THE ARCHITECTURAL EFFICACY OF MUGHAL'S *SARAIS* AT AGRA: AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY

Abstract

Zahīr-ūd-dīn Muhammad Babūr's administrative procedures were rapid, in sharp contrast to the departmentalism of today's bureaucracy. From the reign of Babūr to Aurāngzeb, numerous magnificent *sarāi's*, or resting places, were constructed along main trade route for the convenience of the Mughal emperors. One of the best examples is the *Sarāi* Nūr-Mahāl, which Jahangir built and named for his favorite wife, which is located close to Jalandhar. Edward Terry and Sir Thomas Roe (ambassador of British King James-I) were arrived in Mughal Empire during Jahangir's reign, mentioned that 'The four-hundred-miles voyage was shaded on both sides by large trees. This is regarded as one of the rarest and greatest accommodating works in the entire world by travellers, who have discovered the comfort of that cool shade.'

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I. INTRODUCTION

The *kāravānsarāi* is another building in the Mughal city of Agra, and it has a significant role. These *kāravānsarāi* draw the attention in the construction of building activity carried by the celebrated emperorsthroughout the Mughal Empire. Despite of the Mughal emperors, Queen's and Princess were also erected some *sarāi's* at different places, who, at their own expense, enhanced the new metropolis cities in an effort to win the old Monarch's favor. Similar to our royal palace, the *kāravānsarāi* is shaped like a sizable square with arcades; with the exception that arches are divided by one another through walls into a little square chamber can be located at their innermost points. The same number of chambers open into the gallery that surrounds the structure above the arcades as there are below.

Francois Bernior mentioned about the *sarāis*, were provided the shelters to travelers. He argued that: 'The rich Persian, Usbek, and other foreign merchants congregate here; they can typically find empty chambers, where they can stay in complete security because the gate is shut at night. The search for a safe and affordable place to stay would be less embarrassing for strangers upon their initial arrival in Paris if there were dozens of identical buildings scattered throughout the city. After seeing their acquaintance, they might stay in them for a few days before leaving to explore about for more practical housing. Such a location would develop into widespread foreign traders' retreats and warehouses for all manner of goods.'[1]

II. CONTENT

By road or river, Agra was connected to other significant economic and administrative hubs. Two distinct roads from the south led to Surat, which was the hub of a significant portion of India's global trade.[2] One route went through Rajasthan, while the other went through central India. The significant places located on the previous route within the *subā* were Dholpūr, Gwālior, Nārwar, Shivpūri[3], and on the later phase, Fatehpūr Sīkri, Bayāna, Hindaūn, Chatsu[4]. Several rivers, the majority of which lacked bridges, crossed the central Indian route. Because of this, this path became impassable during the rainy season.[5] It was also stony and rugged in several places.[6] The alternate route via Rajasthan was open all year long, although passing through certain principalities that were only loosely united and whose rulers asserted some customs duties.[7]

Agra was connected to Delhi and Lahore in the northwest. The path traveled across fertile grasslands.[8] A continuous avenue of trees extended alongside the road on both sides. Agra was connected to Patna and Allahabad in the east. Ferozabād and Etāwah were both on

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[1] Francois Bernier, '*Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)*', sec. rev. ed. V. A. Smith, LPP, Delhi, (1934), p. 281.

[2] Tavernier, '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', tr. by V. Ball, Vol. I, Delhi reprint, (1977), pp. 37, 48-65, 89; William Finch, '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', ed. by William Foster, New Delhi, (1968), p. 170.

[3] Peter Mundy, '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', ed. by Sir R. C. Temple, Vol. II, London, (1914), p. 66 ff; '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', op.cit., pp. 48-65.

[4] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., p. 225 ff; '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', op.cit., p. 89; '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 170.

[5] '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', op.cit., p. 37.

[6] '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 144.

[7] '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', op.cit., p. 37.

[8] Richard Steel & Crowther, '*Purchas His Pilgrimes*', ed. by Samuel Purchas, Vol. IV, Glasgow, (1906), p. 268.

the trade route.[9] There were many commercial centres along the trade routes that connected with Mughal imperial capital city. Supplementary trade routes existed, such as the Agrā-Kannaūj- Luchnow route. Finch[10] also mentioned about the Agrā- Kōl trade route. Peter Mundy took, but they don't seem to have been as crucial.

The *sarāi* institution appears to have been crucial to Mughal India's economic development. The *sarāis*, which also called as *kāravānsarāis*, providing facilities like lodging, stable, fodder, entertainment and alike other amenities to the travellers, not only in big townships but also on essential routes at sensible distances in the countryside, was a significant characteristic of Medieval Indian society.

Kāravānsarāi (Inns) for travelers and merchants were frequently spaced out along main thorough fares in Mughal India's towns and cities. *Sarāi* were surrounded, much similar to gardens (*bāgh*) and mansions, where visitors entered by means of one of several substantial portals. Battlements adorned the walls' serrations, and bastions stood at each of their four corners. The walls of the buildings were lined with series of indistinguishable arched chambers divided by tinny partitions. Generally, *sarāi* had containing *katrā* (walled enclosure) for storing the belongings of travelers. They were built by the powerful for charitable purposes, religious observance, and fame, and were accessible to merchants, scholars, religious experts, and other travelers but not to warriors.[11] Eight hundred to a thousand travelers might fit in the ordinary *sarāi*, which also served as a home for blacksmiths, barbers, tailors, washer men, straw and grass vendors, doctors, dancing girls, and musicians. The official's and armies sent by Mughal emperor to each *sarāi* in order to create law and order and ensure security.[12]

The trade routes of Mughal saw the regular construction of *sarāis*, which served as housing for both foreign travelers and traders. Shaded trees and wells were also planted and routinely dug for the *kāravānsarāi* (dealers who moved in groups) on both sides of the Mughal trade routes for the convenience of travellers and traders.

Numerous *sarāis* were built by Emperors and Noblemen in the different area of the Mughal Empire particularly along the Mughal trade routes as well as towns and cities. Apart from these *sarāis*, some prominent *sarāis* were also built by the order of Mughal Queens and the princesses, for example Nūr Jahān Begūm constructed *Sarāi-Nūr-Mahāl* at Agra and another *Nūr-Mahāl-kā-Sarāi* at Jalandhar and on the other hand Jahanara Begum built a *kāravānsarāi* near *Chāndnī-Chāwk* at *Shahjahānabād* (Delhi).

The best example of its kind was the *kāravānsarāi* built by Jahanara Begum in *Chandnī-Chāwk*, close to the entry gate of her garden (*bāgh*). Francois Bernier mentioned about most impressive buildings at *Shahjahānabād*, second only to the Jami' Masjīd. It had towers at each corner, was square and two stories tall, and had 90 exquisitely decorated and

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[9] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 78-79; '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 113-116.

[10] '*Early Travels in India 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 175.

[11] Stephen P. Blake, 'Shahjahanabad: The Sovereign City in Mughal India, 1639-1739', Cambridge University Press, New York (1991), p. 65.

