

The Impact of Persians on Indian Subcontinent From the Advent of Islam up to the Rule of Salatin-i-Delhi

Muhammad Zia-ud-Din

Abstract

Mutual socio-cultural interchange between India and Persia inevitably followed as the political interests of the two regions were interlinked. Geographical proximity and political amity played a very vital role in the maintenance of cordial relations and the brisk exchange of men, commodities, and ideas. In the history of culture, Persia had been playing a dominant role along with India from time immemorial. The interplay of the Persians' role in Indian subcontinent from the advent of Islam up to Salatin-i-Delhi can easily be seen in the fields of politics, religion and socially in the form of significant cultural objects such as architecture, miniatures, manuscripts, calligraphy, coinage, book binding, carpets, jewelry and pottery, etc. The Persian style of history writing influenced the pattern of historiography in India. Likewise, Persian poetry and prose writing also played a key role to enrich Indian literature. All the contemporary chronicles confirm the continuous presence of the Persians at the Indian courts and the continuous exchange of ideas, men, and commodities between the two lands.

Introduction

Indo-Persian multifarious relations have a pleasant past and long history. It is interesting to note how the multi-dimensional contacts from the pre-historic periods down to the modern times has brought the two different regions – India and Iran – so close to each other. There was indeed a continuous inflow of extra-territorial talents into India.¹ These talented Persians played a vital role in each and every segment of Indian culture and society. The utility of their endowment was not merely confined in palaces but it lightened the common society as well. In fact, India as it

¹ Mansura Haider, *Indo-Central Asian Relations: From Early Times to Medieval Period* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2004), p.365.

was an ancient country like Persia, offered a most favorable field for the cultivation of Persian ideas. Here submissiveness of the people and ancient traditions of the country provided congenial atmosphere for the establishment of absolute monarchy. The Muslim kings had before them the precedents of Persian monarchs and the examples of Indian rajas, to whom divine honors were paid by their subjects. The prerogatives they enjoyed as the act of sovereignty which proclaimed their accession to the throne were the recitation of the *khutba* or public sermon, the striking of the *sikka* or coins in their names and the issuance of *farmans* under their own seal or signet. The king was styled as *zillillah* or the 'shadow of God' on earth and divine honors were paid to him.² These were certain symbols of sovereignty to distinguish him for the rest of people. Whenever he went out, he was accompanied by a grand procession and surrounded with dazzling splendor.

This research paper endeavors to screen role of Persians in various fields of Indian life during the period under study to achieve following aims:

- Contemplate on the nature of Persian impact on early medieval India.
- Focus on the major areas of socio-political amalgamation.
- Analyze the eventual consequences of Persians' impact on Indian subcontinent.

Advent of Islam

The advent of Islam introduced fundamental changes in the political, economic and religious life of Iran and the Indian subcontinent. The new Islamic spirit of egalitarianism swept over the souls of men and presented a challenge to all established institutions, including the monarchy, the priesthood and the social system. The mosques belong directly to the people, unlike the fire temples, which, during the Achaemenian and Sassanian times, were under the direct control of kings. Education became the right of everyone, instead of being a class privilege. Islam broke the bonds of race and geography and sought to create a society in which every human being could realize his potentialities to the full. Islam proved as a decisive factor in the Persian consciousness, and expressed itself there in a new tradition. The cultural link between India and Iran had been renewed with the advent of Islam. 'During the early period of Muslim conquest, the Turks and Afghans

² S.M Jaffar, *Some Cultural Aspects of Muslim Rule in India*, (Peshawar: S. Muhammad Sadiq Khan Publisher, 1950), pp.8-9.

were the muscle; whereas the Persians supplied the brain of the Muslim ruling aristocracy of India.’³

Arabs

In India Muslims began their encroachment during the caliphate of Hazrat Umar and after the annexation of Persia and Makran they invaded Sindh.⁴ Muslims had started coming to the subcontinent before the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad Bin Qasim in 712 A.D. Muhammad Bin Qasim came from Shiraz where he had his headquarters, and his army contained a number of Persian soldiers. The Arab rule in Sindh continued till the eleventh century A.D., when Mehmud of Ghazna conquered it.

