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Original Research Article

Residential and Livelihood Patterns in Najafabad's Historic Houses*

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Abstract

Problem statement: Throughout Iranian history and culture, the house has served not only as a place of residence but also as a platform for economic and social activities. Different livelihoods have given the house various roles, such that houses, as centers of production and work, played a key role in meeting the family's needs and contributing to the self-sufficiency of cities. This city, due to its economic importance and commercial position during the Safavid and Qajar eras, is a noteworthy example of this residential pattern.

Research objective: This study aims to investigate the living and livelihood conditions in the historical houses of Najafabad, Isfahan.

Research method: This research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing descriptive-analytical methods and case studies to examine these houses. To gain a more accurate understanding of the link between work and residence, the local economy of Najafabad was studied at the time these houses were constructed. Then, using library resources and field interviews with people who had lived in these houses, economic and livelihood activities were identified within the buildings' physical structures.

Conclusion: The historical houses studied in this study were identified into two categories: commoner and nobler patterns, according to the occupation and social status of their owners; each of these patterns, with distinct physical and behavioral characteristics, made a fundamental contribution to meeting the needs of families and the livelihood of the city of Isfahan.

Keywords: *Najafabad, Najafabad historical houses, Work and livelihood, Family structure.*

Introduction and Problem Statement

Native settlements reflect the cultural and social characteristics of their inhabitants. Understanding a region's people, their lifestyles, and customs leads us to its Architectural and physical structures. One prominent manifestation of the crystallization of culture within a region's inhabitants is the way of life and the means of meeting living expenses,

which directly affect the design and use of residential spaces. In the context of the connection between work and residential space, in pre-industrial societies, production and domestic activities were not separated (Niazi & Chitsazian, 2007). In Iran's historical culture, houses embodied the harmony between family life and economic activities. In this residential pattern, work was closely tied to the family, and various livelihood methods gave rise to distinct residential systems. As Khosrouniya (2009) states: "The type of livelihood and the distribution of goods are all economic factors that can directly affect the physical structure of the fabric and housing, because every activity requires

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space, and this need is met by incorporating elements.” These houses, by providing the necessary conditions and context for activities related to the owner’s job, were effective in supporting the provision of and families’ self-sufficiency. These effects were not only noticeable at the family level but also on a larger scale, specifically in the city’s economic and social structure. From this perspective, examining the houses of Najafabad offers an opportunity to reflect on the connections among architecture, livelihood, and social life. Through this, a foundation is formed for understanding the role of work and family economy in the spatial organization of these houses. The present study followed the process outlined in Fig. 1 to answer the following questions.

Research Questions

1. What kind of lifestyle, work, and livelihood existed in historical Najafabad during the formation of houses, the Safavid, and the Qajar?
2. Which part of the livelihood activities were carried out inside the house, and how were they carried out?
3. What is the impact of work and livelihood on the spatial organization of houses?

Research Background

The background of the present research can be examined based on two general categories: “subject” and “background”. In the subject area, research can be broadly categorized into two main branches. The first branch focuses on “lifestyle” as a set of human activities and practices, examining its effects on the spatial organization of houses. For example, the research by Zarabialhosseini and Yazdanfar (2016) and Mortaz Hejri et al. (2021) is noteworthy in this regard. The second branch positions “livelihood” as the axis of analysis and examines its role

in shaping house structure, especially in contemporary rural settlements. Among them, we can mention the study by Rostami et al. (2021), which analyzed the role of livelihoods in shaping settlement in Bustano village, Bandar Abbas, at three scales: macro, medium, and micro. In addition, some studies have focused on diverse livelihood methods and their impact on the physical structures of historical houses in both urban and rural areas. For example, Kavian & Gholami (2017) examined the concepts of work and production in the construction of historical houses in the village of Boshroyeh, and Pedram & Hariri (2016) analyzed the impact of the owner’s profession on the physical structure of historical houses in Isfahan. Based on the above studies, it can be concluded that the typology of historical houses with livelihood and production functions, especially in older contexts, still faces an information gap, and there is a need for more in-depth research in this field.

In the context of the research, the most important studies related to the city of Najafabad and its cultural and historical features include two primary sources: “The Treatise on the Homeland of the Khorakoushk” and “Introduction to the History and Culture of the People of Najafabad.” These two works, with a comprehensive approach to the city’s history, culture, and social structure, have provided valuable insights into the city’s livelihood foundations, traditional occupations, and cultural developments. Additionally, a collection of primary sources and scattered studies has been effective in identifying the region’s cultural and economic dimensions. Regarding the historical houses of Najafabad, Karbasi (2020) documented and analyzed 40 houses, introducing their architectural features and residents’ lifestyles over the past six decades; however, his research is more descriptive and does not analyze the spatial and livelihood relationships within the houses.

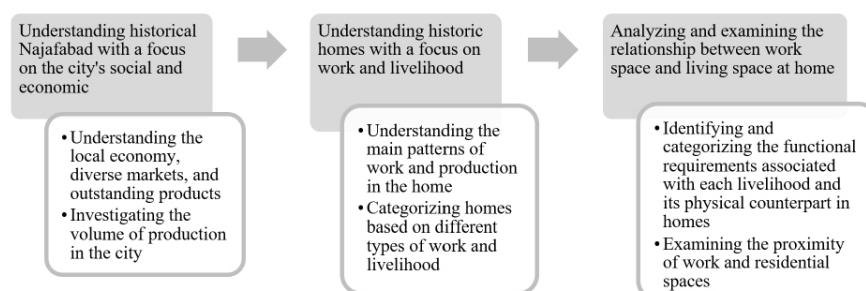


Fig. 1. Research process. Source: Authors.

In another study (ibid., 2024), the structural features of historical houses were examined, and in his subsequent study (ibid., 2023), the process of typological evolution of porches in these houses was analyzed. The closest research to the present topic is the article by Afshari & Haghghi Najafabadi (2023), which examines the arrangement of production spaces in historical houses in Najafabad and their relationship with internal and external spaces. However, the present study, by adopting a holistic and analytical approach, analyzes the role of historical houses in the urban economy at both macro and micro scales. Therefore, the subject of this study offers a fresh perspective on the underexplored dimension of the relationship among housing, livelihood, and the urban economy in Najafabad.

