

# **An Analytical Study on Women Participation in the Administrative and Household Affairs of Mughal Empire**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Due to the patriarchal nature of Indian society throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Indian women were typically prohibited from participating in public or political affairs. However, it became clear that women ran the government like males did through non-governmental venues. The inscription of the subaltern female body as a metonymic text of deceit and plot is explored in this essay along with the formation of bourgeois ideology as an alternative voice inside patriarchy. The stories implied that subaltern behavior and inclinations in the public and private spheres were identical, with the exception of harem or Zannaha situations, which included extreme subjugation and female self-censure. Gradually taking off the veil (in the case of Razia Sultana and Nur Jahan in Middle Ages it was equivalents to a great achievement in harem of Eastern society). This political interest of Mughal women may just be a tiny part, like a pinch of salt in flour, but it signals the beginning of the end for the patriarchy-imposed separation of the public and private on which western proto-feminism built it. The Mughal era in India was endowed with a number of noteworthy and bright features that are still reflected in history. Compared to the histories of other countries, they left behind outstanding characters that enriched Hindustan's history. There is a class represented in these legendary figures that occasionally or indirectly affected Mughal politics. The Mughal Harem is connected to this class. In the Mughal court and politics, the ladies of royalty held a high status. Although a little section, asqueeze of salt in flour however this political enthusiasm of Mughal ladies shows the begin of pulverizingthemancontrolledsocietyforcedrefinementofopenandprivatewhereuponwesternprotowoman'srights built itself. The present paper aims to highlight the women participation in the administrative and household affairs of Mughal Empire.

**Keywords:** *Mughal Empire, Inscription, Patriarchal Nature, Refinement*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The period of medieval India is now considered to be the "dark age" for women. The number of foreign conquests in medieval India caused a decrease in the status of women. When foreign invaders like the Muslims invaded India, they brought their unique culture with them. For them, girls lose their autonomy and are reduced to becoming the exclusive property of their father, brother, or husband.

The Indian people also started to question their own daughters in this way and started to treat them in this way. Another factor in the loss of women's status and independence was the desire of the native Indians to protect their female population from the savage Muslim invaders. As polygamy spread among the invaders, they took whatever woman they wanted and kept her in their "harems." Purdah, a covering for the frame, was first used to try and protect those Indian females.

It is necessary to keep in mind that women in the main Asian region, where the "residence of Timur" started, cherished significantly more freedom and were more active than those in the major Islamic countries, in order to comprehend the prominent position that women play in politics. An important role was played in the prehistory of the Mughals by Alanquwa, the fabled female ancestor of Chingiz Khan.

The founding father of the Mughal dynasty, Timur, had a leader wife who was also rather independent. In more recent documents, Babur's maternal grandmother IsanDaulat Begum, the wife of Yunus Khan Mughal, is mentioned as having taken care of her grandson following the death of her husband. Babur said that there were few women like my grandma IsanDaulat Begum in terms of approaches and approach. She developed into a smart and effective organizer, and frequently plans were prepared in accordance with her requirements. In addition, QultugNigar Begum, the mother of Babur, became the primary spouse of Umar Shaykh Mirza and frequently accompanied her son on his excursions.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. Personalities of the Royal Ladies of Mughals have been evaluated.
2. Impact of the Mughal Royal Ladies on the politics and administration has been critically analyzed.

### **Administrative Domination Of Mughal Ladies**

For Mughal males, being around women was a common occurrence in practically all of their pursuits. Women engaged actively in judicial proceedings, conflicts, and some of the notable ladies conducted business behind the veil with both domestic and international petitioners. The chronicles offer a plethora of information about the imperial household's ladies, who were frequently just as influential as their husbands, supporting the arts, sciences, and architecture, participating in politics, and having the authority to issue edicts. However, despite being safe and well-protected by the Zananah, Mughal women continued to participate directly and indirectly in public affairs. When exercising power, Mughal women did so with a great deal of dignity. Bakhtunnisa was appointed as the governor of Kabul by Akbar. For three years, she ran the region successfully. Even beyond the harem, there were other women who held significant political sway throughout the Great Mughals. As the Chandel princess of Gondwana, Rani Durgavati, did, she led her nation with amazing bravery and ability. Compared to Akbar the Great's, her nation was richer and had better governance. Mughal women took involved in the political climate of the time in a variety of ways and methods, as shown below:

### **A Matrimonial Union**

Numerous weddings during the Mughals' reign were motivated by politics. Through these unions, they improve their standing in several areas. Mughal women played a hidden role in marriage negotiations, led emperors and princes in the direction of political ties that would be most advantageous, and welcomed new wives into the intricate culture of the women's apartments. Babur married Mubarika, a Pashtun woman from the Yusufzay tribe, which helped him gain favor among the Afghan highlanders. Similar to how Babur wed her sister to Shabani Khan, after assuming control of Hindustan he divorced Shabani Khan and brought her sister back. Therefore, women had a significant influence on these political unions. In order to enhance her status, Nurjahan wed Shahjahan to the brother of her brother Mumtaz Mahal, and then wed the other son of Jahangir to her daughter Ladli Begum.