The political or territorial expansion went apace and the standards of Islam, bearing the emblem of crescent, were carried far and wide by the Muslims under the influence of their religion. With the conquest of Persia and the transfer of its sovereignty to Baghdad, Persian ideas and ideals began to flow fast into the rank and file of the followers of Islam. S.M Jaffar writes, ‘The conquerors were literally conquered by the culture of the conquered people’.⁵ They took such a fancy to the culture of the Persians that their eager fascination for it they did not even pause to pick and choose from Persian ideas but assimilated them wholesale in almost every department of administration and in every nook of their social life. Politically, they adopted the principles of Persian government; the division and organisation of the various departments of state, including their names, the personality of the Persian king, his seraglio, his slaves, his servants; state ceremonials and all other symbols of sovereignty, including his dress; the rules of military organisation and equipment, the tactics of war and even the titles and designations of the rank and file, and in fact, every minute detail of administration. Socially, they imbibed the idea of the Persians about social pleasure and pastimes and borrowed from them chase, chess and *chaugan* (polo), drinking, music and songs and even the spring festival of *nauroz*, which is also spelled as *noruz*, or *noroz* (nine-days), a new year festival which usually begins on March 21, and is associated with Zoroastrianism or Parsiism. The festival is still celebrated in many other countries, including Iran, Iraq, India, and Afghanistan. Culturally, they

³ Mohammad Yasin, *A Social History of Islamic India 1605-1748* (Lucknow: D.W Publishers, 1958), p.5.

⁴ Tara Chand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* (Allahabad: The Indian Press, 1936), p.44.

⁵ S.M Jaffar, *op.cit.*, p.7.

made Persian their court language and took over almost all Persian ideas, including *ta'bir* (the science of interpreting dreams).⁶

Ghaznavids

Mehmud of Ghazna (998-1030 A.D) succeeded in laying the foundation of a new empire in Sindh, the Punjab and the Northwest Frontier of Pakistan. The administrative system and the court life of the Ghaznavids show the influence of Persian aristocratic and monarchic traditions. During the Ghaznavid regime, Lahore became a centre of Persian language and literature.⁷ The emblems of the Ghaznavid art in the areas of Pakistan are the towers of victory built by Mehmud and Masud of Ghazna. They provide significant information to prove that the development of Muslim architecture, that it was a continuation of Samanid tradition. The highlight of the cultural influence was the emergence of Persian poetry in the subcontinent during this period. In fact, Ghaznavids patronized Persian language and literature and gathered in their court great Persian poets and writers including, Firdowsi, Unsari, Asjadi, Farrukhi, Albiruni and many others of lesser calibre. Mehmud Ghaznavi, a patron of art and culture, collected poets and scholars around himself. The most famous poet among them was Firdowsi. He wrote his great epic poem when the Iranian people were looking back to their Persian heritage, Firdowsi galvanized Persian nationalistic sentiments by invoking pre-Islamic heroic imagery.⁸ Firdowsi was the pseudonym of Abu-ul-Qasem Mansur who was born in 935 A.D., at Tus (a place in Khorasan in Iran), and died at the same place in 1026 A.D. His famous work, renowned in history as the *Shah-Nameh of Firdowsi*, is a poem of nearly 60,000 couplets. In this period, the Turko-Persian culture of India prospered. Another person who is worth mentioning here was Abu Raihan al-Biruni, who was a Persian scholar and one of the greatest scientists of his times. He was indeed, one of the most learned men of his age and an outstanding intellectual figure, possessing a profound and original mind of encyclopedic scope. He applied his talents to many fields of knowledge, excelling particularly in astronomy, mathematics, chronology, physics, medicine, and history. Some time after 1017 A.D., he went to India along with Mehmud Ghaznavi, and made a

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Dr. Wahid Mirza, 'Adabi Manzar', Prof. Allauddin Siddiqui (ed.) *Tarikh-i-Adabiyat: Musalmanan-i-Pakistan-o-Hind (1000-1526 A.D)*, Vol. III, Farsi Adab (I), (Lahore: Punjab University, 1971), p.41. (ed.)

