

# Delhi's Journey Part 2

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**Abstract**— *Journey of any city is a very fascinating one to scholars of urban studies as well as dwellers, visitors, policy makers and managers of cities. Delhi has an extremely rich past dating back to pre-historic times and charting epochs like the Gupta period, Rajput phase, the Sultanate, Lodhis, Mughals, British and finally, capital of Independent India. This paper presents a birds' eye view of the urban character of Delhi from the founding of Shahjahanabad in 1638 to British occupation of Delhi in 1803. The objective of the paper is to contextualize many monuments, travel writings, novels, memoirs, films, myths, stories, stereotypes present in/ on Delhi to a continuity as well as complexity of urban and cultural tradition. As thinkers and users of cities, it is imperative that we appreciate the ethos we inherit, consume, represent and create. Using a variety of sources from history, sociology, cultural and urban studies, the paper puts together diverse dimensions of this ancient city and imperial capital from the perspective of underscoring that urbanity has always been a matter of intersecting spaces, lives, powers and intentions. This electronic document is a "live" template. The various components of your paper [title, text, heads, etc.] are already defined on the style sheet, as illustrated by the portions given in this document.*

**Index Terms**— *Delhi history, Delhi Culture, Shahjahanabad, Mughal Delhi, Urban Development*

## I. SHAHJAHANABAD: URBAN CHARACTER

The immediate reason for Shah Jahan's desire to return to Delhi is said to be the inability to build a royal ceremonial processional pathway in the crowded and haphazard Agra. Often called the engineer king, Shah Jahan was a passionate and knowledgeable builder. It is said that where Akbar built in sand stone, Shah Jahan built in marble. After the death of Mumtaz Mahal, emotionally distraught and spatially thwarted in Agra, he ordered a fresh site to be located for Shahjahanabad. Delhi proved to be ideally suited for the purpose with a more hospitable climate, abundance of water and availability of building material from the ruins nearby. The imprint of his sophisticated personal taste as well as the display of opulence by an empire at the height of its power constituted the allied objectives which determined the scope and shape of this new capital. On 29 April, 1639, at an auspicious time pronounced by the astrologers, Ghairat Khan, the *Subahadar* of Delhi, entrusted Ustad Hamid and Ustad Ahmad, the two most renowned builders, the work of constructing the capital. As Samuel V Noe surmises, the desire and design of Shah Jahan's capital was most likely inspired by reports of Shah Abbas's excellent capital at Isfahan: "With the Persian orientation of the Mughal court in general and Shah Jahan in particular, Isfahan must have provided a provocative challenge" (Noe, 1986, p. 237). Despite pre-existing impediments like two rocky hillocks on the otherwise flat plains, the meandering river, the ruins of two previous cities, Salimgarh fortress in the vicinity and network of much used long-distance highways, the architects were able to achieve a near perfect symmetry in keeping with Persian formalism. Stephen P Blake highlights another influence which could have been in play in the drawing up of Shahjahanabad's plan:

The plan of Shahjahanabad appears to have been based on a design from the ancient Hindu texts on architecture. These texts, the *vastu sastras* (rules for architecture), were part of a larger body of Sanskrit texts called the *silpa sastras* (rules for manual arts) ..... The *Manasara*, a *vastu sastra* dating c. A.D. 400-600 listed a semi-elliptical design called *karmuka* (bow) as one of the shapes a settlement might take. Such a plan was especially appropriate for a site fronting a river or sea-shore." (Blake, 1986, 2002, p. 71)

In Hindu towns based on *Karmuka* plan, the most sacred spot was the juncture where two perpendicular streets intersected and there stood a temple dedicated to Shiva or Vishnu, but in Islamic Shahjahanabad this spot was occupied by the Palace Fortress, the Qila Mubarak as it was then called, or the Red Fort, as it is now called. Islamic city, as expounded in some detail by Thomas Krafft is a formal stereotype with a centrally located Friday mosque, the bazaar around it, distinct socio-economic differentiations from centre to periphery, irregular street pattern a city wall and citadel, intra urban quarters, blind alleys as its typical components. Writes Krafft,

Unlike other cities of the Islamic world, the bazaars of the Islamic Indian cities do not have any differentiations. On the contrary, retailing, manufacturing and living form a close symbiosis....Bazaars are by no means spatially extended complexes, but are characterised by linear patterns, thus excluding and preventing the development of central-peripheral gradients (Ehlers-Krafft, 1993, p. 22)

Shedding light on another quintessential feature of the city, Jamal Malik writes that, "The builders of Shahjahanabad created the architectonic expression of what has often been called the "patrimonial system" in its climax" (Malik, 1993). However, as Narayani Gupta explains, Shahjahanabad can be seen pre-eminently a Mughal city in form "but its lifestyle was delineated largely by its inhabitants. The immigration, by individuals and communities, over many centuries gave it its unique feel and flavor." (Gupta, 1993, p. 31)

## II. SHAHJAHANABAD: URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Shahjahanabad-the walled city- was enclosed within a stone wall 27 feet high, 12 feet thick and 3.8 miles long. Built between 1651-8, it had 27 towers and numerous gates. Major entryways in the city comprised of the Kashmiri Gate, Mori Gate, Kabuli Gate, Lahori Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkomani Gate and Akbarabadi Gate. The River front side presented access to the river through Raj Ghat, Qila Ghat and Nigambodh Ghat. Along with these major inlets, there were many smaller ones too located near important mansions, markets or mosques. The most important public thoroughfare, road or boulevard of the city, the Chandni Chowk, extended from Lahori Gate to Fatehpuri Masjid with a central canal (Nahar-i-bihisht), tree lined roads and similarly built shops in Urdu bazaar, Ashrafi bazaar and Fatehpuri bazaar. Coffee houses, gardens, hammams and serais also dotted this street. Another bazaar sprawled out from the Akbarabadi gate which over time became famous as Faiz Bazar while Khas Bazar was located on the street connecting the Palace Fort to the Jama Masjid. Along long secondary roads, special bazaars in association with *karkhanas* located in the vicinity developed. The mohallas had local bazaars. The Palace Fort and the Jama Masjid, in fact, formed the twin foci of the city. The Fort, built in red sandstone largely obtained from the neighbourhood of Fatehpur Sikri, was octagonal in shape with a perimeter of nearly two miles with dimensions of 3,100 feet X 1,650 feet. Its axes were aligned with cardinal points of the compass. A moat, 75 feet wide and 30 feet deep, protected the Fort on the landward side. The Fort was divided into two rectangles- the river facing one was the hub of much of the domestic and official activity. The southern half of this rectangle housed the *harim* (women's mansions) to which access was limited to sons and husbands. The *Imtiaz* or *Mumtaz Mahal*, later called the *Rang Mahal*, was the largest building which was the venue for routine and recreational activity of residents of the Fort and to which Shah Jahan retired after his daily schedule in the *Diwan-i-aam*. Adjoining this space were the *Aramgah* or *Khwabgah* ( place for sleeping) and the emperor's *jharokha* (balcony) in the *Mussaman Burj* (Octagonal Tower) facing the riverside underneath which petitioners and subjects would gather for the daily darshan. The northern half contained the more public buildings of the court. The *Diwan-i-aam* (Hall of Public Audience) was a large open pavilion of forty pillars divided into two parts, one for princes, distinguished *amirs*, ambassadors and dignitaries

