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Bazaars of 17th Century Shahjahanabad as Spatial, Symbolic and Cultural Spaces

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Archana Ojha*

Introduction

The growth and development of the city of Shahjahanabad reflected a dynamic process of social and economic transformation where the planned expansion of the capital city played a significant role for the first time in the seventeenth century. It was in Shahjahanabad that one could discern the process of establishment of markets as a social space, where each category of the market carried out a specialized socio-economic function through which it integrated itself with the more prominent politico-administrative structures of the Empire and became an integral part of an urban development 'process that gave distinct identity to the city and established a benchmark to be followed and emulated from hereon in the other subas (provinces). In planning the city, the Mughal Emperor ensured the creation of common open and semi-covered public spaces that included bazaars as commercial spaces apart from gardens, religious monuments and dargahs (sufi shrine). Retail space reflected the maturity of market

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relations as they became the centres of social interaction. People belonging to heterogeneous cultural groups came together to exchange commodities and capital and live in the vicinity, giving the bazaars a distinctive socio-cultural shape and structure that added a new chapter in the history of Delhi. This established an intangible web of growth and development in the city's internal dynamics that later assisted in evolving a distinct Delhi culture based on new patterns of social interactions, structures and ideologies.

Spatial Spread of Shahjahanabad

The rapid pace at which Shahjahanabad got populated from 1648 onwards and integrated with the Mughal economy was based on many factors that were taken into account when selecting the city as a geographical space for the development of the new walled imperial capital of the Mughal Empire'. The spatial history of Delhi had already witnessed myriad ways of development, with 600 years of urban history extending from the period of Rajput rule to the Lodi dynasty", Shahjahan had not invaded this city. It was already an integral part of the Empire and its imperial history. However, when he shifted the capital city, the Emperor assisted in the development of a new spatial spread. He initiated a new method of dialogue among varied cultural groups through built architecture.

The difference was that the site chosen for the new city of Shahjahanabad was at a new space at a significant distance from the earlier cities of Delhi but close to Salimgarh, Firozabad, Humayun's tomb and Dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya. It was planned on a grand imperial scale, never seen before in the early modern period of Indian history. This imperial vision included the

1 Bernier, Francois. (1989). Travels in the Mughal Empire AD 1656-1668. Low Price Publications, Delhi: 249

Frykenberg, R.E. (1986.) Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society, Delhi.

plan to make the city the Centre of the Mughal Universe and ink the name of Shahjahan into annals of Indian history as one of the greatest who successfully integrated the politico-administrative forces with economic and financial needs of the royal family, ruling classes and the other elites that attracted merchants, traders, scholars, skilled and unskilled labour classes to become specialized residents of the new urban society.' The rise and expansion of the Mughal State into an Empire represented by ethnocultural and administrative complexity of the Mughal umara (bureaucracy), along with the development of the varied forms of cultural traditions, meant a period of development of hybrid structures and this hybridity was manifested in the city and bazaars of the Shahjahanabad. With its well-connected internal and external trade linkages, as Delhi was near the Yamuna-Sutlej and in the northwest close to the Yamuna-Ganga doab region, the city could secure an abundant supply of agricultural produce to meet the needs of the city dwellers." The river Yamuna not only provided security to the Qila-i Mubarak (the palace city) but being an easily navigable river, the boats and ships being the most inexpensive form of transportation of goods, could supply essential goods and other commodities from the borderland of the Gangetic plains along with the well-laid out imperial roads and highways with sarais and kos miners (distance markers) that connected the newly established city with the prominent Subas (provinces) of the Empire. The extensive usage of water and land routes indicated the growth of integrated market network systems inside and outside the capital city. The ruler and the ruling classes used the available technological advancements in building activities by hiring specialized skilled labour classes that further provided an economic impetus to the city's growth and market economy.⁵

Bernier, Travels, I, p. 282.

, Naqvi, Hamida Khatoun. (2002). Shahjahanabad, The Mughal Delhi, 1638-1803: An Introduction. In Delhi Omnibus, 57-58.

Chenoy, Shama Mitra (1998). Shahjahanabad: A City of Delhi, 1638-1857. New Delhi.

