Chapter 5

Conclusion
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The research concentrates on the trading towns in India which grew and developed during the Mughal Era. It analyzes why during this period towns started to appear almost in all the directions of such a vast empire. It aims to find out what was the reason behind the growth of so many towns. Further the work brings out the classification of towns during the Mughal Era. It also builds a relationship between the geographical factors and their impact on the growth of these towns. It also describes how specialization of commodities gave birth to different types of markets during that time. Further it proves details of the structure of these towns. The work then focuses on the occupational structure of the six towns that have been selected for the study, their evolution through time by studying their current status with the help of census 2001.

The first chapter elaborates on the glory and grandeur of the Mughal Empire. It explains how the glory of the Mughal empire was proverbial, that there was a continuous movement of man, money and resources which led to a strong interface within the Mughal Empire. The desire of governing a strapping political empire by the Mughals gave birth to a series of urban centres in different directions of the empire for effective control. Towns performed different types of functions by becoming either administrative or commercial or religious centres. It also shows how for nearly one hundred and seventy years (1556-1719) the Mughal Empire remained a dynamic, centralized-complex organization. There was trade not only within the Empire but also with the outside world. It also introduces the general structure of towns during the Mughal Empire, also talks their common factors and features and further explains that how it becomes interesting to look into the detailed structure of these towns.

The first chapter then looks into the research questions, sets objectives of the study and about the hypothesis, study area, research methodology and also includes literature survey.
The second chapter gives the geographical profile of the study area wherein climatic factors such as rainfall, temperature, relief and vegetation has been examined. The chapter also dealt with relationship between the development of these towns and the role of geographical factors in their expansion.

The third chapter gives a detailed description of the structure of towns during the Mughal Era. It also gives the reason for emergence of towns during the Mughal Era, how these towns had welcomed and in a way inaugurated an era of centralized power i.e. centralized government over a vast territory to govern an effective rule over the empire. The emperors needed effective urban centres which could be used as different administrative divisions for covering an allotted area under its jurisdiction so that there was effective law and order therefore considering this point as their major agenda, potentialities of different areas were recognized to make these areas huge urban centres and therefore after the thirteenth century various towns started appearing in different directions.

This chapter gives classification of towns which existed during the Mughal Era, four types of towns which existed at that time are first, primarily administrative centres where industry, commerce and even religious sanctity developed in its wake such as the capital cities though in the course of time their administrative significance, for ex Agra was sometimes overshadowed by their non–administrative significance

Second category of commercial towns where administrative aspect followed the commercial activities, Third were the centre of pilgrimage such as Banaras, where proximity to river facilitated commercial intercourse and constant crowding of pilgrims attracted crafts and service personnel from the neighbouring districts or even further off region. There were towns which had risen because of some distinction achieved. And further there were port cities like Cambay and Surat.

The study area includes Agra, Ahmedabad, Banaras, Cambay, Delhi, Surat. It also informs about the various popular commodities of that time, it also talks about the famous cotton textiles of the different towns of that time. The chapter also delineates how specialization of commodities gave birth to different types of markets. Indeed during the Mughal era one town was different from other but the most interesting
aspect is the economic morphology which was very well marked in Delhi. There were different types of markets existing for keeping different kinds of goods. For example, the Nakhas was a daily market place where cotton and slaves were sold, both wholesale and retail. Gunges were usually the grain markets, Mandavis were markets of goods, usually provision or grains, a katra was an enclosed market. The chapter gives a description of the various types of markets that existed during that period ranging from emporias to hats. It also describes the structure of towns, the infrastructure, such as sarais, karkhanas, banking facilities, gardens etc.

Chapter four gives a detailed account about the Mughal administration. It gives a detailed description of the power structure during the Mughal period. It gives an account of various ministers and also talks about the Mansabdari system.

The location of majority of towns was determined by proximity to a perennial river, which would guarantee continued water supply throughout the year and assisted transport. The towns which did not have access to a river had large tanks or reservoirs for the supply of water.

A majority of towns for defence were surrounded by outer walls made either of mud or stone fronted with deep trenches. Within the wall some kind of planning was perceptible in the position assigned to the fort or town-citadel, houses of nobles, bazaars, residential quarters of merchants, craftsmen, urban professional and labourers, places of worship, sarais and huts of menials, etc. Gardens, burial, cremation ground and slaughter house were usually laid out without the wall.

The period of Mughal Empire or rather of the sixteenth century, seventeenth and part of the eighteenth century appears to be out-and-out golden age of urbanization. At least for much of the Northern and central India, there was both a spreading out of the size of the pre-existing cities and towns and a propagation of the new foundations.

