



THE SOCIAL NETWORK OF THE NIZĀMIYYAH
SCHOOL SYSTEM DURING THE EARLY SALJUQ
PERIOD (1063-1092 C.E. /456-485 A.H.)

BY

SHAHAB DARYANAVARD DARGAHANI

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International Islamic University Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the social networks among ten Nizāmiyyah Madrasahs built by the great vizier Nizām al-Mulk in the early period of the Saljuq dynasty. Nizāmiyyah institutions served as higher educational centres for religious studies in the middle ages and contributed significantly to the development of the Madrasah administration system. The Nizāmiyyah Madrasahs constitute the first universities built by Muslims and served as a model for later educational institutions. The research analyses primary and secondary sources dealing with the history of Muslim education by applying the concept of social network to the study of Muslim educational institutions. There were strong social networks among individuals and organisations associated with the Madrasah Nizāmiyyah throughout the Saljuq dynasty. The administrative system succeeded in creating a strong relationship between professors and students of one madrasah to another. Academic activities included debating among professors, lecturer exchange, visiting-professors, and employment of graduate students in its administration system. Nizāmiyyah libraries facilitated a good relationship with scholars of Shāfi‘ī law. The construction of mosques within the madrasah facilitated communication between the madrasah and the public. The social networks of the various Nizāmiyyah Madrasahs contributed significantly to the prosperity of the Saljuq age and the Islamic civilisation.

ملخص البحث

هذه الدراسة تبحث في موضوع التواصل بين المدارس النظامية التي أسسها الوزير نظام الملك عند ازدهار الدولة السلجوقية. و كانت هذه المدارس خاصة بطلبة الدراسات العليا للعلوم الشرعية. وقد ساهمت المدارس المذكورة في تطور النظام الاداري والتعليمي بشكل كبير حيث كانت أول الجامعات الإسلامية التي ظهرت في خراسان والعراق في القرن الخامس من الهجرة. وكانت مثلاً يحتذى به من قبل الجامعات القديمة و حتي عصرنا الحاضر. تستخدم دراستنا المصادر التراثية و الحديثة في الكشف عن حقيقة وجود الترابط و التواصل بين مختلف المدارس النظامية. وكان للدور الاجتماعي تأثيراً فعالاً بين طلاب العلم و متعلميهم، مع وجود وحدة النظام الإداري بين مجموعة مدارس النظامية فيما بينها والتي أدت إلى تبادل الآراء والمعلمين، و تشجيع المناظرات، و كتابة الأبحاث، و توظيف الخريجين في مختلف أمور الحياة سواءً كانت الجامعية، أو الإجتماعية، أو السياسية، خصوصاً في عهد الوزير نظام الملك. وكان هناك برامج مختلفة للتواصل بين المدرسة والمجتمع من قبل المسجد والمكتبة بالنظامية. وكان لهذا التواصل رمزاً حضارياً و أثراً ثقافياً في تطور النظام التعليمي في دولة السلاجقة وللحضارة الإسلامية بشكل عام.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Art in Islamic and Other Civilisations.

.....
Ataullah Bogdan Kopanski
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Art in Islamic and Other Civilisations.

.....
Abdullahil Ahsan
Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Art in Islamic and Other Civilisations.

.....
Sayyid Mohamed Ajmal bin Abdul
Razak Al-Aidrus
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DECLARATION

I here declare that this thesis is the results of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for my other degree at IIUM or other institutions.

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Signature.....

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DURING THE EARLY SALJUQ PERIOD
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*To my wife Na'imah and my son Salman
for their love and patience during my study in Malaysia*

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In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the Dispenser of Grace

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

An advanced educational system is among the best and most successful features of the Islamic civilisation. Muslims greatly contributed to the spread of knowledge by building various organisations and institutions of learning, and introducing the madrasah as a higher educational institution, among many other educational initiatives. One of the most outstanding of these institutes was the Nizāmiyyah schools established and organized under the supervision of the Saljuq dynasty in the second half of the eleventh Gregorian/fifth Hijrah century.