⁸ Robert L. Canfield, *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.7.

comprehensive study of Indian culture, and wrote *Tarikh-al-Hind* (A History of India), which is besides one of his other marvelous books. According to Richard Frye N., 'the contributions of al-Biruni and other Persians towards mathematical knowledge in the Muslim world, are astonishing'.⁹

Ghorids

Another Muslim dynasty, the Ghorids, disgorged from the Hindu-Kush mountains, possessed Ghazni and captured Lahore. Their leader Shihab-ud-Din Muhammad Ghori, pressing further into the subcontinent, made Delhi their capital in 1192 A.D., under Qutub-ud-Din Aibak, first *sultan* (ruler) of the slave dynasty and of the Muslims in Indian subcontinent. The Ghorids and the Sultans of Dehli, who succeeded them, were also great patrons of Persian language. During their times Thatta, Sehwan, Multan, Uchh, Pakpattan and Lahore were important centers of learning. A number of Persian inscriptions in many of these towns have survived the ravages of time.¹⁰ Society was enriched by the influx of Islamic scholars, historians, architects, musicians, and other specialists of high Persianate culture that fled the Mongol devastations of Trans-oxiana and Khurasan. In a broader sense Khurasan includes eastern Persian provinces namely Herat, Mashhad, Qandahar, Merv and Sistan.¹¹ In the early thirteenth century A.D., Persia had gone into the hands of Mongol horde as an irruption led by Chingiz Khan.¹² In Persia Mongols found a rich civilization nearly about 2,000 years old.¹³ After the sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258 A.D., Delhi became the most important cultural center of the Muslims in the east. Like Ghaznavids and Ghorids, the Sultans of Delhi modeled their life-styles after the Turkish and Persian upper classes that predominated most of western and central Asia. They patronized literature and music but became especially notable for their architecture. Their builders drew from the architecture

⁹ Richard N. Frye, *The Golden Age of Persia*, (London: Weidenfeild and Nicolson, Rpt., 1977), p.162.

¹⁰ Muhammad Ishtiaq Khan, 'The Oldest Persian Inscription of Pakistan', *Iran-Pakistan: A Common Culture*, Articles Written By Twenty Six Pakistani Scholars, B.A Dar (ed.) (Lahore: Pak-Iran Persian Research Centre, 1974), p.451.

¹¹ Vladimir Minorsky, *Tadhkirat Al-Muluk: A Manual of Safavid Administration*, (London: Messrs Luzac & Company, 1943), p.168.

¹² Maulana Minhaj-ud-din, *Tabkhat-i-Nasiri*, Vol.I, (Eng Tr.) Major H.G Raverty (Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, Rpt., 1995), p.230.

¹³ Sylvia Crowe & Sheila Haywood, *The Gardens of Mughul India*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), p.14.

elsewhere in the Muslim world to produce a profusion of mosques, palaces, and tombs unmatched in any other Islamic country. Under the Seljuks, Iran witnessed the most creative period in the history of her art. During the reigns of later Ghaznavids and the Ghorids, the Seljuk art tradition penetrated into the subcontinent. The earliest mosque in existence in the subcontinent today is the *Quwwat-ul-Islam* at Lalkot, Delhi, which is a symbol of Seljuk tradition. It was started in 1193 A.D., by Muhammad Ghori who combined in his service the finest talent that Persian civilization could produce.¹⁴

Salatin-i-Dehli

Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries A.D. was a time of great cultural florescence in Western and Southern Asia. In spite of political fragmentation and much ethnic diversity in the region from the Mediterranean to the mouth of the Ganges there was, among the elite Muslim classes, a great deal of shared culture. In this time, Persia truly asserted itself as the liveliest component of the Islamic acumen. This was a brilliant period of Persian literature and art, when the Persian literature of the time was greater than the Arabic; when so many themes and ideas of art and architecture were carried from east to west.¹⁵ In the time of Iltutmish, whose capital was the cosmopolitan Muslim city of Delhi, there were separate *mohallas* (community centers) assigned to the emigrants from every Islamic county. The Persian culture showed a greater vitality than Arab or any other culture. An analysis of the literary and cultural contribution of Islam to medieval India on a racial basis would easily prove the Persian predominance throughout. This was due to the influx of the Persian middle class and intelligentsia to Indian subcontinent since the beginning of the Muslim conquest. The majority of the Persians were Shi'ahs, therefore, they had an advantage in India as the Muslims were fewer and the Shi'ah-Sunni bitterness was less keen in their new home.¹⁶

The regional Muslims kings that succeeded the Dehli Sultans in the fifteenth century A.D., continued to patronize culture. They fostered the production of fine books and illustrations in the Persian style, and assembled large collections of books from many other parts of the Turko-Persian world, on Islamic, scientific and philosophical subjects,

¹⁴ James Mill, *The History of British India*, Vol.I (New Dehli: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, Rpt., 1990), p.699.

