 19th c. like Saa'datYar Khan Rangin (d. 1835), WaliMohd. Nazir (d. 1830) or ShaikhGhulamHamadani Mushafi (d.1824) were some of the satirical poets who described the worst state of affairs in Lucknow and other parts of Northern India.

Amongst the many swift changes experienced by the native royal masters – central or regional – the sudden appearance of the alien game changers from the trading and established the new power centers by providing military assistance first and then the king makers at central court as well as in other near and distant regions. This swift shift was significant in the period of decline at central court which had paved the way first to the rise of new regional powers, from Deccan to Oudh. Thus, decline, a term conceived at the end of era of great Mughals was not merely coined by the modern historian but reflected in the contemporary works of 18th c too. It can be assumed that from the view of the writers who contemporaneous to the later Mughal court that the changes taking place before their naked eyes were unimaginable to them and so termed it as 'decline'. But looking at the period through an alternative perspective, it can be studied both as a transition of power or the shift of time. One should also keep in mind that in 18th c., as the Persian sources reveal economic conditions or trade across the country or beyond the waters was on rise. It may be mentioned on the basis of Persian sources, like *Tarikh-e-Nuskha-e-Dilgusha* of Bhimsen Kaiyesth, traders and jewelers or the ornamental metal works exporters were not dependent on the royal officers to maintain law and order or to provide them protection against the onslaught of Marathas, but these traders and exporters used to settle the monthly pay off settlement with Marathas themselves to continue their trade uninterruptedly. BhimSen's work, a non-commissioned historical work, was condemned by Khafi khan in his work but ironically, he meticulously amalgamated Bhim Sen's writing in his own work. While it is an eye witness work by an independent writer who also ventured to different courts to get a position as a Munshi, for his Persian knowledge, but due to competition among the Hindu Persian knowing Munshi and

¹² Ms. No. 445/1831, Raza library, Rampur. I am indebted to Dr. Abhishek Kakker who gave me a digital copy of this work.

having no one to recommend him to the said position, finally had to settle in Bundela's court in Malwa, he provides ample information on the state of affair in late 17th and early 18th c. *Tarikh-e-FarrukhSiyari* of Muhammad Ahsan Ijad is another work based on the eye witness account. The detail of minute to minute state affairs at the court of FarrukhSiyar depict the royal court's engagement from early morning to late evening. Being a commissioned work, Ahsan Ijad endeavored to present each and every detail of the said court but was criticized for his proximity to the said brutal king.

The available detail, either on the decline or the resultant effects on polity, culture, society or literature as well as language can be seen in a way where everything is muddled with each other. Separating or sifting the issues, especially in the jargon of hyperbolic Persian of these sources is not an easy task. Most of the writers do not focus on one subject or a timeline when recording the events. Furthermore, many works begin as a chronicler whose intent is to record the events but later on drift away from its tract and become a diary of an observer, none the less these recorded events, are also important to study 18th c era. *Chahar Gulshan* of Rai Chaturman, a Munshi at the court of Ghaziuddin Khan, who also travelled up to Burhanpur and Ahmad Nagar, begins his work by providing a format and plan of his writing. But later on, it turns out to be more an updated A'in-e-Akbari of 18th c. However, its third and fourth *Gulshan* or chapters, provide the first-hand information on the geographical detail in the form of cartographic maps. According to Susan Gole, these are the first ever maps on European cartographic style included in a Mughal text. The last chapter provides detail on various Hindu-Muslim and Sikh religious and non-religious sects. The detail in the last chapter which are also incorporated by Prof Carl Ernst in his paper, hints to the emergence of new movements in the realm of mystical orders that have been discussed by many other authors, like John, O. Voll¹³. In fact, the Khanqahs and mausoleums became the most sought-after shelters both for solace as well as for satiation of worldly desires as one can read in *Muraqqa-e- Dehli*.

