Conclusion
CONCLUSION

The traditions of Muslim education in India were in general the same as the Abbasids of Baghdad. They were transplanted in India by the scholars and literati of Muslim lands who migrated to India as a result of the Mongol invasion. The Sultanate of Delhi within just a century of its foundation had reached an unrivalled position in the field of Muslim education.

Qutbuddin Aibek founded the Delhi Sultanate in 1206 A.D. and was the first of the slave dynasty. He built many mosques which were not only centres of religious worship but also of education. In the memory of his son Nasiruddin Mahmud, Iltutmish founded the Nasiriyah College. Qazi Minhaj Siraj, the historian was appointed as its principal. Sultan Iltutmish during his absence appointed his daughter Razia Sultan his regent and also during his lifetime declared her his successor to the throne. Driven by the hordes of Changiz Khan, learned men from places such as Turkey, Mawara-ul-Nahr, Khurasan, Iraq, Azarbaijan etc. found an honourable place in the court of Balban at Delhi. Balban’s son Sultan Muhammad was deeply interested in education and learning. The most
learned and accomplished men of the time visited his court quite frequently.

Sultan Alauddin Khalji was also a great appreciator and patron of talent. By the time of Alauddin Khalji’s reign (1296-1316 A.D.) Delhi became an important metropolitan city for the migrants coming from the Muslim East. The migrant scholars from far-off lands such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Iraq and Iran were not able to carry their invaluable collection of books and manuscripts to India with the result that stress was laid on such subjects as poetry, contemporary local history, law, grammar etc. which did not require the use of libraries. However, there were a large number of schools and colleges in all important cities. Delhi alone had one thousand madrasahs in the fourteenth century A.D.

The Sultanate of Delhi attained a very high level in the field of Muslim education just within a century of its foundation. According to Ziauddin Barani, the scholars of the reign were on par with Ghazali and Razi. After the close of Alauddin’s rule, the high standard of wisdom and learning sank to an inferior level. Although Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq appreciated all sorts of learning yet the number of learned men during the period were comparatively less.

Amongst the Tughlaqs, the first three rulers of this dynasty were themselves distinguished scholars. Although Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq’s
learning was generally religious but that of his son Muhammad Tughlaq was almost encyclopaedic and his appetite for knowledge was insatiable. He was so well versed in the rational as well as theological sciences that even his worst critics recognized his high intellectual calibre. The *Futuhal-i-Firoz Shahi* by Sultan Firoz mentions that Firoz Shah Tughlaq repaired and rebuilt structures of former rulers which were ruined due to the lapse of time. He built the magnificent ‘Firozi Madrasah’, Ziauddin Barani, the contemporary historian, has praised this building and says that Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi a scholar of great repute, was appointed to teach commentaries on the *Quran, Hadith* (tradition) and *fiqh* (Muslim law and jurisprudence) in the *Madrasah*. During Firoz Shah’s reign a syllabus was introduced of fourteen subjects which included traditional as well as rational sciences. He was deeply interested in astronomy and medicine. The *Sirat-i-Firoz Shahi* enumerates in detail the development in the field of astronomy and medicine. The study of medicine developed to a great extent during the reign of Sultan Alauddin Khalji, Muhammad bin Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq.

The Delhi Sultans took a keen interest in the promotion of learning, many books were written under their patronage, scholars were recognized, many Sanskrit books were translated into Persian, *madrasahs* were established, endowment and grants were made so as to make
provision for the maintenance of these educational institutions. But this does not mean that Muslim settlements in India began after the Ghurid invasions. Long before Shihabuddin appeared on the scene many Musalmans had been living for generations in India under the Hindu Rais. There were Muslim colonies in Badaon, Bahraich, Ajmer, Nagaur, Qanauj and other places. For example, Maulana Raziuddin Hasan Saghani, the famous author of Mashriq-ul-Anwar was born in Badaun in 1181 A.D., learnt the ahadis there and when he went to Baghdad he was soon acknowledged as a leading scholar of the Traditions of the Prophet which means even before the coming of the Sultanate there was some kind of indigenous education and institutions of the same. Secondly the development and progress of education did not depend on the Sultan’s patronage alone and the madrasahs established by him. Whether there was patronization of education or not, Muslim education was always there.

