

IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL LIFE OF CENTRAL ASIA ON INDIA

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Indian society is living proof of the principle that culture is characteristic of a land and its people. Assimilation and synthesis has been the process of Indian civilization. A strange combination of geographical factors and historical forces has marked India as a distinct social hegemony. Many different groups have contributed to Indian civilization. The two basic components of this 'heritage', which at the same time shape this 'heritage', are the natural and physical land of India, and the people who have inhabited this land. Through the process of contact they could build their social and cultural life. Since the time of the Old Stone Age, people from neighboring as well as distant places have been coming to India and making this country their home. Over the course of history, the ethnic groups that have come to India and made India their home include the Indo-Aryans, Central Asians, Iranians, Greeks, Kushans, Shakas, Anas, Arabs, and Turks.

In terms of cultural depth, intensity and broader social consequences, the two most profound influences on the formation of distinct Indian culture are those of the ancient Indo-Aryan and medieval Central Asian and Iranian regions. "India had very close cultural and political contacts with Central Asia for many centuries before the arrival of the Mughals in the subcontinent. With the establishment of Mughal rule, contacts with Central Asia strengthened. Zahiruddin-Muhammad Babur was the founder of the dynasty which A direct descendant of Taimur, he spent most of his life in that region. During the medieval period, some of the achievements of ancient times were carried forward and new and magnificent structures were built on those foundations. Many new elements appeared in Indian society. Who influenced the growth of various aspects of culture? In the society, the period is important for the introduction of new elements, the Turks, Persians, Mongols and Meghs, apart from the Arabs who settled in some coastal areas in India. Culturally, this period marks the beginning of a new phase in the development of the overall culture of India.

The first hundred years of the Delhi Sultanate were a period of complete Turkish domination. The Central Asian Turks regarded themselves as inheritors of a historical

tradition that was superior to the rest of the Muslims of India. However he challenged the air of superiority of the Ilbari Turks and asserted himself. The condition of native Muslims and non-Muslims improved under Khilji and Tughlaq. Firoz Shah Tughlaq was married to a Hindu woman of Gurjar stock. It was from his Gujar wife that Firoz Tughlaq had a son, named Fateh Khan. Local customs began to influence the social life of foreign Muslims very early. Non-Muslims who converted to Islam continued to follow many of their social customs and added local flair to the way of life of the Turks in India. The use of betel nut became popular among foreigners. Many ceremonies relating to marriage, birth and death were adopted by the Turks. The music and its forms became popular and accepted by the local people.

The Mongols destroyed cultural centers like Baghdad and Central Asia. After Ghazni and Lahore, Delhi became the most important cultural centre. Scholars, poets and people of letters from those areas moved to Delhi. Due to this influx some fruitful work has been done. Ziauddin Barani has detailed about the poets, preachers, scholars, philosophers, astronomers, physicians and historians who visited Delhi during the reign of Alauddin Khilji. The Turks, Persians, Meghs and Arabs entered India, and the men who followed them were intellectuals, clergy, technicians and warriors with their own social and spiritual practices, leading Indian society towards a holistic culture.

Teaching and development of educational institutions were considered essential. The state facilitated this by providing good teachers. Secular subjects like history, ethics, philosophy, biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics and astronomy were also taught along with Islamic teachings. At the initial level, the service of scholars who had expertise in various branches of learning. Scholars migrating from Central Asia and Iran were engaged in madrasahs that enriched the intellectual environment. More than fifteen princes from Central Asia, Iran and Khorasan were honored in Delhi during the time of Ghiyasuddin Balban. Some great men of letters of that period were also with these princes. Earlier, driven away by Chengiz Khan's marauding hordes, a large number of princes, khans and maliks and men of letters had taken refuge in Iltutmish's court; they were warmly received and suitably provided.

Literature, mysticism, history and ethics were also subjects taught in North India. Science as a subject also received attention from South Indians. Geometry, logic and botany were encouraged during the Bahmanis. Bahmani Sultan Tajuddin Firoz was also interested in

astronomy. In the early 15th century he began work on an observatory near Daulatabad. Hakim Hasan Gilani, a renowned astronomer from Gilan, was to oversee the observatory. This project could not be implemented due to his death.

Apart from the rise of Islamic studies, he also embellished the Bengali language. Ramayana and Mahabharata were translated into Bengali language for the first time. Nasiruddin Bughra Khan was the first ruler who ordered the first translation of the Mahabharata into the Bengali language. His court became a major center for the promotion and spread of the Persian language. Apart from local scholars, poets and publishers like Amir Khusro Dehlavi were invited to his court. Mirza Muhammad Sadiq Isfahani's encyclopedic work Sab-i-Sadiq gives us the names of many eminent Persian scholars, ulemas, poets and writers who either lived in Bengal or visited there.

The most famous litterateur of the Delhi Sultanate was Amir Khusro. His parents came from Turkey under the pressure of the Mongols' constant threat to peace. He showed his literary promise since childhood. His creativity, invention and imagination are reflected from his early days. He was attached to Sultan Bughra Khan in Bengal. Later he served successive sultans such as Sultan Muhammad in Multan and Muizzuddin Kaiqabad in Delhi, who were his first royal patrons. Successfully he served seven rulers of Delhi and witnessed their rise and fall for fifty years. He could do this because he had no interest in court politics based on purely academic considerations. His outside achievements were in literature, music and producing a living narrative of his times.