Another essential factor to consider is that the city was one of the largest in the seventeenth century, witnessing the rapid migration of specialized labour classes, merchants and traders. These elements gave the new capital a unique and intangible identity, making it a more vibrant and advanced walled city. The establishment of this new city assisted in developing new social-economic systems of urban development where religious boundaries were easily blurred to secure profits through active participation in the bazaar economy. The city eventually evolved into a culturally hybrid city where the movement of people and commodities and the spread of new cultural ideas rapidly generated enough capital resources and accumulation. The city also made the exchange system of products and capital more complex by developing bills of exchange, insurance and investment in craft and industrial activities by the ruler, ruling classes and individuals. ⁶

City's Symbolisms

This new city established a symbiotic relationship between the three centres of power, with Qila-i Mubarak (the palace city) representing the politico-military space that also maintained dynastic legitimacy and political prestige of the Mughals; religious institutions and symbolisms like mosques, dargahs (sufi shrines), tombs, temples and ghats (river banks) that also represented the spiritual-religious realm of the Empire providing social legitimacy to the Mughal dynasty, especially after the construction of [ami Masjid along with madrasas and hospitals; and finally the bazaars that infused the economic spirit.' Development of bazaars established layers of integrative economic forces that bound the

⁶ Cheney, Shama Mitra. (2004). *Shahjahanabad: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Symphony, Identities, Plurality*. NMML. Monograph, 8. New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

⁷ Echlers, Eckart, and Thomas Krafft. (1993). *Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi: Traditions and Colonial Change*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner.

merchant classes, ruling classes and royalty into a cohesive whole. In this sense, the city showcased a hierarchical transition from public to private spaces where the Palace, Havelis (villas) and houses of the general public became the private realm. In contrast, the city's public space consisted of bazaars, religious institutions, mohallas,⁸ waras," chattas," katras." kuchas" and madrasas (educational institutions).¹³

The age of the city's development coincided with a high point of Indo-Islamic cultural development as politically dominant communities came to identify themselves with the Mughal Persian culture." In this predominantly Mughal cultural period, there was a gradual spread and growth of Braj bhasha. Its roots now extended to the Mughal court due to marriage alliances with Rajput princesses. Therefore, the city's demographic profile varied, ranging from royalty to bureaucrats, administrative personnel, religious scholars, mercantile classes, indigenous and foreign, artisans, servants and enslaved people. While the royalty and bureaucrats controlled the most desired spaces in the city, the city's core, where bazaars were situated, was inhabited by the general population. The heart of this city was divided based on the nature of the bazaar and the profession adopted by different classes living in the localities (mohallas). The town's spatial division of mohallas or localities was based on occupations. This fact is provided in the accounts of the foreign travellers who

Localities where the same professional or caste groups resided and traded

Where a small lane could be a street or an alley

¹⁰ Covered passage to carry out manufacturing

¹¹ An enclosed area with gates where people lived and had warehouses

¹² Street or lane

¹³ Blake, Stephen P. (1991). *Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1659-1739*. Cambridge.

¹⁴ Rezavi, Syed Ali Nadeem. (2011). 'Dynamics of Composite Culture: Evolution of an Urban Social Identity in Mughal India'. *Indian History Congress, Vol 72, Part I*: 408-422.

mention the celebration of major religious festivals of different communities. The city had begun to witness the growing popularity of mushaira culture", and there are shreds of evidence of collaborative business ventures undertaken by Hindu and Muslim merchants. Before the city's construction, the existing temples remained untouched, and many more were developed by individuals, although ghats for Hindus were relocated as the site was close to the Qila.

The new city attracted varied classes of people. Some influential businessmen shifted into the city from the adjacent regions and built mansions for themselves on the land provided by the Mughal Emperor. There was a hierarchy and specialization based on different functions performed by the respective groups. The other important business community were the jewellers (jawharvan), who were given space to build an entire market, the Dariba or the [auhari bazaar. The city attracted merchants from distant lands like the Armenians, Persians, and Central Asian merchants and traders. There were also substantial numbers of professional groups-the wholesale traders, shopkeepers, moneychangers-cum-moneylenders involved in fiscal transactions (sarrafs), some of whom had shops near the Qila that signified their importance. The city included gumashtas and dalals (agents and brokers), scholars, painters, good carriers, hordes of skilled and unskilled labour classes and banjaras who were experts in bulk transportation of goods. There were also merchants (beoparis) in the city whose status was equal to master artisans. Abul Fazl placed them below the nobility but above the religious and scholarly classes in his classification of social strata during the reign of Emperor Akbar." The city had shops of vaid, hakims,

¹⁵ This tradition of poetic symposium developed much later in the eighteenth century. Before eighteenth century, it was called Murekhta or Majlis-i Rekhta where Rekhta language was used and this was early form of Urdu language and meant 'scattered' or 'mixed' language with heavy use of Persian words.

