During the medieval period, the *khanqah* played an important and multidimensional role. There was an intricate relationship between the khanqah formation, urban expansion and power mechanism, especially during the Sultanate period. As a complex social and administrative network existed within the khanqah and between the khanqah and the Sultanate, the khanqah played an inevitable role in the continuous discourse of power. It ran parallel to the institution of the Sultanate and became a subject of concern for many Sultans during the period.

The term *khanqah* meaning 'Sufi convent' assumes important overtones in more contexts than one. The *khanqah* or *jama'at khana* was a special building to meet the requirements of the Sufis, their followers and visitors, which provided accommodation for each visitor and inmate. At that time, khanqahs were made for feeding the poor and the *durveshes*. The Chishti saints built *jama'at khanas*, while the Suhrwardi saints constructed khanqahs. Popularly, both the terms were used as synonyms. In contrast to these, the zawiyahs were smaller places, where mystics lived and prayed, but unlike the inmates of the khanqahs and the jama'at khanas, they did not aim at establishing any vital contact with the world outside.

The *jama'at khana* usually consisted of a big hall. All the inmates
lived a community life. The roof of this *jama'at khana* was supported by a number of pillars and at the foot of each of these pillars a mystic could be seen with all his belongings - bedding, books and rosary. They all slept, prayed and studied on the ground and no discrimination, not even on the basis of seniority or piety, was permitted to prevail in the *jama'at khana*. If food was available, all would partake of it; if not, all would suffer jointly the pangs of hunger. Often there was non-availability of food in the khanqahs of Shaikh Qutub al-Din and Baba Farid. In the *jama'at khanah* of Shaikh Farid, the inmates had to pluck pelu and delah from the kareel trees, fetch water, collect wood from the jungle, and then a saltless dish could be prepared for them. The quality of food depended on the futuh received. Shaikh Nizam al-Din's khanqah had comparatively better provisions, as there are evidences of serving of meat, tahiri, sambosas etc. from time to time.

The Subrawardi *khanqahs* in contrast to Chishti ones received enormous *futuh* and often had a *khazana* where the *futuh* could be stored. Even the local administration looked for help from them in case of dire circumstances like drought etc. There is reference in the *Siyar al-Ariffin* of abundance of wealth in Suhrawardi *khanqahs*. Jamali has reported: "The Shaikhs kept and spent the wealth carefully."

They received enormous futuh. For instance Shaikh Rukn al-Din received a hundred villages from Sultan Mohammad bin Tughlaq. In addition, the
Suhrawardi *khanqahs* were better furnished and better organised. They had an aristocratic character laced with deep religious fervour. This is similar to the present day *haram sharif* i.e. vicinity of the mosques of 'Mecca and Madina',\textsuperscript{10} which also have aristocratic look with religious atmosphere. The Suhrawardi *khanqahs* were located in a wider area, with separate accommodation for the inmates and visitors, unlike the *jama‘at khana* of the Chishtis. There were no open invitations for food in their *khanqahs*. However, they generously entertained their guests. The terms, *khanqah* and *jama‘at khana* are used interchangeably and almost mean the same thing. Thus, it would be convenient to use the term *khanqah* for both.

The *khanqah* saw several stages in evolutionary history. According to Ibn Taimaiyah, the first house for the mystics was built in Basra, but the popularity of the *khanqah* and *rabtra* (derived from Arabic root *rabata*, which means to bind or to attach etc.) started at a later period.\textsuperscript{11} At a later stage, the tombs of Shaikhs were preserved, so that the followers and the admirers might pay their respect to the tombs of their masters. In the final stage, the presence of the tomb led to the association of the *khanqah* with it.

The Chishti *khanqahs* in India were located at prominent places, a little away from the urban activities. Khwaja Muin al-Din Chishti had his *khanqah* at Ajmer,\textsuperscript{12} which was politically and economically an important place. Shaikh Qutub al- Din's *khanqah* was in Delhi\textsuperscript{13} and so was the *khanqah*.
of Shaikh Nizam al-Din Aulia. On the bank of river Sutlej, halfway between Ferozepur and Bahawalpur the famous khanaqah of Baba Farid was located. Shaikh Burahan al-Din who was an elite having privileges of birth, education, nobility and job opportunity and took to mysticism had his khanaqah at Daulatabad, which was strategically and politically very significant to the extent that Muhammad bin Tughlaq attempted to make it his capital.

