

## **Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India**

**Rukhsana Iftikhar**

*University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.*

### **ABSTRACT**

India was comprised of many villages before the arrival of Muslims. Those Muslim invaders, who conquered India and established their rule, essentially belonged to the urban ruling classes. In early Turkish Empire (1206 – 1266), ruling classes have developed numerous urban centers in town across India. In Muslims period, Iqta system provided opportunities to Turko – Afghan communities to have luxurious life style which provoked skill workers, artesian and architect to migrate garrison. These towns also emerge as cultural centers with the passage of time. Early cities like Daultabad, Fatehpur Sikri and Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi) were royal capital cities. Some of the major cities like Kabul, Agra, Allahabad, Lahore, Attock and Multan were developed near major road (Grand Trunk Road). Many towns like Dholpur, Jodhpur, Sirohi, Asirgarh and Ajmer were inhabited near nonmetal led roads . Many of the Mughal cities and towns still exist in spite of many natural disasters. Many European travelers narrated the glory and significance of these cities and towns in their account. They compared Indian cities with Europe, like Fatehpur Sikri was larger than London and Delhi was not less urbanized than Paris. These urban centers were not only the administrative units but also considered as cultural centers in Mughal State. Emperors sometimes generated the economic activities in these urban centers. Abul Fazal mentioned many factories in Delhi, Agra and Fatehpur Sikri supplied many precious articles in the King's wardrobe. Capital cities always had the excess of fruit and food for the Royal kitchen. People brought their master pieces in the capital city just to get the acknowledgement of kings and nobles. This paper analyzes the development of major urban centers in Mughals (most illustrated dynasty of the Muslim civilization). It also highlights the cultural transformation of Muslims under the influence of native one.

**Key Words:** Mughals, Inhabited, Ajmer, Fatehpur Sikri, Abul Fazal

### **Introduction**

Cities were normally developed due to some reason i-e administrative hub like capital cities. Sometimes economic and commercial activities converted small towns into big cities. Some places serve as pilgrimage centers and it help in urban growth. Coastal line also made towns they ultimately turned into urban centers. Max Weber defined city, a place where trade and commerce dominates agriculture. One aspect of the city highlighted that was urban economy. Cities were normally centralized and bureaucratize. But Karl Marx considered urbanization is a

## **Rukhsana Iftikhar**

launching pad for sustainable development of productive forces. Marx never alienated rural life from city. There are always some impacts of agriculture upon urbanization. Weberian notion identifies the influences of administrative political classes. Marx argued about the class struggle in the capital city structure. In case of Indian urbanization Max Weber ideas are more relevant specially in case of Mughal India. Hasler identifies six factors after analyzing Webers concept of Medieval city (Meagher, 2008). Independent and autonomous laws, in Mughal India it was Islamic Sharia made by religious guilds. Muslims also introduced their own judicial agencies in the form of Qazi and Qazi-ul-Qazat. Muslim rulers had the power to imposed taxation. Mughals hold the regulation of markets. They were and independent to levied tax duties on import and export. Muslim state was a military state. Last but not least non-urban political and feudal-manorial structure of Muslim state. (Drilk & Weber, 1998) S.N Mukherjee started the idea of Indian urban history in 1977. (Spodek, 1980) According to S.C Misra, in the study of urbanization the urban centers expand with the passage of time. It promoted growth and ecology which was generated by the towns in various dimensions; in the economic system, in natural environment, in political system, in social network and even in the minds of the people who lived in a particular area. Satish Chandra and J.S Gerwal (Chandra, 1994) discuss the avenues of urban development in medieval India. (Grewal, 1980) InduBanga analyzed the rural urban interaction in upper Bari Doab K. N Chaudhary also contributed in the approaches of urban heritage in Indian history (Chaudary, 1995).

The first phase of Indian urbanization found in India in form of twin cities of Indus valley civilization (city of Harappa and Mohenjo daro). After the arrival of Aryan Indian economy grew into agrarian economy. Aryan began to colonize Ganganatic plains. The second phase of urbanization started in later Vedic period (1000-600 B.C). Approximately sixty cities existed in India in age of Buddha including known religious centers Varanasi, Rajagraha, Champa, Vaishali, Sakat and Sravastietc . the third major development occurred in Mauryan and post Mauryan era in north and south India. Urban process was also depending upon political stability. Gupta period also contributed in evolution of urbanization. Turkish rule (1206-1526) was considered a revival of urbanization in India. The state deployed all available potentialities to build-up urban complexes (Chathopadhyaya, 1986). The state of Sultans possessed ample resources to take all vigorous steps for the urban growth in India. Sultans of Delhi introduced Iqta system (a piece of land granted to some official by the state). This system encouraged labor classes and artisan to settle in those towns which were under the rule of Iqta holders. Hindu principalities scattered all over Northern India. The Hindus had neither interest nor any urgent need to take special measures in the way of urbanization. The initial steps Sultans took to stabilized and consolidated military garrisons. But Sultans were in need of frequent urban centers which could form administrative bases for covering those territories under their jurisdiction. These urban centers were "nuclei" that ultimately grew into urban complexes from

