The Artisan Scholars of India and their Impact on Reshaping the Societal Perceptions about the Importance of Craft and Industrial Labor during the 7th and 8th Hijri Centuries (15th and 16th Calendar Centuries): A Historical and Cultural Study

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Abstract

This study sheds light on the elite class of scholar-artisans of the Indian society during the 7th and 8th Hijri centuries (15th and 16th Calendar centuries). The study examines the impact of these artisans on transforming the negative societal perceptions about manual labor, thus demonstrating the importance of artisan work and their vital role in human life and in serving the Indian society. This transformation was achieved through the active engagement of Muslim scholar-artisans in India in various industrial crafts. Their involvement constituted a revolutionary challenge to the customs and beliefs entrenched in the Indian society which had long relegated such crafts to the status of lowly occupations, fit only for the lower classes or the "untouchables" of the society.

These pious scholars succeeded in altering this mindset, fostering the growth of artisanal activity and paving the way for the emergence of a new generation of devout scholars. These successors deliberately distanced themselves from political authority, rejecting the official positions, stipends, and grants offered to them, and successfully harmonized their professional artisanal endeavors with their scholarly pursuits.

This study examines these artisan-scholars and the various crafts they practiced, including carpentry, blacksmithing, agriculture, goldsmithing, trade, medicine, and other professions. The study identifies both the indigenous Indian scholars who were born in the subcontinent and those scholars who migrated to India from across the Islamic world, settled there, and engaged in artisanal trades. During the specific period under investigation, India emerged as a highly attractive destination for settlement and prosperous living, as it provided all the essential prerequisites for development, civilization, and most importantly security, which remains the fundamental element for progress and advancement.

KEYWORDS: Scholars of India, Professional Crafts, 7th Hijri century, 8th Hijri century, 15th Calendar century, 16th Calendar century

1. INTRODUCTION

This study sheds light on the professions and crafts practiced by scholars in India during the specific period in which Delhi served as the capital of the country. This era commenced in 603 AH (1206 AD), when the Ghūrid dynasty relocated its seat of government to Delhi and established it as its capital. Delhi remained the capital of the Sultanate until Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq decided to transfer the capital to the city of Daulatabād in 750 AH (1349 AD).

The study focuses on elucidating the impact of Islam and Muslim scholars on transforming the Indian society's perception of various professions, crafts, and manual and industrial trades. Prior to this influence, Indian society had viewed these occupations with a dismissive and condescending attitude, regarding them as activities fit only for the lower strata of the society.

Furthermore, the study highlights the remarkable high proficiency these scholars attained in these manual, professional, and industrial crafts demonstrating how they evolved into skilled artisans and professionals all while maintaining their brilliance and preeminence in the academic realm. Their scholarly endeavors never ceased; they continued to educate Indian society across diverse fields of knowledge, ranging from Islamic religious sciences and Arabic studies to various applied sciences. Consequently, the Indian society came to regard these scholars as exemplars, guiding lights, and ultimate role models to be emulated in daily life.

2. **Research Significance**

The significance of this study lies in uncovering the impact of Indian Muslim scholars specifically those engaged in artisanal and industrial crafts on the life of the Indian society, and in elucidating their role in the economic activities. Most historical sources have naturally focused on the role of scholars in the cultural, religious, and social spheres and to a lesser extent, in the political sphere while offering only scant references to their economic role.

These sources provide very few details regarding the scholars' means of livelihood, earnings, and sources of sustenance; likewise, there is a dearth of scholarly material in the historical records concerning the specific professions and crafts in which they engaged. Instead, these sources tended to focus, in this context, on the grants, gifts, and stipends scholars received, or the wages they earned in exchange for their scholarly activities and intellectual endeavors. Consequently, investigating the economic role of Indian scholars and the very nature of that role has historically been fraught with numerous difficulties, and often shrouded in ambiguity due to the scarcity of source material, particularly in the historical texts.

Furthermore, the significance of this study lies in examining the impact of the professional activities of these scholars on their political and intellectual stances. These scholars were neither beholden to the ruling authorities nor dependent upon them for their livelihood; rather, they earned their living through the labor of their own hands. Consequently, this financial independence naturally afforded them a considerable latitude of freedom of opinion enabling them to express their ideas freely, critique the

authorities, and, at times, even stand in opposition to them. Such freedom was, however, unavailable to those scholars who were affiliated with the ruling power, as they strove to preserve the official positions they held and the fixed stipends they received.

The study also delineates the professions and trades practiced by scholars born in India, as well as those who migrated there from other parts of the Islamic world during that era. Indeed, India captured the attention of the scholarly community, attracting a significant number of scholars who earned their keep through professional trade, and have been very keen to work and to subsist on the fruits of their own labor. Thus, some of these scholars worked as physicians, merchants, carpenters, jewelers, weavers, blacksmiths, and in various other capacities to meet their material needs, provide a dignified life for their families, and serve their communities. The growth of this professional engagement was further facilitated by the emergence of a new generation of scholars who distanced themselves from the ruling power, rejecting the official positions, gratuities, and grants offered to them. These scholars successfully managed to balance their time between their professional and artisanal occupations on the one hand, and their scholarly pursuits and intellectual output on the other.

2. Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve a primary objective: to shed light on the Indian scholars who engaged in crafts and industries, which was a significant segment of the Indian society. The study seeks to demonstrate the impact of this category of scholars on transforming the Indian public's perception about the importance of artisanal and industrial labor work that was historically viewed with disdain by the society and considered suitable only for the lower classes. To achieve this objective, the study examines how this negative stereotype about vocational craftsmanship was changed during the research period into a positive one, by highlighting how these scholars successfully undertook and excelled in these trades alongside their other scholarly pursuits.

Furthermore, the study aims to underscore the significance of artisanal and industrial work and its impact on the lives of both individuals and society during a pivotal historical era: the 7th and 8th Hijri centuries (15th and 16th Calendar centuries) on the Indian subcontinent. Additionally, the research seeks to identify the key vocational trades practiced by these Indian scholars including blacksmithing, carpentry, jewelry making, commerce, medicine, and various other professions which served as their primary sources of livelihood. Finally, the study aims to examine the stance adopted by these scholars towards official government positions in the Indian state during that specific period of time.

3. Research Questions

The research will answer a major question, which is:

Who were the Indian scholars who were engaged in crafts and industries during the specified research period, and what was their impact on the life of Indian society? Branching from this central question are several sub-questions: What constituted the sources of livelihood for these artisanal scholars during the research period? Did these scholars rely on their cultural and academic activities as a means of earning a living? If so, was this their sole avenue for sustenance? What impact did the scholars' engagement

in these vocational trades have on shifting societal perceptions? And what was the scholars' attitude toward holding official government positions?
The study endeavors to address these questions in the light of the available scholarly material and references found in the primary sources, particularly through the significant, albeit scarce, references preserved in biographical dictionaries (Tarājim), class-based chronicles (Ṭabaqāt), hagiographies (Manāqib), and both specialized and general historical texts.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the historical, analytical, critical and descriptive research method in which systematic material is collected from the most reliable sources and then arranged, classified and presented in the form of a descriptive, analytical and critical study, by comparing it with the scientific material contained in the contemporary sources.

6. Research Structure

This research is made up of an Introduction, which outlines the significance of the research and identifies the specific research gap it addresses within its specialized historical and civilizational field, specifically concerning the artisan and industrial scholars of India and their impact on transforming the Indian societal attitudes about the importance of artisanal work in the lives of both individuals and the society. The introduction also sets forth the research questions and objectives, and details the methodology employed in the study. This is followed by seven core sections, and the research ends up with a conclusion that summarizes the most significant findings reached by the study.

