CONCLUSION

The difficult nature of the hills and the scattered hamlets in Himachal made the region unsuitable for large scale trading activities. Economically due to the difficult geographical conditions the region was not very developed during 19th and 20th century. Even the Punjab Hill areas of Kulu, Kangra, Lahaul and Spiti and Shimla, which were under direct administration of the British Government were much behind the other progressive region of Punjab and did not witness any substantial economic development.

The political repercussions of British colonialism nevertheless affected the economy of 19th century Himachal. Despite the inhospitable geographical conditions which hindered the trade and commerce of the region due to the limited means of communication and scanty population. The economy did produce some amount of surplus for trade. The village cottage industries were developed enough to encourage the export of woollen clothes, shawls, blankets, pashmina, wheat, barley, tea, rice, ginger, spices, medicinal herbs, timber, ghee etc. Imports included sugar, silk, clothes, indigo, salt, musk, saffron, borax, conch
sheels, metallic instruments, metals, arms and ammunition, precious stones, sandal wood, nuts, cloves, cardamons, cinnamon, animals, oil, kerosene, leather, saddles, praying wheels and a host of other items. Markets, towns such as Mandi which lay enroute between Central Asia and the North Indian plains, Kulu and Lahaul, Palampur in Kangra, Shimla, Bashahr were important markets. These market centres had geographically and demographically strategic locations to cater to the trading communities by way of Central Asian trade routes, Hindustan Tibet Road and access to the markets in the plains. Besides these markets, trading activities were an important part of the fairs of Lavi of Rampur, Sul, Loi, Minjar of Chamba, Renuka in Sirmuwar and Dussehra in Kulu. The internal market towns of Kangra, Sujanpur Tira, Una, Jwalamukhi, Nurpur, Haripur, Gangath also seen to have been active centres of commercial exchange. The arrival of British in India led to Shimla emerging as the summer capital of India. This provided an impetus to the export & import activities. Because the difficulty of the terrain goats, horses, donkeys, camels and yaks were employed for carrying the goods across Tibet, Yarkand and Ladakh. In some of the less mountainous hill states, carts and bullocks could also be used. The export of tea was to Amritsar, Calcutta, Jullundhar, Multan, Lahore and Ravalpindi apart from tea being send to these towns it was also exported to Australia, America, England and to other European Countries. Paddy
crop was produced in adequate quantity in Kangra, Kulu, Sirmour and Chamba. Fine quality of rice basmati was exported. The Lahaulies on the other hand for reasons of being snowbound for half of the year used to purchase much of their requirements at Kulu. Even poppy seeds and oil from poppy crop at Kulu attracted not only purchasers from Sultanpur and Mandi but traders from the plains. Bhaghal state now Arki, Bilaspur, Sirmour, Nalagarh, Jubbal were found cultivating poppy and Muhammadan merchants from Ropar, Rahon in Jullander and traders from Pehova used to purchase opium. It is worth mentioning that States like Keonthal had a negligible impact on the trade and commerce. In food grains Bilaspur, Nalagarh, Sirmour produced surplus quantity and were able to meet not only their own requirements but also helped the other areas that were short of foodgrains like Ambala and certain areas of Uttar Pradesh. Surprisingly, traders had been taking away sizable quantities of wheat, maize, grams and rice. Ginger from Sirmour, raw as well as dried, was exported from Sirmour, Bilaspur, Bhagal and Keonthal to Anandpur and Ropar. The State of Baghal whenever it had a surplus of ginger cash crop exported it to Kalka and Ropar. Another cash crop-potato was produced in Chamba, Mandi and Keonthal. Bhaghal too supplied potatoes to other states in need. Ghee was produced in large quantities. An abundant was produced in Bhaghal State and several other areas. The common village
household in Himachal also kept beehives in their cottages in Mandi, Kulu, Kangra, Chamba, Bashahr and Sirmour. The rich timber wealth of Himachal Pradesh was extracted from the region along the rivers which flowed through almost every hill state. It was through these rivers that they reached the depots in the plains. Ravi in Chamba served this purpose up to Lahore and Chenab to Wazirabad in British Punjab. The produce from Bashahr was floated down the Sutlej and caught at Phillor & Ropar. The sleepers from Jubbal were handled at Jagadhri whereas Sirmour's export of timber depended on Yamuna river to reach Ambala District.

Chowries of fine silky wool from the Yak tails were exported largely from Spiti and to some extent from Bashahr as the chowries were of ceremonial use for the royalty. Some industrial products were also exported. Nahan exported sugarcane pressing machines and appliances to the adjoining areas of U.P. and Punjab. Herbal produce was obtained from the wilderness and exported. This included mohra, karru, kuth, bajjar, bhang, kawa, violets, musk, zira, tilla, harar, patish, banfasha, pomegranate seeds, turmeric and a variety of wild mushrooms. The cropping pattern and snowfall make the hill people idle during winters in most of places. They remain confined to their houses. This is the occasion which provided the opportunity for knitting, weaving and stitching and producing woollen
pattus, gudmas, numdas, pashmina and several other woollen garments.