With the establishment of Muslim rule in India, a need was felt for the erection of mosques, which also fulfilled the function of the centres of learning. It is a striking feature to note that since the rise of Islam, mosques played an important part in the promotion of education and learning. It was the meeting place of the learned men, the place of
devotion and worship, study and discussion not strictly organized but open to every Muslim.

In India too, as in other Muslim countries, mosques continued to function as centres of learning even after the establishment of regular madrasahs. During the Sultanate period also a large number of mosques were constructed throughout the length and breath of the land. Learned men who came to India either of their own volition or were invited by the ruling monarchs, usually had close links with these mosques. In teaching, they did not adopt any new method but followed the traditional system which was prevalent in other Islamic countries. The religious basis remained in force as it was in other countries.

A study of Muslim education during the Sultanate period helps us to understand that Islamic education did contain a co-ordination between secular and religious elements. Though education was influenced by religion, at times the ulama and scholars established the importance and indispensability of education for practical life. Provision of education in arts, crafts, architecture, agriculture, medicine and commerce and such other subjects of practical utility defined the essential aim of education to be a harmonization between secular and religious education.

It is very difficult to estimate the extent of Muslim education in India in early times. We have no accurate estimate as to the average
number of students attending a college. Probably this varied considerably from just a few pupils with one teacher, to a large number with many teachers in the more important centres of learning. Probably most mosques had attached to them, if not a madrasah then a maktab or primary school. All Muslim children were supposed to attend a maktab in order to learn the portions of the Quran required for the Muslims daily devotion but we cannot be sure that they always did so.

Under the Islamic system, education was considered to be indispensable for life. The religious background enhanced the indispensability and universality of education. Another important feature of Islamic education was that politics, literature and history made appreciably good progress during the period. Before this period the tendency to produce the historical work had not freely evolved under the ancient Indian education system whatever little history we get, it is in the form of legendary and mythological tales and epics.

We are able to obtain less of true and authentic accounts of historical events in chronological order before the advent of the Muslims. Rajatarangini written by Kalhana can be placed in the category of history. But during the Muslim period history was written in the form of memoirs and the Sultans extended patronage to famous historians in their courts. Belles letters of the period owed its existence especially to the high
aesthetic sense of the Sultans. Therefore, different aspects of literature such as prose, verse, fiction and poetry were included in the curricula of contemporary education.

Like the ancient Indian system of education, it is a special feature of the Islamic educational system the it effected a close personal contact between the teacher and pupil. Most teachers either the one's of the maktabs and madrasahs or private teachers paid individual attention to the students. Rote learning in maktabs was given importance, and the principal aim of the teacher was to pass on the pupil the learned traditions which he himself had received. Every student proceeded with his lesson independently according to his level of intelligence and personal capability.

Despite its merits, Islamic education was not immune from certain glaring defects. Though religious education formed an integral part of the primary curriculum and the study of the Quran was compulsory yet a very high level of spiritualism was difficult to attain. Prompted by religious and social prestige, the rulers had established maktabs and madrasahs but after the death of the founders usually the institutions deteriorated but this does not mean the Muslim education deteriorated because the individual centres run by scholars kept functioning as institutes to impart education.
Right from childhood, in the elementary or primary stage itself, children were taught the Persian alphabet in maktabs. The medium of instruction in madrasahs was Persian. Persian was the court language and was compulsorily studied, although Arabic grammar and language was also taught. Although according to the tenets of Islam, the acquisition of knowledge is considered an important duty, Islamic education in India could not be 'universal'. Infact, the state did not establish any regular well organized body like the Department of Education aiming to educate the masses and to spread knowledge among them.

