6. CONCLUSION

*Malfuzaat* is more than the writings of Sufis. It is an intense appreciation of God, awareness of his closeness, and at the same time his distance. In the absence of mass communication tools, the birth of this literature was also vital for the continuation and spread of Sufism in the sultanate period. *Malfuzaat* not only became an important marketing tool in the hands of the Sufi saints, assisting Nizamuddin in creating an institution for Sufi practitioners, but is arguably the most important literary achievement of the period, and as is shown throughout this thesis, is necessary for the deconstruction of the sultanate period.

*Malfuzaat* explains many Sufi principles and teachings, but also explains an attitude of the era to a vast range of social problems. The story of medieval India is not only 'his' story – ruling classes, sultanates, establishing new empires, expanding territory, and developing new techniques to control them. It is also about 'their' story – the story of those who were in fact the majority, but somehow weren’t important enough to make it to the pages of other books of the period.

*Malfuzaat* are vital in understanding the past and present composite culture. Though generally we are aware of the tradition of slavery in the
Indian medieval period, when we turn the pages of *malfuzaat* we see how they were treated in the *khanqah* and subsequently outside of the *khanqah*.

In particular the author is impressed with the Sufi attitude and practice regarding peasants and gender equality. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, the *malfuzaat* shows the active promotion and practice of gender equality within the *khanqahs*, which numbered over 2,000 in and around Delhi.

The *khanqah* of the saint was a city in itself where people from all walks of life could be seen rubbing shoulders. However the fundamental difference between the outer city and that of the one inside the *khanqahs* was the society of the former was riddled with problems, where massive compartmentalization on the basis of race, caste, class, and religion prevailed, and where cultural interaction among different sections of society was avoided, as severe punishment was inflicted upon those who dared breach archaic separatist laws, laws which were cited as justifications for punishment. On the other hand, egalitarianism was the basic law followed in the *khanqah*, and for visitors it meant freedom from oppressive communal prejudices outside its gates. Slaves and masters, rural folk, urban elite, farmers, traders, poor and rich alike thronged the *khanqah* with the objective of realizing truth and meeting like-minded people. Sufis worked hard to
instill confidence among the common people as they endeavoured to bring about human harmony.

Sufi’s contribution to language is another feature of note. Due to their desire to effect as many people as possible, a common language was born which later came to be known as Urdu. The earliest sentences of Hindawi we have discovered were uttered in the khanqahs.

The pivotal point of thought of the early Indo-Muslim mystics was their concept of religious attitudes, which constituted the basis of their approach towards society and the state. When asked to explain the highest form of religious devotion, Muinuddin Chishti remarked that it was nothing but feeding the hungry, providing clothes to the naked and helping those in distress.

Elaborating the same view, Nizamuddin spoke about two kinds of devotion to God – Lazim (intransitive) and muta‘addi (transitive). In the Lazim, the benefit, which accrues, is confined to the devotee alone. Lazim includes the observance of rituals like prayer, fasting, pilgrimage to Mecca, recitations of religious formulae, turning over the beads of rosary, and so on. The muta‘addi on the contrary, brings advantage and comfort to others; it is performed by spending money on others, showing affection to people and by other means through which a man strives to help his fellow human beings. The reward of muta‘addi devotion is endless and limitless.
The contemporary historians of Alauddin Khalji portray him as a godless king. The ambition behind his famous market policy was allegedly to fulfill his imperialist desires by strengthening his military power. A reading of Nasiruddin’s *Khair-ul-Majalis* reveals an intention of a philanthropic nature. It is recorded in this *malfuz*, that after the death of Khalji, his people were in deep mourning, and visited his grave in droves offering prayer. Nasiruddin himself had a very high regard for Khalji.

Similarly, the Tughlaq period has always been considered a very prosperous one because of several projects like token currency, the establishment of a department of agriculture, digging of canals, and giving loans to farmers. As is revealed through Nasiruddin’s *malfuz*, the ground reality was quite different, yet a reading of the *Khair-ul-Majalis*’s historical counterparts insist on supporting the notion of Tughlaq’s reign and successful and prosperous.

As we see, *malfuz* literature can be utilised, and should be adopted, in terms of collecting as much original information as possible written during the sultanate period. We have seen that texts based on the writings of paid authors of the period and unreliable and biased, and as such, the *malfuzaat*, with its wide ranging scope of topics and its confrontations with the realities of its day, provide us with a credible supplementary historical source which must be used in conjunction with these other texts.
The author believes that he has only just opened the book on this topic. Having analysed just two of the many *malfuzaat* available, there is much potential and scope for further research in this area. For instance, the *malfuzaat* of Hamiduddin Nagori, the *Surur u-Sudur*, is a Rajasthani *malfuz* of the sultanate period, and is yet to be explored, and will no doubt provide some very interesting insights in life in Rajasthan during that period.

Similarly, the *malfuz* of Deccan Sufi Gesu Daraz, the *Jaawami ul-Kalim*, and which was compiled by Akbar Husaini, is yet to be deconstructed. The north Indian *malfuz Siraj ul-Hidayah*, is a collection of the discourses of Sayyid Jalaluddin Bukhari, and was compiled by Makhdumzada Abdullah, and last but not least, the *Maadin ul-Maani* of Shaikh Sarfuddin Yahya Maneri from Bihar, compiled by Maulana Zain Badr Arabi. These *malfuzaat* have yet to be analysed, and will no doubt be a mine of information about the lives of the people of their era.