INTRODUCTION
Introduction

A travelogue or an itinerary is a travel writing of literary value. It typically records the experiences of an author touring a place for the pleasure of travel.

In post-classical times Muslims and Chinese dominated in travel writing but Europeans took the central stage in travel and travel writing during the early modern era (From 1500-1800 A.D.). Europeans ventured to the distant corners of the globe and European printing presses churned out thousands of travel accounts that described foreign land and peoples.

The volume of travel literature was so great that several editors, including Giambattista, Ramusio, Richard Hakluyt, Theodore de Bry and Samuel Purchas assembled numerous travel accounts and made them available in published collections.

Over the centuries India has always been the object of foreign interest which has led scholars, conquerors missionaries, journalists and travellers to venture descriptions and classifications. Foreign attempts at depicting the sub-continent have greatly influenced people imaginaries, causing the birth of a stereotypical vision of the country which somehow has survived until today, both in the West where those accounts were produced and in India itself.

India’s classical image was established by travellers from outside - those remarkable people who ventured to remote lands in the garb of merchants, ambassadors, rulers, chaplains, pioneers, administrators, soldiers, artists, writer, poets, philosophers, missionaries, mariners, scholars, conquerors, journalists, physician, jeweler etc. and recorded the contemporary events, circumstances and conditions—political, social, economic, cultural and administrative, topographical details, ideas and concepts, trade, flora and fauna, behavior and etiquette and many other aspects of life in India which are valuable for understanding the socio-cultural as well as economic life of the time. They conveyed back impressions to their countrymen through lively tales, anecdotes and travel journals. These travellers came from far and
They were from England, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, Holland, Russia, Persia, Turkey, Tibet and the Arab countries.

The significance of 16th and 17th can’t be measured in the World History. Even the period of these two centuries formed the most brilliant epochs in Indian History because of the maturity and downfall of Hindu Kingdom in the South during the first half of the sixteenth century. On another hand it witnessed the rise and growth of the Mughals to paramountcy in Northern India. The political turmoil of the first half of the sixteenth century was transitionary. Eventually, it gave way, to the stability that signified Akbar’s reign; beginning with the second half of the sixteenth century.

The history of both the centuries in India has been a very interesting study-politically, socially, economically and culturally. The changes in all these spheres are not only momentus and marked but, also, revolutionary. The Turko-Afghan rule in the early medieval period, gave way to the establishment of the Mughal sway-but, it lacked a solid basis and was swept away-rather, too soon, by the Afghans under Sher Shah. But, it is to their credit that, the Mughals were able to strike back successfully, and restore their lost glory and dignity. Moreover, they were able to perpetrate their dynastic rule in this land for about two centuries.

During the first half of the sixteenth century travellers generally visited Southern India, especially the Malabar Coast and the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. This was due to its geographical location. South India lies in the peninsular Deccan Plateau and is bounded by the Arabian Sea in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south and the Bay of Bengal in the east. The geography of the region is diverse, encompassing two mountain ranges, the Western and Eastern Ghats, and a plateau heartland. A number of dynastic kingdoms ruled over parts of South India during its glorious history.

Father Stephen, Ralph Fitch and John Mildenhall were the only exception who visited the northern India during the 16th century. Only Ralph Fitch had given the account of Mughal Empire to some extent whereas the other two had just fulfilled the formality of being travellers as Ft. Stephen was the traveller only in name and Mildenhall’s account was mostly personal in nature.
Besides, three missions were also sent to Akbar's court starting in 1580. Father Monserrate had pictured a good account at the Akbar's court. Father Jurric had compiled all the three missions sent at the Akbar's court. Thus, forms a very good and first hand source for the Akbar's reign from the perspective of an outsider.

Study show that the important travellers who visited India during the sixteenth century were seven in numbers. Excluding Ralph Fitch, all the other six travellers confined their visit to Southern India only.

The seventeenth century in India saw the maturity of a very great empire in the East, the Mughal Empire. The period of a century which saw the reign of three most important Mughal rulers besides Akbar was very significant in the making of the Indian Medieval History.

A large number of foreign travellers started visiting the Mughal Empire from the very beginning of the seventeenth century. Mostly the travellers were Englishmen. Nevertheless, there were some important non-English travellers also in record in every reign that had put forward an interesting and detailed account for the period dealing with the socio-economic and cultural life of the period. Pyard De Laval was the only Frenchman who visited South India during the seventeenth century.

Although it is very difficult to estimate the accurate number of foreign travellers who visited India but an attempt is made in Appendix-1 to provide with the name of well-known travellers who visited India during the period under study with their time period and country name to make the picture clearer.