Research Method

The present study, which focuses on the historical houses of Najafabad, examines how the residents' livelihoods and economic activities have influenced the design and structure of these houses. In this regard, the study examines the history and social context of these houses from the Safavid era to the present day. The analyses encompassed issues such as the local economy, local markets, key products, and the level of production in the city, which were conducted using reliable historical sources, including "A Journey to the Court of Sultan Sahib-e-Quran" and related theses. Then, an attempt was made to determine which parts of the livelihood activities were carried out inside the house and how they were performed. At this stage, the structure of 18 historical houses in the city was used as the basis for the study. This study was conducted in three main steps. Step one: Identifying the residents' occupation and the economic activities related to it in the house. Step 2: Analyzing the family structure and the roles of its members in daily and livelihood activities. Step three: Matching the livelihood method with the house structure. The samples are divided into three categories in terms of the availability of information about the precise functioning of the spaces:

The first category includes five samples in which detailed interviews were conducted with current or former residents of the houses. The working method in this section included visiting the houses, directly observing

the spaces, photographing observations, preparing maps, and taking notes on the use of the spaces¹.

The second category: In this category, the structure of 40 historical houses in the city was studied using the book "Forty Houses" (Karbasi, 2020), and 10 samples were selected for examination². In this category, several criteria were considered for selection, including:

- Houses for which information is available regarding the life course and livelihood of their residents in the past.
- Houses that appear older and have been less damaged or changed.
- Selection of diverse types of "life-work" that reflect different economic classes and diverse livelihood styles in the city.

This section includes houses with less information about livelihoods, but practical results can be achieved through comparative analysis.

The third category: Collecting detailed information through the stories and memories of older people who once lived in these houses and whose houses are no longer in existence. These interviews include questions about the way of life and livelihood throughout the interviewees' lives, as well as the lifestyle of previous generations.

Based on what was mentioned, after exploring the historical and cultural records of the society and understanding the changes over time using field observations, in-depth interviews, and reviewing historical documents and comparative analysis, the above houses were examined based on diverse types of work and divided into two main categories: A- ordinary houses and B- houses of nobles and prominent people in the city. Next, the spatial requirements associated with each livelihood type and their physical equivalents in houses were examined. Then, detailed interpretations of the impact of livelihood on the structure of historic houses were presented, using images and maps.

Understanding Historical Najafabad with a Focus on the City's Social and Economic Structure

• Understanding the Local Economy, Diverse Markets, and Outstanding Products

Najafabad, a small city located 25 kilometers west

of Isfahan, has been a significant commercial and economic center since the Safavid era. The city has been uniquely exempted from the usual chaos in Iranian urban development³. Various motivations have been cited for the establishment of this city, including expanding agriculture, ensuring Isfahan's security, establishing a forge, housing weapons workers, and facilitating trade with western and southern Iran (Naqsh-e Jahan Consulting Engineers-Pars, 2016). With its vast gardens, fertile soil, and advanced irrigation systems, Najafabad played a key role in meeting Isfahan's agricultural needs. Historical sources have pointed to the importance of this city during the Safavid and Qajar eras; As Savory (1980/1995) writes in his book: "Shah Abbas and the main designer, Sheikh Bahai, provided a solid agricultural infrastructure for the new capital by creating complete irrigation and communication networks and founding the thriving commercial city of Najafabad 25 kilometers west of Isfahan to provide food for the city (Isfahan)". Brugsch (1863/1983), the German ambassador who came to the court of Shah Abbas during the Safavid era, writes in his travelogue: "The gardens of Najafabad are so vast that we rode our horses through the alleys of the city's gardens for three quarters of an hour until we finally reached the streets and bazaar of the city." Al-Isfahani (1989), who visited Najafabad during the Qajar era, says of the gardens that are so full of trees that Isfahan's firewood for half the year is the result of pruning them. Almonds, pomegranates, hair, and walnuts are known as the main products of Najafabad trees (Yazdani Najafabadi, 2017). These products were essential not only for domestic consumption but also for export to markets such as Mumbai⁴. There are also many herders in that town (Najafabad) (Jaberi Ansari, 1999). In addition to agriculture, animal husbandry was a prominent occupation in the region, and animal products, including dairy products, wool, and fertilizers, accounted for a significant share of the local economy. Handicrafts, such as cotton ginning, spinning, and dyeing, were among the other economic activities of the people of Najafabad. The raw materials of carpets were wool and cotton, and the wool needed was provided from the livestock of the region and surrounding villages

before the establishment of wool-spinning factories. In Brugsch's⁵ descriptions of the city's markets, extensive handicraft activity is noted, especially dyeing with natural materials such as pomegranate and walnut peels, which indicates the deep connection of these industries with local resources. Based on what has been mentioned, the primary livestock and agricultural products and derivatives of Najafabad and Heraf and their related industries can be presented in the form of Table 1.

• The growth of the commercial city of Najafabad in trade and local markets

Over time, due to the diversity of jobs and the emergence of specialized sectors such as shoemaking, knife-making, and felting, Najafabad became the commercial hub of the surrounding villages. After a while, the city's manufactured goods, such as knives, canvas, Qalamkar cloth, carpets, and rugs, were able to compete in larger markets and even export to neighboring countries (Salehi Najafabadi, 2018). "The volume of transactions was so high that two large Caravanserais in the city of Isfahan were allocated to the people of Najafabadi so that the garden products of Najafabad and neighboring villages could be sold there every day" (F. Khalili, 18 January 2024, Personal interview)⁶.

The economic centrality of Najafabad enabled the market to expand, featuring caravanserais, Timchehs, Rastehs, and shops⁷. In the trade category in the city of Najafabad, three significant elements, in terms of quantity relative to the city's scale, were the Asarkhaneh, the place of production, and the Timcheh and Caravanserai, which served as places of buying and selling. The presence of elements such as caravanserais and timchehs within the market area, as shown in Fig. 2, indicates that, despite its small size, Najafabad produced a significant quantity of goods that necessitated exchange with the outside the city. In addition, the number of buildings, including the mill site, Asarkhaneh, timcheh, and caravanserai, exceeds what is needed for a small city, indicating the existence of a large market.

The presence of various occupations in the city of Najafabad reflects its social diversity and the historical impact of Isfahan on the city's economic and social structure. Given that the city's most essential elements

Table 1. Indicative horticultural, agricultural, and livestock products of Najafabad and its related industries. Source: Authors.