Nizām al-Mulk (1018-1092 C.E.) established ten Nizāmiyyah schools located mostly in the territory of Khurāsān which consisted of some parts of modern Iran, Afghanistan, and Central Asia. The Nizāmiyyah of Nīshāpūr was the first Nizāmiyyah which was built around 1063 C.E., and later in 1067 C.E. the famous Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad was established. Great scholars and Muslim thinkers such as Abū Ishāq Shirāzī (d.1083 C.E./476 A.H.), al-Juwaynī (d.1085 C.E./478 A.H.), and al-Ghazālī (d.1111 C.E./505 A.H.) worked in these institutions. Nizām al-Mulk provided boundless donations to assure generous incomes for the teachers as well as board, accommodation, clothing, and furnishing for the students¹.

The Nizāmiyyah institute was an archetype for the modern university. These schools were for the graduate students (*faqih*) who completed the intermediate level of religious sciences. Hence, the professor of law (*mudarris*) addressed postgraduate

¹ Bayard Dodge, *Muslim Education in Medieval Times* (Washington: The Middle East Institute, 1962), 20.

students. Further, Nizāmiyyah schools were dedicated to Shāfi‘īte scholars and jurists, and school staff such as the trustee (*mutawallī*), librarian, *qārī*, and security personnel were Shāfi‘ītes. The Nizāmiyyah Madrasahs were not the first madrasah established by Muslims despite some historians suggesting that they were. Much of the literature suggests that Nīshāpūr in Iran was the place of the first public madrasah in Islam, among them the al-Bihaqiyyah school started by Abū Ishāq al-Asfrāyynī (d.418 A.H.)². Nājī Ma‘rūf listed 25 madrasahs before the establishment of the Nizāmiyyah and al-Bihaqiyyah schools while Ibn Khallikān and al-Dhahabī believed that the Nizāmiyyah was the first madrasah in Islam³. It is fair to say that the characteristic of schools before the establishment of Nizāmiyyah differed. Mehdi Nakhosteen explains:

Muslim education went through two distinct periods. First was the period covering the ninth and tenth centuries, when schools developed spontaneously with private endowments interested in public enlightenment; and second the period beginning in the eleven century and developing through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when education became the function of the state, and schools were institutionalized for purposes of sectarian education and political indoctrination⁴.

The establishment of the Nizāmiyyah schools heralded a new era in the educational history of Muslims that contributed to the development of the university institution.

The 11-12 C.E./5-6 A.H. centuries are known as the golden age of education in the Muslim civilisation. Ironically, although Muslim educational organisation and its administration system flourished in this period, but the military power and the scientific development of Muslim began to decline. Furthermore, in this period, the

² M, al-Qtaibī & Hakīm Rashīd. “The Role of Schools in Islamic Society: Historical and Contemporary Perspective”, *The American Journal of Islamic Social sciences*. 14:4, 3-7.

³ Nājī Ma‘rūf, “*Madāris Qabl al-Nizāmiyyah*”, *Majalah Majma‘ ‘Ilmī al-Irāqī*, vol. 22, (1973): 104-110.

⁴ Mehdī Nakhosteen, *History of Islamic Origin of Western Education (A.D.800-350)* (Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1964), 38.

attention of the authorities and common people was to the religious rather than secular sciences. This circumstance should be studied through the socio-political condition of the period. The Saljuqs introduced substantial changes in both the political and social lives of Muslims. The Saljuqs were the patrons of Sunnism and the Abbasids Caliphate largely benefited from their policy. Tughril Beg who founded the Saljuq dynasty in Nīshāpūr in 1037 C.E./429 A.H., removed the threat of Malik Raḥīm, the last emir of the Būyīd dynasty. The Saljuqs further supported the Caliphs of Baghdad against both the Fātimīd dynasty and the Byzantine Empire (Eastern Roman Empire-“*Romania*”).

This research highlights the significance of the social networks developed by the Nizāmiyyah schools in the early era of the Saljuq dynasty under the administration of Nizām al-Mulk as vizier and architect of Saljuq policy from 1063 until his death in 1092. In this study, the term 'social network' refers to those elements that linked all Nizāmiyyah schools to each other. This highlights the administration system of these institutions and aspects of the scholastic community such as communication of professor of one madrasah to another, the relationship between students and professors, student communications, and the case of graduate students. The elements that connected the madrasah to the society are also introduced. This is not a study of learning instruction, educational method, or curriculum. The majority of historians focused on the study of the academic dimensions of the Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad, which was by far the most popular of the Nizāmiyyah schools. This study differs in that it casts a broader net and studies the Nizāmiyyah as a broad institution with important networking between its various schools.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A study of the socio-political condition of the 11 C.E./5 A.H. century will highlight the purpose for the various establishments of madrasahs for different *madhhabs*. In current Persian literature on Nizāmiyyah schools, which forms the largest body of literature on the study of Nizāmiyyah schools, researchers believe that Nizām al-Mulk was an intolerant man who dedicated most of the government budget for Shāfi‘ī scholars and students⁵. This policy of public government-supported educational institutions encouraged religious conflict among various Muslim communities, and led to the decline of rational sciences in the history of the Islamic civilisation. Through our historical examination of the social network among Nizāmiyyah schools within the socio-political context of the eleventh century, several important questions arise:

1. What are the main features of the Nizāmiyyah schools?
2. What elements of social networks existed among various Nizāmiyyah schools?
3. How did socio-political changes affect Muslim educational activities?

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this research manifests in its (1) identification of the characteristics of Muslim educational institutions which were built and developed in the hey-day of the Islamic civilisation; (2) understanding the nature of Muslim institutions and their

⁵ See for instance, Noroollāh Kasāeī, “Az Nizāmiyyah tā Mustansariyyah”, *Maqālāt va Barrasihā*, vol. 48-47, (1368sh): 96-7; Safar Yusefī, “Elal Rokod ‘Ulum ‘Aqlī dar Zamān Saljūqyān”, *faslnāmeḥ Takhassosī Fiqh va Tarīkh Fiqh*, 20 (1388sh): 180; Kūrosh Gavharyān, “Modiryyat Amūzesh dar Madāres Islāmī”, *Faslnāme Mutāle‘āt Ma‘refatī dar Dāneshgāh Islāmī*, 20-30, (1385sh): 52; S. MurtadāMusavī, “Madāres Nizāmiyyah, Nakhostīn Marākez Amuzesh ‘Alī dar Islām”, *Faslnāme Mesbāh*. vol.11, (1373sh): 89; Shahīdī Pak. M. “Mahār Amuzeshhāye Shi‘ī ‘Asr Buwaihī bewasilei Saljūqyān”, *Ketāb Māh: Tarīkh va Gographyā*, 151 (1389): 21. It seems that most of these literatures have been influenced by Noroollāh Kasāeī’s book: *Madāres-i Nizāmiyyah va Tathīrāt Ilmī va Ijtemā‘ī ān*, (Tehran: Sepehr Press, 1363sh).

organisation; (3) indicating the existence of social networking among various Nizāmiyyah schools; and (4) finally, this study presents the characteristics of the first university established by Muslims that heralded a new model for a new scholastic system.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims at introducing the Nizāmiyyah schools as one of the greatest Muslim educational networks which is poorly presented in Western orientalist literature, as well as stressing the pivotal role of the Saljuq dynasty in developing these educational institutes. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To highlight the advanced level of educational system in the Muslim civilisation.
2. To examine social networks among the Nizāmiyyah institutions.
3. To identify socio-political relations between the madrasah and Muslim community.

1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study engages in a review of the literature on the history of the early Saljuq dynasty, the socio-political environment during the Abbāssīd Caliphate, current studies on the history of Muslim education, and an analysis of the Nizāmiyyah system.

Great Muslim historians recorded the social and political life of the Saljuq dynasty. Ibn Athīr (1160–1223 C.E.) in “*Al-Kāmil fī at-Tārīkh*”, and Ibn Jawzī (508–597 A.H.) in “*Al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Omam wa al-Mulūk*”, and Ibn Kathīr (1301–1373 C.E.) in “*Al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*” recorded the events of this dynasty. Ibn Jawzī tended towards the explanation of the social and religious life of the people,

while other historians mostly recorded the political conditions of dynasties. Besides that, Saljuq historians also recorded their history in Persian and Arabic. “*Rāḥat as-Şudūr wa Ayat as-Surūr*” by al-Rāvandī, and “*Musāḥarat al-Akḥbār wa Musāyarat al-Akḥbār*” by Maḥmūd Ibn Muḥammad Aqsarāeī, and “*Saljūqnāmeḥ*” by Zaḥīr ad-Dīn Nīshāpūrī are among the Saljuq histories written in Persian. Şadr ad-Dīn al-Ḥusainī (d. 1180C.E. /575A.H) in his Arabic book “*Zubda at-Tawārīkh: Kitāb Akḥbār ad-Dawlah al-Saljūqiyyah*” recorded parts of Saljuq history. However, biographies written by Muslims such as “*Wafayāt al-A’yān*” by Ibn Khallikān or “*Ṭabaqāt as-Shāfi’iyyat al-Kubrā*” by as-Subkī provide a wealth of information on the educational life of Muslim scholars during that period.