Section One: A Brief Overview of the Political History of India during the 7th and 8th Hijri centuries (15th and 16th Calendar centuries)

It may be very useful, at the outset, to provide a brief overview of the political history of India during the specific period under investigation, as well as the role played by Muslim scholars in the Indian society during this research timeframe. Delhi became the capital of India in 603 AH (1206 AD) during the Mamlūk era (603-689 AH / 1205-1290 AD) (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 62). This occurred after the conquest of Delhi by Qutb al-Dīn Aibak, the first of the independent Mamlūk sultans (603-607 AH / 1206-1210 AD) who established the foundations of a new political order for Muslims in India. The brief period during which Qutb al-Dīn Aibak ruled Delhi that spanned no more than four years, is considered a turning point in the city's history.
Indeed, Delhi acquired immense political significance after becoming the Muslim capital in India; a development which paved the way for the emergence of Muslim scholars and the expansion of their role within society (Al-Juzjāni, 2013, 1: 952). The role of scholars became even more prominent and influential with the rise of Sultan Shams al-Dīn Iltutmish (607-633 AH/ 1210-1235 AD) the first Mamlūk sultan in India to secure the approval and support of the Abbasid Caliphate. Consequently, envoys from the Caliphate began to frequent the city, signifying the Abbasids' official recognition of Iltutmish as the Sultan of India, and establishing Delhi as a Dar al-Islam

(Abode of Islam) and a sanctuary for a great many Muslim scholars (Al-Juzjāni, 2013, 1: 642).

Although Iltutmish had designated his daughter, Rāzia, as his successor, it was his son, Rukn al-Dīn Firūz Shah, who ultimately ascended the sultanate. This turn of events sparked unrest and turmoil, thereby creating an opportunity for Sultan Rāzia (634-637 AH/ 1236-1239 AD) to ascend the throne, who unexpectedly demonstrated exceptional prowess in administering state affairs (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 73).

Subsequently, the Mamlūk dynasty faced significant political obstacles during the reigns of Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Bahram Shah (637-639 AH / 1239-1241 AD) one of Iltutmish's sons and Sultan Nasir al-Dīn Mahmud Shah (644-664 AH / 1246-1265 AD) Sultan Iltutmish's younger brother (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 81). These difficulties arose from the grave perils encircling the Islamic East, resulting from the Mongol invasion and the collapse of the Khwārazmian Empire one of the Mamlūk dynasty's key allies in the East. Ultimately, the catastrophic collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate and the fall of Baghdad plunged the entire Islamic East into a state of turmoil, prompting large numbers of scholars and Muslim families to migrate to India (Ishtāq, 1942: 29).

However, this state of turmoil did not persist for long in India, as Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban (664-686 AH / 1266-1287 AD) rose to power and, by virtue of his military and administrative expertise, successfully safeguarded the country against the Mongol threat. Furthermore, he succeeded in welcoming and resettling the waves of Muslim migrants in India including prominent scholarly families who were fleeing the Mongol menace (Isāmi, 1967, 1: 163). Following Sultan Balban's death, Mu'izz al-Dīn Kayqubād (685-689 AH / 1286-1290 AD) ascended the throne at the age of no more than eighteen years. He proved incapable of managing the state affairs amidst the external and internal perils besieging the nation; indeed, his weak character was a contributing factor to the collapse of the Mamlūk dynasty and its inevitable demise (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 100).

It is well established that, under such circumstances, the constructive role of scholars must come to the fore, as they offer society the counsel and guidance it requires to navigate the crises afflicting it. This role becomes even more potent and influential when scholars transcend the purely theoretical realm represented by the stage of mere advice and instruction and engage with practical reality, which entails sharing the hopes and hardships of the general public and, moreover, serving as exemplary models of taking civic responsibility, for instance, in their commitment to earning their own livelihoods through manual labor, thereby ensuring they do not become a burden upon the society during such trying times.

India entered a new era known as the Khalji Period (689-720 AH / 1290-1320 AD) (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1:174) after Sultan Jalāl al-Dīn Khalji (689-694 AH / 1290-1295 AD) founded the Khalji dynasty. He declared himself Caliph of the Muslims in India, thereby breaking with the traditions inherited by all the Islamic states that had successively ruled the subcontinent. Jalāl al-Dīn succeeded in consolidating the foundations of his dynasty's rule and established Delhi as the capital of his new state (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1:114).

This was followed by the era of Sultan Ala al-Dīn (695-715 AH / 1295-1316 AD), the most illustrious period of the Khalji state, despite the suspicions surrounding him regarding his alleged involvement in the conspiracy that claimed the life of the previous Sultan, Jalāl al-Dīn Khalji. This situation plunged the Sultan into a legitimacy crisis,

which he attempted to control by courting public favor through the distribution of large sums of money. Furthermore, he launched military campaigns to protect the borders from the Mongol threat and actively attracted scholars and Sufis to his court; consequently, a great number of learned figures gathered around him during his twenty-year reign (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1:123).

Subsequently, Sultan Qutb al-Dīn Khalji (716-720 AH / 1316-1320 AD) ascended the throne following a political coup against his brother, Khidr Khān. The country subsequently descended into a state of chaos and turmoil as members of the Khalji dynasty engaged in brutal internal wars and hatched dangerous conspiracies against one another, which were actions that ultimately led to the demise of their rule over India and the loss of power from their hands (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 149).

Khusraw Khān (720-725 AH / 1320-1325 AD), who hailed from the Barawān tribe a Hindu, a community of outcast status, assumed the Sultanate and succeeded in eradicating the entire Khalji dynasty while simultaneously reviving Hindu culture. Khusraw's reign, however, lasted no more than four months, a period during which Hindus ascended to high-ranking positions within the state administration. This turn of events provoked a rebellion among the court's princes, who subsequently attacked and killed him under the leadership of Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 156).

Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq then ascended the throne (721-725 AH / 1321-1325 AD) after having liberated India from the dominion of the Hindus, who had wreaked havoc throughout the land; thus began a new era, which was called the era of the Tughluq dynasty. Ghiyāth al-Dīn Tughluq strove diligently to consolidate his rule and to restore to Delhi's both Islamic character and prestige. To this end, he initiated a revival of Islamic teachings within his administration, while also drawing scholars and jurists close to him and relying upon them to re-establish India's Islamic identity (Al-Harawi, 1995, 1: 174).

In the year 725 AH / 1325 AD, Ghiyāth al-Dīn passed away and was succeeded by his son, Fakhr al-Dīn, who adopted the regal title Muhammad Tughluq (725-752 AH / 1325-1351 AD). During his reign, the Delhi Sultanate reached its greatest territorial extent, encompassing thirty-three provinces, among the largest and wealthiest regions in India. His dominion extended over a vast number of districts, a scope of authority unmatched by any previous sultan in the history of India (Al-Umari, 2022, 3: 38). Delhi served as the administrative capital for these sprawling territories until Sultan Muhammad Ibn Tughluq decided to relocate the capital from Delhi and establish a new metropolis for India, which he named Daulatabād. He ordered the inhabitants of Delhi to migrate there, compelling them by force; when some of them refused, he forcibly and violently evicted them, purchasing all their houses and homes until Delhi was left in ruins (Ibn Battūta, 1997, 3: 138).