Due to the strict Pardah system, women usually remained confined to their homes and were deprived of education. No doubt, the princesses and other girls belonging to aristocratic household received education inside their own palaces and some of them acquired a considerable amount of learning but there was no proper arrangement for the girls of the general masses. Only few girls learnt reading and writing in the local mosques with boys. According to some writers, this neglect of female education was due to adversity of circumstances and not due to any inherent defect in the system.

The patronage, which the institution of harems enjoyed under the Sultanate of Delhi, gave women of royalty enough inducement to further their ambition in carrying out administration, leading troops to the battle
field, dispatching and receiving of envoys, signing treaties and dealing sternly and tactfully with disruptive forces in the Sultanate. Women belonging to the royal household such as Khudawanda-i-Jahan, Shah Turkan, Chief queen of Sultan Ilutmish, Razia Sultan, eldest daughter of Sultan Ilutmish, Malika-i Jahan, wife of Sultan Jalaluddin Khalji, Makhduma-i-Jahan and Khudavandzada, mother and sister of Sultan Muhamamad bin Tughlaq patronized education and learning.

The effective role of these women in politics and administration displays that they must have been fairly educated. But contemporary historians abstain from making public mention of them. No doubt their political, religious and literary contributions have been narrated by the Persian chronicles but the social and cultural aspects of Muslim women have been evaded. The Persian chronicles knowingly or unknowingly or under compulsion did not deal with women’s affairs but concentrated their compositions on the political affairs of the empire, the military exploits and the magnificence of the royal courts. The system of mass education for girls was however not present in the Sultanate period, though education among the ladies of the royal families was quite intensive and progressive, especially in case of ladies who displayed high intellectual potential. But during the medieval period there was hardly any mass education, worth the name. despite the fact that Muslim ladies
remained behind Pardah with not many facilities for a liberal education, yet the progress made by some women is indeed admirable.

Although the aim of receiving education was mainly religious and moral training, it may be stated that the Muslim religious scholarship during the medieval period was not hostile to the study of rational, metaphysical or practical subjects. Its main concern was to ensure that the religious dimension of the personality did not weaken as a result of the emphasis on philosophic studies. The tradition of rational and philosophic studies was respected to the extent, that it did not erode the foundations of religion. The Mu’tazilite Kashshaf, the rationalist Tafsir-i-Kabir of Razi and the works of Abu ‘Ali’ibn Sina continued to enjoy a place in Islamic studies of Medieval India.

Other than the maktabs, madrasahs and khanqahs there were also other agencies through which education was imparted. The individual centres of education academic assemblies and Sufi majlis were also channels through which knowledge was imparted. The individual centres were the most popular medium for imparting knowledge. The observatories and astrolabes functioned as a medium to provide knowledge in astronomy and hospitals functioned as institutes for the provision of medical knowledge and karkhanas functioned as a medium
to provide technical knowledge and develop industrial skill and craftsmanship.

The madrasahs in Medieval India had hardly any fixed syllabus. The inclusion of books in the curricula depended on several considerations, personal predilections of a teacher, availability of books, adherence to traditional approach and utility in some specific context. There were teachers who were known for their special insight in certain classical works and students came to them to receive instruction in that particular books and obtained certificates (ijazah) which entitled them to teach the book to others.