The inmates of khanaqah consisted of people from all streams, but three important categories predominated. First were the scholars, who could have their search and animosities of scholastic logic resolved through mysticism only. Thus, Badr al-Din Ishaque went to Baba Farid to clear his doubts, which could not be resolved earlier, despite the best of his efforts and meetings with numerous scholars and reading a large number of books. He settled at the khanaqah of Baba Farid.

Second category included merchants, who were burdened with their material goods and were looking for the peace of mind. The Kirmani family was one such part of the vicinity of the khanaqah of Shaikh Nizam al-Din. Shaikh Nasir al-Din also came from such a rich family. In the third category were people frustrated with inner conflicts and their heart aching due to atrocities and self-seeking external world. Government servants who were frustrated with worldly power, oppression and increasing demands of the state system also were regular visitors who shed hatred and developed
kindness, which they reflected while dealing with the people. Thus, Hamid, while in the service of Tughril got himself freed from him, when the latter declared himself Sultan Mughis al-Din, by directly confronting him to free him and joined the khangah of Baba Farid. Similarly, Kara, who was in the service of Ala al-Din, when he was a prince, took shelter in Shaikh Nizam al-Din's khangah. Amir Khusrau himself wanted to give up government service and devote full time to spirituality. In addition, there were a large number of visitors at the khangah.

It is observed that in the khangahs two types of people were staying i.e. 'musafirs' and 'muqims'. Musafirs were travellers and muqims were habitants. Musafirs came there before 'asr' i.e. late after noon prayer. He also notes that in every khangah the Shaikh and murids had their haweli to live, musalla for prayer and a place for gathering.17

The inmates of the khangah shared the responsibilities of running the khangah. The duties included cleanliness of the khangah, the kitchen, and the mosque, the provision of water for 'wazu' i.e. ablution, spreading of prayer carpets, provision of fuel in the kitchen, preparation of food and its distribution, making of tawiz, maintenance of stores, receiving and distribution of 'futuh', looking after visitors and guests etc., in addition to writing of khilafat-nama which was done by senior disciples. Moreover, teaching Quran, Hadith and other religious books were the most important functions. Calling
of 'azan, and leading prayer five times in the khanqah respectively done by 'Muazzin' and 'Imam' were other regular activities. Certain persons were assigned the tasks to recite religious verses and couplets.

In the khanqah itself, the power structure was visible, mainly based on spiritual attainment and as per the tasks allotted to the inmates. Persons allotted the tasks of personal attendance of the Shaikh were important. Khwaja Ahmed Siwistani performed the task of arranging water for ablution (wazu) i.e. providing water for cleanliness before prayer to Baba Farid. Sometimes, he washed the clothes of Baba Farid, which was done after performing ablution. Shaikh Farid had appointed Isa to look after his private affairs. Isa, also used to send the Shaikh's wives to him according to their turn, so that no injustice occurs in marital relationship. Mulana Badr al-Din Ishaque was in his personal attendance.

For personal attendance of Shaikh Nizam al-Din, Iqbal and Mubashir were appointed. Prayer carpet or musalla was carried to the mosque by Khwaja Abu Bakr and thus he was known as Abu Bakr Musalladar. Initially, Nur al-Din Kirmani was assigned the task of provision for ablution and washing off clothes of Shaikh Nizam al-Din, which was later assigned to Iqbal. Iqbal is also seen as receiving and distributing 'futuh'. Shaikh Burhan al-Din was in charge of the kitchen. Amir Khusrau was close to the Shaikh, who succeeded in obtaining pardon for Shaikh Burhan al-Din, when he was
banished from the khanqah. Syed Khamosh Kirmani, Amir Khwurd's uncle had a party of musicians for sama.22