### *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*

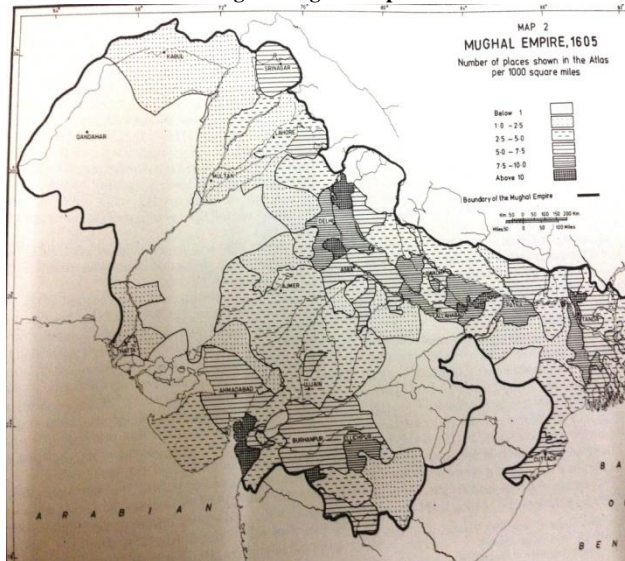
13th century to onwards. They got employments in these areas and towns flourished. These towns also gave them political and economic power. In the periods of Sultan Ala-ud-din Khalji these classes possessed immense political power. Sultan Mohammad bin Tughluq also had good relation with professionals or may be technocrats of that age to minimized their political influence. Many new towns appeared like Hisarfiroza, Jaunpur Agra, Daulatabad and older towns like Delhi, Banaras, Lahore and Qanauj were reinvigorated (Naqvi, 1986).

The provincial autonomies dismembered after the invasion of Taimur in 1398 A.D. It also adhered the policy of urbanization. Mughal dynasty (1526-1707A.D) also followed the policy of Sultans for urbanization in India. Mughals were conscious about the strong uphold of their dynasty in India. They came from an urban background from Central Asia.

When Babar (the founder of Mughal Empire) arrived in India many older towns like Badaon, Bayana, Kalpi, Sambhal, Qanauj, Ajodhya, Etawah, Chunar, Lucknow, Banaras were still there (Babar, 1921). The urban progress was higher on the western parts of India at that time. Ain-i-Akbari provides us a list of industrial cities like Delhi, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Jaunpur, Burhanpur, Ahmadabad, Murshadabad and Lahore. Even coastal lines opened a way for European in India. (Fitch, 1998) Ralph Fitch, who visited Agra in 1585 A.D found this city larger than London. Father Monserrate claimed "Burhanpur was large and populous city. Fitch praised sonarganon (Decca) for its finest cloth. The data of cities and towns indicate one hundred and twenty cities and thirty two hundred towns were included in Mughal Empire. It comprised of trade centers, coastal towns, administrative units and commercial centers as well (Monserrate, 1922). Manucci, Italian traveler spend most of his life time in India considered Surat, a largest coastal line served European and Chinese Jesuits and Asian travelers (Manucci, 1906).

This coast generated a great economic activity in Mughal Empire. Goa, Kochin, Calicut, Nagappattinam, Masulipattam, Sripur, Cattagong and Satgoan were also used for sea trade in India. Cattagong was attached to Bay of Bengal. Allahad, Ajmer, Kashmir, Khandash, Thatta, Kanniya kumari and Coromandal were the largest commercial centers in India.

Fig. 1: Mughal Empire 1605



Abul Fazal mentioned that Khandar and Kabul were two gates of India. Through these gates a large number of traders and merchants entered in Mughal India beyond Lahore and Multan. Tabqat-i-Akbari recorded, 120 large towns (cities) 3200 small towns and each of them having thousands of villages in the age of Akbar. Sometimes they settled in those areas rich in economic activities and constitute urban centers. Emperor Akbar (1556-1605 A.D) took daring steps for the urban development (Ahmad, 1936). Imperial factories of Mughal India also attracted urbanization as Abul Fazal mentioned that Akbar maintained hundred of imperial factories and each of them resembles with a big city. Hundreds of workers busy in making of those thing which were of royal consumption. When Akbar conquered Gujarat and Bengal, he took up the challenge to strengthened urbanization in India (Fazal, 1964)

- Fatehpur Sikri, a new capital city was founded in 1571-1572.
- Akbar's agrarian reforms provided an opportunity to cultivators to remain close to the urban centers so they could get a good price of their products.
- It promoted money economy.
- Free minting and issuance of the coins to the small domains of Hindustan enhanced this process of urban settlement.
- Akbar took effective measures for the smoothness of administrative machinery on the local levels as the appointments of Kotwal and Faujdars( city/district magistrates) .
- Communicational links were established. Akbar's forerunner Sher Shah had given a sustainable contribution in this direction that were construction of new roads and repair of existing one. Inns and Sarais

## Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India

were established. Shady trees were planted along with the major roads (List of major roads).