[12] Niccolao Manucci, '*Storia Do Mogor* or *Mogul India, 1653-1708*', tr. by William Irvine, Vol. I, Delhi, (1990), pp. 67-70, 115.

furnished rooms. The courtyard's center had a garden with streams, ponds, trees, and flowers. There were the richest and significant Persian as well as Uzbek merchants also permitted to constructed buildings.[13]

Iqtidar Alam Khan mentioned that 'The tradition of building rest-houses (*Kāravānsarāis*) on highways seems to have originated in India with the rise of a centralized state seeking to keep far-flung regions under its control. Such a state would need a network of high-ways dotted with rest-houses for the swift transmission of information and royal decrees which was so essential for ensuring administrative efficiency. The earliest reference for building of rest houses (palaces) along the trade routes by an Indian ruler is found in Asoka's edicts. Many *sarāis* were constructed by Sher Shah Suri (1540-1545 A.D.) and Akbar (1556-1605 A.D.) along the main routes; there appear to be similar types of rest stops every two and five *kurohs*, respectively …….'[14]

A thorough study of the institution's actual operations is necessary for determining the magnitude of its function in this regard, which necessitates looking at the *sarāis* organizational structure. These *sarāis* pay particular attention to the architectural framework, the regulations guiding their behavior, and the level of administrative supervision the Mughal Empire exercised over them. To a lesser degree it also envisages an examination of the available evidence about endowments covering or attached to the *sarāis* in and around the Mughal city of Agra.

There was no shortage of proof that the Mughal Emperor and the aristocracy who lived near capital city at Agra and built theirs *sarāis*. This information pertaining to the organization and facilities of the *sarāis* established by other organizations, which may be presumed to represent relatively smaller units, is scarce and, therefore, insufficient for determining the organizational establishment. As a result, the data pertaining to how the larger *sarāis* functioned is primarily considered. Any inferences drawn from the study of this information should be accurate to some extent regarding all *sarāis* categories, even smaller units.

All of the information that is currently known about the *sarāis* in India dates from the time after the Turkīsh conquest, which may mean that the Turks brought this institution to this nation in the form that is now well-known to us through historical evidence. Traveller narratives from the 16th century and later frequently mention the existence of several *sarāis* at various regions in the Mughal Empire. Despite all existing facts, these *sarāis* is quite modest, several of their buildings have remained. The number of *sarāis* of all sizes and types that were actually present during the Mughal era is apparently much smaller than the constructions that have survived.

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[13] Muhammad Salih Kanboh, '*Amal-i Salih*', Vol. III, p. 47; '*Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)*', op.cit., pp. 280-281; '*Storia Do Mogor* or *Mogul India, 1653-1708*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 212-213; also see '*Mahtab Bagh: An Imperial Mughal Garden at Agra*' by Salim Javed Akhtar, Proceedings of Indian History Congress, 69th Session, Kannur, Dec. 2008, pp. 1083-1090.
Link: https://www.jstor.org/stable/44147270

[14] See for Iqtidar Alam Khan, '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', Published in Indian Historical Review, Biannual Journal of the I.C.H.R., Vol. XIV, No. 1-2, July 1987- Jan 1988, p. 111.

The majority of travellers in medieval India were traders, merchants, pilgrims, and state officials, together with their troops. During the mid of the sixteenth century, the expansion of trade and commerce within Mughal Empire probably becomes more brisk. The desire for more and better amenities to be built in the *sarāis* would inevitably increase with the frequency of trade and commerce. In reality, there is a ton of general statement proof indicating Mughal India had several *sarāis* strategically situated along the major routes.[15]

There were several stories of European travellers provide a significant account of the material pertaining to the institution of *sarāis*. which provide specific information about the large *sarāis* and also details on the main *sarāis* distribution pattern throughout several routes under Mughal period. It is very problematic to identify all the big *sarāis* mentioned in these accounts. Some of these, however, can be easily identified with the surviving structures.

Of fact, it's likely that some *sarāis* vanished without telling any villages or *Muhallās* where they were from. However, based on the supposition that any region with a disproportionately the names of various villages were ending with "*sarāi*" likely to have contained *sarāis* population in actuality, one could use the geographical distribution of places with names ending in *sarāi*, as a rough indication of the true geographical distribution of *sarāis*. One way of testing the veracity of this assumption is that the geographical distribution of these villages and localities is shown on a map and this map be compared with the one prepared by Irfan Habib showing the trade-routes in medieval period. For making this kind of comparison it would be better to select the area that makes up the current state of Uttar Pradesh, as this region on the one hand, contains the largest number of the villages and *Muhallās* with *sarāi* names and, on the other hand, for the main trunks of land route passing through this region comparatively more detailed information is available. This information has been used by Irfan Habib to work out the actual course of the routes.[16] This map also shows the products of different localities within the region; from which it is also possible to attempt some conjecture about areas where local commerce might have been brisk, and so small branch routes might be expected.

The existing various *sarāis* found in alignment coincides with the route adopted by Peter Mundy for his journey from Agra to Patna.[17] He followed this route until he reached Banaras. This also coincides with the trade route between Agra and Banaras as given in Irfan Habib's map.

The above comparisons indicate that the assumption, on which we have proceeded in this enquiry, is by and large valid. The large measure of conformity of the trade-routes existing in the Mughal period with the pattern of distribution of places boring the designation *sarāi* as a part of their names goes to confirm that these places are actually the sites representing medieval *sarāis*.

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[15] Edward Terry observes that 'for their works of charities many richmen built *sarais*', Cf. W. H. Moreland, '*India at the Death of Akbar*', on the basis of his general survey of the travelleral accounts, Moreland suggests that the main routes of land travel were defined by "walled enclosures known as *sarais*".

[16] Irfan Habib, 'An Atlas of the Mughal Empire', Oxford University Press, Map No. 8B: 'Economic' Uttar Pradesh, 1595 A.D.

[17] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., pp. 78-137.

Apparently, the ancient Indian tradition of a centralized state undertaking to establish rest-houses on roads had survived down to the sixteenth century. Brief description of *sarāis* set up by Sher Shah given the impression that these were basically *dāk-chaukīs* (Postal Stations) which provided also free food and lodging facilities to the travellers who had no other place to go. From this we can deduce that not every traveller had free access into these state-run rest-houses.[18] If we compare Rizqullah Mushtaqi's and Abbas Khan's descriptions of the *sarāis* established by Sher Shah, it appears that contained only one *darwāza* (large gateway).[19] Inside this enclosure, there existed a *Khāna-i-Pādshāhi* (a government house). This seems to have been a building or a portion of a building reserved for the use of the state personnel stationed there, namely a number of *nigahbānān* (watchmen) commanded by a *Shahnā* (officer).[20] Possibly these functionaries were also responsible for looking after the two horses of the *Dāk-Chaukī* stationed in the *sarāi*. In addition to the *Khānā-i- Pādshāhī*, each *sarāi* contained *khāna-hā* (houses) for Hindu as well as Muslim travellers. Brahman and Muslim families were settled close to the gateway of the *sarāi* to look after the comfort of Hindu and Muslim travellers. A well and a *Masjid-i-Jāmi'* (central mosque), both built of *khisht-i-pukhta* (burnt bricks), and a *bāzār* (market place) located in the centre of the enclosure were other conspicuous features of such a *sarāi*.[21]

The road-side houses of Akbar's reign mentioned by 'Arif Qandahari in *Tārīkh-i-Akbarī*, which was writing around 1580 A.D., denotes to '*these rest-houses as chaukis located on roads at an interval of five kurohs'*.[22] It is not specified explicitly, though, that these visitors admitted to the 'state-run' *sarāis* received free accommodation along with other amenities. Mughal state's rest-houses were originally no more than postal *chaukīs*, but now non-official impoverished travelers were also allowed entrance. It's possible that the travellers, who were permitted access to the 'state-run' rest households including free nourishment, although this isn't specified anywhere.[23]

The civilian clientele served by the *kāravānsarāis* established either state or private individuals, were generally charged for food and lodging. The majority of *kāravānsarāis* were supported by endowments set up by the founding private individuals. These *kāravānsarāis* overall maintenance costs were covered by endowment revenue, while the

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[18] In this context 'Abbas Khan Sarwani mentions only *musāfirān-i be takyagāh* (the travellers having no refuge). Cf. '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., p. 111, foot note- 3.