Although some scholars argue that he did not, in fact, demand that the entire population of Delhi migrate to the new capital, and that not all residents actually migrated, some sources posit that this decision was driven by Daulatabād's central location amidst the Sultanate's provinces, thereby rendering it secure from Mongol invasions (Agha, 1938, 122). Undoubtedly, this decision had a profound impact on the city and the activities of its inhabitants, the majority of whom relocated to the new capital; consequently, Delhi's prominence began to wane following the transfer of the capital away from it.

Of particular interest to us during this era, is Muhammad Tughluq's deep commitment to scholarship and scholars. With the aim of reviving Islamic rites and eradicating the innovations and extraneous influences that had infiltrated the Muslim community in India, it is said of him that he drew close to those engaged in the sciences and arts, as he was himself a man of letters, possessing a body of work comprising both Persian prose and poetry. This inclination prompted him to establish numerous healing centers and shelters for the sick and the infirm, over which he personally presided (Al-Nadwi, 1978, p. 26).

It can be inferred from the foregoing that the political circumstances, through which the Indian society passed, created an opportunity for many scholars to fulfill their scholarly and religious roles, particularly during periods of weakness and turmoil. However, the role of these scholars did not stop there; they also made significant contributions to the realm of manual trades and crafts, driven by their belief in the intrinsic value of labor within the civilization and the necessity for a Muslim to earn his livelihood through the toil of his own hands.

Section Two: The Value of Labor in Islamic Civilization

One of the most significant motivations that impelled Indian scholars toward manual labor was Islam's clear and explicit stance on work. Indeed, labor is one of the fundamental principles that God has enjoined in His Holy Book. The Quran contains numerous verses that issue an explicit call to work; a call that stands as a testament to the progressive nature of Islamic civilization. Among these is the Almighty's command: "And say, 'Work, for Allah will surely observe your work as will His Messenger and the believers'" (Surah At-Tawbah: Verse 105).

Furthermore, numerous Quranic verses demonstrate that the Prophets peace be upon them all engaged in various professions and trades. It was incumbent upon them to meet the demands of daily life within legitimate boundaries that did not infringe upon the rights of individuals or society; concurrently, they bore the responsibility of conveying the message of their Lord and His Divine Law revealed to the people. Thus, Adam peace be upon him tilled and cultivated the earth; Noah peace be upon him was a carpenter; Idris was a tailor; and David was a blacksmith.

Likewise, our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), tended sheep and engaged in trade (Ibn Ishaq, 1978, p. 124). This principle is further underscored by the Prophetic Sunnah, wherein the Messenger of Allah stated: "Indeed, Allah loves that when one of you performs a task, he does so with excellence" (Al-Albāni, 2001, 1:1880). Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) engaged in the profession of trade using the funds of Lady Khadija (may Allah be pleased with her) when she entrusted him with a journey to the Levant to trade on her behalf (Ibn Hishām, 1955, 1: 188).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) urged people to work, stating: "No one has ever eaten food better than that which he earns by the work of his own hands; indeed, the Prophet of Allah, David (peace be upon him), used to eat from the work of his own hands" (Al-Bukhari, 2002: 2072). The Companions of Prophet Muhammad (may Allah be pleased with them) followed the path of the Prophets (peace be upon them); thus, they engaged in various professions and trades, acting in accordance with the words of Allah, the Mighty and Majestic: "It is He who made the earth subservient to you, so

walk among its slopes and eat from His provision; and to Him is the resurrection" (Surah Al-Mulk: Verse 15).

Indeed, the Companions of the Prophet (may Allah be pleased with them) were active in their work; Abu Bakr al-Siddiīq (may Allah be pleased with him), for instance, would travel to the Levant for trade (Al-Asbahāni, 2010, 1: 50). Similarly, the Caliph Uthmān Ibn Affān was a merchant both before and after the advent of Islam, and the men of Quraysh would often seek his advice for his knowledge and expertise in trade (Ibn al-Athīr, 1994, 1: 578).

Furthermore, the Companion Abdul Rahman Ibn Awf (may Allah be pleased with him) was a first-rate merchant who amassed great wealth from trade (Ibn al-Athīr, 1994, 1: 256). Thus, the Companions of the Prophet understood that work is not merely an act of worship that draws one closer to Allah, but also a form of Jihad (struggle) in the path of Allah. The scholars of this nation have continued to follow the path of the Prophets, the Companions, and the Successors (al-Tabi'ūn), with some of them engaging in various professions and trades, and they strove to earn their livelihood through the practice of their professions, with many of them keen to ensure that they subsisted on the labor of their own hands.

Based on the foregoing, the scholars of India have followed this same approach; with many of them becoming engaged in various crafts and professions that served as a vital means of earning their livelihood. Before we explore these specific crafts and professions, however, it is essential that we first define the linguistic meaning of these terms and the terminological definitions of professions and crafts.

Section Three: The Linguistic and Terminological Definitions of Professions and Crafts

Profession: From a linguistic perspective, the term "profession" (mihnah) refers to a service, as well as to the competence demonstrated in performing that service specifically, manual labor. It denotes any work requiring expertise and skill; indeed, the word mihnah originally signifies "working with one's hands." This led Ibn Manzūr (d. 711 AH/1311 AD) to assert that a profession is, fundamentally, a service (Ibn Manzūr, 1994, 3: 425).

Terminologically, however, professions are defined as a set of occupations requiring specific skills, which individuals acquire through practical training and practice. The scope of this term may be broadened to encompass all facets of human activity, or it may be narrowed to refer specifically to an individual engaged in manual labor that necessitates manual dexterity.

Furthermore, a profession is defined as an occupation undertaken by an individual for their own benefit: one that typically necessitates both theoretical study and extensive technical training (Al-Zubaydi, 2010, 13: 220). As for Craft (ḥirfah) from a linguistic standpoint the term is derived from the noun ḥarf. A ḥirafī (craftsman) is an individual skilled in a specific craft; with the term also denoting one's livelihood and the earnings or profit derived solely from one's labor. Al-Jawhari (d. 393 AH/1002 AD) noted that a ḥirfah (craft) constitutes both the work itself and the means of earning a living, while the word ḥirafī means the worker who is skilled in a craft. Additionally, the term ḥirfah refers to any occupation through which a person earns their livelihood such that any

task performed by an individual to sustain themselves is classified as a craft (Al-Jawhari, 1987, 3: 1245).

Terminologically, the term "crafts" refers to activities involving buying and selling, shopkeeping, and the itinerant vending of goods, specifically those activities that do not necessitate the use of complex machinery, specialized tools, or advanced engineering and mechanical processes. Furthermore, the term encompasses production processes that are executed manually, and are often executed using simple tools including the axe, the hammer, and the like. Consequently, it appears that the concept of a "craft" (hirfah) is broader and more comprehensive than that of a "profession" (mihna), as a craft refers to any work undertaken by a human being for the purpose of earning a profit (Ibn Manzūr, 1994, 8: 209).

Section Four: The Stance of Scholars toward Official Positions

India witnessed remarkable development in various spheres of life following the Islamic conquest. This progress is attributed to the efforts of those Muslim leaders who accorded the land the utmost attention; indeed, under their rule, the region enjoyed security and stability. Delhi was established as the capital of India, a development that fostered economic growth and created abundant employment opportunities. This era also coincided with the emergence of a large body of scholars, authors and intellectuals who strove to be self-reliant in earning their livelihoods in order to preserve their independence and freedom.

