

Fouzia Farooq Ahmed*

The Myth of Tribal Egalitarianism Under The Lodhis (800-932/1398-1526)

Abstract

The Afghans have a long history in India as migrants. Under the Delhi Sultans, they worked as petty soldiers who gradually rose to power and became a strategically placed minority in the power structure. Bahlul Lodhi's ascendancy to the throne of Delhi marked the culmination of Afghan political power in the Delhi Sultanate. It is generally understood that Bahlul Lodhi governed on tribal egalitarian model that was the reason behind the stability and longevity of his reign. His son Sikandar Lodhi maintained a delicate balance between tribal model of governance and kingship. However, Ibrahim Lodhi lost the balance and his attempts for extreme centralization backfired. This article provides a brief history of Afghans as a strategically placed minority in the Delhi Sultanate and argues that Bahlul Lodhi did not aim to establish a tribal egalitarian system. Many of the practices that are associated with him as attempts of introducing egalitarianism were simply efforts not to confront with the already empowered political and military factions. Governance model of Bahlul Lodhi was not a break from the past. Nor was it an Afghan exclusive system. Furthermore, the governance model of Lodhi dynasty had legitimacy issues which were same as his predecessors.

Key Words: Tribal Egalitarianism, Afghans in India, *tawaiif ul Mulukiat*

By the end of fourteenth century, the political power of the Delhi Sultanate was on a steady decline. Muhammad b. Tughluq's (725–52/1325–1351) ambitious projects and his capricious treatment of the subjects and the *umara* substantially decreased the size of the sultanate. Muhammad's successor Firuz Shah (751–789/1351–1388) did not make any substantial move towards re-conquest or territorial expansion and his policy of making the *iqtas* inheritable for the landed elite made the *iqtas* strongholds of the *umara* who held them. The civil war in the last days of Firuz Shah (709-790/1309-1388), left the sultanate defenseless and prone to the threat of external invaders. This was the time when Amir Temur (737-808/1336-1405) was gaining grounds in the Central Asia. Thus, seeing the power vacuum in the Delhi Sultanate, he advanced to fill it. However, like Mahmud of Ghazna (360-421/971-1030) it was not his aim to settle in India nor did Temur left any notable generals in the region to administer his conquered territories, therefore, no new administrative institutions were established in the sultanate.

Thus, the last decade of the fourteen century and the first decade of the fifteenth century, was marked by intense political fragmentation in northern India. *Parakhandashahi /muluk at-tawaiif¹* or rule of groups or petty kings prevailed in the core regions of the Delhi Sultanate where numerous militarily strong warlords

* Fouzia Farooq Ahmed, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad

scrambled for carving out principalities for themselves. Each warlord in his domain acted like a king whose authority was continuously challenged by other lords. The incessant military clashes made it impossible to have effective governance or administration. The provinces had split into independent states.² Some of these independent states aspired to capture Delhi since it could have provided them the legitimacy for proclaiming themselves as the successor of the deceased Empire of Delhi. The tributary states had already assumed their independent status during Muhammad ibn Tughluq's time that Firuz Shah had been unable to retrieve. In brief, the Temurid invasion (802/1399) had proven to be a deathblow to the political authority of the Delhi Sultanate and for three years after Temur's invasion, the sultanate remained sans sultan. The Sayyid Dynasty (817--855/1414-1451) that took control of the Delhi and other core areas of Delhi Sultanate struggled to survive and was eventually replaced by the Lodhi dynasty (800-932/1398-1526).

The Lodhis were able to stay in power for seventy-five years under three main rulers.³ Scholars like R. P. Tripathi and A. Raheem infer that Bahlul Lodhi's rule was a break from past. It was an Afghan tribal confederacy of the Afghans where the king was *primus inter pares* and maintained political norms on the basis of tribal egalitarian values.⁴ Egalitarian is a political school of thought that emphasizes on the equal value of all human beings. This equality can be political, economic, social or relational.⁵ I. H. Siddiqui on the other hand points out that 'the nobility under sultan Bahlul Lodhi was not a charmed circle where the non Afghans could be forbidden to enter. Its doors were rather thrown open to all the deserving candidates.'⁶ Siddiqui further, maintains that Bahlul's policy of making the Afghans as co-sharers of power was limited and his abstinence of maintaining hierarchy was temporary.⁷

Present article reaffirms that Lodhi Dynasty was not an Afghan exclusive dynasty. It further builds upon Dr. Siddiqui's argument and shows a projection of Afghans in the Delhi Sultanate power structure as a strategically placed minority on the background. The present article tries to assay the Lodhi government, and discusses, how it was more of a continuity rather than a break from the past. The article argues that the rise of Lodhis was a temporary episode of relative restoration of the Delhi Sultanate. Bahlul Lodhi was able to maintain a delicate balance of various strategically placed ethnic groups. Sikhandar Lodhi tried to change to compassion of the ruling elite. The long reigns of Bahlul and Sikandar Lodhi had provided an opportunity for certain power groups to thrive and had deeper root in the power politics than the progeny of Sikandar Lodhi. The presence of such groups resulted in the ultimate collapse of the Delhi Sultanate.

Afghans as a Strategically Placed Minority in the Delhi Sultanate Power Structure

Being the neighboring regions, the trade and communication links between India and Afghanistan (region of Roh in Indo-Persian sources), have always remained very strong. Therefore, the presence of Afghans as an essential element of Indian demography since earliest times is a conceivable notion. The Afghan presence in northwestern part of India gained momentum in the wake of the Ghaznawid and Ghurid invasions from the north-west. Lahore remained the winter capital of the Ghaznawid sultans till they were ousted by Shihab al-Din Ghuri (544-603/1149-

1206) and the population of Lahore at that time largely maintained the characteristics of the Ghaznawid core regions in terms of religious and ethnic orientations. The post- Shihab al-Din Ghuri era witnessed the rise of Afghans in the sultanate ruling elite as an important strategically placed minority. Till the times of Ghiyath al-Din Balban (597-686/1200-1287), the historical sources suggest a more individual and less collective presence of the Afghans in the state structure, nevertheless, they gradually rose to prominence as a group in the times of Khaljis and Tughluqs. Later, the Afghans were able to fill the power vacuum in the post-Temurid interregnum and were able to expand the territorial extent, and restore the administrative and military strength of the decaying Delhi Sultanate temporarily, till they were replaced by the Temurid prince Babur.