As for current studies on the social life and political power of the Saljuq dynasty, “*A History of Saljuqs: Ibrahim Kafesoglu’s Interpretation and the Resulting Controversy*” edited by Gary Leiser is a detailed analysis for the growth and decay of the Saljuq dynasty. It also constitutes a scientific account of the social, intellectual, and religious life of the period. Perhaps the best collection of studies of the Saljuq dynasty in English is the “*Cambridge History of Iran*”, especially its fifth volume: *The Saljuq and Mongol Period* edited by J. A. Boyel. In this work, three articles address the general and specific history of the Saljuqs. The first article is titled “*The political and Dynastic History of The Iranian World (1000-1217A.D.)*”, the second article, “*The Internal Structure of Saljuq Period*”, and the third, “*Religion in the Saljuq Period*”. Together, these articles detail the political, social, administrative, and religious life of Muslims under the Saljuq dynasty. Likewise, Dr. Dhabihollah Safā in his collection “*Tārīkh Adabyāt dar Iran*” [History of Persian Literature] dealt with the Saljuq period (from the middle of the 11C.E./5A.H. century till the beginning of the 7thC.E./13th A.H. century). In the second volume of this book, Safā explained various

aspects of the life of this dynasty. In chapter four, the author discussed the scientific life under the Saljuq dynasty and explained the various educational institutions that developed under Saljuq supervision including the Nizāmiyyah schools. In the next chapter, Safā discussed the Persian literature of this period that reflected the social and political circumstances.

In the case of the history of Muslim education, in his valued book “*History of Islamic Origin of Western Education*”, Mehdī Nakhosteen covers the different Muslim organisations of learning, their characteristics, and systems of education within various Muslim communities. In chapter 3, he mentioned that Muslim education could be divided into two distinct periods. It is fair to say that by this division he means before and after the establishment of the Nizāmiyyah. This institution, as he confirms, “was the first system of special schools geared to that state and Sunnite Islam⁶”. Another celebrated book is “*The Rise of Colleges Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West*” by George Makdesī. As an introduction to the history of Muslim education, this book clarifies the institutions, instruction, organisation, and methodologies of Muslim education of the past. The rise of various schools of law (*Madhhab*) and colleges of law (*Madrasah*) in the first chapter of this book can lead us to understanding the mystery of the growth of some *Madhhab* in some parts of the Islamic world and the mission in establishing the variety of *madrasah*. Furthermore, this kind of study is well presented in Ahmad Shalabī’s book “*At-Tarbyah al-Islāmiyyah: Nazmohā, Falsafatohā wa Tārīkhohā*”. This well organised book is important in the study of the historical changes in the Muslim educational system. For the developing of higher education in Islam, due to historical record, the author concentrated more on *Al-Madrasah Al-Nūriyyah al-Kubrā* which was built by Nūr ad-

⁶Nakhosteen, *History of Islamic Origin of Western Education*, 38.

Dīn Zangī (d. 563 A.H.) in Damascus. However, the valuable information on the Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad and the social conditions of Muslims is also represented in this book.

Besides this general outline on the history of Muslim education, there are a number of articles and books that introduce the Nizāmiyyah schools, especially in Persian. Noorollāh Kasāeī in his unique book “*Madāris-i Nizāmiyyah wa Tathīrāt ‘Ilmī wa Ijtemā’ī ān*” [Nizāmiyyah Schools and their Scientific and Social Effects], covered all Nizāmiyyah schools. The author believed that Nizām al-Mulk established eleven Nizāmiyyah as higher education institutions for Shāfi’ite scholars and students, and hundreds of elementary schools in various cities and villages with Saljuq territories. The structure, organisation, financial system, and social influences of Nizāmiyyah are discussed in this book. This work is largely quoted by later writings on Nizāmiyyah, and the critical method and judgment of the author affected the current literature on Nizāmiyyah among Iranian writers. Kasāeī mentions in the last chapter some of the advantages and disadvantages of the establishment of these institutions, but he did not give reasons for the dedication of Nizāmiyyah to the Shāfi’ite *madhhab* and Ash’arite school except by claiming the intolerance in the personality of Nizām al-Mulk. However, Kasāeī’s book is not the first contemporary studies on Nizāmiyyah madrasas. In 1973, ten years before the publishing of “*Madāris-i Nizāmiyyah*”, Nājī Ma’rūf published a book by the title ““*Ulamā al-Nizāmiyyāt wa Madāris al-Mashriq al-Islamī*”. In this book, the author concentrated on the biographies of selected important figures within Nizāmiyyah institutions. He devoted the first chapter to an introduction of the different Nizāmiyyah institutions, and stated that Nizām al-Mulk established ten Nizāmiyyah schools. Both authors

contributed to the introduction of the structure and organisation of Nizāmiyyah schools.