### **Missions of Diplomacy**

These women strengthened the connections that were advantageous to the empire by writing letters and sending couriers to the noble wives of other kings and nations. With the nobles and other officials, the ladies engaged in frequent correspondence. Among the women who engaged in active correspondence during the Mughal era were Mumtaz Mahal, Nurjahan, Jaahan Ara, and Hamida Bano Begum.

### **Appointments to positions of authority**

The appointment and elevation of family members and associates to positions of political and financial responsibility was heavily influenced by women at court. The family of Nurjahan, who greatly benefited from her position as Jahangir's wife, is perhaps the most famous example of this engagement in the creation of court hierarchy.

### **Court politics**

The real participation of women in political affairs at court was the most significant way they influenced Mughal politics. They were serving as peacemakers and mediators. The most well-known instance of women acting as peacemakers in intercession took place near the conclusion of Akbar's rule, when Salima Sultana Begum, Maryam Makani, and Gulbadan Begum succeeded in reconciling Akbar and Salim via their arduous efforts.

### **Impact Of Royal Ladies On Administrative And House Hold Affairs Of Mughal Empire**

In India, the Turks, who had fully adopted Persian political customs and respected women's sovereign rights, had already elevated a woman, Razia, to the throne, marking a significant advancement. The ladies of royalty were inspired to participate in politics by Razia. This custom persisted throughout the Turkish occupation of India, and it even appears that the Afghans gave their women some influence in areas of politics and administration.

Babur's family, which carried on the customs of Chingiz and Timur, gave its female members enough political freedom to participate actively in governance and politics.

Babur was barely eleven years old when Umar Sheikh Mirza passed away in 1494 A.D., and he was forced to face two strong armies within the frontiers of Farghana. His grandmother, Ehsan Daulat Begam, was of great assistance to him during this crucial time, and her wise counsel was largely to blame for his success. Even in such a dire circumstance, she

handled business as usual, took care of the immediate administrative issues, and handled herself so diplomatically that Babur did not suffer significantly. Furthermore, five or six months later, when one of his officers named Hasan organized a plot to assassinate Babur, it was once more Ehsan Daulat Begam who stepped up to the plate, rallied the obedient soldiers, and with their help, successfully arrested the conspirators and put an end to the situation. She was a perceptive and smart woman who gave Babur important assistance in managing the affairs of his state.

The Mughal Family was not an exception to Ehasan Daulat Begam's strong participation in modern politics. According to their individual capacities, Babur's mother and his wives also helped to find solutions to a number of challenging political issues. In all of his battles and travels, he was always followed by his mother, Qutlaq Nigam Khanum.

Mahim Begam, a Shia who was married to Babur in 1506 A.D., however, had a more significant part in his life. She traveled with her husband to Badakhshan and Transoxiana, supporting him through good times and bad. She held a high position during the reign of Babur and was the only queen permitted to sit next to the monarch in Delhi on the throne. She continued to take an active interest in the current political and administrative activities for another two and a half years following the death of her husband.

Babur's second wife, Bibi Mubarika, whom he wed in Afghanistan in 1519 A.D., assisted him in finding solutions to some of his political and administrative issues. She significantly assisted Babur in lowering the hostility between the Afghans and Babur.

Khanzada Begam, the eldest sister of Babur, was the first lady who had a significant position in the harem during the reign of Humayun. She was awarded the title of Padshah Begam and promoted to the position of the principal lady of the palace upon the death of Mahim Begam in 1532–1533 A.D. Humayun had a great deal of faith in her and frequently turned to her for advice when dealing with challenging family issues. Gulabdan Begam, Humayun's sister, constantly referred to her as the "Dearest Lady."

Khanzada Begam took a pretty deep interest in the political and administrative issues during her final twelve years as the head of the harem, and she had a significant impact on Humayun and his siblings. She made an effort to support Humayun during his difficult times, as much as she could. No other woman had contributed significantly to modern politics or administration during the rule of Humayun, with the exception of Khanzada Begam.

Political upheavals abounded throughout the early years of Akbar's rule, and some women also had significant roles to play. One of them was Mah Chuchak Begam, Akbar's stepmother, who wed Humayun in the year 1546. In the year 1556 A.D., Humayun selected her son Mirza Mohammed Hakim as Kabul's governor.

Mah Chuchak Begam was an aspirational woman who heavily used her power in Kabul's political issues. She actively engaged in Kabul politics after her husband's passing and tried to control the scene for the following eight years. She ultimately perished while attempting to support and enhance the status of her son Mirza Hakin. It is pretty apparent that throughout the early years of Akbar's rule, her activities added to the annoyance.

Maham Anaga, Akbar's principal nurse, was another female who contributed greatly in those early years. She was the mother of Baqi Kuka and Adham Kuka and the wife of Nadim Kuka. When Kamran threatened to expose Akbar to the flames of the camion in 1547 A.D. while they were fighting Humayun, she gladly obliged because she loved Akbar so much. As a result, Akbar had a lot of faith in her.