The Afghans were among the trusted ethnic groups of Shihab al-Din Ghuri, since his earliest appointed officers were not exclusively Turkish slaves but also Afghans. In 576-7/1179-80, Ghuri forces took the region of Multan and *sipah-salar* Ali Karmakh was appointed as the *wali* (governor) of this region. Six years later, Lahore fell to Ghurid arms and the *sipah-salar* was entrusted with an additional responsibility of administering this region. Ethnically, the *sipah-salar* belonged to the Shishani tribe of Ghur.⁸ Similarly, the fort of Sialkot occupied in 579/1184-5 was placed under the custody of Hussain Kharmil who bore a Ghurid name.⁹ Malik Zia al-Din Qazi Tuluki was given the charge of Tabarhinda.¹⁰ Therefore, it can safely be inferred that, the Ghuri expeditions in India before the battle of Tarai'n were largely headed by non-Turk elements that were largely Afghans.

The *umara* of Qutb al-Din Aybeg, comprised of both free and non-free elements, contained Afghans in them. However, in the times of Aybeg, Iltutmish and during the progenies of Iltutmish, the Afghans do not seem as visible as they were in the times of Nasir al-Din Mahmud.

The post Shams al-Din interregnum had swept most of the senior and strongest Shamsi *umara*.¹¹ Owing to his political genius, Balban-i- Khward (the future sultan Ghiyath al-Din Balban) not only survived this brutal epoch but also rose to eminence from being a junior Shamsi slave to the most powerful *amir* (entitled Ulugh Khan) of Nasir al-Din Mahmud's era. He was well aware of the fact that in order to survive in the Delhi Sultanate he required a power-base which was exclusively loyal to him, therefore, he patronized ethnically variant power groups among which the Afghans were one. Thus, the historical records of Sultan Nasir al-Din Mahmud reflect that Ulugh Khan had engaged 3,000 Afghans to check the hill tribes of Mewat.¹² When Balban became sultan, he strategically placed the Afghans around Delhi to counter the Mewatis who were a constant menace for the people of Delhi by endowing the regions surrounding Delhi as garrison with assignments of lands for their maintenance.¹³ Spatially, these Afghans concentrated in certain localities, such as the southwest vicinity of Delhi due to its Afghan residents came to be known as Afghanpur.¹⁴ In order to police the turbulent populations of Bhojpur, Kampil and Patiayali, Sultan Balban deployed Afghans into these regions.¹⁵ Similarly, the enterprising crown prince Muhammad who was securing the borders of Delhi Sultanate against the Mongols, had a large number of Afghan elements in his army.¹⁶

The Afghans were culturally different from other power groups present in the Delhi Sultanate. They were looked down upon by other groups for their lack of culture and sophistication in the Delhi Sultanate sources. In the words of Amir Khusraw, "Afghans nay, man slaying demons for even the demons groan in fright at their shouts. Their heads are like big sacks of straw, their beards like the comb of the weaver, long-legged as the stork but more ferocious than the eagle, their beards lowered like that of owl of the wilderness. Their voices hoarse and shrill like that of a jack-daw, their mouths open like that of a shark. Their tongue is blunt... Well, has a wise man said that when speech was sent to man from the sky, the Afghans got the last and the least share of it."¹⁷ Nonetheless, due to Mongol invasions in Central Asia and Afghanistan, the Afghans continuously migrated to Delhi Sultanate and became petty soldiers in the armies of Sultans and Sultanate officials.¹⁸

The year 688/1290 marks the conclusion of the Olberli Turkish rule from Delhi Sultanate. The Khaljis who were probably Afghans or Afghanized Turks did not trust the Turks on higher ranks. Hence, Afghans were one of the ethnicities that substituted Turks in the power structure. Some important *amirs* of Sultan 'Ala al-Din Khalji were ethnically Afghans, the fact that 'Ala al-Din Khalji had an Afghan *amir* whom Barani calls Ikhtiyar al-Din Mal Afghan signifies that the Khalji Sultans trusted the Afghans favorably.¹⁹ The sultans of Delhi constantly patronized new ethnic elements in sultanate, as their being new in the polity made them more dependent upon their patron. The sultan achieved loyalties from these groups by providing them opportunities to grow politically and financially. Thus, owing to this conducive environment for growth and prosperity, there must have been a regular influx of Afghans to the Delhi Sultanate.

The Tughluqs inherited the Delhi Sultanate that 'Ala al-Din Khalji had turned into an empire that stretched up till far south. By that time, the number of bureaucrats that were required to control the state had substantially swelled. In order to control the giant empire and its officials, the Tughluq sultans also maintained a delicate balance between multiple strategically placed minorities among which the Afghans had rose to prominence. The historical sources of Muhammad ibn Tughlaq's era frequently mention rebelling Afghans who had served the sultan as governors or high officials in Multan, Deopapur and Gujarat. Though, none of these rebellions was successful, yet they reflected the growing political presence of the Afghans. For instance, Malik Shahu Lodhi Afghan was able to take over the province of Multan after killing the governor of Multan. He had become exceedingly powerful that the sultan himself came to suppress this revolt. Malik Shahu who had a substantial following in Multan found it impossible to defeat the sultan took flight towards Afghanistan with his followers. Another Afghan rebellion occurred in Dawlatabad where the Afghans drove away officers of the sultan and selected Ismail Makh Afghan as their ruler. The sultan came in person to deal with the rebels who then absconded from Dawlatabad. However, once the sultan went back, the Afghans retreated to Dawlatabad. The internal strife among the Afghans and other chiefs nevertheless, caused fall of Ismail Makh.²⁰ Afghans also rose at arms in Gujarat under their leader Malik Taghi and it was certainly a challenge for the state to control the situation.

