CHAPTER VII

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Man's keenness about his surroundings has remained an integral part of his nature. He never satisfies with the present situation and new experiments with new techniques are being used by him. New ideas, with aspiration came into his mind which has shaped the objects in a novel way. With the growth of techniques, the products also increase and he desires to make them more beautiful and attractive. This shows his aesthetic sense.

Every object created by man, comes under the word 'Art' and its reflection can be gleaned on the social and economic condition through the examination of the artifacts of the concerned age.

The period c. 600-1200 A.D. Which is called early medieval period heralds the advents of new period in the history of land system, arts, crafts, commerce, polity, society language and religion. During this period a Kaleidoscopic series of states and rulers had appeared on the political stage except Harsh's kingdom which had a large part of Northern India under his rule.

It is right that Indian feudalism was also in vogue during this period and urbanism - an important aspect of developed state of arts and crafts also suffered a setback.
But inspite of this, it does not mean that there was absolute stagnation in early medieval period as described by R.S. Sharma in his books 'Indian Feudalasim' and 'Urban Decay in India'. Despite the dampening effects of localism, the third urbanism emerged which is in itself an indication of the presence of the productive activities of numerous artisans as the term could not have come into vogue without these productive activities. This also shows that a gradual and continues process of change in socio-economic life of society was still on the way.

In the present study, an attempt has been made to examine the development of arts and crafts in the context of the new economy during the early medieval period.

In this work the development of the arts and crafts represents man's continuous efforts in making more products with better techniques, more scientific tools and with numerous varieties of materials. The number of industries, the techniques of products, types of goods produced and material used are some factors which indicate the quality of technical activities. From archaeological excavations, various types of objects made of metal, clay, leather, glass, beads, ivory and stone of the early medieval period came
into light. The close examination of these objects supported by contemporary literary sources leads us to determine their quality and the techniques used by the artisans.

Industries had remained an important part of North India's economic stability. In the period under study, various industries flourished in Northern India. The artisans evolved advanced techniques, used refined tools and various kinds of materials.

Metal industry reached its acme with the production of remarkable artifacts which are of much value even now. In this industry among all metals iron was the most popular one. It was used for making tools and instruments used by the carpenters, coppersmiths, ironsmiths, sculptors and architects etc. Various types of machines, weapons of war, implements for agriculture and weights and measures were made of it, which are in use even in this age. Famous iron pillar at Dhāra, the capital of the Paramārs which was the tallest of its type not only in India but also in the world was the most notable achievement of iron smiths. Such a wondrous creation was possible only by highly qualified and skilled workers.

Mostly the household utensils were made of brass and copper, but the royal and noble families used golden and silver
made pots in their houses. Other domestic articles such as bedsteads, thrones etc. were also made of precious metals for kings and princes.

Ornaments of various types were also made of gold and silver with intricate designs. Coins of gold, silver, copper etc. minted during early medieval period had considerable artistic merit. They were marked by various motifs engraved on them and were made of different designs and patterns.

According to R.S. Sharma, this was the time of downfall in coinage system but a whatever be the number of gold, silver and copper coins found during excavations, are of great artistic skill. Other artifacts made of metal also reveal that this industry was quite developed during the period under study.

Textile industry was another important industry. Man of early medieval period was quite conscious about his clothes. Different kinds of fabrics were used for making garments. Fine clothes such as chināmsūka, devāmsūka and pattāmsūka were also in vogue which shows that the knowledge of the workers of textile technology was well developed. Sulaiman in the 9th century A.D. has described that in the kingdom of
Rahmi (i.e. Bengal) there was a stuff not to be found else­where; so fine and delicate was this material that a dress made of it may be passed through a signet ring. It was really a tribute to this industry and the skilled textile workers of that period. When such type of products were available, how the period be termed as the age of stagna­tion. The people used to wear cut and sewn garments and the tailors had a good job. They also knew the techniques of colouring, making designs and embroidery on the clothes for making them fashionable. All these factors are the signs of good aesthetic taste of the people of that period alongwith their expertness and advanced knowledge about this industry.