	Products	Derivative	Industries and related professions		
Garden	Almonds	Dried Fruit			
	Pomegranates		Dyeing industry (using its bark in dyeing)		
	Walnuts	Dried Fruit	Dyeing industry (using its bark in dyeing)		
	Berry	Dried Fruit (Dried Berries)			
	Grapes	Currants, Raisins			
			Vinegar		
	Wood	Baskets, Firewood, etc.	Wicker weaving, a type of basket woven with purple, pomegranate, or willow branches		
Agricultural	Wheat	Flour	Mill		
	Barley	Flour			
	Vegetable seeds	Edible, Industrial, and Medical Oil	Asarkhane (Oil mill)		
	Cotton	Fiber	Spinning and dyeing industry	handloom industries (canvas weaving, Giveh making, carpet weaving)	Chitgar

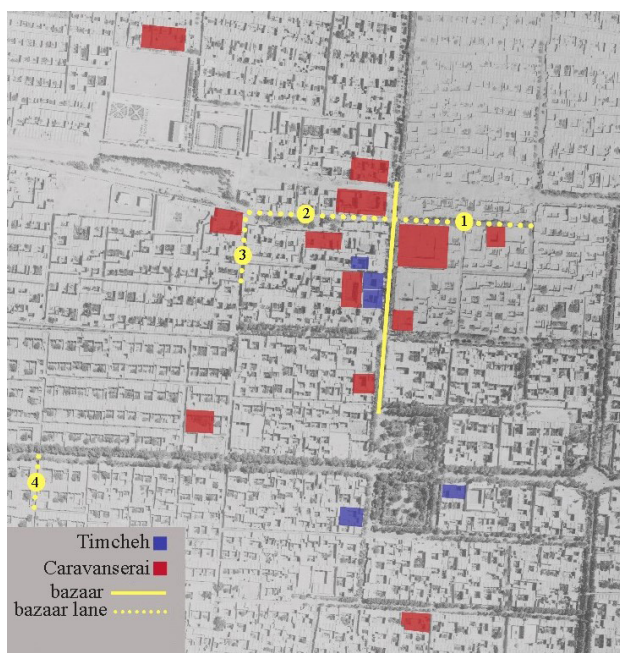


Fig 2. The concentration of elements such as Caravanserais and Timchehs within the bazaar area indicates a vast market in Najafabad. The distribution of Caravanserais and Timchehs on an aerial photograph from 1956. Source: authors based on National Mapping Organization.

are its gardens and farms, agriculture and its role in meeting Isfahan’s needs have always been of interest. The economy of Najafabad was primarily based on agriculture and animal husbandry, and later, the manufacture of weapons and war tools, as well as the industry of Asarkhane. Additionally, during the Qajar period, cotton ginning, spinning, and dyeing were

significant components of the industries and crafts in Najafabad, suggesting a decline in agricultural activities in the late Qajar period, when the population was more engaged in industrial work. According to contemporary reports on Najafabad in the “The Homeland of the Khorakoushk” (Yazdani Najafabadi, 2017), the city’s economy is based on agriculture, carpet weaving, and animal husbandry.

Carpet weaving is considered the second primary economic sector in Najafabad, often carried out alongside agricultural work. Given the high volume of production in the city and knowing that during the Safavid and Qajar eras, production was primarily traditional, questions arise: “What role did houses play in the city’s economy and the creation of such a market?” and “What products and industries were traditionally produced or processed in houses?”

Understanding the Architecture of Najafabad’s Historic Houses with a Focus on Work and Livelihood

To understand the role of work and livelihood in the historic houses of Najafabad, one must first examine their architecture and spatial structure. In scattered historical and cultural writings, descriptions of these houses can be found. Brugsch (1863/1983) writes in

his travelogue: “The houses of Najafabad are built very neatly and according to the principles of urban planning, and perhaps the great proximity to Isfahan was effective in this.” An examination of an aerial photograph (Fig. 2) from 1956 also reveals the same regularity and spatial order. However, due to extensive destruction and renovation of the old fabric, as well as the lack of detailed research, there is limited information available about when the houses were built. The only documented research in this field is Karbasi’s (2020) work, which, after examining 40 houses, estimated their ages to range from 60 to possibly 200 years. Most houses were built on rectangular plots with a north-south extension. At their heart was a central courtyard, with rooms and enclosed spaces forming around it. The buildings were often one story tall, slightly taller than the courtyard. Most of the rooms were located on the northern facade, which the locals called “Aftab-ru”, and sometimes on the southern facade, called “Nesarm”, and usually had a porch that opened onto the courtyard. Based on the physical-spatial pattern of these houses, Fig. 3 can be concluded. In these houses, several generations of a family lived under one roof. The houses of Najafabad can be categorized into two main types: those with arched vaulted ceilings and those with flat-beam ceilings (Karbasi, 2020). Older houses were mainly built with arches, while in later periods, flat-beam roofs became more common. An aerial photograph of the city in 1956

shows that arches continued to play a significant role in house construction from the Safavid and Qajar eras to the early Pahlavi period. Therefore, in the present study, the term “historical house” refers to a quality of livelihood and spatial organization manifested by an arch-shaped structure, rather than to a specific time period. The aim of this study is not to focus on a particular historical period, but to identify and recognize the totality of spatial and functional patterns of houses. In this regard, numerous and common examples have been examined under the title of ordinary houses. Only in limited cases, to explain the diversity of types, have a few instances with specific occupations been mentioned.

• **Identifying the main patterns of work and production in ordinary houses**

A study of case studies and interviews reveals that ordinary houses in Najafabad primarily focused on meeting the household’s basic needs, with their various spaces serving both livelihood and production functions. Field findings and library studies show that, in general, three dominant livelihood patterns, including agriculture, animal husbandry, and handloom industries, played a role in the spatial organization of houses. Although the core of agricultural and animal husbandry activities was carried out outside the house, spaces within the house were also used for the production and storage of livestock and agricultural products, as well as their derivatives. According to F. Khalili (18 January 2024, Personal interview), “The main products that were stored or processed in the houses were: almonds, walnuts, raisins, Currants, milk, butter, and oil. These products, in addition to providing for the family’s livelihood, were part of their income sources and were sold through traditional markets and Timchehs. “Agriculture was one of the most important occupations of the city’s residents, and most families engaged in gardening in addition to their main occupation. A. Mokhtari (21 December 2023, Personal interview)⁸ explains: “In some cases, products were stored for sale in the following seasons so that they would not be offered when the market was saturated, and in other cases, they were kept to meet the annual needs of the family. Therefore, spaces were considered in the houses for a warehouse and storage.” In addition to these