Table 3.1: Principal Highways during the Mughal Empire

S.No	Point of Origin and terminus	Approx. distance	Built by or in the reign of	Remarks
1	From Sonargaon to Attock	1500 Karohs	Sher Shah Suri	
2	From Hindustan to Kabul leading upto Jalalabad, Khairbar, Bangash, Naghaz and Farmul	.....	.....	River Sind had to be crossed at Chauparah ferry
3	The Khalibar route	.....	Emperor Akbar	It was a regular road fit for wheeled traffic
4	From Lahore to Kashmir	.....	Emperor Akbar	Was called the Imperial Road ; was open for traffic for seven non-winter months
5	From Multan to Delhi	.....	.....	.....
6	From Multan to Qandahar	.....	.....	.....
7	From Thattah to Amhadabad	.....	.....	Was dangerous being infested with Baluchi marauders
8	From Amhadabad to Cambay	.....	.....	The route passed through Baroda
9	From Amhadabad to Surat	.....	.....	.....
10	From Amhadabad to Burhanpur	.....	.....	.....
11	From Burhanpur to Orissa	.....	.....	Probably only an unfrrequentated track
12	From Orissa to Bengal	.....	.....	.....
13	From Bengal to Bihar	.....	.....	.....
14	From Maldah in Bengal to Jaunpur	.....	.....	Through Garhi as the gate to Bengal was only a track, it passed through Chhapara near Patna
15	From Agra to Fatehpur Sikri	12 cos	Emperor Akbar	was shady, populous and full of shops
16	From Agra to Delhi	.....	Sher Shah Suri	ran via Mithura and west of Jamuna
17	From Agra to Jodhpur and Chittor	.....	Sher Shah Suri	.....
18	From Agra to Ajmer	.....	Emperor Akbar	Well-cared route
19	From Agra to Sirhind	.....	.....	.....
20	From Agra to Lahore	350 cos	.....	A Khayaban i.e. shaded avenues: Jahangir had put Karoh mirrors to mark the distance; at every five Karohs he built a well
21	From Agra to Mandu	.....	Sher Shah Suri	.....
22	From Agra to Burhanpur	.....	.....	Extension of Agra-Mandu highroad
23	From Agra to Surat	.....	.....	Extension of Agra-Mandu highroad
24	From Agra to Broach	.....	.....	it ran via Ajmer, Merta, Amhadabad and Baroda. From Broach on it got linked up with Cambay and Surat.
25	From Agra to Attock	.....	.....	Khoyaboni, i.e. a shaded avenue
26	From Agra to Bengal	.....	.....	Khoyaboni, i.e. a shaded avenue
27	From Agra to Benares	.....	.....	Lay through Qanauj, Lucknow, Akbarpur and Jaunpur
28	From Agra to Allahabad	.....	.....	Covered Koil, Itamadpur and Manikpur en-route
29	From Agra to Etah	.....	.....	was a metalled road
30	From Ajmer to Allahabad	.....	.....	.....

Source: Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi (1972) Vol-1, Urbanisation and Urban Centres under the Mughal 1556-1707. IIAS, Shimla

- Urbanization of industries: rural products were commercialized; many facilities were given in form of local urban market, maximum freedom for internal trade and foreign commerce along with the better accommodation for the foreign travelers. The interest of the urban classes was safe guarded by the state.
- Military also played a part in urbanization and urban culture in Mughal India. When Akbar introduced Mansabdari System it helped in form new garrisons which later converted into town's (Naqvi, 1986).

These measures boost-up the economic activity in the empire. At the death of Mughal king Akbar the multiplication and expansion of the towns blew-up. In the reign of Jahangir (1605-1627A.D) European's entered into India. The residence of European in the towns of their business added the activities of urbanization. The absence of census did not clear the quantitative details of urbanization whether it was vertical or horizontal growth under the great Mughals. All available sources indicate that this was the era of urban boom due to the wealth and prosperity of India.

## **Rukhsana Iftikhar**

The major portion of Hindustani population was still living in villages as testified by Bernier. Economically it does not appear any depression in the commercial activities of towns when Emperor Aurangzeb left for Deccan. An orphaned capital slowed down the process of urbanization. The local principalities weakened the central structure. The Mughal urban centers can be divided into three major categories.

**Coastal cities:** Cambay, Broach, Surat and Calicut.

**Defense lines:** Attock, Sehwan, Thatta and Kabul.

**Industrial and commercial towns:** Lahore, Multan Gujarat, Sialkot, Sultanpur, Hoshiarpur, Machhiwara, Sarhind, Saharam, Jalalpur, Panipat, Samana, Delhi. Faridabad, Kishangarh, Mathura, Jainagar, Udaipur, Ahmadabad, Agra, Kalinjar, Kalpi, Lucknow, Daryabad, Faizabad, Tanda, Akbarpur, Kanah, Jaunpur, Allahabad, Benaras, Mirpur, Ghazipur, Baxar, Chappra, Patna, Fattu, Daudnagar, Calcutta.

### **Resilience of major cities of Mughal India:**

**Delhi:** the envy of the world was one the pulpous city remained capital for centuries. The city is religious cum political center. The seventh city of Delhi Shahjahanabad still survived and others have only ruins i-e Lalkot, Siri, Tughlaqabad, Jahanpanah, Firozabad, Purana Qila. Shahjahanabad (old Delhi) is a walled city having seven gates. Delhi has various bazaars and markets especially outside the main gates. A special bazaar is also there where the physician, storyteller, astrologist and dancing girls were available near the famous mosque of Delhi. It became the capital of Shahjahan, the Mughal emperor in 1638. Delhi is known due to various commodities like indigo, spices jaggery coarse and Muslin. Delhi is famous trading center of cloth. Delhi was a source of attraction for traders, travelers and tourists from centuries (Blake, 1998).