¹⁵ Robert L. Canfield, *op.cit.*, p.14.

¹⁶ Mohammad Yasin, *op.cit.*, p.6.

written in Arabic as well as in Persian. Robert L. Canfield, mentioning this scenario, says:

‘As the predominant influences on Turko-Persian Islamic culture (in India), their administrative cadres and their literati were Persian; cultural affairs were thus marked by characteristic pattern of language use: Persian was the language of state affairs and literature; Persian and Arabic the languages of scholarship; Arabic the language of adjudication; and Turkish the language of the military.’¹⁷

A large number of Persian architectural features are perceptible in Indian architecture since the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate in the twelfth century A.D. The Muslims in India possessed a highly developed architecture of their own, as varied and magnificent as the contemporary architecture of Europe. The Muslims who conquered India were of Turkish and Persian blood, endowed with a remarkably good taste and a natural talent for building.

The most magnificent monument of the early period of Sultanat-i-Delhi is the *Quwwat-ul-Islam* Mosque, at Delhi, its foundation was laid by Muhammad Ghori but was later completed in 1197 A.D., by Qutub-ud-Din Aibak, to commemorate the capture of that place, he also erected a huge tower of victory, the world famous *Qutub Minar*. Sultan Shamsuddin Iltutmish added a facade to the mosque, and completed the construction work of Qutub Minar in the Persian Seljukid tradition. Under the Khiljis (1282-1320 A.D), the architectural Seljuk traditions gained a firm hold. The *Alai Darwaza*, a gateway built by Alla-ud-Din Khilji is a monumental example of the Seljuk influence. Other important examples of Persian influenced architecture are the mausoleums of Sultan Bahauddin Zakaria (1262 A.D), Shams-ud-Din Tabrizi (1267 A.D), built by Ghiyas-ud-Din Balban and the Tomb of Rukn-i-Alam Multani built by Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughluq (1320-24 A.D).¹⁸ Sindh and Multan were the first to fall into the hands of the Muslims. Of the many monuments, particularly mosques were built there during the Arab rule. The Muslim artisans brought their art into India from Persia, for instance the art of glazed tiles originated in Persia, mainly at Kashan, in thirteenth and fourteenth centuries A.D., and these blue tiles from that place were copied and used for the construction of earliest mosques in India.¹⁹ In

¹⁷ Robert L. Canfield, *op.cit.*, p.18.

¹⁸ Mumtaz Hasan, *Iran and Pakistan: The Story of Cultural Relationship Through the Ages* (Karachi: Elite Publishers, 1971), pp.xi-xii.

¹⁹ Dr. M.G Dikshit, *History of Indian Glass* (Bombay: University of Bombay, 1969), p.75.

Multan, the oldest monuments are the tomb of Shah Yousuf Gardezi built in 1152 A.D., the resting-place of Baha-ul-Haque, built in 1262 A.D., the tomb of Shah Shams Tabrez, and the shrines of Shadna Shahid and Rukn-i-Alam. They all show a great affinity to the artistic creations of Ghaznavids and are mainly Persian in form and character.²⁰

The Bahmanid kingdom in Hyderabad Deccan (1347-1518 A.D) enjoyed strong relations with the Persians and had fine taste for architecture. The most noteworthy of the existing monuments at Gulbarga (the capital of Bahmanid kingdom), are *Chand Minar* at Daulatabad and the *Madrasa* of Mahmud Gawan at Bidar. *Haft Gumbad* (seven domes), in Gulbarga, containing the tombs of Mujahid Shah, Daud Shah, Prince Sanjar, Ghiyas-ud-Din and his family and Feroz Shah and his family, is worth mentioning. The style of architecture of these monuments is mostly Persian.²¹

Firoz Shah Tughluq, an indefatigable builder, erected a number of cities, forts, palaces, mosques, *madarsas*, tombs, embankments in Persian style, along with other works of public welfare. The oblong shaped *Chhota Sone ki Masjid* (small golden mosque) and the *Bari Sone ki Masjid* (grand golden mosque) at Gaur in East Pakistan now in Bengal, built during the reign of Alla-ud-Din Hussain Shah (1493-1519 A.D), an independent ruler there, is a unique example of mosque architecture in that area, which also shows a blending of Persian influence with indigenous elements.²²