and the other for lesser *amirs*, nobles and officers. The emperor himself sat in a balcony in the eastern wall six feet above the ground. The officers involved in the day's business stood below on a marble platform. The emperor transacted routine financial, military and administrative affairs in the Diwan-i-aam. The three sides of *Diwan-i-aam* were surrounded by a courtyard with rooms appointed for seating the amirs of the standing guard. Beyond was a naqqarkhana (Place of Drums) which had musicians for playing martial music. The riverfront side of the *Diwan-i-aam* held the most elegant and extravagant building of the Fort- the *Diwan-i-khaas* (Hall of Private Audience) or the Shah Mahal (Emperor's Palace). The bejeweled marble décor with generous use of bullion and glass made it a glittering chamber which also boasted of the most expensive throne in the world- the Peacock throne. The Royal *Hamam* or *Ghusal Khana* (Bath) was adjacent to it and was as lavishly furnished with three storeys, one for dressing, hot water and cold water each. The Shah Burj (King's Tower) brought up the end of the river facing landmarks in the north-east corner of the Fort. To the west of imperial quarters was another densely populated area in contiguity with the *Naqqarkhana*, called the *Jilau Khana*, where members of the royal family, amirs, officers, petitioners etc. wishing to gain entry assembled and waited. A covered bazaar called *Bazaar-i-mussaqaq*, not found in India till then but common in West Asia, was another peculiarity of the Fort. A lot of palace space was dedicated to gardens, prominent among which were the Hayat Bakhsh and Mahtab Gardens. Outside the Fort, beyond the moat, separating the Fort from the rest of the city, extended beautiful gardens like the Buland, Gulabi and Anguri gardens. As Shah Jahan attended the Jama Masjid built by him, there was no mosque inside the Fort. The Moti Masjid in the Fort was built by his son, Aurangzeb. The road linking Akbarabadi Gate to Salimgarh Gate in the Fort was lined with offices, residences, workshops, stables etc. to serve the needs of the royal household. The quarters of young and fledgeling princes were located inside the fort but the more established ones lived outside the Fort in mansions allotted to them.

Area just outside the Fort was earmarked for the residence of members of royalty and nobility. Area around Chandni Chowk was also subsequently used for the purpose. This concentrated the rich and powerful within this territory. Though the Fort was visualized and laid out with planning and precision to ward off the urban jumble of Agra and Lahore, yet the town planning went on becoming amorphous and arbitrary as one traversed away from the Fort. This was primarily because most of the effort was expended in developing the *axis mundi* of the emperor's glory. Rest of the settlement followed the social and economic dynamics of the relationships in the city. The most important one among them was the location of the mansions of royalty and nobility which served as microcosms of the Fort. Their size and population entitled them to be called *qasrs* (fortresses) and these duplicated, not only in design but also political and economic impact, the patterns of the Fort. *Havelis* or *Nashimans* (large mansions) contained all the architectural graces of the Fort like massive walls, *jilau khana*, *naqqarkhana*, *karkhana* (workshops), *tehkhana* (underground chamber), *sardkhana* (cool chamber for summer retreat), *diwankhana* (hall for audience), *mehal sarai* (family area), *hamam*, *idgah* and *khanabagh* (garden). The dependents and the workforce of these mansions started living outside them in thatched hutments giving rise to the *mohalla* system of population distribution. As Stephen P Blake points out that later other principles of organization like caste, origin, trade etc. also came to govern the *mohalla* formations. (Blake, 1986, 2002) According to Sharia values, city was to be divided into public (thoroughfares, secondary roads, bazaars), semi-private (alleys in *mohallas* which were sealed, homogenous units entry to which was through city gates) and private (*havelis*) spaces. This accounts for the hierarchical urban organization in which heterogenous population lived together. The internal hierarchy was part of the concept of the city, a fact evident from allocation of land to the *shurafa* (elite) and construction of mosques from east to west following the royal perspective. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the spatial order existing in Shahjahanabad led to its segregation in three rough categories. North of Chandni Chowk lived the gentry with its mansions, gardens and palaces. Further in the direction of Chandni Chowk, traders in fabrics, fish, meats, luxury goods, huqqa makers were found in proximity with imperial house. Along Chandni Chowk, luxury shops selling the best of readymade goods were lined. In *Mohallas* around Khari Baoli, one could find specialists in products like tobacco, flowers, perfumes, butter oil, pomegranates. This was the economically well to-do region. North of this was the Punjabi Katrah of ambitious traders and workers. From the outskirts of the city towards the centre, a specialisation pointing to the hierarchical character was noticeable in accordance with the pattern of consumption and availability of raw materials and labour. Christian missionaries and Europeans settled in Daryaganj to the southeast. The majority of the working class population lived south of Chandni Chawk e.g., in Gali Rodgaran (gut-workers), while the poor strata, such as the *kumhar* (potter), *qasai* (butcher), *dhobi* (washerman), *chamar* (cobbler) and *teli* (oil extractor), predominantly lived close to the city gates (with the exception of the Lahori Gate, the Kabuli Gate and the Kashmiri Gate) as well as the eastern entrances of the city, or even outside the city walls. Dancing girls lived in this neighbourhood (Gali Kanchne ki). Professions like tanners and barbers neither had a *mohalla* of their own as they were located at the outskirts of various *mohallahs*.

The city could also be roughly subdivided along religious lines. While the Hindus predominantly lived in Chhipiwara (abode of cloth printers) (west of Jami Masjid) and in North Ballimaram (south east of Fatehpuri Masjid), the majority of the Muslims were settled in South Ballimaran, Lal Quan, Haweli Haider Quli Khan and close to the large mosques. Shahjahanabad had one *Kotwali* in Chandni Chowk, 12 *thanas* under *thanadars* who collected taxes and duties, maintained population registers, policed, and controlled markets. The *thanas* were further subdivided into *mohallas*. The *mohallas* got named either after affluent, dominating residents or the vocation of the people living there. *Mohallas* followed a pattern of differentiated quarters. "The quarters are embedded in a complex texture with their norms relating not only to economic necessities but also to manifold social interweaving" (Malik, 1993). They were socially cohesive with "no separation of the spheres of production and reproduction" (Malik, 1993). The *mohallas* mostly bore the stamp of the chief service sector settled there, i.e. artisans, traders, ethnic groups, other representatives of economic or social life as is evident from names like *mohallah-e dhobiyan* (washermen), *sawdagar* (traders), *muftiyan* (religious scholars), *tehiyan* (oil extractors), *rikkab* (stirrup holders/cupbearers), *suiwalan* (needle makers), *gadariyan* (shepherds), *punjabi*, *katrah-e Marwari*, *jatwara* etc. The different social and ethnic groups shared a symbiotic relationship aligning their buildings and adjoining streets in a profitable manner. Inside *mohallas* were *katrahs* (emporia also offering lodging) at the centre and small alleys (*galis* or *kuchahs*) radiating outside which could be categorised as primary, secondary or tertiary streets depending on their distance from the *katrah*. The *katrahs* and the *kuchahs* were once again known by the names of corresponding professions or ethnic groups. The greater the distance from the *katrah*, diversity increased but so did social anonymity. Narayani Gupta forwards a tenable thesis as to why a large number of people could live together in this compact area and still accommodate more without social tension being generated. "The reason was that this urban society was a highly regulated one ... it was a hierarchy of Chinese boxes, ranging from the city wall to the curtained private quarters of the house" (Gupta, 1993).