**Agra:** Ralph Fitch declared Agra and Fatehpur Skiri great cities and each of them was larger than London. Akbar made this city the capital of his empire. This was a grand market of various commodities like cotton, carpets, salt, animals and other goods. Agra was considered as an important exchange center of 17th century India. Akbar initiated carpet industry in Agra, Mughal's also introduced laces in Agra, A known market named as Kanari bazaar is famous for silver and gold laces. The urban population was on increased as it was the hub of all kind of trade. Agra had facilitated bankers, transporters and commission agents. Agra was connected to Kandahar and Kabul via Lahore. Kandahar also connected Hindustan with Central Asia. It was easy for the trader's to be connected with Agra. It was a great trading center of the world known as "emporium of the world trade". It became the nucleus of the international trade also. There was a constant migration of the people from villages to towns, towns to cities and cities to capital cities. Fatehpur Skiri, the capital of king Akbar was deserted when he shifted his capital from Agra to Lahore. But Agra remained the center of attraction for local and

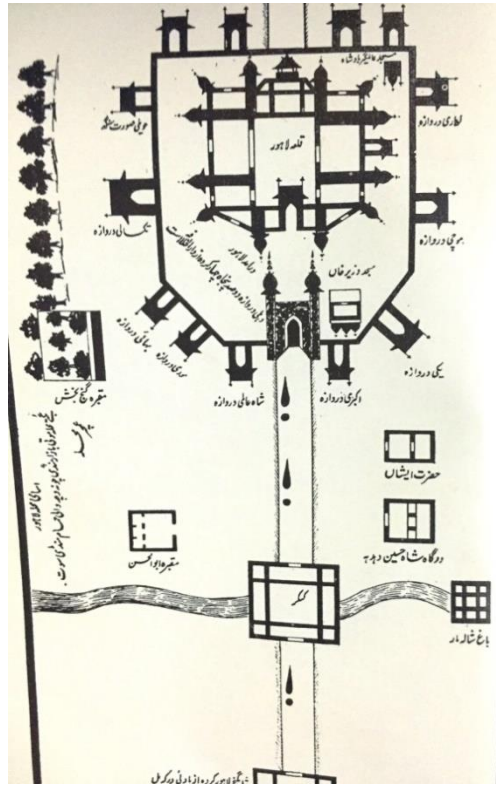
### *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*

international traders. The capital trade and commerce provided a proof of the stability of Agra (Bhattacharya, 2006).

**Kabul:** This town was incorporated in Mughal Empire after the death of Mirza Hakim in 1585. The chief town of the Kabul remained the part of empire unlike Qandahar. Kabul was ancient town known for its trade activities. In Mughal era Kabul got both commercial and strategic importance. Kabul led to Central Asia like Badakshan, Balkh and Kashghar. Eastward the town had a good road up to Attock which was linked with Lahore, Agra and through them connected with Sonargaon and Bengal. The merchant of Farghana, Samarand and Aleppo used to arrive in Hindustan through Kabul. The fresh fruit were brought from Bukhara, Balkh and Badakshan, dates from Basra, Silk, red hides, slaves carpets and high breed horses arrived at Kabul. Tavernier estimated the cost of annual trade amount 50,000 annual through Kabul. The Central Asian merchants invested their trading goods in Lahore, Delhi and Agra. Sometimes it reached Patna in the East. Emperor Jahangir remittance of all duties accelerated the trade activities in Mughal empire (Bhattacharya, 2006).

**Allahabad:** The ancient name of this city was "Parag". Emperor Akbar constructed a fort near this city and named it "Allahbas" His grandson Shahjahan renamed it "Allahabad". Ain-Akbari only mentioned the name of this city founded by King Akbar.

**Lahore:** Akbar made Lahore the capital city of Hindustan due to his north-west frontier policy. Attock was declared as headquarter of this defense baseline. Akbar gave orders to repair and enlarged the Lahore fort and the town situated near the wall. Lahore rapidly grew in form of area and population under Akbar. The urban population remained in the wall city of Lahore. In 1598 A.D Akbar left Lahore. His governor maintained his administration. Skilled workers, artisans, singer's and dancers occupied the space in this city due to aristocracy.



### Fort of Lahore in the Days of Mughals

**Ahmadabad:** Tavernier writes it, "one of the largest towns in India". Ahmadabad was a center of national and international trade. The size of population was extraordinary. Being a "handsomest city" Ahmadabad had 360 mahallahs or wards. The Bohra Bankers of Ahmadabad were known for their wealth. Many markets were established in Ahmadabad like indigo, saltpeter, and cotton were established in which Asian, Armenian, Persian and European merchants exerted themselves to invest money. Ahmadabad was most eminent town of the Mughal Empire especially from the business point of view.

**Banaras:** a Hindu religious center which turned into commercial market was known for silk stuff, silver and gold embroidery, sugar and many varieties of cloth. Tavernier calls it "Athens of India". Manucci wrote, everything made up of gold and silver in this first distribute in Mughal realm and then export to the temples extend the commercial traffic of this city.

**Khambat:** According to Emperor Jahangir, Cambay appeared as the largest port of Hindustan. Travelers and merchants who came here from different countries of the world settled here. Many of the ships landed on Goa, a port lying opposite to Kathiawar city. Tavernier recorded, "these ships are full of aromatic perfumes, spices and silk stuff. This region had direct link with Persian Gulf and red sea in



## *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*

Mughal period. It became a main port of Gujarat when Akbar conquered it in 1572 A.D. Major ports of Gujarat like Cambay and Goa became the emporia of trade. The urban population of these areas was normally comprised of traders, merchants and travelers. Local population was also involved into trading activities. These areas were the centers of Portuguese and other European travelers. Portuguese were so powerful in these areas as Akbar had to made agreement to send a ship of pilgrimage to Mecca with these Portuguese.

