Introduction
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Wild life has been a very interesting phenomenon of the human civilization. The history of the bond between man and the animal goes back to the days when he (man) was a wandering hunter and food gatherer. Thus, the animals and birds had never been far from the habitat of the human being. From earliest times till present day man has always been fascinated by the growth and survival of the flora and fauna in the lap of this wonderful and amazing mother earth. Man is always occupied with the animals and birds and employs them for various purposes. Consequently, it may be fairly said that the history of wild life is as ancient as the history of the mankind.

While working on wild life, we come across that much has been written about the kings, princess, wars, victories and defeats and about the rise and fall of the empires. The royals and their occupations and engagements are under focus of the scholars. But a considerable attention has not been paid to the study of animals and birds which seems really an injustice with the nature history, i.e., the wild life. Even though the animals always figure in our everyday life and they remain scared and the faithful slaves of men. Nevertheless, some pioneer works related to the study of wild life by Salim Ali, Divyabhanusinh Chavda, M. A. Alvi and S. K. Saraswati, have already appeared but these are short and do not envelop the whole canvas of the wild life. Hence, the select theme “Wild Life in Mughal India: from texts and paintings” of the present study forms the subject of this thesis – a humble step indeed to fulfil this lacuna.
This thesis deals with various aspects of wild life (flora and fauna) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Mughal India viz. Mughal emperor's love for nature; passion for hunt; devices and methods of hunting, domestication of animals and birds, rare and curious species of animals and birds, their habitats and characteristic features. Further, it deals with the management, treatment and breeding of the animals and birds in captivity under the Mughals who (Babur, and Jahangir) were naturalists. Additionally, the thesis presents glimpses of the flora like various plants (including medicinal plants as well), trees, flowers and fruits which are quite often shown in the miniatures depicting royal gardens, and more commonly represented in the surface embellishment of the interior and exterior parts of the Mughal buildings. Thus, present thesis aims at encompassing the wild life as a whole illustrating its association with man and nature. The Mughal period, of course, the richest in this context, is presently under study.

The source material which constitutes the fundamental source of this thesis is considerably the contemporary Persian chronicles, however edited and translated into English, e.g., Baburnama, Humayunama, Ain-i-Akbari, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri and Shahjahanama, etc. The travellers accounts like those of Bernier, Pietre Della Velle, John Fryer, Linschoten and Thevenot, etc. further supplement the historical material on the subject. Similarly, the visual material on wild life depicted in contemporary illustrated MSS and albums, etc., particularly in the paintings of the Baburnama, Akbarnama, Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Anwar-i-Suhaili, and Ajaib-al-Makhluqat, etc. have been utilised. These contain a lot of information in illustrated form on the flora and fauna of Mughal India. The motifs and designs decorating the walls of the Mughal buildings
further enrich our study material. Apart from these sources, enormous number
of books, or the secondary sources help to understand the intricacies of the
research and its methodology, etc.

The thesis contains eight chapters dealing with different themes and
aspects of the wild life in Mughal India in a comprehensible manner.

With the establishment of the Mughal Empire by Zahiruddin
Mohammad Babur, many changes took place in the socio-cultural life of
Hindustan. Even the wild life or flora and fauna could not escape from the eyes
of the Mughal emperors. The reason behind this was one, and that was the keen
interest of the Mughal emperors in wild life. Babur in his Memoir the
Baburnama, has given a graphic description of a number of things of India.
Babur being a great lover and admirer of the nature had a keen eye. It
facilitated him to write about the natural beauty of India. His Memoirs in its
section ‘description of Hindustan’ deals with the seasons, climates,
environment, plants, trees, flowers, forests, variety of animals and birds, and a
number of other things. Thus, Babur tried to keep the flora and fauna alive in
the form of paintings and in the creation of the paradise-like gardens, i.e., Aram
Bagh, Bagh-i-wafa (Garden of fidelity), Bagh-i-chenar, etc. These instances
establish Babur as a great naturalist. The remains of his gardens are still extant.