### III. ISLAMIC CULTURE AND CULTURAL ETHOS

While political legitimacy in the Sultanat was derived from Islam, in the Mughal world if it is to be located in any monolocal principle, it is that of the patrimonial bureaucratic state (Mukhia, 2004). While some like Amina Okada and Ebba Koch have highlighted the role of Mughal art in securing legitimacy, some others like Urvashi Dalal see the pursuit of legitimacy inbuilt in the design of Shahjahanabad. In the twentieth century, Francis William Buckley's theory of corporate kingship has been influential where Mughal sovereignty has been ascribed to practices like bestowing of the *khilats* whereby the nobles were taken in the distinguishing folds of the 'court society'. Islam, as Harbans Mukhia demonstrates, constituted one of the various durable sources of derivation of legitimacy operating at the intellectual, political and popular level (Harbans Mukhia, 2004, p.16). Writes Mukhia:

If the intellectual and cultural ambience at the court bore the impress of Islam's considerable presence, the rulers themselves frequently invoked Islamic idiom and jargon to legitimize their actions. With some of them it might have been merely a political manoeuvre; with some others of conviction, even vehemence, shaded a part of the exigency. (Mukhia, 2004, p. 17)

While Babur called himself a practicing Muslim, he ignored its dictates when it came to worldly pleasure. Akbar's *Sulh-i-kul* placed Islam on equal footing with other religions while Jehangir's disregard of Islam is legendary. Shah Jahan did not overplay his Islamic identity which, in fact, was done overwhelmingly by his successor, Aurangzeb. Even during his reign, there wasn't any systematized or furious proselytizing or temple demolition. While Islam banned drinking and consumption of other narcotics, addiction of Babur, Humayun and their descendants to drugs is well known. Aurangzeb reiterated the taboo but he was defied by his own sisters and wives. Shahjahan decreed that mosques should be built in each and every corner of his capital and accordingly, along with other places of Islamic worship like *dargah*, *khanqah*, *imambarah* and *idgah*, there were mosques of *begumi-amiri* stature and *mohalla* rank also in the city. The Jama Masjid, or Masjid-i-Jami (Friday Mosque) was the great central congregational mosque where the major service of the week was held. Built from 1650 A.D. onwards under the supervision Sadullah Khan, *wazir*, and Fazil Khan, *khan saman*, it took one million rupees and

six years to be completed. Standing atop one of the cliffs, the Bhujalal Pahari, in the plains of Shahjahanabad's site, its magnificence was elevated further by a steep flight of steps leading to its huge doorways on its three sides. The Masjid presented the religious and vertical counterpoint to the political and horizontal eminence of the Fort in the iconography of Shahjahanabad. Bazaars with all types of wares on display spread out on the steps flanking the Masjid on its three sides. On the western side where the flight of steps was not there, a *madrasa* and a *dawakhana* financed by the emperor were located. Shah Jahan used the eastern side for his own entry. Royal procession enroute to Jama Masjid passed through Khass Bazaar populated by healers, story tellers, astrologers and dancing girls. The Masjid itself was on the second floor as was the common practice in multistoried mosques. The prayer hall was a large square over which stood three large domes. *Mihrabs* (recess or alcove in the direction of Mecca), minarets and a central fountain brought out its simple splendor. The Masjid attracted worshippers in large numbers from all parts of the city and on account of its magnitude and magnificence, was regarded as the most important or *Padshahi* (Sovereign) mosque of Shahjahanabad. Eight *begumi-amiri* mosques built, as the name suggests by members of imperial household or distinguished nobles, existed in Shahjahanabad and were located at premium places in the city. Of these, three mosques, Akbarabadi, Fatehpuri, Sirhindi, were constructed by Shah Jahan's wives. *Mohalla* mosques were as many as 91 in number and many of them were, in fact, located inside *amiri* mansions. Islamic law necessitated public access to these. Low ranking tradesmen settled along southern and south western rim of city walls also constructed mosques identified by their professions like butchers', washermen', shepherds', metal workers', potters', masons', and coalers' mosques. Closer to the core of the city, there were the weavers', wool producers', horse traders', oil extractors' mosques as these socially more respectable professions lived in this area. Along the primary streets were located karori's (collector of taxes) mosque and muhtasib's (censor of public morality) mosque. The professional groups located north of the axis Sitaram Bazar or Kucha-e Sayyid Qasim Khan were carpenters, dyers, gardeners, shoemakers, potters, money changers, bangle makers, spinners, basket weavers, and hair dressers. Each had its own little mosque. Building mosques was considered to be a virtuous act and the *mohalla* mosques were constructed, maintained and popularized by *amiri* patronage. The upkeep of the mosques was done through income from *waqf* (dedication for management of the mosque by the builder), donations or rent from rooms in mosques used as *musafir khanas* (lodges). Substantiating his point that that within the city, each Islamic tradition could be traced to specific areas of origin and development, Jamal Malik writes,

By establishing a closed unit with its variety of social groups, complementing each other, with schools, stores for essential goods, etc., each mohalla gave an incentive for a life in seclusion and devotion to God, thereby forming a moral community. Trans-mohalla movement was thus not necessary in this strictly demarcated cultural framework. ... The identity of the quarter was thus marked out by its economic and social contacts as well as religious affiliations and therefore often served as a first port of call for new arrivals to the city. (p. 87)

The religious scholars exemplified the tradition of spiritual and vocational purity by never stepping out of their respective *mohallahs*. Thus, they formed the spiritual centre of the mohalla where "the inhabitants of the mohalla would meet for ever repeated rites and festivities in a centre that provided the mohalla with its essential identity and integrated them with a common social and ritual world" (Jamal Malik, p.73).