**Surat:** another coastal city of Mughal India, it attained prominence in Jahangir period (1610 A.D). Due to the shift of silver mint industry from Ahmadabad to Surat, this area was deserted. Most of labor of the mint industry shifted in Surat. It made a triangle of trading industry from Surat to Ahmadabad and Agra. The connection among the major ports and the capital city was direct in the period of Mughals. This port was used as a major source of tax as well because it was levied on import and export. Surat was the center where these duties were charged. After 1650A.D European companies developed direct link with Bengal. But Surat provided a large sum of bullion to empire. It had received bullion through the Red sea and Gulf. Aurangzeb tried to build a hinterland of Surat. All Hindustani goods like indigo, iron, opium, spices, sugar, sandal and even slaves etc reached Surat by the way of Burhanpur.

**Buahanpur:** this town was name after the holy saint Burhan-ud-din Darvaish. This town was founded in 1401 A.D. on the bank of river Tapti. It acted as great gateway to Deccan and a garrison area. The imperial army always remained in this area. Deccani goods such as pepper, ginger and copper reached Agra. Burhanpur and Ahmadabad was two districts dealing with each other.

**Thatta:** an ancient town situated at the west bank of river Indus. The fall of Hurmaz and naval supremacy of Portuguese weakened the trade activities in Lahiri Bander. This situation was recovered in 1640-41A.D.and the mercantile activities were revived on this port. Those merchants arrived at Thatta reached Multan, Lahore and Agra. Thatta was a rich town, well stocked with all kinds of provisions received from the neighboring districts. The traffic of Agra to Surat passed through Burhanpur. These traders supplied raw cotton and red salu to other town of the country. Orissa and Jalesar were adjutant's towns of Burhanpur. Satgoan and Hugli was the town rich in commercial activities. In addition to the precious metals, copper, brocades, velvet, satins, taffetas, procelain, gilded ornaments, pearls, jewels, cloves, nutmeg, Portuguese imported all the goods through Hugli.

**Aurangabad:** Emperor Aurangzeb himself laid the foundation of this city when he was nominated as the governor of Deccan.

**Bahkhar:** This city is still there in Pakistan. Syed Muhammad Shuja reached this town early in the morning and named this town after an Arabic word "Bakkar"

## **Rukhsana Iftikhar**

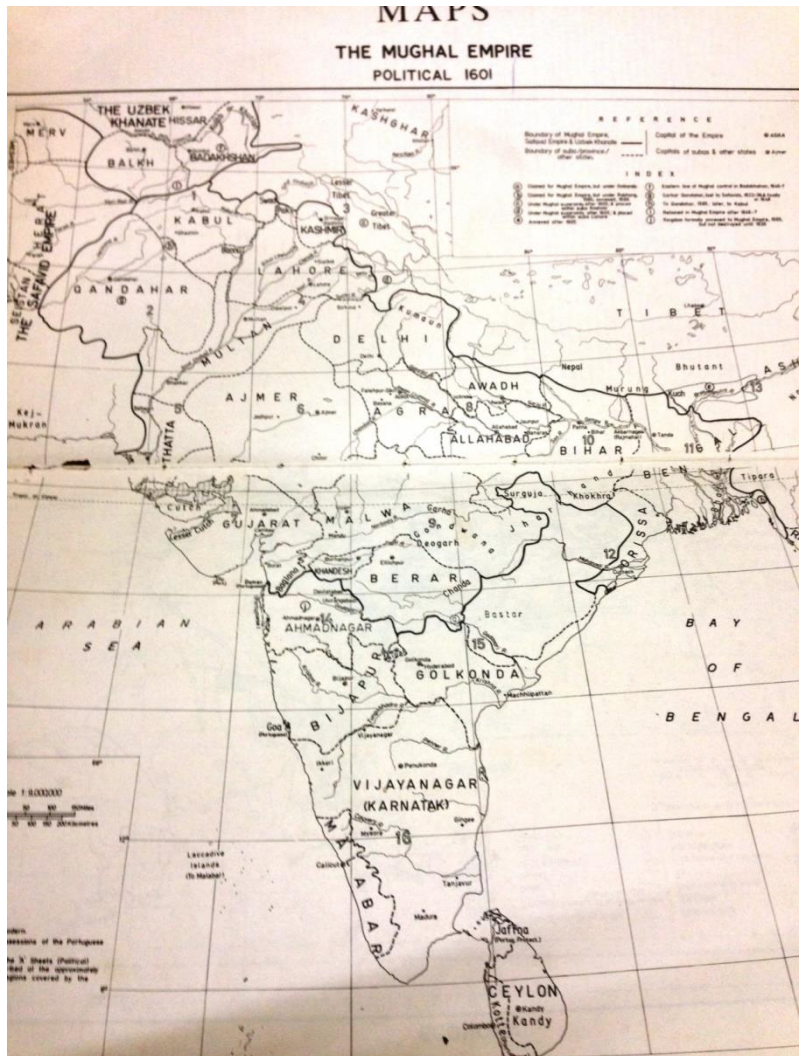
means early in the morning. Now after the use of centuries this word became Bahkhar. (Bhattacharya, 2006)

These Medieval towns acquired different status with the passage of time. Delhi is considered the NCT(national capital territory) . It was the 2nd most populated city of India and 8th most populated city of the world. Delhi urban population had a special status after 1991. It is also considered an industrial area. Agra is considered the most populous city of U.P. Agra was the capital of Mughal empire remained industrial city for centuries. Being the capital of the largest state of Indian Gujarat, Ahmadabad is the Manchester of the East. The urban population is involved into the great economic activities of India. Ahmadabad was the entrepot of Mughal India. Today, Ahmadabad is one of the important industrial cities where the cotton, steel, cement, chemical, silk, glasswork, paper and rubber industries constitute the urban elite culture. The harbor of Cambay has silted up and maritime trade also shifted to other areas. Now this city has few industries like textile and paper. Banaras is still a religious center for Hindus. The Urban population attached with those industries which facilitate the tourists.