Muhammad b. Tughluq's era witnessed the transformation of the Afghans from a strategically placed minority that the sultans were employing to maintain a balanced power equation among the *umara* to a strong power group that strove for power as sultan's antagonists. The strength of the Afghan warlords was the Afghan community that seemed to be supporting their leaders against the sultan on the basis of *asabiyah*. Being the neighboring region of India, the émigré influx from Afghanistan must have been greater than that of Turkish, Arab and Persian regions. It is also evident that the Afghan population had settled in the geographically proximate regions of Delhi such as Doab in the Punjab and Katehar. In this era a large number of Afghans were included in the provincial services as *amiran-i-Sada* (the centurions-officers with a contingent of one hundred). The *amiran-i-Sada* rebelled under the leadership of Hasan Kangu Behmani. According to histiran Farishtah, Afghans received unprecedented patronization under Muhammad b. Tughluq's successor Firuz Shah who not only included them in the rank of one hazari (officers with a contingent of one thousand) nobles but also appointed them on the borders.²¹ In Firuz Shah 's era, two Afghan *umara* were entrusted with important *iqtas* . The *iqta* of Bihar was allotted to Malik Bir Afghan, Sambhal and Katehar (Rohailkhand) to Malik Khitab Afghan.²²

In 816/1414 the last Tughluq Sultan Mahmud was succeeded by Dawlat Khan, a warlord whose origin is ambiguous. While Firishtah who compiled his history two centuries later in south India considers him an Afghan²³, Yahya Sirhindi does not provide any such detail,²⁴ nor the Afghan histories written in the times of Mughals boast such claims.²⁵ *Tarikh-i-Haqqi* and *Zubdat al Tawarikh* mention him as a prince of the family of Firuz Tughlaq.²⁶ Although it seems plausible that he was not an Afghan, however, it is also an undeniable fact that the Afghans had gained an unprecedented political strength in this era.²⁷

As mentioned earlier, the post-Temurid interregnum²⁸ instated an era of *parakhandashahi* or *muluk al-tawaif* (gang rule). Among different groups contesting for power, the Afghans were one of the strongest. In the times of Sayyid dynasty, their power grew enormously. The reign of Sayyid dynasty witnessed the rise of Lodhis as the most prominent strategically placed minority. Founder of the Sayyid dynasty, Khidr Khan utilized the Lodhi warrior skills to counter their rivals on several instances. Lodhis were trusted since they seem to be the newest ethnic element in the sultanate ruling elite. Islam Khan provided military assistance to the Sayyids several times. Sultan Mubarak Shah appointed Sultan Shah Lodhi with the title Islam Khan, as governor of Sirhind.²⁹ Islam Khan nominated his nephew Bahlul as his successor instead of his son Qutb Khan. He was aware of the fact that the tribal grandees will not accept his own son who was the son from a non-Pashtun lady. His successor and nephew/son in law Bahlul Lodhi found it difficult to put up with the Sayyids, nevertheless he did receive the title of Khan -i-Khanan from them since he helped them to survive the threats of rival states of Malwa, Gujarat and Jawnpur.³⁰

Lodhis were later granted Lahore and Deopalpur. So overwhelming their power had become, that after assisting the Sayyids in countering the forces of Malwa they actually made two attempts to conquer Delhi. The internal strife among the

umara of Delhi, who had become exceedingly powerful, in the absence of any strong sultan at the center also worked in Lodhi's favor.³¹

Bahlul was the most dominant warlord in the northern India of his time, who virtually ruled entire Punjab during the reign of the last sultan of Sayyid dynasty 'Ala al-Din 'Alam Shah.³² Alam Shah was unable to exercise authority either within Delhi or outside, the territorial extent of the rival states of Jawnpur, Malwa and Gujarat were expanding, while he neither had will nor capacity to withstand all these threats and pressures. Thus, the *umara*'s power became unchecked under 'Ala al-Din 'Alam Shah who was realistic enough to understand his inability to control them and took resort in Badaun. A period of three years following this episode is that of interregnum, where the tussle of power made one of the group of *umara* invited Bahlul where he was enthroned as sultan. Bahlul Lodhi moved forward to fill the political vacuum in the center and successfully seized the throne in 854/1451.³³

Power Relations Redefined: The Lodhi Sultans Sultan and the *Umara*

According to Naimatullah and Serwani, the most salient feature of the Lodhi era was that Bahlul Lodhi redefined the power relations between the office of the sultan and his *umara*.³⁴ In Delhi Sultanate, the only way through which a sultan could stay powerful was to control his *umara*, through making them weak, dependent and well monitored. There was a zero-sum game in the power politics of the Delhi Sultanate, the sultan and *umara* grew powerful at the expense of one another. In other words, the empowerment of *umara* generally resulted in their becoming the *de facto* rulers.

Like his predecessor, Bahlul Lodhi was as generous in distributing the land among his confidants. In the first reading of the Afghan sources³⁵ it seems Bahlul's attempts were not to develop and keep a delicate balance among mutually antagonistic multiple ethnic communities as the earlier sultans, he was nurturing only Afghans as a community by enhancing a sense of *asabiyah*. *Asabiyah* seems to be the predominant rhetoric during the times of Lodhi dynasty. Bahlul ruled merely as *primus inter pares*. Bahlul Lodhi had invited the Afghan chiefs from Roh to join him in the Indian environs in order to counter the growing military threat from Jawnpur. The Afghans were unpopular among the residents of Delhi because of their unpolished manners. One Mulla Qadan passed humiliating remarks against the Afghans in congregational mosque in the presence of Bahlul, which must have convinced him to make his powerbase consisting on only Afghans.³⁶ It can well be imagined that the migrations continued in the times of Sikandar and Ibrahim. Politically and economically, the Lodhis were much stronger than the Sayyids. Possession of elephants was a symbol of royalty and prosperity, in the times of Lodhis, we find many political actors possessing elephants.³⁷

According to Serwani, Bahlul's distribution of land and offices was purely towards the Afghans, who emerged as the only ethnic group possessing political power under the Lodhis.³⁸ Since the time of Sayyids, the Delhi Sultanate was experiencing an existential threat from the Sharqi Sultanate of Jawnpur, Bahlul's rivalry was with the Sharqi Sultan Mahmud of Jawnpur, to counter which he invited the Afghans of Roh maintaining that, "God has given the kingdom of Delhi

to the Afghans, but the other kings wish to expel them. Come to this country. The name of sovereignty will remain with me but the territories we have acquired and may conquer will be shared among us as brothers.”³⁹ Bahlul’s policy of patronizing his fellow Afghans initiated a new wave of Afghan migration and settlement in India. Bahlul not only knew the art of winning allies but also maintained them as friends for an enduring period. He bestowed upon them *jagirs*, which the Afghans considered as their personal property and not a property of the sultan.⁴⁰ He was also nurturing an Afghan migrant power-base among the common people. The sultan also encouraged his *amirs* to patronize the Afghans in their *jagirs*. Naimatullah mentions sultan’s orders towards his *umara* which reflect his policy towards the Afghans,

“Present before me every Afghan who comes to Hind from Roh and is willing to enter my service. I shall grant him a *jagir* more agreeable than he deserves, and if he prefers service under anyone of you, out of ties of kinship, attachment, and friendship, offer him a satisfactory salary and if I hear of a single Afghan going back to his country for want of livelihood or employment, I shall remove you from the *jagir*.”⁴¹