Bairam Khan succeeded Humayun as Akbar's regent in 1556 after the latter's demise. But over time, Akbar grew to detest the idea of regency. He was becoming older and no longer content to live an amusing life. He wanted to make a personality statement because he was sick of Bairam Khan. He had the example of his grandparents and father, who no longer found it easy to maintain their noble ties.

Fortunately, when Akbar stated that he wanted to get rid of Bairam Khan, Maham Anaga responded favorably. He had happy cooperation from Maham Anaga. They (Maham and Shahabuddin, the Governor of Delhi) informed the Emperor that Bairam Khan would deny Akbar any authority and power as long as he remained in power. Akbar was frustrated by this. 16 Because of Bairam Khan's behavior and Akbar's affection for Maham Anaga, who had given him encouragement, the two fell out after the Emperor apprehended some of Bairam Khan's mass murderers<sup>17</sup>. Because of Akbar's behavior, Bairam Khan decided to on a pilgrimage and left him. 18 Prior to this, the Emperor made the decision to seize control of

the government. The Khan-E-Khanan could now see clearly what was going on (Bairam Khan). In 1561 A.D., he made a submission offer before departing for Mecca.

Following Bairam Khan's defeat, Akbar turned his focus to Malwa, which was then governed by Baz Bahadur. In 1561 A.D., Baz Bahadur was defeated when Adham Khan, the son of Maham Anaga, was dispatched to attack Malwa. Adham Khan became conceited as a result of his success; instead of presenting the spoils to the Emperor, he sent only a few elephants and kept the women and the most valuable items for himself. Akbar was immensely irritated by Adham Khan's misbehavior. Maham Anaga arrived on the scene not long after. She orchestrated events, and eventually Adham Khan presented the entire loot to the Emperor. Finally, his submission was approved. Akbar had a lot of respect for Maham Anaga's sensitivity and didn't say anything to hurt her feelings. He was thankful to his nurse.

Additionally, Maham Anaga gained control of the state's affairs with her loyalty and sagacity. She rose to the position of the Emperor's top confidence. She engineered the appointment of Bahadur Khan, the brother of Ali Quli Khan, to the position of Wakil and gained the trust of Shahabuddin and Khwaja Jahan. Maham Anaga did the actual labor, despite the fact that he eventually became Wakil.

Up until this point, everything went without a hitch. But Maham Anaga became aware of her significance as a result of all this accomplishment. She desired to maintain control, either in her own right or by joint efforts with her family. It did not appeal to Akbar. Shamsuddin Atka Khan was chosen by Akbar to serve as prime minister in 1561 AD. Maham Anaga, "who, from her outstanding services, abundant wisdom, and exceeding devotion, saw herself as the substantive prime minister, was ousted at his" when Shamsuddin Atka Khan assumed control of the political, financial, and military matters. Disagreements developed between the Emperor and his nurse as a result of the growing influence of Maham Anaga, which also infuriated Munim Khan. This demonstrates that Akbar was acting as his instrument but was not entirely under his control. Within a two-month span, her impact was gone. Maham Anaga has clearly lost any power she once had on the Emperor, as evidenced by the transfer of Pir Mohammad to Malwa and the Emperor's subsequent recall of Adham Khan from that location. It is frequently asserted that her goals were the downfall of Bairam Khan and the advancement of her son's interests. However, the evidence does not back up this claim. Neither Bairam Khan nor Adham Khan received a penalty or favor. Additionally, Akbar did not spare Adham Khan after he killed Shamsuddin Atka Khan out of pure jealousy and instead had him thrown off the terrace as a form of punishment. It supports Akbar's assertion that he acted on his own volition. Maham Anaga passed away in 1562 after forty days had passed since the loss of her son.

In conclusion, Maham Anaga's thesis of petticoat governance is not particularly appealing. It seems that Akbar made the most of Maham Anaga's status and abilities while resisting letting the women in his harem rule over him.

Bakhtunnisa Begam was another intriguing figure of this era. She was Khwaja Hasan of Badakhshan's wife and Akbar's half-sister. Shah Mansur, who was Wazir in 1580 A.D., incited Muhammad Hakim, the governor of Kabul, to rebel in Kabul in 1581 A.D. Muhammad Hakim fled to the hills after Akbar made war on him. The emperor personally traveled to Kabul. Despite being absolved, Muhammad Hakim was humiliated when his sister Bakhtunnisa Begam was named Kabul's governor.

Akbar was able to control the situation in Kabul by assigning Bakhtunnisa Begam to the administration. The operations of Abdulla Khan Uzbek, on the one hand, and Muhammad Hakim's behavior, on the other, terrified the emperor. He made an effort to keep them from clashing by using tact. The emperor received expert assistance from Bakhtunnisa Begam in resolving this issue.