¹ Allami, Abul Fazl. (1989). *The Ain-i Akbari*, Vol. I, translated H. Blochmann, ed. D.C. Phillott. Reprint.

pandits and mullah (physicians and teachers) employed in Maktabas and madrasas (educational institutions). According to Bernier, most merchants lived at the backside of their shops, which were well built and had sufficient space to store commodities, but the display method needed to be better." A very significant uniqueness of the city was that it created liminal space – both aesthetically and professionally. The royal women stepped out into the public areas and contributed to the city's aesthetic urban and economic growth by constructing bazaars, mosques, sarais and gardens. This new development assisted in the structural evolution of the city based on gendered spatial identity and symbolisms.

The categorization and complexity of the bazaar economy reflected the interplay of socio-political factors that assisted in the growth of a workable space for the new urban community bound together by market forces. However, they still managed to retain their distinct socio-religious identities. Therefore, the markets of Shahjahanabad reflected complex political, economic and cultural elements as they significantly contributed to the city's cultural transformation, irrespective of whether this was planned or developed in organic forms and details.^f These bazaars integrated and assimilated three factors into one cohesive space by bringing together local-regional-external economies of the Empire. The city eventually became the centre of manufacturing, marketing, banking, business activities, and economic linkages with the other regions of the Empire and beyond.^l In other words, bazaars played a spatial and symbolic role in the process of cultural development

¹⁷ Bernier, Francois. (1989) *Travels in the Mogul Empire AD 1656-1668*. Low Price Publications. Delhi: 245-246.

¹⁸ Dale, S.F. (2010). 'Empires and Emporia: Palace, Mosque, Market and Tomb in Istanbul, Isfahan, Agra and Delhi'. *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Volume 53, Issue 1:212-229.

¹⁹ Raychaudharv. Tapan, Irfan Habib, and Dharma Kumar. (1982). *The Cambridge Economic History of India*. Vol. I, c.1200-1750. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 434.

of the city and made it into a storehouse of economic and political power. Bazaars were, therefore, made into a social-cultural construct essential for the Mughals for the smooth functioning of the urban economy and to keep it safe and secure to maintain market relations and social divisions. **In** this way, the rise of a walled city operated through the administrative apparatus of the Empire - the safe and secure space assisted in the gradual growth of integrated cultural values, attitudes and mannerisms.

In common parlance, bazaars or markets are spaces where goods and services are exchanged between the buyers and sellers directly or through the agency of intermediaries. According to K.N. Chaudhari, markets represent the economic behaviour of the period and a space where the entire exchange process manifests into a dynamic system. It is also a sociological phenomenon as various social groups enact differentiated functions. This established power differentials and social stratification between the political rulers and merchants, merchants and brokers, and banjaras and peddlers." Taking a cue from here, the bazaars of Shahjahanabad became a geographical space where the sellers competed for local and foreign customers. Products from across the world and within the empire were brought into these bazaars and sold to the buyers based on the cash nexus system. Evidence points to the development of three types of markets: one that trade in goods, financial markets and money markets. The complexity of bazaar forces led to the division of labour as demand for products from the Indian sub-continent reached unprecedented levels in Europe and other parts of the world.

Another essential factor that stimulated the growth of bazaars, according to Irfan Habib, was the usage and circulation of the Mughal imperial tri-metallic coins of excellent uniformity and purity, with the silver rupee as the primary currency to meet the

²⁰ Chaudhari. KN. (1994). 'Markets and Traders in India during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in Subrahmanyam, Sanjay, ed., *Money and Markets in India 1100-1700*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, p.259.

transactional demands of the commercial, fiscal and household economies. From the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the monetary metals, especially gold and silver, came into India at their highest levels." Abul Fazl writing in the sixteenth century stated:

By the help of God's goodness this excellent precious metal [gold] has come to the shore of existence, and filled the store of life without much labour on the part of man. By means of gold, man carries out noble plans and even performs Divine worship in a proper manner....To render it service, God has allowed silver and brass to come into use, thus creating additional means for the welfare of man. Hence just kings and energetic rulers have paid much attention to these metals, and erected mints, where their properties may be thoroughly studied."