From Naimatullah and Abbas Serwani's accounts, it seems that Bahlul Lodhi was encouraging Afghan migrations from the region of *koh*⁴² and thus was keener on developing an Afghan confederacy and not a monarchy. It was due to his invitation that the warrior Farmuli and Lohani tribes migrated and settled in India. These settlements on tribal lines, provided a stable powerbase to the tribal chiefs, which enormously strengthened their positions in the Lodhi dynasty. Bahlul parceled out a substantial area of his sultanate as *jagirs* and assignments to these Afghan chiefs, whose following came from their tribes.⁴³ These *jagirs* were by no means transferable revenue assignments, since there is ample evidence that these *jagirs* were transferred to the next generation, for instance, the Lohanis were able to keep the region of Bihar under their control as their *jagirs* for three generations. Thus, the *jagirs* traveled from Dariya Khan Lohani to his son Bihar Khan, from where it was inherited by his grandson Jalal Khan. Similarly, in the times of Ibrahim, the region of Oudh, was bestowed upon Miyan Kala Pahar Farmuli as *jagir* by Bahlul Lodhi, was inherited by his daughter Fath Malika and her husband Mustafa Farmuli.⁴⁴ These *jagirs* traveled down to generations, such as in the Punjab, the family of Dawlat Khan Yousufkhail maintained their *jagir* for an extended period of thirty years.⁴⁵ Farid Khan (future Sultan Sher Shah Sur) inherited his father’s *jagir* in Sahsaram.⁴⁶ There are also incidences that indicate that the tribal chief considered it his own discretion to distribute their *jagir* among their sons, for instance, in Malwa, an *amir* Shujaat Khan, portioned out his *jagir* among his sons⁴⁷ and Hasan Khan Sur also divided his *jagir* among his sons while he was alive.⁴⁸

The *jagirdars* were petty sultans in their own domains, they administered these regions according to their own policies. The appointment of officers and organization of personal army were usually motivated by their own needs and not the will of the sultan. For instance, Farid who assisted his father on the *jagir* had formulated a new policy to administer his personal military force, the subordinate officers and people of the *jagir* as the deputy of his father made new arrangements with the soldiers, the *zamindars* and the subjects.⁴⁹

The *jagirdars* maintained personal armies on their *jagirs* and the Lodhi era was no exception to it. These armies were the powerbase of the *jagirdar*, which came in the use of the sultan when the need arose. The historical sources that discuss Lodhi era, mention the officers at *jagirs* and their personal armies. For instance, in the *jagir* of Kara and Mankipur the Sarwani warlord Azam Humayun maintained 45000 cavalry and 700 elephants.⁵⁰ In the Punjab, Tatar Khan Lodhi Yousufkhail who held territories beyond Sutluj River and had rebelled against Bahlul Lodhi possessed 15000 cavalry.⁵¹ In Jawnpur, the *jagirdar* Jamal Khan Lodhi Sarangkani and his son Ahmad possessed 20,000 horses.⁵² Also, the *jagirdar* of Chaund Muhammad Khan Sur kept 1500 horses⁵³ while Hasan Khan Sur, the *jagirdar* of Sahsaram maintained 500 horses.⁵⁴

Just as the sultan appointed his officers and thus delegated power among their own confidants in the sultanate, in the similar fashion, the *jagirdars* also distributed the power and responsibilities in the *jagir* according to their own will. Hence, the *jagirdars* also achieved loyalty among his officers through granting largess and privilege. This political culture that rose to culmination point in the times of Bahlul continued during Sikandar's rule.

For the reasons mentioned above, Bahlul Lodhi's treatment of his *umara* has been highly criticized by many historians, since they hold him responsible for 'establish (ing) a monarchy in which the position of the chiefs was enhanced beyond measure and the dignity of the sultan was greatly lowered.'⁵⁵ However, it is plausible to think that the Afghans had grown exceedingly powerful before Bahlul rose to power and it was an intelligent move on his part to include them in power structure on their own terms instead of making them the contenders to the throne. The sultan did patronize the Hindu rajas and maintained alliances with them.

Besides, it is also worthy of noticing that the previous sultans who had attempted to control the *umara* through, blood and iron, poison and dagger, by curtailing their socialization and economic strengths were only curtailed till the end of the reign of one sultan. Once the sultan grew weak or after his death, it was the *umara* who decided the issue of succession and contested for power with each other by reducing the office of the sultan to a mere formality.

From the statements given in sources like *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* and *Tarikh-i-Daudi* it seems that monarchy was clearly converted into oligarchy where, the status of the sultan had become one among the equals. The other Afghan warlords who led their tribes or the *jagirdars* were not treated as subordinates but as co-sharers of power.⁵⁶ These sources give an impression that, Bahlul Lodhi could not continue the political traditions of his predecessors and strove to achieve relational egalitarianism and distributive equality.⁵⁷

However, a close reading of the sources tells that Bahlul Lodhi used the rhetoric of his ethnicity and cultural practices as a tool to gain legitimacy. He patronized people of different racial stock. He invited Afghan tribes from Afghanistan to India and parceled out land, treasures and largess to them, thus making them co-sharers in the power structure. The elite bureaucracy of Bahlul included pashtun groups including Lodhis, Nuhani, Jilwani and Sarwani.⁵⁸ Yet there were Afghan tribes like Niazi, Suri and Kerrani that remained out of power.

Additionally, he was also supported by certain Hindu chieftains, local *zamindars* and old nobility that continued to exist since the time of Sayyids. There were non-Afghan foreign elements in the bureaucracy including *Shaikzadas* of Farmuli tribe.⁵⁹ Thus, the Delhi sultanate under Bahlul was more than a confederacy of Afghan chieftains.

The Persian court culture of decorum and hierarchy that was the hallmark of the courts of the earlier Delhi Sultanate was overlooked.⁶⁰ Bahlul did not sit on the high throne, instead his seat was on the carpet, besides other Afghan lords who were addressed as *Masnad-i-'Aali* meaning your Excellencies.⁶¹ It is incorrect to see this practice as an innovation since it was being practiced in the times of Firuz Shah.