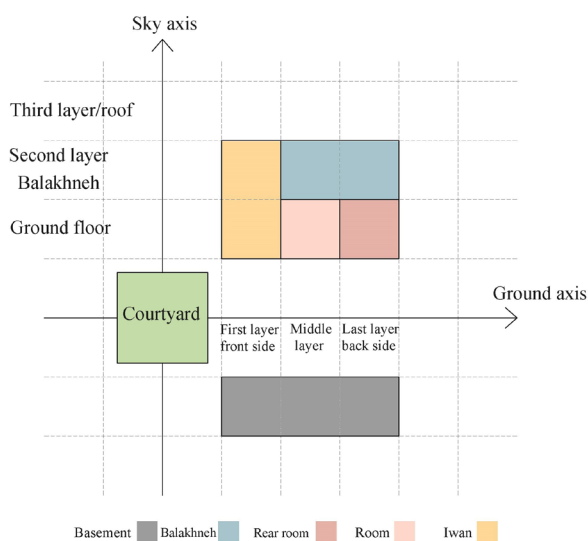


Fig. 3. Common spatial physical pattern in historical houses of Najafabad. Source: Authors.

activities, women’s role in the household economy was prominent. The women of the house played a significant role in household production, engaging in activities such as weaving canvas, carpets, and rugs. B. Rajai (2 December 2023, Personal interview)⁹ and Sh. Habibollahi (2023, Personal interview)¹⁰ narrate: “Women personally carried out all stages of production, such as spinning yarn to sizing and weaving, and at the same time they also dealt with household and family affairs. The canvas produced was sold in markets and Timchehs”. This industry declined amid the rise of new textiles and was subsequently replaced by carpet and rug production.

The production activities of households can be divided into two categories based on the scale of production: 1. Production for family consumption: This category includes daily products or stocks that are kept for use throughout the year. In this case, the household owner often engaged in agriculture or animal husbandry alongside their primary job, and the products produced were mainly for domestic consumption. 2. Production of surplus for sale: This category was mainly observed in households where the owner’s main job was agriculture or animal husbandry. The household’s surplus products were offered in the market as fresh or dried fruits. Such houses usually had larger spaces for processing and storing products. One of the most critical factors affecting production scale was the number of people living in the house. The greater the number of nuclear families in a household, the more human resources were available and, consequently, more space was allocated to production activities. Thus, in many houses, it is observed that handicrafts such as canvas weaving or carpet weaving were carried out in the verandas according to the number of women in the house. Also, in many cases, at least one family living in the house was engaged in gardening. Based on the information gathered on household livelihood flows, the main activities associated with each livelihood can be presented as shown in Fig. 4. Now, considering this classification, we will discuss the impact of livelihoods on settlement forms in the historical city of Najafabad.

- Examining the spatial and architectural manifestations of the agricultural livelihood pattern in houses

The spaces related to this livelihood can be divided into two parts:

Place for Processing and handling of agricultural products: Local interviews indicate that many agricultural activities, including peeling and drying, were carried out in Iwans (Fig. 5). This underscores the importance of the Iwan and is one of the reasons for its fixed, repetitive use in houses. In many historical houses in Najafabad, a distinct height difference is observed between the exterior and interior of the main living space (Karbasi, 2024). This height difference is due to a storage space on the upper floor, which serves as a warehouse for garden products, especially almonds and grapes (ibid.). It is called “Balakhaneh” (attic) in the local dialect. In many balakhanehs, there were rings on the ceiling that were used to hang and dry grapes (Fig. 6). The main access to most balakhanehs

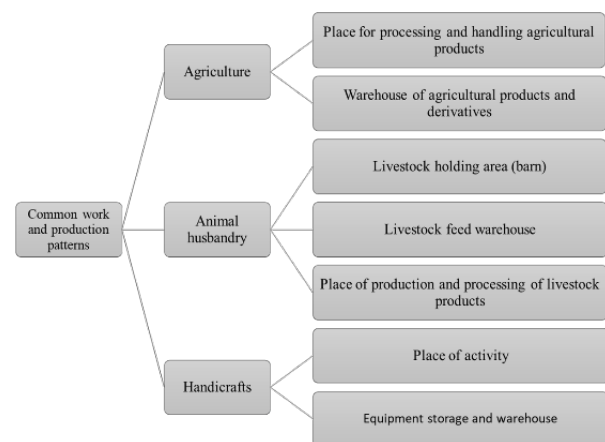


Fig. 4. Classification of common livelihood patterns in house along with activities and functional requirements associated with them. Source: Authors.



Fig. 5. Iwan and courtyard where agricultural products are handled. Source: Karbasi, 2020.



Fig. 6. From left to right: Re-creation of currants and raisin production in the Balakhaneh of the Ayat house, remaining ropes for hanging grapes in the Balakhaneh of the Ayat house, and remaining ropes for hanging grapes in the Balakhaneh of the Shafi'yan house. Source: Authors.



Fig. 7. How to access the Balakhaneh in the Ayat house. Source: Authors.

was via a steep staircase and a hole in the ceiling of the back room. If both the rear room and the room had a balakhaneh, a hatch was placed above the entrance to the room in the courtyard, accessible via a ladder, to allow movement to the balakhaneh (Figs. 7, 8 & 9).

Warehouse of agricultural products and derivatives: One of the fundamental components in the spatial organization of the historical houses in Najafabad was the provision of spaces for storing and preserving agricultural products and their derivatives. These spaces included “Balakhanehs” and “basements,” and in a few examples, rooms were used as “warehouses.” In some examples, the Balakhaneh floor was divided into separate sections by short walls, allowing various garden products, such as almonds and walnuts, to be stored in individual compartments.

Basements also played a key role in storing products. Basements were usually located on the north or south facades and were often accessed via a steep slope or staircase from the courtyard (Fig. 10). In wealthier houses, “storerooms” were usually formed as independent spaces or resulted from the conversion of existing areas, such

as the stable and kitchen. These storerooms were often located on the east or west facades, and sometimes at the end of the north or south facades (Fig. 11). Such spatial organization reflects the economic power and the need for larger-scale storage in this house type. Another architectural innovation in this field, as shown in Fig. 12, was the installation of compartments called “Kateh” in the floors of niches or in the walls of certain rooms. “These compartments were used to store grains such as flour, wheat, and barley, and were harvested through a hole near the floor of the room” (Salmanizadeh, 23 December 2023, Personal interview)¹¹. In some cases, the presence of two wooden doors on the walls of these compartments led to their being called “Ganjeh.” Overall, it can be said that the diversity and multiplicity of these spaces, from Balakhaneh and basements to storerooms and smaller compartments, formed a coherent, multi-layered structure for managing agricultural production and meeting the household’s subsistence needs.