The art of sculpturing was also at a great height during the period under study. The female figures have been shown wearing diaphanous saries which are sometimes embroidered. The male figures, particularly the Buddha images from Sar­nath and Nālandā are clad in transparent Samghāti. The fine folds of the same are clearly visible. The different types of blouses and upper garments of both sexes were the result of expert tailoring. These figures indicate the types of clothes worn by people on the one hand and accomplishment in the art of sculpturing on the other. They also speak of the refinement of aesthetic sense of the people of that age.
Pottery is a window which shows the artistic accomplishment of the potters and way of living of the masses of that age. Contemporary literature contains numerous references of the types and the uses of pottery. The pottery yielded by excavation speak eloquently by about the pot making handi- craft of the period and the aesthetic sense of the people. A large number of pottery articles have been found in Northern India which include miniature bowls as well as the big storage jars.

Mostly the pottery was wheel-turned as all the pots which were small to medium sized such as cooking vessels, bowls, dishes, miniature vases of various types, incense-burners and pots for carrying and taking food etc. were made by this method. But big pots such as big storage jars, water vessels and containers of various types were made by hand. These could not be made entirely on wheel.

For giving them final shape hands were also used. Dabbar and bats were also used. Pottery was an art which served every walk of the society from a village hut to a city palace. For making the pots more stable the potters used kilns and holes were created for mature firing. This process in which oxygen passed through the kiln freely was the process of oxidation and this procedure turned the pots red. the
pottery from Hastinapur in Meerut Distt. is entirely wheel-turned. The fabric is medium to coarse and has been tempered with sand, often containing big particles of grit. For making the pots attractive, mica powder has been dusted on the exterior part of the pots. Pots of various types, having numerous designs on them have also been found. From Hastinapur, several sherds bearing moulded, incised, impressed and painted designs have been excavated. A fragmentary sherd of red ware, decorated with moulded designs consisting of dots and loops and other fragment bearing a moulded creeper have been found. The other pot-sherd bears incised design, leaves etc. on the inner face, a design of spoked-wheels impressed on a sherd of greyish black ware, a sherd of red-slipped ware, painted with a horizontal hand, oblique strokes emanating from its bottom are some interesting pieces. Dishes, miniature vases, incense burners and jars of coarse dull red fabric and utilitarian in nature have been unearthed from Ahichchatra. One jar of miniature size containing 15 debased Indo-Sassanian coins of c.1055-1081 A.D. was found. Jars of this group have a globular body and flat base. These biconical small jars at times were decorated with incisions and ridges below their neck. Incense burners have horizontally splayed rim and hollow pedestal base. Spouted jars with a single spout were common, but here a double spouted jar with
externally splayed, thickened and under-cut rim was also noticed. The profile is decorated with incised horizontal lines and circular stamps. Dishes with notched rims and incised floral decoration on the inner side have also been found. All these examples are sufficient to prove that the potters were highly qualified artisans who made durable as well as beautiful pots. Such fine and utilitarian ware could be made only with good techniques. The same techniques are still used in rural areas by the modern potters.

Wood industry has remained quite popular through the ages. Its use in various ways was in vogue. Not only buildings and houses, but articles of furniture such as tables, stools, tripods and maravi etc. were also made of wood as is referred to in the Kolhapur inscription of 1135 AD. The literary works and archaeological evidences refer to the wooden articles, used by the people of that period. Boats of wood were made for carrying armies and trade-articles across the rivers. The edifice of the famous Somnath temple in Saurashtra was erected on 56 pillars of teak wood covered with lead. An excellent example of wood work is a pillar from the Sun temple at Katārmal of the 10th Century AD, which has been brought from the Himalayan area of Uttar Pradesh. The rich carving bring out the beauty of the wood temple carved out of cedrus deodāra. It can be seen in the National
Museum, New Delhi. Some other examples of great artistic skill of the master artists of the period specially of Bengal is an exquisitely carved image of standing Vishṇu, holding his usual attributes, flanked by his consorts, Sri and Saraswati. Equally interesting is the fine statue of winged Garuda, the celestial mount of Vishṇu, found during the excavations at Raghurāmapur. These specimens of wood clearly show that this industry had reached its acme during early medieval period.

Leather industry which was also very popular during the period under study was in vogue since Rig-Vedic age. It was flourishing industry as the raw material used in it was found in abundance.

