

## **The Socio- Economic condition of 13th- 14th Century Medieval India and the role played by Sufi Saints for improvement in livelihood conditions of the Sultanate**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The Socio- Economic condition of medieval India demonstrated excellent rural fabric, along with Qasbas which were the centre of economic development. Sufism came to Indian Sub-Continent with greater thoughts of brotherhood and humanity. The Sufi Saints took up the responsibility of creating better social capacity among the people. It is for the ilm or knowledge, the Sufi Saints worked very hard. They also had their spiritual domain which came to be known for humanity and charity. The coming of the Turks in India brought pyrokinetic efficiency. It also heralded new facilities for the development of humanity, and socio- economic improvement. Community living played a very crucial role in integrating the society and it also paved the way for creation of Ain- i- Akbari, in the later Mughal Era which is an excellent treatise for socio- economic development.

**KEYWORDS:** Socio- Economic, Rural Fabric, Qasbas, Community, Integrating, Development.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION:**

In Medieval India, the medieval ruler and the Sufi Saints along with Qazi and the ruling elites took the responsibility of administration. Sufi Saint is a very powerful person, who could control his waliyat, integrating sincerity and community work for the development of Medieval India. The ruler also respected the pir- murid relationship. The stability and the order can be established, if we see the harmonical basis of administration. The community concern is regarded as the foremost opinion for the improvement of the Medieval Indian society. The Khalji and the Tughluq rulers gave very much emphasis on traditional hierarchy. They also had relationship with the Iranian traditional elites, who are the foremost guardian of Noor- i- ilm in the Sufi order.

The Socio- Economic order of the 13th- 14th Century Medieval India is a theme which requires discussion. In the Historical Analysis, it is found that social and the rural fabric got a structured shape during the Medieval Indian society. The Khalji ruler gave importance to the celestial architecture. According to the ruling elites, the centre of education and the beautiful surrounding could give ilm ie Knowledge to the sincere people of the waliyat. It will further bring harmony in the society. The Maqtabas are developed in the region of Hauj Khas and its surrounding. Even today, we see the historical architecture, which reflects traditional Sufi unity. It is the reflection traditional Sufi harmony and artistic tradition. It is the reflection of excellent craftsmanship, descending from the Iranian tradition, which says knowledge is power.

The Tughluq architecture also shows some of the beautiful specimen of ruler and his spiritual domain for the cause of development. The Tughluq ruler gave importance to strategic determination for the social development. They also gave importance to trade for socio- economic improvement. The harmony and the efficiency are also given priority for the concern of social development. The Tughluqs also respected the previous Khalji architecture for the harmonious traditional architecture. It is said the rulers gained knowledge for the society, livelihood concerns and definitely, they respected tradition for humanity.

In the agricultural department, we see Medieval period demonstrated traditional seed development and sowing the rice, wheat and pulses. The crops were much common in the rural society and the village community safeguarded the concern of the farmers, Pahikasht is one of them. The concern of Pahikasht is important, because of the development ethics. The overall improvement was seen in the cropping pattern. The rulers and the ruling elites took an improvement analysis on the agriculture produce. It became popular in the Medieval Indian Society. Later, the great Mughal dynasty also adopted some of the very popular agriculture tactics from the Sultanate elites for the harmonious administrative structure.

The concerns of the rural people are taken in Sufi discussion. As we know that there are cultivation efforts and irrigation issues for agriculture basis of the Sultanate. The Sufis took great pain in understanding the socio- economic conditions. There are the concerns for the village community, where the Persian wheel helped

in agriculture technology. Community efforts have been regarded as the crucial theme, where humanity thrives and co-operation persist.

Community efforts deserve crucial evaluation because of the kind concerns and development ethics. The issue of development ethics actually is seen in Sultanate era, as we notice village community taking up cultivation measures. Meanwhile, we can also mention about the Ancient Indian Society, where welfare works were prioritized by rulers like Asoka and Harshavardhana. In medieval India, the Sufi thought got a formulated shape, and took up the cause of charity which is undoubtedly the unique achievement of humankind. The events like Sama' gave hope to people of the Sultanate to embrace humanity and work with sincerity. The common lives have been discussed in the Sufi works, which adheres to the principle of brotherhood and integrity. The role of Sufi is to work for charity, and celebrate the courage along with dignity. Humanity has found a new moral value, which is universally acclaimed for its simplicity.

The Sufi Saint gave importance to harmony and discussion with the elites for socio- economic improvement. The Sufi Saint also had his house in the fringes. The Sufi- Saint offered prayer in his realm and dedicated few things like Sama', which means Sufi music and Sufi dance to God. People could attend Sama', and pray for the tuneful administration of the realm. Realm here means the sultanate, which has been formulated with lot of sincere effort and courage. The ruler of the sultanate did his best to carry on his duty as a great warrior. He also sincerely took up the socio- economic concerns for the benefit of the people at large. This is the power of the Sultanate, which regards the supreme God and respects the Qazi, Sufi Saints and the travellers from the distant lands.