There were 32 urban centers of cotton only in the age of great Mughals. Agra was one of them. In 1640 the approximate population of Agra was seven lakhs. In 17th century western India was more advance in term of industry. So, the industrial cities attracted more merchants, shopkeepers, grain dealers, clerks, brokers, transport personal, servicemen and so on.

These cities have their own cultures vary from region to region. Social divisions had sharpened the strata of Indian society. In capital cities like Delhi, Agra and Lahore, Kings and nobles were the essential components of urban culture. Kings and Prince maintained luxurious life styles. Special factories were set-up to facilitate those royal families. Abul Fazal mentioned the types of various "Karkhanas" of royal consumptions during the reign of Akbar. Capital cities also have the sections for autocracies.<sup>23</sup>The class of nobles followed the same extravaganzas like kings and princes. In nobility of great the Mughals ,Irani, Turani, Afghani and Rajputs were notable communities. They lived in huge forts like many Havilis were constructed when Akbar was shifted to Lahore and made Lahore as his capital (map of Lahore). Nobles were also the patrons of architecture, arts and literature. Many Mughal gardens and mosques were constructed by the nobles. Sir Thomas Roe described more than 30 dishes were served in the dinner of Asif Khan, brother of Queen Noor Jahan. Satish Chandra appreciated the novelty of the Mughal nobility, they were of the different lineage, knowing different languages and professing different religions with different cultural traditions.

## *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*



Professional classes lived in state of "studied indigence" as Bernier commented, "Petty mansabdars were also the part of this community. They tried to follow life style of elite classes".

Merchants and travelers also lived under the influence of some nobles or jagirdars. Among Europeans, Bernier and Manucci come under this category. Many of travelers or merchants lived in coastal cities like Christian missionary of Akbar period lived in Goa. These European formed the culture of coastal cities.

The major population of Indian region belonged to the classes of artisans, slaves and servants, laborers, small traders and shop-keepers. Peasants were also part of these communities. They lived on the mercy of land owners and mansabdars (Fazal, 1964).

## **Rukhsana Iftikhar**

On local level caste system played an integral role in making the civic life of Mughal India. The main elements of urban life were trade bankers, merchants and religious experts who had developed coherence and autonomy in the civic life of that age. Janie merchants were considered the most influential community in the Eastern India. In Northern India the authority of the Mughal officials had been largely eroded. Those cities which served as religious centers for Hinduism and Muslims, traders successfully used religious organism for their financial benefits. In Banaras, Hindus, used these tactics and in Delhi, Muslim traders used the same. The powers of major mercantile houses were same as Seth in Bengal and Nawabs in Awadh. These two communities had a strong hold in trading authorities. Mehra Khartris were dominated in the business of cloth. Agrwals were strong in grain trade. Gujarati Baninias were expert in brocade trade.

The composition of Indian society in the age of empire is as following:

- Dominance of Brahmin in Ganga Valley
- Chitpavan in Deccan
- Military in Punjab.

Some of the ideas of Max Weber are considered viable in the academic studies of the cities in Mughal India. The bureaucratic and warrior classes were dominant in the urban life as merchants and traders had lower status in the social set-up. Bureaucratic empire held to prevent the emergence of corporate bodies. If they did not exist in a society then urban and mercantile solidarity might come into being. As Weber mentioned,

"In India during the period of great salvation, religious groups appeared with hereditary elders uniting in many cities into an association. As residues from this period, there are at present, some cities (Allahabad) with a mutual urban elder corresponding to the occidental mayor." (Fazal, 1964)

Has a nutshell Mughal state enhanced the possibility of the self- organization among the local bodies in medieval south India. Self-governing bodies of merchants had a great influence in the petty states. The evidence of social change in the Mughal empire had not seen because the Brahmins, merchants and ascetic involved in the broader context of commercial agriculture. Hindus and Janise merchants were passive. They could never provide a base for political action. Weber's idea of kingship is relevant toward Mughal state. Army, priest's and other groups made an alliance with the state for the preservation of their commercial rights and religion.

Caste distinction irreparably fragmented urban and mercantile communities in India. Even the matrimonial alliances strengthened the mercantile communities. It also consolidated the political solidarity as well. The boundaries of caste system even extended to the local defense associations and festivals. The caste restriction prevailed in all activities, lower castes are not allowed to enter into the festivities and mornings and other communities. The common dining and marriage alliances should not be the basis of corporate activity in Weberian assumption in Indian

### *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*

environment. In Muslim law town term was applied to a place with an urban status where a mosque, a public bath and a Qazi had to place. In Muslim towns (Qasbah) the service gentry was very successful in the period under review. One thing was very much common between service gentry and mercantile groups of Hindus that they worked beyond the boundaries of small principalities. They grasped all economic resources, power politics, credits, marketing and banking. Muslim schools, mosque and shrines of Sufis gave small gentry towns, a different quality to Hindu bazaars. There were different societies in Qabahs/towns like Sheikhs of Kekori, the Barah Sayyid and Sayyid of Jansath. Political gentry could sell their skills as an administrator, literati and soldiers to one regime to another. Ain-i-Akbari attested the slow consolidation of Zamindars (landed services communities) around many towns in Mughal India (Khan, 2006).