- Examining the spatial and architectural manifestations of the pastoral (livestock-based) livelihood pattern in houses”

The spaces related to livestock affairs can be divided into four sections:

Livestock keeping place: As can be seen in Table 2, the place where livestock was kept was mostly basements, sometimes some small secondary courtyards, sometimes a roofed space in the corner of the courtyard on the eastern or western fronts, and in some cases, one of the end spaces on the northern or southern fronts (Karbasi, 2020).

Livestock feed storage: Often above the entrance hall of the houses and sometimes above independent spaces that were used as stables, there was a space called

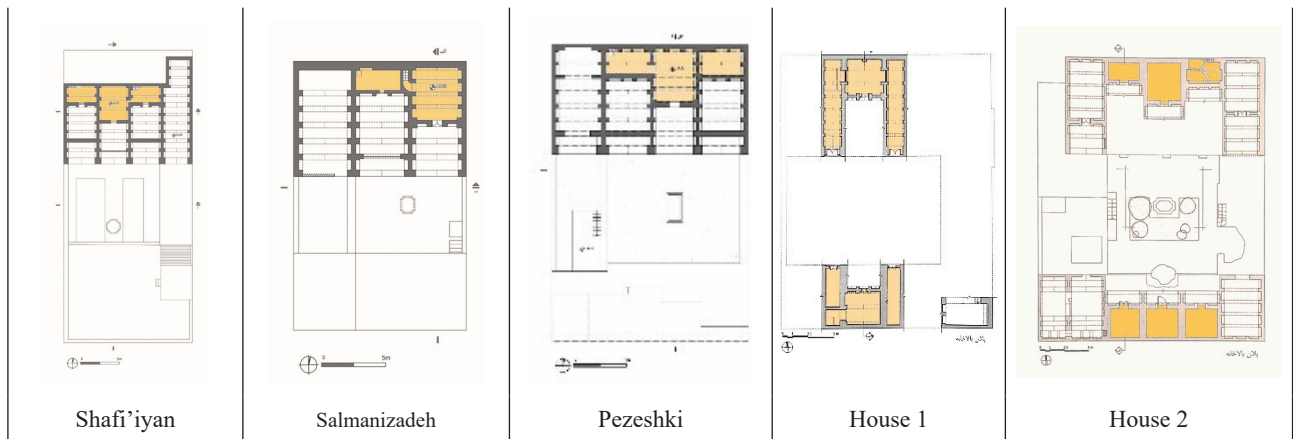


Fig. 8. Location of the Balakhnehs on the northern and southern facades in several examples. Source: Authors.

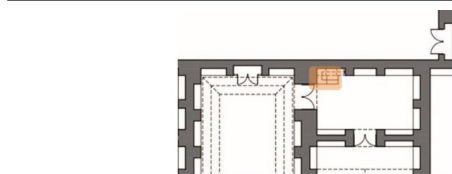
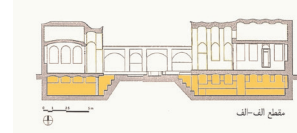
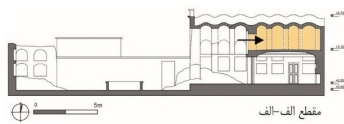


Fig. 9. Zoom in on the location and access to the Balakhneh (example: Pezshki House). Source: Authors

Fig. 10. Location of the basement for storing food and products (Example: House 5). Source: Authors.



Fig. 11. Location of product storage in the house. Source: Authors.



Fig. 12. From left to right: 1. Picture of the Katcheh (family food storage) in Salmanizadeh's house, 2. Picture of the Ganjeh in Ayat's house. Source: Authors.

“Dashgo” or “Dashko” in the form of a half-story, which was the place to store livestock fodder. The dashgo extended to the body of the yard and was often accessible via a ladder (*ibid.*) (Fig. 13 & Table 3). In the Side-yard pattern, the livestock storage space was divided into three parts, including open space, closed space, and the Dashgo located on the stable, according to what is given in Fig. 14.

Place for the production and processing of livestock products: The Iwan and kitchen were used as the main spaces for this.

Table 2. Location of stables in houses. Source: Authors.

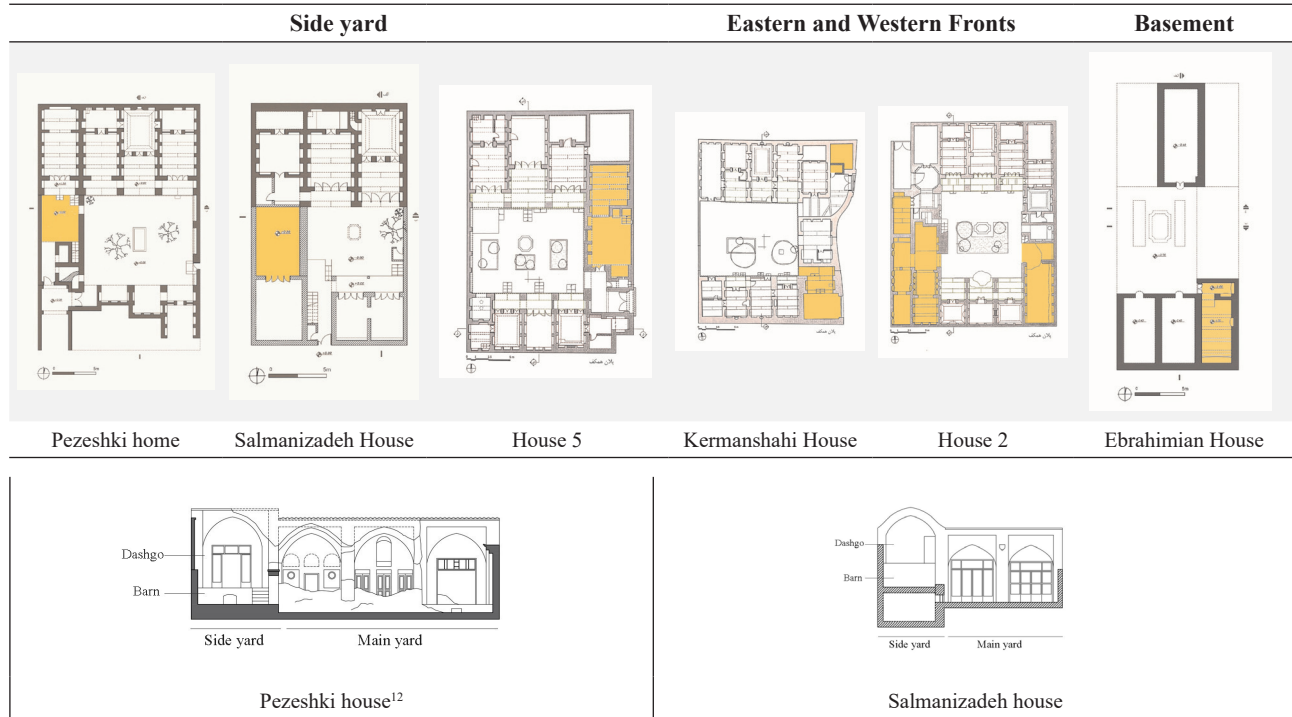


Fig. 13. Typical pattern in houses with a side yard for keeping livestock. Source: Authors.