According to A. Rahim, the sultan did not issue commands to the powerful warlords.⁶² If any one of them was disgruntled with him, he himself went to the noble's abode to reconcile. He used to place his sword and turban before the angry lord and would say, "if you think me unworthy of the office choose someone else and give me some other office."⁶³ In the observance of royal decorum, Bahlul Lodhi was an absolute opposite of Balban, since Bahlul used to eat in the company of his *umara* and his horse was no exception to his chiefs. There was no pomp and show associated to his office. Such was the founder of the Afghan monarchy in India and his relationship with the chiefs.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, a close reading of the sources suggests that Bahlul Lodhi did issue *farmans* and treated some of his nobles with blood and iron. The most extraordinary feature of Bahlul's rule was that he was able to reinstate the power of the Delhi Sultan on the region of Northern India, his presence stabilized the Delhi Sultanate for sometimes.⁶⁵

Like any other Delhi Sultan, by the end of Bahlul's reign, his *umara* had become exceedingly powerful. Thus, it was not Bahlul's will that was to decide the issue of succession but the *umara*. Although, Bahlul and his predecessor Islam Khan both, while deciding their successor had considered the acceptability of their nominee among the *umara*. The *umara* could overlook the will of the deceased sultan and decide their new ruler.

For instance, Islam Khan the grand Lodhi chief nominated his nephew and son in law Bahlul Lodhi instead of his son Qutb Khan as his successor, as his mixed lineage would pose serious issues to his authority, since it would not be acceptable to majority of the *umara*.⁶⁶ However, while Bahlul enjoyed a popular Afghan support, Qutb was also able to win following.⁶⁷ In the later stage, Bahlul was able to win a decisive support and following of the fellow Afghans with his patronization of Afghans and promotion of *asabiyyah*.

Thus it will be apt to state that the image of the existence of a Afghan tribal egalitarian set up under Bahlul Lodhi is a mere myth created by historians Naimatullah and Serwani. Firstly, Bahlul, ignored hierarchy only till the defeat of Mahmud Khalji of Jawnpur but resumed it once he had a tighter grip on the state apparatus. Secondly, he did punish the *umara* on several occasions. Thirdly, the nobility under the Lodhis was mixed as there were Afghan and non-Afghan elements both in the nobility. Fourthly, the bestowal of land grants or *iqtas* was not indiscriminate to all Afghans as there were certain Afghan tribes which were deliberately kept at an arm's length i.e. Niazis, Sur and Kherranis. Fifthly, it is also

said that the Afghans in India maintained a culture of their own power, social and economic institutions, socialization and manner of living had distinct tribal traditions. Ibn-i Khuldun's theory of dynastic cycle and *asabiyyah* fits over the Afghan settlers in India. Owing to their tough mountainous training, they were able to dominate militarily on the civilized northern Indian environment. However, it is important to note that the *asabiyyah* among Afghans was very flimsy and did not survive the rapid urbanization. Till the Tughluq era, Afghan settlement were on individual lines, therefore, their impact over the Sultanate polity was not as strong as it became in the post Tughluq era when they settled in India on tribal lines. Due to their tribal *asabiyyah*, they rose as the Lodhi Sultans. Nevertheless, this *asabiyyah* disappeared within one generation and factional infight broke out amongst the Afghan residing in the power corridors.

After Bahlul Lodhi the crisis of succession resurfaced. Sikandar's rise to the office of sultan (894-1489/922-1517) also reflects upon the culture of power in the Delhi Sultanate where the Afghan Chiefs decided the issue of succession and overlooked the will of the sultan. During his reign, Bahlul nominated his second son Sikandar as his successor. However, after Bahlul's death his *umara* assembled to decide the issue of succession. Among sultan's three sons, the eldest Bayazid was dead and his son Azam Humayun was an option to be chosen as a sultan, the second son prince Barbik was at Jawnpur at that time, the third son Alam Khan was the governor of Rapri and Sikandar was in Delhi.⁶⁸ They all had support among one group of *umara* or another. Sikandar who was nominated by Bahlul was also being considered as an option and not the only candidate, therefore, in order to remind the *umara* of the competence and eligibility of his son, Sikandar's mother spoke from the veil. On this, an influential chief Isa Khan Lodhi gave her a contemptuous answer that the throne was not for the son of a goldsmith's daughter.⁶⁹ This statement resulted in a row among the *umara* and, Khan Khanan Farmuli, another influential chief condemned such rude statement towards the wife of the late sultan.⁷⁰ This was the point when Khan Khanan Farmuli supported the cause of succession of Sikandar. This chief had a large following among the *umara* who also conceded to his decision.⁷¹ Thus, Sikandar was made the sultan of Delhi. Historians credit Sikandar as a righteous Muslim who did not have a lenient policy towards the Hindus.⁷² Like Firuz Shah, (Tughluq) Sikandar was also one of the multiple contenders to the throne. Therefore, it is possible that like Firuz Shah, he had used religion to win legitimacy and support among the *umara*.

Sikandar Lodhi's status in the Lodhi dynasty is that of a consolidator, since he made a serious attempt to build political institutions. In order to administer the state in a more organized way, the sultan made an effort to curtail the power of the *umara* whose unchecked power was a challenge to the stability and writ of the state.⁷³ Although Sikandar did not give the *umara* as great opportunity to share power as given by his father, yet, he was a man of sagacity he was able to maintain a balance.⁷⁴ Like his father he did not sit on the throne and in addition he alighted himself from the horse when he received the *umara*. His treatment of the tribal chiefs was quite mild in political and financial matters. Although, the *umara*'s financial matters were inspected and audited both, however, the sultan did not treat them harshly or indecorously. The sultan treated them leniently in financial matters and they were allowed to settle the matters with revenue and finance

department according to their own choice.⁷⁵ However, there were still many who complained that sultan was obstructing their liberty. Nevertheless, Sikandar was successful in his treatment of the *umara* and was able to maintain a relative peace within the ruling elite.⁷⁶

In 922/1517, Sikandar breathed his last. The *umara* were again divided on the issue of succession. While a notable majority of the *umara* supported Ibrahim Lodhi, whom they considered worthy of the office of sultan⁷⁷ there were others who wanted his brother Jalal to be enthroned. Thus, Ibrahim was enthroned in Delhi, while his younger brother was enthroned in Jawnpur.⁷⁸ This dual royalty created many problems for Ibrahim, who had to invest a lot of time and energy to fight and eliminate his brother if he was to stay in power. Overcoming and eliminating his brother was something that he did as his first priority and became the only ruler of Delhi Sultanate.