Some other Persian or some Urdu writings, both in poetry and prose, throw light on the newly found desire of the eighteenth-century society to visit the *Sufic Khanqahs* more frequently in the period of decline and post decline period. If many of the devotees, especially those from elite

¹³ Oxford History of Islam, OUP, 1999

class were not able to travel to major *Khanqahs*, like Ajmer Sharif, their *Wakils*, appointed by them amongst the *Khadims* of Dargah made the journey on their behalf. Prof. Moini, in his work on the *Khadims* of Ajmer Sharif, describe the power hierarchy in the Dargah during the said period. These *Wakils* were issued the written appointment letters too. For instance, the *Wakalatnama* issued by Rai Chaturman, writer of the *Chahar Gulshan*, a Munshi at the court of Ghaziuddin Khan in early 18th c. is available for perusal.¹⁴

Another major characteristic of the Persian writings of the said period is the rise of non-commissioned writings. Amongst these, one gets information beyond the conventional format of history writings. Like *Tarikh-e-ShakirKhani*, a work of Shakir Khan, son of Lutfullah Khan Sadiq, a member of elite nobility from the family Panipat Ansaris, belonging genealogically to the family of Khwaja Abdullah Ahrar Ansari, who once migrated from Khurasan. Shakir Khan penned this work after he was disrobed of his status. Though the work is not in any systematic format but its inputs provide a complete view of the activities that are full of action like any present-day Hollywood or Bollywood film. In the preamble, one may even see the kind of counseling, he spells out for Muhammad Shah, emperor of his time. He tells the emperor:

Bāyadkiguftār u kirdār-ash azkhudbāshad, ya’nīsipāh u ra’yat bi-dānandkiānchipādshāhmī-gūyadmī-kunad : The Ruler must rule independently, and all must know that the King’s word will be acted upon and that his judgement is final

Ashrār-rāwizāratna-dihand, kiāthār-i-zawāl-idaulat : Do not appoint evil men ministers, that is a sure sign of a decaying state

Yak mard-ishujā’ wasāhib-i ‘azm u jazm u tadbīr, bihtarazhazārmard-ibītadbīrast : A single courageous, decisive man with an intelligent grasp of strategy, is better than a thousand ditherers.

These maxims are paralleled in the subsequent main text (folios 91 verso to 96 verso) by extensive quotations from *AmīrSāhib-I Qirān* (Tīmūr)’s supposed *Qā’ida-yiSaltanat* (actually, according to Rizvi pp 34-40, an imperial edict of the Emperor Akbar admonishing his provincial governors on the aims and techniques of correct government). These are back-dated by the author by 200 years from Akbar’s period (1580’s) to the period of Timur (1380’s) in order to

¹⁴ Introduction by the editor, in the edited text, *ChaharGulshan*, Ed. ChanderShekhar, NMM, (published by) DilliKitabGhar, New Delhi, 2012

give them greater authority and clearly reveal the author ShākirKhān's Muslim Sunnī and Tūrānī conservative sympathies, as well as his desire for personal spiritual development in the governing classes.

Day to day events recording as reported in the Mughal courts -from Aurangzeb till Bahadur Shah II, are primary source to know deeply about changes occurred in the respective ruling periods¹⁵. These Akhbarat – *Akhbarat-e Darbar-e Mo'alla-* or *Roznamacha*-are the mines of information. Most of the scholars based their works on Sarkar Collection unfortunately. One may find the fast mode of shift thru these *Akhbarat and Roznamachas too*. *Roznamcha* collection onwards Shah Alam I to Shah Alam II¹⁶ provides declining power, falling economy, as well as weaken royal authority and in that state too extravagancy in Marriages and social gathering.

Works of Anand Ram Mukhlis, especially *Waqai' Badai'* or *Chahar Gulshan e Shujai* of Harcharan Das or *Chahar Gulshan* of Rai Chaturman or *Tahmasbname* of Darab Beg or *Bayan-e-waqai'* of Munshi Abdul Karim or the reports of Jugal Kishore and such works penned by officials who had access to the royal archives for past history and were witness to the contemporary developments. One may definitely find exaggeration and hyperbolic statements in the depiction in these works but one can also carefully sift out the material of utmost importance.