The political authority attracted many scholars, and official government positions were entrusted to some of them. Not all of these scholars rejected such appointments; rather, they viewed government service as a means to instruct the Sultans in the principles of religion, a vehicle for ensuring the welfare of the general public, and a way to resolve the plight of the destitute. For these reasons, some scholars accepted government positions, titles, and salaries without hesitation, particularly given that the state was in dire need of their expertise to consolidate their moral authority and spiritual vitality of the society in order to facilitate the reformist projects of the sultan (Al-Dahlawi, 1975, 65).

Conversely, many Muslim scholars in India opted for a different path to earn a livelihood in order to convey their message with complete freedom. Thus they chose the path of seclusion, detachment from official positions, and engagement in independent professions and trades. The various Sufi orders prevalent throughout India facilitated this approach, urging scholars and disciples alike to rely on their own resources and avoid entanglement with government employment. In this regard, both the Suhrawardi and Chishti orders adhered to al-Ghazāli's perspective regarding the concept of the state (Al-Ghazāli, 1967, 2:146), a perspective which emphasized the necessity of maintaining distance from sultans, stating that:

"One must withdraw from them, neither see them nor being seen by them. This is, in fact, a duty, for there is no safety to be found except in such withdrawal. Consequently, one must harbor aversion toward them due to their injustice; should not desire their continued existence, offer them no praise, should not inquire into their affairs, distance himself from those associated with them, and feel no regret over any opportunities lost as a result of keeping away from them. This would apply if thoughts of them happen to cross one's mind; yet, to remain entirely oblivious to them is, indeed, the most excellent course of action" (Al-Ghazāli, 1967, 2:104). Furthermore, itinerant Sufis

believed that government service diverts the Sufi from his quest for the ideal which entails living solely for the sake of God. In this connection, one of them remarked: "The faqīr (spiritual mendicant) finds no self-sufficiency in anything apart from God; indeed, serving the state distances him from God, and to serve it or to become immersed in its affairs is tantamount to signing one's own spiritual death certificate" (Al-Hujwīri, 2007, 1:230).

As for the Chishti order, it is an ancient tradition, grounded in steadfast principles that it has never abandoned. Foremost among the core tenets of the Chishti order is the refusal of its spiritual masters or Sheikhs to accept government service under the Sultans. This principle was not left to the individual discretion of the Sheikh, but was rather regarded as an imperative duty that had to be strictly observed (Tanvīr, 2005, 492). The Chishti Sheikhs held the view that if a Sufi were to entangle himself with the ruling class or the state apparatus, he would effectively isolate himself from the primary sphere of his activity, namely the masses, thereby severing his connection with the common people and becoming, instead, a mere extension of the government and the ruling authority (Ahmad, 1967, 240).

In the light of these principles, the Chishti Sufi order in India, throughout the Islamic era, adopted a stance of detachment regarding government service, steadfastly refusing to collaborate with the state. Although the Chishti Sheikhs often maintained cordial relations with the Sultans, they consistently evaded the acceptance of official government appointments. For instance, despite the amicable relationship between Sheikh Qutb al-Dīn Kaki and Sultan Iltutmish, the Sheikh declined the prestigious office of Sheikh al-Islam when the Sultan offered it to him. Furthermore, when the position of Qadi (judge) was offered to a Sufi figure named Sheikh Hasan Dana, he feigned insanity to avoid it; upon learning of this incident, Sheikh Qutb al-Dīn remarked: "Sheikh Hasan is not mad; rather, he is truly wise" (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 220). Similarly, during his youth, when Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn requested that Sheikh Najib al-Dīn Mutawakkil pray for him to become a Qadi, Najib al-Dīn replied: "God forbid that you should ever become a Qadi!" (Al-Dahlawi, 1988, 432). This lesson was deeply internalized by Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn, who later went so far as to revoke the spiritual authority (Khilāfah) he had bestowed upon his disciple, Qādi Muhi al-Dīn Kashāni, the very moment he sensed that the latter was developing an inclination toward government service (Chishti, 1993, 893). Nizām al-Dīn grew to detest the pursuit of government positions. Indeed, the Sheikhs of the Chishti order harbored deep mistrust toward the Sultanate's judicial system, viewing it as a state instrument of repression, rather than a means to redress injustice and punish wrongdoers (Al-Dahlawi, 1988, 40). The policies and traditions of these Sufi luminaries stood in opposition to government service, based on the premise that such service rendered individuals autocratic, reckless, avaricious, and cruel. Furthermore, they argued that it entailed an excessive reliance on worldly authorities a stance fundamentally at odds with the Sufi principle of absolute trust in God. This remained their conviction, even though government service could, at times, represent the most effective instrument for alleviating the misery and poverty of the common people (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 105). Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that many of India's scholars and mystics deliberately eschewed official government appointments, rejecting them through every available means. This demonstrates their clear preference for manual labor—earning their livelihood through the toil of their

own hands a preference reflected in the diverse array of crafts and professions pursued by members of this social stratum.

Section Five: The Manual and Industrial Professions of India's Scholars

The manual and industrial professions engaged in by India's scholars during the period under study were remarkably diverse. Among the most prominent of these were the following:

1. Farming and Livestock Rearing

Agriculture stands as one of the most significant professions undertaken by certain scholars in India. Several factors contributed to this choice; foremost among which was the fact that farming is a relatively simple occupation, requiring less specialized technical mastery than many other trades and crafts. Moreover, it is a vocation traditionally pursued by the humble and the ascetics. For this very reason, Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808 AH / 1406 AD) classified it as a primary means of livelihood for the socially vulnerable (Ibn Khaldūn, 1955, 932). Furthermore, India was characterized by an abundance of agricultural land spanning vast areas. Consequently, some scholars found before them a wide scope for engaging in agricultural work as the Muslim Turks who arrived in India following their conquest of the country showed little interest in agriculture; instead, they preferred to settle in urban centers, and not to pursue farming as a profession, and hence failed to utilize the vast tracts of fertile land that had fallen under their control. Thus, scholars were among the few Muslims outside the administrative apparatus, who ventured into the villages and rural regions. These abundant lands served as a means by which they managed to meet their needs independent of the state.

Sheikh Mu'īn al-Dīn (d. 633 AH / 1236 AD) is considered one of the earliest scholars to engage in agriculture, having done so from the prime of his youth even before his arrival in India. When Sheikh Mu'īn al-Dīn's father passed away at a time when his son was only eighteen years old, he bequeathed to him a garden and a mill; Mu'īn al-Dīn proceeded to cultivate these assets at that tender age. Sesame was among the crops Mu'īn al-Dīn grew in his garden, alongside various cash crops that he sold to sustain his livelihood (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 102).

Mu'īn al-Dīn remained committed to his work as a farmer even after joining the Sufi path and becoming the Sheikh of the Chishti order in India. When he set forth the nine principles of the Chishti order, they included among other tenets reliance on cultivating barren land and the refusal to accept gifts or grants from rulers. Mu'īn al-Dīn continued to engage in farming after settling in Ajmer, where he revitalized a tract of barren land, which was a plot that possessed a reliable water source and was situated away from the city. The Sheikh reclaimed this land to earn his livelihood, cultivating it with the assistance of his family, and steadfastly declined all offers of grants and gifts which had been granted to him by the authorities (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 105).

Following the death of Mu'īn al-Dīn, his son Sheikh Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan Fakhr al-Dīn inherited the land, just as he inherited from him the mantle of spiritual leadership and guidance. He engaged in agriculture, which became the sole source of income for both himself and his family. He continued to work in that plot of land for twenty years, until his death in 653 AH / 1255 AD (Al-Mubārakfūri, 1958, 216). Among Sheikh Mu'īn al-Dīn's disciples who also pursued agriculture was Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn Sawāli al-Nagūri (d. 673 AH / 1274 AD) (Tanvīr, 2005, 241).

Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn settled in Sawal a district affiliated to Nagūr, which was a city in the Punjab region where he possessed a substantial tract of agricultural land, estimated at one acre. This land was initially barren, but he reclaimed and cultivated it with the assistance of his sons. He also engaged in livestock rearing, keeping cattle, sheep, and goats; however, out of respect for Hindu customs, he never slaughtered any of his cattle throughout his entire life, nor did he consume meat, relying instead on their milk for his sustenance. His wife wove the family's clothing from the wool of their sheep; thus, he achieved self-sufficiency through this land and desired nothing more. Indeed, the Sheikh declined an offer of additional land extended to him by the ruler of Nagūr. Subsequently, he lived the life of an Indian peasant, adopting the very same methods and tools utilized by the local Indian farmers (Al-Dahlawi, 1975, 82).

Sheikh Qutb al-Dīn Kāki (d. 644 AH/1245 AD) took a keen interest in agriculture; he assisted Sultan Iltutmish in constructing a water reservoir in Delhi later known as the Haud-i-Shamsi (Shamsi Tank) to meet the city's water needs and to utilize the surplus for farming. Some scholars adopted the chambers surrounding the Haud-i-Shamsi as their residences and cultivated the banks of the reservoir with various crops, such as sugarcane, cucumbers, canna, watermelons, and cantaloupes. These crops were among the finest in Delhi, and people flocked to purchase them in great numbers (Al-Dahlawi, 1975, 26). The sons of Sheikh Farīd al-Dīn (d. 664 AH/1265 AD) also practiced the profession of agriculture; his eldest son, Nasir al-Dīn, relied on cultivating the land for his livelihood. Nāsir al-Dīn would spend the majority of his time in contemplation and prayer upon his land, returning to his home only after long intervals of time (Sayyid, 1978, 149).

The miraculous deeds (karāmāt) and virtues (manāqib) of the Sufis shed light on various facets of agricultural activity undertaken by certain Indian scholars. Hamīd Flinder, for instance, recounts the story of a scholar-farmer who was endowed with miraculous powers: if he so desired, the heavens would open and rain would fall; conversely, if he did not wish it, the weather would remain dry. He steadfastly refused to leave his field, spending both day and night engaged in cultivation, driven by a desire to bestow a spiritual blessing upon the grain for the benefit of all who would consume it. Furthermore, he would not permit any of his assistants to aid him in the farming process, lest the crop lose its inherent blessing (Al-Dahlawi, 1975, 157).

It can be inferred from this account, despite its exaggeration in extolling the miraculous powers of this Sufi, that some scholars occasionally suffered from water scarcity, prompting them to resort to the Istisqa (prayer for rain) to irrigate their lands. Furthermore, it reveals that they took meticulous care of their crops, taking the utmost pains to personally undertake every agricultural task, right through to the harvest. When Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Tabrīzi (d. 642 AH / 1242 AD) migrated to Bengal and established a large Khanqah (Sufi hospice), he purchased vast tracts of agricultural land in order to ensure the institution's sustenance. He directed his disciples to cultivate these lands; an endeavor that proved sufficient to cover the Khanqah's operating expenses and provide food for its visitors while the Sheikh sold the surplus produce to secure the necessary cash funds for the hospice (Chishti, 1993, 723).

Similarly, when Sheikh Nāsir al-Dīn Chiragh (d. 8th Hijri century / 15th Calendar century) withdrew to the wilderness for spiritual seclusion (khalwa) at the age of twenty-five in the Indian city of Awadh, within the Bhard region, he joined a group of peasant-dervishes who were tilling the soil and cultivating mango trees. He immersed

himself in their work; they would gather together to offer their prayers beneath the trees, and he eventually became a skilled farmer himself (Chishti, 1993, 858).

Later, Ibn Battūta (d. 779 AH/1377 AD) spoke of certain Sufis who had settled in India long ago and engaged in agriculture. He stated: "The city of Zihār is a iqtā'(land grant) belonging to Sheikh Ibrahim. Sheikh Ibrahim had arrived in this city and settled just outside it; there, he reclaimed a tract of barren land and began cultivating melons. These melons grew to be of exceptional sweetness unrivaled by any others in that region. Although people in the neighboring areas also cultivated melons, theirs never equaled his in quality. He used to provide food for the poor and the destitute (Ibn Battūta, 1997, 2: 577).

Alongside agricultural activity, various crafts and industries were practiced by scholars. However, industrial development during this period was not extensive; industries were predominantly manual and rudimentary, and most yielded a low income, serving merely to provide scholars with their daily sustenance. Among these crafts were the following:

2. The Crafts of Sewing and Spinning

Sewing and spinning were considered two of the most significant professions prevalent among the scholars of India. The necessary prerequisites for establishing these crafts were readily available particularly the raw materials required for their execution, as cotton was cultivated on a wide scale throughout India. Furthermore, wool was obtained from domesticated sheep as well as from mountain sheep, which facilitated the production of woolen textiles (Abdul Halīm, 2015, 164).

In addition to the availability of raw materials, sewing and spinning were crafts suitable for both men and women alike. The scholars of India favored engaging in these two crafts because they afforded them autonomy in their work and granted them sufficient time to continue their education and carry out their teaching activities. Historical sources corroborate this fact, as one indication suggests that Sheikh Farīd al-Dīn Ganjshakar encouraged engagement in the crafts of sewing and spinning. When one of his disciples presented him with a knife as a gift, he declined it, remarking: "I would have preferred a needle; for a knife is used for cutting, whereas a needle is used for sewing" (Al-Dahlawi, 1988, 250).

Among the factors that contributed to the flourishing of the sewing and spinning trades was the resurgence of Sufism in India, accompanied by the proliferation of Sufis and disciples a group distinguished by their practice of wearing the khirqa (Sufi cloak) (Al-Kāshāni, 1992, 178). Indeed, wearing the khirqa was regarded as a symbolic bond between the disciple and the Sheikh; while Sufis generally favored the blue khirqa, there was no prohibition against a Sheikh and his disciples wearing khirqas of different colors (Al-Suhrawardi, 2006, 1: 114). The khirqa itself is a garment fashioned from various pieces of coarse cloth; it served as a substitute for the wool garments worn by early Sufis and is characterized by the presence of numerous patches (Nūmāk, 1999, 487).

Sufi scholars used to craft the khirqa (mantle) or murraqa (patched robe) with their own hands. Opinions varied, however, regarding the method of stitching it: some held that the needle should simply be drawn through wherever it emerged, without any affectation; others maintained that the sewing of the patches required orderliness and precision, specifically, a meticulous attention to alignment and a deliberate effort to ensure straightness (Al-Hujwīri, 2007, 1: 24).

Biographical literature and chronicles indicate that some scholars and their wives engaged in sewing and spinning. A notable example is the wife of Sheikh Hamīd al-

Dīn Suwāli (d. 673 AH / 1274 AD), who worked as a seamstress; she was responsible for weaving the family's clothing and also sold garments to the children of peasants to assist her husband with expenses (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 245).

Sheikh Mahmoud Mu'īn al-Dīn also worked in tailoring; specifically, he was a "furrier." He was one of the scholars of the city of Suwāli and a disciple of Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn Suwali (al-Dahlawi, 1988, 84). This craft involved transforming animal hides into hats and winter garments, as collected animal skins were utilized as clothing. These early fur products were simple in their construction; however, the methods and techniques of fur craftsmanship evolved over time (Al-Maqrizi, 1998, 3: 187).