Akbar's mother, Miriam Makani, and his wife, Salima Sultan Begam, both played significant roles in political matters throughout his reign, just as Khanzada Begam did during the rule of his father, Humayun. Prince Salim, who had been denied audience for long time due to his excessive drinking habit, was allowed to make Kornish in 1599 AD while Akbar was departing for the Deccan thanks to Miriam Makani's pleas, who softened the emperor's heart.

Salim engaged in major criminal activity once more. He made the decision to seize the kingdom by force because he was tired of his father's protracted rule, which had already lasted more than forty years. He raised the rebel flag and acceded to the throne at Allahabad in 1601 A.D. The situation deteriorated quickly. The emperor was not happy at all. Nobody ventured to make a request of the prince. In the end, Miriam Makani and his aunt Gulbadan Begam asked for his pardon. The emperor gave in to their requests. The prince was given permission to address the emperor. He gave Salima Sultan Begam the order to inform the prince of the forgiveness. As a result of their efforts, the prince received his pardon in 1603 A.D.

Salima Sultan Begam, his stepmother, along with a few other Begams of the harem, had an important role in current affairs during the first year of Jahangir's rule. Khusru, the eldest son of Jahangir, revolted against his father in 1606 A.D. at the behest of Mirza Aziz Koka, also known as Khan Azam, the son of Shamshuddin Atka, and Jahangir eventually pardoned him as a result of pressure from Salima Sultan Begam and other Begams.

After Khusru's insurrection was put down in 1613 A.D., his mothers and sisters again pleaded with the emperor to pardon the prince and provide him access to the throne because he was repenting of his behavior. Khusru was finally given audience by Jahangir and given permission to visit the emperor every day thanks to the ladies of the harem's efforts. The daughter of Itimad-ud-Daula, Nurjahan Begam, was one of this era's most striking figures. Jahangir wed her in the year 1611 AD. She was really devoted to Jahangir and took wonderful care of him on a personal level. She was a brave woman who was gifted with the ability to comprehend political issues and to have a keen interest in administrative issues. She provided her spouse with wise counsel. The emperor had a lot of faith in her. Naturally, she had a lot of power over her husband.

Prince Khurram rebelled against his father Jahangir in 1623 AD. Finally, he turned to Nurjahan for protection, and through her efforts, the emperor forgave him. There are divergent views on the power Nurjahan wielded over the monarch as well as the current politics of the empire. She allegedly had a very high level of ambition and a desire for personal dominance. She thus established a "Junta" (clique) of her close family members, which included her mother Asmat Begam, her brother Asaf Khan, and her father Itmad-ud-Daula. Khurram, the second son of Jahangir, was added to the group in 1612 AD through his marriage to the daughter of Asaf Khan. By giving her relatives prominent positions, Nurjahan was able to use this Junta to further her authority. This inflamed the resentment of other nobles who despised this group's monopoly over politics.

Later, when Khurram had attained the title of Shahjahan and was beginning to assume prominence in the political activities of the Empire, a conflict between him and Nurjahan slowly grew and the Prince eventually became estranged from this group. Perhaps their competing interests caused Nurjahan to decide to send Khurram to a distant location like Qandhar. Additionally, he lost access to his Jagirs.

Khurram obviously didn't want things to happen because he refused to follow the order Nurjahan gave him. Khurram's insurrection was ultimately the result of this. it was effectively put down. It is thought that her rising political prominence ultimately fueled the animosity among some of the nobility. One of the former greats of the Empire, Mahabat Khan, rebelled as a result of it.

The only time she actively engaged in politics and gained notoriety was when she helped put an end to Mahabat Khan's revolt. Mahabat Khan and Prince Parvez were despatched to the Deccan to put an end to Shahjahan's uprising. Orders were given for the transportation of Mahabat Khan to Bengal after the uprising was put down in 1625 AD while prince Pervez and Mahabat Khan were camped close to Sarangpur. Both were assembled using the Imperial Orders, albeit reluctantly. Mahabat Khan was also requested to send the elephants and give an explanation for the money he had made during Shah Jahan's uprising. He was also accused of violating royal protocol in that he had betrothed his daughter and married her without the Emperor's consent.

Mahabat Khan was furiously offended by this mistreatment. His impression was that Asaf Khan, who was constantly envious of the former and sought to set up a showdown for him, was the one who ordered these orders to be conveyed to him. With this goal in mind, he traveled for the court with 4,000–5,000 Rajput soldiers with the intent of separating the Emperor from his "evil genius" Asaf Khan. Jahangir was traveling to Kabul at the time and had set up camp on the Jhelum River's bank. 50 He watched for a chance. After forcing his way into the Emperor, Mahabat Khan ultimately led him to his tent.

In the frenzy of this performance, Mahabat Khan forgot to arrest Nur Jahhan. She phoned her brother Asaf Khan right away, reprimanded him severely, and arranged a meeting of all the notable nobles and officers. They all agreed to try their hand at combat with Mahabat Khan's men.