Ibrahim Lodhi (922/1517-932/1526) was the third generation of royalty and he was well convinced with the effectiveness of the idea of hierarchy that had been the tradition of the sultans of Delhi before the Lodhis. He believed that Bahlul's relaxations to the nobility had damaged the authority of the office of sultan, since the *umara's* power became unchecked under this system. The *umara* were unruly and often did not heed to the royal orders. So immense was their power that they considered it their right to make the decisions that should be the discretion of the office of sultan such as succession.⁷⁹ Ibrahim had a first hand experience of handling the unruly Afghan chiefs, who had become a threat to his authority by instating his younger brother Jalal as a contending sultan in Jawnpur.⁸⁰ There were other instances such as appointments and removal from office where the *umara* disregarded and opposed his orders. In the campaign against Rana Sanga of Mewar, Ibrahim gave chief command to Miyan Makhan replacing Miyan Hussayn Farmuli. This riled the latter who joined the cause of Rana against the Lodhi forces headed by Miyan Makahn.⁸¹ Ibrahim therefore asserted that the ruler had no friends or relations and that all were the servants of the royalty.

The measures that Ibrahim Lodhi took to curtail the influence of the *umara*, were seen with a general disapproval and resentment. Since *umara* apprehended them as encroachment into their power, privilege and liberty. Although, Sikandar also had similar designs as Ibrahim, however the latter's tactlessness won him more enemies than friends.⁸² Ibrahim's constant efforts to curtail the power and privilege of the *umara* immensely damaged the *asabiyah* among the Afghans. Despite their internal strife, the Afghans had earlier fought collectively against any external threat. Now that the internal threat was formidable they took help from the outside forces. It was due to Ibrahim's conflict with Dawlat Khan Lodhi that Babur was invited to invade India eventually. Babur gained maximum advantage of the divided *umara* and the weakened office of sultan. Thus, he was able to terminate the Afghan dynasty in 932/1526 in the battle of Panipat,⁸³ the decisive battle which provided a chance to Babur to establish his suzerainty in India.

To sum up, the political situation under the Lodhis was certainly better than the Sayyids. The Lodhis were militarily stronger and were well defended against their enemies outside and inside both. The statement of Dr. Tripathi that the political system as devised by Bahlul Lodhi was not monarchy or despotism but that of

oligarchy or confederacy,⁸⁴ holds little truth. Though Bahlul parceled out lands to his fellow Afghans and advised the Afghans from trans-Roh regions to join him. Yet he also had support from non-Afghan elements. Thus, the territorial extent of the Delhi Sultanate was reinforced when the Lodhis were able to defeat the sultanate of Jawnpur finally and annex it to Delhi in 884/1479 and the last Sharqi ruler resigned to Bihar.

It was certainly not the annexation and reinforcement of the land that proved to be the revival of the Delhi sultanate, but also consolidation of administrative practices in the times of Sikandar Lodhi in (894/1489-923/1517). In order to focus more on his military fronts of Alwar, Gwalior and Bhayana the sultan transferred his capital from Delhi to Agra in 911/1505. The sultan however, was giving excessive focus on south while he ignored Punjab. The Sharqi sultan was expelled from Bihar when Sultan Sikandar successfully captured these regions. Sikandar was also able to make his military mark in south. Different other regions were also seized from the control of other warlords. This included Nagor, which was taken over from the ruler of Gwalior in 914/1508. Some regions of the sultanate of Malwa were also taken over, such as Chanderi in 921/1525. Finally, in 915/1509 Nagwor became a part of Delhi Sultanate. Earlier, the Awhadis in Bhayana, whose status was that of a tributary under Delhi were finally defeated in 898/1492. However, this control was only short lived, since in the times of Sikandar's son and successor, Ibrahim (923-32/1517-26), the regions of Nagor and Chanderi were lost to the Hindu ruler of Merwar. Later, Ibrahim was able to capture Gwalior.

The successor of Bahlul, Sikandar, wished to restore the prestige of the office of sultan, consolidated his position vis a vis the *umara*, however this dominance was short lived. After his death, his *umara* tried to effect the decision of succession. However, once in power, Ibrahim attempted to curtail the powers of the existing *umara*, and tried to build his own powerbase.⁸⁵ The overt and abruptly harsh policy of Ibrahim towards, prominent political figures culminated in distrust among the ruling elite due to which he had to face dire circumstances. The empire constructed by Bahlul and Sikandar quickly disintegrated during Ibrahim's time.⁸⁶

It was the resentment towards the arbitrary rule of Ibrahim that his uncle Dawlat Khan Lodhi, the governor of the Punjab invited Babur to attack India. Babur initiated a series of military expeditions into India. In his fourth expedition, he was able to defeat the one who had actually invited him to India and he took over the region of Lahore in 930/1524. Soon enough he was marching towards Delhi. Thus, on 8 Rajab 932/20 April 1526, a fierce battle at Panipat Ibrahim's forces were defeated.⁸⁷ Although, the Lodhi forces outnumbered the Mughal army, however, the 100, 000 strong Indian forces could not stand a chance in front of Babur's artillery and thus were defeated.⁸⁸

The Delhi Sultanate under Lodhi (855/ 1451-932/1526) dynasty faced multiple challenges to its existence. The status of Delhi Sultanate was reduced to one of the multiple successor states contending to gain the region of Delhi. The state that owned the region of Delhi was the legitimate successor of 'Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad ibn-e-Tughluq's Delhi Sultanate that held its sway till far south. The states of Jawnpur, Gujarat, Malwa, Bengal, and Hindu principalities in Mewar, Alwar and the Doab had challenged the authority of the Delhi Sultanate under

Sayyids several times. Delhi itself was invaded by the rival Muslim kingdoms several times, for instance, the sultan of Malwa invaded Delhi in 844/1440 and the sultan Jawnpur had attacked the region in 810/1407, in 856/1452, in 870/1466 and in 883/1479 respectively. Although, Lodhis were able to improve upon the nature of political authority of the Delhi Sultanate however, they could not annihilate all the rival states. Similarly, till the times of the Tughluqs, the Caliphal investitures in India were a privilege of the sultan of Delhi however, they were now obtained by other rival states.⁸⁹ Therefore, the Lodhis had lost the religio-Legal claim to be considered the successor of the Delhi Sultanate.

To conclude with, we do not see political or economic egalitarianism in the times of Bahlul Lodhi.⁹⁰ However there seems to be a relational egalitarianism in the beginning of Bahlul's rule. Bahlul was selective and arbitrary in his dealings with the Afghan tribes as well a case that seems evident from the exclusion of Niazis, Suris and Kerranis from the power matrix. Although some historians including Naimatullah and Serwani try to create a myth that Bahlul was harboring a tribal egalitarian governance model which led to the decline of the dynasty is not supported by evidence. Thus tribal egalitarianism was not the major cause of the decline of the Lodhis. Rather it was the infighting among the Afghan nobility, inability of the Sultan to counter the nobility and Babur's advance tactics weaponry and gunpowder that cost Lodhis their empire. The sources clearly indicate that Bahlul Lodhi effectively utilized the rhetoric of his ethnicity to gain legitimacy among his the Afghans. Nonetheless, people of different racial identities served under him and he excluded certain Afghans tribes from his nobility as well. His political system was neither politically nor economically egalitarian. There seems to be a relational egalitarianism among the sultan and the ruling elite during Bahlul's time. Then again, the Persian court etiquettes were resumed by Sikandar Lodhi who re-Persianised the court of Delhi.

