CONCLUSION

With the death of Aurangzeb far-reaching rather earth-shattering events were taking place in the country. First fratricidal struggle for the throne commenced with Aurangzeb’s death itself. His son Bahadur Shah’s death proved equally a period of great calamities for the Mughals. The tragedies during these two wars and the challenges they posed to the stability of the Empire were too serious and full of stresses. Renowned authors as well as the soldiers could not remain unaffected by the gravity of the situation and the problems involved.

Monumental works were produced to write history of the contemporary period. Khafi Khan’s Muntakhab-ul-Lubab, an anonymous writer’s Asrar-i-Samadi, Muhammad Bin Qasim Lahori’s Ibrat Namah, Kamraj’s Azam-ul-Harb, Nemat Ali Khan’s Bahadur Shah Namah, Nuru-Din’s Jahandar Shah Namah, Jagjiwan Dass Muntakhab-ut-Twarikh, Mubarak Allah Waze’s Tarikh-i-Iradat Khan, Mohammad Ahsan Ejad’s Farrukh-Siyar Namah, Kamraj bin Nain Sukh’s Ibrat Namah, Mohammad bin Rustam Harisi’s Ibrat Namah, Ghulam-Muhy-ud-Din’s Futuhat Namah-i-Samadi and a number of other such works were produced primarily to leave behind creditable historical accounts for posterity. These and many authors were prominent historians. By writing their own observations on the contemporary events they could bequeath reliable source material for the future scholars of history. Hence, there was a spurt of eye-witness accounts during this period. These writers and some other authors too gave primacy to eye- witness accounts. Of course, Ghulam Muhy-ud-Din was urged by some other considerations also to record his own observations. He was convinced that the new
generation was not interested in the old tales of valour, courage and bravery about the past heroes. Their war tactics too had lost their charms. Nawab Abdus Samad Khan’s tactics extolled by him and their novelty and force which might make a sure appeal to the new generation. The author’s consciousness of the challenges faced by the Mughal Sovereignty inspired him to take up this onerous assignment. This established the significance of eye-witness accounts in writing history for all time to come provided they were recorded by mature, sensible and reliable historians.

Besides being an eye-witness he had a lot of literary talent too and was an accredited writer. His narrative of the threats and the challenges the Mughals faced is informative and instructive. He perceived correctly that the Sikhs were the most dreaded foes of the Mughal Imperialism and hence out of the 174 folios of the text he devoted 131 folios to describe the relentless and bitter struggle for supremacy that raged between the Mughals and the Sikhs. Both sides adopted new strategies and new tactics to out-do the other. At times one got an impression from reading the text that the author was keen to make a comparative study of the Sikh leader Banda and the Mughal commander Nawab Abdus Samad Khan. The Sikhs were anxious to push the alien rulers out of the country while the Nawab was equally keen to exterminate the Sikhs without sacrificing a single soldier from his own camp. Banda’s success is measured by the facts that he was the first Sikh who carved out a Sikh State. He took vigorous steps to make it an ever-lasting achievement. He took the frontiers of the new State upto Thanesar known as Gateway of India. To give it more credibility he set up a tall wooden minar, the ‘sutun-i-jung’ at Thanesar with the avowed purpose of preventing the Mughals from entering the Punjab. He issued insignias and badges to his soldiers. He collected his soldiers at Thanesar to
prevent Bahadur Shah from entering the Punjab. His soldiers fought with a religious zeal and they were convinced that death for their faith on the battle-field gave them an everlasting life. They excelled their rivals in fighting artillery battles though they were themselves short of heavy artillery. The author was surprised by their effective system of espionage. Their war tactics were also copied by the Nawab. Zakariya Khan wondered at their expertise in fighting with small weapons. Many more instances of their valour, courage and determination could be cited to overawe their adversaries. The Nawab had the resources, arms, equipments men and animals, money and material. They fought many battles some of which were scuffles while others were bitter fights. The Mughals were convinced that the Sikhs were fighting for an ‘Inqilab’ i.e. change of rulers. The Nawab relied on reducing the enemy to complete starvation. Hunger and thirst had ultimately reduced their determination to fight while bombardment from heavy artillery especially the ‘Koh-shikan’ gun brought from Lahore caused havoc in their camp. When the Sikhs offered to surrender on condition of safety and security, their offer was accepted. They surrendered but the Nawab went back on his word and indulged in their reckless slaughter both at Gurdaspura and at Delhi.

The Nawab was certainly a great strategist and tactician. He won battles too. He vanquished his enemies. He subjected the Sikhs to a complete ruin, but he miserably failed to take notice of the well-established composite culture of the people of the Punjab. In the tussle between the Sikhs and the Mughals, the Muslims of the Punjab did not go to help any succour to the fighting Mughals. The Punjab Muslims kept themselves away from it.
The author was convinced of the genuiness of the grievances of the Sikhs. The government also must have been aware of the brutalities that Nawab Wazir Khan of Sirhind perpetrated on them. Yet the government turned a deaf ear. This behaviour on the part of the Government was responsible for such heavy losses in the country. The author further writes what the Mughals had done to the Hindus and the Sikhs was so dreadful that not a single soul from amongst them would ever recite the name either of ‘Ram or Nanak’. The author’s prognostication proved absolutely wrong. Nawab Abdus Samad Khan’s victory was only ephemeral. A decade and half later the Mughal rulers in the Punjab were supplicant for peace before the Sikhs. Still later in about 1765 A.D. the Sikhs became the rulers of the Punjab. Riding rough shod over the peoples’ grievances proves always a costlier game for every government. The Sikhs suffered heavily no doubt, but a few years later they were seen running faster on the road to shaking off the yokes of slavery from the State’s neck and attaining their ultimate objective i.e. total freedom.