The soldiers and administrators who served in Mughal Empire had a tribal genealogy and association with Islamic ethnicities such as Irani and Turani. In Mughal military culture both state and non state actors played a role. Mughal Mansabdars promoted urbanization after engaging various social forces especially in those areas which are now known as garrison cities. But these elite had more secure base and tradition in India. On Village level the armed peasants and warlords also initiated the process of urbanization as indicated below. Many of the villages were named after noble and pious men of that age. The families of holy men resided on the revenue- free grant lands by the Mughal rulers and later on regional rulers. There were many villages (Mauzas) in India having a particular identity with their name "Pura". H.K Naqvi mentioned „Mauza is a place where 200-300 able bodies men stayed together in a close cluster (Naqvi, 1986). But these Puras were larger than Mauzas. Every Pura was resembled with a city. In Tuzrait-ul-Muluk the author mentioned in Usmanpura there were twelve thousand shops. All the bazaars of the city were filled with merchants, skill workers and other workers. Many of the Puras were destroyed. When Akbar conquered many areas of Hindustan the population of these had changed. Many of the village re habituated. Some of the Indian villages in Mughal period are as follow:

- Qazipura: This village was founded by Qazi-ul-Qazat Khwaja Abullaha of Alamgir period.
- Hajjipura: Hajji Bahar-u-din constructed mosque which was a central place of this village increased the population of this village.
- Daryiapura: This village named after an amir (noble Daryia Khan)
- Pinnahpura: The administrator of Aurangzeb, who had founded this village.
- Jahngirpura: In the region of King Jahangir, this village was founded.
- Habatpura: Habat khan was an amir (noble) in the Salateen of Gujarat.
- Bibipura: A woman who belonged to Chahtia Silsala of Sufis. She resided in this village .After her death her shrine was constructed and her name used as the name of the village.
- Wahabgang: Qazi-ul-Qazat of Aurangzeb , Abdul Wabab had founded this village in the region of Alamgir.

## **Rukhsana Iftikhar**

- Furkhpora: An amir Abul Farah Khan first constructed a mosque and village was flourished around this mosque. He himself resided in this village in Aurangzeb period.
- Nurgang: Jahangir named this village after the name of her beloved consort Noor Jahan.
- Qutubpura: A religious center of Muslims, people normally visited this village to pay homage to Hazrat Qutub Alamsara.
- Naurangpura: This village was founded in Aurangzeb period (Shahbah-ud-din & Rehman, 1963).

The small towns were deeply rooted in the fabric of rural Indian society. They supported the local temples and tombs of the Sufi saints which were linked with popular religion of the town like Hinduism and Islam (Shahbah-ud-din & Rehman, 1963). In small towns, new politicians and leaders of the religious movements build -up their first social alliance. Peasants' market places (haths) grew in numbers with the expansion of population. More substantial towns went through bewildering variety of cycles of growth and decline as trade routes had changed upon which they depended. Peasants sold their goods in small town in order to pay rent and revenue to the state. A part from iron, salt, cotton, sugar, cloth, spices and tobacco all of the articles were sold in Indian small towns. There was a place for small merchants who had commercial marts in a town. Predominantly "Burgher" towns like Mirzapur had emerged.<sup>29</sup>In big cities Hindus and Janis provided the solidarities out of which corporation and a sense of urban even political identity was forged. These places were small Mirzapurs; temple and bazaar went together. The establishment of Muslim rule in India had scattered small towns across north India from Punjab east to Monghyr led to the Bay of Bengal and in south Hyderabad Deccan. These centers were clustered in the upper Doab and the western part of Awadh. In these urban Islands the families of soldiers, administrators and learned men expand into Hindu hinterlands. They were virtually became the landed gentry of 17th century India. (Chandra, 1994)

The first Muslim invasion of Indian sub-continent it appears it had been a long time period that the penetration of holy men as Sultans of Delhi began to dominate the central Ganga valley. The crucial growth of town societies extended due to Sufi orders. The key of this Diasporas was the concept of spiritual territory known as "wilayats" (division of this universe). Each wilyat was the gift of God into which the mystic orders settled down to spread the message of the God. The heads of these waliyats were the subordinate (khalifas) for the towns still dominated by the Hindu population. (Athar Al, 1997) But these heads were the source of attraction for the Muslim community. The appointment of Qazi and Mufti in small town provided legal business of the Muslim state in Indian locality. Qazi was the expert of Muslim jurisprudence who had linked with the Sufi seminaries. This three ways link of the state, the disciple of the Muslim law and Islamic mystic persisted in Mughal period especially in Muslim Qasbah. In history of Awadh towns such as Bilgram, Makanpur and Kara the penetration of mysticism and the concept of

### *Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India*

grant-free lands were minimal (Morrison, 1967). Muslim saints came into contact with popular Hindu Rajas in the agrarian set-up of India. The Sufis tombs and the shrines became particular resorts for Hindus to get rid of their miseries and illness. But Hindu temples and Sufis shrines stood aloof in the local set-up. Both these connections survived in the Muslim revivalist movements of 17th and 18th centuries (Ghoshal, 1966).

