Chapter 1

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

On the basis of the evolution of towns in different periods they can be classified as Ancient, Medieval and Modern towns. The ancient towns developed as religious and cultural centres and it was only during the Mughal period that a centralized political setup came in India and trading as an activity started.

Mughal Era witnessed a continuous movement of people, money and resources, which paved the way for a strong interaction between different provinces of that time. The aspiration to govern a strong political empire by the Mughals gave birth to a series of urban centres in diverse parts of the empire for efficient control. Towns performed different types of functions by becoming either administrative or commercial or religious centres.

Different types of commodities prevailed in these towns and were traded. The "Great Mughal's" wealth and grandeur was proverbial, and nearly all observers were impressed by the opulence and sophistication of the Mughal Empire.

For nearly one hundred and seventy years (1556-1719) the Mughal Empire remained a dynamic, centralized, and complex organization. The main trade route acted as blood vessel which ran through whole of the Mughal Empire and strengthened the interaction between various trading centres.

Trade was a major economic activity of that time and the subcontinent's productivity ensured that it enjoyed a continuing favourable balance of trade,' Not only there was inland trade but also international trade since during the seventeenth century, craft industries originated and so on .Today centuries have passed after the decline of the Mughal empire but the towns that originated then are still existing though with a different scenario altogether. Therefore to study their current status census 2001 data has been taken into account. It becomes imperative to look into the general structure of towns which existed during that period. An attempt in this chapter has been made
to acquaint the reader with the general structure of the town.

Persian historians of the period present very simple classification of towns (or cities). They mention only two categories based either on size and population or on administrative status (whether imperial or provincial capitals, sarkar or pargana headquarters). There was first a simple division of towns in to big and small. The word balda (or occasionally shahr) is generally employed for a big town, and qasba for a township. For the ports big and small the terms Bandar and Bara were used.¹

Some features were familiar to all the towns. There was a permanent market (bazaar) and the inhabitants were largely non-agriculturalists. The towns were centres of commerce and crafts. Easy access to water, from a river or artificial reservoir was another requirement. Usually too, a town of a respectable size had fortification comprising a castle within and an outer enclosing wall, whether of mud or bricks, surrounded by a deep trench. Finally, it contained administrative headquarters. In case of the major ports (Bandars), in addition to the above features access to the open sea either through a harbour, or a creek or estuary, was crucial to facilitate ships to approach and cast anchor. The bara had its connection with the high-seas through a smaller river to which small boats alone had access.²

References to several Bazaars in a single town point towards the fact that each ward or locality had its own market. In addition to things of daily requirements of the residents, these bazaars also sold commodity manufactured there or brought from outside for sale. The Bazaar was known after the name of that commodity. Sometimes, the bazaars were also known after the name of a particular craft and profession. The big markets known as bazaar-I khas (bazaar-i-Kalan) where all kinds of commodities were on sale, were usually confined to big streets or Chaklas, chauks or chaourahas, or located in front of the fort or around principal mosques, sarais and temples. The smaller markets, viz., mandis, ganj, dariba, katra, pet-nakhas were scattered in various wards and quarters. On both sides of the street there used to be

¹ M.P.Singh, Town, Market, Mint & Port in The Mughal Empire 1556-1707, pp. 1-3
² Ibid, pp.14-16
shops opening during the day a fixed time and were kept open to until first quarter of
the night.\footnote{Ibid, pp.18-20}

The sources of the period give the impression that except one or two big broad and
paved streets the other streets and lanes were narrow and muddy.