Another important source of literature is the *Mal'fuz* literature of various regions and different Sufi Silsilas. It is interesting to mention that by 18th c, it was not only the Muslim Khalifas of the masters but also due to the Hindu Khalifas, a new class of sub-Silsilas also emerged, especially in Deccan, Bengal and Bihar. As indicated above, amongst the *Mal'fuz* writings of this period, like *Nal-e-Andlib* of Khwaja Andlib, father of renowned sufi poet Khwaja Mir Dard, speaks on royal court development in the Dastangoi format. His master Shah Gulshan was one of the favored saint of mid 18th c Delhi. His discourses were a great source of solace to the disturbed populace of Delhi in the said period.

Persian sources provide ample detail on the transition of power from the court of Delhi to the regional courts-from Delhi to Awadh, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Jaipur or even smaller centres of

¹⁵ Better to read RAS & Bikaner Collections, not the re-transcript version Kept at National Library, Kolkatta in Sarkar collection or at Sitamau lib. As a good percentage is not re-transcribed.

¹⁶ Available in Bikaner and India office collection too.

power like Alwar¹⁷ or Bharatpur. From 14th c till early 18th c, many new habitations in the form of cities, townships and villages came into existence for various reasons, but in 18th c., certain new centers of power like Faizabad/ Lucknow/ Awadh, Aurangabad (after decline of Daulatabad / Golkunda/ Hyderabad), Kolkata (after transfer of trading headquarter from Surat) and many other such shifting of power houses could be witnessed. Hence, it was the beginning of a new era.

Commissioned works and East India Company's writers: Apart from the above-mentioned sources, there are many Persian texts which were compiled or written at the behest of new game changers. The newly arrived power houses from west who had to struggle almost two centuries to get the primary recognition in the establishment of trading houses though as a garb to their real motive, emerged only in 18th c. They not only learnt Persian but were well versed in the local languages. Hence, they commissioned their own form of Persian sources. Among these one can mention *Tarikh-e-Shahdat e Farrukhsiyar wa Julus-e-MuhaammadShahi*¹⁸ of Mirza Muhammad Bakhsh Ashob (d.1199 AH/1785AD). Its author says that he was present in the battle of Karnal in 1739 and remained at the court in later period too. *Siyarul Mutakharin* of Tabatabai in 18th c. or in 19th c. *Jangnama –e-Bharat pur or Tarikh-e-Jhajjar of Munshi Abdul Karim who also wrote prior to it Tarikh-e-Kabul wa Qandhar in 1847.*, Both the later works were written as the letters of victory trailing the style of *Ghazvanama(s)* or *Fatehnama(s)* of classical Persian writings. There are some works, existing in Manuscripts form still, either commissioned by Europeans/Britisher or Pan-Indian writers compiled/wrote their works and presented to them. Like *Tarikh-e Hussainia*¹⁹ by Kazim Hussain gifted to Lady Sara Archer Amherst wife of British Governor General of East India Company William Pitt Amherst served from 1823-1829. There is

¹⁷ Interestingly, Macaulay dethroned Persian as an official language in 1837 but in 1838 East India company recommended a Muslim administrator namely Aminullah Khan in the time of Maharan Banni Singh alias Vinay Singh. He introduced Persian as official language and whole official work began to be scribed in Persian. A good number of Persian, Arabic and Urdu manuscripts were copied there. A highly illuminated Manuscript of Gulistan of Sa'di was prepared at the cost of fifty thousand rupees at that time.

¹⁸ He was introduced to Jonathan Scott by Col. Antoine Polier (d.1799) in Lucknow and on his suggestion, he penned this work. In preamble of another work, *Saulat-e-Farooqi* (published from Muhammadi Press, Azam Garh, preserved in Rampur Raza Library, Rampur as Ms. 312/4881 H.,) he states that he was compelled to go to Allahabad on 27 Rajab, 1196 AH/July7, 1782. He has three other works. The complete copy, in the ms form, is in Cambridge University Library and its abridge English translation in National Bibliotheque, Paris. Some fragments of the Persian text is also available in *Majmua*, a collection of the selection of texts from various sources of 18th c on different subjects, Ms. no.