The leather workers manufactured various types of leather articles. It is clear from the archeological evidence as well as from literacy works. Bow strings, slings, thongs to fasten the parts of a chariot, reins for horses, water leather bags, shoes etc. were the products of that period. Leather boots, shoes and sandals were used from very early period. The images of Sūrya and Revanta have been depicted as wearing shoes or boots in the sculptures from Bengal, Bihar and other places. The demand of leather goods in foreign countries proves that the leather workers had
acquired much proficiency in their profession. Cambay was a renowned centre of leather industry and the sandals produced there were known as "Sandals of Cambay" as pointed out by Al-Masudi. Thana was an important centre of leather export in Western India as confirmed by Marco Polo. Dressed hide was exported to Arabia and the Persian Gulf in early medieval period. The literary works such as Šukranīti suggest that the kings should pay special attention to the leather workers. This fact shows that leather workers had their own position in the society. It is known that leather bottles, bags, sandals were the artifacts which had beautiful shape & appearance. Though this industry was in existence in the earlier period also, yet it had attained important and special place in this period due to its highly developed stage.

Ivory industry was another important industry. The main source of raw material for ivory industry was the elephant. Ivory objects being valuable, durable and beautiful, were in demand with the people, elite class as only they could afford it. King's throne, boxes, cages for sparrows, balconies, bracelets, anklets of well-polished ivory and ivory sandals were some of the artifacts made and used during that period. Ivory sandals were in vogue as is indicated by an ivory sandal datable to the Pāla period (9th-10th Century AD) which is displayed in the Archaeological Museum, Nālandā.
(Arch. No. 32. 2953). The ivory workers were proficient in making ivory articles with great skill. Naiṣadhacarita has referred to ivory bracelets which resembled the orb of moon. In Maṇasollāsa, we find descriptions of anklets of well polished ivory. It shows that the ivory workers knew the art of carving and polishing their products. Ivory was an important item of trade also and Orissa was a great centre from where it was exported to the Arab countries in substantial quantity as described by Minorsky, V. (in his Hudūd-al-Ālam P-86). Some specimens of ivory-objects have been received from various parts of Northern India. For example a group of these has been found at Brāhmaṇaṇḍ in Sind. This group formed part of a box or boxes. The subjects treated on them include female figures holding mirrors, a lotus (Plate XXII,1 and 2), elephant and lion, makaras, flying gaṇa and resolled foliage (oriental Art (NS), I, 1955, PP-47-50 figures 2-3). Another notable group of ivory objects is found from Bengal and is kept in the Seattle Art Museum, Seattle. It appears as an architectural form, a three tiered stupa with a modified cruciform cross section. The finely executed piece, complete with col-umns, canopies, thrones and niches has been adorned with fifty six figures, sixtefe of them in animal form and the rest being the images of the Buddhist deities.
These objects can be made only with a knowledge of the advanced techniques. The carving on ivory was an act of advance method and it was done during that period. The ivory workers had manufactured numerous ivory pieces of great artistic beauty as described above. It leads to the conclusion that this industry had also reached a high stage of development during the period under study.

Bead making industry 'was one of the important Industries'. Various kinds of beads, found from the different sites of Northern India, confirm, the fact that beads were used mostly in jewels such as necklaces, anklets etc. The elites used gold, silver, pearl, diamond etc. for making beads for their ornaments where as the common and the poor men and women had to satisfy themselves with silver, copper, iron, ordinary stone and even clay beads for jewels. The technique to perforate the beads requires an expert hand. Perforation was done with great skill. It was a sign of great proficiency. A novice was likely to break the bead while perforating it.

Glass Industry was also in vogue and its use in India is very old. In the age of Suṣruta, liquids and wine were served in glass vessels. In the period under survey, many
works have references of glass vessels. For example 'Rasar-nava' mentions Kācha Kupi, a glass bottle. An apparatus of glass known as 'Valukayantram' has been described in the Rasaratnasamuchchaya (IX. 34-36). It was a glass flask with a long neck containing mercurials, wrapped with several folds of cloth, smeared with clay. Kalhana has also referred to a merchant, named Padmarāja who used to send daily the water of Pāpasūdana tirth filled in a large number of glass jars to the king of Mālwa named Bhoja. Glass was used for making other domestic articles. Its use in buildings has also been mentioned. The workers engaged in glass industry were proficient in the techniques of manufacturing articles of glass. Glass workers had been accorded a good position in the social set up of that period.