Overall, if one analyzes the whole issue one can summarize that urbanization foresees a state of development where among other things, a compact conglomeration of inhabitants with in a delimited area, a centralized governing organism, and industries
as the materially productive units exist. This is in contrast to the rural society which implies a dispersed population over a relatively larger area, a rather local administrative set up, and cultivation as the principal productive activity. But while the villagers without any large urban centres in the vicinity can persist for centuries, the latter would perish in the absence of an agriculturally prosperous hinterland, that is to say that flourishing agriculture is an indispensable complementary base for the size of an urban structure.

During the Mughal era the towns grew so flourishingly because they were supported with rich agricultural hinterland.

Promising agriculture is a complementary base for the rise of an urban structure. Further if a town's industrial and economic activities are to grow, their most favourable utilization of all the natural assets and resources with which the area may be endowed, becomes an indispensable prerequisite. The agricultural prosperity has therefore, to be in regard to both food grains and valuable crops specially the cotton crop, so that while the former sustains the urban population, the latter feeds the industry particularly the cotton industry, because during that time the cotton fabrics dominate the economy in much the same manner, as steel works do today. The volume and variety produced and the level of traffic achieved in cotton goods went a long way in shaping the wealth of a town. It was through their manufactured products and commercial intercourse that the towns were able to attain feasibility.

Urbanisation was used as an apparatus by the Mughal Emperors to govern a strong political era. By opening towns in different directions, they could keep a check over the whole empire and also were able to make a robust economic and political empire.

The political amalgamation of so vast an area under a single ruler unavoidably stimulated commercial and therefore urban life. It became easy to trade since the empire was under one ruler and that too a large area was available for traders to trade. The great expansion of commerce during the Mughal period – to be seen most strikingly in the manufacturing and marketing of textiles to meet both an internal and external demand- unavoidably brought swelled wealth to the major urban centres of
the country, especially to those cities whose location made them natural entrepots whether by land or by sea.

The blossoming of an urban–based economy and of urban culture during the supremacy of Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, and for much of supremacy of Aurangzeb, derived largely from the promising political circumstances which were highly beneficial to commerce and to the trading and artisan classes of the cities.

Urban artisans and craftsmen were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of those people who asserted control over their product until it was sold in the market and included relatively well-to-do artisans who owned their equipments and produced luxury goods for a limited market as well as poor artisans who produced ordinary goods for the larger market. The second group included those artisans who had no control over their goods. For these persons, the materials and in some cases, the tools, and the final product remained the property of someone else.

*Karkhanas, sarais, transport facilities, banking and credit facilities were available.*

Building *sarai* was regarded as a beneficent activity of the imperial government, the nobles and the big merchants. Besides the *Sarai* built on highways, there was barely any town which did not have one. They were meant for travellers and strangers and for all those who came for business in the town and had to stay overnight. Hospitals were sometimes established in the big towns.

At Ahmedabad, a hospital meant for poor patients which was run by the Imperial government was present. In the accounts of European travellers there are several references to hospitals for animals in almost all the principal towns of Gujarat. They were run by money collected as alms and from certain big merchants. Here old, sick and disabled animals, birds and insects were looked after.

*Mughal cities were frequently surrounded by marvellous gardens. According to Pelsaert, they served two purposes. During the life-time of the nobles they “served for their pleasure and enjoyment….. And after death for their tombs.” Nobles used to splurge generously on gardens. A huge amount of money was spent on ensuring the supply of running water, feeding tanks, forming waterfalls and fountains. On high
bricks and stone walls and towers in each corner, cupolas, pillars and galleries, on arched gateways and on all sorts of trees, grass and flowers and flowers.

Merchants in the Mughal India did not form guilds that integrated or established prices and conditions of trade, and negotiated with princes and kings for property rights and protection. The only organizations that were similar were the merchant councils of Ahmadabad in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and those of Banaras in the eighteenth century. They were not there in Shahjahanabad or Surat during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

During the Mughal period the foremost merchant group in North India seems to have been the Khattris, a Hindu caste of traders and administrators from Punjab. This caste dominated commerce in Agra and Lahore in the seventeenth century and along with some Gujarati and Rajasthani merchants, controlled trade in Shahjahanabad as well.