Outside the enclosures of the nobles the rest of the people used to live together
according to professions, crafts and castes. The merchants, craftsmen, professionals and
labourers lived in separate wards. We come across names of several localities known
after crafts or professions. For example, in Agra several \textit{mahallas} were known after the
principal crafts placed there or after a particular commodity sold.\footnote{Ibid, pp.20-22}

There was the \textit{loha gali} (after blacksmiths) \textit{chhapitola} (ward of painters), \textit{cheeni tola}
(the sugar mart), \textit{naiki mandi} (Barbers ward), \textit{dal mandi}, \textit{ghasmandi}, \textit{hing ki mandi},
\textit{kanari bazaar}, \textit{sabun katra} (soap market), \textit{nilpara} (indigo mart) \textit{kucha-i-rangrezan}
(dyers) in Agra. At Delhi \textit{mochiwara}, \textit{nil katra}, and in Banaras, \textit{katra-i-resham} was
there. Besides the economic advantage in having a craft concentrated at one part of
the town, there was also the caste system which was responsible for this pattern of
settlement. The poorest men and menial servants usually had their quarters close to
the city walls. However, with the further extention of the town they tended to be
pushed outside the wall.\footnote{Ibid, pp.20-22}

In Mughal India some planning appears to have been followed, in the location of forts
or imperial residences, houses of nobles, \textit{bazaars} (mandis), merchant colonies, quarters
of artisans, professional men and labourers, mosques, temples, \textit{sarais}, \textit{dharamshalas},
places of burial and cremation, gardens, tanks, wells and slaughter-house.

As a general practice gardens, tanks, cemeteries, and cremation grounds and
slaughter-houses were not located near the middle of the town. As for the town castle
there appears to be no unchanging pattern. It could be in one corner of the town or it
could be built on a near by hill or on elevated ground surrounded by habitation. But it
usually possessed effective defence mechanism such as a river either on one side or
on two sides. If there was no river on any side, it was usually encircled by a deep
ditch. The outer wall of the fort built of bricks, red sand-stone or of mud, usually had
two gates one at the front and other at the rear. The door frames of the gates were
strong and thick made of wood backed by iron strips with sharp spikes facing
outwards to protect them from a charge by elephants. The wall itself was usually thick
and contained battlements and string courses besides having towers on all four corners
mounted with heavy cannon. The fort contained accommodation for officers,
karkhanas, kachehri, quarters of staff, water reservoir, storehouses, etc.

Above and beyond the fort in the capital city meant for imperial residence a fort was
built in almost every town and a garrison headed by the quiladar and consisting of
cavalry, infantry, matchlockmen, gunners, cannoniers and racketeers, equipped with
heavy cannon was stationed there. The forts in general were spacious enough to
provide shelter to a sizable portion of the town population in times of threat.

In the capital the principal nobles had their palaces as close to the imperial residences.
But proximity to water supply appears to have been another vital consideration. In
cases of Agra and Delhi for example the nobles built their extravagant enclosures
containing gardens and Tanks along the rivers. It was for this reason that Agra
stretched to a length of 6 kos while its breadth was only ½ kos. In case of smaller
towns the proximity to water supply and closeness to the fort from the point of
security determined the sites of houses and men of substance. The towns were by and
large protected by thick walls, made of bricks or muds from eight to ten feet high.

The wall had battlements and string-courses and towers mounted with heavy cannon
in all corners and at premeditated points or on top of the city gates which were shut
after sunset and guarded by a posse of guards headed by a darogha under the general
supervision of the kotwal. Nobody could come in and go out without the written
permission of the guards.6

According to Mirat, “a pura (of Ahmedabad) means a big street containing lofty
buildings and a bazaar full of precious and rare articles. In reality each pura consists
of a big city,” The pura came in to being when the population of the town increased

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6 Ibid, pp.16-22
so as to leave no space within the city for further enlargement. Certain rich men got their houses built outside the wall and named the new colonies (pura) after their own names. While a pura had all stipulations of the city life, hitherto without the mother town, it had no identity of its own.

For general as well as fiscal administration it was included in the main town. It was considered simply a part of the extention of the main town outside the wall. Following the noble or rich man or whosoever founded the new pura, the merchants, artisans and workmen, also built their houses there and contributed to making the pura a blossoming centre of commerce and manufacturers.