Bibi Zulaikha (d. 7th Hijri century / 13th Calendar century, the mother of the renowned scholar and Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn (d. 724 AH / 1325 AD), was a working woman (Lyse, 2018, 535). She was celebrated for her skills in sewing and spinning. Following the death of her husband, she undertook the weaving of garments to cope with their difficult economic circumstances, as they possessed no other source of income. She continued to work in this trade for an extended period of time to support her son in completing his studies (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 240).

3. The Craft of Rope-Twisting

Rope-twisting is considered a physically arduous craft one that was widely practiced in the past, as it constituted the sole method for manufacturing ropes, a process that relies entirely on the use of one's palms. This ancient craft was a staple upon which the people of India depended for a multitude of tasks. Ropes were produced by gathering coconut fibers which are abundant throughout India and soaking them in water for a period of time. The fibers are then teased apart, arranged into small strands, and manually twisted together in two strands at a time until a sturdy rope is formed. These ropes are subsequently utilized for pulling or hoisting heavy objects, as well as for dragging stones and palm trunks to transport them from one location to another. Furthermore, they were used to fashion majādil (woven panniers), which were employed to transport fodder and firewood on the backs of camels (Abd al-Halīm, 2015, 173).

Among the scholars who engaged in the craft of rope-twisting was Sheikh Hasan Ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Badauni, famously known as "Rasan Tab," a moniker meaning "The Rope Twister." A man of profound learning and knowledge, he earned his livelihood by manufacturing and selling the ropes he crafted, personally gathering the necessary coconut fibers himself (Al-Nadwi: 1999, 1: 96). Another rope-maker was Sheikh Shāhi, a native of Badaun; who practiced rope making as a craft that constituted his sole source of income (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 211).

Similarly, the great Sheikh Badr al-Dīn Abu Bakr al-Badauni, who was one of the renowned saints of India, worked in the profession of yarn-spinning. He was a spiritual peer (ṣinw) of Sheikh Hasan Rasan Tab, and received instruction from his brother, and subsequently from Sheikh Qutb al-Dīn Bakhtiyār al-Dahlawi, from whom he received the khirqa (spiritual mantle) before returning to Badaun. Like his brother, he earned his livelihood through the craft of spinning (Al-Nadwi, 1999, 87).

4. Butchery

Among the crafts practiced by scholars was butchery. Sheikh Ain al-Dīn, who was one of the disciples of Sheikh Bahā al-Dīn of the city of Multan, worked in this trade. He was a frequent visitor to the khanqah (Sufi hospice), though he did not reside there permanently, as he remained occupied with his work throughout the day slaughtering cattle, camels, sheep, and goats. He was among the close associates of Sheikh Bahā al-

Dīn, who frequently called upon him to perform ritual slaughter for the murīds (disciples) at the khanqah; furthermore, he served as the official butcher at the court of the Emir of Multan for a considerable period (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 211).

5. Paper-making and Calligraphy

Among the professions undertaken by the scholars of India was the craft of warāqa (paper-making and book-craft). By the 7th Hijri century (13th Calendar century), India had emerged as one of the greatest centers of learning in the Islamic East, and the paper industry flourished in the country during that era. This is evident in the words of Amīr Khusrow (d. 725 AH / 1325 AD), who observed: "Paper had become so inexpensive that local vendors in Delhi would wrap their merchandise in paper before handing it to their customers." Sufi scholars were considered the pioneers of this profession, as it was well-suited to their scholarly pursuits. Consequently, many scholars would venture into the forests to gather raw materials for paper production, manufacturing large quantities of paper that served as their primary source of livelihood (Aneesa, 2008, 77).

Furthermore, some scholars engaged in the profession of calligraphy. Among the renowned calligrapher-scholars was Sheikh Hasan Afghani, a resident of the city of Osh (Al-Hamawi, 1995, 1: 281). He was a disciple of Sheikh Bahā al-Dīn Zakariya (d. 661 AH / 1262 AD) and specialized in transcribing Quranic texts using various Arabic scripts, including the Basri script.

He copied numerous books authored by Sufi scholars; moreover, he was commissioned by princes to transcribe important volumes housed in the royal court library in Multan. This profession constituted his sole source of income (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 168).

6. Hunting and Leather Tanning

Among the trades practiced by scholars in India was the craft of hunting. India was characterized by an abundance of forests and rivers, and its wildlife, particularly in its woodlands, was rich and teeming with various animals and birds. Consequently, some scholars would venture into the forests to hunt these creatures, whether to obtain their meat (especially that of deer, which was highly sought after by the nobility and the wealthy), to sell their furs (which commanded high prices), or to tan their hides. Indeed, large quantities of hides of goats, buffaloes, oxen, and other animals were regularly processed through tanning (Al-Hujwīri, 2007, 2: 647).

Tanning or the leather industry was among the widespread industries during the period of Islamic rule in India. Foremost among these leather crafts were the manufacture of shoes, slippers, sandals, sword scabbards, saddles, and bridles. For this purpose, they utilized sheep and goat hides. Judge Hamīd al-Dīn al-Nagūri (d. 642 AH /1244 AD), who was one of the successors of the Suhrawardi order, worked as a iskafi (shoemaker) after resigning from the judiciary, and one of his disciples assisted him in managing the shop (Chishti, 1993, 727).

7. Trade

The propagation of Islam in India was historically linked to dā'is (preachers), specifically scholars and merchants even prior to the era of Islamic conquests. Many such preachers accompanied sailors and merchants on their voyages to India, and subsequently settled in remote regions with the specific aim of disseminating Islam within these new territories. Consequently, numerous zāwiyas (religious lodges) and khanqahs (Sufi hospices) were established, fostering a relationship of mutual benefit

with the merchant community. Specifically, Sufi khanqahs provided a form of "divine insurance" for merchant caravans and expeditions that used to embark on journeys to distant lands that were inherently fraught with peril. In exchange for lodging in these khanqahs, the merchants would make financial contributions to the owners of the khanqahs (Sayyid, 1987, 1: 399).

The khanqah of Sheikh Bahā al-Dīn Zakariya in Multan stands as one of the most significant hubs for merchant convergence, owing to its strategic location along the primary trade route connecting Sindh and Delhi. Sheikh Bahā al-Dīn and his sons who succeeded him welcomed numerous wealthy merchants, for whom the Sheikh had designated special, private quarters. These merchants, hailing from regions outside India such as Iraq and Khorasān sought both security and financial gain in exchange for the funds they contributed to the khanqah (Al-Dahlawi, 1988, 216).

The khanqah of Abu Ishāq al-Kazarūni served as another prime example of this phenomenon. Al-Kazarūni was a Sufi master who commanded immense respect and veneration among merchants, sailors, and travelers traversing the routes extending from the Persian Gulf to India and China. Sufi disciples of the Kazarūni order would travel alongside merchants to India and China, seeking the spiritual protection they believed Sheikh Abu Ishāq bestowed upon them. Consequently, numerous Kazarūni khanqahs were established at various points along these trade routes. Furthermore, acting upon their Sheikh's directives, many of his Sufi disciples traveled to India and China specifically to collect the financial offerings (nadhr) that sailors and merchants had vowed to donate in exchange for their safety and security (Ibn Battūta, 1997, 4:45). However, historical sources do not indicate the fate of the funds donated by these merchants in the event that the Sufi Sheikh's prayers and supplications went unanswered, specifically, if the merchants were killed or their wealth was stolen. Nevertheless, it is evident that there was no mechanism by which these funds could be reclaimed. Despite this, merchants continued to seek refuge in the Khanqahs (Sufi hospices) belonging to the Suhrawardi, Chishti, Firdausi, and other orders, as these institutions provided them at the very least with psychological solace. The Khanqahs were not the sole gathering points for merchants; Sufi shrines served this purpose as well. Indeed, large crowds of disciples and devotees would assemble before the shrine of Sheikh Nūr Qutb a site renowned as a sanctuary for the destitute and the afflicted.