[19] According to 'Abbas Khan Sarwani (fol. 110a), Sher Shah used to say that if he would live long enough, he would convert the *sarāis* that had been "made *khām*" (not built of burnt bricks) into *pukhta* (strong, that is, built of burnt bricks) ones. This clearly indicates that the ramparts of *sarāi* enclosures were mostly built of mud. From two different passages of 'Abbas Khan Sarwani (fol. 109a) and Rizqullah Mushtaqi (fol. 50a) we get the impression that each *sarāi* had only one gateway because they refer to *darwāza-iharsarāi* (the gateway of every *sarāi*) and not to *darwāza-hā-i-har-sarāi* (the gateways of every *sarāi*). Cf. '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., p. 111, foot note- 4.

[20] The official commanding the *nigahbānān* is designated *shahna* by 'Abbas Khan Sarwani and *shiqdār-i-sarāi* by Rizqullah Mushtaqi. For more detailed comments on the designations and powers of this functionary, see Ravindra Kumar, "*Administration of Sarāis*", paper presented at the Indian History Congress, Hyderabad, 1978. Cf. '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., p. 112, foot note- 1.

[21] '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., p. 112.

[22] Abul Fazl, '*Tārīkh-i- Akbarī*', pp. 44-45 and '*Akbarnāma*', Bibliotheca Indica, Vol. III, (Calcutta, 1873-87), pp. 824-285. Cf. '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., p. 112, foot note- 2.

[23] See '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., pp. 112-113.

various service groups, predominantly the *bhatīyarās* who served as attendants-cum-cooks were fed by fees made by visiting travellers.[24]

In the 17th century, *bhatīyarīns*[25] often took care of the travellers' needs as well as other household chores in the *sarāis*, leaving the male family members to work in the fields or at other jobs. Under Mughal India, the *Kotwāl* had a crucial place in municipal governance. The *Kotwāl's* functions were thought to be highly extensive, often seeming to have a broader reach than those of contemporary municipal organizations, according to the diverse facts found in the records of European traveller's.[26]

The *Ā'īn-i-Kotwāl*[27] and Akbar's *farmān* given in the *Mir'āt-i-Ahmadī*,[28] containing instruction for *Kotwāl*, are read together then one gets the picture of an ideal city government headed by a very powerful autocrat. However, *Kotwāl* was expected to be powerful enough to make life in the city pleasant or intolerable to particular individuals at his will.[29]

The *Kotwāl* may be referred to as the chief of police in relation to a significant component of his role. He was primarily in charge of keeping watch on the town and its environs. The host is required to notify the *Mīr-i-Mahallā* or spy about any visitors, whether they are family members or complete strangers, when they arrive. The informer was required to record every occurrence as well as every individual that entered and exited the street in daily reports. The *Kotwāl* were to be showed it.

Another crucial duty of the *Kotwāl* was to prevent traveller from theft, other criminal activity, and murder within the town's boundaries. The *Nigārnāma-i-Munshī* contains a *sanad* of appointment issued to Muhammad Beg, the *Kotwāl* of Muhammadābād *'Urf Benāres* and master of ferry over the Ganges. He is directed to see that 'there be no theft in the town, and the inhabitants while enjoying security may carry on their respective trades peacefully.'[30]

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[24] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., p. 121, foot note- 2; see for detail in '*The Kārwānsarāys of Mughal India: A Study of Surviving Structures*', op.cit., pp. 113-114.

[25] '*Early Travels in India 1583-1619*', ed. William Foster, op.cit., p. 225.

[26] For functions of the Kotwāl, see Abul Fazl, '*A'in-i-Akbari*', tr. by H. Blochmann, Vol. I, pp. 284-285; Abdul Qadir Badaoni, '*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*', ed. by Ahmad Ali, Vol. II, Calcutta, (1865), p. 390; '*Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*', tr. by W.H. Moreland & P. Geyl, Delhi, (1972), p. 57; '*English Factories in India (1622-23)*', op.cit., pp. 124-125; '*Travels of Sebastien Manrique 1629-1643*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 188-189; '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 447; '*Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)*', op.cit., p. 369; '*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*', ed. by S. N. Sen, The National Archives of India, New Delhi, (1949), pp. 12, 27; John Fryer, '*A New Account of East India and Persia being Nine Years Travels, 1672-81*', ed. W. Crooke, Vol. I, Hakluyt Society, London, 1909, p. 246; J. Ovington, '*A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*', ed. H. G. Rawlinson, London, (1929), pp. 137-138; A. Hamilton, 'A new Account of the East Indies (1688-1723)', printed in '*Voyages and Travels*', ed. J. Pinkerton, Vol. VIII, London, (1811), p. 312; '*Storia Do Mogor or Mogul India, 1653-1708*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 292, 295-296.

[27] '*A'in-i-Akbari*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 284-285.

[28] 'Alī Muhammad Khān, '*Mir'āt-i-Ahmadī*', ed. Nawāb 'Alī, Vol. I, Baroda, (1927), pp. 168-170.

[29] '*Hidāyat-al-Qawānīn*', ff. 30b-31a; 'Alī Muhammad Khān, '*Mir'āt-i-Ahmadī*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 168; '*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*', op.cit., p. 27; J. Ovington, '*A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*', op.cit., p. 137.

[30] '*Nigarnāmā-i-Munshī*', ff. 238ab- 239a. Cf. M. P. Singh, 'Town, Market, Mint and Port in the Mughal Empire, 1556-1707', Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi, (1985), p. 46, foot note- 2.

Every *mahallā* was to have a nightguard (*chaukī*) established by the *Kotwāl*. He had to ride out and patrol the streets every night at 9 p.m., 12 a.m., and 3 a.m. In these circumstances, a big copper trumpet would blow and the men in his patrolling team would shout the term *Khabardār* (Alert!) loudly.[31] The other patrolling parties in the neighbouring street were to repeat the same word '*Khabardār*'. [32]

The *Kotwāl's* primary duties were providing distinct living spaces (localities) for various groups within the town's inhabitants, including traders, artisans, prostitutes, butchers, and low-level workers;[33] to control and provide locations beyond the town wall for slaughterhouses, crematoria, and burial grounds;[34] to establish separate *sarā'is* for new-comers; and regulate the supply of water through supply channels for the general public; and to allocate the different types of markets at different places.[35]

Iqtidar Alam Khan also observed that in the beginning *kāravānsarāis* providing temporary accommodations to ordinary travellers without any distinction between the poor and the rich were established in the substantial urban centres. These *kāravānsarāis* were mostly charitable institutions. However, with the passage of time, these seem to have become rent yielding properties. Large numbers of Mughal *kāravānsarāis* were constructed throughout on every trade route.[36] These *sarāis* provided the safety for the foreign travellers as well as the traders.

The *Kotwāl* was also anticipating receiving information from the *sarāis* government on the arrival of outsiders. It makes reasonable that in this type of relationship; the *sarāi* administration would not perform as alertly and effectively as the authorities had hoped. The *Kotwāl* was given the authority to create a distinct *sarāi* in the town for the purpose of housing the newly arrived traveller until it was necessary to review the information about them during Akbar's reign, seemingly in order to address this issue.[37]

Kāravānsarāi was well defined by Thomas Coryat in his *Travels*. He mentioned that: "*I'd like you to know that I always travel in the company of caravāns in a secure manner. In all of Asia, the term caravān refers to a large group of people traveling together while hauling goods from one country to another on camels, horses, mules, asses, and other*

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[31] '*A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*', op.cit., p. 137; '*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*', op.cit., pp. 27-28.