The wide-ranging impression that one gets from the sources is that houses in Indian cities were of two types; (a) extravagant enclosures built of bricks and stone belonging to the aristocracy, rich men and big merchants, (b) houses of mud, wood and bamboo covered with straw, grass and thatch inhabited by ordinary people (the artisans, workmen, and labourers). The former were spacious airy well–built and well supplied with water containing gardens and tanks and bordering upon the principal streets. The latter were undersized, soiled, with no appropriate arrangements for water, unsymmetric and opening in to tapered and short lanes.

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 were hardly a town which did not have one. These were meant for travellers and strangers and for all those who came for business in the town and had to stay overnight. A sarai could be built in the middle of the town or in a separate locality or in a pura. It was usually built in the form of a square, and like cloisters divided in to several cells. Every now and then a sarai was so big as to have a street within. Some of the sarai were built of brick and stone and looked like fortified palaces with bastions and strong gates. Others were walled enclosures with 50 or 60 huts covered with thatch within.

Indian towns had usually a number of mosques and temples. Mosques were in general built within the locality inside the town wall whereas temples could be built within or without the town wall and were sometimes laid out in a garden close to habitation.

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7 Ibid, pp.22-24
The Idgah always was situated outside the town and faced the direction of Mecca. As Mosques and temples, because they were community properties, were usually built by joint contributions from the respective communities. Conversely there are references to mosques being built by the emperor, big nobles and rich men.

In addition, rich baniya merchants constructed temples at a number of places out of their own resources. In some towns, mosques and temples were surrounded by bazaars. Besides being used as places of worships, mosques and temples served their respective communities in another way, viz., for imparting elementary education. There are references to madrasas, maktabs and pathshalas, attached to mosques and temples. Here theologians of the communities acted as teachers, the main stress being laid on the study of religion, philosophy and scriptures. There are also references to madrasas and maktabs housed in mausoleums and khanqahs. Broadly there were two types of schools; One established by rulers and private individuals at a particular place and the other scattered at the houses of learned scholars. The Mughals did not have any enduring department to look after education. They however, used to aid plentifully by way of stipends, gifts and land grants to learning centres and learned scholars who attracted a large number of students to higher studies. Besides these, a number of schools were run by private persons with the support of donations.8

Hospitals were now and again established in the big towns. At Ahmedabad a hospital meant for poor patients and run by the Imperial government was reported.

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.9

Mughal cities were often surrounded by magnificent 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 spend lavishly on gardens. A huge amount of money was spent on ensuring the supply of

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8 Ibid, pp.22-24
9 Ibid, pp.23-26
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. A tax was levied on the owner provided the produce was more than the expense. Nobles also laid out large orchards.  

The largest group among the inhabitants of towns was unsurprisingly composed of artisans and labourers. The needs of luxuries and comforts required by the aristocracy and the demand for ordinary articles such as cloth by the ordinary employees of the officials and their court establishments furnished sufficient reason to attract them to cities. Long –distant trade, also helped to develop urban commodity production. The import of horses, rarities, gold and silver, which created a counter demand for native goods, ultimately stimulated production for exports (i.e. cotton- cloth, silk-goods, salt petre, indigo, etc.).

The growing trade in calicoes and other fabrics not only provided essential thrust for popularising the weaving industry but gave birth to a number of ancillary trades. Mention in this regard may be made of cotton carding, spinning, thread processing, bleaching, dyeing, embroidering and manufacturing clothes interwoven with gold and silver threads. The various categories of handicraft producers residing in towns were, Firstly, weavers (julaha) of cotton, silk and woollen cloths and those who supplied allied industries such as carders, spinners, processors of thread, painters, embroiderers, dyers, bleachers, workers in gold and silver thread and weaver of rough fabrics; secondly, those engaged in the manufacture of articles from metals-gold and silver (sunar), iron (lohar).