According to J.F. Richards, the Mughal monetary system by the eighteenth century had become robust, flexible and long-lasting as the Mughal monetary supply system was based on imports from east and west over both land and maritime routes. Indian goods were in high demand. By the sixteenth century, the inflow of gold and silver from the New World became more intensive in the seventeenth century when precious metals from the Mediterranean came to the Indian Ocean through trade transactions. With the emergence of East India Companies in Europe, they traded for textiles and spices in exchange for precious metals. He goes on to state that this precious metal was converted into imperial coins. The Mughal emperors issued three types - gold coin known as muhr or ashrafi, which was used for hoarding purposes; silver coin for commercial and tax payments in which the percentage of other metals never went above 4% and finally, for

²¹ Habib.Irfan, 'The System of bills of exchange (hundis) in the Mughal Empire', in Chandra, Satish, cd.. *Essays in Medieval Indian Economic History*.

²² Allami, Abul Fazl. (1989). *The Ain-i Akbari, Vol' I*, translated H. Blochmann, ed. D.C. Phillott. Reprint. 16-17.

small, petty payments used copper coins. The Mughal coins were subject to specific discounts based on age, and for this purpose, each coin bore the name of the mint and the year of issue. The new coins enjoyed total value compared to the old coins. The Mughal coinage was free as the three metals fluctuated in value in relation to each other. Irfan Habib stated that by 1595, the rupee began to dominate transactions and copper coinage was used only for petty payments. Mughal Empire made hundi system more Widespread in nature (as it was in existence from the Sultanate era) that was issued by bankers known as sarrafs (Arabic word) and were also known as Khwastadar (financier) or in the local language as Mahajan. They were handling money movement by using hundis for individuals or institutions. Their services were used not only by the State itself but even by the jagirdars, European traders and trading companies in return for which they received commission or interests. Hundi was used not only as a promissory note but also as a system of bills of exchange."

Moreover, the Mughals collected land revenue in cash, which encouraged market activity and increased demand for cash. Converting agricultural surplus into money led to the commercialization of agriculture, which led to intense circulations of capital from urban-rural areas." According to Aziza Hasan, there was an increase of 200 percent in the seventeenth century in the circulation of silver.²⁵ Shireen Moosvi comes to the same conclusion, while according to Tapan Raychaudhuri, the growth of population, urbanization, an increase in land revenue demand and

²³ Habib, Irfan, 'The System of bills of exchange (hundis) in the Mughal Empire', in Chandra, Satish, ed., *Essays in Medieval Indian Economic History*, p. 208. Prakash, Om, 'Sarrafs, Financial Intermediation and Credit Network in Mughal India', In Cauwenberghe, Van, ed., *Money, Coins and Commerce*. pp. 473-490.

²⁴ Chandra, Satish. (1966). 'Some Aspects of the growth of a money economy in India during the seventeenth century'. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, vol. III, (4).

²⁵ Hasan, Aziza. (1969). "Sliver Currency Output of the Mughal Empire and Prices in India During the 16th and 17th Centuries". *Indian Economic and Social History Review*. Vol. VI, No. I. March, pp. 85-116.

volume of commerce began to be witnessed from the seventeenth century. The Mughals paid their troopers, and military officials cash salaries, spent on monument building and luxurious lifestyles, which could not have been possible without money circulation. The Mughal ruling class invested huge fortunes in trade by providing commercial capital to traders and merchants engaged in long-distance trade."

The period saw the development of the hundi system, an indigenous bill of exchange that made monetary transfers easy over long and short distances. According to *I.F.* Richards, three factors combined in the eighteenth century assisted in the increased velocity of money in circulation - the land revenue on the agricultural productions, the institutionalization of the jagir system and increased commodity sales in the market system." Stephen P. Blake has stated that the circulation of money from rural areas since the Mughals collected agricultural taxes in naqd (cash) stimulated the growth of rural haats (markets) and mandis (wholesale markets) where the peasant sold their produce to secure the money and paid the required sum of taxes to the state. A significant part of the collected taxes was spent on the salaries of the Mughal mansabdars. Still, a large sum of money went back into the rural economy by market forces and moneylenders. The entire process of collecting the taxes assisted in the rise of district towns (pargana) and scores of bigger cities (sarkar) that became the centre of trade and production. This process assisted in the urban growth and growing importance of independent traders and merchants.