[32] '*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*', op.cit., pp. 27-28.

[33] '*A'in-i-Akbari*', Vol. I, op.cit. pp. 284-285.

[34] Ibid., p. 284. It was also the *Kotwāl's* duty to arrange for carrying and finally disposing of the dead bodies in case pestilence struck the town.

[35] Ibid., p. 284.

[36] '*Sarais* at different places', see for '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 45-46; '*Sarais* between Burhānpur and Sironj', see '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 47; '*Sarais* between Gwalior to Agra', see '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 52-53; '*Sarais* constructed between Allahābād and Benares', see '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 96; For the '*Sarais* built between Benares and Sasaram', see '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 98; Also see 'Some *Sarais* outside of Āgra', see '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 71, 88; also see 'Divers *Seraes* built by great men, faire buildings to entertaine travellers', Cf. '*Purchas His Pilgrimes*', op.cit., p. 267.

[37] '*Ain-i-Akbari*', tr. by H. S. Jarrett, Vol. II, op.cit., p. 44. 'He (i.e., *kotwāl*) should establish a separate *sarāi* and cause unknown arrivals to alight therein, and by the aid of divers detectives take account of them.'

animals. They also use tents and pavillions to shelter in open fields in place of homes, and they are equipped with all the necessities and practical tools to dress themselves……"[38]

For the maintenance of *sarāi's*, female attendants were provided in it. Nicholas Withington mentioned about the female attendants[39] in the *sarāis*. Peter Mundy mentioned that, women employed in the *sarāi*. Richard Steel and John Crowther wrote that: '*For thieves, it is risky at night, but safe during the day. There are Seraes built by the King or some important persons every five or six courses, which are quite nice for beautifying the path, preserving the remembrance of their names, and providing entertainment for travellers. You will have a room, a space to tack your horses, and a meat storage area in them. However, because of the Banians, there was little benefit for men in many of them. No one may displace a guy once he has taken up residence. The gates are opened as soon as everyone is prepared to go together in the morning, around daybreak. No man has ever been allowed to go before out of fear of thieves. This was a laborious task because, two hours after the sun rose, we were hardly able to stand the heat……*'[40]

Sarāis, or resting areas, were built all along these roads for usage by traders and travellers. These were built at a convenient one day's travel distance. In addition to being built in large numbers in most significant towns, *sarāis* could hold up to three thousand peoples at once, along with their horses and camels. These offered special accommodations for female travellers. Some of these *sarāis* were stunning works of art. It is reported that during the Mughal era, numerous lovely *sarāis* (*Kāravānsarāis*) were constructed close to Agra. The ruins of some of the *sarāis* serve as a reminder of the splendor of the imperial era even though they are in disrepair. A portion of the 130 sets of vaulted apartments, that the *sarāis* had been converted into local habitation. Now, the square area in the middle of this *sarāi* is occupied as well as illegal structures built by the locals.

These were large, generally single-storied, buildings enclosed on all sides by high walls and adequately secured, with one or two gateways which were broad enough to give admittance to carts, camels and beasts of burden. Their doors were closed after sunset but a small window in one of the two doors was kept unlocked.[41] The *sarāis* had almost a uniform plan. In the middle was a spacious and open Court all around which were provided on a raised platform by small living rooms. They had only one window each for ventilation and each living room had a small *varandāh* or courtyard of its own on its front, which opened on a *chabutarāh* which was generally about 4 feet or 1.22 meter (approx.), higher than the level of the court. While the floors of living room (*kotharīs*) and *varandāh* (*dalāns*) were paved, *chabutarāh* was kept *kachchā* and it had series of trees for shade. The court was big enough to hold carts and animals of the travellers. People usually travelled in groups or caravans and carried such things of their own as could make them independent even on long journeys. A well or step-well (*baolī*) was invariably there, generally in the centre of this court, which was obviously the life-line of the *sarāi*. Its keeper along with his family lived in the two living

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[38] See Thomas Coryat, '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', ed. by William Foster, New Delhi, reprinted, 1968, p. 259.

[39] '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 225; "For the female attendants in the sarāis", see '*The Travel of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., p. 121, Cf. '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 225, foot note. 1.

[40] '*Purchas His Pilgrimes*', op.cit., p. 268.

[41] '*Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)*', op.cit., p. 233.

rooms and their respective *varandāh* (*dalāns*) inside the main entrance gateway. They were supervised the entry and exit of the travellers,[42] provided for their comforts and managed its affairs.

These *sarāis* were a Persian institution and there is nothing indigenous in the Mughal *sarāi* except the well or the *baolī*. Islam ordained social equality and universal brotherhood, in which *Sarāi* and *Masjid*, was a very popular institution in the Muslim Society. By road or river, Agra was connected to other significant economic and administrative centers. Two distinct roads from the south led to Surat, where a significant portion of India's international trade was carried out.[43] One route went through Rajasthan, while the other went through central India. Dholpur, Gwalior, Narwar, and Shivpuri were significant locations along the earlier path of the *subā*, and Fatehpur-Sikri, Bayana, Hindaun, and Chatsu were significant locations along the later route. Several rivers, the majority of which lacked bridges, crossed the central Indian route. The alternate route via Rajasthan was open all year long, although passing through certain principalities that were only loosely united and whose rulers asserted some customs obligations. Agra was connected to Delhi and Lahore in the north-west. A continuous avenue of trees extended alongside the road on both sides. A continuous avenue of trees extended alongside the road on both sides. Along both sides of trade route, there were series of trees. These were the main accesses connecting the Mughal Empire's capital city.

It was a twofold order for the construction of *sarāis* on highways for the comfort of the travelers, and for their maintenance and management. These functions were assigned to the *jagīrdārs* where the roads passed through their *jagīr*, and to the *mutasaddis* in the *khālsah* territories. Hitherto it was largely a religious and charitable obligation of the rich, and the state could not do much to facilitate the overland travel. Akbar's strong and stable rule of half a century not only ensured security to the people and trade flourished, it also opened up new avenues of state's awareness and concern for people's welfare. Now it was enough organized to take up such projects in hand and it was also financially capable of maintaining such an institution which did not bring any revenues in return.

In order to replenish the funds under this account, Jahāngīr also ordered that if anybody in his Empire died without leaving any heir, his properties should be spent in: "*building of mosques and sarais, the repair of broken bridges, and the digging of tanks and wells*".[44]

Thus, working under sound legacy Jahāngīr exerted to institutionalize the system of highway and *sarāis*. These trade routes were further enlarged, extended and properly maintained under Jahangir. These were generally, made of *kankār* laid on the highways to prevent the surface from being washed off during the rains, but whenever these roads passed through cities and towns, they were stone (brick) pathway, bricks being laid in upright position (called *khurrā* or *kharānjā*) to prevent horses from slipping over. Fruit trees were positioned along the sides of the road to give the highway the appearance of an avenue.

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[42] Ibid., p. 281.
[43] '*Travels in India, 1640-47*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 37, 48-65, 89; Also see '*Early Travels in India 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 179.
[44] '*Tuzūk-ī-Jahāngīri*', ed. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Ghazipur and Aligarh, (1863-64), p. 4.

On the other hand, *Kōs-Minārs* were erected along the highways (Agra-Lahore), at every *kōs*. Probably, minarets resembling these goal-posts were built in Byzantium, whence the idea traveled to Iran, which provided the prototype to the Indian *Kōs-Minār*. That such masonry structures were not built in ancient India certainly points into this direction.