The two most stupendous items of import in to Mughal India comprised treasure (notably silver) and horses, while textiles dominated exports. The Mughal cavalry generated an enormous demand for quality horses from Central Asia and Persia. Above and beyond this there were horses required by the cavalry troopers. To retain such large number of horses of non-Indian breeds, there was need to import horses continuously, particularly since these breeds could not be raised well in India. While bullion and horses constituted the main import and must have accounted for the major portion of the value of imports, there were also imports of certain other articles, namely precious stones, non precious metals like copper, quicksilver, tin, lead; amber beads and vermillion.

Russian hides, pearls, high quality woollen and silken cloth from Europe, Persia and China, unprocessed silk from China, spices from South- East Asia and Ceylon, coral cloves, coffee and ivory from the East African coast and the Red Sea, and dry fruit from Central Asia. From across the Himalayas came imports of gold, copper, lead, musk, ginger, borax, woollen stuff, wooden objects, hawks, falcons, etc.

Pelsaert also records the quantities of Quicksilver, Vermillion, tin and Ivory brought by Dutch to Agra. As far as the exports are concerned, besides indigo, other main
agricultural and semi agricultural exports of Akbar’s empire were sugar, rice, and opium. Rice was exported mainly from Bengal, with a good variety from Gujarat as well, to ports in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. Bengal also sent sugar in considerable quantities to Pegu and other places. Sugar of various varieties was taken overland via Kabul as well. Mughal India also exported opium. Besides these agricultural commodities there was export of iron. Malabar pepper was one of the important items of export from India; but the producing regions and principal exporting ports were in South India, well outside Akbar’s empire. The major portion of Indian exports was accounted for by textile. Indian cotton textiles were also exported by the Western overland routes. Babur mentions cotton cloth among the main merchandise brought from India to Kabul. Cotton textiles had a colossal market in the Red Sea countries and Turkey.

Turkey imported Gujarat cloth through the Levant. Quantities of Gujarat calico must thus have been regularly reaching Western Europe by the end of the Sixteenth century through the Levant as well as around the Cape of Good Hope.

Ceylon and the Maldives islands also imported cotton cloth from Gujarat. Gujarat cloth had still larger markets farther east. Cambay cloth of various kinds exported to Malacca. Bengal the prior vital exporting region sent white muslin to various markets extending from the Red Sea to China. Sind too produced cotton stuffs. Diverse kinds of Muslin, conceivably fine calico, were exported from the province to Portuguese India and Hormuz.

Mughal India also exported some quantities of Silk. Although Bengal silk exports were a striking features of India’s trade in the seventeenth century, these do not seem to have been as large at the beginning of that century.

Agra

The city of Agra by far was considered the largest and most popular city of the Mughal Empire in the seventeenth century. The geographical location of Agra made the flow centripetal and Agra stood as the pompous town of the Mughal Empire. All
the routes in northern India radiated to and from Agra portraying it as “the heart of his empire or the navel of the whole realm

All goods moving between any two diverse parts of the empire were required to make a halt here. Apparently the city besides handling its own imports and exports was also acting as a transit depot, thus adding to its own commerce.

The Dutch factor Pelsaert visiting Agra in the beginning of the 17th century rightly emphasized its importance, the situation of the city at the junction of all the roads from distant countries; All goods must pass this way as from Gujarat, Tatta (or Sind) from Kabul, Kandahar or Multan, to the Deccan or Burhanpur to those places or to Lahore; and the Bengal and the whole east country; there are no practicable alternative routes, and the roads carry indiscernible quantities of merchandise, especially cotton goods. Thus the city catered to the demands of local, regional, national, and international markets and became an important collecting and distribution centre for retail as well as wholesale trade. Besides finished goods there was also a constant flow of raw materials and specialised products in and out of the city, for goods manufactured locally in neighbouring regions and those in other distant regions.

Important industries at Agra were cotton industry, Cotton textiles from the place were very famous.

The main commodities from the adjoining regions for which the city was collection centre were cash crops such as indigo and tobacco, agricultural commodities such as wheat, rice, sugar, vegetable oils and butter (ghee) and other commodities such as spices, drugs, opium, salt, walnut, asafoetida, lead, volatile oils (perfumes) lac, gum, vermillion, quicksilver, and coral. Indigo was mainly produced in Hindaun, Bayana, Panchoona, Bisaur, khanwa, Khurja, Koil and Itimadpur, Byana and Kalpi were main producers of sugar. Shawgur was the only place near Agra which supplied saltpetre; while salt was dug from nearby region of Etawah. All these commodities were first brought to the markets of Agra before they were sent out, Places like Gwalior, Kalpi, kotputli, and Todah Bhim which were under the jurisdiction of Agra subah were famous for mines of iron, copper and turquoise. Agra also used the minerals and metal
resources of Rajputana. Spices were supplied to Agra mainly by Indian merchants from Deccan though the Dutch also got interested in its trade during the middle of the 17th century. Armenian merchants brought quantities of broad cloth here

One more significant industry was metallurgy. Besides articles of silver and gold, those of copper, iron and brass were manufactured in Imperial workshops for domestic use by talented artisans in Agra.