Nawab Abdus Samad Khan’s measures for supressing Isa Khan Munj proves that the Nawab had admirable qualities of killing two birds with one stone. Isa Khan Munj and his father Daulat Khan started their career with penury but royal patronage and their own unscrupulous tactics brought them to the fore. They were, however, Afghans when they proceeded ahead with their rapacious conduct they became victims of the Nawab’s superior tactics. Deputing Shadad Khan against the duo Isa Khan and his father was another off-shot of his policy. The superiority of the Nawab’s strategy and tactics rewarded him with getting rid of the duo without sacrificing any soldier.
The Nawab’s campaign against the rebel tribes, Kharals, Bhattis, Gondals and Ranjhas of the Dullah Bhatti Bar ended neither in a fiasco nor in a victory for the Mughals. These campaigns, however, exposed the Mughal Government’s neglect of these vast regions which had turned into vast deserts on account of the Government’s neglect and apathy forcing the residents to indulge in crimes for supporting their families. These campaigns serve a reminder to the reigning power that complete neglect or unequal treatment of the people in the long run proves disastrous for the sovereign power and also for the areas over which their rule extended.

The Nawab’s military expedition against Hussain Khan Kheshgi was eminently successful. From the very beginning the Nawab relied on the superiority of his tactics. The Kasoor Afghans fought resolutely with the spirit of a crusader for the independence of their community, but the tactics they adopted smacked of their diplomatic immaturity leading to ultimate disaster. They were inveterate enemies of the Mughals but were no match for their deceptive politics. To be forthright in one’s dealings is an ethical and moral act but in power-game and politics these qualities often lead to defeat. The Afghans had valour and they taught the Mughal a lesson with their brave actions but if viewed politically they were neither perspicacious nor shrewd enough for winning a war.

The author further invites the reader to the degeneration of the Mughal Nobility at the Imperial Court. The intense rivalry between the Hindustani Party and a combination of the Iranians and the Turanis had promoted disaffection and disloyalty amongst the members of Nobility. He has cited some instances of their conspiracies. Nawab Abdus Samad Khan belonged to the Turani Party but he owed his position as a
Subadar of the Punjab to the Sadat leader Abdullah Qutub-ul-Mulk of the Hindustani Party. The author writes that the Sadats recommended Abdus Samad Khan’s name for the post because they wanted eagerly to keep him away from the court. The author knew this conspiracy but, according to him, the Nawab was completely ignorant of it. This and a few more such incidents throw light on the decance of the character of the Mughal Nobility. There were many causes of the decline of the Mughal rule in India. Degradation of the Nobility at the royal court consequently failed to prevent what they had earlier shed their blood for its splendid and glorious maintenance.

The author further lifted the curtain off some of the most difficult problems in Kashmir. This concerned the Kashmiri Muslims, who, according to the author considered ‘idiotic stupidity’ as the real representative of Islam. A Hindu called Sahu owed debts but failed to make repayment. This incited communal bitterness and the Muslims of Kashmir set ablaze the houses of the Hindus. They forced Mir Ahmed Khan the Naib Governor of Kashmir to flee for life and take shelter in the suburbs. They expelled the Qazis, Kotwals, Muftis and other State employees from their posts. The Nawab was certainly the correct choice of the Central Government to deal effectively with the situation. The author seems to think that non-appointment of the regular Nawab in the State led to this upheaval. According to him if the Central Government had taken this precaution and also taken timely action against the rebels the State would have escaped the communal violence in which they found itself. Thus complete negligence of the Central Government about its affairs in the State was the main reason of conflagration there. It was a warning to the State that grievances of any particular community against
their own compatriots or against the Government must be redressed before they start festering and prove ruinous for the State.

This Manuscript completed in (1722-23A.D.) is a monumental work on the history of the Punjab especially of the Sikhs for a study of the period under review. His objectivity as a scholar of history attracts us though it loses its luster when he has to compare the Sikhs and the Mughals. It is surprising that the greatest historian of the time Khafi Khan could not restrain his propensity to call the Sikhs ‘dogs’. Ghulam Muhy-ud-Din never soiled his tongue with such degrading adjectives for the Sikhs. At certain places, however, he does not spare the Sikhs and uses uncomplimentary language. At the same time we find he has on the whole presented an almost credible picture of the Sikhs. Some of the words were eulogistic also for the Sikhs. The Sikhs’ respect for women in the early eighteenth century was remarkable. Their valour was unprecedented. We generally find genuineness, integrity and credibility in his writing. He was conscious also that he might have erred here or there. For these unconscious acts of omission and commission he honestly apologizes and suggests that the critics should themselves make the necessary correction.