#### IV. THE SUFI INFLUENCE

While the mosques were the material expressions of exclusive Islamic culture, Sufi dargahs and khanqas, exuded a "melting pot" kind of *weltanschauung*. They were the microcosms of popular composite culture. There were many dargahs inside Shahjahanabad like the dargah of Sayyid Bhure Shah (Chishti Sufi Sayyid Sabir Ali alias Sabir Bakhsh, d.1821), the dargah of Shah Turkman of the suhrawardi order (d.1249) and the Shiite dargah, Panjah Sharif. Other Islamic cults also had a presence in Shahjahanabad. The naqshbandiyya order was represented in Delhi by Shah Wali Ullah(d.1763), Mir Dard(d.1785) and Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Jahan (d.1781). Madarasa Rahimiyyah was founded by the father of Wali ullah, Abd ar-Rahim in Mahandiyan outside city walls. On account of its repute in disseminating knowledge of traditional sciences (*manqulat*), he was allotted Haveli Kalan Mahall in Daryaganj by emperor Muhammad Shah. In addition, Wali Ullah was rewarded with 51 *bighas* land outside Delhi by Alamgir II in 1754 for his own *madarsa*. Shah Wali Ullah's sons - Shah Abd al-Aziz and Shah Abd al-Qadir -operated against the odds of colonial interference and Sunni influence. Wali Ullah's lands had been confiscated in 1774 but his sons managed to recover them on account of cultivating good relations with the British administrators. Shah Abd al-Aziz established Madarsa Shah Abd al-Aziz on a site near Chitli Qabr and Tirahah Bairam Khan. Abd al- Qadir taught at the Akbarabadi Masjid. Both the *Madarsa* and the *Masjid* were destroyed by the British after 1857. A student of Shah Wali Ullah, Shah Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831), originating from Lucknow and a soldier by profession, went on to become a founder of the Mujahiddin militant movement whose theological epicentre were the Madarsa Shah Abd al-Aziz and the Akbarabadi Masjid. Mirza Mazhar Jan-e Jahan founded the Naqshbandiyya-Mujaddidiyya order in Delhi attempting to offer an alternative to the contemporary collapse in the court, religion and society in the sermons he offered in Bazaar Chitli Qabr. However, he was assassinated at the behest of Najaf Khan owing to his indictments on the Shiites. His successor was Shah Ghulam Ali (Shah 'Abd Ullah Dehlavi) who built a *khanqah* at the grave of his mentor near Chitli Qabr which soon became the rallying point for Mujaddidi ideas. The food and lodging facility extended to pilgrims made it a much frequented place by *murids* of Shah Ghulam Ali residing all over other towns, cities and countries. In keeping with the quietistic ways of his father, Shah Ghulam Ali also refused *waqf* for his *khanqah* subsisting only on *zakat* and *futuh* (alms and voluntary donations) in glaring contrast to the affluent and influential Madarasa Shah Abd al-Aziz. Ghulam Ali's successor, Abu Sa'id, migrated to Medina in 1857. The *madarasa* attached to the mausoleum of Ghaziuddin (founded in 1792, located in a large Campus beyond Ajmeri Gate) overtook all the other educational institutions and went on to enjoy British aid 1824 onwards. It is significant that while Bombay, Madras and Calcutta accorded an enthusiastic reception to European learning and English language, the people of Delhi preferred to learn European Science and Philosophy, but in Urdu rather than in English. Inter-Islamic disputes were articulated and embraced in Shahjahanabad as part of a long standing tradition but the hitherto intellectual and cordial tenor of these assumed an acerbic and furious color upon British advent. Originating within local mosques, these debates often reached the Jami Masjid where the polemics reached a feverish pitch demanding nothing short of a face-to-face confrontation.

#### V. MUGHAL FASCINATION FOR GARDENS

The gardens of Shahjahanabad wove sensuous as well as symbolic patterns in the urban design. On the one hand, a garden served as a summer retreat in the arid climate while on the other, it was the earthly counterpart of its idyllic version in the Quran. In Mughal India, therefore, the inspiration for garden landscaping came from the royal pleasure gardens of Central Asia as well as from the depictions of Paradise in Quran. The gardens were rectangular in shape, enclosed by high walls, having intersecting waterways, a central pool and fountain with a summerhouse (*barahdari*), heavily laden fruit trees along with trees of flowers and foliage, birds as well as fishes. The most prominent examples of Shahjahanabad's penchant for gardens were Jahanara's garden (called Sahibabad) north of Chandni Chowk and Raushanara's garden near Lahori Gate. The two daughters of Shah Jahan laid out exquisite, sprawling gardens while Shah Jahan himself planted the Tis Hazari Bagh in a central location in the city. Nawab Sirhindi Begum's garden was in the same area as Raushnara Garden while Nawab Akbarabadi Begum's Shalimar Bagh was beyond Lahori Gate. Other members of the royal household and gentry nurtured their gardens outside city limits along the banks of the Yamuna or populous highways. Very often, these gardens also doubled as mausoleums of their builders. The *nahar-i-bihisht*, the long circuitous canal from the Yamuna to the city, was the main source of water and was responsible for the lush greenery of the city. Firuz Shah's canal, which entered the city by the Kabuli Gate and then split into two parts- one flowing through Chandni Chowk and the other flowing through the gardens of Chandni Chowk before entering the Fort via Shah Burz- was restored, the main canal of which reopened in 1821. There was an abundance of wells, springs, step wells and tanks. In 1846, a large tank constructed called Laal Diggai was linked to the main canal between Fort and Khaas Bazaar.

#### VI. MUGHAL MATERIAL CULTURE

The material culture of the Mughal times was a highly refined one cashing on indigenous traditions, Islamic influence and availability of luxury goods from foreign lands. Hindus as well as Muslim upper classes spent lavishly on dress. The glorious garbs of the royalty have caught attention of Indian writers as well as foreign travelers. Humayun invented the *ulbagcha* (*achkan* like overcoat) worn over *qaba* or the coat. Akbar's refined tastes extended to his

sartorial choices and Father Monserrate and Father Rudolf describe him as clad in exquisite garments and ornaments. Humayun and Akbar chose the colour of their dress according to the colour of the ruling planet of the day. Jahangir was known to be even more opulent in his tastes. He wore English gloves on his palms and buskins on his feet. He patented a style which others were forbidden from emulating consisting of *nadiri, tus shawl, batugiriban, qaba, chera* and waist belt. Shahjahan's dress was almost the same except that it was more garish but Aurangzeb favored simplicity in his dress. The Ain-i-Akbari describes eleven types of coats viz. Takauchiyah (with round skirt gathered on the side), Shah-ajidah (royal coat with sixty fancy stitches), Peshwaj (open and tied in front), Gadar and Fargi (overcoats) and Chakman and Fargul (raincoats). Shalwars or breeches formed the lower garments and were of three kinds viz. single, double and wadded. The upper and middle classes wore long open shirts on shalwars. The rich wore embroidered velvet or brocade jeweled shoes and Spanish, Turkish or Moroccan leather shoes while the middle class used raw red leather shoes. Women wore embroidered shoes or open heeled slippers. Hindus were also known to wear *Khadauns* and *Alpracas* (wooden sandals). Muhammadan women, royalty as well as middle class, wore shirts with half or full sleeves going up to their knees on their shalwars. They wore wollen qabas and shawls in winters. Nurjahan is famous for having invented many dresses, fashions and ornaments. Several varieties of brocades and laces also owe their origin to her. The Hindu women wore the *angiya* and the *sari*. Both Hindu and Muslim women covered their heads with *dupattas*. *Lachaq*-the head dress- was only for princess and daughters of noble households.