Poems related to contemporary events written by Amir Khusro are also very famous. The Mufta-ul-Futuh is an active account of the campaigns of Sultan Jalaluddin Feroz Khalji against Malik Chhajju, the Mongols and the ruler of Jhin. Qiran-u-Sa'dain gives details of Sultan Bughra Khan and his son Muizzuddin Kaiqabad. Khazain-ul-Futuh tells about the conquests of Sultan Alaaddin Khalji. Nuhsipahar tells about the reign of Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji and tells about the social and religious situation of that period. The name Tughlaq describes the successful campaign of Malik Ghazi. And in 'Aashiq' he narrated the romance of Gujarati princess, Deval Rani and Prince Khizr Khan, son of Alaaddin Khalji.

The Sultan of Delhi was in favor of building construction. Yet we have many buildings, tombs and monuments, which are examples of his falseness and love in the field of architecture. Architecture was the main field in which foreigners gave expression to their

love of beauty. Central Asian and Iranian styles came together along with Indian style of architecture resulting in a new form of architecture.

Indo-Central Asian Indo-Iranian style of architecture was also adopted by the kings of Gujarat, Deccan and Bengal during the 14th century. The kings of Rajasthan and Bundelkhand also adopted this style with some modifications. QutubMinar, Quwatul-Islam Mosque in Delhi and Jama Masjid of Ajmer are the best examples of this style during early medieval India. Furthermore the Arabic text in Kufic style of calligraphy on these buildings is creating a beautiful effect which is testimony to the source from which they come.

The Mughal dynasty in India was founded by Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur, a great personality of Central Asia, which was further strengthened by his grandson Akbar. The Mughals of Central Asia used India's weak political situation during the 16th century as an opportunity and invaded India. Babur defeated the Magan king Ibrahim Lodi and captured the throne of Delhi. Gradually, after Babur, his son Humayun and his grandson Akbar the Great, the center became strong and peace was established.

The Mughals of Central Asia not only had a strong army, cannon and gun powder, but they also had a rich cultural heritage of Central Asia. They not only carried forward their Central Asian traditions, but also adopted the social traditions and cultures of India. He assimilated himself into the local environment. Every aspect of his life influenced the local culture. With the fusion of two cultures, a new and a common culture can flourish. The Mughal state established by Babur was a cultural state in which the local people cooperated and played an important role.

The Mughals advocated religious tolerance seriously. Babur, the first king of the Mughal dynasty, advised his son Humayun to practice religious tolerance which reached its peak during the reign of Akbar the Great. Every person was free to practice his own religion. This led to complete religious inclination. The religious inclinations of the Mughals led to a new fusion of Hindu-Muslim culture. Sufis and devotees played an important role in preparing the ground for religious spread, which was supported by the teachings of Nanak and Kabir.

The Ottomans had a system of government during the 15th century that occupied much of the Iranian plateau, the Timurid-Uzbek successor states in Central Asia, and Anatolia, based on the Tuto-Persian system of the Mughals in India. Persian bureaucratic

administration and Turko-Mongol dynastic authority. Culturally these states enjoyed similar Ottoman-Persian traditions based on Persian diplomatic insha' and Turkish language and customs. He also held the rally as per Quran-Hadith Shariat tradition. The most important rallying points were mosques and madrassas, tariqas (Sufi organizations) and khanqahs (Sufi conferences). This situation continued until the fall of the Mughal Empire in India. The great centers of this culture were Istanbul, Bursa and Edirne for the Ottomans, Tabriz, Qazvin and Isfahan for the Safavids, Bukhara, Samarkand and Hart for the Ozbeks, Agra, Delhi and Lahore for the Mughals.

The location, pattern, and organization of houses in Mughal India were determined by factors such as climate, geography, and social and economic conditions of the region. Since India is a hot country and the early Mughals were highly sensitive to heat, river banks were a powerful attraction for them, Babur was troubled by the heat, dust and hot winds of the country. Unable to bear the extreme heat, many of his commanders objected to the idea of remaining in India and some even began preparations to return to their country.

There have been close cultural contacts between India, Iran and Central Asia. These contacts encouraged languages like Arabic, Persian and Turkish to influence Indian languages and its way of life. These languages have also contributed to the development of thought and culture. These languages have been the source of a unique cultural heritage. Persian renderings of Indian classical works during the medieval period and Turkish adaptations during the Ottoman Empire in Samarkand developed a common history of mankind and served as a cementing factor between India, Iran and Central Asia.

Due to the close contacts between India and Iran and Central Asia which developed and encouraged with the passage of time, resulting in massive migration from these regions. The date of this migration cannot be certain. Close contact between Vedic Sanskrit and Avesta is believed to have played an important role in bringing the two regions closer. The cultural history of any region is the history of the transfer of ideas, thoughts, and philosophies to another culture. Contact with these regions increased when the Ghaznavids renewed the Sasanian initiative. During the medieval period, dynasties like Ghaznavids, Ghorids, Khaljis, Tughlaqs and Mughals were Turks in origin and their mother tongue was Chagatai Turkish, but after coming to India they absorbed into the Turko Persian culture prevalent in Indo-Persian culture.

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