The mercantile community appears to have been a heterogeneous class comprising a range of racial elements. In the literature of the period the members of the above, with the exception of the saraf, dallal and arhatiya, no strict classification based on work or business appears to have existed. Even in the case of saraf and the dallal the two

10 Ibid, pp.26-30
11 Ibid, pp.34-35
12 Ibid, pp.35-36
professions got intermixed, the saraf often acting as dallal; otherwise, the merchants were just classified as either big (bara or pukka saudagar) or small (chhota or kachcha saudagar) At times with money in hand a chhota saudagar could become a bara Saudagar. The merchant community was probably quite abundant. There were 84 castes or sub-castes of Hindu merchants, besides their counterparts among Muslims at Ahmedabad.  

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

• To assess the influence of geographical parameters on the evolutions of trading towns during the Mughal Empire

• To assess that how specialization of commodities gave birth to different types of market during the Mughal Era.

• To assess the current status of these trading towns

1.3 HYPOTHESIS

• Historically urban centres of India are evolutionary in nature

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Ibid, pp. 36-40
THE MUGHAL EMPIRE

POLITICAL 1601

Map1.1: The Mughal Empire Political, 1601

Source: An Atlas of the Mughal Empire
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Map 1.2: Mughal Empire Economic, 16th and 17th Century

Source: An Atlas of Mughal Empire
Chapter 1: Introduction

Map 1.3: Main Trading Route during the Mughal Era

Source: An Atlas of Mughal Empire
Map 1.4: Study Area
1.4 STUDY AREA

Six prosperous and important towns which fell on the main trading route of the Mughal empire have been selected for the study, they are Delhi, Agra, Ahmedabad, Varanasi (Banaras) Khambat (Cambay), Surat. These towns belonged to different categories of towns, Agra and Delhi the capital cities, Agra and Ahmedabad acting as the entrepots of the Empire. Khambat and Surat were the port towns and Varanasi was the famous religious as well as the important trading centre regarding the cotton textiles. Towns belonging to different categories have been selected so as to present an overall description of the structure of towns existing during the period of the study.

1.5 DATA SOURCES

- Both primary and secondary sources have been studied. Primary data here is the Archival data.
- Census data 2001 for the current status of the towns.
- Books and journals.
- Websites

1.6 METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUES

Cartographic techniques have been used to represent the data. Arcview software has been used for creation of maps, Furthermore data has been represented with the help of, bargraphs and other such diagrams. In all the above techniques the used data was first collected from different sources then it was tabulated, calculated according to the technique used and subsequently the results were analyzed.
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Bhattacharya (2006)\textsuperscript{14} in his book urban development in India: since pre historical times gives a detailed account of the urban development during the medieval periods within which he tries to elaborate upon the urban setup from the medieval period to the end of the Muslim rule. He provides further information regarding the different trading centres which were existing and the views of different writers such as Abul Fazl, Thevenot, Manucci about the nature and characteristics of these towns and cities.

Blake (1991) in his work discusses about the weberian line of argument, faintly expanded to swot the nature of the state in the Mughal India. He writes, Weberian portrayal of the beginning, organisation and decline of the patrimonial state is the most effusive realised endeavour yet to analyse traditional politics. This study illuminates how Asian capitals were not the huge unstructured agglomerations illustrated by Marx and Weber. It makes an effort to convincingly show that Indian cities in common and Shahjahanabad in particular was no jerky Imperial camp, to a certain extent it was a permanent base of the Mughal Emperor and his officers, politically potent, economically vigorous and culturally blossoming.

\textsuperscript{14} Bhattacharya B.B. “Urban Development in India (since pre historic times)” Concept Publishing company, New Delhi, 2006.
Census of India (2001) the towns and urban agglomeration issue classifies the different towns according to census classification and provides the status of the towns in India.