This growth of merchant classes and the development of a financial economy was facilitated by the expansion of fiscal

²⁶ Raychaudhary, Tapan, Irfan Habib, and Dharma Kumar. (1982). *The Cambridge Economic History of India*. Vol. I, c.1200-1750. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

²⁷ Richards, John F. (1987). *The Imperial Monetary System of Mughal India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

functions across the Empire. This process juxta positioned itself with the increase in grain production and the development of grain marketing networks that facilitated the growth of finance and credit systems. Money was also used to make advance payments for textile manufacturing and encourage cash-crop production in rural areas.

In this manner, by the seventeenth century, the monetary economy had become embedded into the cultural realm of the rural society, evident through the application of the system of weights and measures, land measurement mechanism, and exchange of commodities taking place at the most basic level of the early modern society and according to Frank Perlin, the period from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries witnessed not only the growth of the commercial exchanges between the Americas, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia with East Asia but also a wide-ranging, differentiated rise in demand for money along with an increase in manufacturing, agricultural production and exchange of money that facilitated the flow of precious metals to the Indian subcontinent."

The Typology of Bazaars

Scholars have identified three types of bazaars wherein bazaars developed in an organized manner for the royalty and the ruling classes. At the same time, the rest of the common markets grew organically over time." The division of bazaars into three broad categories depended on three factors – the first primarily being the number of customers and classes it catered to, followed by the size of the market, and finally, the variety of goods and services the market offered to its customers.

²⁸ Perlin, Frank. (1986). 'Monetary Revolution and Societal Change in the Late Medieval and Early Modern Times: A Review Article'. *Journal of Asian Studies*, VolXLV, No.5.

²⁹ Rezavi, Syed Ali Nadeem. (2015). 'Bazars and markets in medieval India'. *Studies in People's History*, 2, 1;61-70.

Central Bazaars

The central bazaar was two in number, spread from the Lahori gate of the Qila to the Fatehpuri Masjid (named after Shahjahan's wife, Nawab Fathpuri Begum) of the city." The other near Akbarabadi masjid that was also known as Ashot Panahi, which meant place of great protection (named after Nawab Akbarabadi Begum), later came to be known as Faiz Bazaar (Bazar of Plenty), was built in 1650 that also had a sarai, hammam, and, in both the bazaars, Nahr-i Bihisht (Canal of Paradise) which flowed through the centre." These types of bazaars provided the people with unique and luxurious commodities not available elsewhere. As they were in the straight line of the Qila, special provisions for adequate security of the market and its elite customers were put in place. Shops here were all symmetrical in nature, design and architecture, making this a beautiful shopping experience where the elites could sit and admire the commercial hub of the capital city. Shops sold rubies, gems, pearls, precious stones, best quality clothes from the other parts of the Empire and from outside, attars (perfume), Chinese crockery, glass huqqas, bowls, jugs, wine cups along with Persian and Kashmiri carpets, the best quality of kebabs, flowers, astrologers, coffee shops and other exquisite materials where the nobility and other elites conversed on matters of commerce, finances, trade and poetry." Close to Chandni Chowk were Kucha Natawan shops that trained dancing and singing girls and other performing artists for the royal court and nobles. There was a fruit market here that brought fruits from Persia, Balkh, Bukhara and Samarqand during the summer months and in the winter, shops supplied grapes and other exotic

³⁰ Blake, Stephen P. (2002). Cityscape of an Imperial Capital; Shahjahanabad in 1739. In *Delhi Through the Ages: Selected Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society*, ed. Frykenberg, R.E. p. 72-73.

³¹ Blake, Stephen P. (2002). p. 72.

³² Blake, Stephen P. (2002). p. 73.

fruits from Central Asia." The area also had coffee shops and bakeries; Juhari bazaar had shops of jewellers and sarrafs (money lenders); there was also Mandi Gulfaroshan (flower market) and Sharabhkhana (liquor house). Kutchi Natawan sold statues of deities for Hindu temples. Katra Nil, where Khattris lived and monopolized indigo products. Fathpuri bazaar was famous for grain and perfume shops; Khari baoli had many small bazaars like Gandhak gali or lane of perfumeries, then there was Bazaar Majid Parcha, where wool, silk, hemp and cut pieces were sold along with spice bazaar. There was also Katra Raughan Zard selling ghee or clarified butter. The Kalari bazaar sold liquor made by the Hindu caste Kalar who knew to distil liquor. Moti bazaar sold gems, and Kinari bazaar was famous for gold and silver. Between Moti bazaar and Maliwara, shops were for shoemakers, clothiers and handicraftsmen."