When Jahangir heard of this, he immediately understood the foolishness of the plan because Mahabat Khan's army was far too powerful for the Imperialists to be able to overcome it. Jahangir repeatedly advised Nurjahan not to risk engaging in combat with Mahabat Khan. But the imperialists opted to use force after utterly ignoring his advice. Fidai Khan made an attempt to save the Emperor throughout the night, but he was unsuccessful.



Nurjahan ultimately chose to command the imperialists against Mahabat Khan. Nurjahan could manage the time spent apart from her husband. She tried unsuccessfully to free Jahangir by force, and in the end gave herself over to Mahabat Khan and joined her husband in jail. Mahabat Khan now had complete control of the circumstance. She began secretly making plans for both her spouse and her own freedom. The strategy worked. After reviewing the forces that Nurjahan had amassed, Jahangir notified Mahabat Khan. The Khan made no effort to resist, declared his allegiance to the Emperor, and then eventually fled. He brought his adversary Asaf Khan, Abu Talib, and the son of Daniyal with him. The royal army tried to catch up with him but was unsuccessful.

Once released from Mahabat Khan, the Emperor traveled to Rohtas, where the customary darbar was held. The overthrow of Mahabat Khan and the liberation of the famous nobles was the main issue facing the Imperialists. Through Afzal Khan, Nurjahan issued Mahabat Khan a "imperious mandate" requesting the release of the nobility. While Mahabat Khan freed the son of Daniyal, he would not free Asaf Khan until he had arrived in Lahore and assured his own safety. He was once more threatened by Nurjahan to immediately release Asaf Khan. He was released by the Mahabat Khan after swearing devotion to him.

Asaf Khan was named Wakil when the Imperial camp now arrived in Lahore. Mahabat Khan once more formed an alliance with Shah Jahan, alarming Nurjahan, who then named Khan Jahan the supreme commander of the imperial army and dispatched him to subdue them. Unfortunately, Jahangir passed away in October 1627 while traveling from Kashmir to Lahore and his health was deteriorating at Rajauri.

Nurjahan summoned the nobles for advice as soon as the Emperor died, but Asaf Khan, who secretly supported his son-in-law Shahjahan, detected foul play and stopped the conference. He begged Nurjahan almost behind bars. Dawar Bakhsh, the son of Khusru, was temporarily crowned Emperor after he summoned Shahjahan in the Deccan. Shaharyar was to be the Emperor upon Nurjahan's request. One day's march ahead of Nurjahan, Asaf Khan and Dawar Bakhsh arrived in Lahore, defeated Shaharyar, put him in jail, and blinded him. In 1627 A.D., Shahjahan was subsequently crowned Emperor of Delhi.

Immediately following Shahjahan's ascension, Nurjahan left politics. She accepted Shahjahan's offer of a two lakh rupee annual pension. In terms of her personal goals, Nurjahan's complete retirement from political activity is particularly significant since she had been so closely involved in imperial affairs that, had she desired it, she could have continued to meddle in them even after Jahangir's passing. She had already demonstrated her aptitude for understanding and comprehending political issues as well as her intelligence. One can infer from her full renunciation of political activities that her interests were limited to Jahangir and Jahangir alone.

She chose to live a reclusive lifestyle after his passing rather than engage in political activism. It may be argued that after Shahjahan's accession, she lost all of the power and influence she had before, making it impossible for her to have an impact on politics. All of this was absolutely absent, which can only be attributed to her wish to retire completely following the passing of her spouse, with whom all of her interests were intertwined.

Mumtaz Mahal, Shahjahan's loving wife, applied some political pressure in the early years of his rule. even before Shahjahan assumed the throne of Delhi. She had joyfully accompanied him on all of his travels and exile. enduring the hardships and sorrows of life while living in the forests of Telangana, Bengal, Mewar, and the Deccan.

She held the most important position in the harem in 1628 A.D., when Shahjahan succeeded to the throne, and the Emperor frequently sought her advice on both private and official matters. The Royal Seal was given to her. The Imperial Harem had the exclusive right to stamp the seal on the state documents after they had been finalized and handed to them. As a result, she was able to gain insight into current events, some of which she actively pursued.

Mumtaz Mahal's professional life was brief. She passed away in 1631. Jahanara Begam, Shahjahan's eldest daughter, was given the honor of succeeding her as premier lady of the harem after her passing. She participated actively in politics. She had everything she wanted because she was her father's favorite daughter, and she received the most respect from all the ladies of the palace. She had unrestricted power to advance in the court.

Jahanara Begam occasionally helped the Imperial family, which held hearings on political matters, mend their divisions. Shahjahan became angry with Aurangzeb in the year 1644 A.D. as a result of some of his own actions and the misguided advice of some of his advisors, and his jagir and status were taken away. As a result of Jahanara Begam's petition, the Emperor pardoned Aurangzeb and gave him back his previous position. Jahan Aara Begam supported Dara,

assisted him, and prayed for his success when the battle for the Delhi throne between her brothers broke out in 1658 AD. She made every effort to influence her brothers to keep things peaceful.