Table 3. Dashgo: Livestock feed storage. Dashgo is located in several houses. Source: Authors.

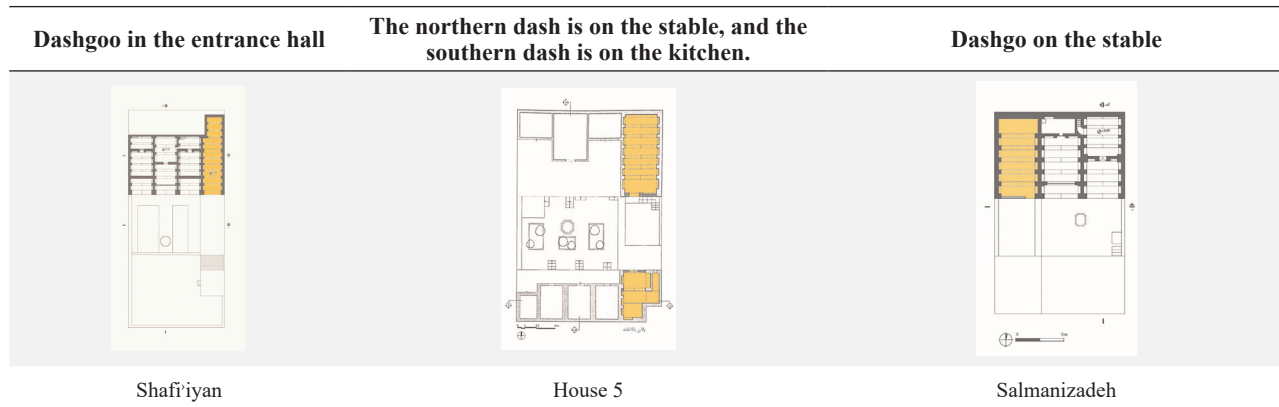


Fig. 14. From right to bottom: Re-creation of transfers to Dashgo in the Salmanizadeh house. Source: Authors, Northern Dashgo, House5. Source: Karbasi, 2020. Dashgo: Livestock feed storage. Dashgo is located in several houses. Source: Authors.

- Examining the spatial and architectural manifestations of the handicraft-based livelihood pattern in houses

Regarding handloom industries, which were primarily engaged

in by women of the house, the spaces related to them can be divided into two parts:

Place of activity: If there was an empty room, the women of the house would turn it into a home workshop.

However, in most cases, the Iwans in front of the rooms served as the primary platform for these activities. According to M. Shafi'yan (16 January 2024, [Personal interview](#))¹³, “in cold seasons, by installing a tent at the entrance to the Iwan, it was possible to continue the activity.” Some Iwans were purposefully equipped with special elements for handicrafts. One of these elements was the “weaving hole,” which was a shallow pit dug in a corner or suitable part of the Iwan. The weaver would sit next to this hole and place his feet in it so he could easily move the counterweights and control the weaving process (Fig. 15). This simple innovation elevated the Iwan from a purely communicative and living space to an active, dynamic workshop for home production.

Storage of tools and materials: Basements were usually used, and in a few cases, Balakhaneh were used as well. Finally, based on the three livelihood patterns mentioned in the formation of houses, the main activities and their physical compensation can be presented in accordance with Table 4. Regarding the flow of work and residence, it seems that spaces with specific functions, such as stables, Dashgo, Balakhanehs, and warehouses, have

been added to the house. In some cases, some of the house's spaces, such as Iwans, have been allocated to the owner's job. It is also observed that various activities were carried out in some spaces, such as Iwans, which were places for handloom industries and, on the other hand, a place for handling agricultural and livestock products. This diversity in the roles of the spaces in the house indicates that the spaces adapt to the family's livelihood needs.

Based on the discussions above, Table 4 reflects a type of livelihood whose physical manifestation can be identified, especially in the formation of arched structures. In the meantime, one topic that can be examined in an independent study is how the physical transformations of houses affect how spaces are used in relation to residents' work and livelihoods. A clear example of these changes is the physical transformation of porches. For instance, over time, the porches of houses have transformed from a space with a north-south extension and with the most significant interference with the room behind it and a structure along it with dimensions perpendicular to the courtyard to a single space independent of the rooms with an east-west



Fig. 15. From left to right: Girls weaving carpets, weaving machine on a weaving hole (date: Safavid). (Source: Najafabad Archaeological Museum), Women spinning yarn in Isfahan during the Qajar era (Source: Institute for Contemporary Iranian History Studies), re-creation of carpet weaving in the middle Iwan of the Shafi'yan house. Source: Authors.

Table 4. Summary of common livelihood patterns and their physical compensation in the city's historic houses. Source: Authors.

	Work and production at home	Physical compensation in the house
Livestock-based livelihood	Livestock holding facility (barn) Small secondary courtyards Roofed space on the eastern or western fronts	Basement as a livestock shed
	Livestock feed warehouse Part of a stable or barn	Dashgo
	Livestock product production and processing facility	Yard, kitchen
Agriculture-based livelihood	Place for processing and handling agricultural products	Drying products Northern and southern Iwans
	Warehouse of agricultural products and derivatives	Cleaning and peeling products Northern and southern Iwans
		Converting grapes into raisins and currants Northern and southern Balakhanehs
		Converting grapes into vinegar Northern and southern basements
		Basement, Balakhaneh

extension and with the least interference and depression in the heart of the closed space with an independent structure (Karbasi, 2023). This transformation can indicate a kind of shift in the function of the porch and other spaces.

• **The ratio of work and architectural pattern in the houses of the nobles and prominent people of the city**

The livelihoods and economic status of the residents directly influenced the structure and form of the houses in Najafabad, and these effects are clearly visible in the design and use of the different spaces. The noble houses belonged to wealthy families and prominent people of the city. In addition to meeting basic needs, these houses offer more space and better facilities, indicating the residents' well-being and high social status. In the following, we will introduce and examine four examples of this category, as shown in Table 5.