Chaudhuri K.N\textsuperscript{15} (1978) in his book covers a wide geographical area and a wide time span. He has taken the Indian Ocean and the extensive geographical region around it as a unit and covers a whole millennium-from the rise of Islam in the seventh century to the middle of eighteenth century. In terms of themes diverse issues have been dealt with issues such as the role of merchants, the cultural role of trade, social attributes towards the sea, the wind system, the technology of and the regional specialisation in ship building, the bond between land and the sea, the role of urbanisation etc.

Habib (1982)\textsuperscript{16} in his book has made an in-depth study of historical geography. On 32 sheet maps he has incorporated almost all the relevant information regarding politico-administrative divisions, administrative centres and the economic products of seventeen century. Out of these as many as 26 are devoted to the area covered by the Mughal Empire and only 6 pertain to southern India. By incorporating southern India Habib has drawn attention of scholars working on these regions to imbalance, which is mainly due to little work undertaken on south India, a lacuna which has been filled by extensive utilization of temple inscriptions and local records.

Habib(1963)\textsuperscript{17} in his writing has covered a lot of issues providing tremendous information’s while covering the agricultural production, trade in agriculture produce, material conditions of the life of peasantry, the peasant and the land, the village community, zamindars, the land revenue, etc. Many of his exciting findings result from his ability to uncover the intention of the authors of his primary sources.

Moosvi (1987)\textsuperscript{18} in her book presents the most detailed examination yet in quantitative terms of the structural composition of the Mughal Imperial economy. The

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item K.Chaudhari, The trading world of Asia and the English East India Company,1660-1760(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1978)
\item Irfan Habib (1982), An Atlas of the Mughal Empire, Oxford University Press, New Delhi
\item Irfan Habib (1963), The Agrarian System of Mughal India (1556-1707), Asia Publishing House, New York.
\item Shireen Moosvi (1987), The Economy of the Mughal Empire.C.1595: A Statistical Study, Oxford University Press, Delhi
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
rich statistical data relating to the 1590s contained in Abul Fazal classic A-in –Akbari form the bed rock of this monumental study. It gives a detailed account of the Mughal economy and stands as a valuable reference work on the macro economy of early modern India.

Singh (2007)\textsuperscript{19} in his work talks about towns during the Mughal Empire and its main institutions. Besides dealing with the physic–administrative-cum-economic structure of the towns, It investigates in to the organisation, functioning and economic importance of the Mughal urban institutions such as market, mint and the port. Geographically it takes in to account the territorial limitations of the Mughal empire.

The study further reveals that the simplified theories of Mughal-urban life that the towns then were either few, or only military camps, are no longer sustainable. Towns and cities in Mughal India, according to the needs of the time, were in sufficient numbers.

Naqvi (1968)\textsuperscript{20} explains that how the Mughal cities, at least the major ones were independent living entities, with a sound economic base. She flatly refutes the views of the parasitic Indian cities, with evident of its great industrial productivity. She also gives a detailed account of the manufacturing and trading procedure in several industries; Cotton textiles, iron, copper, salt, sugar and paper. She has thoroughly combed the sources particularly the Persian records and the accounts of the European travellers. Through her descriptions she has provided an important revisionist perspective on urbanisation in Mughal India.

Richards (1993)\textsuperscript{21} elaborates upon the kind of trading pattern which existed during the Mughal Era also he also gives a sequential and detailed account of the growth and decline of the medieval India.

\textsuperscript{19} M.P Singh (2007), Town, Market, Mint and Port in the Mughal Empire(2007):Adam Publishing House. New Delhi

\textsuperscript{20} Hameeda Khatoon Naqvi (1968), Urban Centers and Industries in Upper India 1556-1803, Asia Publishing House, Bombay

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Tapan Ray Chaudrahuri & Irfan Habib (1982) in their book given a geographical introduction to north India and south India, describe the material into two chronological block: 1200-1500 and 1500–1750. For the first period there are sections on north India under the sultanate, on south India during the Vijaywada period and on the maritime commerce of the subcontinent. The much larger section devoted to the second period consists of essays on the role of state, agrarian relation and land revenue, system of agricultural and non agricultural production. They have discussed about inland trade, foreign commerce and monetary system and price movement.