English travellers outnumbered the other European travellers for the whole period of one century but it is clear that during the reign of Shahjahan the other European travellers were much more as compared to the English and even more significant than the Englishmen. Peter Mundy was the only significant English traveller for the reign of Shahjahan. Besides, Henry Lord and Herbert also contributed in the travel narrative but insignificantly.

Though the original material for the study of Indian History during 16th and 17th centuries is vast and varied but the place occupied by the accounts of foreign travellers has its own importance. The significance can also be guessed from its profuse usage by the modern historians especially in corroborating a fact.

The present thesis entitled “Socio-Economic and Cultural Life of Medieval India during 16th and 17th Century as Depicted in the Accounts of Foreign
Travellers" attempts to study those aspects of socio-economic and cultural life of Medieval India which were either not focused or not given due importance in the official or Persian chronicle.

Thus the Socio-economic and Cultural life of Medieval India as depicted in the accounts of foreign travellers has been dealt in great detail in this thesis.

Almost every aspect of socio-economic and cultural life of medieval India had been taken by these travellers. Though there are lots of allegations on the travellers like they exaggerated the matter and depended mainly on bazaar gossips but there are some aspects of Indian History that came into light because of these foreigners like the issue of ‘Anarkali’ etc. As they were unofficial sources they were not under pressure to eulogise the reigning monarch.

The most valuable information regarding the contemporary mode of socio-cultural life during the medieval period is to be found in the accounts of Barbosa, Pyard Laval, Nuniz, Paes, Fitch, Pelsaert, William Finch, Edward Terry, Coryat, Pietro Della Valle, Peter Mundy, Manrique Mandelso, Tavernier, Bernier, Manucci, Thevnot, Bowrey, Carre, Careri, Fryer, Marshall, Ovington and Hamilton. These travellers recorded facts about Indian social life with considerable objectivity.

Accounts of Pelsaert, Tavernier and other travellers throw valuable light on the trade and economy of India during 16th and 17th century without any restrictions. These foreign travellers had taken into account the economic conditions of different segments of society.

Objectives of the Study

This thesis proposes to study the following aspects and questions:

1. Why individuals have travelled beyond their own Societies?

2. What were the conditions that accelerated the arrival of foreign visitors on Indian Sub-continent?

3. What was the significance of the 16th and 17th century in world history?

4. What was the political significance of 16th and 17th century in medieval Indian history?
5. Why most of the travellers visited South India before the 17th century? Who were the travellers to visit South India during the period under study? What was the place visited generally in South India?

6. Why the travellers during the period under study were generally Europeans? Who were the non-European travellers to visit India during the period under study? Under whose reign they visited?

7. Why a bulk of travellers visited northern India during the 17th century? Name of the places visited by foreigners in Northern India.

8. Providing period-wise as well as country-wise list of all the travellers who visited during the period under study in the form of an appendix.

9. A brief biography of all the foreigners who visited during the period under study is provided to enhance the knowledge of even an amateur historian.

10. How the Indian society was depicted by the foreign visitors? What the socio-economic and cultural life was as depicted in the accounts of the foreigners?

11. What was the structure of society? Who were at the apex of hierarchy? Was there any difference in the social structure of Northern India and Southern India as depicted in the travelogue?

12. What were the social evils that attracted their (foreigners) attention during the period under study? Were all the evils related with the women?

13. How the women were represented in the travelogues? What was the status and position of Indian women during the period under review?

The thesis has been divided into five chapters.

**Chapter-1**

**A BRIEF STUDY OF THE FOREIGN TRAVELLERS WHO VISITED MEDIEVAL INDIA DURING 16th AND 17th CENTURY**

The first chapter deals with the biographical study of travellers who visited India during the period of 16th and 17th century. This chapter aims at giving a brief introduction of the travellers and the significance of their works.
It discusses the circumstances at their home that led them to travel to the East. Their country and profession to which they belonged played an important role in the way of writing travel narrative. An attempt is also made to study their family background to know their mental setup. Significance of their travel narrative depends on the source of collection of their data and also on the fact that which places they had visited in India.

The travellers suffered from certain handicaps by ignorance of the language, customs and institutions of the country. That is why certain factors have to be taken into consideration while accessing the value and the volume of their evidence; the areas of the country they visited and the time and duration of their visit; their linguistic equipment, their opportunities and personal experiences in relation to the court and the people; and above all their education, mental equipment or powers of observation and their prejudices.

The chapter is divided into four sub-chapters for making the chapter easy and interesting giving a clear knowledge of traveller’s period-wise omitting all confusions to readers.