Intermediary Bazaars

These bazaars were constructed near the imperial palace and the powerful nobles' mansions that served the nobility's large households and goods were qualitatively better and more expensive. Bazaars close to the buildings of power holders had adequate security measures in place. A separate category of merchants supplied goods in these markets procured from wholesale markets. These merchants had surplus capital and used this to their advantage to extend loans to the nobles, and they also gave advance money to banjaras to supply them with the required commodities. One example of this bazaar was the Urdu bazaar (Camp market) that extended from the Lahori gate of the fort to the edge of the Kotwali Chabutra (the Town's Magistrate's Platform

³ Bernier, Francois. (1989). Travels in the Mughal Empire AD 1656-1668. Low Price Publications. Delhi: 249

⁴ Anonymous Author. (1997). Delhi the capital of India. Revised and Enlarged edition of All About Delhi'. First Published in 1918. Reprint: 113.

where criminals were given public punishments)." The shops in this area supplied soldiers, enslaved people, servants, clerks, and artisans to the Emperor, imperial household and nobles. A unique bazaar catered only to the royalty inside the Qila was the Chatta Chowk that spread from the Lahori gate to Naqqar Khana (the music hall of the Qila), a long vaulted bazaar (bazaar-i musaqqaf) based on Safavid style. It was very similar to a bazaar built by Ali Mardan Khan at Peshawar that was seen and liked by Emperor Shahjahan in 1646. He ordered his chief architect of the Qila to copy the same inside the palace city.³⁶

Four other bazaars existed in four directions of the [ama Masjid. The west side had shops selling liquor, opium, textiles, cloth, brass and copper utensils, printing press, sweetmeat or sugar cakes, bangles, grain, and exotic birds." Then there were small markets selling reed grass used for thatching, rabri shops (thickened milk), shops selling samosas, flower shops, dal (lentil) bazaar, wholesale grain market, shoe bazaar and shops selling precious stones and jewellery."

On the Southern side, known as Chitli Qabr, there were butcher shops (Qassabpura), arms and ammunition shops, candle shops, and bamboo sellers, and this bazaar was close to Dilli Darwaza (entrance door). On the Northern side were jeweller shops and shops of skilled artisans who did pachchikari, khurdakari, and khattamkari (different styles of engraving, inlay work on stones); at Dariba were shops of sarrafs and seal engravers. Then there were shops selling durries and wood furniture, firecrackers, and halwai (makers of sweets) shops." In the East, the Khaas (specialized) bazaar connected the [ami masjid,

³⁵ Blake, Stephen P. (2002).p. 72.

³⁶ Koch, Ebba. (2002).Mughal Architecture. Oxford University Press, p.124.

³⁷ Shama Mitra. (1998). Shahjahanabad: A City of Delhi, 1638-1857. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. p. 123-124.

³⁸ Trivedi, Madhu. (1992). 'Shahjahanabad' in Historic Delhi. Indian History Congress. 52nd Session: 28-29.

and the Qila was an area of storytellers, fortunetellers, handicrafts and physicians." Chowk Sa'adullah Khan (he built the platform) was near this, where the sellers sold arms and clothes.

Local Bazaars

Nakhas, or neighbourhood bazaars (daily markets), developed organically over time. They supplied limited goods as they served the local population, primarily selling grain, cloth, salt, fruits, vegetables, spices, milk products and meat. These types of bazaars were set up either during the early morning or evening. They were significant in number as they served the localities and primarily constituted small shopkeepers who purchased the required goods from the wholesaler market like the one that existed in Paharganj that sold grain, leather goods, metal utensils, horned cattle, sheep, goats, horses, wood, soap, fireworks, fish, cheese and building material. Another such bazaar was Darya Ganj (a market along the river), where farmers came to sell their vegetables, fruits and milk products."

The city's markets were also centres of manufacturing the finest quality cotton textiles, particularly of export quality like chintzes, quilts and tie-dyed cloths. The bazaar also had shops and karkhanas that manufactured copper utensils, weapons, paper, leather commodities, sugar and indigo. The city boasted the best masons and stonecutters known for their skills, building engineers, and architects. It was particularly these classes of skilled professionals and workers that Nadir Shah took away to Iran after he invaded the city in 1739.⁴²

³⁰ Shama Mitra. (1998). p.125.