The *Ain-i-Akbari* gives a detailed account of the toilette ritual which men and women were supposed to complete in the morning. It included brushing teeth, use of eye and mouth washes, bathing, giving oneself a rubbing and kneading massage, shampooing hair, anointing the body with perfume, using mirror for putting collyrium in the eye, powder on face and hair dressing and finally, betel chewing. Hindus also applied *tilak*. Women stained their palms and feet with henna or *alta*. The use of soap or *sabun* is well documented along with homemade cleansers like soap-berry, bark-ash, gram flour, turmeric powder, rice powder, paste of *kusama* flower, oil-cakes, sandal wood paste etc. *Obtanah* or beauty packs made from sandalwood, medicated camphor and other fragrant ingredients were also used for improving complexion. *Wazma* or *khizaj* were used as hair dyes or hair was combed with lead combs to impart it blackness. Women dried their hair with fragrant smoking and dressed it with pomatum. Kautilya's Arthashastra and Ain-i-Akbari list in detail the use of fragrances like sandal wood, saffron, *araq-i-sewti, araq-i-chameli, mosseri, and amber-i-ashab*. Akbar crated a perfumery called *Khushbu Khana*. Nur jahan's mother is known to have concocted the *Itr-i-Jahangiri* from roses which surpassed all *itrs* in its aromatic strength. The beauty regimen remained incomplete without the ornaments. Abul fazl lists 37 different type of ornaments in Ain-i-Akbari including *chauk, sisphul, maangtika, kotbiladar, sekra, binduli* for the forehead, *karnaphul, mor bhanwar, baali* and *champakali* for ears, *nath, besar* and *laung* for the nose, *haar* and *guluband* for the neck, *Baazuband* and *Tad* for upper arms, *Gajrah, kangan, churi, jawe, bahu* for wrists, rings and *arsi* for fingers, *jehar* and *payal* for ankles, *bhank, anwat* and *bichhwah* for toes and *chhudra khantika* and *kati mekhala* for the waist. Muslim men wore no ornaments except amulets while Hindu men wore ear and finger rings and bracelets. Mughal kings, however, adorned themselves with a lot of finery.

The daily diet of Hindus as well as Muslims comprised of the same staples except that the majority of Hindus did not consume meat. Muslims ate beef, fish, mutton, chicken, fowl and birds and animals of prey except the forbidden flesh of swine. Mughal kings abstained from eating flesh on campaigns, holy days or during periods of penance. Hindu diet was rich in dairy products as Hindus were vegetarians. Pickles, spices and condiments were used by both the communities. Mughal cities had food sellers, bakers, sweetmeat shops and fruit sellers selling home grown seasonal fruits and imported ones in abundance. The rich could afford fruit treats from overseas like melons from Karez, Badakshan and Kabul, grapes, apples and pears from Samarkand, pomegranates from Yazd, pineapples from Europe and cherries and dry fruits from Kabul. Sherbets and juices were also available to quench thirst. Sumptuous meals were served on royal tables and in noble households. Best of grains from Bharaj, Gwalior and Rajouri were cooked in Mughal kitchens with *nimlah ghee* (clarified butter) from Hisaar and meat and poultry from various places. Experts cooks were hired to prepare various delicacies. Meat soups were also regular items on the menu. *Khichri* was a popular dish with both the rich and the poor. Similarly, *birinj* was a dish made from mixing rice, pulses, vegetables, herbs and spices which both Hindus and Muslims relished, but Muslims added meat to their versions called *qabuli, duzdbiryani* or *qimah-pulao*. As against the rest of the rice eating subcontinent, north India ate wheat along with *jowar* and *bajra*. Sweet dishes came in infinite variety. So did fruit preserves and comfits. Water was the only drink accompanying meals. Ganges water known for its purity was preferred. Saltpetre was used to make ice during summers. Wine or *araq* was forbidden to Muslims by religion and hence prohibition was part of the administrative policy but Kings as well as nobles indulged in drinking. Babur and Jahangir were heavy drinkers while Akbar and Shah Jahan indulged more in social drinking. Humayun was given more to opium while Aurangzeb abstained completely from alcohol. Local varieties of wine like *tari, nira, mahwa, jagre, kherra, bhadwar, kajang* were distilled. Persian and Portuguese wines distilled from grapes were also available. Opium or *afim* was another intoxicant which was widely favoured by the aristocracy, Mughal as well as Rajput. Tobacco was introduced in India in 1605 by the Portuguese and its addiction spread like wildfire all over India. Chewing betel leaf with areca nut, spread with *kattha*, camphor, musk or other fragrant stimulants, remained a favourite habit. *bilhari, kakar, jaiswas, kapuri, kapurkant, banglah, makhi* and *keroah* were some of the choicest varieties of betel leaves. Tea and Coffee were consumed less as beverages and more to invigorate the mind and body, preferred more by Hindus, especially *banias* and *brahmins*, and less by Muslims.

There was no dearth of entertainments available to the royal and noble ranks as well as the middle and lower classes. Chess, *chaupar* ( a game of dice) and playing cards were the most popular indoor pastimes. The account which follows amply demonstrates that there was a well developed culture of playing sedentary games. Playing cards was known to pre-Mughal India. Chess is referred to in the accounts of Hasan Nizami, Amir Khusrau, Malik Muhammad Jayasi as a game of wits which the rich as well as poor tried their hand at. The Mughal aristocrats considered it to be a game useful for sharpening skills of how "to place and displace, give and take" (Chopra, 1988, p. 57). The game of *chaupar* became the court favourite after receiving Akbar's patronage. Some variations of the game like *Chandal Mandal* and *Bisai-i-Nishat* were also played. An ancient Hindu game, particularly dear to Akbar, was the game of *Pachisi*, the board of which is laid out in marble flooring in Agra Fort. Akbar used slave girls to move them as pawns in the game. *Nard* or Backgammon was brought to India by the Muslims. *Guti* games like *doguti, treguti, nauguti, baraguti* and their innumerable regional variations have been enjoyed by people since times immemorial. Tiger and goat games had the *gutis* representing these animals in games like *bagh chaal, bagh chakar, bagh bandi, golekuish* etc. Hunting, animal fights and *chaugan* were indulged in by the elite by way of outdoor recreation. *Chaugan* fields were part of all palace and fort complexes and the game enjoyed universal appeal. Hunting was an expensive as well as adventurous obsession of the royalty. Fishing was a profession as well as a sport. Jahangir was very fond of it enjoying the Rohu fish a lot. The Mughals also liked to fill their pools and canals with tame fish. Animal fights were staged for amusement by ordinary people as well as the nobles. Combats between men and wild beasts were also common. Pigeon flying was also in vogue. Royal pigeons were trained to perform *charkah* and *bazi* for regaling the public. Hockey originated as *Dhophari* in Bengal and there are paintings which depict Jahangir watching the game with keen interest. Other recreational activities included kushti, kabbadi, kite flying, boating, horse, camel and elephant riding. In addition, "Jugglers, mountebanks, dancers, conjurers and magicians were all a source of recreation for the people" (Chopra, 1988, p. 67). Dancing girls performed for the gratification of the rich. While peasants, seamen, women etc. contributed to folk music, court music was more refined including genres like "dhrupad, chind, chruva, bangula, qawl, chutkalahi, taranah, lahchari, chhand, sadara and desakha" (Chopra, 1988, p. 69). All Mughal kings except Aurangzeb encouraged musicians producing virtuosos like Bairam Khan, Tansen, Ram Das, Lal Khan, Sawad Khan, Kabir and Rauza Qawwal. Enactment of scenes from *Mahabharata, Ramayana, Parshwanath Charitra* and *Harish Charitra* constituted the earliest and simplest attempts at theatre. More formalized and stylized, however, were the *Mushairas*, where renowned poets enthralled the audience with poetic compositions.