Chapter-II

SOCIETY OF 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY AS DEPICTED IN THE ACCOUNTS OF FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

The chapter is an attempt to study the Indian society that was prevalent during the 16th and 17th century from the perspective of a foreigner. Looking the Indian society from the eyes of a foreigner is a different experience. In this chapter the focus is to study the structure of the society during that period. Besides this an emphasis is made to study the similarities and differences that were prevalent between the Muslim and the Hindu societies such as their manner of taking food and drink, the way of wearing ornaments and dressing and the nature of housing. A trial is also made to focus on the superstition and beliefs that was commonly prevalent in the society.
Chapter-III

CULTURAL LIFE IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY BY FOREIGN TRAVELLERS

A study is laid to know the cultural life that was prevalent from the early sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century more specifically that are covered in the travelogues of the period. An attempt is made to analyse the Indian culture in all important aspects like; political and administrative organization, economic conditions, education, social and religious life etc. in medieval India. What was the role of aristocracy and nobility in enhancing the cultural development? A trial is made to study the impact of living of higher class responsible in shaping the cultural life during the period. Also the role played by the education-system, festivals and fasts on cultural life of the period in general. In spite of the Islamic predominance a composite culture sprang up that was neither Islamic nor Hinduism in character is studied here.

Chapter-IV

ECONOMIC LIFE AS DEPICTED BY THE FOREIGN TRAVELLERS OF 16TH AND 17TH CENTURY

Regarding the economic condition of India during the 16th and 17th century the travelogues tell us a good deal. A trial is made in this chapter to get an exhaustive account of Indian products, industries, imports and exports, commercial codes and practices, methods of purchase and sale, banking and exchange, currency weights, measures, custom duties, tolls and transportation, etc. by weaving together numberless, scattered references in the travelogues and other sources.

Chapter-V

REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN FOREIGN TRAVELLER’S ACCOUNT

This chapter aims at picturing the status of women in general from the viewpoint of a visitor. The curiosity of western males to know about the eastern beauties is a very interesting study that too when the access was almost impossible. Issues related to gender are taken up here. The representation of woman in all the aspects of life is
studied. However, an interesting contrast has been drawn by our travellers when they recorded the freedom enjoyed by the women in South India that lowered the status and position of women during the period. Not only this, they had also laid down the exalted positions of the women belonging to royalty and nobility. They recorded the better economic position of Muslim women as compared to their Hindu sisters in Mughal India.

**Review of the Primary Source Material**

The present study is based on the study of travelogues that forms an important primary source material for Medieval Indian History. The original material for the study of socio-economic and cultural aspect of Indian History is vast and varied but my focus is mainly on the personal narratives of the travellers who visited our country during 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century.

We are fortunate to possess most of these in published form today. Many narratives have been published by the Hakluyt Society which depicts the lifestyle, customs, social practices and religious beliefs etc. of the people in different parts of the country and are a valuable source material for study of contemporary history.

The Factory records of various trading companies operating in India are of immense importance as the source material for the social life of 17\textsuperscript{th} century. They include “Letter Book of the East India Company, Letters received from its servants and Calendar of the Court, Minutes of the Company”. These series cover the period between 1600 and 1708 and were collected by William Foster. Letters received by the East India Company from its servants in the East, based on the India Office records and published in six volumes are letters received during 1602-17. The English Factories in India in thirteen volumes edited by William Foster cover period from 1618 to 1669 A.D.

Though they deal little with society but, being official records, their information may be taken as true and trustworthy. These throw important light on the administration and economic life of the country. The letters are full of personal experiences. They also deal with the condition of artisans, labourers, merchants and brokers. They are invaluable for an economic history of India during the early years of 17\textsuperscript{th} century.
A number of contemporary works were written on current events as well as the social, economic and cultural trends followed by the royalty and nobility during the Mughal era. In this thesis, some important translated Persian sources are used for corroborating the facts sometimes. These works are-

The *Baburnama*, also known as the *Tuzuk-i-Baburi* or the *Memoirs of Babur*, constitute a firsthand account for Babur’s own career and his times. It describes the land, with its geography, trade and industry in evocative tones. Emperor Babur’s daughter, Gulbadan Begum also wrote an account of Humayun’s life, the *Ahval-i-Humayun Badshah* or the *Humayun Nama*. It reflects the condition, circumstances or situations; and her unique account of the everyday lives of the royal family presents many aspects of Mughal life about which very little is known from other sources. The important feature of her account is that it reflects a feminist perspective.

*Akbarnama* was the first official history of the Mughal court. Its official and equally voluminous appendix, the *Ain-i-Akbari* (an administrative and statistical record of Akbar’s government), was written by Abul Fazl. It is useful for studying the household administration, court ceremonies, coinage, salaries and ranks, literary and intellectual life.