On May 29, 1658 A.D., Dara and Aurangzeb engaged in the Battle of Samugarh, which Dara lost. Shahjahan and Jahan Ara Begam both experienced great sadness. At the meantime, Aurangzeb arrived in Agra in June 1658 AD, when he was met by the army and imperial nobles. He then gained control of Agra and surrounded the fort where his father Shahjahan was holding out. He reduced the supply. Although the emperor begged Aurangzeb for mercy, he insisted on the full surrender of the Agra Fort. Finally, on June 8th, 1658 A.D., Shahjahan gave up. He allowed the fort to be opened, and Aurangzeb locked him up.

Jahanara visited Aurangzeb on June 10th, 1658 AD, in an effort to try her own sway and persuasion. She suggested the Empire's stance. She recommended to Aurangzeb that the rest of the Empire be given to him with the title of "Iqbal-Buland" and the heir-apparent position, while the Punjab and neighboring lands should be given to Dara, Gujrat to Murad, Bengal to Shuja, and the Decan to Sultan Mohammad (Aurangzeb). She also pleaded with him to speak with Shahjahan. Jahanara, however, was extremely humiliated when Aurangzeb rejected her proposal. She turned to her father's side after being upset by her brother's actions and preferred imprisonment to sharing the victory's honors with him. She eventually accepted the circumstance and stayed with her father till the very end.

The second child of Shahjahan, Raushan Ara Begam, did not get along well with her sister, Jahanara Begam. She (Raushan Ara) was an Aurangzeb supporter. She was as vindictive and dishonest as they come. She made an effort to help Aurangzeb carry out his scheme to seize the throne from his father's shaking hands. When she learned that Aurangzeb had taken up arms in order to seize the throne of Delhi, she was aware of the activities in the seraglio and secretly sent her brother daily reports on all the occurrences. She gave him access to all the gold and silver she had. She was promised a payment of five lakh rupees from Aurangzeb in addition to the title of Shah Begam, which he gave her in 1669 AD.

During his rule, Aurangzeb forbade his wives from actively participating in politics. One of his wives, Dilras Banu Begam, appears to have been a proud and independent woman, and the Emperor was somewhat in awe of her. He married another wife, Udaipuri Mahal, when she was still quite young. She remained a powerful force in his life, and it was because of her influence that he forgave his son Kam Bakhsh of many of his transgressions.

The daughters of Aurangzeb were not just simpletons; they actively participated in political affairs. It has been established that Zebunnisa, the eldest daughter of Aurangzeb, frequently appeared in court while wearing a veil and supported her father's decision-making. His father-in-law, Shah-Nawaj Khan, did not offer him any assistance during the Aurangzeb brothers' fight for succession in 1658 A.D. Aurangzeb imprisoned his father-in-law following Dara's loss.

Women from the post-Aurangzeb period are distinct from those from the earlier time. Instead of the queens, princesses, or wives of some high nobles and state officers from the Mughal or Rajput families, concubines of low origin who were highly ambitious, cunning, and self-centered came to prominence. They took advantage of political crisis, social decline, and intellectual deterioration to spread their tentacles for gaining power and pelf, undermining whatever little Imperia there was beyond all hope of recovery.

Additionally, it seems that some of the ladies wanted to strengthen the Emperor's waning power. They operated in secret since they were unable to operate openly. The women who served as the royal household occupied a sizable area of the palace (Harem). It has also been discussed how the clans and familial groups of nobles at the court are organized, how racial and sectarian tensions exist, and how politics are played out among them. However, despite their significance in the past for comprehending the whole operation of the institution of nobility, organization and administration, his home, and other aspects of his existence have thus far been disregarded. We will gather information about their homes, presents and charities, which they gave generously to a range of people as well as their hobbies, in addition to their household (Harem), which included several slaves, attendants, and eunuch, wives' rooms outside apartments, and kitchen.

The spouses of the nobility followed in the royals' footsteps. A noble rarely had fewer than three or four spouses. These wives adored their husbands like gods, with the elder woman commanding the highest adoration. The reason was that they had complete control over the management of the palace and could accept or reject anything. On those occasions when the noble visited a specific wife on a specific day, he was warmly received. The remainder of men remained behind and enjoyed the eunuchs' company. They were constantly itching to leave. These women indulged in all worldly pleasures aside from their husbands' company, wearing the priciest clothing, eating the most exquisite food, and enjoying the daintiest

cuisine. They frequently harbored intense jealousies of one another over obtaining favors from their husbands, but they never voiced these feelings out of fear of upsetting the master.

To ensure that no male other than her husband saw each wife, Eunuchs and bought Bengali slaves were assigned to watch them. A severe punishment was meted out to a eunuch if he did not perform his task. Only a small percentage of noblemen's wives, according to Pelsaert, were virginal, and the majority of them engaged in sexual activity together while their husbands were away. But it appears that this point of view is based on rumors. They maintained tight solitude while residing there.