Coins are good indications of the economic condition of the society of a period. If the coins of gold and silver are circulated in large quantities, the society would be prosperous, but if the coins of base metals such as copper, bronze etc. are circulated then the economic condition of the society cannot be good. The standard money in many parts of Northern India during the period under study was dramma. It has been referred to the Gwālior inscription of Bhojdeva of Kanauj dated 875 AD and in the Pehoa, Asni and Siyadoni inscriptions of the 10th century AD. The stone inscription
of Asvaka of 1143 AD, and the Kirachu stone inscription of Alhanadeva dated 1160 AD (Epigraphica Indica). also refer to this fact. The economic compulsions forced the Rajput states to use billion coins as a substitute of silver coins due to the scarcity of silver. (Journal of the Dptt. of Letters XXX(1938), P-38). The billion coins were made by mixture of silver and copper and were called Diliwals or Dilials by the early Muhammadan writers. All the kings of Tomara and Chauhān dynasties also adopted this type of coinage. Thus, during this period Gold, silver, billion and copper currency was in vogue and the masses kept their account and transacted business in cowries probably due to shortage of currency. In the excavations, a good number of gold, silver, copper and billion coins have been found which speak of the economic condition of the period under survey. At the same time, they also reflect the standard of metallurgical knowledge of the minters and their artistic ability and skill of engraving. A study of coins from this point of view reveals that they had different designs patterns and motifs engraved artistically on them.

Stone Industry was quite an important one as has been proved by the finds brought to light by the Archaeological Survey of India. The expertise and the skill of stone workers and stone carvers of this period has also been uncovered
by the excavations. Stones of numerous varieties were used for fashioning the sculptures. Various images made different kinds of marble have been found from Western India. Someśvara was a śilpi of Magadha. He was an artist of high order and specialist in stone-carving. The sculptors were very efficient in their art. The remains of a large number of images confirm this fact. The architectural remains of the Śiva temple of Vaibhagui at Rajgir of 8th century AD. shows the complexity and sophistication of the stone industry in early medieval period. Various types of machines such as the flour grinding machines used locally quarried rock as millstones. Stone was also extensively used in fashioning things of daily use for the home. It was used for building forts, temples, ponds, wells and images. The works of that period such as Mānsollāsa testified to the highly developed exploitative technique of the stone using industries. The word ‘Śīlā-srī' means one who imparts beauty to stones. It claims that the gifted sculptors could easily transform a dead stone into a living one with their masterly skill. They (Sculptors) took delight in fashioning their creations in poetic or visual metaphors.

One in particular, among the stone monuments of the period under survey feature sculptures and carvings of rare quality which do great credit to these arts. In the temples
of Khajurāho, the most excellent craftsmanship of a sculptor and a carver can be seen. These temples are the noblest monuments of the early medieval art of India. The structures have mixed grace and beauty with size and grandeur of conception.

These industries turned out goods and artifacts that exceeded the personal needs of the artisans of their households and were produced to earn money. This fact gave a considerable boost to trade and commerce within this country as well as outside. There are numerous references to this effect in the contemporary literature. Merchants from various countries came to the parts of India and carried away Indian commodities to their countries which had great demand for them. India was connected with other countries by both sea routes as well as over land routes. Sind which was under Muslim rule had kept up a regular communication with the rest of Muhammadan empire. North Eastern India also was connected with the outside countries by overland routes. One route connected Fundrāvardhana with Kāmrūpa and Hieun-Tsang had followed this route in 7th century AD. Trade with foreign countries was carried on both by sea and land routes.