## VII. EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Education began at the age of 4 or 5 for both Hindus and Muslims with the *Upnayana samsakara* and the *Maktab* respectively. The Hindu children went to *pathshalas* (schools) which were nothing but thatched huts in which Brahmin teachers taught 5 to 15 students without charging fees as teaching for money was considered a sin for the Brahmin community. The *pathshalas* were private establishments animated by familial relationship between the teacher and the taught and also between class mates. As institutions, these subsisted on grants and donations. There was a possibility of specialization as some schools concentrated on poetry, *Puranas* and *Smritis*, while others taught the law and the *Puranas* while yet others focused on the *Nyaya Darshan* and logic. Sanskrit

teachind and Vedic commentaries declined during the Mughal Period and old authoritative texts like Panini's grammar were replaced by more contemporary adaptations. Mathematics was definitely the forte of Hindus. So were astronomy and astrology. These disciplines, however, elicited equal interest in the Muslim world as well. Jotika Rai, Kanjar Beg, Nuruddin Muhammad Tarkhan, Imam Abul Muhammad of Ghazni and Mulla Farid Munnajam were some veterans of this field. Ayurvedic as well as Unani systems flourished in Mughal India and medicine was generally a hereditary profession. Hindus were also masters in Metrology. Hindus continued to perfect their ancient heritage of philosophy and Abul Fazl notes that there were 9 schools of Hindu philosophy. When several schools offering different specializations sprang up in a given place, it came to resemble a University as in the case of Banaras where there were schools teaching *Vedas*, grammar, poetry, logic, law and astronomy. These Hindu centres of Higher Learning sprang up in holy cities like Nadia or Navapada in Bengal, Mithila, Prayag, Ayodhya, Srinagar, Tirhut, Thatta, Madura, Multan, Sirhind etc. With Mughal rule, Banaras regained its lost glory and reputed families like Dharmadhikari, Sesa, Bhatta and Mouni took up the cause of education. The city nurtured Kabir and Tulsidas. Next in line after Banaras was Nadia, which reinvigorated Brahmanical learning during Mughal times specializing in *Nyaya* and *Smriti*. The average duration spent in graduation was ten to twelve years and a few more if the student was keen on a doctorate under a reputed teacher. There were no formal examinations as the teacher was the sole judge of the students' progress and when he deemed the education completed, he issued certificates, appreciation letters or titles or in a convocation like ceremony (*chhurika bandhanam*), a dagger was tied dress of the pupil to declare him a graduate. The Hindu families were more keen on education than their Muslim counterparts. This was perhaps because the career and future of Hindus was in trade and service sector whereas the Muslims as a ruling class saw greater promise in army and governance. In the *maktab* (Islamic school), the alphabet was followed by rote learning and understanding of Quran, calligraphy and literature like *Gulistan*, *Bostan* and poetry of Firdausi. For Higher Learning, generally in the field of theology, the Muslims students graduated to the madarsa, most often attached to a mosque. Places like Agra, Lahore, Jaunpur, Gujarat, Sialkot, Ahmedabad were chosen by Islamic men of letters as these abounded in Muslim population and ambitious disciples were easily found here.

Delhi, being the Imperial city, was of course the greatest centre of Muslim learning for past many dynasties and it kept up its tradition in the Mughal times as well. Humayun built a school on honour of Zain-ud-Din Khafi on the banks of the Yamuna. Maham Anga built a residential *madarasa*, Khair-ul-Manzil, opposite the western gate of Purana Qila. Sheikh Abdullah of Talna was another celebrated teacher. There was a *madarasa* in Humayun's Tomb. Shahjahan built an imposing royal *madarasa*, Dar-ul-Baqa, on the southern side of Jami Masjid. Madarsa-i-Rahimmya, named after Abdur Rahim, Shah Waliullah's father, came up during Aurangzeb's times. For further studies, dedicated scholars went to places like Mecca, Medina, Basra, Damascus, Cairo, Kifa, Yemen, Iran, Baghdad, Hijaz, Khurasan etc. Where the curriculum of study is concerned, Abul Fazl categorizes it into *Ilahi* or divine sciences, *Riyazi* or quantitative sciences and *Tabiqi* or rest of physical sciences. So, overall, the main subjects of study in Islamic institutions were grammar, rhetoric, logic, theology, metaphysics, literature and jurisprudence. Astronomy, mathematics and medicine gradually made inroads into the curriculum but here Hindu influence and authority was unavoidable. Muslims made better surgeons (*jarrahs*) than Hindus as they did not have any abhorrence in cutting the flesh. Muslims had a greater interest in history producing historians par excellence like Abul Fazl, Badaoni, Nizammuddin Ahmad, Abdul Hamid Lahori and Khafi Khan. Geography, however, was one area which remained neglected in the Hindu as well as Islamic schools and Aurangzeb vents his wrath on his tutor for this serious lapse.

Writing was done on paper which used to be sourced from places like Sialkot and Shuhzudpur famous for their fine varieties like *Man Singhi* and silk paper. In primary schools and by the poor, wooden tablets or palm leaves were used. Official correspondence was recorded on metal plates. Printing technology was virtually unknown and writing materials like the Persian *Qalm* (reed quill) and *Qalm-i-sarab* (lead pencil) were available. Inks, the finest varieties of which were made in Kashmir, were stocked in metallic or china inkpots. Calligraphy by a paying and respected art, eight schools of which were practiced with the *Naskh* and *Nastaliq* being the most popular. Books were priced possessions both on account of cost of production as well as being rare commodities. As reported by Manrique and De Laet, the Mughal Imperial Library boasted of 24,000 books costing approximately 65 lakh rupees. However, apart from the expensive ornate and illustrated versions, ordinary editions of popular books were also available on the streets of the Imperial Capital. Most people accessed books in Libraries which were in large number in Mughal cities. Every *madarasa* had a library attached to it. Similarly, Hindu centres of learning maintained huge libraries full of ancient manuscripts zealously guarded and protected. Learned scholars also kept private libraries employing people like librarians, *khushnavis* (copyists), painters, book binders, scribes and *warragshaf* (proof readers) on a permanent basis. The Imperial Library was the most magnificent of all. Stocks were added to it under each emperor and Akbar introduced a sophisticated system of classification of books. The Librarian was called the *nizam* who was in-charge of purchase of books and upkeep of library with a *muhatim* and a *darogha* under him along with several assistants for cataloguing and accession. Translators and *Jadwalsaz* (artists to make fancy borders on pages) were also retained by the Library.