Furthermore, the flora and fauna has remained a subject of importance
and interest throughout the Mughal period. Though it suffered a disruption
because of the rise of Sher Shah, and Humayun’s exile and sojourn at the court
of Shah Tehmasp of Persia. Nevertheless, it proved positive for the rise of
Mughal school of painting and Humayun brought some excellent calligraphers
and painters, viz. Abdus Samad, Mir Sayyed Ali with him. After Humayun, his
son the Akbar paid full attention towards the phenomenon of wild life in Hindustan. Abul Fazl highlights in *Ain-i-Akbari* about the keen interest of Akbar in the flora and fauna. Similarly, Akbar’s son, Jahangir was also a great naturalist. He wrote in his Memoirs *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* about the natural beauty of this country. His Memoir is full of long description of curious and rare animals, birds, plants and flowers, etc. He maintained a rich menagerie and an aviary managed by expert officials and servants under his personal supervision. He also created beautiful gardens, i.e., Shalimar garden, Nishat garden, etc. Undoubtedly, the Mughal emperors, particularly Babur, Akbar and Jahangir, were great naturalists.

The Mughal emperors’ love towards the flora and fauna inspired them to document the flora and fauna in visual form. Akbar and Jahangir played a very significant role in highlighting the wildlife in Manuscript illustrations, album pictures, and margin paintings. These paintings are unique source for reconstructing the history of wild life. The paintings contain the hunting scenes, trapping of birds, trapping of animals, and also drawing of different flowers, plants and birds and animal. During the Mughal period, the illustrations from the *Baburnama*, *Akbarnama*, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, *Anwar-i-Suhaili* and *Ajaib-ul-Makhluqat* contain representative examples of the birds and animals and pictures of species of flowers, plants and trees of India. The painters of Akbar’s time mainly Daswant, Basawan, Miskin and Lal and of Jahangir’s time, like Mansur, Abul Hasan, Manohar, Inayat, Govardhan and Bichitra have contributed much in this field.

Another important aspect of wild life during Mughal India was the hunt of the wild animals and birds. The hunting spirit of the Mughal emperors,
nobles, etc. was also another important reason for their encounter with the wild animals and birds of different species. With the arrival of Babur the hunting of the wild animals had become an interesting feature and the source of pleasure in India. After Babur his descendents-Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan and even Aurangzeb enjoyed hunting as a big game of that time.

There are graphic descriptions of royal hunt in the Baburnama, Humayunnama, Akbarnama, and Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. Abul Fazl writes in the Ain-i-Akbari about the methods, tactics and modes of hunting. In this context, a number of hunting equipments like drums, naqqaras, chains, ropes, and nets etc., find a mention. Similarly, the Mughals used guns, matchlocks, swords, axes, spears, bows and arrows for hunting. The emperor Jahangir often writes about his hunting expeditions in his Memoirs Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. The sources reveal that among the Mughal emperors, particularly Akbar and Jahangir, have a great fascination for the tiger and lion hunt. Apart from the tiger and lion, they used to hunt other animals also, viz. deer, blue bull, rhinoceros and also the trapping of elephants, etc. With the study of the Mughal sources we often come across that the nobles, soldiers and even royal ladies, like Nur Jahan also participated in hunting expeditions. It is more interesting that hunting was also popular among the common people in their everyday life. Thus, hunting was a remarkable event in Mughal period which derived the Mughal emperors very close to the wild life.