Along with trade with outside countries, internal trade had also developed during the period under study. People's
acquaintance with luxurious ways of life and social progress increased the demand for various commodities. Bana has referred to rows of shops like camplines and wide market roads of Ujjayini looking like a sea had minus its water with heaps of cownches, oyster-shells, pearls, corals, emarlds and gems displayed, there for sale. Towns were the centres of internal trade, for example Sirsa produced large quality of fine rice which was exported to Delhi and the city of Marh produced corn which was exported to other places. Costumes were exported from Himalayas, indigo from Gujrāt, Camp-or and rattan from Malaya were brought to the ports of Sind for carrying to other places. Regarding sea-born trade Ajanta paintings depict scenes of shipping and ship building.¹ According to Hieun-Tsang the people of Saurāstra deprived themselves from their livelihood from the sea because they took to commerce. There was a brisk trade with China and the West and it was carried on by sea. A vivid representation of the apresentation of credentials by the persian envoy has been given in Ajanta paintings which proves that India & Persia had trade connections also. A flourishing trade with Japan, Ceylone, Arab countries, Pegu, Cambodia, Java, islands of Malaya Archipelago and Roman

¹ Santosh Kumar Das-op. cit PP 167, 169-170.
empire was carried on by Indian merchants. A stone inscription from Mysore informs that merchants of foreign trade carried on trade with Chera, Chola, Pāndya, Melaya, Nagaoha, Kosala, Saurāstra, Nepal and other countries. The mercandise consisted of lions, elephants, precious stones, spices axomahahe herbs and medicines. Indian & foreign ships sails day & night loading unloading merchandise at Indias ports situated at Eastern & Western Sea coasts.

Development of trade and commerce is a sign of prosperity of a country and development of trade is in itself the result of surplus production. Thus, there is a close connection between development of various industries as summarised earlier and the socio-economic condition of the people during the early medieval period.

Through increased export and trade the industrial surpluses also play a role in the process of urbanisation. Big cities & towns with bazars having a variety of shops laden with merchandise of varioustypes for sale and conglomeration of industries and industrial workers emerge. These towns & cities are situated at appropriate places having facilities of transporation., For sea trade the trade centres develop near the sea shores. The growth of the cities and towns leads to betterment of economic condition of the society.
It is noticed that the growth of industries and trade during the early medieval period in Northern India led to the growth of city life. The writers of that period have described various big cities which were famous and prosperous. Usually the traders, bankers, kings, princes and high officers live in large cities. Courts also functioned there. The artisans and craftsmen carried on their work under their sreniss corporations which were local in character.

We find many references in the records on contemporary period regarding establishment of new towns by rulers and officials. This very fact that urban centres of various dimensions became readily recognisable in records from a particular point of time onwards immediately relates to the problem of social change of which urbaniastion is but one aspect considering the social formation of the age which these urban centers were likely to represent.

The existence of fully developed urban centres can be traced particularly to the close of the 9th century AD, numerical references to them increase gradually suggesting crystalisation of the process.

The cities were the centres of all activities and wealth. The literature and epigraphical records of the said period have references to towns and cities and the speciality which
made them famous. The chief characteristics of most of the big cities as described in contemporary literature and as evidenced from archeological excavations were: a high wall surrounding it, a moat deep and broad, often filled with water and crocodiles and alligators, wide roads, markets, temples, buildings, tanks, wells and parks etc.

Some of the important cities and towns which achieved fame for flourishing trade during the early medieval period are given below:

1. Alor: It was a rich city situated in the upper valley of Sind. Various writers such as Masudi, Al-Idrisi and Ibn-Khardadba have referenced it in their works. Its situation near the bank of Indus suggests that the river was navigable.

2. Arthuna: It was important city in Rajasthan. An inscription refers to flourishing trade in the area round the town. Merchants here traded in barley, cotton, cloth, salt, sugar and oil.¹

¹. El., XIV No. 21, 69-79.
3. Aswal (Ahamdabad). It was an important centre of trade and flourished as a new town during the period under study.

4. Broach: The inhabitants of this town engaged mostly in trade and were rich. Vessels from China and Sind used to come to this port.

5. Benaras: This city was famous for its temples and had a reputation for producing swords.

6. Rahmi (Bengal) It was famous for its fine fabric as the dress made from this stuff could pass through a signet ring.

7. Cambay: It was a trading centre as well as an important city. Its inhabitants used fine muslin garments, and silken and cotton goods. It was a naval station and important port of Gujrat. Merchandise of every country was to be found here. It was situated at the extremity of bay where vessels could enter and cast anchor.