As stated earlier there was no uniform syllabus for all institutions. Shaikh Farid Ganj Shakar (ob.1265) taught to his disciples the Qur’an the Tamhidat of Abu Shakur Salimi and the Awarif-al-Ma’arif of Shaikh Shihab-al-Din Suhrawardi. His objective was pragmatic, the Quran was to act as the source of all religious inspiration, the Tamhidat was to serve as a guide book for Fiqh, and the Awarif a manual for Khanqah organization. Maulana Kamal-al-din Zahid taught Mashariq-al-Anwar to his students and Maulana Farid-al-Din Shafi, Shaikh-ul-Islam of Awadh taught al-Kashshaf to his pupils. Eminent scholars of the period who had special insight in some branch of learning usually taught a few selected books and granted certificates (ijazah) to their pupils.
Moreover in the Sufi majlis the most commonly used Tafsir were the Tafsir Madarik, Tafsir Kashshaf, Tafsir Razi, Tafsir Zahiri, Tafsir Nasiri, Tafsir Basara, and Arais-ul-Bayan. It appears that in the Chishti circle the most popularly used Tafsir was the Tafsir Madarik. During our period of study the Awarif-ul-Ma’arif, Fusus-ul-Hikam, Kashf-ul-Mahjub and Qut-ul-Qulub were the famous Tasawwuf books taught in the Sufi Majlis.

The institutions run by state had a more comprehensive syllabus and included subjects like, Ilm-i-Tabi’i, Ilm-i-Riyadi, Ilm-i-Nazar etc. some books were compiled on specific themes by persons who were specialists in that area. Maulana Diya-al-Din al-Din Sunnami, who held charge of the Department of Censor of Public morals during the reign of Alauddin Khalji wrote in Arabic Nisab-al- Ihtisab for the guidance and instruction of those who had to perform the duties of a muhtasib (sensor of morals). Maulana Abd-al-Hamid Muharrir Ghaznawi wrote during the time of Firoz Shah Tughlaq a manual ‘Ilm-al-Hisab for the instruction of those who had to keep records and maintain accounts. The selection of certain books like Tahdib-al-Mantiq, Hikmat al-Ishraqiyah, Khulasat-ul Hisab etc. for preparation of commentaries and annotations was dictated by the needs of students studying those books. The use of paper is likely
to have facilitated the copying of books and book trade. It also enabled larger collections of books to be accumulated by individuals.

The fourteenth century saw the largest production of *Fiqh* literature in India. *Fatawa-i-Firoz Shahi, Fawa'id-i-Firoz Shahi, Fatawa-i-Tatar Khaniyah* were the popular works of *Fiqh* compiled during this period.

As a result of the Mongol invasion, after the Ghurian conquest in India (c. 1200) access to the massive richness to Arabic Sciences was now achieved but under increasing intellectual and religious restraints. Ziauddin Barni (1351 A.D.) vehemently criticized Muhammad bin Tughlaq for upholding Reason and Rational approach to be superior to the dictates of the sacred texts and for keeping company with scientists and philosophers.

It is, therefore, not surprising the little fundamental work in science was produced in India during the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries. India two areas in which interest was mainly shown were astronomy and medicine especially during the reign of Alahuddin Khalji, Muhammad Tughlaq and Firoz Shah Tughlaq which has been discussed in detail in chapter V of this thesis.

With regard to modern survivals of Quranic schools in India, the Quinquennial review of education quotes De la Fosse as saying that these
are usually attached to a mosque . . . . . . . the scholars commence by
studying the Arabic alphabet, and as soon as they can read are made to
recite suras, or chapters of the Quran. Neither writing nor arithmetic is
taught. So far as my experience, instruction is usually confined to reading
and memorizing but some times an attempt is also made to explain the
meaning of what is read. This however is rare.¹

William Adam, in his report on education in Bengal (1835-1838
A.D.) says with regard to the madrasahs, “In the Arabic schools, the
course of study takes a much wider range. The grammatical works are
numerous, systematized and profound. Complete courses of reading on
rhetoric, logic and law are embraced. The external observances and
fundamental doctrines of Islam and Ptolemy on astronomy in translation,
are not unknown. Other branches of natural philosophy are also taught,
and the whole course is crowned by the presence of treatises on
metaphysics, deemed the highest attainment of the instructed scholar.²

In the contemporary world the significance of curriculum and its
survey has increased to the extent that the relation of education with
religion and culture has become very strong and firm and it has also
developed a deep relationship with the economic life of the people. No