## VIII. AURANGZEB AND THE TWILIGHT OF THE MUGHALS

The zenith of Mughal court and authority as embodied in Shahjahanabad could not sustain itself over the eighteenth century. Towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign in 1657, a war of succession broke out between his sons, Dara Shikoh, Shah Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad Bakhsh. Aurangzeb emerged victorious over his other brothers, especially Dara, who was the heir designate primarily because Dara's unconventional religious views did not find support in staunch Sunni Mughal bastion. Aurangzeb's reign was made a period of incessant conflict and turmoil by the rebellion of constituent domains on the one hand, and religious discontent on the other. Aurangzeb had to leave Delhi in 1679 to remain parked in the Deccan till his death in 1707 battling the indomitable Marathas. His daughter, Zinat-ul-nisa begum built Zinat-ul-masjid in Daryaganj while his wife, Nawab Aurangabadi Begum also erected the Aurangabadi Masjid near Lahori Gate. Sonari Masjid, Masjid Sharif-al-daulah and Fakr-al-masjid were built by *amirs* and *begums* from outside the imperial family.

In deference to Aurangzeb's wishes and religious beliefs, no tomb was erected over his grave. Instead, he lies buried in an open grave at Daulatabad at the dargah of Burhan al-Din with a simple stone cenotaph. Inspired by Aurangzeb, the last Mughals emulated his example. There were instances when emperors or members of the royal family died in other parts of the empire but Delhi became the chosen location for interring them, especially the neighbourhoods of the Dargah of Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, the Dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya, and Humayun's Tomb (Savita Kumari, 2011). Aurangzeb's son, Bahadur Shah I or Khuld Manzil, was buried in an oblong marble *muhajjar* (a tomb enclosure open to the skies) near the Dargah of Shaikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki which became the site of a popular *urs* on his death anniversary when his widow, Mehr Parwar, organized a glittering display of thousands of lamps in the shape of trees and pillars. Two other rulers are buried in Bahadur Shah's *muhajjar* – Rafi ud-Darjat (d. June 6, 1719) and Rafi ud-Daulah or Shah Jahan II (d. September 19, 1719). Shah Alam II constructed tombs for his mother and sister called Lal Bangla, Akbar II and Bahadur Shah II constructed palaces but they did not construct tombs for themselves. All of them wished to be buried in the *muhajjar* of Bahadur Shah I. Muhammad Shah happened to be the only ruler who built a final resting place for himself in his own lifetime. He preferred the neighbourhood of Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya's Dargah. Jahan Ara was already buried there in an open grave surrounded by an elegantly carved marble enclosure. Muhammad Shah modeled his own enclosure on the same pattern. Nawab Sahiba Mahal, his wife, and his daughter are also buried in the same complex. Later, Mumtaz Mahal Begum, the wife of Akbar II, built a similar tomb there for her son, Mirza Jahangir. Thus, the spectacular mausoleums went out of vogue after Aurangzeb but they were still imbued with political and religious meanings. One burial ground which inexplicably assumed a peculiar meaning was Humayun's tomb as it became the place where deposed kings and royals assassinated in the wars of succession were buried. Bahadur Shah I buried his brothers and nephews here. Bahadur Shah I, despite attempting to undo some of the damage done by his father's devout nature, had to contend with intractable factions during his brief rule of five years and he too did not set foot in Delhi during all this time. He commissioned a mosque- the Moti Masjid in Mehrauli- to be built in 1709.

Thirty three years of imperial vacuum ended only when Bahadur Shah's successor, Jahandar Shah, entered Delhi in 1712 although the empty coffers, dissipating administrative machinery and mounting internal as well as external threats made Delhi less a bed of roses and more the proverbial crown of thorns. Jahandar Shah was given to a life of hedonism and degeneracy and it was the kingmaker, Zulfiqar Khan, who ruled the roost in the kingdom. The next infamous king makers were the Sayyid brothers who catapulted Farrukh Siyar, Jahandar Shah's nephew, to the throne in 1713. After Farrukh Siyar's death in 1719, Sayyid brothers raised Muhammad Shah to power. Despite considerable erosion, Mughal prestige was not altogether lost and its army was

also a force to reckon with. Administrative machinery, although skeletal, was operative. The Maratha menace was confined to the South while the Rajputs were not too troublesome either. Hence, Muhammad Shah had curtailed but requisite infrastructure at his disposal to heal the ailing dynasty. The emperor, however, did not seize the moment and speeded the death of the dynasty by remaining engrossed in the courtly pleasures. Known popularly Muhammad Shah *Rangila*, he remained oblivious to the impending doom by insulating himself in the comfort zone of ease and luxury. From 1719 to 1739, the year Nadir Shah sacked Delhi, a period of relative stability ensued during Muhammad Shah's reign which ended with his death in 1748. Muhammad Shah built walls outside the *dargah* of Chirag Dilli. While a queen of his, Udham Bai, built the shrine of Shah Mardan, another of his wife, Nawab Qudesia Begum, laid out a blooming garden on the banks of River Yamuna north of Kashmiri Gate. Frustrated by the indolence, frivolity and intrigues of the emperor, nobles like Nizam-ul-Mulk defected to carve out semi-independent states for themselves. The physical splintering of the kingdom was commenced when large parts of Bengal, Hyderabad, and Awadh emerged as what are called the succession states where Mughal care takers staked independent claim. Others such as Marathas in Central India and Malwa, Afghans in Rohilkhand, Jats in Bharatpur, Sikhs in Punjab and Rajputs in Rajasthan and Gujarat formed states by spurning the mantle of Mughal authority donned by them till now. Similarly, Mewati Meos and Gujars, bands of Sikhs who later formed the Phulkian states, all rampaged without a firm hand of authority. Maratha sardars began heading northwards and Afghans directed their attention to North India to benefit from the power deficit of this region. And then Nadir Shah's scourge descended over North India in 1738. The Mughal Empire was reduced to the 'Kingdom of Delhi' by the time Shah Alam II came to the throne in 1759.