The nobility's female members had opulent lifestyles. The exact definition of splendor might be found in their homes. Zafar Khan's wife was one of the most beautiful and liberal women I've ever met. According to Tavernier, Zafar Khan's wife is the most beautiful and liberal woman in all of India, and she alone spends more than all of the other wives and daughters of the same kind together. Her family has ongoing debt. She held a lavish luncheon and invited the Emperor after one of her palaces was finished. The grand-daughter of Asaf Khan, Khalilullah Khan's bride, too led a regal lifestyle. According to Manucci, the Khalilullah Khan's wife wore shoes with precious stones that were worth three million rupees.

Each aristocratic wife had her own apartment and was given money by her husband each month to cover household expenses (furniture, clothing, jewelry, etc.). These women owned numerous silver and gold vessels. They were served by a large number of slaves and maids. Their opulence fluctuated depending on how much power they had over their husbands. Large walls encircled the homes of these women, which contained gardens and tanks that they used for amusement. The Mahals are revered with lustful sensuality, wanton and reckless celebration, unnecessary pomp, inflated pride, and embellished daintiness, according to Pleasant.

In both royalty and the nobility, keeping concubines was a highly widespread practice. These concubines worked hard to win over their masters. They urged people to consume opium and other intoxicating substances and stimulated their passion by using perfumes, ointments, and delicious scents. By swatting flies, massaging their hands and feet, and playing musical instruments, they rendered service to them. They occasionally replaced their genuine wives, who were envious of them. Each concubine lived in a separate apartment. They were guarded by capable individuals. The inner rooms of their palaces were only accessible to the eunuchs or maid slaves. If any of these guards did not do their duties, they were severely punished. These women yearned for their husbands' presence as well, who visited them infrequently out of practicality. According to Pelsaert, "The women are so lustful, yet they are excused since the husbands, even though they are merely peasants, call them when they have occasions."

As previously said, the wives of nobles and the concubines were envious of one another for winning their husbands' favor and company. As a result, Tavernier notes, "The ladies of the King's harem were quite envious of each other as the custom dictates that the first born succeeds the crown." They tried everything to induce miscarriages in the other women. Tavernier goes on to add that Shaista Khan's surgeon told him, when he was in Patna in 1666 A.D., that the prince's wife of Shaista Khan had forced eight women in his harem to miscarry in one month by forbidding any infants other than her own. In the Harem, there were women who could predict the future. When a pearl worth 14,000–15,000 rupees went missing under Jahangir's rule, a female soothsayer said that it would be found shortly and would be brought by a woman with white complexion. She was rewarded when this turned out to be true. Jahangir was told by a female palmist that a lovely woman dressed in white would come to bless him. A concubine (Turk) came to him smiling on the third day and said that the prince who had been sent to Dhoolpur would succeed. Therefore, it would appear that women did indeed predicate the future in those times. It appears that female fortune tellers were created because male fortune tellers were unable to enter female residences.

Women worked as spies for the Mughal Court as well. The era of Humayun and Akbar contains references to a woman by the name of Aga-i-Saruked. She once resided in Babur's harem. She arrived in order to pose as a spy and go investigate Khan Khanan and other powerful nobles.

The nobles kept a pretty large home. These homes are described by Plesart as magnificent and lovely with lots of flats. The majority of these homes also had gardens and tanks inside. In the summer, oxen would carry fresh water from wells to fill the tanks on a regular basis. In this climate, plants and water provide refreshment and leisure that are unheard of in Europe. He does, however, emphasize that because mud is used to build the walls rather than mortar, these homes only endure a few years. He thought the walls' white plaster was exceptional and far better than anything in Holland. They made a thin paste out of sugar, milk gum, and unslaked lime. After the plaster on the walls had dried, they added the paste,



smoothing it out with specially tailored cloths before polishing it constantly with agates—possibly for a whole day—until it was dry and hard and gleamed like an alabaster and could even be used as a looking glass.

Hakim Ali's mansion was regarded as a wonder at the time it was constructed. It was constructed underneath the reservoir. The home included rooms for beds and other amenities. Emperor Akbar personally visited the residence, and to do so, he dove into the reservoir with Hakim. When he got there, he changed his clothes, put perfume on, ate breakfast, read a few novels, and had a short pause before putting on the lion-sheet (lung) again and leaving the house.

The floor of this structure was completely covered in lavish carpets in bright colors since it was believed that a bare floor was unfit to support the lavish canopy bed that was centered in the room. This bedstead's complete construction was done in the best materials and brightest hues, which not only increased its value but also gave it a very appealing aspect.

The lords of old managed their kitchen with a fairly large crew. Modi-i-Khana, the kitchen's chief, was also referred to as mushrif-i-barwarchikhana. His gumashtas would go to the kitchen at midnight, get the ingredients for the food to be cooked, and stay there for the next two watches. Islamkhan himself often paid these gunashtas two rupees a month for a meager diet of dry rice (bhut) of the sathi kind, vegetables, and bread made from millets (Juwar and bajral). However, 1000 trays of high-quality food were served on his soldier day. The top Iranian, Turani, Kashmiri, and European chefs are among those he employs. He used to hire Brahmans to prepare food for Hindus.