2. HIED I-P. 361.
3. HIED, I P-84.
8. Champa: This town was a great internal port of that time. It was connected with different parts of the country and different ports both by water and land routes.

9. Chadobha: The Dubkund stone inscription of Kachchapaghata Vikramsiimha has described the town as having excellent markets and thriving trade. People came to this town to trade in different things which they had got.

10. Debal: It was a port town which was known to the Arabs in 8th century A.D. It was situated between Karãñchi and Thatta. The prosperity of the city was due to the volume of trade. According to Al-Idrisi, Debal was a populous place where vessels of Sind and other countries congregated. Ships laden with products of Uman (Oman) and those of China and India met at this place.

11. Gwālior (Gopagiri) It was administered by merchants. Nizāmi has given a vivid picture of Indian swords made in this city.

1. Avasyakachutrni, P472
2. EI, II P-232 fn.
3. HIED I P-377.
4. HIED II P-227.
12. Gujrat: Gujrat was an important centre of trade and its chief products were indigo and cotton materials of every description.¹

13. Kashmir: Kashmir was famous for saffron and medicinal plants. It was an important centre of the textile products such as woollen, silken and cotton clothes.

14. Kalinga: It was famous for making swords.

Kundina: This city was inhabited mostly by potters who had a brisk trade in their products during the period under study.

15. Khambyat: It was situated near the sea shore and was a naval station. Merchandise from every country was to be found here for shipping to other countries.

16. Multan: Cotton textile industry was in a flourishing state in this city during the period under study.

17. Malabar: Malabar was an important city and considered as 'Key to Hind' in the period under study. Its products such as rubies, aromation, grains were carried to Iraq Khurāsān, Syria, Ruman and Europe.

¹ Chau-Ju-Kua P-92
18. Nehrwala: It was the capital city under Solankis. It was a great emporium of trade with eighty four markets in it.

19. Pattana: This city was famous for weaving of cloth\(^1\) and sale of cattle. It was also a centre of river navigation as shown by Khalimpur plate of Dharampāla.\(^2\)

20. Parvarapura: This place had regularly arranged hattas (markets) as mentioned in contemporary works.\(^3\)

21. Somnāth: This city was a naval station and ships plied from here to various countries such as China and Sufala.\(^4\)

22. Sindan: It was a populous city and its people were known for their industry. It had extensive commerce both in exports and imports.

23. Subara: Its modern name probably is Surat. It was a famous port of Gujrat situated at one and a half mile from the sea.\(^5\)

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1. RT .V.162.
2. EI. V P-254.
3. RT III. 368.
4. AI .II P-104.
5. HIED I PP-85, 403.
24. Shergarh: Shergarh city has been described in the Somnath temple inscription as a flourishing centre of trade, industry and agriculture.¹

25. Veraval: It was another port town situated in Saurastra. It was an important trade centre of Western India:

The prosperity and fame by these and many other cities and towns had been achieved because they had grown either as centres of surplus production of some useful products or as centres of brisk trade and commerce. The economy of this country that had been mainly agrarian had also now moved a bit towards the other side i.e. industrialisation specially at the second half of early mediavel period.

This transition, though quite, slight and not much perceptible, was significant from both social as well as economic points of view. The development in the techniques and methods of production resulting into surplus yield during the period under study, probably provided some stability to the process of urbanism. The third urbanism heralded by this period, perhaps, continued to gain further strength as the time passed thus giving a new direction and meaning to the socio-economic structures in the country as unlike the early

¹. EI XXIII, P-131 fn.
historical urban phase there is no suggestion as yet that this phase to reach a stage of decay. The considerable expansion of urban economy during the Sultanet period (as described by Irfan Habib—Economic History of Delhi Sultanet—an essay in interpretation) will have to be, as Chattopadhayay says and is clear from the present study, analysed and assessed in relation to the kind of change that surely was taking place in early medieval (pre-Sultanet) period.

The quality of products made by the artisans also further improved thus making the occupation more economically gainful for them and giving still more strength to the process of socio-economic transformation.