The local service gentry was another element of urban sector of Mughal India. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century towns were already flourishing centers scholars, artisans and office- holders. In 1590 Muslims were the simple patch holders in Doab an Awadh. In the time of King Akbar (1556-1605) the existence of remarkable number of towns was not there in Hardio district. it seem that the Muslims of western Awadh had less interest in acquiring property rights in the latter end of Akbar's period (Baylay, 1975). After the period of Akbar Sayyid families rapidly gained property throughout Doab. Rajput excelled in the northern India. It was easy for the Muslim families to expand their land, properties, deeds and advantages. The first Mughal emperors were hostile toward their service gentry to acquired lands and transfer their revenue to control over the usufruct lands. In Aurangzeb's period the state gave recognition to service gentry. In 1690 a Farman was issued with recognition of service free charitable land to be inheritable within the family. It was also appeared in this period many landlords began to assimilate their service free lands to avoid the state tax and other duties. So the power was shifted toward gentry. In 17th century, the emperor had been able to get the benefits from this balance which existed between the mansabdars, Qazi and Qanungo. There was no "sprouts of capitalism" arising out of Indian mercantile economy in the years 1600-1800 A.D. There was no evidence of change in the system of artisan production which might be producer's labor and tool were not directly control under the capital. Agra and Delhi had shown some capitalist growth in 1680. Merchants and townsmen had enough power to protect their interests without a strong political and legal framework but they could not dissolve the dominance of rural structure in Indian society (Baylay, 1975). The growth of more commercial and bureaucratic style of government paved a way for groups between state and rural society. The "middle class" of those inferior revenue officials and professional servants of Mughal nobility grew when the empire had passed its peak (Khan I. A., 1967).

## **Conclusion**

The study of Indian towns and urban centers shows that urban process was on full swing before the arrival of foreign companies in Hindustan. The Mughal dynasty gathered the support of local corporate structure and gives a way to foreign merchant after reducing the import duties. The emperors, nobility and service gentry develop a bond with devotional network, craftsmen, and laborers. The towns will be seen as much as places to store and transact information and ideas of hard-edge economic classes and inclusive communities. The relationship created by indigenous notion of arbitration, by property rights by criminal and civil laws made the idea of the city blurred in Hindustan at that time. From bleeding politics to social history, urban history gave a fresh look to Indian towns and bazaars. It has traced the answers of many questions in Indian history such as the origin of communalism, poverty, nationalism and may be the role of towns and cities in the decline of the empire.

## **References**

- Ahmad, N.-u.-D. (1936). *Tabaqat-i-Akbari*. Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society, Bengal.
- Athar Al. (1997). *The Mughal Bobility under Aurangzeb*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Babar, Z.-u.-D. (1921). *Babarnama*. London: A.S Beveridge publication.
- Baylay, C. (1975). *The Local roots of India Politics*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bhattacharya, B. (2006). *Urban development in India since Pre Historica Items* . New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Blake, S. P. (1998). *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign city in Mughal India 1639-1739*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Chandra, S. (1994). *Some aspects of Urbanization in Medieval in India*. India: Cambridge University Press.
- Chathopadhyaya, B. (1986). *Urban Centers in early Medieval India*. New Delhi: Routledge Press.
- Chaudary, K. (1995). *The English East India Company: The study of early joint stock company 1600-1640*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Drilk, H., & Weber, M. (1998). *An Introduction to his life and work*. U.K: Cambridge University Press.
- Fazal, A. (1964). *Ain-i-Akbari. Trans. H. Beveridge*. Calcutta: Asiatic Society Bengal.
- Fitch, R. (1998). *England Pioneer to India*. London: Haukyat Society.
- Ghoshal, U. (1966). *A History of India Political Ideas*. London: Oxford University Press.



## ***Urban Formation and Culture Transformation in Mughal India***

- Grewal, J. (1980). *Historical Writing on Urbanization*. London: The City in Indian History.
- Khan, I. A. (1967). *Middle class of Mughal Empire*. Aligarh, India: IESHR Publishing House.
- Khan, M. (2006). *Muntakh-ul-Lubab Trans. Elliot and Dowson*. Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publishing.
- Manucci, N. (1906). *Storia do Mogar or Mughal India, trans.* London: J.Marry.
- Meagher, S. M. (2008). *Philosophy and the city*. New York: State University of New York.
- Misra, S. (1994). *Urabn History in India: Possibilities and Perspective*. London: Demography, Society and Politics.
- Monserrate, F. (1922). *The Commentary on his Journey to the court of Akbar, Trans. Hoyland and annotated by S.K Banerji*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, M. (1967). Values as an obstacle in the growth in South Asia. *Journal of Economic History*, 16-23.
- Naqvi, H. (1974). *Mughal Hindustan: Cities and and Industries*. Karachi: National Book Foundation.
- Naqvi, H. (1986). *Agricultural, Industrial and Urban dynamism under sultans of Delhi*. Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Shahbah-ud-din, S., & Rehman, A. (1963). *Hindustan ky Hukmarano ky Ehad ky tamaddany Jalway*. New Delhi: Dar-ul-Mausnafeer.
- Spodek, H. (1980, January 15). *Study of the History of Urbanization in India*. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/009614428000600301?journalCode=juha>:  
<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/009614428000600301?journalCode=juha>

### **Biographical Note**

**Dr. Rukhsana Iftikhar** is Associate Professor at the Department of History & Pakistan Studies, and Director, Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan.

---