Miran Sadar Jahan was renowned across the Mughal empire for offering karhi and bhat with a distinct flavor. The aristocrats used to make intricate plans for food preparation during military excursions. Farid reports that during Abul Fazl's Deccan campaign, 1,000 trays of the finest food were set out on the table, and he entertained all the amirs and nobles who traveled with him. Alongside, a tent was established where khichri was prepared throughout the day and given to anyone who came there in need of food.

According to the nobility who were known for giving generously, Murtaza Khan Shaikh Farid Bukhari compiled a list of all the sayyids in the area and sent it to Gujrat, where he gave them financial support. Out of his own sarkar, he also established a separate fund to cover their daughters' wedding costs. Additionally, grants were granted to Markhderms, darweshes, and widows whose husbands had perished while serving him in the Khangah. The shighar of that location wrote to him, "All the lower land cultivable land have been awarded to the divines and there is noun left but 60bighas of cultivable land in this pargana. He used to provide so many subsiten grants that an entire pargna was assigned to the aimma. How am I going to be able to stay in this pargana?" Instead of responding directly, the shaikh wrote the following couplet by hand and sanded it: Aglaganti Jhonpri. When the Shaikh rode to the royal court, he habitually gave out blankets, tunics, sheets, and slippers, saying "Jo nikles so labh" (whatever comes out from the flaming but, is gain).

Ram Das Kachhawana also developed an additional method of gift-giving by allowing the community of charans, bards, and courtesans to come each year in the same month and receive the same amount of money from the cashier. There was no requirement to acquire a new order. Ramdas Tere deb mal-kunhamalhairer hen is the first line of a verse written in his honor by the well-known Hindi poet Gang.

In the past, the nobles hosted lavish celebrations in the Emperor's honor. We have information about yet another lavish celebration that Zain Khankoka staged at his home in honor of Emperor Akbar. Farid briefly describes the extraordinary preparations made for the event but leaves out information about the food and beverages offered. Regarding the preparation, he notes that Zain Khan set up a lengthy platform made of boards and covered it with the rare Tus shawls of the time to accommodate the Emperor and other guests. Three tanks were dug up in front and filled with rosewater, saffron-colored water, and water that had been filled with argaja (an Indian Perfume). This was done in order to fling the 1,000 dancing girls who had congregated there into the Tank, coloring their complete drawings. Additionally, he had a very large quantity of milk, sugar, and Yazd rose syrup prepared. There was yezdrose water all around the seating area. Just before the party began, he presented offerings of items covered in jewels and ornate decorations. Mughal Royal Ladies spent their free time engaging in a variety of interests. Mukwis Khan was very interested in raising animals. He gathered a sizable number of buffaloes, she-goats, sheep, camels, and horses and kept them in Delhi's Shakarpur pargana. According to Farid, this is where the daily quota of curd, butter, ghee, beef, and mutton came from. Numerous nobles also enjoyed gardening as a hobby. A generally known garden in Akbarbad (Agra), known as the Garden of Paradies, according to Itamad-ul-son-in-law Daulla's Hakim Beg, was located close to Nakhaus.

Numerous nobility supported artists in the arts, including writers and musicians. As a musician, Beg Tarkhan wrote songs in Sindhi and Hindi and was skilled in both vocal and instrumental music. A guy with exceptionally sophisticated tastes,

Shah Nawaz Khan arrived at the Mughal court after surrendering Qandhar during Akbar's reign. He gathered a sizable group of Kalawants and musicians of rubab and bin (vina) because he had a particular fondness for music. Some of them, such as Quliji Khan, used to devote a lot of time to regularly instructing Madarasas students in law, the Quran, and Hadis. At most, ovory nobles held a sizable number of sahelis, or slave girls. A number of other nobility, including Ilah Vardi Khan and As at Khan Jafar Beg, also held a lot of lovely slave ladies.

## CONCLUSION

It is abundantly evident from the discussion above that the nobles were free to spend money from their individual salaries and income. The expenses they paid for with their own money were not audited. Only the personnel, materials, and services that nobles gave were reviewed or scrutinized; their personal costs were not. Because of this, each noble had his own semi-autonomous "Sarkar" (administration), which included his military unit, officials, domestic staff, servants, and hangers-on. Since the nobles were free to spend their own revenue however they liked as long as the military and other duties owed to the state were satisfied, all such administrations were independent units. It is a remarkable accomplishment of women that they were able to make their imprint in politics despite the limitations of the purdah and harem in medieval India. Along with engaging in political activities, they frequently displayed a domineering attitude toward their male sovereigns. These women provided them with vital advice. They received the right to sit next to the monarch and to issue farmans on his behalf, and they received the coins bearing their names. This feature is an excellent illustration of the Mughal harem's restrictive structure's permissive attitude toward women.

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