Similarly, the glimpses of the flora and fauna can also be seen in the Mughal architecture. It is not merely a project of bricks, stones and mortars, but attaches equal importance to topography, and surrounding environment comprising gardens, plants, and flowers, etc. Since ancient times the depiction
of flora and fauna has been a unique feature in Indian architecture. Before the Mughals, the depiction of animals, birds and flower plants can be seen in ancient Hindu temples and secular buildings where a clear depiction of *matsya* (fish), *kurma* (tortoise), *mriga* (deer), *simha* (lion), *asva* (horse) and flower like *champa*, *chameli*, *padma*, *kamal* (lotus) etc. is distinct. With the Mughal rule a new phase started in the development of architecture in India. The period of Akbar (r. 1556-1605) and of Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) has been remarkable for the development of the architecture. The Mughals used several types of designs for architectural decoration such as arabesques, penals of calligraphy and floral motifs, each in a great variety. The dados of *kutub-khana* (so called Sultana’s palace) at Fatehpur Sikri (1572-85) depicts jungle scenes and natural flora and fauna, carved in red sandstone. Similarly, floral depiction can be seen in the dados of the *Musamman Burj* and the *Diwan-i-Khas* at Agra Fort, and in several other Mughal buildings of that time. During the time of Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58) the Mughal architecture reached its zenith, and the Taj Mahal is the best and a wonderful example of this development. The unique * parchinkari* (pietra-dura) and the flowers, plants, leaves, delicately carved in marble and red sandstone at the Taj complex give a glimpse of the natural beauty of plants with blossom.

The deep affection of the Mughals with flora and fauna can be seen in their creation of the ornamental gardens and flower beds in India. These formal gardens which were laid out by the Mughals at Agra, Delhi, Lahore and abundantly in Kashmir are beautiful examples of the affection of Mughal emperors for flora and fauna and nature as a whole. A number of variety of the trees were laid out, i.e., *aam* (mango), *amaltas* (laburnum), *amla* (
myrabalone), large tree like ashok (saraca indica) Bargad (ficus indica), bel (wood apple) and also flower plants. The large trees in these gardens, quite naturally, provided shelter to many animals and birds, i.e., cuckoo (koel), sparrow (gaureya), weaver bird (baya), lark (lava), parrot (tota), peacock (mor), pigeon (kabutar), crow (kauva), monkey (bandar), rabbit (khargosh), deer (hiran) and creatures like squirrel, mongooses and even ducks, swans and fishes in the beautiful ponds.

During the Mughal period, a number of herbs were used in the form of medicines. These herbs, viz. Indian figs, pepper, ginger, clove, cardamom, camphor were used to cure various diseases, like fever, cold maw, for foul smelling, sharpen the memory, smelling and evil humours, etc. It establishes that the Mughals were knowledgeable keenly interested in the growth of the herbs and medicinal plants of this country.

The most important contribution in the field of wild life, for which the Mughals must be remembered in history, was their organised system of management, treatment of the animals and the breeding of birds and animals even in captivity. The Mughal emperors particularly Akbar and Jahangir organised a management system to keep the animals and birds for various purposes. Abul Fazl mentions in the Ain-i –Akbari that Akbar kept a number of animals, like, cheetahs, elephants, deer, camels, horses, goats, domestic cows and wild buffaloes. All these animals were categorised and each category of animals was given under the charge of an official. While a number of keepers and servants were there to look after these animals. Abul Fazl mentions about the breeding of the elephants and a number of equipments which were used to keep them under an organised management system. Similarly Jahangir
also played a crucial role in the management, treatment and breeding of the birds and animals.

On the other hand, the Mughal miniatures contain a lot of information on the wild life of the Mughal period. It is true that with the inception of the Mughal rule in India, painting received a mighty impetus. Thus, the greatest contribution to the Mughal paintings in Indian art was the portrait-painting. During Jahangir's time most of the pictures of birds and animals were drawn by Mansur, Manohar and Abul Hasan. So, the miniature painting reflects the wild life of the Mughal period. The unique feature of these paintings is the depiction of animals and birds in their real form. Additionally, the border designs and the pages of the calligraphy are fully decorated with a number of flowers, plants and a great variety of animals. All these form an integral part of the present study. Undoubtedly, the whole panorama of Mughal pictures on nature history set in marvellously and uniquely laid background represent, in its true spirit and characteristics, the vary quintessence of nature's endless variety of nature and beauty.