This arrangement to raise a *minār* (tower) at every 9 *kōs* provides the conveyance for post or *Dak-Chowki*. According to historical accounts, Akbar constructed a *kōs-minār* and dug a well at every *kōs* along the route from Agra to Ajmer.[45] Jahangir extended this facility of milestones (*kōs-minār*) also along the highway between Agra and Lahore.

Sarāis held a significant position in the urban space in Medieval Indian society. There is evidence that suggests *sarāis* were present in Delhi's environs as early as Balban's reign.[46] During the period of Firuz Shah Tughluq, *kāravānsarāis* were established as a recognized means of promoting for the public welfare.[47] Sher Shah Suri, however, setup noteworthy influence in this field[48] and tradition was also followed by the great Mughal emperors at a large scale. Till now, a large number of Mughal *sarāis* structures still surviving in a dilapidated condition. In terms of rest houses, the *kāravānsarāis* gained popularity in both north and south India in the sixteenth century.

In this chapter, I also attempt to study the architectural plan and purpose of few *sarāis* in the Mughal city of Agra. These *sarāis* were surveyed and their details with photographs and plans are provided below. There were many *sarāis* (rest houses), in Agra, which was served the capital city of Mughal Empire's. The *sarāis* included in this chapter are *Sarāi*-Nur-Mahal (popularly called as *Raja-ki-Sarāi*), *Sarāi* Nawāl Ganj, *Sarāi* Pukhtā, *Sarāi* Tājganj, *Sarāi* Chipitolā, *Sarāi* of Badar-ud-Din, *Sarāi* of I'tibar Khan Khawja, *Sarāi* of Rōzbihānī etc

III. *SARĀI* NUR-MAHAL (*RAJĀ KI SARĀI*)

However, *Sarāi* Nur-Mahal is currently in a state of dilapidated condition. This is positioned between *Battīs-Khambhā* and *Bāgh-i-Gūl-Afshān* (Arām-Bāgh).[49] This *sarāi* was constructed on the Nūr Jahān *jāgir* in 1612 A.D., whose officers collected taxes on goods brought by river from this location. Initially, it could hold up to 3000 peoples and 500 horses simultaneously. There is no longer any sign of the smaller entrance on the *Battīs-Khambhā* side. The single-story chambers had a vaulted ceiling; a veranda (*dalān*) at the front covered by a eaves (*chhajjā*), and were plastered on the interior. The entrance is located on the east side of the road. The riverfront tower with kiosk (*chhatri*) are still visible, but the stepped *ghāt* (river landing stairs) has vanished.

Bāgh-i Gūl Afshān or Aram Bagh was restored and recalled as *Bāgh-i Gūl Afshān* by Jahangir, is located the riverine *sarāi* of Nur Jahan. Her officers constructed it in order to

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[45] '*Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*', Vol. II, op.cit., p. 173; Abul Fazl, '*Akbar Nama*', ed. by Maulavi Abdur Rahīm, Vol. II, Calcutta, (1881), p. 111; also see for example "History of Mughal Architecture", by R. Nath, Vol. II, New Delhi, (1985), pp. 273-274.

[46] Ziauddin Barani, '*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*', ed. Sh. Abdul Rashid, pp. 65-66.

[47] Shams Siraj Afif, '*Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi*', tr. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. III, P. 354.

[48] Abbas Khan Sarwani, '*Tarikh-i- Sher Shahi*', tr. Elliot & Dowson, Vol. IV, P. 417.

[49] Gul-Badan Begum, '*Humāyūn-Nāma*' (The History of Humāyūn), (Persian M.S. Or. 166, British Museum), ed. by A. S. Beveridge, LPP, Delhi, reprint, 2006, ff. 16a, 20a, 30a, 31b.

collect taxes on cargo moved by river. The traders were definitely the intended users of this *sarāi* at this *Chungi-Nāka* right on the river-bank Yamuna. Peter Mundy witnessed, this *sarāi* in good functioning order shortly after Jahangir's rule. He mentioned that: "*is a very fair one built by the old Queen Nur Mahal for the accommodation of travellers, in which may stand 500 horse, and there may conveniently lie two or three thousand peoples; all of stone, not one piece of timber in it, the rooms all arched, each with a several (separate) cupola (chhatri).*"[50] This *sarāi* had a single floor and was crowned on the façade by a separate *chhatrī* for each chamber. Brick masonry was once covered with stone, but due to the theft of nearly all of the stone facings, it is now exposed. *Chhatrīs* have also been robbed. Auspiciously, its borders are still in existence and support Mundy's claim that it was a very roomy tent with room for 500 horses and 2,000-3,000 travellers.

In 1611 A.D., Jahāngīr wed Nūr Jahān, and shortly afterward, she received generosity. She probably received this *jagīr* around 1612 A.D., and at around the same period, the wise lady, realizing its critical importance, ordered the construction of this *sarāi*.

Despite this, second riverine *sarāi* during Mughal era, constructed about the same time as *Sarāi* Nūr-Jahān in Agra, is located at Delhi just south side wall of Humāyūn's Tomb. Currently, also called as *Mandī* (*Arāb-Sarāi*). Its construction during Jahāngīr's reign is plainly attested to by the inscriptions and paintings on the doorway. It was constructed by *Mihr Bano Agha*, also known as *Agha Man* or *Agha-i-Aghayan*, an experienced and dependable Jahangir servant.

Be it as it may, undeniable is the fact that it is the first example, and for that matter a brilliant one, of riverine *sarāi* of the Mughal and testifies that they cared for the comfort not only of those travellers and traders who travelled by road, but also for those who travelled by river. They could lodge in this *sarāi* with their barges tied on the *ghāt*, they paid duties, rested, engaged horses and porters and proceeded towards the east by road, or vice-versa. This *sarāi* not only facilitated but also coordinated and regulated the traffic and trade by land and river and it was a valuable transshipment point for goods received from or supplied to the eastern provinces of India.

Tavernier's description of this province is arguably the most fascinating part of his narrative of his time spent in Agra. This was the famous *Nur-Mahal Ki Sarai*[51]. Nur-Mahal was wife of Jahangir the famous emperor of Mughal Empire in India. She erected an imposing *sarāi* in the vicinity of Agra. At Agra her memory has been perpetuated by the remains of this handsome *kāravānsarāi*, which was built probably during the Jahangir's reign. This *sarāi* located near the left bank of Jamuna River at a few distance in the north direction from Arām-Bāgh enclosure. The eastern and western entrances are still standing; however, they are in ruins. This *sarāi* most likely had 52 rooms on the northern side of the enclosing wall and 53 rooms on the southern side. Although the chambers in the eastern and western sides may have also existed, there are currently no remains to be uncovered as proof of their existence. The enclosure wall of this *sarāi* may house 120 rooms or more.

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[50] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., p. 78.
[51] '*Travels in India*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 92-93; Also see '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 78-79, 82-83, 143.

At present, it is lying forgotten and neglected, in an extremely ruined condition. The main gate is located on the eastern side, close to the highway, and it has a rectangular shape with an east-west layout. It is a red sandstone-faced archway made of brick masonry that stands freestanding among drains and trash. On the western or riverside, there is another comparable but smaller doorway; however, the downstairs (*ghāt*) assisted boat for loading and unloading, now completely demolished. The central portico was a very picturesque riverfront characteristic of the Mughal era made up of two *chhatrīs* overlooking the *sarāi* on either side. Now, everything has been changed. Another little door that provided entrance from the *Battīs-Khambhā* side was located in the center of the northern wall, but it has also been destroyed.