Notes & References

- ¹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, edited Sh. Abdur Rasheed (Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University, 1954).p. 7. Abdullah specifically mentions the word “*Tawaif al-Mulukiat*” to explain the political conditions of Hindustan. He explains further that every city has its own ruler. Ibid. pp. 6-7. see also, Morony, M. and Wasserstein, D.J., “*Mulūk al-Ṭawā’if*”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 08 September 2019 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0794> First published online: 2012 First print edition: ISBN: 9789004161214, 1960-2007
- ² For instance see Sirhindi, Yahya Bin Ahmad Bin Abdullah. *The Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*. Translated by K. K. Basu. (Karachi: Karimsons,1977) p. 165; Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi* (Lahore:1975), p. 312.
- ³ 1451-1526, Bahlul, Sikandar and Ibrahim
- ⁴ R. P. Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* (Allahabad, 1936), p. 83; Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, introduction.
- ⁵ For debates on multiple forms of egalitarianism Sidanius, Jim, et al. "Social dominance orientation, anti- egalitarianism and the political psychology of gender: an extension and cross- cultural replication." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 30.1 (2000): 41-67. Erdal, D.; Whiten, A. "Egalitarianism and Machiavellian Intelligence in Human Evolution" in Mellars, P.; Gibson, K. (eds.). *Modeling the Early Human Mind*. (Cambridge MacDonald Monograph Series,1996). Whaples, Robert M. "Egalitarianism: Fair and Equal? New Thinking on Egalitarianism". *The Independent Review*. (2017). Archived from the original on 2017. Retrieved 28 October 2017.
- ⁶ Iqtadar Hussain Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India* (Aligarh, 1969), p. 13.
- ⁷ Siddiqui, *Afghan Despotism in India*, p. 13.
- ⁸ Habib, Irfan. "Formation of the Sultanate Ruling Class of the Thirteenth Century." In *Medieval India 1: Researches in History of India(1200-1750)*, ed. Irfan Habib, (1992): p. 4-5.
- ⁹ Irfan. "Formation of the Sultanate", pp. 4-5.
- ¹⁰ Irfan. "Formation of the Sultanate", pp. 4-5.
- ¹¹ For instance see Fouzia Farooq Ahmed , *Muslim Rule In Medieval India Power And Religion In The Delhi Sultanate* (London, I.B.Tauris, 2016), pp. 4-71.
- ¹¹ For instance see Fouzia Farooq Ahmed , *Muslim Rule In Medieval India Power And Religion In The Delhi Sultanate* (London, I.B.Tauris, 2016), pp. 4-71.
- ¹² Siddiqui, Iqtadar Hussain. "The Afghans and their Emergence in India as ruling Elite During Delhi Sultanate Period." *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982): p. 251.
- ¹³ Barani, Diya al Din. *Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi* (Calcutta, 1862). (Persian) pp. 57-8.
- ¹⁴ Rahim, *Afghans in India*, p. 30.
- ¹⁵ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (Persian), pp. 57-8.
- ¹⁶ Amir Khusraw, *Tuhfat-ul-Sighar*, as cited in Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amiir Khusraw* (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 51-2.
- ¹⁷ Amir Khusraw, *Tuhfat-ul-Sighar*, as cited in Wahid Mirza, *The Life and Works of Amiir Khusraw* (Calcutta, 1939), pp. 51-2.
- ¹⁸ Bilal Sheikh, "Patterns of Afghan Migrations in India During Medieval Period," *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, issue 2, 2017, p. 138.
- ¹⁹ Barani, *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* (Persian), pp. 241. He was also among the notable *umara* of Qutb al-Din Mubarak Shah , Ibid., p. 379.
- ²⁰ Muhammad Qasim Farishtah, *Tarikh-i Farishtah* vol.1. translated in Urdu by Abdul Haye Khwaja (Shaikh Ghulam Ali and Sons Publishers, 1971), p. 736-
- ²¹ Farishtah, *Tarikh-i Farishtah* vol.1. p. 467.

²² A. Raheem, *Afghans in India*, p. 31.

²³ Farishtah, *Tarikh-i Farishtah* vol.1. p. 493-4.

²⁴ Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi*, pp. 180, 182-3, 185-6, 195.

²⁵ For instance, *Tarikh-i-Daudi* which is written in the times of Mughals by Abdullah is one history that is written to glorify the past of Afghans as rulers, starts the line of sultans from Bahlul Lodhi and does not mention Daulat Khan. If Daulat Khan was an Afghan, Abdullah would have made a mention of him. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, edited Sh. Abdur Rasheed (Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University, 1954).

²⁶ Raheem, *History of the Afghans in India*, p. 32.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

²⁸ For a detail on political fragmentation of the Delhi Sultanate during the post Timurid invasion read: Simon Digby, "Before Timur Came: Provincialization of the Delhi Sultanate Through The Fourteenth Century" in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* (Brill) Volume 47: Issue 3, pp. 299-315.

²⁹ Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i-Mubarak Shahi*, p. 196.

³⁰ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 33.

³¹ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 33.

³² The Lodhis had their suzerainty from Lahore till Panipat. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 7. Here Abdullah specifically mentions the word "*Tawaif al-Mulukiat*" to explain the political conditions of Hindustan. He explains further that every city has its own ruler. Ibid. pp. 6-7.

³³ For the account of Bahlul being invited by one group of *umara* ' that was led by Hamid Khan, to Delhi. Bahlul was not the only person being invited to Delhi, Hamid Khan had also invited Qiyam Khan of Nagwor to center. He was to support anyone of the two who reached the center first. see, Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 4-5. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 10.

³⁴ 'Abbás Khán Sarwání, *Tarikh-i-Sher Shahi* "*Tárikh-i Sher Sháhí; or, Tuhfat-i Akbar Sháhí, of 'Abbás Khán Sarwání.*" Sir H. M. Elliot. (London: Packard Humanities Institute, 1580). Introduction

³⁵ For a critical survey of the Afghan sources in India see, Milo, Alexander, "The historiography of the political culture of the Afghan period (1451-1557) in Northern India: A critical analysis of its logical and empirical status." M.Phil thesis. (1979) SOAS University of London.