The brass rings were manufactured in Agra and chemicals were used to dissolve the brass. There is also reference to quick-silver mines near Agra. Fitch mentions diamonds also. The stone cutting industry blossomed from the time of Babur. Abul Fazl refers to “masterly sculptors and cutting artists of form in Agra.” The countless huge and beautiful buildings of Agra made in red stone clearly demonstrate how nascent this industry must have been.

Embroidery with gold and silver thread on beautiful textiles chiefly silks was one of the most important crafts of Agra.

A further blooming craft was inlay work and carving designs on various articles of metals and stones.

Thus during 16 and 17 centuries Agra became a nucleus of international trade and reached its pinnacle in economic prosper. Besides its favourable geographical setting, undeniable other factors also played a conspicuous role in the economic advancement of Agra. The commercial and industrial life of Agra could not have received such a momentum had there not been a constant supply of food stuff and raw materials from the fertile hinterland for the overgrowing needs of the city’s mobile and permanent population. They were complimentary to each other, resulting in a relationship of mutual benefit. The surrounding hinterland found a ready market for their agricultural produce and the population of Agra city never felt a paucity of such articles of daily consumption.

There was an invariable movement of people from villages, towns, small and big cities to the capital cities to for temporary or permanent stay. These included
merchants, traders, bankers, skilled, semiskilled and unskilled artisans, craftsman, weavers, masons and labourers.

**Ahmedabad**

Tavernier calls it “one of the largest towns in India”-carrying on a considerable trade in a wide range of items, silk stuffs taking an important position among them.

The economic magnitude of Ahmedabad was immense. Basically two types of trade were found in Ahmedabad that is local trade and the trade occasioned by benefit of its being an entrepot to the maritime commerce. It also acted as a major market for Indigo Saltpetre produced around Budh nagar was exported from Ahmedabad.

Silk industry was quite outstanding the raw silk was imported from Bengal and the Ahmedabad weavers had become experts in manufacturing satins and velvets of all kind and colours. Carpets were also made. Ahmedabad when considered from the cotemporary standards would be more in nature of a super magnum rather than an ordinary town though it was just a provincial capital of the Mughal Empire. The most striking feature of this town was its securities measures in regard to which it had surpassed even the metropolitan towns of the empire.

Banking being a natural consequence to a prosperous trade, numerous bankers flourished at Ahmedabad. The Bohra bankers are frequently mentioned in the sources. Principally a Muslim trading community with wide business ramifications and maintaining vakils (agents) at all important trading centres, it was expedient and lucrative for them to be engaged in money transactions as well. Thus they in all likelihood came to presume the character and role of bankers.

**Delhi**

It became the capital of the Mughal empire in 1638, Just like Agra, Delhi also had proximity to river body and this geographical gain was very beneficial in defining the commercial traffic at Delhi ; Numerous commodities were found in Delhi during that
time, The popular ones were sugar, indigo, paper, jaggery, turmeric and coarse muslin etc. An assortment of coarse muslin was found here, these were Gangajal, Calico, Chintz etc. if one looks in to the paramount industries of Delhi, Cotton industries but more so Chintz were well coloured, next in quality to those of Masulipatnam only these were also produced in large quantities and several qualities with a wide range of prices to suit the pocket of high and low. This very fact shows that Delhi had material available for both the classes i.e. for the privileged as well as for the common man.

Delhi was well reputed for its dyeing of cotton fabrics, especially the type of dyeing called tie-dyeing, its famous quilts used to be dyed thus. The indigo industry too was in a promising state magnetize merchants in large number good indigo used to be produced in the quantity within the environs of the city; a prosperous leather industry was also present.

Different types of markets existed, these diverse markets kept different sorts of goods for ex the Nakhas was a daily market place where cotton and slaves were sold, both wholesale and retail. Gunges were usually the grain markets, Mandavis were markets of goods usually provision or grains. A katra was an enclosed market, and just like a mundi, might be named after some article sold there or its founder, many katras occur in the sources. At Delhi a Nil katra, (indigo) there were still other bazaars, bearing again the names of the commodities in which they mainly traded or represented their founders, such as the Khasbazaar, khanambazaar, chaoribazaar, jawhari bazaar and rjabazaar etc.