Abdul Qadir Badauni’s three volume *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* is also considered to be a comprehensive account of Muslim rule in India from the Ghaznavids to Akbar. Badauni was a great critic of Akbar’s policies. His text is useful for verifying facts portrayed by Abul Fazl and also gives a fuller picture of the political and religious environment of the time. The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* written by Nizamuddin Ahmed offers a more objective account of Akbar’s reign and is therefore considered to be one of the most reliable sources. Yet another text on the period, the *Tarikh-i-Akbar Shahi* of Muhammad Arif Qandhari presents a general survey of Muslim rule in India from Mahmud of Ghazni to the middle of the sixteenth century.

The *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri* which is the autobiography of Jahangir is an important source for the period. For the Shahjahan’s reign Abdul Hamid Lahori’s *Padshah Nama* is a comprehensive account of the emperor’s life and times. Inayat Khan’s *Shahjahan Nama* is another biography that archives Shahjahan’s life till his thirtieth year.
Emperor Aurangzeb’s rule has been compiled by his court historiographer Mirza Muhammad Kazim, in the Alamgir Nama. Khafi Khan’s Muntakhab-ul-Lubah also covers Aurangzeb’s lifetime. The Maasir-i-Alamgiri of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan is based on the official accounts of Aurangzeb’s rule, covers a major part of his reign: while Shahnawaz Khan’s Maasir-ul-Umara and Ishwardas Nagauri’s Fatuhat-i-Alamgiri give more detailed accounts of Aurangzeb’s reign.

The above mentioned sources are easily accessible in Maulana Azad Library, Seminar Library of History Deptt., A.M.U., Aligarh and National Archives of India Library, New Delhi.

**Review of the Secondary Sources**

There is no scarcity of scholarly studies on the socio-economic and cultural aspect of Indian History for the period under review. The present thesis as proposes to study the travellers account and the depiction of the socio-economic and cultural life of Indians by the foreign visitors during the 16th and 17th century for which the work of M.A. Ansari’s, ‘European Travels under the Mughals’ and Meera Nanda’s entitled ‘European Travel Accounts During the Reigns of Shahjahan and Aurangzeh’ is an informative book but focuses on the aspect of Indian life for the period of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb only. Joan-Pau Rubies work entitled ‘Travel and Ethnology in the Renaissance: South India through European Eyes, 1250-1625’ is a scholarly and very interesting study regarding the travellers who visited the Southern India. Other works available on the socio-economic and cultural life of the South India are also used.

There are some of very important works that deal with the biography of the foreign travellers like Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam entitled ‘Indo-Persian travels in the Age of Discoveries, 1400-1800’. I find chapter-3 and chapter-4 in the above work as useful for my topic that gives good information regarding life and Indian visit of the Turkish admiral Sidi Reis and Mahmud Wali Balkhi.

Other related important works are R.C. Prasad’s, ‘Early English Travellers in India’, E.F. Oaten’s, ‘European Travellers in India’, J.T. Wheeler’s, ‘European Travellers in India’, R. Nath’s, ‘India as seen by William Finch’, M.H. Fisher’s, ‘Vision of Mughal India: An Anthology of European Travel Writing’, Paul Kegaum’s, ‘European Travellers in India during 15th, 16th and 17th Centuries’, P.K. Nayar’s, The
Modem work relied heavily on the archives of the East India Company (‘Factory Records’) and the accounts of European travellers. Therefore, I have tried to base my study primarily on the published travel narratives left by the foreign visitors whose details are discussed to some extent in the first chapter. Other sources are also used to help in corroborating the facts.

Like all other historical documents, travel accounts are highly problematic source of information. There are numerous reasons why it is impossible to accept the testimony of travel accounts of face value. Sometimes these travellers did not notice or were not able to notice, or perhaps were not even permitted to certain aspects of the societies they visited. Sometimes they were sloppy or did not take the trouble to investigate carefully the society, culture and economy they visited. Sometimes they felt such a deep commitment to their own societies that they tendentiously misinterpreted or misrepresented the lands they visited. Occasionally they took as their principle interest the critique of their own societies. So they exaggerated the virtues of the lands they visited. To some greater or lesser extent all travel accounts reflect the biases, prejudices and interests of their author.

So this is the job of a historian to critically evaluate the information provided by the travelogues because whereas they are sometimes serve as a very good and first hand historical material but many times they are not free from angularities which have resulted from an uncritical acceptance of the testimony of the contemporary travellers.

It is thus the purpose of my thesis to critically analyse the information provided by the foreign travellers account to highlight the various aspects of Socio-Economic and Cultural life of medieval India during 16th and 17th century.