¹⁹ This is the sole rare copy available in Lady Amherst Collection. <http://libguides.amherst.edu/c.php?>

a collection of her diaries too which depict her observations on socio-cultural facets of early 19th c.²⁰

Many British and European officers for instance, Jonathan Scotts's own Persian writings which are currently housed in the Cambridge University library are good pieces of information on the phase of transition. Likewise, for acquiring revenue in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the newly acquired states after defeating and imprisoning Shah Alam, the officers of East India company faced the problem of understanding the system of collection of revenue. They engaged Shitab Rai to prepare a manual to guide them for this purpose. Interestingly, in mid and late 18th c. many such primers to train the new class of revenue collectors were prepared in Persian. *Siyaq* or the accounting system regained popularity, so much so that many works on *Siyaq* learning for the revenue officers were prepared. Some of these have been published as early as 1787. Even the primers, like *Khulasatus Siyaq*, *Farhang-e Kardani*, *Badai'ul Funun*, all from Aurangzeb period, are discussed/quoted rarely but its complete copies never published.

These officers or the factors (mostly English officers for English factories across western and eastern English factories) not only learnt Persian and later Urdu but also composed poetry in Persian and Urdu. Ram Babu Seksena's monumental work "*A History of Indo-European poets of Urdu and Persian*"²¹ provides ample detail on this aspect. Its third chapter also speaks about the changes occurring in the lifestyle of these people in post 1760's. Though, it may not be in realm of my paper but briefly I may mention that the result of trading of manuscripts²², especially the illustrated ones, of different eastern languages, particularly Persian, Sanskrit or other vernacular languages encouraged the European scholars to set the centers of Oriental Studies. Antoine Louise Polier's vast collection in Bibliothèque National, Paris which he acquired during his long stay at Lucknow and other places set the base for the Oriental Studies first in France and then in Germany. These collections not only became the source of research in the new horizon of Orientalism but also gave a sense of newly acquired colonies where the European and British

²⁰ For detail, see above link

²¹ Nawal Kishore Press, Lucknow, 1941.

imperialism had got the new grounding. Jasanoff reports: *three wealthy friends associated with Indian rulers in the late 18th century, chiefly in Lucknow. Antoine Polier was a Swiss engineer from Lausanne who fought with Robert Clive and became a rich trader. He devoted his free moments to collecting manuscripts in Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic. His friend Claude Martin was a French officer from Lille, who migrated in India from the French to the British camp. He, too, ended up in Lucknow and became a collector, not just of Indian artefacts and manuscripts but of everything from Europe that any 18th-century collector might have been assembling - paintings, books, coins and natural history specimens. A third acquaintance, Benoît de Boigne, was a soldier of fortune from Savoy who served in various Indian armies and specialised in the collection of swords, guns and daggers. A vast collection of Persian and urdu mss taken away by the above and later by Springer made Berlin and Paris rich in the oriental collection. She did not add Kohinoor as it was acquired beyond her period of research, perhaps William Delrymple knew about this gap and he took up as a new project of his own way of writing history.*

New trends in Indo-Persian language and lexicons in 18th c.: In 18th c. one may notice the mass production in Indo-Persian writings on various subjects. Among native Persian writers or speakers and Indian Persian writers or poets a war of tug became to hostile state. Though one may notice its beginning from the period of Shah Jahan itself²³. Hazin and Khan Arzoo's literary skirmishes are the best example of the said aspect. Khan Arzoo's pupil initiated a school of lexicography. They insisted upon the incorporation of Indian connotation of Persian words or the valid usage of Indianized forms of Persian words. The newly coined meanings of literary and administrative terms became part of these lexicons like Tek Chand Bahar's *Bahar-e-Ajam* which became later on the mother source for Persian- English dictionary of F. Steingass who perhaps adopted it on the suggestions made by Blockmann in his long essay on the need of a bilingual lexicon of Indo-Persian.

