CONCLUSION.
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As commercial advance in India became particularly marked in some regions during the seventeenth century, the well established currency system provided the necessary infrastructure to this advance; simultaneously various other commercial practices such as dodn, usury, banking, hundi etc., reinforced this infrastructure, while providing enormous benefits to merchants and neree. Through these institutions the middlemen established a thorough control over the internal market. Gradually these groups of neree, merchants and brokers grew stronger and could control prices and the supply of commodities. In so far as the question of response of local merchants to the highly organized commercialism of the European Companies is concerned, the indigenous mercantile elements were able to effectively check the Europeans from establishing direct links and also from gaining any effective control over the organization and system of commerce in the internal market or over the production process and the primary producers. Many of the merchants and all neree were basically interested in financial transactions only. There were some big merchants like Virji Vohra, Ganeshyam Das, Shanti Das, Gopal Bhai of Gujarat and Chintaman Shah, Chittaral Shah of Bengal who did conduct their own trade. However, the bulk of the merchants who consisted the intermediate layer in the merchant hierarchy mainly
sought to profit through the financial institutions of the market such as usury, banking, *surrati, hundi* etc.

Having considered the developing trade and commerce and the stimulus it provided to the process of commodity production, commercialization and the growth of money economy during the seventeenth century, it is easy to infer that there was a remarkable growth of a financial machinery for credit and exchange. Merchant capital and commercial organizations were also highly developed. But, it is interesting to note that there was not much commercial link between the merchants and the petty producers. Indian merchants operated their business with their own capital accumulated through various sources such as usury, exchange, *hundi, dakh* etc., and used to get profits - averaging around 25 per cent. On the other hand the Mughal officials instead of establishing any control over the fluctuating exchange values of currencies, encouraged the practice of extorting money through exchange and usury etc., in their own interest. In fact, there was conspicuous absence of a clearly formulated commercial policy on the part of the Mughal government.

Consequently, uniformity in the rate of exchange value of currencies could not be maintained which had its impact not only on the prices and supply of commodities but also the English investment in India.

The mode of payment by the middlemen to the petty producers and artisans was also a significant factor in this system of commerce. Though the supply and demand of commodities could be steadily main-
tain ed to a large extent, the producers, artisans and petty middlemen were the main losers due to the fact that there was always a manipulation by middlemen in financial transactions. As we have noted earlier, the banjara (grain merchants) used to bring grain from distant parts of the country and get the prices in mahudia particularly in Gujarat. These banjara hastened to get the mahudia exchanged into the widely prevalent coinage of silver rupees. In this process they had to bear a loss due to the fluctuation in the rates, which to a large extent depended on the discretion of seersafa.

The Mughal currencies of very high metallic value was certainly a remarkable achievement of the period, in spite of the drawback of fluctuating exchange rates. The varying exchange value of coins was a function of the total circumstances and was not regulated by the authorities. The duality in the value of a coin - (a) its intrinsic value which was ascertained by the mint and (b) its exchange value determined by the market - no doubt, was an influencing factor not only in the development of the English trade in India but also in the fluctuation in the rates of exchange and prices of commodities.

The great variety in the quality of exchange money (i.e., sikka, chelani or neat), the differences in the exchange value of the numerous localised currencies (i.e., mahudia, parada etc.) and the fluctuation in the prices at which bullion were being sold in Indian market where silver was scarce, influenced the trade and commerce to a great extent. In other words, the multiplicity of coins in circulation caused great inconvenience not only to foreign merchants but
Taking multiplicity of coins the leading sarrafe and merchants got an opportunity to control the money circulation and to manipulate the exchange value for their own advantage. Petty producers and artisans, however, remained the main losers in such commercial transactions, apart of course from the foreign Companies.

Though the Mughal Emperors had adopted a liberal policy regarding the mint as well as custom administration, local officials manipulated the whole affair to their own will. Inspite of strict control of the Mughal government, mint-house became the place of corruption. Sarrafe, darogaha and other staff at the mint-houses could influence the money supply in the market by delaying the minting of coins or by other means such as fraud in coining, bribes etc. On the other hand it is also clear that the Mughal governments could not adopt any clear cut custom policy. The attitude of the Mughal rulers towards levying duty on exports at the ports and also inland-custom was hardly favourable as the merchants had to pay duty at higher rates. Besides, rakharia collected by the jamirdara and other local officials at many places on the way to the ports at varied rates also influenced the prices and supply of goods.

However, from the discussion it may be concluded that the Mughal government had, no doubt, very favourable policy towards levying duties on import of bullion in particular. Import of bullion certainly increased to an appreciable extent during the seventeenth century. Due to lack of information at our disposal it is difficult
to establish the exact trend of yearly import of bullion into India, yet we are in a position to say that the import of bullion went on increasing throughout the seventeenth century. The following table suggests that minor fluctuations apart, there is a fairly steady increase in the import of bullion during the seventeenth century.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value of bullion import in £</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1601-05</td>
<td>16,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1606-10</td>
<td>17,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1611-15</td>
<td>15,667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1616-20</td>
<td>82,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1621-25</td>
<td>47,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1626-30</td>
<td>106,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1631-35</td>
<td>63,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1636-40</td>
<td>31,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1666-70</td>
<td>166,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1671-75</td>
<td>144,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676-80</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681-85</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686-90</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1691-1700</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1701-1705</td>
<td>800,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this connection, Miss Aziza Hasan has also drawn a positive conclusion. While answering an important question as to whether the new supplies of bullion added significantly to the existing silver stock in India she goes on to argue that in 1692, due to high rate of silver bullion influx, "... the copper coinage had been finally replaced by the rupee as the basic unit..." However, we are left with a question that despite this increase in the existing stock of silver why did the English Factors in India often face the problem of scarcity of money on the one hand and imbalance in the prices and supply of commodities on the other? It could perhaps be suggested that it was not merely as if the demand for money exceeded the supply but that the functioning of the fiscal systems made them dependent on merchants, brokers, sarrafa and officials who let go of no chance to manipulate this dependence to their advantage. The inordinate delays in getting their bullion converted into money, again, forced the English to depend on the middlemen. Though direct and specific references are lacking, the inference cannot be ruled out that there was connivance between the sarrafa and local authorities in delaying the minting of money for the Europeans and consequently establishing a situation advantageous both for the sarrafa and the authorities but detrimental to the English Company. Thus the seventeenth century Indian money market was no more a perfectly competitive market where

the law of demand and supply would operate than the markets are in our own day; the sophisticated financial mechanisms facilitated decisive intervention by their operators to reduce the law of demand and supply to a mere textbook principle, even before it had been formulated.