- Akhlaghi House: The house belongs to the first owner of the "Asarkhaneh Bozorg Agha" or "Asarkhaneh Akhlaghi" in Najafabad.

- Hamleh-dari House¹⁴: The first owner of the house was Haj Ali Hamleh-dari, who was engaged in the job of carrying pilgrims to Mecca (Karbasi, 2020).

- Ayat House: The owner of the house, Seyyed Ali Ayat Najafabadi, was a mujtahid and religious studies teacher who lived in the house for nearly ninety years. Mr. Ayat held lessons and meetings with the people and scholars in the two rooms on the southern front, and he also met with those who wished to meet him in the south courtyard (ibid.).

- Noorian House: The original owner and builder of the house was a Bakhtiari Khan named Khwajeh Nasir al-Din. The area surrounding the larger courtyard was his residence, and the area surrounding the smaller courtyard was the residence of the household staff (ibid.).

- **Studying the patterns of separation of work and residence in the houses of the nobles and prominent people of the city**

This section deals with the separation of work and residence in the homes of aristocrats and famous people and points out several main patterns:

- Separation of work and residence on different levels: In the Akhlaghi house, the work space is separated from

the house spaces on the ground floor by a staircase in the entrance hall, and a space is formed for the business transactions of the house owner and temporary accommodation of guests.

- Separation of work and residence using separate courtyards on one level:

Service courtyard: The use of two separate courtyards in the Nouriyani house separates the service and supply areas from the living area.

The teaching courtyard: The teaching courtyard in this house is an area for the owner's transactions and classes (Fig. 16).

- Separation of access to the work space from the living space: In examples where the work space and the living space are separated for various reasons, including privacy, the entrance to the work space and the living space are distinguished from each other in two ways

1. Separate access from the passage adjacent to the house
2. Access from the hallway or entrance vestibule before entering the central courtyard

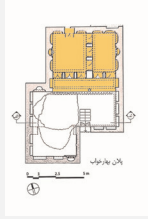

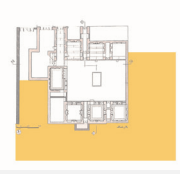
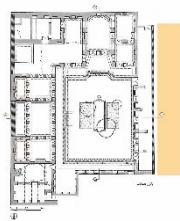
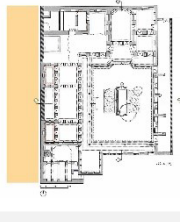
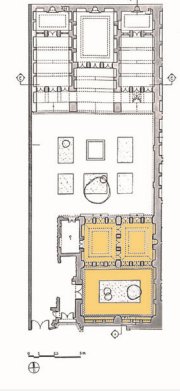
- Separation of the place where livestock and livestock supplies are kept from the central courtyard of the house: This pattern is often observed in the homes of wealthy people. This separation protects the main spaces of daily life from odors and environmental pollution related to livestock.

• **Summary**

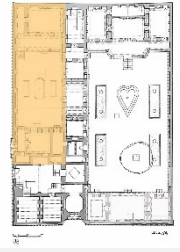
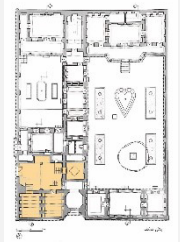
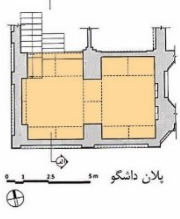

The study of the historical houses of Najafabad shows that there was a close connection between workspace and production in these houses. The historical houses studied can be divided into two categories based on the occupation and social class of their owners: ordinary houses, houses of nobles, and prominent people.

Ordinary houses: In this category of houses, the three dominant livelihood patterns, including agriculture, livestock, and handloom industries, played a decisive role in the spatial organization. Accordingly, part of the house's space was dedicated to the production and storage of products. Household and livelihood products included carpets and canvas, livestock products, and agricultural products, which, in addition to family consumption, were sold as a source of income in traditional markets and Timchehs. The main difference

Table 5. Matching work and livelihood methods with the structure of houses.
Source: Authors.

Home	Profession	Functional Requirements	Physical Compensation at Home
Akhlaghi	Trade	Father's business meeting room	
		Shops	
	Asari	Asarkhaneh and Camel stable	
Hamlehdari	Hamlehdari, livestock farming	Barn and stable	
	Agriculture	Garden location	
Ayat	Religious Studies Teacher	Classroom	

Rest of Table 5.

Home	Profession	Functional Requirements	Physical Compensation at Home
Nourian	Trade	Father's business meeting room	
		Barn	
	Livestock	Storing livestock feed	
	Agriculture	Product handling area	

between these houses mainly depended on the volume of products and the number of families living in them. In this pattern, there was no clear boundary between work and life, and families used different parts of the house simultaneously to meet their livelihood and living needs.

Houses of nobles and prominent people: Houses belonging to higher social classes accommodated more diverse patterns of work and livelihood. The most important feature of these houses was the relative separation of the work area from the residence. In this group of houses, we can identify signs of social interaction, including a trading house, a special courtyard for servants, and larger spaces such as a barn and a stable. If we want to classify houses



Fig. 16. From left to right: Service yard in Nouriyān House. Source: Authors based on Karbasi, 2020/ Teacher’s yard in Ayat House: Recreating the interactions and visits of the house owner, Baharkhab, Akhlaqi House, and recreating the interactions and visits of the house owner. Source: Authors based on Karbasi, 2020.