“*Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad*” by George Makdisi represents the different aspects of the life of Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad. Makdisi gave credit to Nizām al-Mulk for establishing a network of madrasahs. In this article, author gave more praise to the Nizāmiyyah than other institutions. Details were provided regarding its organisation, endowment, professors, and student life. However, he believed, “The Nizāmiyyah experiment failed in its attempt to develop an institution free from caliphal jurisdiction... the institution of the madrasah as such went on to flourish in the sixth/twelfth century”.⁷ ‘Alī Muḥammad as-Ṣallābī, who published many works in Islamic history wrote “*Dawlah as-Salājiqah*”. This book defined the history of the Saljuqs and their contribution to the Islamic civilization. One chapter of this book is dedicated to the study of Nizāmiyyah madrasahs. The author gave due credit to Nizām al-Mulk and believed that he was instrumental for the success of these madrasahs. He showed the reasons for dedication of these centre to the Shāfi‘ī code of law and Ash‘arite theology.

Parvin Turkamānī Azar in his article “*Saljūqiyān: Ekhtelāfāt Madhhabī va Pyāmadhā-i ān*” [Saljuqs: Religious Dissentions and the Results] claims that Nizāmiyyah schools fostered religious dissention and caused political instability, economic chaos, and impeded cultural and scientific development in Persia. As a consequence, the exile and migration of ‘ulamā, and the terrorizing and defeating of opponents occurred during the Saljuq era. Further, he argues that Nizām al-Mulk aimed at indisposing the personnel of the Saljuq state to be one of the graduations of Nizāmiyyah schools and to unify all *madhhabs* through staunch government support

⁷ George Makdisi, “Muslim Institutions of Learning in Eleventh-Century Baghdad”, *Bulletin of the School of Oriented and African Studies* XXIV 1961, p. 56.

for the Shāfi‘ite *madhhab*. The author argues that this religio-political thought of Nizām al-Mulk created religious conflicts and impeded the freedom of thought by promoting an obscurantist mind-set⁸.

Another study suggests that the prosperous system of education in Persia during the Būyīd dynasty faced serious challenges due to the hegemony of the Saljuq dynasty. In an article “*Mahār Amuzeshhā-i Shī‘ī ‘Asr Buwaihī bevasile-i Saljūqiyān*”, Shahīdī Pāk claims that the tendency towards rational and experimental sciences which was started by the Būyīds and was under the supervision of Shī‘ite theology came to an end under the educational system of the Saljuqs. He claims that the characteristics of higher education were shaped in the 10 C.E./4 A.H. century by the Būyīd dynasty in Iran, while the Saljuqs continued and developed this organisation. However, as the author believes, the study of philosophy, *kalām*, and science declined under the Saljuq educational system.

Hādī ‘Alamzāde and A‘zam Reyāhī published an article entitled “*Amuzesh dar Nizāmiyyah Baghdad va Rub‘-i Rashīdī*” [Education in the Nizāmiyyah of Baghdad and Rub‘-i Rashīdī (Tabrīz, Iran)]. In this article, the authors investigate the parallelism and dissociation in the education system and organisation of these two institutions which were dedicated to the Shāfi‘ite students and established under the supervision of two great viziers, one from the Saljuq dynasty and another from the Ilkhānīds. This study indicates the different sections of study in the Nizāmiyyah, its curriculum, the conditions of lecturers and students, and the purpose for the selective subjects in its educational system in comparison to Rub‘-i Rashīdī. In the study of the history of the madrasah, Johs Pederson wrote an article titled “*Some Aspect of the*

⁸ Turkamānī Azar, P. “*Saljūqiyān: Ekhtelafat Madhhabīwa Pyāmadhaiān*”, *Shenākht: Falsafe va Kalam*. Autumn 1385sh/2006, no. 51, p. 164-77.