The khanqah life completely revolved around the Shaikh, as he was the centrifugal as well as centripetal force in the khanqah. With some variations, Shaikhs followed their daily routine meticulously. The foremost duty of the Shaikh was prayer and meditation. Baba Farid remained in 'sajdah' for two hours after the Morning Prayer; Shaikh Nizam al Din's night lamp was lit till late night, showing that he was mediating at night. Attending to visitors, was another important function. Baba Farid met visitors after the 'zohar' prayer and would not retire unless every one was attended. Shaikh Nizam al-Din started meeting people after sunrise till midday. In the afternoon, after the 'zohar' prayer also, he kept meeting people. It kept continuing till night except at the prayer time.

One day, Akhi Siraj sent away a person who had come to meet the Shaikh at the time of his midday rest. Baba Farid came to the dream of Shaikh Nizam al-Din and said: "If you have nothing to give to a visitor at least receive him cordially." The Shaikh gave instructions to the inmates that whenever a visitor came, he should be woken up.23 Whenever the Shaikh was unwell, the inmates of khanqah and disciples were worried, as he was the central figure of the khanqah.

The khanqah had an open kitchen and hospitality was one of the most
important aspects of the *khanqah*. The tradition quoted by Shaikh in this regard is as follows:  

"If someone visits a living man and gets nothing from him to eat, it is as if he has visited the dead".

If, nothing was available, the visitor could be offered water to drink. The expenditure of the kitchen was made out of 'futuh' i.e. unasked for charity. The monasteries were visited by various kinds of people and every one from king to beggar was welcome and at least notionally treated alike. For instance, Jamal Qiwam reports that Shaikh Nizam al-Din's *khanqah* was visited by all kinds of people - ordinary persons, amirs, princes, officials, traders etc. However, prayer took precedence over attending to people. Once, Firoz Shah Tughlaq visited Shaikh Nasir-al-Din, who was then taking a nap. When he was woken up, he performed ablution and prayer. The Sultan who was still waiting outside, addressing Tatar Khan, an official, remarked: "I am not a king, he is the real king."  

Besides Muslims, Hindus including, untouchables visited the *khanqah*. In fact, the untouchables saw there was no discrimination, flocked in groups. *Yogis* also came to the Shaikh. Baba Farid appears to have learned and practiced *yoga*.  

The *khanqah* some times became so crowded, that the Shaikh asked their disciples to shorten their stay. Many of the senior disciples, as a result,
constructed their homes near the *khanqah* of Shaikh Nizam al-Din. In the *khanqah*, the rule was 'first greet, then eat, then talk'. Food was served to all visitors without discrimination. The guests were helped in washing their hands. The Shaikh not only ensured service of food to the guests, but also attended to each one of them and their problems.

Barani reports about Shaikh Nizam al-Din *khanqah* as under:

"There was provision for all the visitors, murids, travellers, repentants etc. for *wuzu* (ablution) and *namaz* (prayer). There were attendants to provide water to them for *wuzu*, facilitating *namaz*, under each *chabutra* (shaded platform)."

Sometimes, Sufis from other parts and other silsilahs also visited each other. Shaikh Rukn al-Din Multani of Shuhrwardi order often visited Shaikh Nizam al-Din. Once, when he came from the court to meet the Shaikh, he had a fresh ablution saying that he could not meet the Shaikh in the same ablution with which he met the Sultan. The respect was reciprocated by host Shaikh as well.

Knowledge was necessary for a durvesh. Baba Farid's *khanqah* was a great learning centre. He considered dedicated study of the *Quran* was essential for awakening spiritual sensibilities. His *jama'at khana* was always filled with the voice of reciting *Quran*. Shaikh Nizami al-Din was asked to do 'hifż' i.e. memorising *Quran* by heart by Baba Farid, which he did later.
He also learned Awa’rif-ul-Ma’rif, the tamhidat, fiqh (law) and Shari’at there.