**Varanasi**

It was admired not only for its commercial significance but it was a famous pilgrim site of Hindus. Silk stuff, gold and silver embroidery, sugar, calico, chintz, were among the commodities which were traded. It emerged as a significant trading centre for cotton textiles. The variety of cotton goods produced at Banaras were excellent, several of them were bordered with gold and silver threads. In view of *Abul Fazal* and
Palesaert, there seems to have been a progress in the cities manufacture and all the subsequent writers agree to the excellent quality of its stuff.

**Cambay**

It appears that a large variety of goods were exported annually from Cambay and the vessels on their onset composed and brought various special goods and commodities from different places. These goods were of all varieties these were white stamped and painted silk stuffs, quilts, carpets, Indigo, Paper, Leather goods, Dressed hide, Opium and other drugs, Iron, Large quantities of Sugar, Dried Ginger, Raw Cotton, Asafoetida, precious stones.

The vessels reaching Cambay from east delivered silk from China, Quicksilver, Vermillion, Large quantities of Spices, Sandal woods, Pearls from extreme south of peninsula, Cordage Coconut in large quantity, Oil, Honey from Maldives and Slaves from Zeila. Besides these Rupee mint Aurangzeb was also there at Cambay.

**Surat**

It was already a port of some magnitude for pilgrim traffic since Tapti river presented a harbour, while within small discharge silting was not too immense a peril. Its benefit as a port was enhanced by the unearthing of a hole, or a natural under sea though opposite the village of Swally, presenting outstanding anchorage for huge ships.

Surat continued to instil large amount of bullion into the empire. The Hindustani consignment ordained for south reached Surat by way of Burhanpur. The goods incorporated Poppy, Indigo, Opium, Iron, Ship building, Pineapple, Gumlac, Spices, Sugar, Sandal, etc. Whereas returning to Surat ships brought musk from China, Horses from Arabia, Slaves and Ivory from Ethiopia.
Regarding the occupational structure most of the towns are having predominantly male population as workers in all the categories. The percentage of male workers with respect to total workers ranged from eighty three percent to ninety percent and in case of female it is ten percent to fifteen percent therefore basically the structure was dominated by male workers. There is lack of equity among the participation of male and female workers.

Moreover all these towns are dynamic in nature. Be it demographically, socially, politically or economically these towns have evolved from their past status and are still evolving as they are evolutionary in nature.

It has been seen that a multitude of factors leading to the rise and growth of individual towns; and any classification on the basis of functions that a town mainly performed must take in to account not one or two but a number of categories. The categories of town included; Administrative centres; marts with access to raw materials from the country around to ensure a permanent manufacturing character; positions on navigable river or land route; ports; places of religious sanctity, and of pilgrimage; places possessed of strategic situations on hills passes or borders, contributing to their military as well as commercial importance.

Occasionally more than one factor could coalesce to account for the rise and growth of a town. But by and large it may be said that whatever the origin of towns it was the industries and subsequently the trade which assured their continued survival and stirred their further growth.

There are examples of towns which started out and developed as administrative centres but did not die out when they stopped to function as such owing to they having acquired position as industrial centres or marts such as Agra.

A very important fact that emerges is that the Mughal administration in the different regions of the empire followed a fairly unvarying pattern. The officials posted in and around the town and their status and functions all-embracing, but not so much
according to regions, as to size and importance of towns. Unsurprisingly a big city, which contained a number of *mahals*, could have a huge number of custom officials, whereas a small town which had only one *mahal* had fewer officials. But on the whole, the designations, duties and functions in various towns were identical, and they were appointed by the same measures.

Secondly, the system was noticeably centralized. For supervision with hold to general as well as fiscal smaller towns came under the jurisdiction of officers at the provincial capitals and the latter under ministers at the Imperial court. Complaints from mundane towns were carried to provincial headquarters and at times unswervingly to the emperor.

Local officials had little decision making powers. Imperative issues before being disposed of locally had to be referred to the headquarters. Auxiliary, the centre kept an eye on local affairs all the way through the intelligence department and reports which it received from number of local officials independently.

There was modest participation of local people, or local influential, in the administration of towns. From time to time, nevertheless the local officials invited prominent citizens for consultation. But on the whole, such cases were not many and had little effect in restraining the unpredictability of Mughal local administration.