⁹ In *Faslname Takhassosī Fiqh va Tārīkh Tamaddun*, no.19, (1388sh), p. 21-46.

History of The Madrasa”, published in “*Islamic culture*” in 1929. He explained the development of the organisation of madrasah in the history of Muslim. The author criticised the idea that Nizām al-Mulk was the founder of the Madrasah, but he gave credit to the Nizāmiyyah as constituting a new era in the educational activities of Islam.

Current literature on the Nizāmiyyah schools does not concentrate on the study of the social network of these institutions that were systematised within a large territory of the Saljuq dynasty. The study on the Nizāmiyyah, however, is poorly presented in Western and current Arabic literature. Therefore, the study of the Nizāmiyyah schools as a new academic system during a crucial period of the history of Muslims can develop ideas in the study of the philosophy of Islamic education, and offer new insights in the rise and fall of educational systems in the Islamic civilisation.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative library-based research that involves the analytical study of primary sources and secondary literature. It deals with historical and biographical books written during the time of the Saljuq dynasty or recorded by some great Muslim historians after the fall of this dynasty in both Arabic and Persian. The examination of the social network of the Nizāmiyyah schools involves the investigation of the regional territory of the Saljuq dynasty and an analysis of Muslim educational institutions in the 11 C.E./5 A.H. century. Therefore, a variety of books in Islamic studies required for understanding the social network within the madrasahs of Nizāmiyyah. Besides that, this research will benefit largely from current studies on the history of Muslim education and the Nizāmiyyah schools.

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

As an introductory section, the background to the study, research problem, justification, the objectives of the study, literature review, research methodology, and the outline of chapters are explained in chapter one.

The socio-political conditions during the early Saljuq period and before the advent of Nizāmiyyah madrasahs are discussed in chapter two. The rise of the Saljuq dynasty and fall of the Būyīd dynasty, the decline of Fātimīd dynasty, and the political conditions of the Abbāsīd caliphate are covered in this section. The economic situation of the Saljuq government and the religious life of Muslims in general are discussed. The biography of Nizām al-Mulk the founder of the Nizāmiyyah is also presented in this chapter.

The third chapter deals with the development and function of Nizāmiyyah madrasahs. Firstly, a brief history of different types of Muslim educational centres before the advent of Nizāmiyyah madrasahs will be introduced. Secondly, the general background of all the Nizāmiyyah institutions with introducing of their outstanding lectures and students will be discussed. Finally, the purpose of establishing the Nizāmiyyah institutions will be discussed.

Chapter four includes the social network of the Nizāmiyyah schools. The different departments and organisations such as academic centre, administration chart, and financial system within Nizāmiyyah madrasahs are explained. Further, the social networks regarding the administrative systems and some aspects of scholastic community are discussed. In this section, the contribution of the Nizāmiyyah schools are also discussed.

Chapter five contains the summary. In this section, the significant discourse and findings of this work will be mentioned, followed by recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE DURING THE EARLY SALJUQ PERIOD

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Like the emergence and growth of other dynasties the history of the Saljuq dynasty is the story of tribal life that started as sedentary culture to conquering vast lands occupied by previous generations (dynasties). Studying the Saljuq dynasty deals with important socio-political changes within the Islamic civilisation.

The Saljuq dynasty played a pivotal role in forming the Islamic civilisation in Persia, especially in Khurāsān when the Abbāsīd caliphs ruled in Baghdad. The 11th and 12th centuries mark a turning point in the demography, religion, and administration in the Middle East. The demography of the area were forever changed due to the invasions and considerable immigration of the Saljuqs. This led to the founding of a Turkish population in Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and Caucasus that continue to exist today. The Saljuq period also characterises the reassertion of Sunnī dominance in the Middle East, which was lost to the Shī'ite Būyīd dynasty in Iran and Iraq and the Ismā'īlī Fātimīd reign in Syria, Egypt, and North Africa in the tenth century¹.

In this section, the political conditions deal with the general political history of Muslims in the Eastern regions of the Islamic civilisation in the 11 C.E./5 A.H. century. In other words, the establishment of the Saljuq dynasty and foreign policies of this dynasty are discussed. The term social condition deals with religious and economic conditions in the early Saljuq period.

¹ A. C. S. Peacock, *Early Seljuq History: a New Interpretation* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 1.