On the northern and southern edges of the rectangular structure, single-story chambers were placed, leaving the center exposed to traffic and animals. Every room featured a vaulted ceiling, and the inside was tastefully plastered. It had a veranda (*dalān*) of its own on the front, which was also shielded by an eve (chhajjā). Every aperture had an arch. All of the eves (*chhajjā*) slabs have been stolen, but their brackets, which are firmly set into sturdy brick masonry, have survived. Due to the full disregard by the conservation organizations, this stunning *Sarāi-Nūr-Jahān* has been destroyed, with the exception of some stone brackets and the naked brick masonry skeleton.

The rectangular enclosure of this *sarāi* spans a total size of (225 X 52) square meters. Each square room inside the *sarāi* measures (3.20 X 3.20) square meters and has a front porch that is (2.00 X 3.20) square meters in size. A lengthy colonnade is created by connecting the porches through holes in the side walls. A (3.20 X 3.20) square meter pavilion with an entrance to the east is located in the northern side's center. This *sarāi* is disproportionate in that, unlike rectangular or square *sarāis*, its length is significantly longer than its breadth. Inter-connected porches creating a portico in front of the rooms, which allows protected entrance to each room, are a significant feature. In none of the *sarāis* at Agra, I had surveyed did I notice this arrangement.[52]

IV. *SARĀI* NAWĀL GANJ

Itmād-ūd-Daulā's tomb is located about 500 meters to the north-east of this structure, although there is no inscription or any proof of its identification. Rāja Rām recognized this location as a *Katrā* erected by Shaīstā Khān for his own dwelling during Shāhjahān's reign when he was writing a few years prior to the revolt.[53]

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[52] 'Interestingly, this arrangement is not seen in the following Sarais: *Sarai Nawal Ganj, Sarai Chippitola, Pukhta Sarai & Sarai Taj Ganj*.' Also see details Salim Javed Akhtar, "*Sarais in the Mughal City of Agra*", Transformation in Indian History, ed. Pratima Asthana & S. Z. H. Jafri, **(ISBN- 978-81-7975-261-6)**, Published by Anamika Publishers & Distributors (P) Ltd., New Delhi, (2009), pp. 258-275. Link: https://books.google.co.in/books?id=2c9312fKPqgC&pg=PA258&lpg=PA258&dq=Sarais+in+the+Mughal +City+of+Agra+Salim+Javed+akhtar&source=bl&ots=4wdUQa64-g&sig=ACfU3U0JremrOFUYsGcZKOJxjQDkSqRjoQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjHo6XK2LL0AhXy wTgGHc8YBqQQ6AF6BAgkEAM#v=onepage&q=Sarais%20in%20the%20Mughal%20City%20of%20A gra%20Salim%20Javed%20akhtar&f=false

[53] 'The gardens of Agra', *Journal of UP Historical Society*, Vol. IV, 1928, Part I, pp. 15-16.

However, A. C. L. Carlleyle in 1871-72 attributed the construction of the building to Salāt Khān, a noble of Shāhjahān, as a *Katrā*[54]. He also says that *Katrā* Nawāb Ganj, which is a lengthier name for the location, was shortened to become Nawālganj. According to him, it was served as a marketplace. However, we may confidently deduce that it is a *sarāi* building based on the structure's layout.[55] This structure, which consists of a square enclosure, has four octagonal bastions at the corners, high battlemented walls, and a square footprint of (115.25 X 115.25) square meters. At centre of enclosure wall on the east and west sides are two imposing entrance huge gateways. Within the complex, rooms are located along each of the four corners. In accordance to the two tall entrances in the other two directions with expanded exterior walls, there are two bigger chambers in the centre of the north and south side. These rooms have a square footage of (11.66 X 4.14) square meters. The corner chambers have containing doors that go into the hollow bastions. The building contains 86 rooms. The regular rooms are (3.35 X 3.35) square meters in size and identical in design, with an arched entrance of the same size forming the porch.

V. *SARĀI PUKHTĀ* OR (*PAKKI SARĀI*)

This *Sarāi* is located next to Sayed Nagar in Taj Ganj's southern region. This *sarāi* is said to have been constructed under Shahjahan's rule. The year when this *sarāi* was built cannot be determined from inscriptional or textual information. It could have been erected simultaneously with the Taj Mahal. This *sarāi* is said to have held construction materials for the Taj Mahal. The workers who were employed in the construction of Taj Mahal were also provided accommodation in this *sarāi*. This is location in front of the Taj Mahal, approximately a half mile to the south, is one of its most significant features.

This *sarāi* features a square floor design, with 36 rooms on each side. The round corner chambers are in disrepair and have no windows. The enormous entrances that previously stood centre of the enclosure wall in east and west sides are no longer survived till date. In this *sarāi*, several of the apartments were still standing. Likely equal in size, each room was (3.35 X 3.35) square meters. There were formerly two enormous monumental entrances in this *sarāi*'s eastern and western side wall perimeter, but nothing remains now. The enclosing wall's overall area may be in the neighborhood of (170 X 170) square meters.

VI. *SARĀI* TAJ GANJ

Our primary sources mainly refer to the economic activities of the city of Agra, which had acted as the northern headquarters of the trading agents for the European companies. However, it is noticeable that they do not ever complain about lack of facilities like the negotiation of bills of exchange, transport or communications, in these towns.

During seventeenth century, merchants and traders, who flocked to the city of Agra did not experience major problems associated with their work. Immediately after reaching the city, they could requisition the services of professional negotiation, brokers (*dallāl*), who would take them to the wholesale markets for specific commodities, where almost unlimited

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[54] A.C.L.Carlleyle, '*Archaeological Survey of India*'. Report for the year 1871-72, Vol. IV, pp.159-162.

[55] "It is most likely that the structure was planned as a *Sarāi* but it gradually came to be used entirely as a market place which led it to be as *Katrā* (*Gānj*)."

stocks were available. In short, entire consignments of assorted commodities could be arranged without delay. The dominant picture that emerges through the working of these institutions establishes Agra as integral to a wide network of trade and financial activities of the subcontinent, with important linkages even with the markets outside the Hindustan.

Despite all, the main routes *sarāis* were erected by restricted bureaucrats and royal noblemen, which were used by merchants as well as travellers.[56] Such *sarāis* were built at a reasonable distance of one day's travel.[57] Not only were a number of *sarāis* built in the main towns, but some of them were huge enough to house two to three thousand people at a time, along with their horses and camels.[58] Women travelers had separate chambers in the *sarāis*.[59]

The Yamuna River functioned as the principal waterway. Because this river is deep and wide, no stone bridge was built across it. However, due to the high frequency of traffic on the Yamuna in Agra, a boat-bridge was built. Ferry boats were available for crossing at key spots along all rivers. Stone bridges were built on minor rivers, sometimes by members of the nobility.[60]

With such massive building activity, the actual number of master craftsmen and labourers would have been many times more than the figures given by Babur in his account. From the chief architect downwards a number of officials worked in different supervisory capacities in the imperial establishments.[61] Such type of arrangements might have existed, even if temporarily, in the establishments of the nobility, to construct such beautiful monuments as have been listed by Pelsaert,[62] or the *sarāis*, some of which were huge enough to lodge two to three thousand persons at a time along with their horses, camels and merchandise.

Peter Mundy writes about the *Nūr-Mahāl-kī-Sarāi* that was constructed of stone, 'not a piece of Timber in it, the rooms all arched, each with severall cupola.' About another *sarāi* at Chaparghat, he writes that it was '*fairest and formalestsarae that I have yet seene, with 4*

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[56] Richard Steel & Crowther, '*Purchas His Pilgrimes*', op.cit., pp. 267, 268; '*Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*', op.cit., p. 50; '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 78-79; '*Zakhirat*', Vol. II, pp. 14, 404. Also see Salim Javed Akhtar, '*Sarais in the Mughal City of Agra*', op.cit., pp. 258-275.