Indo-Persian literature was dominated by the fascinating personality of the mystic poet, Amir Khusrow (1253-1325 A.D), who was a profile writer both in Persian and Hindi. The activities of Amir Khusrow, who is rightly called *Totee-i-Hind* (parrot of India), is placed greatest among all ancient and modern poets. According to Ziauddin Barni, his activities not were confined to the literary sphere; he was a humorist, singer and dancer of a high order. He had mastery in instrumental music as well, he introduced *sitar* (a musical instrument like guitar) more correctly *sehtar* or three wires. He is also reputed to invent the *qawwali*, a unique mode of singing which was a judicious mixture of Indo-Persian models, which later gained great popularity among the Indian Muslims.²³ The Indo-Persian literature of medieval India abounds in *mathnavis* (masnavis), *diwans*, *kulliyat*, biographies, local and general

²⁰ S.M Jaffar, *op.cit.*, pp.102-03.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.106.

²² Mumtaz Hasan, *op.cit.*, p.xxiii.

²³ Sayed A. Lateef, *An Out Line of the Cultural History of India*, (Hyderabad: Indo-Middle East Cultural Studies, 1958), p.199.

histories, commentaries of the Holy Quran, and in works on philosophy, metaphysics, theology, sufism, lexicography, medicine, logic and ornate prose.²⁴ The coins of early Sultans of Delhi, besides having the general pattern of coinage of the Muslim world, started using legends in Persian. Muhammad Bin Tughluq (1325-51 A.D), who is famous in history of numismatics for his 'forced currency', was perhaps the first who used Persian folklore extensively on his coins to induce the people to accept them for gold value. In the same regime an eminent painter, Shahpur, belonged to Khurasan. He painted a lot of miniatures in Persian style, one of his model painting is still displayed in Calcutta Art Gallery.²⁵

The legacy of Timur (Tamerlane), provides an example of how solidly the Persian type of Islamic civilization was established in Asia by the fourteenth century A.D. Although, he himself was of Turko-Mongol stock, but, like other most great military figures of Muslim Asia, he founded a dynasty which has become synonymous with Persian painting, science, and architecture. In the court of Sultan Hussain Baiqra, the last great Timurid ruler, painter Behzad and Shah Muzaffar, poet Jami, historians Mirkhwand and Khwandamir, were of prime importance.²⁶ The schools of miniature painting at Shiraz, Tabriz, and Herat flourished under the Timurids. Among the famous artists gathered at Herat was Behzad, whose dramatic, intense style was unequaled in Persian manuscript illustration. As in other fields of learning in Iran, the art of carpet making and book binding reached its zenith during the Timurid period in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries A.D., and its surviving specimens are among the finest ever produced. The Timurid workshops practiced leatherwork, wood and jade carving. In metalwork, however, Timurid artistry never equaled that of earlier Iraqi schools. In this regime, has also played an important role in the development of the art of Muslim calligraphy. Timur's period has also been one of the most glorious epochs in history for the growth of Persian literature and the nursing of the best poetry.²⁷

During the Lodhi dynasty (1451-1526 A.D), the reign of Sikandar Lodhi is an important period in which Hindi and Persian grew in intimate relationship with each other, their reciprocal influence also

²⁴ S.M Jaffar, *op.cit.*, pp.162-163.

²⁵ Sayed A. Lateef, *op.cit.*

²⁶ Foltz C. Richards, *Mughal India and Central Asia*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.2.

²⁷ M. Abdul Ghani, *A History of Persian Language & Literature at the Mughal Court*, Vol. I (Lahore: Hijra International Publishers, 1983), pp.73-4.

led to a distinction between the 'Persian's Persian' and the 'Indian's Persian.' Sikandar Lodhi, on his accession to the throne in 1489 A.D., installed those of his subjects who possessed the classical knowledge of Persian in the responsible offices of the government. The consequence was that Hindus and such of the native Muslims whose mother-tongue was Hindi, began to introduce into their language words from Persian and Arabic. This was a turning point in the history of Persian literature in India.²⁸