The Waliyat of the Sufi Saint is very powerful and unique, and has been regarded as the mystic domain of the Sufis. It is here, we see development in socio- economy. We also notice the pir- murid relationship for the cause of knowledge which means ilm, and sainthood.

In the society, the Sultanate saw the development of the Qasbas. The Qasbas are the centres of traditional industry. It had pottery making units, weaving industry and the market for the local people. The synthesis in the society is seen in the Qasbas, where the social development is seen with sincerity, devotion and integrity. The Medieval Qasbas also had the karkhanas which became popular in the later Mughal period. The potential of the socio- economic development is seen in the Mughal Era, because of the greater economic integration. The outer fringes and the continental areas got a trading impetus, which is an area of study for the researchers. However, the industrial development in England, gave England the advantage to trade with India and South- East Asia.

The study on the Sufi theme is important for the village community. The Sufi Saint helped the village people in agriculture improvement. They also supported educative value for the socio- economic development. The Maktabs had Scholars, who, in later times took the cause of humanitarian work and socio- economic development. It is because of the Sufi Saint, we see improvement in living conditions of the rural dwellers. The communal harmony also got a formulated shape with the coming of the Sufis' in India.

**Aamir Khusrau** has been noted for excellent poetic creations, along with being a great warrior in the Medieval India. The Sultanate demanded sort of military warriors, who could win for the cause of humanity and sincere determination. Khusrau also believed in pir- murid relationship. Aamir Khusrau has been given the title of Toote-i - hind, which means the great lyricist of the hind. His verse has woven with sympathy, determination and devotion. This is the cause of Sufi tradition, which treats humanity as the most important tradition. Sufi tradition gives importance to charity, according to the Sufi tradition, the Waliyat can reach stability with empathy and sincere approach to work with devotion. Aamir Khusrau travelled the Sultanate, he found Kashmir to be the most beautiful place on Earth. The environment and the realm of humanitarian work and craftsmanship have made Kashmir heaven on Earth.

Aamir Khusrau says-

Agar firdaus bar roo- e zameen ast,

Hameen ast- o Hameen ast-o

Hameen ast

This is a Farsi verse for bringing greater aesthetic environment in humanitarian work, it means

If there is heaven on Earth, then it is this, it is this, it is this.....

Aamir Khusrau also said that brotherhood, sincerity and respect for mother is the most beautiful thing, where humanity can be artistically furnished with greater courteous thoughts; which could be ushered for the socio- economic development.

### ***The inception of the Sufi concept in the Middle East***

In the desert conditions of the Middle East, there came up the Sufi's for the service of humankind. They believed in the meditation tactics and the purification of the soul for charitable and devoted cause. Giving a new kind of hope to the people, Sufi's started their journey to different part of the Globe. It is in this context, we can mention that Sufism originated from the word Suf' or Safa which means wool. The pure and aesthetic mindset

lingers in the mind of the people of the Middle East. They believe that there is a state of mind which is called Hal. This is a very unique concept, where the human mind finds sincerity and devotion. The genre' of the Sufi prayer is to bring stability and safeguarding the goodwill for the greater thought of humanity. The devotion of the Sufi's is very distinctive and Sama' is the authentic way to purify the mind and good deeds. The mystical experience is very heart touching and the tradition is carried out everywhere in the world. There is the different silsilas of Sufism, and we have known them through literary works and Historical studies. The silsilas believe in greater aspects like humanity, sincerity and devotion. The Socio- economic context of the Sufi tradition also believes in community living. It works on the principle of brotherhood and respect for the human beings. Charity is the most crucial issue, where a Sufi can find happiness and gratification. The socio- ethnic context of Sufi tradition is a mystical experience in itself. The greatest of all thoughts is the virtue of kindness and co-operation, and Sufi tradition respects the same for stability of the realm.

The Medieval Indian Society, they had trade dynamics, it is for the development of the socio-economic conditions. The ruler and the ruling elites were concerned for the development of socio- economy. They gave importance to agricultural productivity. The Sufi Saint gave very much importance to the agriculture and the development of trade for the cause of humanity. It is to be mentioned; the Sufi Saint had to find ilm, which means knowledge. At times, the ruler discussed with the ruling elites and Sufi Saints for the betterment of the agricultural conditions. The impact on the socio- economy had been regarded as the best condition in the History of India. The village dweller has been very much influenced by the mystic power of the Sufi Saint. The Sufi Saint had the thought of equality and harmony in his mind. This created a scene of social and economic development, phenomenal for the agricultural development. The issue of brotherhood has been regarded as the best concern for the stability in the society. Meanwhile, it is to be noted that the Sufi Saint lived in the fringes for offering prayer and celebrating the theme of humanity and sincerity. All these are the issues which reflect in the medieval period for ushering of the knowledge society.

