CONCLUSION

The Memoirs of Babur and Jahangir constitute first rate authority not only on their respective careers but also throw a flood of light on the socio-cultural, political and economic life and the landscape of India. Both the rulers belonged to a common family and were also directly related to each other, but they belonged to different political and cultural set up. Babur was born and brought up in the Central Asian Town of Andijan and his home milieu was characterized by Central Asian and Islamic cultural values. On the other hand Jahangir was born to a Rajput mother at Agra in India and was brought up at his father Akbar’s royal court, which was characterized by Indo-Islamic cultural values.

Therefore in context of their different religio-cultural background it was perceived that the description of Indian society and culture in their Memoirs would be influenced by their respective religio-cultural heritage. But during the course of this research study many new and hitherto unexplored facts came to light.

Babur describes India as uninteresting and monotonous, with few pleasures and advantages to recommend. The only things that appeal him are the vastness of the country, its immense manpower, its natural resources and its moist air during the rainy season. Apart from these whatever he saw and
moist air during the rainy season. Apart from these whatever he saw and mentioned in his Memoirs were compared by him with their Central Asian counterparts and were declared to be unworthy by him. Contrary to the popular perception, his attitude towards Hinduism he sounds to be more considerate. Though he declared the war against Rana Sanga to be a holy war and claims to have erected pillar of the skulls of the vanquished soldiers in Chanderi, yet such actions on his part do not suggest that he hated Hindu doctrine and its followers.

In the battle against Rana Snaga, his army was on the verge of revolt after initial set backs, therefore to boost their morale; he had to declare the war to be a Jihad. The bizarre action on his part in Chanderi can be understood in context of the feeling of being a conqueror in medieval times. Yet in the entire narrative he never adopts bitter tone to describe Hinduism. From his Memoirs it is also evident that he never intended to discriminate among his subjects on religious or sectarian ground. Moreover he seems to be appreciative of the profession based division of Hindu society.

Unlike his great grand father, Jahangir adopts a positive attitude in describing the secular aspects of Indian society and culture. His Memoirs also reveal his great love for the land over which he rules. He has mentioned in detail about important trading and commercial centres of India. Ahmadabad and Cambay are described as the hub of commercial activities in India. Other aspects
of Indian society and culture, like condition of women, social composition, food habits etc. are described in a more detailed manner. The beauty of Kashmir and the pleasant climate of Mandu are also highly appreciated in the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri. But on the other hand his writings suggest that he had developed some sort of aversion against Hinduism, Jainism and other heterodox religious movements of the time, like Sikkhism. He claims to have broken the Varaha avtar image of god and thrown it into the Pushkar lake because he was not convinced of god manifesting itself in such ‘detestable’ form. Moreover he also termed Hinduism as a ‘worthless religion’. But it was not only the non-Islamic religions, which were despised by Jahangir. Some Muslim saints especially Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi was thrown into the dungeon for antagonizing the emperor on ideological lines. But it does not mean that Jahangir was a religious bigot. In fact he even gave permission and monetary help to Bir Singh Bundela for erecting a magnificent temple as a reward for murdering Abul Fazl. He also held special regards for the Hindu saint Jadrup Gosain of Ujjain. Moreover Hindus, especially the Rajputs were given important post in the administration and we do not come across any instance of discrimination against non-Muslim subjects. Therefore, it seems that Jahangir was a political realist but some times behaved like a self-willed medieval autocrat.
The veracity of the facts mentioned in the two Memoirs was also checked from other contemporary Persian Chronicles like Tarikh-i-Rashidi, Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh, Akbar Nama and Iqbal Nama-i-Jahangiri. All the above mentioned four texts were in agreement with the general factual description of Indian socio-cultural life in the two Memoirs. All these texts reflect that a composite society and culture was evolving in the medieval period. The description of various religions thoughts and ideas, emergence of new sects and cults is suggestive of the evolution of a harmonious and pluralistic society. But some conflict at the level of ideas also prevailed in the society, which was visible at superficial level only. Moreover these texts also suggest that wide economic disparity prevailed in the society and the condition of women was also very pathetic. To save the so-called dignity of their family, she had to perform some horrendous acts like Jauhar and Sati. Therefore all the six texts including the two Memoirs can also be utilised as an effective source for the study of socio-cultural life of Mughal India.

Apart from being a valuable source for the study of Indian socio-cultural life, and the attitude of their respective authors towards it, the two Memoirs also carry immense literary and linguistic importance. Both the Memoirs are interspersed with many poetic verses. Moreover the romantic description of flora
and fauna and other natural scenes also add extra dimension to their literary importance.

Therefore in a nutshell it can be said that endowed with immense scholastic accomplishment and literary talent, both Babur and Jahangir tried to surpass each other in terms of depiction of India in their Memoirs. Though Jahangir’s description of some non-Islamic ideology is marred by intolerance. Yet, his comments about India are attractive and lavish. On the other hand Babur does not adopt any sectarian attitude towards Hinduism, but his comments about the secular aspects of Indian socio-cultural life are very critical, and at the same time they are surprising and interesting too. It would not be incorrect to say that had he lived for a longer period in India and seen more of its people and areas, he might have changed his opinion. Nevertheless both Babur and Jahangir deserve appreciation for being honest and truthful in the depiction of their own personality traits.