The rearing of a fine breed of sheep was carried out in Kulu, Seraj, Wazeeri-Rupi. Woollen blankets were in much demand with the European residents in Kulu besides much was exported. Walnuts, apples, pear, hazelnuts, chilgoza, dried apricots, suil, phuelan, khashkhas, dhanya, bees wax, seapnuts, dhup, salt and tobacco etc. from Chamba, Sirmour, Mandi, Kangra, Shimla hill States, Kulu, Spiti etc. were exported and imported. The rice from Kangra in 1924-25 sent to the plains amounted to one lakh maunds i.e., approximately, worth two lakhs and twenty five thousand rupees. Kulu rice attracted a rate of Rs.2/- per maund. The rate of tea at that time was Rs.1.50 to Rs.2/- per pound. In 1868 and 1872 the tea output in Kangra was 2,41,332 and 4,28,655 pounds respectively and in 1883 it rose to 8,99,157 pounds. Similarly, the other items as adduced before were exchanged for rupees, pounds, shillings and measured in scales as maunds, pounds, seer etc. Even the barter system was also vogue between the hill states and Tibet. One seer of Tibet salt was exchanged for 2 1/2 seer of husked rice at Rampur. On borax, the profit was three times and on wool it was 50%. Although trading went on regularly the trade disparities because of heavy imposition of taxes by the Tibetan authorities on imports inflicted a
financial loss to the export from the Himachal Hill States who had to carry silver coins with them for importing articles from the adjoining countries. As such, in real sense of the hill states had no regular or established markets. The places of Bashahr, Mandi, Simla, Kulu, Lahaul & Spiti and Una where business flourished, were the markets catering to the local requirements. Fairs & festivals attracted a large number of traders and became points at which business could be transacted. Sultanpur which lay along the Central Asian trade route received goods from Kangra and Mandi. Mandi again was a very busy market between the plains, and the Central Asian towns. During the months of Katik, Magh, Jeth and Baisakh trade melas (fairs) and other local religious festivals encourage the ordinary shopkeepers of the villagers to engage more actively in business. These melas were an important means by which extensive trade connections were established with distant areas. Simla, with a rapidly growing population imerged as a significant market town of Himachal. The establishment of a cantonment in the vicinity added further to its already considerable business activities. The resourceful Indian businessmen, especially the Suds and Parsis opened shops and arranged for supplying provisions required by the residents and visitors. Influenced by the commercialisation, business establishment were also opened by Europeans.
The trade routes in many areas were widened and pack animals and carts could be used. It would, nevertheless, be long before the region would be fully connected with a network of roads suitable for wheeled traffic. The route from Nahan to Ambala via Shahzadpur and Naraingarh; route from Barara running via Sadhaura in Ambala joining Nahan at Kala Amb extended upto Dehradun in Sirmaur up areas. In Mandi there were several routes: from Mandi to Palampur; Mandi to Kulu over the Dulchi Pass; Mandi to Hoshiarpur; Mandi to Baijnath and Palampur and from there to other local centres. To Simla there was the bridle road via Dharampur, Solan, Kiarighat. The Hindustan Tibet Road from Simla into the interior passed via Mahasu, Narkanda and Kotgarh to Rampur and Chini in Bashahr. The routes turning north-west into Spiti were primarily difficult tracks. In Bilaspur, there was the Ropar road through Swarghat which lead upto Suket Mandi. There was another road joining from Nadaun in Hamirpur then Sidhara touching the Ravi at Shahpur. It entered into Chamba touching Pathankot, Dalhousie, Bathri valley, Banikhet and finally Chamba. Horses were often used in Jubbal and mules and ponies in Bhajji Bashahr, Chamba, Sirmaur and Keonthal. The yaks were found to be effective in picking their way through the difficult mountainous tracks of the higher reaches. Waterways were some times used for trade purposes. Although the hill rivers were difficult to navigate the
transportation of sleepers of timber, logs and wooden planks was feasible through the Ravi river to the British territory in the plains; through the Sutlej to Ropar and through the Yamuna to the plains. People who were involved on a full time bases in the buying and selling of merchandise would normally be the only ones to qualify to be termed as traders. The main trading communities of the hill states in this respect were the Banyas, Suds Pahari Mahajans, Khatries, some category of Muhammadans and Brahmans etc. But it is important to point that the indigenous tribes in Ladakh, and those of Yarkand and Tibet were also engaged in trading pursuit. These business classes were found all over the country. As far as Banyas are concerned they had been a regular feature of economic society for rather long and were also frequently involved in the money lending business. On the other hand Pahari Mahajans who were of mixed origin were the general traders. In certain parts of Himachal the Khatries and even Brahmans were engaged in trading activities. These Brahmin business community was called the Kayath. The others were the Suds whose descent is traced from Sarhind. Suds had a deep business insight and were enterprising in nature. They were purely mercantile in their pursuits and were scattered in Chamba, Bilaspur, Nalagarh, Bashahr, Suket, Kangra and Amritsar. The Kangra area was for the Suds a business haven but they faced competition also from the Khatris from the plains. In the
mid-Himalayan and higher mountain ranges beyond India boundaries Lahulas, Khampas, Baltis, Chambials, Kanawari traders, Gujjars and Muhammandons were also involved in the wholesale and retail trade of the produce of the land. Once again it needs to be indicated that many of the last category were also peasants and cultivators who engaged in trading activity during some months of the year.