³⁶ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 12-5.

³⁷ M. Habib and K. A. Nizami (eds.), *The Delhi Sultanate (A.D. 1206-1526): A Comprehensive History of India*, V (Delhi, 1970), p. 665.

³⁸ The Afghans were highly unpopular in Delhi due to their unconventional mannerism. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 12-5. For details see, *Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi*, "The Composition of the *Nobility* under the Lodi Sultans." *Medieval India, a Miscellany*. 4 (1977): pp. 10-66.

³⁹ Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, p. 68.

⁴⁰ Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, pp. 68-9.

⁴¹ Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, pp. 69.

⁴² Bilal Sheikh, "Patterns of Afghan Migrations in India During Medieval Period," *International Journal of Research in Economics and Social Sciences*, Vol. 7, issue 2, 2017, p. 133.

⁴³ A. Raheem, *History of Afghans*, p. 43.

⁴⁴ Hussain Khan, *Sher Shah Sur Ustad-i-Badshah an Humayun alias Sher Shah Suri* (Karachi: Firoz Sons, 1987, p. 70.

⁴⁵ Hashim Ali Khan (Khafi Khan Nizam al-Mulk), *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, vol. 1, *Mughlia Daur-i-Hukumat: Babur Say Jahangeer Tak*, translated by Mahmud Ahmad Farooqi (Karachi: Nafees Academy, 1963), p.

⁴⁶ Khan, *Sher Shah Suri*, p. 31.

- ⁴⁷ Khwajah Nizam al-Din Ahmad, *Tabaqat-i-Akbari (The Tarikh-i-Nizami)* vol. 3. (Calcutta; 1927, repr. 1931), p. 421.
- ⁴⁸ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 107-8.
- ⁴⁹ Khan, *Sher Shah Suri*, pp. 10-22.
- ⁵⁰ Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, XVIII. Azam Humayun was one of the most important *amirs* under Lodhis and later Suris who was known for his power, bravery, piety and generosity, for details see, Khan, *Sher Shah Suri*, pp. 29, 64, 69, 92, 102-3, 110. Also see, Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 46, 85, 101-2, 154. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 65, 87-92, 98-9.
- ⁵¹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 27-34.
- ⁵² Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. XVIII.. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 12, 107-8.
- ⁵³ Ibid. p. 110. See also, 111, 113-4.
- ⁵⁴ Hasan was the father of Sultan Sher Shah Sur, Ibid, p. 107. For details on Hasan Sur, see also, Ibid, p. 108-10, 127.
- ⁵⁵ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 53.
- ⁵⁶ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 34; Shaikh Razqullah Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi* (Persian), Edited by Iqtadar Hussain Siddiqui and Wiqar al-Hasan Siddiqui (Ram Pur: Ram Pur Raza Library, 2002), pp. 4-5. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 10.
- ⁵⁷ for relational egalitarianism and distributive equality see <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/egalitarianism/#RelEqu>
- ⁵⁸ Nirodbhusan Roy, *Nimatullah's History of the Afghans: Makhzan-i-Afghani* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2002), pp. 67-8.
- ⁵⁹ Siddiqui, *Afghan Despotism*, p. 13.
- ⁶⁰ The sultans of Delhi, including Iltutmish, Balaban, 'Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad ibn-e-Tughluq had given special care to Persian court etiquettes and hierarchy. This hierarchy maintained the exalted status of the rulers and induced fear among the *umara*'. There were other means of state control such as espionage system and police system through which the government controlled their lives.
- ⁶¹ Hussain Khan, *Sher Shah Sur Ustad-i-Badshahan Humayun alias Sher Shah Suri* (Karachi: Firoz Sons, 1987, p. 6. Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 10. Certainly the ones who sat beside the sultan were selected few among the *umara*'.
- ⁶² Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 52.
- ⁶³ Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 10.
- ⁶⁴ It was opposite of Barani's theory of Kingship
- ⁶⁵ He ruled from 1451 to 1489, a total period of 38 years, thus the longevity of his reign is remarkable as compared to other rulers of the Delhi Sultanate.
- ⁶⁶ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 5-6.
- ⁶⁷ Mushtaqi, *Waqi'at-i-Mushtaqi*, p. 4 : Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 5-6.
- ⁶⁸ Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2002), p. XXIV.
- ⁶⁹ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, 49.
- ⁷⁰ Ibid. This might have served as an immediate cause of the instigation of a conflict.
- ⁷¹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 34-6.
- ⁷² Nimatullah, *Makhzan-i-Afghani*, pp. 93-8. For similar views and for the account of Sikandar as a practicing Muslim see, Mushtaqi, *Waqiat-i-Mushtaqi*, pp. 18-9. Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 29, 34-5.
- ⁷³ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 54.
- ⁷⁴ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 54.
- ⁷⁵ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 54.
- ⁷⁶ Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 54.
- ⁷⁷ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, p. 85.
- ⁷⁸ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 85.
- ⁷⁹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 85.
- ⁸⁰ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 85-8.

⁸¹ Abdullah, *Tarikh-i-Daudi*, pp. 92-7.

⁸² Raheem, *History of the Afghans*, p. 55.

⁸³ Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, pp. 78-82.

⁸⁴ Tripathi, *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration*, p. 83.

⁸⁵ Siddiqui, *Some Aspects of Afghan Despotism in India*, Chapters 1-2. For the position of Afghans under the Lodhi Sultans see, Idem, '*the composition of the nobility under the Lodhi Sultans*,; *Medieval India a Miscellany* 4 (1977), pp. 10-66.

⁸⁶ Beveridge tr., *Babur Nama*, p. 523.

⁸⁷ Khan, *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab*, pp. 78-82.

⁸⁸ Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, pp. 324-5.

⁸⁹ Jackson, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 322.

⁹⁰ Many political scientists also believe that egalitarianism is a normative ideal which finds few examples in the real world. For instance see, Woods, Allen, "Karl Marx on Equality". (2014). "Marx thinks the idea of equality is actually a vehicle for bourgeois class oppression, and something quite different from the communist goal of the abolition of classes. [...] A society that has transcended class antagonisms, therefore, would not be one in which some truly universal interest at last reigns, to which individual interests must be sacrificed. It would instead be a society in which individuals freely act as the truly human individuals they are. Marx's radical communism was, in this way, also radically individualistic". Nielsen, Kai (August 1987). "Rejecting Egalitarianism". *Political Theory* (15: 3). pp. 411–423.