¹⁰ Khan, Dargah Kuli. (1989). Muraqqa-e-Dehli. Translated by Shekharn, Chander and Cheney, Shama Mitra, Muraqqa-e-Dchli, The Mughal Capital in Muhammad Shah's Time: 21-23. Shama Mitra. (1998). pp. 126-127.

¹¹ Naqvi. Hamida Khatoon. (2002). P. 59. Sharna Mitra. (1998). Shahjahanabad: A City of Delhi, 1638-1857. Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers. p.119.

¹² Naqvi, Hamida Khatoon. (2002). Shahjahanabad. p. 59.

Conclusion

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that studying bazaars is essential to understand people, their living standards, culture and cultural interactions. Bazaars of the city assisted in the investment of the accumulated wealth. In the process, it created a division of labour and demand for new and varied products. Even though powerful nobles and merchants in the city had their karkhanas (manufacturing units), they also required more specialized goods. In contrast, the highly stratified population required different types of markets to meet all their needs. The process helped more classes become literate as bazaars encouraged writing in complex and simple forms. It stimulated the development of a rudimentary form of economic management and facilitated craft production, diffusion of technologies and increase in agricultural production." To manage the bazaars apart from Kotwal, there were headmen for each mohalla and scores of other Mughal officials whose task ensured that the market economy functioned unobstructed. The uniqueness of Delhi was that the city was also the foci of manufacturing as it produced for the local population and adjoining areas that made the city markets an entrep6t for many other cities. The presence of so many sarais that performed multi-dimensional functions as inns, banks, credit units and storehouses indicated the movement of merchants from inside and outside the frontiers of the Empire who came as temporary dwellers to the city. Some markets were developed outside the walled city, particularly if more space was required to manufacture products, for a storage facility or when the leather-making and fabricating units created enough pollution to be placed outside the city's walls." The city contrary to the statement

⁴³ Blake, Stephen P. (1987). 'The Urban Economy in Premodern Muslim India: Shahjahanabad, 1639-1739'. *Modern Asian Studies*. Vol.21. No.3: pp. 447-471.

⁴⁴ Cheney, Shama Mitra. (2004). *Shahjahanabad: Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries Symphony, Identities, Plurality*. NMML. Monograph, 8. New Delhi: Nehru Memorial Museum and Library.

made by Max Weber" that the Indian cities lacked corporate or municipal authorities had layers of administrative mechanism to govern and regulate the affairs of the city. Eight gateways controlled the movement of the people entering the city. The entire city was placed under the watchful eyes of the Kotwal (magistrate) and to manage localities, twelve thanas (wards) were established and each ward was supervised by the thanedar who maintained the register of people, tax collections and also supervised the night chowkidar (watchman) who was paid by each mohalla. In a further sub-division of the city administration, in each mohalla, there was a mahallahdar who supervised day-to-day functioning and since each mohalla could be easily sealed with a gate", it became a safe heaven secure from theft and outsiders."

People inhabiting this city came from diverse cultural backgrounds. They created a complex geometrical web of inter-relations that gave the town a unique character. The urban family units blurred religious boundaries and cultural differences even though each locality was self-regulating with an organic identity based on multiple factors. New styles of selling commodities and varied communities of inhabitants made the bazaars of Shahjahanabad into a commercial-political space that further enhanced the economic power of the Mughal Empire. In this space, new social relations emerged influenced by the politico-economic culture of the Empire.

The study of different bazaars in Delhi points to the fact that by the seventeenth century, the Mughal Empire had transformed itself entirely with extensive use of money, cultivation of surplus

⁴⁵ Weber, Max. (1969). "The Nature of the City". In *Classic Essays on the Culture of Cities*, ed. By Richard Sennett, 23-46. New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts.

⁴⁶ The system of Kucha bandi, the lane closure process.

⁴⁷ Mofussil Stations No. XI, Delhi, *Asiatic Journal*, May/August 1834, p. 2. Taken from Gupta, Narayani, 'The Indomitable City', Echlers, Eckart, and Thomas Krafft. Ed. (1993). *Shahjahanabad, Old Delhi: Traditions and Colonial Change*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner.

agricultural production, and production of manufactured goods for internal and external markets. All these factors combined to transform the city of the Mughals into an abode of intense commercial growth and development with all its complexities.