

## Conclusion

In the foregoing chapters, an earnest endeavour has been made to explain, on the basis of primary as well as existing secondary sources, the position occupied by women during Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century A.D. The study has brought forth women to the centre of historical process and attempts at studying the socio- political history of the Delhi Sultanate with an intention to provide space to the women perspective. Our study propels the conclusion that women also played quite important roles freely and equally in all walks of life and contributed for the continuation and development of culture.

Earlier studies on the society of the Sultanate period had concerned mainly on the social life in general and included a description of women among these a comprehensive treatment of the entire panorama of royal and lay woman had been long been awaited.

Our study reveals that there was a significant participation of women in all spheres of work in Sultanate period. It is of course, common knowledge that women played a pre- eminent role in the domestic/ household sphere, and that it was primarily owing to their labour that the organization of the family household was maintained. The study has reinforced this assumption, and has argued that it was women's work in the household primarily that ensured material and symbolic reproduction of the society.

Further the image of aristocratic household / harem has been as yet reconstructed merely as a zone of sexual activity, our findings have shown their role otherwise. The public realm is associated with the exercise of power and control over persons; women exercised a great influence on conduct of the government.

In the course of our discussion, we have seen in the context of Sultan Razia, observing her talent and quality befitting a ruler, her father Sultan Iltutmish nominated her as the heir to the Sultanate after the death of her most capable son, Prince Nasiruddin Mahmud. Razia Sultan was encouraged by her father to engage in the army and taking leadership that developed a wonderful capacity of leadership qualities, responsibilities and bravery as her characteristics.

No matter how long she ruled over the country, her reign is very significant as she was the only female monarch of the Delhi sultanate who directly ruled over the

country by winning the throne on her own strength. She discharged her duties in most appropriate manner by appearing before the public without veil, dispensed justice, took active part in warfare, appointments of the officers etc. She seems to have taken keen interest in education also. She was fond of music and gave musicians royal patronage and also to men of letters. Minhaj was entrusted the task of supervision of Madarsa-i-Nasiriya which became a centre of learning in her region. In her personal life we have seen that she recited the Quran and offered prayers in a proper manner which shows that she was a true practicing Muslim. She had a fair knowledge of several other Sciences and possessed all the qualities necessary for a wise ruler. No matter, in spite of prevailing *purdah* system, she discarded it and appeared before the public.

The example set by Raziya gradually became a source of inspiration and encouragement to the other royal ladies to participate in politics. Harem in itself was a very large social and political unit. The political participation of women is nonetheless very crucial and went on to shape the medieval political system.

The first evidence which is found in the contemporary sources, is the name of Shah Turkan, the queen wife of the Sultan Iltutmish. She was so meritorious that she rose to the position of the chief queen of the Sultan from a position of Turkish slave.

Interestingly enough, is her journey to power and controlling politics after the death of her husband, and going beyond the will of the Sultan in appointing her son Ruknuddin Firoz in place of Raziya's nomination. Later during the Khaljis, we find the influence of *Malika-i-Jahan*. Next we have seen, the role of the mother of Sultan Mohammad Tughluq, *Makhduma-i-Jahan*, who was the queen mother and the most virtuous lady. Khudavandzada, the sister of Mohammad Tughluq also enjoyed a respectable position.

Painting, also form a significant source to provide the first hand information which has not been earlier utilized in the context of the study of Sultanate period. From these paintings we get visual information, which we may not get from the written text. These painting have illustrated the culture of the period, glimpses of the customs, status of women and influence of composite culture after the coming of the Turks to the country in Thirteenth century. It was a fusion of Persian as well as indigenous elements. Numerous painting of early medieval times exhibit outdoor scenes. They cover the various aspects of everyday life. These paintings show women at work also.

We have sample paintings from Jain illustrations, some of the famous illustrated manuscripts are *Kalpasutra* and *Kalakacharya Katha* in the collection of the Chhatrapati Shahu Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly, Prince of Wales Museum), Mumbai, Mandu *Kalpasutra* of 1439 A.D. preserved at the National Museum, New Delhi, *Kalpasutra* painted at Jaunpur, dated A.D. 1465 at Narasimhajina Polna Jnana Bhandar, Baroda. These illustrations reveal different kind of style illustrated at different provinces. Women are shown in different positions, wearing sari, adorning ornaments like necklace, bracelets, bangles, head ornaments etc. which is a fine source of the study of culture of that time.