The Sufi Saints offered prayers and had a thoughtful mindset, where he could create integrating and sincere order. Nizamuddin Aulia had his waliyat where he dedicated sincere approach for welfare dynamics and community development. Here, we see the knowledge society, incorporating all categories of people to work for humanity and welfare. Another great Sufi Saint is Qutub uddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, he is also known as the Shiraj- ul- Auliya. The Sufi Saint Bakhtiyar Kaki gave importance to sincerity and devotion. In his Waliyat, there is the influence of ilm, where there is the prayer for the Noor. He also respected royalty for the concerns of humanity and noor- i -inshaan. It means the purity and sincerity can usher the welfare in the society. The Sufi Saints are noted for their charitable works reflected in the treatise of the Medieval in the society. The Sufi Saints are noted for their charitable works which are reflected in the treatise of Medieval India. Another great Sufi Saint of the later times is Salim Chisti, he created the powerful Waliyat. He also had connection with the ruling elites for the concern of the humanity and social welfare. The Mazhar of the Sufi Saint, Salim Chisti, Salim Chisti is located in Fatehpur Sikri, a forum of Mughal Architecture. The tomb of Salim Chisti reflects Celestial order and says the theme of Universal brotherhood.

Sufism describes Sama' as very important aspect towards reaching a harmonious realm. It is in this context, we can mention about the Great Sufi Saint Nizamuddin Auliya, who had been very much interested in Sama' for creating mystical environment. His disciple, the great poet of the Hind, Aamir Khusrau dedicated much of his time in creating lyrics. He composed musical Treatise and found that Sufism is one of the ways to reach God. He also invented several musical instruments for the improvement in the social gatherings. The Sama' became very popular. In due course of time, the Sama' gather people from distant places. It is the mystical voice of the Sama' which can be known as spiritual experience. Now, the question arises what kind of theme is prevalent in the Sufi songs. It is known that human life can experience compassion, kindness and dedication. All these are present in the theme of the Sufi music. Our heritage has been formulated with humanitarian work and welfare basis. This is the dedication which is thought provoking and is popular even in the present times.

#### ***Sufism and its influence on the people of the Sultanate:***

Sufism played a very crucial role in providing the livelihood opportunity to the people of the Sultanate. The Sufi Khanqah had the heritage to incorporate agriculture and livelihood concerns for the socio- economic development. There is the Khanqah or hospice, where the Sufi Saint used to meditate. The kind of meditation is controlled by the Sufi Saint. The Sufi Saint offers prayer for protecting the Roohaniyat. The genre' creates an environment, where the goodwill and charity thrives. Moreover, the natural milieu also gets a tuneful form. The meditation tactic is very unique, and it has been said that it has got curative supremacy. People of the Waliyat respected the ilm of the Sufi Saint. The noble aesthetic consideration gets a reliable appearance. It is like the stratum of the cascade, from where there is continuous discharge of pure water. The Sufi Saint believes in offering prayer to God, it is because the Supreme power could heal the pain of the common lives. The Sufi Saint is a very powerful soul who has the concerns for humanity, sincerity and devotion for the sake of greater good.

***How the Heritage continues in the present times?***

Even today, the Sufi tradition continues in India. This tradition believes in the powerful soul and the mystical experience which could be reached with human understanding and sincerity towards welfare activities. There are several silsilas of Sufism, and the most important ones still believes in the human compassion for the improvement of the realm. The Sama' has been very unique experience in building the ethical experience and saintly event. The purified soul and its prevailing environment have placed Sufism on a commanding height. It can be reached with devoted thoughts and humanitarian experience. Hermits say, the light is seen in the heart and it will illuminate the world. It has been enchanting the sincere and loyal minds to admire the kind work and esteem the simplicity.

***The achievement of the Hermits in the land of humanity and co- operation:***

There has been debate on the achievements and results in the socio- cultural forum. Yet, one word Wahdad- al- Ujud lingers everywhere and displays compassion, courage and humanitarian works. It is for the betterment of the socio- economical life, where the hermits took pain. It is for the improvement in the education sector, where we could see development in science, culture and religious life. It is in this context, we can mention the aesthetic realm of the Sufi Saints, where the humanitarian works are continued with sincerity and devotion.

The influence of the Sufi Saints has been known through the literary works of the Sultanate Era. The religious discussion and the overwhelming participation have been written in the courtly ethics. There is the effort of co- operation and dedication in the treatise. The knowledge of the Sufi Saint is very important in maintaining stability of the realm. He had his disciples who also helped the Great Sufi in social events and creating the mystical experience of Sama'. The musical experience actually purifies the human heart and soul. It is in this context, we can mention about the charity and the life of dignity, which adheres to the principle of Sufism.

In conclusion, it can be said that Socio- economic conditions of Medieval India incorporated agricultural aspects and syncretism. The doab region region of Ganga and Yamuna proved to be very much important for producing water yielding crops. The Sultanate also relied on Ghati- Yantra which means Persian wheel. For growth of agricultural crops, the Persian wheel turned to be very unique. Rural life got stunning forward motion, with the augmentation of cultivated land. Discussing the theme on the Sufi Saints and their contact with society, it can be said that Sufi Saints relied in sincere efforts and humanitarian basis. The overall theme of Brotherhood and community living paved the way for establishment of Mughal dynasty in the later times. The Sultanate also had their own socio- economic premise, where the Qasbas and the village community played the most crucial role in integrating the society.

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