At his khanqah, there were senior disciples who were erudite scholars in their own right. Maulana Shams al-Din Yahya, Maulana Fakhr al-Din Zarradi, Maulana Ala al-Din were experts in 'usul' (juristic principles), 'fiqh' (law), Islamic law and 'kashf' respectively. Shaikh Nasir al-Din was an expert in external science and Qazi Muhi al-Din Kashani had extensive knowledge of 'Hadith'.

The senior disciples instructed the juniors. When one group completed their training, they were to train the new entrant. The Shaikh concentrated on the education and the training of the senior disciples. They were trained rigorously and some became Khalifas of the Shaikh. Maulana Ghauthi Shattari has reported that Shaikh Nizam al-Din had appointed 700 Khalifas and sent them to various parts of the country.

The people of the khanqah i.e. ahl-i- khanaqah were divided into the permanent (muqiman) and travellers (musafirin). The travellers stayed for a maximum of three days. It they over stayed they had to help the inmates in their day-to-day work. The permanent residents of the khanqah were divided into three classes viz. the ahl-i khidmat, ahl-i suhbat and ahl-i khilawat according to their spiritual standing and the nature of duties assigned to them.

Strict discipline was maintained in the khanqah and elaborate rules
were laid down for the guidance of the inmates: how to talk to the Shaikh; how to deal with visitors; how to sit in the khanqah; how to walk; how and when to sleep; what dress to wear and on similar other topics minute instructions were given to the people of khanqah.35

Delhi was a nucleus of large network of khanqah organization, life as well as of political organization. Its existence was not limited to being an administrative capital that rose and fell with the fate of the Sultanate. It also inhabited three of the most famous Chishti saints, Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Shaikh Nizam al-Din Auliya and Shaikh Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i Delhi who together covered almost the entire period of the Sultanate, dealing with twelve Sultans of the Sultanate period. The urbanisation of Delhi during this period is partly attributed to its being the capital and efforts of the Sultan by their construction and partly attributed to the presence of the Sufi saints in the city to whom people of all walks of life visited, for blessings and spiritual guidance, resulting into greater interaction and intermingling of people, new settlements and expansion of trade, crafts and other business activities.

The enforcement materials at khanqah came from futuh i.e. unasked for gift. This is also to be understood with the concept of kasb (earning one's livelihood) and tawakkul (trust in God) which are cardinal values of Islam. Kasb is a part of sunna i.e. the practice or custom of the Prophet. Once a person complained of his poverty to the Prophet, upon which the Prophet
advised him to buy an axe for livelihood. Consequently, the man's fortune changed because *kasb* was viewed as the best means to lead a life of *halal*. In contrast there is *zanbil* (begging) and *futuh* (unasked for charity). The Sufis were busy praying and serving the people and hence most of them were dependent on *futuh*.

The Prophet has said that the most halal food is the one which is gained by earning by own hands. However, Shaikh Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi recalls that Abu Talib Makki in his famous writing, *Qut al-Qulub*, had reported that labour of one's hand really meant raising of one's hand for begging for food in a state of starvation. He also explains that raising one's hand may mean raising hands in prayer to God.  

The Sufis in India, for that matter in South Asia, had distaste for *kasb*. They allowed the men of general learning to leave for their learning work. It was appreciated greatly if anybody gave up property and *kasb* to devote exclusively to prayer. Then, those who are in advance stage of training and are likely to be considered for becoming *Khalifa* were not allowed *kasb*.

Notwithstanding this, there are evidences to show that both Shaikh Muin al-Din  and Baba Farid took interest in protecting the agricultural land held by their sons. Shaikh Farid's eldest son Khwaja Nizam al-Din was in the imperial army. However, the Sufis generally kept away from *kasb* and directed their entire energy in prayer and service.
The relatively brisk activities of the *khanqah*, usefully engaged many people within its confines. The khanqah, therefore had to subsist on *futuh*. There are evidences that at the *khanqah*, *futuh* was accepted. Large number of men were dependent on the incoming *futuh*. Once, when Shaikh Nizam al-Din observed that some grain was kept for future requirement, he ordered for its immediate disposal. The *futuh* was virtually consumed by the people assembled there in no time.\(^\text{39}\) Thus, it is important to note that people around the khanqah or in the *jama'at khana* did not feel the need to work.