Trivedi K.K (1998) gives a detailed account of the Agra Suba during the medieval era and also talks about its grandeur and power. He describes Agra as one of the biggest city of the Mughal 'empire, 'tower ring over the other townships.

Verma (1989) states that among the Mughal kings Akbar took Keen interest in town building and he tried to incorporate all those factors which were necessary through the consolidation of empire and urbanization was one of the major items on his agenda because he was of the opinion that the vast territories could properly be governed through the deputies appointed by the emperor in a series of well dispersed towns located at strategically appropriate points. Thus, the foundation of the new towns and resuscitation of the older ones was undertaken primarily due to the stress of political necessity.

W.H. Moreland (1962) in his work gives a detailed account of the country and people about the year 1595. He provides detailed information on production, administration, and on different classes and he also gives information about the period when the Portuguese has wanted from Muslim the premier place on the Indian seas. Also he talks about the different ports which existed during the time of Akbar. The author also describes the importance of spices and very interestingly portrays a detailed picture of the Mughal India.

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23 Trivedi, K. K., Agra: Economic and Political Profile of Mughal Suba 1580–1707, Pune 1998
W.H. Moreland (1929)\textsuperscript{26} through his excellent work gives an account of revenue system of the Mughal India and he further describes the decay of the system and especially the rise of the intermediaries between the government and the Ryot.

Lewis Mumford (1961)\textsuperscript{27} sees the ancestors of urban institutions in the graves and the caves of Palaeolithic peoples and in the transformation of the role of hunter into that of king. When the cultures of the Neolithic village and the Palaeolithic hunting band fused, he suggests, cities were born. Romans with their more sophisticated tools and ships built towns throughout the Mediterranean basin and supported them with the gains from trade and with taxes. In ancient times, on the other hand, intensive urbanisation in Europe was limited to lands with no trouble reached by ship from the heart of the urban network in the eastern Mediterranean. The Rhine and the Danube marked the effective limits of Roman colonization in central Europe, and both England and northern Gaul (France) had only small urban populations.

Nevertheless, towns stand out as islands of secular rationality and acquisitiveness in medieval society. The urban order remained subordinate to the hierarchical agrarian regimes that stretched across Europe. Despite its limitations, the feudal mode of production generated the surpluses that supported urbanisation. Politically, landed elites asserted power in and over the multiplying cities, although they increasingly could not do without these subjects. Cities offered to both the elites and the masses goods and services that were soon found indispensable, and in the process became significant autonomous political actor in the power struggles of the middle ages. Lords founded towns to consolidate their control over a region. Kings used urban wealth and literacy to reinforce the claims of royal authority against rebellious vassals. The church, whose bishops had sustained what urban continuity there was with ancient times, made towns the centres of religious ritual and education. Medieval modes of rule, thought and production required cities, although spiritual and temporal elites fought to keep the subversive urban orders dependent and under control.

\textsuperscript{26} W.H.Moreland The Agrarian System of Moslem India, Cambridge, Heffer (UK) 1929.
\textsuperscript{27} Paul M.Hohenberg, Lynn Hollen Lees, The making of Urban Europe 1000-1950,Harvard University press 1985
Even the pastoral societies at the fringes of the European continent central places that filled urban functions, while in the limited core cities actually contested for dominance. Medieval urbanization flourished in the long period of expansion between roughly 1000 and 1300, and longer in eastern Europe. The generations who lived in towns or produced for them also merit our attention.