[57] '*Purchas His Pilgrimes*', op.cit., p. 268; '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 179; '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 225; '*Travels in the Mogul Empire (A.D. 1656-68)*', op.cit., p. 294.

[58] '*Storia Do Mogor* or *Mogul India, 1653-1708*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 69; "Each of them might hold, more or less, from 800 to 1,000 persons, with their horses, camels, carriages; and some of them are even larger"; See also '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 62, 64-65, 78: '…in which stand 500 horses and there may conveniently lye 2 or 3,000 people.' See also '*Early Travels*', op.cit., p. 179; '*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*', op.cit., p. 48.

[59] '*Storia Do Mogor* or *Mogul India, 1653-1708*', Vol. I, op.cit., p. 69.

[60] '*Early Travels in India, 1583-1619*', op.cit., p. 179; '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', Vol. II, op.cit., pp. 64-65, 89, 91; '*Travels in India*', Vol. I, op.cit., pp. 64-65, 114; '*Storia Do Mogor* or *Mogul India, 1653-1708*', Vol. II, op.cit., p. 302.

[61] Ahsan Jan Qaisar, 'Building Construction in Mughal India: The Evidence from Painting', Delhi (1988), pp. 6-15.

[62] '*Jahangir's India: The Remonstrantie of Francisco Pelsaert*', op.cit., p. 2.

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faire Towers att the 4 corners, and 21 stately gates attcomeinge in and goeinge out, and a veriehighe wall round about, full of Battlements, as yett all compleat.'[63]

With such information as we have the possibility cannot be ruled out that initially the settlement pattern of Agar conformed to some definite arrangements. These, however, went haywire during the period of political upheavals starting from 1526. The political forces, deeply absorbed with the crisis of survival, had hardly any thought for the planned development of any city, and Agra, which intermittently served as one of the political centres during this period, was no exception. Even so, some of the market centres which had developed in Agra town as a result of east-west trade in mid of sixteenth century trade withstood the political turmoil of the next thirty years.

The first known reference to a planned market centre belongs to *Tājganj*, located in the vicinity of Taj Mahal, was conceived by Shah Jahan as the most important market of Agra. From the available accounts, it emerges that a large area near the Taj Mahal was selected and suitably leveled, which entailed the leveling of some hillocks. Streets and shops were constructed according to future growth projections. The ambitious project of the *Tajganj* was seen by contemporaries as Shah Jahan's plan to develop a twin city for Agra. The plan is reported to have included dwelling houses for all sections of society, merchants, shop-keepers as well as artisans.[64]

Whole area of Taj Ganj presently is divided into four *Katrās*.[65] Taj Ganj lies in front of Southern Gateway of the Taj Complex. viz. *Katrā Umar Khan, Katrā Phulai, Katrā Resham and Katrā Jogidas.*

The description of the plan of Taj Ganj[66] complex has been provided by the official historian of Shāhjahān, Abdul Hamid Lahori in *Bādshāhnāma.* Writing about the Taj Ganj he mentioned that: "To the south of the area of the *Jalukhana* (Front of the Taj) is a four-laned bazaar. The width of the (lanes of the) eastern and western bazaar is 90 yards[67] and of the northern and southern 30 yards. On all the four sides of this four-laned bazaar are four *Sarai*. These two *Sarais* have been built with *pucca bricks* and lime out of (funds of) the royal exchequer. Each is 160 yards long and broad. Each has an octagonal courtyard of the Baghadai shape with 136 cells lining it, each cell fronted by a verandah with a three-angled

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[63] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., p. 78. See also '*The Karwansarays ofMughal India: A Study of Surviving Structure*', op.cit., pp. 111-137.

[64] '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., pp. 213-214. Also see Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, '*Mughal Sarāis in the vicinity of Tajganj at Agra*', International Journal of History, Edited by Dr. Vishal Kr. Sharma, AkiNik Publications, New Delhi, July 2022, pp. 23-29. Link: https://www.historyjournal.net/archives/2022.v4.i2.A.155

[65] The term *Katrā* actually means a small bazaar but it is used as a locality here.

[66] "For information on the Taj Ganj area in the foreign traveler accounts", also see '*The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*', op.cit., p.213; '*The English Factories in India (1646-50)*', ed. by William Foster, Vol. VIII, pp. 220 & 299; '*The English Factories in India (1651-54)*', ed. by William Foster, Vol. IX, p. 122; '*District Gazetteers of the United Provinces Agra*', by H. R. Nevill, Vol. VIII, p. 217-218; '*U.P. District Gazetters*', ed. by Esha Basanti Joshi, Agra, (1965), p. 362; S. M. Latif, '*Agra: Historical and Descriptive*', Calcutta, (1896), p. 106; also see Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, '*Mughal Sarāis in the vicinity of Tajganj at Agra*', op.cit., pp. 23-29.

[67] "The length of the Mughal yard (*gāz*) has been estimated as 31.464 inches." See, Col. A. Hodgson, '*Memoire on the length of the Illahee Guz or Imperial Land Measure of Hindostan*', JRAS, (1843). pp. 45-53.

arch (dar). Each of these two *Sarais* contains at three corners three *chauks* (markets). Each of those courtyards is 14 yards by 14 yards. On the fourth corner of each *Sarai,* there is the gate used for entry and exit of the people and opens into the octagon of a market (*chauk*) 150 yards long, 100 yards broad, set in the middle the four-laned bazaar. The other two *Sarais* are on the same pattern. In these *Sarais* valuable goods from different countries of the world are brought for sale. Behind these royal *Sarais* merchants have built a large number of *pucca* houses and established *Sarais*. And this place which became a large town came to be known as *Mumtazabad.*"[68] The measurement of the room in the figure was ordinary rooms in *Sarāi Pukhtā*.

VII. *SARĀI* CHIPITOLĀ

This sarāi is located at the fort's south-western corner. It is approached from the east via a massive doorway.[69] This sarāi also contain the Palace as well as Hammām of Alahwirdī Khān (Ilāhwardī Khān)[70] situated at Chīpī-Tolā is an example. It used to have a big monumental entryway, a garden, a palace with hammām, and an attached sarāi. Although, arrangements of sarāi have now been altered. The gateway has remained in a deteriorated state. The sarāi has a vegetable market (mandī). On the sides of the doorway and in other areas of the complex, houses have been constructed. The palace itself has been demolished. Its Hammām, on the other hand, has survived, and the complex is now known as the Hammām. It features four huge square rooms, each with a reservoir, and tiny vaulted chambers around them, some with clay pipes running through the walls. Large monolithic perforated ventilators, referred to as cowls, fashioned like hollow hemispheres in the ceilings of these rooms are a distinguishing characteristic of this structure. On the red stone gateway is an inscription eulogizing the Emperor Jahāngīr and the hammām, containing the chronogram which gives the date A.H. 1030 (1620 A.D.).[71] It is important to note that Hammām architecture peaked only during Akbar's reign and that very few examples from Jahāngīr's reign have survived. In any case, unlike the Romans, the Hammām was a private construction that was frequently attached to a palace.