Anand Ram Mukhlis, another pupil of Khan e Arzoo, compiled a lexicon of descriptive form entitled *Mira'tul Istelah*, an encyclopedia of various words and phrases from different disciplines and subjects also deliberate upon the arrival of new culture as well as the new words. Or the Persian words coined for the newly arrived material from non-Persianate world. The linguistic factor, author of *Mira't* exhibits the slow infusion of western languages and their equivalents coined in Persian and Hindawi. For instance, in

²³See for detail, Introduction, *Majma'ul Afkar*, Ed. ChanderShekhar, NMM, New Delhi, 2016, Vol.I,

the term *oto-kash*, the first part is the transliteration of auto and the second is from kashidan- meaning to iron a press cloth. Likewise, *jawahar-mohra* is for medicinal tablets or *Unqar-e waqt-o-sa'at* (clock with twinkling sound) or the lead-nib pen mentioned under *Tutiya-e qalam* introduced by Europeans. Likewise, the appearing of such words – either in the original form or the coined indo-Persian form- increased day by day in post 1750 Indo-Persian sources. In the realm of poetry, one may find some other interesting changes too. There were not only new words but new similes and metaphors too. In the earlier poetic compositions, beauty of Laila, damsels of *Khat o Khutan* or Khurasan or *Turkan-e-Shiraz*, the icons of love poems portrayed the aesthetical sense which was the minor Asian centric. But after the arrival of European or British officers in various cities, the beauty of newly arrived British *Sahibas* were source of attraction for Indian masses, especially males. The charming beauty of British Sahiaba known as *Firangan* also found place in contemporary poetry. Moreover, London replaced the conventional *kucha e yar*, the place of residence of the beloved. This new change can be seen in the following verse of Insha':

چارناچار ہوا جاتا ہے لندن اپنا۔ لے گئی جمعین کے دل ایک فرنگن اپنا

Char Na Char Hua Jata HaiLondon²⁴Apna LeGaiCheenKeDilAikFiranganApna²⁵

(Going even to London has become inevitable now, as a *Firangan*²⁶ (British/Frankin beauty) has carried away my heart there).

Another important and effective genre emerged in Persian dominated Urdu language in mid 18th c known as *ShahrAshob*²⁷. The history of this genre in Persian goes to the time of Khaqani who wrote a *ShahrAshob* in praise of the city of Ray (presently down town part of Tehran). In the *ShahrAshob*'s of 18th c., the corrupt nobility or the officials of the city are exposed for their misdeeds. Though the courageous initiative of condemnation of the corrupt and dishonest nobility and even emperor Farrukh Siyar-with the chosen and newly coined compounds of Arabic-Persian and Hindawi, may be seen in the poetry of

²⁴ In Urdu it is not pronounced as London.

²⁵ *Kulliyat-e-Insha'*, Majlis-e-Tarraqi-e- Adab, Lahore, 1969, p.80

²⁶ Britons are also addressed as Europeans in India.

²⁷ Lit. Disturber of the tranquility of the city; a mistress; a poetical praise or disparagement of the people of a town, Steingass, F., A Comprehensive Dictionary of Persian-English, Munshi Ram ManoharLal, New Delhi, 2006, p.709; A poem describing a ruined city, Standard 20th c Dictionary Urdu to English, Educational Publishing House, New Delhi, 1989, p.405

Jafar Zatalli, he was eventually hanged for it. But in the later period this kind of lamentation and rebuking tone became the part of the said genre.

It may also be stated that since the presence of the Europeans was concentrated more in the southern peninsula, these words or phrases appeared more in the Deccani Persian and Deccani language. For example, in Asad Beg Qazvini's memoir²⁸, the introduction of *Tambakoo* (Tobacco) in Deccan was initiated by Portuguese. He also brought *Tambkoo* to Akbar's court and some *Chillams*, decked with precious stones and illumination, for the usage of *Tambakoo*. He claims that it was he who introduced this item to the royal court and later on trade of *Tambakoo* became very popular.²⁹ But prior to him, NaziriNishapuri, a court poet of Abdur Rahim Khan-e-Khanan, had composed a eulogy in praise of *Tambakoo*, highlighting its impact on one's temperament. Similar work have also been composed by Zuhuri Turshezi who was first at the Adil Shahi court and later moved to Mughal court.