The *khanaqah* provided impetus for urban expansion and preservation, in so far as all Chishti Shaikhs moved away from the center of political power and the hub of social activity and established their *khanaqahs* in the vicinity of the peripheral limits of the existing urban center.\(^\text{40}\) The urban conglomeration is a subsystem within a larger one, formed by economic and social apparatus and the cultural milieu of a civilization. It reflects this totality and functions within it. The Indian formation did not have the juridical distinctions between the town and the country.\(^\text{41}\) Smaller associations determined by kinship and by residence were thus the foci of medieval existence. However, Bruce B. Lawrence holds that a potential famous Sufi had to be an urban, as an urban background is a prerequisite to being a Sufi of repute.\(^\text{42}\) His views, thus, presupposes the existence of urban society and urban culture which is not in conformity with the view that there was no clear distinction between the
urban and the rural. A holistic view would be that there were some areas which were qasbas and were more urban than other areas and some sections of society were urban in culture due to birth, education, social ethos etc.

The *khanqah*, not only encouraged the establishment of buildings and monuments, but also ushered in economic and social regeneration to the newly inhabited site. For instance, Ghiyaspur was away from the city life before Shaikh Nizam al-Din came and settled. However, in due course of time it became a center of activities, as settlement started partly to cater to the requirement of larger numbers of visitors and partly due to their possible attachment towards the Shaikh and the *khanqah*. The Shaikh was highly popular and the people came to see and seek advice and blessings from him. Ghiyaspur, eventually, became so popular that Shaikh Nizam al-Din once had contemplated to move out of there.

Since, urban centers did not spring into being in one rapid move, these activities of the Sufis went a long way in enlarging not only the spatial horizons of the city, but its commercial faculties as well. It is seen that towns and cities were composite entities that were 'planted' or 'founded' more than once, and in many phases. Now, wherever shrines of important Sufis exist, urbanization has taken place in the vicinity. During the lifetime of the respective Sufis, increasing habitation nearby their *khanqahs* could not be ruled out.
The langar and functions organized at the khanqah might have had huge material requirements, for supplying which artisans and traders would have been visiting the khanqah. Thus the institution of the khanqah depended on commercialized craftsmen, artisan and traders who supplemented its day to day requirements, thus introducing a dynamic force in augmenting the volume of output and carrying the economy forward.

The Shrines of the saints are visited by large number of people. These have become institutions in themselves. Urbanization has taken its place in those areas. Commercial activities have sprung up. For instance, the 'dargahs' or shrines of Shaikh Nizam al-Din and Shaikh Qutub al-Din have become important urban centers of Delhi, namely Nizamuddin and Mehrauli. Futuh, qawwali, and langars are still prevalent. To give an example, at the shrine of Shaikh Qutub al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, langar is distributed twice daily i.e. approximately at 11 AM in the morning and 6 PM in the afternoon. Thus, the shrines helped in the foundation and expansion of commercial and urban centers.

The medieval commercial communities used a classical pattern of offerings which played an important role to strengthen the khanqah and was responsible for the spatial growth of the city. In this way, the merchants were not only acquiring religious merit but were also responsible for establishment of new neighborhoods, besides being involved in political
relations outside the neighborhoods.

The *khanqah* provided a safe location to live, to the distant travelers and merchants, and thus, encouraged urban settlement. A traveler desiring to stay in a *khanqah* was expected to arrive there before the 'asr' i.e. later afternoon prayer. If he arrived late, he was advised to pass the night in some mosque and join the *khanqah* the next day. As soon as a guest arrived, he was expected to offer his prayer and then greet the residents of the *khanqah*. The servants of the *khanqah* were instructed to show extreme hospitality to all guests and were strictly warned against ridiculing those who were ignorant of the mystic customs and conventions.

It was common among commercial communities to relocate geographically and to alternate between long distance trade and political centres. The location of the *khanqah* in the periphery of the urban centre enabled it to function as a buffer between the villages and the distant government. The *khanqah* served as a meeting place for people from different walks of life and thus, bred an atmosphere of goodwill in the society. These provided an opportunity to enrich and further human development.