Mumford (1961)\(^28\) has given us two images of the medieval town: the container and the magnet. Towns attracted and secured their population, drew and held them. A much older symbol for the city is a cross enclosed in a circle. As Lopez points out, the “crossroads within a wall” embodies a paradox: the city closes itself off from the rural environment in order to enlarge the scope and intensity of communication with the wider world. Functional definitions of medieval urbaneness are more useful than ones formulated simply in terms of size, because the economic and political organization of cities set them apart so markedly from the surrounding countryside. Medieval Leicester was predominantly a regional marketplace, serving as the commercial centre of the county and as a producer of staples, such as bread and beer, for residents. But by the late twelfth century, woollen cloth in substantial amounts was manufactured and sold outside the town. Although this industry soon declined, the town’s merchants remained major exporters of wool, and both tanning and leatherwork flourished in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Barel (1977)\(^29\) argues that the Medieval town was very much a part of the feudal society. Its origin was frequently promoted by the lord. Spiritual or temporal, as a means of establishing or consolidating a degree of power. The scope of the town’s freedom varied inversely with the power of the territorial authority. Where the overlord was weak cities developed in to city-states and extended their political control over as much as the surrounding land as they could dominate. The political functions of medieval towns must be seen in three different contexts therefore: internal governance, relationship to a territorial authority, and administrative control.

over a hinterland. All were linked to a precarious balance of autonomy and dependence that constantly shifted according to the identities of other players in the European political game. Weak distracted rulers and neighbours encouraged urban political freedom and expansion, while royal centralisation limited urban power.

The first chapter gives an introduction of the study in which the aims and objectives, hypothesis and methodology are included it also includes a small literature review which gives an insight to the research.

The first chapter elaborates upon 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 interaction within the Mughal Empire. The desire of governing a strong political empire by the Mughals gave birth to a series of Urban centres in different parts of the empire for effective control. Towns performed different types of functions by becoming either administrative or commercial or religious centres. And it 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 with the outside world also.

The second chapter gives the geographical profile of the all towns which have been selected as the study area (Agra, Ahmedabad, Banaras, Cambay, Delhi, Surat) wherein climatic factors such as rainfall, temperature, relief and vegetation has been taken in to account as to develop a strong relationship between the development of these towns and the role of geographical factors in their development.

The third chapter gives a detailed description of the structure of towns during Mughal Era; It gives the reason as to why the towns started coming up during the Mughal Era, that how they had welcomed and in a way had 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 is effective law and order therefore considering this point as their major agenda potentialities of different areas was recognized to make these areas huge urban
centres and therefore after the thirteenth century various towns started appearing in different directions.

The chapter further gives a classification of the towns which existed during the Mughal Era, the different types of towns which existed at that time and possibly four types of towns which existed that time are first, primarily administrative centres where industry, commerce and even ecclesiastical sanctity developed in its wake such as the capital cities tough in the course of time there administrative significance, for example Agra was sometimes overshadowed by their non–administrative significance

Secondly commercial towns such as Patna where administrative aspect followed the commercial activities, Thirdly, centre of pilgrimage such as Banaras, where the 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. Finally there were towns which had risen because of some distinction achieved.

The study area includes Agra, Ahmedabad, Banaras, Delhi, Cambay and Surat. The chapter then gives a detailed description of the towns; it also informs about the various popular commodities of that time, indigo, salt peter, quilts, sugar, quick silver, paper, spices, asafoetida, leather goods, opium, dried ginger. It also talks about the famous cotton textiles of the different towns of that time. The popular cotton textiles were calico, chintz, bafta, chautar, ghazi, sahan, etc. The chapter also deals with one of the objective of the study that 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 thing comes in the shape of the economic morphology which was very apparent within one town and this was very well marked in Delhi, there were different types of markets existing, different markets for keeping 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. It gives a description about the various types of markets that existed during that period ranging from emporias to hats.
The chapter four talks about the Mughal administration. It gives a detailed description about the power structure during the Mughal Empire. It gives an account of the various ministers and also talks about the Mansabdari system and tries to bring out the characteristics of a South-Asian specific administration.