In the later period, many personal and proper nouns of European language can be tracked in these sources. In all the letters of appreciation in eulogistic manner in favor of Warren Hastings, sent by Indian *Jagirdars and Talluqedars*³⁰, or even in the correspondence of Lord Clive with the Nawwab of Oudh, especially in regard of collection of Noshadar or Sal Ammoniac to be exported to England, Kent area for usage in Gun Powder production, variety of words can be seen. For instance, the words *Kompani/Kampani* for East India Company was amongst the most commonly used word in the post 1750 indo-Persian sources. Another popular for the new masters was *Sahib*. These new Sahibs were privileged to have special Persian teachers known as *Munshi*. There are many works on these sahibs including "The India Inscribed" which sarcastically highlights the misuse of privileges these Sahibs were enjoying at the cost of Company's behest and also brought defame to the latter's prestige. Some Munshis prepared Persian primers for their benefit. Many of these are still in the form of manuscript. Amongst these, three are worth mentioning here: the first text is in the Cambridge university lib and was compiled for

²⁸ The Persian text, edited on the basis of all available and known mssis in press. Its English translation is done by Prof Muzaffar Alam & Sanjay Subrahmaniyam is published in their two different papers,

²⁹ This aspect of the trade in tobacco has been quoted and verified in the works of Prof. Irfan Habib.

³⁰ Asiatic society collection of the mssnool BL.

Jonathan Scott. (for detail see, Jonathan Scott: Paper published in Indo-Iranica). This work shows the new style of preparing the primers.

There is another manuscript of such a primer in the Leiden library, prepared for a French officer who was in the court of Tipu Sultan. This was also prepared in a new format. The chapter has three columns. One for Persian script material, second for transliteration of Persian into French and third for the French translation. Interestingly, one does not find such methods adopted earlier by Indians when they had started learning Persian, or it could not adapted be as they were not the Sahibs but the *Ghulams* or *zimmis* or the native of *Darul Harb*. One can observe interesting ways of transliteration in these texts, for instance, in the file no. 180 in the British Library, there is a letter addressed by Lord Clive to Nawwab of Oudh, apart from its contents, the seal inscribing the name of Clive is transliterated as کلیو. One may find various forms of his or many European names in Indo-Persian sources. In the above said primers, Sahibs were informed about the titles that the Princes, Sultans (family members of royal family), Khanzadahs, mansabdars, jagirdars or other official were entitled to use with their names. On the same pattern, new Sahibs were also addressed with the newly coined decorative phrases. For instance, in a letter addressed to one Mister Shamir or Shemer, attached in the aforementioned file of East India company, Kolkata office, the Munshi of the Sahib, addresses him as:

مستر صاحب و مشفق و مهربان جامع کمالات صوری و معنوی مقبول فقرا پی محبوب الہی اہل اللہ یگانہ
ومان برگزیدہ دوران سلمہ اللہ تعالیٰ

or

محسن الدولہ جان شامیر صاحب سلمہ اللہ تعالیٰ

In fact, the Munshi wanted to introduce his uncle who was a trader and needed some work. The whole text is in a hyperbolic Persian full of praises, loaded similes and phrases for the Sahib to get an appointment for the said person. However, these newly coined titles, decorated with higher acclaimed phrases, also was the result of newly established new power house.

This resulted in the addition of proper names to the corpus of Persian in India. Later on, these were absorbed in Urdu and Persian lexicons. It should be also remembered that many did not welcome the new technology at that time too. Recently, in India, after a comment on the usage of loudspeaker by Muazzin in Mumbai by the famous singer, Sonu Nigam, a variety of pro & against protests appeared. Leaving apart the conflicting views, it is a fact, that in the beginning a large number of Islamic clergy class has opposed these mind-blowing trumpets. In the same manner, the pictures of man and woman, even for the requirement of issue of Passport were opposed. In one of the Fatwas, published in a journal of Social Sciences, Punjab University Lahore, the issue was resolved by stating that, “as the picture to be used in passport does not show all the limbs of human body, it is permissible”. Similarly, many hilarious writings came up on the Railway track and on the beginning of the train in mid and later 19th c. The effects could be seen even in the *Sethnas* (songs of hilarious sarcasm sung on the occasion of marriage on both the sides) of Ghazipur Shia community, which can be still heard on the occasion of marriage:

Dulehke bahne rail ke line, dulehe ka phupa tel kakupa, etc etc.

(sisters of the groom (are so many) that looks as their number goes unending like a rail track whose ending is not visible, and the uncle of the bridegroom is like a drum of oil.)