Of all these Persian influences, the most important and significant influence on the Sultans of Delhi was the 'theory of divine right' - the most distinctive feature of Persian monarchy. In relation to his subjects, the Persian monarch was their lord and master, absolute disposer of their lives, liberties and property; the sole foundation of law and right, incapable himself of doing wrong, irresponsible, irresistible, a sort of god upon earth; one whose favor was happiness, at whose frown men trembled, before whom all bowed themselves down with the lowest and humblest obeisance.²⁹ The approach of divine right of kings contended that no matter how kings might come to power but a monarch's authority was still derived from God alone. Similarly in India the Muslim kings adopted the title of '*Zill-i-illahi*' (Shadow of God), or the incarnation of God upon earth. In the late of thirteenth century A.D., Ghyas-ud-Din Balban, the ruler of Slave Dynasty in India, adopted a theory of kingship which was based on the same principle of divine right theory. India, an ancient country like Persia, offered a most favorable field for the cultivation of such ideas. Here the submissiveness of the people and the ancient traditions of the country furnished a most congenial atmosphere for the establishment of absolute monarchy. The Muslim kings, proclaimed their accession to the throne with the recitation of the *khutba*, the striking of coins in their names and the issuance of *farmans* (royal orders) under their own seals or signets. Among other symbols of sovereignty may be mentioned the *taj* (crown), *takht* (throne), *darbar* (court), *naubat* (royal band), *alams* (standards), bearing the emblems of 'fish and crescent' which no one could use unless specially permitted by the kings. In fact, the Muslim Indian monarchs and statesmen had largely adopted the pre-Islamic Sassanian model of kingship.³⁰ These Achaemenian and Sassanian ideas of kingship of ancient Persia, through the Arab conquest reached Baghdad,

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.44.

²⁹ S.M Jaffar, *op.cit.*, pp.7-8.

³⁰ Colin Paul Mitchel, *Sir Thomas Roe and the Mughal Empire Karachi: Area Study Centre for Europe*, 2000), p.113.

and from thence traveled into Ghazni, as also into Europe and the other parts of the world, and finally made their way into India with the march of Muslim conquerors, where these traditions flourished well. Therefore, S.M Jaffar says, 'the Sultans of Dehli formulated their own laws, which was based purely on Persian traditions and Indian usages, which were different from and even opposed to those of Islam but conducive to the State.'³¹

Conclusion

In view of the uninterrupted historical relations between India and Persia, there was certainly an incessant inflow of talented Persians into Indian subcontinent. These talented Persians played a vital role in each and every segment of Indian culture and society. The bequest of their impact on Indian subcontinent was not only cramped in gorgeous palaces but it also bleached the common society of that times. Indian kings took such a fancy to the culture of the Persians that in their eager fascination for it they did not even pause to pick and choose from Persian ideas but assimilated them wholesale in almost every department of administration and in every aspect of their social life. Politically, they adopted the principles of Persian government; socially and culturally, they imbibed the ideas of the Persians about social pleasures and pastimes. The medieval Indian kings made Persian their court language and took over almost all Persian thoughts. The literary and inscriptional evidence also shows that the Persians in the ancient and medieval times were soldiers in the army of the Indian kings. The adoption of Persian in India and its synthesis with other dialects finally contributed to the emergence of a soldier's and trader's dialect 'Urdu' which is a noteworthy example of lingual fusion. Indo-Persian literature was produced in the medium of the Persian language but with Indian ideas and an Indian background. The Persian influence on the origin and growth of literary and *sufi* traditions in India had valuable importance. It is a controvertible proof of the impact of Persian language that all the primary sources of Indian history are in Persian language, which were written by the eminent Persian and Indian chroniclers of the contemporary times.

Thus, Persians influence on the Indian subcontinent during medieval times was particularly noticeable in the form of visually significant cultural objects such as miniatures, manuscripts, calligraphy, coinage, book binding, carpets, jewelry and pottery, etc.³² In fact, India

³¹ S.M Jaffar, *op.cit.*, pp.16-7.

³² Hamidi, Tasweer Husain, 'Common Cultural Heritage of Pakistan and Iran in the National Museum of Pakistan', in *Iran-Pakistan: A Common Culture*,

enjoyed a special relationship with the Persians; they came to India, stayed there and served the country in different ways. They were donors of religious gifts and theologies, and richly contributed to both the ancient and medieval Indian life in various fields like religion, politics and arts. They became a part of Indian society and later on, by merging in that society they Indianised themselves as well.³³

Articles Written By Twenty Six Pakistani Scholars, B.A Dar (ed.) (Lahore: Pak-Iran Persian Research Centre, 1974), p.83.

³³ Nalinee M. Chapekar, *Ancient India and Iran: A Study of their Cultural Contacts* (Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1982), p.14.