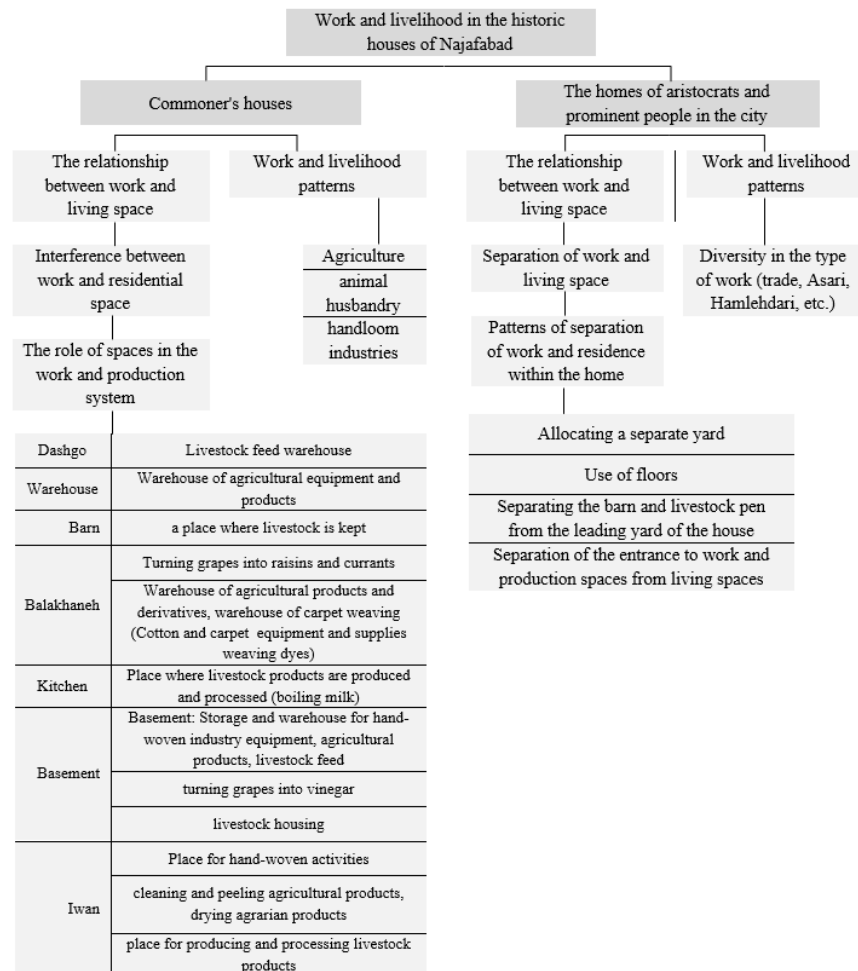


Fig. 17. Classification of historic houses based on differences in relation to the owner’s occupation and social class. Source: Authors.

based on work and livelihood and their impact on house structure, we can conclude (Fig. 17).

Conclusion

In this study, the historical city of Najafabad in Isfahan was selected to examine the areas of life and livelihood in its historical houses. To better understand the relationship between work and home and to consider the role of the house in the city’s economy, this research began with a study of the local economy during house construction. Then, to examine the impact of residents’ livelihood types on house structure, a comprehensive survey of residents’ livelihood activities and their effects on house

structure was conducted. This study was based on a review of 18 examples of historical houses in the region, using a variety of methods, including field surveys, in-depth interviews, the evaluation of historical documents, and comparative analysis. The study’s results show that people’s lifestyle was based on extended families. Their main activities during the construction of houses were related to agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts, and the resulting products, in addition to meeting the family’s needs, also met part of the city of Isfahan’s needs. Meanwhile, there were differences between the lives of the nobility and prominent people and the ordinary people. The historical houses studied were divided into

two categories: nobles' and prominent people's houses and ordinary people's houses, based on the owners' occupations and social classes. In ordinary people's houses, essential livelihood activities were carried out. Various products and industries were produced and stored, and families simultaneously used residential spaces for productive activities related to animal husbandry, agriculture, and handicrafts. In noble houses, spatial diversity was greater, and sometimes parts of the house acquired a quasi-commercial function. In contrast, ordinary people's houses relied more on the production and storage of products for consumption and sale. The study found that work and livelihood had a direct impact on the spatial organization of the houses. Residential, production, and storage spaces were arranged in an intertwined manner, and the physical layout of the houses was adapted to the residents' livelihood activities. Thus, the examples in two groups, each with its own physical-behavioral patterns, played an essential role in family self-sufficiency and meeting the food needs of Isfahan.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Endnotes

1. The houses in this category are: Shafi'yian House, Ebrahimian House, Pezeshki House, Hassani House, and Salmanizadeh House.
2. The houses in this category are: Kermanshahi House, Ayat House, Akhlaqi House, Hamlehdari House, and Nouriyani House. The other five houses, due to the unknown owner's name, were introduced as houses with numbers 1 to 5, respectively.
3. As Andre Siegfried (1950/1964), a French sociologist, has stated: "Najafabad is a city that was built during the time of Shah Abbas according to the orders and plans of Sheikh Baha'i. Najafabad is the only place or one of the rare places that, because it was created for a specific purpose and according to a general plan with a single mind, has a system and rules."
4. Al-Isfahani (1989), in his visit to this city, refers to the abundance and high quality of almonds in Najafabad, so much so that he claims that Isfahan almonds are generally supplied from this region. Mirzah Hossein Tahvidar (1964) also mentions that almond kernels are taken to Bombay every year.
5. Brugsch (1863/1983) stated in his visit to Najafabad: "After walking through several alleys and streets, we reached the Najafabad bazaar. Although it was afternoon, all the shops there were open, and the merchants were busy. An important part of the industries and crafts of the people of Najafabad and the merchants of the bazaar was cotton cleaning, spinning,

and dyeing. They used primitive tools to separate the cotton bolls and skeins from the seeds, then spun the cotton into thread on a spindle... Dyeing workshops were abundant in the Najafabad market, and the dyes used there were mostly indigo dyes and their derivatives, as well as natural dyes that the dyers extracted from plants and fruits according to formulas inherited from their ancestors."

6. Personal interview was done in Najafabad, the aforementioned workplace on Imam Street.
7. "Excellent baths, various successive caravanserais, and mosques were seen. Approximately four hundred and fifty different shops are located and open in it, each of which has goods and supplies ready in such a way that it will never need the city of Isfahan" (Al-Davoud, 1989).
8. He is a descendant of the Pezeshki family, the owners of the historic Pezeshki house, and lived in this house as a child.
9. Personal interview was done about the lifestyle and livelihood in the houses they lived in.
10. Personal was done about the lifestyle and livelihood in the houses they lived in.
11. Personal interview was done in Najafabad, her house on West Quds Street.
12. In recent years, Dashgo has been converted into a room, and the roof of a barn has been demolished.
13. Personal interview was done Najafabad, her father's house on Shohada Street.
14. The house of the Hamlehdari is valuable because it was located next to a garden. Yazdani Najafabadi (2017) has stated that houses were sometimes accompanied by a desirable addition called a "garden in the house". These gardens were located near the house. In these gardens, plants that were available and needed by the family, such as vegetables, summer crops, mulberry trees, figs, pomegranates, etc., were cultivated and considered the family's favorite recreation area. Flandin (1957) mentions a settlement in Najafabad that is close to the above definition. He writes: "The garden, whose inhabitants were evicted at that time, was made our home. We used the shade of its trees, and when the heat of the weather subsided, we set out".

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