Shah Alam II fled from Delhi in 1759 to proclaim himself emperor in Ghatouli in Bihar. Living under the protection of Shuja-ud-daula of Awadh, he lived like a refugee first in Bengal fighting East India Company till the defeat of Buxar, then in Allahabad as a pensioner of East India Company, finally entering Delhi in 1772 with the Marathas. A treaty was signed between Shah Alam and the Marathas in February, 1771 and Shah Alam entered Delhi escorted by the Marathas in January, 1772. From 1785 onwards, Delhi became an appenage to Sindia's domain. The simmering tension between the Marathas and the British Company resulted eventually in the much anticipated war of 1803. The battle of Delhi (or the Battle of Patparganj) took place on September 11, 1803. The Company under Lord Lake defeated the army of Scindia on the left bank of the Yamuna, just opposite Humayun's tomb. Shah Alam II replaced the Marathas with the Company for protection and pension. The Company occupied Delhi in 1803 and from that year till 1857, when the flickering Mughal flame was finally snuffed out, the Mughal emperors merely served as a political front for the British. Shah Alam's long and turbulent reign came to an end with his death in 1806 followed by what is called the Pax Britannica (British Peace) for 50 years which once again dissolved in violence and destruction in the 'mutiny' of 1857.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Though there is a tendency to dub the entire eighteenth century as the twilight zone, period of decadence, effete glory or inevitable decline, but there are also voices of caution against such simplistic confabulations in the history of Delhi. Percival Spear is wary of such "facile terms". (Spear, 1949, 2002: 1) Satish Chandra also warns that it would "be wrong to dub the entire eighteenth century a period of 'unchecked decline' for Delhi". (Chandra, 1986, 2002: 114) He calls, as several others have also called, the early eighteenth century crisis, the *jagirdari* crisis. As Percival Spear underlines,

The degeneracy of Hindustan during the second half of the eighteenth century was social and financial rather than naked power. Individual quality was often high, but men lacked a guiding star of conduct, a motive for ambition other than naked power. (Spear, 1949, 2002: 11)

Satish Chandra avers by emphasizing that this period "spelt not so much an absolute decline, as a prolonged period of stagnation." (Chandra, 1986, 2002: 115) The upside of this period was the cultural accomplishments of the city with architecture taking a backseat and painting, music, poetry stepping into its place. Secular and broad-based, the arts found patrons in the imperial family, the nobility, and the affluent settlers who cherished the cultural ethos of the city. Christopher Bayly, economic historian, expounds that demographic redistribution took place in the eighteenth century not because of 'decay of large cities' but because of emergence of new metropolitan centres (*shahrs*) like Lucknow, Pune and Nagpur, market towns (*qasbahs*) and fixed bazaars (*ganjs*) (Bayly, 1986, 2002, p. 121). The entrepot trade of Delhi was less affected as trade to the North-West stretching as far into Central Asia as Astrakhan in low bulk goods like dry fruits, shawls and drugs was carried out by Muslim and Khattri traders. Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century, the bazaars of Chandni Chowk, were still brimming with fancy stuff thanks to the North-Western trade. Although Delhi suffered economic decline as it stopped receiving revenue from neighbouring or far flung areas, yet politically it saw unabated activity. The Marathas and the East India Company were the main protagonists in Delhi's last phase of imperial vacillations till it first emerged the capital of the British Raj and later, the capital of the independent nation. The Delhi Subah of the Mughals extended from Haryana in the West and went upto the Upper Doab and Rohilkhand in the east. In 1638, its area was 601,42,375 *bighas* with 45,088 villages. By 1803, Delhi district had shrunk to include only 600 villages. Narayani Gupta writes that,

In the decades between Bernier's visit (around 1638) and the British conquest in 1803, Shahjahanabad withstood the ravages of civil war and invasion. The basic map of the city remained unchanged, though there was some building activity as well as cases of some areas becoming gradually or suddenly deserted. (Gupta, 1998, 2002: 3)

The Mughal aristocracy and the service classes survived the anarchy of the late eighteenth century by shifting to Lucknow or Hyderabad or seeking employment with the Marathas or the British. As has been noted by Bayly, the displacement of the traders was not as evident because Delhi retained remnants of the Mughal aristocratic class and those who stepped in their shoes like the Jats and the Marathas, even the British, assumed Mughal lifestyles. (Bayly, 1986, 2002: 133) Post 1806, with the end of hostilities and emergence of 'British Delhi', survivors returned and were able to partly recover their possessions. By 1847, there had developed thirteen clusters of population outside the walled city with a majority of non-cultivating population. These included Mughalpura, Sabzi Mandi, Jaisinghpura, Kishenganj, Trevelyanganj, Teliwara, Shidipura, Pahari Dhiraj, Sarai Idgah, Kadam Sharif, Banskauli, Paharganj and Rakabganj. The castes in majority were the Shaiks and the Banias. Apart from the River and wells, the main source of water was the Yamuna Canal which existed from Firoze Shah Tughlaq's time branching from Karnal towards Delhi. It was repaired during Akbar's reign and modernized by Ali Mardan Khan for Shahjahanabad. It fell into disuse after 1770 A.D. only to be revived by the British almost half a century later. The River itself was navigable round the year up to Delhi, hence it supported human and cargo transportation in and out of Delhi. There were also important highways connecting Delhi to other city centers like Agra, Lahore, Ajmer or Patna. Delhi's hinterland produced corn, millet, pulses rice and indigo. Gupta writes that by virtue of being located at the closing arms of the Yamuna-Sutlej and just next to the north-west turning of the Ganga-Yamuna doab, Delhi lay within easy reach of major sources of agricultural production. It was fed from the Doab and the grain emporia east of the river in Shahadara, Ghaziabad and Patparganj. "These were linked to the intramural market near the Fatehpuri mosque; vegetable and fruit came from the north-west and were sold in the wholesale market of Sabzi Mandi in Mughalpura, outside the city wall, on the Grand Trunk Road to Lahore". (Gupta, 1998, 2002: 2) Wheat and Tobacco thrived in the Khandarat. Khoa for sweets, leaves for disposable plates, tamarisk for baskets, firewood and cowdung for fuel were also supplied by the countryside. All this was consumed by the city leaving hardly any surplus. The neighbouring qasbahs transmitting their produce to Delhi were Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Mehrauli, Najafgarh, Narela and Sonapat. Maps of 1760s and 1790s indicate dense cultivation eight to twelve kilometers around Delhi. Delhi was naturally surrounded by a forested region in the form of the Ridge but it also had a rich array of Gardens planted along the River and the Canal. The Ridge typically served as the hunting ground for royalty and nobility apart from providing succor in summer, protection from enemies and prevention of land erosion. Indiscriminate deforestation to meet timber and domestic needs was allowed in the forest cover. The occupation of Delhi by the British in 1803 was an epochal event which brought about many redefinitions and realignments during Pax Britannica (Mittal, 2015), the aftermath of the 1857 uprising, the transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, construction and inauguration of New Delhi and finally, the departure of the British in 1947 bringing the uprooted hordes of the partition on the one hand and the democratic and bureaucratic structures of the government of free India on the other.

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