The *khanqah*, provided like the marketplace, the common meeting ground for the urban intelligentsia and the rural pastoralist, thereby functioning as an agent of cross-cultural interactions. Thus, not only did the *khanqah* promote urban expansion, but also gave urbanization a visibly distinct
character. This negates the view of writers who view 'urban growth in the context of medieval India to be seen as an imperial device to promote political stability and material progress.'\textsuperscript{45} These \textit{khanqahs} provided accommodation and shelter to those mystics who had no accommodation of their own, besides providing the Sufis an opportunity of mixing with each other and regulating their life and conduct. In the process, they got an opportunity of mutual criticism and rectification.

Both Chishti \textit{jama'at khana} and Suhrawardi \textit{khanqahs} were great religious power centres - centres of learning, pilgrimage and spiritual attainment. People of all sections visited these for seeking solace, guidance and blessings from the Shaikhs. Nobles, amirs, princes visited the khanqahs and returned contented. It facilitated inter group contacts, thereby creating a new paradigm for pluralism, hybridization and inter group cooperation and competition. Moreover, it also functioned as a power centre, often complementary to the political power centre i.e. the Sultanate, except on certain occasions. These certain occasions, however, were vital to determining the power equations between the Sufi and the Sultanate.
NOTES


2. Fruits of Wild Thorny plants of North West Region.


8. Ibid, p.129.


10. Construction and beautification of *Haram Sharif* of Meeca and Madina in late '80's and early 90's has added grandeur and aristocratic look with costly Persian carpets spread all over.


16. Ibid, p.170

17. Dr. Syed Ziauddin, Sajjadi, *Mujadanaei Bar Mabani-i Irfan-Tasawwuf*, Simat, 125


21. Ibid, pp. 204-5.


24. Fuwa'id-ul-Fu'ad, p.36.

25. Jamal Qiwan, Qiwan al-Aqaid, as reproduced in Qandi Farsi, May1994, Chapter-VI, p.73.


27. Baba Farid is known to be practicing 'yoga' regularly. He also practiced 'ardhamukhogami' i.e. his legs tied on a branch of the tree and face down over a well, with his eyes fixed in the water in the well.

28. Fuwa'id al-Fu'ad, p.77.

29. Siyar al-Auliya, p.413.

30. Zia-al-Din Barani, Tarikh-i Firuz Shahi, p.344.

31. Qiwan al-Aqaid, MS, p.177.


34. K.A. Nizami, "Some Aspects of Khanqah Life", Studia Islamica, pp.59-61, Mislah-ul-Hislaya, pp.120-21

35. Najib u'd-din Abd al-Qadir Suhra Wardi, Adad-ul-Muridin Awarif-ul-Marif, Part-1, see Chapter XIII to XX.

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38. Shaikh Abdul Haqq Muhaddis Dehlawi, *Akhbar al-Akhyar*, p.82.

39. The *Indian Historical Review*, "Ideas on kash in South Asian Sufism", p.-115.

40. For instance, Shaikh Nizam al-Din settled at lesser known place i.e. Ghiyaspur.

41. Ref. to Proceedings on UGC seminar on Urban History, see S.C. Mishra's, article on Some Aspects on Self Admitting Institutes in Medieval Indian Towns.

42. Bruce B. Lawrence, p.104.

43. The presence of Shaikh Nizam al-Din and existence of his *khanqah*, led to new habitation in the area, in addition to large number of visitors, for provision and arrangement at the *khanqah*, business would have flourished in the area. It became a part of the urban centre. After his death, he was buried at a secluded place, close to his *khanqah*, but, it became a place for pilgrimage with new settlement; Influential people like Humayun, Rahim Khan-i-Khan, Jahan-Ara, Sultan Mubarak Shah also were buried near his 'shrine'. Consequently the place has become so important that there exists a Railway station named after him i.e. Nizamuddin Railway station.

44. Personally visited and observed and also interviewed Khadim Shams al-Haq, 82 yrs. old, engaged in the service of the shrine for over 50 yrs.