In comparison to the doorways of the other *Sarāi's* in Agra, this massive gateway is in good condition. The doorway is a massive domed building that used to house the inscription. This *Sarāi* floor design is made up of huge chambers in each of the four corners. The size of each larger room is around (5.20 X 5.20) square meters. With the exception of a handful on the eastern side due to the space taken up by the doorway, all of the rooms are distributed among the three sides. There could be 33 identical rooms in all. Similar to other *Sarāi's* rooms in the area of Agra, it has a size of (3.35 X 3.35) square meters. East to west

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[68] Abdu'l Hamid Lahori, '*Badshahnamah*', ed. by Maulavi Kabir-al-Din Ahmad & Abdu'l Rahim, Vol. II, Part- I, A. S. B. (Bib. Ind.), Calcutta, (1868), p.329.

[69] 'There are no other gateways besides this gateway.' Also see Salim Javed Akhtar, '*Sarais in the Mughal City of Agra*', Transformation in Indian History, op.cit., pp. 258-275.

[70] Shah Nawaz Khan, '*Máasir al-Umara*', ed. by Maulavi Ábd al Rahim, Text- I, Part- I, Calcutta, (1888), pp. 207-215; T. W. Beale, '*An Oriental Biographical Dictionary*', rev. ed. by H. G. Keene, (1894), p. 47.

[71] 'For full text and translation of the inscription', see for A. Cunningham, '*Archaeological Survey of India, Report (1871-72)*', op.cit., pp. 197-98; also see S. M. Latif, '*Agra: Historical and Descriptive*', op.cit., pp.198-99. Also see Salim Javed Akhtar, '*Sarais in the Mughal City of Agra*' Transformation in Indian History, op.cit., pp. 258-275.

measurement is 64 meters, while north to south measurement is 58 meters. Thus, this *Sarāi's* entire size is close to (64 X 58) square meters.

VIII. *SARĀI*-BADĀR-ŪD-DĪN

Several *sarāis* were built in the city of Agra during Mughal era, one of which is also called as *Sarāi* Badār-ūd-Dīn. Today, only the massive monumental doorway remains, which also has the inscription on the façade (entrance gateway). This inscription stated that this *sarāi* was erected during the Mughal period by one of the prominent nobles Badār-ūd-Dīn Khan. Today, this magnificent gateway serves as the main entrance of Agra's District Jail. There were no traces of this *sarāi's* apartments or exterior wall enclosure discovered. The District Jail's exterior enclosure is currently being built.[72]

IX. *SARĀI* OF I'TIBAR KHĀN KHAWJĀ

This *sarāi* of I'tibar Khan Khawjā is located four kilometers from Agra Fort near Sikandra on the (Agra-Delhi) old highway. It was previously an open summer home, but the doors have been enclosed with masonry.[73] *Begā-Sarāi* is the name given to this area nowadays. Only a massive entrance facing north remained in a deteriorated condition. This gateway is engaged by locals. Besides, this entryway, nothing of this *sarāi* remains today.

X. *SARĀ'Ī* OF RŌZBIHĀNĪ

Shāh Nawāz Khān stated about *sarāī* Rōzbihānī, which is situated four *kōs* from main city of Agra. He also mentioned that: '*It now advanced to near Akbarābād (Agra). Muhammad Mu'izz-ud-Dīn also left the capital (Delhī), and came to Agra. He was meditating the crossing of Jumnā, when Hasan 'Alī Khān anticipated him by crossing the Jumnā near the sarā'ī of Rōzbihānī four kos from Āgra. Muhammad FarrukhSiyar also crossed after him, but most of his followers through distress….*'[74]

William Irvine wrote about this *sarāi* as: '*Camp was pitched at Sarai Roz Bahani*[75] *near Akbar's tomb at Bihishtabad Sikandra, five miles west of Agra fort, with the front facing*

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[72] Saeed Ahmad Marharvi, '*Morāqqā-i-Akbarābād*', Agra, (1931), p. 144.

[73] S. M. Latif, '*Agra: Historical and Descriptive*', op.cit., p. 196. Also see details in Dr. Salim Javed Akhtar, 'Imperial Mughal Capital City at Agra', 1st Edition, INSC International Publishers (IIP), Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, (India), 2021 (**ISBN: 978-1-68576-042-7**). Link:https://books.google.co.in/books/about/Imperial_Mughal_Capital_City_at_Agra.html?id=jEKwzgEAC AAJ&redir_esc=y

[74] Shah Nawaz Khan, '*Máasir al-Umara*', ed. by Maulavi Mirza Ashraf Άli, Text- III, Part- I, Calcutta, (1891), pp. 133-134. Also see Khāfī Khān, '*The Muntakhab al-Lubáb*', ed. by Maulavi Kabir Al-Din Ahmed, Text- II, Part-II, A.S.B., Calcutta, (1874), p. 720.

[75] "Yahya Khan, 120b, places the camp near Sikandra. *Sarai Roz Bahani* (Khafi Khan, Vol. II, 720) was 4 *kos* or about of a saint of west of Agra. There is a tomb of a saint of some repute, Shaikh Roz Bihan, a little to the east of Shiraz town, E. G. Browne, *A year among the Persians*, London, 1893, p. 274. Roz Bahan was the son of Abi Nasar, lived to be 84 years of age, and died 606 H., *Shiraz-nama*, B.M. Addl. 18,185 fol. 136a. The Roz Bahani who built this *sarai* may have been a descendant or disciple of this saint. Roz Bahani is not in Beale, although that author lived at Agra. A Yusuf Khan Roz Bihani was subahdar of Haidarabad in Bahadur Shah's reign-*M.U.*, I, 256. Again *Ibid.*, iii. 771, a corps Roz Bahanis was present in the battle against Prince Shuja at Belghatha near Akbarnagar." Cf. William Irvine, 'The Later Mughals (1707-1720)', ed. by Jadunath Sarkar, reprinted, L.P.P., Delhi, (2006), p. 228, foot note- *

Agra and the rear towards Dihli…'[76] Again he mentioned that: '*When he had gone four or five miles, he came to a place where he saw some villagers wading through very shallow water. Forthwith (9thZul Hijja 1124 H., 6th Jan. 1713) he crossed with the five hundred horsemen then in his retinue.*[77]

XI. CONCLUSION

The preceding study of ground plans and other relevant data reveals the main distinguishing features of a Mughal *kāravānsarāis*. It is made out of a combination that is either square or rectangular surrounded by four wings, each with rows of rooms fronted by short porches. It may be suggested that the smaller and bigger chambers reflected the regular and extraordinary living units offered in a *kāravānsarāis* respectively. A *kāravānsarāis* enclosure or complex also contains one or two access points via gates with arched portals of substantial height. A gateway is always at the center of a courtyard wing. If there are two gates, they are located on opposing sides of the compound, facing each other. The gates are frequently double-story buildings with intricate patterns of halls and chambers. The rooms in the gates were probably allocated for the officials of a *kāravānsarāi*, who utilized them for a variety of reasons. However, most of the surveyed *sarāis* are in dilapidated conditions and it is very difficult to get their accurate measurements. A more detailed study of the *sarāis* in Agra will shed further light on the position of *sarāis* in the Mughal city of Agra.

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[76] William Irvine, "*The Later Mughals (1707-1720)*", op.cit., p. 228.

[77] 'Iradat Khan (J. Scott, Vol. II, Pt. iv. p. 91) says the counter march was one of twenty miles, and the place of crossing the ford of *Gao Ghat*, some miles above Agra. Khāfī Khān, '*The Muntakhab al-Lubáb*', Vol. II, op.cit., p. 720, fixed it on the night of the 11th (i.e., the night between the 10th and 11th); the water, he says, was up to a man's chest, and from Agra on the road to Dihli. The '*Ahwal-ul-Khawaqin*', 56a, also calls it the ford of Roz Bahan.' Cf. '*The Later Mughals (1707-1720)*', op.cit., p. 228, foot note.