Any beggar, pauper, or traveler arriving at the site would pause at the shrine, where its custodians would provide three daily meals for everyone, in addition to offering overnight accommodation. These large gatherings were subsequently leveraged to establish a market surrounding the shrine a venue for the exchange of goods transported from distant regions of India. Furthermore, the shrine's custodians assumed the responsibility of arbitrating and resolving any disputes that arose within the marketplace (Salim, 2009, 46).

This illustrates the significant role played by certain scholars in organizing and regulating commercial activity. Furthermore, Sufi sheikhs in India encouraged their disciples to engage in trade; their role extended beyond merely offering support and prayers for merchants. Indeed, numerous lessons were taught to Sufi disciples regarding the practicalities of trade and the Islamic legal guidelines or Shari'ah precepts that a dervish was required to observe (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, p. 270).

Nizām al-Dīn, for instance, urged his disciples to uphold integrity and honesty in their commercial dealings. He maintained that a merchant must never, under any

circumstances, misrepresent the cost price he paid for a commodity; rather, he should state the true cost and be content with a modest profit margin; a practice, he argued, that would ultimately lead to wealth in the long run. Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn attributed the destruction of Lahore by the Mongols in 639 AH (1241 AD) to corrupt commercial practices. He recounted an incident in which a group of merchants from Lahore traveled to Gujarat to conduct business, selling their goods to local Hindus at exorbitant prices. Unaccustomed to the practice of bargaining, the Hindus purchased the merchandise at whatever price the merchants demanded.

When one of the Hindus inquired whether such conduct reflected the standard market ethics of Lahore and received confirmation that it did, he prophesied that a city so devoid of such honesty would inevitably face destruction in the near future (Al-Dahlawi, 1988, p. 331). Consequently, examples emerged of scholars who engaged in trade and achieved widespread renown throughout India, distinguished by their honesty, integrity, and exemplary conduct in business dealings. Some of these individuals rose to become proprietors of vast commercial enterprises, trading across the routes connecting the Persian Gulf, India, and China; others remained local merchants, operating small, modest shops. There was a local Sufi merchant in Nagūr of whom Sufi sources mention nothing other than that he was a disciple of Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn Nagūri who served as a courier for the correspondence exchanged between Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn and Sheikh Bahā al-Dīn Zakariya in Multan.

In this correspondence, Hamīd al-Dīn criticized Bahā al-Dīn's financial policies. This merchant operated between Multan and Nagūr, transporting mustard seeds to Multan while purchasing cotton to be brought back to Nagūr (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 249). Nagūr was experiencing a growing demand for cotton, as it was a key input for numerous local industries; however, the climatic conditions in Nagūr were unsuitable for its cultivation, as cotton requires high temperatures, which were conditions that were well-suited to the climate of Multan. Similarly, mustard was a highly sought-after commodity in Multan due to its scarcity there. Consequently, that merchant reaped substantial profits from such trade (Nizāmi, 2009, 180).

Among the scholars who traveled to India in the year 668 AH (1269 AD) and engaged in commercial activity was Ibn al-Suhaybi, specifically Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wāhid, known as Sheikh Sharaf al-Dīn al-Jazari, a renowned traveling merchant who conducted extensive trade operations along the eastern coast of India (Al-Safadi, 2000, 5: 222).

Ibn Battūta also wrote of a scholar engaged in trade within the city of Cambay, stating: "Also residing there, among the devout Muslim, was the merchant Khwāja Ishāq. He maintained a zāwiya (hospice) where he provided meals to all travelers and visitors, and he spent generously upon the poor and the destitute; yet, despite this expenditure, his wealth continued to grow and multiply" (Ibn Battūta, 1997, 4: 29). Sheikh Ali Mulla (died in the 7th Hijri century/ 13th Calendar century), was also engaged in trade. A native of Badaun, he was a disciple of Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn al-Tabrīzi. He sold milk and cheese in the city, and after meeting Sheikh Jalāl al-Dīn, he became one of his disciples, yet he continued to trade in dairy products, as his Sufi allegiance did not deter him from pursuing a commercial vocation (Al-Dahlawi, 1975, p. 167).

Among the scholars who also engaged in trade was Qādi Hamīd al-Dīn al-Nagūri, one of the successors (khalīfas) of the Suhrawardi order. He worked as a cobbler, crafting leather footwear; not content with merely making shoes, he also owned a shop for their

retail, a venture he undertook after resigning from his judicial post. One of his disciples assisted him in managing the shop. Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn exempted his Sufi disciples from payment, allowing them to obtain footwear free of charge (Al-Nadwi, 1999, 2:208).

Another prominent Sufi merchant was Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Mahmoud al-Kirmāni, who was a man of both scholarly erudition and the Sufi Path who hailed from Kirmān and belonged to a distinguished local family. His trade flourished, and he traveled extensively between Kirmān, Lahore, Multan, and Ajodhān. Sheikh Muhammad married the daughter of his uncle, Sayyid Ahmad, who served as the official in charge of minting currency in Multan. He frequently visited the khanqah (Sufi hospice) of Sheikh Farīd al-Dīn in Ajodhān, presenting futūh (spiritual offerings) and gifts to the hospice's residents during every visit. Late in his life, he resolved to renounce all his worldly possessions, embracing a life of asceticism, during which he withdrew to the khanqah, where he remained in spiritual seclusion until his death (Mīr Khurd, 1984, p. 31).

Also numbered among the Sufi merchants of Multan was a friend of Amīr Khusrow, a relationship formed during the latter's time at the court of Prince Muhammad, the ruler of Multan. This young man was engaged in the bread trade, and used to distribute bread to the poor free of charge (Firishta, 1926, 1: 278). Al-Dhahabi also mentions the Sufi merchant Ahmad Ibn Muhammad Abd al-Wāhid al-Zāhid, known as Sheikh Sharaf al-Dīn al-Jazari (d. 668 AH / 1269 AD) who was an itinerant merchant; he visited numerous lands, including India, and traveled extensively among various Indian cities and islands (Al-Dhahabi, 1993, 51: 257).

Among the prominent merchants in Delhi was the Hadith scholar Kamal al-Dīn al-Dukhmi al-Hamawi, later al-Dimashqi whose full name was Ahmad Ibn Abi al-Fada'il Ibn Abi al-Majd Ibn Abi al-Ma'āli (d. 671 AH / 1282 AD). He was deeply interested in the discipline of Hadith and authored numerous works after traveling extensively in pursuit of Hadith knowledge, traversing several lands before entering Delhi, where he resided until his death (Surūr, 2006, 121).

Among the Suhrawardi merchants was also one named Sa'd, a disciple of Sheikh Sadr al-Dīn 'Arif (the son of Sheikh Bahā' al-Dīn). He was a resident of Delhi and one of its well-known merchants. He provided assistance to Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn when the latter arrived in Delhi with nowhere to live; so he hosted the Sheikh in his large, two-story home located in the heart of the city. The Sheikh resided on the first floor, while Sa'd lived on the second; Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn remained in his home for approximately one month (Mīr Khurd, 1984, 186).