In brief, every Persian source has something to provide in the form a new information on the age of decline and also the resultant impacts either on the society or polity or even the language or culture. The last two were expanded and amalgamated during the 18th and 19th centuries. Apart from the literary Persian sources, there are also non-literary sources or which can be put into the category of knowledge based Persian sources, like *Taiid-e-Bisarat* of Lutfullah Khan NisarDehlavi³¹, the AkhurBegi of Muhammad Shah’s Period. The said work provides information on the art of sword making in various regions of India, Ottoman empire as well as various cities of Europe and Arab countries, especially the Maghrab. The said rare work speaks of the trade practices as well as the process of valuation of these arms. It shows the growth of globalization of trade in 18th c. For example, he mentions about the trade of German and British swords in the court of

³¹*Taiid-e-Bisarat*, Ed. ChanderShekhar, Sub-continent, Academy of Persian Language & Literature, Tehran, Vol.II, Summer, 2014. P. 349-381

Deccan. He also speaks about the swords having fake trademarks of Iranian sword maker, Asadullah Isphani of Abbas I, the Safavid king.

As we all know the basic cause of the colonization of Indian subcontinent or any other part of world by the then UK or other European powers or even today, was the economy. In the post debacle or decline of Mughals, industrialization started on a gradual pace. The literary or non-literary sources reveal that in the beginning there were protests against it, usually by declaring these advancements as anti-culture, anti-Islamic, or anti-conventional professions. Only one example is enough in this realm: the printing press. Elizabeth Eisenstein may have declared the Printing Press as an agent of change (Cambridge University Press, 1979) in Europe, but in India, the press which was brought by Portuguese Christian missionaries in Goa and later on shifted first to Chennai and then in Srirampur, Baptist Church Mission press, was declared as the vital source of conversion. The lead letter faces were declared as unaesthetic or not as attractive as the hand written calligraphic style. By the mid of 19th c, newspapers and Persian texts as well as vernacular language primers and their literature got wide spread circulation in India as printing presses were established in many Indian cities.³² Instead of lead letters, Chinese technology, lithography was adopted, first on the stones and later zinc plates. By the end of 19th c. this technology became the vital support tool for spread of new education pattern throughout India. However, changing times led to the limitation in usage of the calligraphic art which was then relegated to the unenviable position of just a fine art for highly skilled professionals, like many other arts which moved towards decay due to the new technology. It is also mentionable that some works highlighting the old professions of skilled artisans³³ were described in Persian sources like *Matla'ul Ulum-wa Majma'ul Funun*. The said work was also translated into Urdu later. To keep abreast with the new technology, various institutions initiated their own innovative ways. In Anglo-Arabic college, Delhi, a journal was initiated in the supervision of Master Ram Chander, a mathematician, to introduce modern technology to the students.

³² See for detail, Nadir Ali Khan, *Urdu Press*, Uttar Pradesh Urdu Academy, Lucknow, 1986; Chander Shekhar & Abdur Rashid, *Fehrist-e-Kutub-e-Matba' Nawal Kishore*, 1986, Dilli Kitabghar, Delhi, 2013.; LITHOGRAPHY ii. IN INDIA, *Encyclopaedia Iranica*,: Empire of Books, An: Ulrike Stark, *The Naval Kishore Press and the Diffusion of the Printed Word in Colonial India*, Orient Blackswan (June 1, 2009)

³³ There are some sources which highlight the techniques of conventional professions, like *Taiid-e-Bisarat* of Luftullah Khan Nisar Dehlavi or Ghulam Yahya's *Kitab-e-Tasvir-e-Shisha Geran...* .Ghulam Yahya, *Crafting Traditions*, text and translation by Mehr Afshan Farooqi, IGNCA & Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2005.

In brief, this period brought forth many variegated subjects which were either lesser known or completely afresh for the writers and poets, society and its polity. Its continuation in the 19th c, paved the way for a new intellectual class which was not dependent on the patronage from an imperial court but based on individual or societal changes. For the writer or poet, the touch stone became the society and its observations. While the royal courts, mainly the central one's like Mughals, Safavids and Ottomans, were in total decline but on the other hand changes were taking place in the regional power houses, while the society was in process of great upheaval.

ABOUT



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