Besides these, there is another kind of paintings which can be called as *Bourgeois* style. In this category *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau, *Sikandarnama* painting, *Hamzanama* come. In these paintings we find Arab and Persian influence. Here we find Persian text written in the background and women are shown wearing long tunic, *odhni* behind their head etc. while the Indian costume comprises *sari*, *choli* and *odhni* etc. In *Hamzanama* painting we see a woman at work as she is the water carrier meeting Hamza. In another painting of *Hamzanama*, we find some dancers performing before Hamza.

We find the illustration of *Laur-Chanda*, the versified love story composed by Mulla Daud. Five illustrated leaves from the copy of *Laur-Chanda* are in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhawan, Banaras. We find here the Awadhi texts on the reverse is written in Persian characters. During the time of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, we find a cookery book, the *Nimatnama* in which Certain traits of the Turkoman style of Persian painting were adopted. It is preserved in the Indian Office Library, London. The text of the *Nimatnama* deals with the most detectable recipes of medicine, cosmetics, perfumes etc.

These paintings indeed are beautiful examples for the study of the period which attract the attention of the reader. The subject matter throws some interesting side lights on medieval culture.

In the context of religion we learn that there was strong influence of Sufism on the society. Various Sufi saints like Nizamuddin Auliya, Baba Farid, Nasiruddin Chirag Dehlavi, Maualna Asuli etc. had a long lasting effect on the mind of the people. They were generous enough towards women and there are various instances to show their piety and love towards women.

Inspite of this we see that as in the eyes of God, men and women are equal, there are references of female Sufis whose influence can be seen in general and also as mother and wives of the Sufis. There are ladies which we have discussed earlier who excelled in the field of religion and influenced the society not less than the male Sufis. They showed miraculous power and inclination toward God.

We further argue that in view of the lack of concrete boundaries between the private and the public spheres in Sultanate society, women played an extremely important part in the so called public spheres as well. Our study has brought out the diverse nature of work performed by women in public and private life.

The household is a site of work and involves a large range of activities, in all which women pre-dominate. Here she as endowed with so called natural activities that is of cooking food, tending cattle, bringing fuel and water, taking care of the children and old and so on. These are treated as external to the productive domain. It was not realized that her labour was essential to the social/ economic viability of the place concerned.

We have seen in the foregoing chapter that they were excellent dancers and singers who even earned their livelihood through this profession. There was hardly any occasion where singing and dancing was not found. It was considered a courtesy not to have them on ceremonial occasions. It was a highly specialized field and they were taught to do so.

There were a large number of female slaves who were excelled in art and amusement and even they were a significant element in the institution of slavery where they served both domestic works and for the company of their masters. They were skilled in playing chess and chaupal, worked as royal guards, spies, serving their masters etc. We also come to know about their significance in household chores, in dance and music and concubines etc. Institution of public women was quite popular at that time. These women had cut their all ties from family and relations but they did maintain overarching links with the patriarchal culture by reinforcing social norms imposed on them as different class.

Regarding the common women, we learn that they were dependent on the royal household for their need to be fulfilled. However it appears from the writings of Amir Khusrau that they adorned expensive cloths, ornaments, cosmetics etc. While Amir Khusrau emphasizes on morality and chastity as an essential element to adorn a woman. Here we also get clear knowledge of various institutions and ceremonies like

marriage, divorce, widowhood, *Sati* system, *jauhar*, *purdah*, chastity of women etc. Ibn Battuta has given vivid description about common women, customs, rituals and social evils of the society. Education of women was somehow similar to the Islamic countries. Religious education was imparted to women at home by private tutors and in *maktab*s and *madarsas*.

As the theme of my work is women depicted in the sources of the Delhi Sultanate during Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries, we reach to the conclusion that women excelled in the field of performing art. They were capable rulers, they had power to reign over the country. They had tact and diplomacy to manipulate things to grab the power and authority even for their self interest. While in the context of Razia Sultan we can say that women enjoyed the right to rule and they had access to education and procurements to other talents like riding, art of warfare etc. The lay women similarly played significant role in the society.