Furthermore, many of Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn's disciples engaged in commerce. One such disciple, known as "Khujandi," was a prominent merchant in Delhi whose extensive trade activities earned him a place among the wealthy elite. Khujandi was a merchant dealing in the coarse cloth typically worn by dervishes. On one occasion, one of his boats, heavily laden with this fabric, sank in the Yamuna River. A few days later, however, the vessel was discovered amidst the reeds, with its entire cargo remaining intact and completely undamaged. Khujandi was a man of great generosity and benevolence, and he whenever he left his home, he used to give alms to beggars. He would even scatter sesame seeds and sugar grains into ant-holes (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 183).

Among the scholars who also engaged in the textile trade was Sheikh Shams al-Dīn Bazzāz, one of the disciples of Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn (Tanvīr, 2005, 347). Indeed, there were other disciples of Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn who worked in the vegetable trade; in fact, Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn's own father had sold vegetables prior to his death. After his mother passed away, Sheikh Nizām al-Dīn found himself living under difficult financial circumstances, as his mother had left him a mere twenty Indian tankas, and had instructed him to follow in his father's footsteps. Consequently, he would carry a basket on his head and venture out to sell vegetables; a vocation he viewed as a means of ensuring that he remained dependent on no one, placing his reliance for sustenance solely upon God (Al-Dahlawi, 1985, 277).

8. The Medical Profession

A number of scholars who practiced medicine emerged in Delhi, utilizing it as a means of earning their livelihood. Among them was the distinguished physician Al-Hakīm Husam al-Dīn al-Marikli (d. 684 AH / 1285 AD), who was renowned as one of the most prominent physicians of his time. He studied medicine in Delhi, practiced there, and was a contemporary of Sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn Balban (664-686 AH / 1265-1287 AD) (Al-Nadwi, 1999, 94).

The virtuous and eminent Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn al-Hakīm al-Mutarrīzi was among the figures of the seventh century who practiced medicine. The author of Nuzhat al-Khawātir described him, stating: "He had no peer in his era regarding proficiency, sound judgment, knowledge of diseases, and the prescription of remedies" (Surūr, 2006, p. 100).

Another prominent figure in the medical arts was Sheikh Sadr al-Dīn al-Hakīm al-Marikli, who inherited the practice of medicine from his father. Born and raised in the royal capital of Delhi, he pursued his studies under the tutelage of the most renowned masters of his time. Subsequently, he embraced the Sufi path under the guidance of Sheikh Nāsir al-Dīn Mahmoud. He was a man of exceptional medical acumen, well-versed in various other disciplines, possessing a keen intellect and a sound mind. He taught medicine in Delhi during the reign of Alā al-Dīn Khalji (695-715 AH / 1296-1316 AD). He was a man of refined spiritual insight, he could diagnose the underlying causes of an illness upon his very first encounter with the patient; he would then administer the remedy, and God would grant the patient a swift recovery (Al-Nadwi, 1999, Vol. 2, p. 143).

Another Sufi who excelled in the field of medicine was Maulāna Badr al-Dīn al-Dimashqi. Both Firishta and Al-Harawi spoke of him in identical terms: "Among the most proficient and skilled physicians, was the 'Master of Medicine,' Maulāna Badr al-Dīn al-Dimashqi. He possessed such extraordinary medical expertise that, when there was a vial containing animal urine placed before him, he could instinctively identify the specific animal from which it originated. He would declare, 'The urine in this vial belongs to such-and-such animal. Given that the aforementioned scholar was a master of spiritual journeying (sulūk), divine insight (kashf), and contemplative vision (mushahadah) within the Sufi tradition, such a feat was not considered surprising coming from him; indeed, such a precise determination would be exceedingly difficult and truly astonishing for anyone whose knowledge was limited solely to the academic study of medicine" (Al-Harawi, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 148).

Badr al-Dīn al-Dimashqi was accorded the title "Master of Medicine" (Ustādh al-Tibb). He conducted his teaching sessions before large assemblies of students, and he notably

taught from Ibn Sina's monumental work, Al-Qanūn (The Canon). He was unrivaled in the excellence of his exposition and clarity of instruction, as well as in his ability to convey subtle concepts to his students. He resided in the royal capital, Delhi, during the reign of Sultan Alā Al-Dīn Khilji, and [his influence] ultimately extended to He was a leading figure in teaching and the practice of medicine (Surūr, 2006, p. 121).

Among the other physicians was the virtuous Sheikh Diya' al-Dīn al-Nakhshabi al-Badauni (d. 751 AH/1350 AD). He was a man known for his excellence and perfection. He acquired knowledge from Sheikh Shihāb al-Dīn al-'Umari and was educated under him. He then received Sufi instruction from Sheikh Farīd al-Dīn Ibn Sheikh Hamīd al-Dīn Nakūri, whom he accompanied for a period. He was an ascetic, devout, and upright man, devoted to God and unconcerned with worldly matters. He was highly skilled in medicine and authored a book on the practice of medicine entitled "Al-Kulliyat al-Juz'iyya" (The Partial Principles), in which he explained Indian medicines and herbs using their Indian names (Chishti, 1993, p. 836).

CONCLUSION

This study, examined the role of Indian artisans and their impact on the societal perceptions of the importance of crafts and industry during the 7th and 8th Hijri centuries (15th and 16th Calendaer centuries), following a methodology of a historical and cultural study. At this stage the researcher arrived at a set of findings, which are presented here as a conclusion to this work, summarized in the following points:

- The study demonstrated that Indian scholars set an exemplary standard in instilling the value of work in the Indian society, not only through their teachings and admonitions to the public, but also through their own practice of various crafts and industries. They were keen to earn their living honestly and to eat from the fruits of their labor, believing that these professions are an integral part of the nation's heritage, history, and civilization.
- The professional and industrial activities of Indian scholars during the research period have been documented and their work detailed. Such documentation aims to benefit future generations in the Muslim community and to encourage young men and women to recognize the importance of professional, craft, and industrial work in human life, and its impact on the society in general.
- The study revealed that these scholars were highly skilled and professional, in addition to their scientific brilliance. Their crafts and professions were not obstacles or limitations on their path to knowledge; on the contrary, they facilitated it. The study demonstrated that some Indian scholars took pride in the crafts and professions they practiced, as evidenced by the fact that some scholars' titles were derived from their professions or trades.
- The study also demonstrated that the Indian scholars' engagement with and pride in their crafts sparked an intellectual revolution against some prevailing Indian beliefs about manual labor. This led to a shift in the Indian society's view of many professions that were previously considered lowly, thanks to the high status enjoyed by these scholars who practiced them. It was no longer considered shameful to pursue such professions.

- The study emphasized the importance of crafts and professions for scholars in several aspects, including their ability to maintain modest means in their food and drink. Furthermore, these professions and trades granted scholars considerable freedom, allowing them freedom of opinion and expression without being constrained by their relationship with the ruling power and its fluctuations.
- The study demonstrated that the scholarly activity of these scholars was not significantly affected by political changes, as they were not dependent on any existing political system, nor did they rely on government patronage for their livelihood. In fact, the political circumstances in India during the research period sometimes led the authorities to seek the scholars' support in guiding society and attempting to resolve crises and unrest, recognizing the value of the scholars and the high regard the people held for them.
- The study also demonstrated that the professions and trades practiced by Indian scholars facilitated effective communication between scholars and the general public. Scholars did not live in isolation from their surrounding communities; rather, they shared in their times of prosperity and hardship, refusing to be a burden on the society in which they lived.

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