¹ Keay, F.E., Indian Education in Ancient and Later Times, London, Oxford
² Ibid, p. 139.
doubt this relationship was also found in the past but it was not so deep
rooted and commercialized as it is in the present day and age. This is the
reason why the consideration and interest of people has increased in the
curriculum of the madrasahs and other religious institutions of Muslims.
A lot of discussions and debates take place on the need for amendment
and reform and in different ways the expression of thoughts still persists.
From the detailed discussion on the curriculum in this thesis, it can be
deduced that whatever was the course of studies it was perhaps
dominated by various books of study. The selection of books in the
process of teaching was such that after their completion a student would
develop the quality of grasping the meaning of the subject and the power
of comprehending the different sciences and arts would enhance.

It is however not correct to compare the method of teaching
adopted in the madrasahs of that period to the modern madrasahs of
nowadays. Especially considering the difference in thinking and
administration of both the periods it is not right to form a hasty opinion.
No doubt just like during the Sultanate period different sciences and arts
were taught similarly in the curriculum of the modern madrasahs along
with religious sciences other sciences can be taught.

While comparing the administration of education of both the
periods usually this aspect is neglected that during the medieval period
there was no fixed time or period for the acquisition of knowledge, instead the love of learning and deep interest was such that the process of derivation of knowledge continued throughout their lives, thus it was not very difficult to attain specialization in a particular subject. Usually after obtaining excellence and mastery in one field of studies the scholars would change to another field of studies. But nowadays the circumstances are such that the student after reaching a particular stage or level of education or after completing a definite course, in order to fulfill the economic needs or other necessaries of life or to fulfill other demands of life gives up education. In other words education during the medieval period was not job-oriented like these days and it was not so deeply related to earning a livelihood or gaining employment as it is nowadays. Also the differences in the courses of teaching of subjects were not so inherent as it is today. That is why under one administration the study of different subjects at the same time was possible or it was comparatively convenient to study the rational as well as traditional sciences simultaneously. Moreover nowadays with the massive technological and technical advancement and advanced research, the sciences have developed to such high levels, beyond measure that it would be foolhardy to expect an individual to acquire knowledge of several subjects at a time.
As Muslim thought developed from the seventh century onwards there were in almost every subject a number of opposed schools. But discussion gradually reconciled the idea of these schools, or else left (as in mystical thought) two opposed schools in the field. Under the medieval circumstances of life and specially the conditions of teaching, it is not surprising to find that academic progress led to acceptance of one standard work, or if reconciliation of opposed ideas was not possible to two standard works, one representing the orthodox, and the other the critically minded. Thus Quranic commentaries found their fulfillment in two works the *Kashshaf* of Zamakhshari for the critically minded and the *Tafsir-i-Kabir* of Imam Fakhruddin Razi for the orthodox. Similarly in mysticism, the centrist school of Shaikh Junaid found its final expression in the ‘*Awarif-ul-Ma’arif* of Shaikh Shihabuddin Suhrawardi, while the thoughts of the leftist schools who had suffered persecution for centuries, were expressed in the *Futuhat-i-Makkiya* of his contemporary, of Shaikh Muhiuddin Ibni ‘Arabi. In other subjects, where continued disagreement would have been disastrous, a single work obtained general acceptance for eg. the *Qanun-i-Shifa* of Shaikh Abu Ali Sina in medicine and the *Hidaya* of Maulana Burhanuddin Marghinani in law. These great works preserved the achievements of the past but they crushed initiative, for they were accepted as final in their own spheres.
Muslim civilization in all spheres had developed to its maximum stature before the establishment of the empire of Delhi. The Indian Musalmans during the Sultanate period did not contribute much to the ideology of Islam. Their contributions are limited to the sphere of applied arts and the reduction of theory to practice. But within this limited field, their achievements are commendable.