CONCLUSION
CONCLUSION

In the historical and cultural scenario of Central Asia, Bukhara had enjoyed an extraordinary position. Due to its importance, it was called *Bukhara-i Sharif* (Bukhara the Noble), and *Qubbat-ul Islam* (cupola of Islam) by Juwaini and was equated with Baghdad by many chroniclers in grandeur and splendour. It remained for centuries a rendezvous of distinguished men of letters. Such was Bukharan fame in the sphere of knowledge that Jalaluddin Rumi had called it a "mine of knowledge". Widely known and recognised for its marvellous culture Bukhara had contributed immensely in world civilization. Ibn-i Khaldun and others have highly appreciated its excellent and rich progressive approach and resultant success in the sphere of science and fine arts. The later chroniclers also eulogized the grand and laudable achievements of its men of learning's. It is indeed a puzzle how Bukhara which had managed to reach at the zenith of efflorescence of science, literature and learning fell all of a sudden from apex of grandeur to the nadir of illiteracy, corruption and evils of degenerating economy. They have been described as the people who were living on "margins of world history". The society said to have been characterized by conservative influences, which retarded the development of art and culture.
As a matter of fact Bukhara had a grand hoary past, it was an eminent centre of all kinds of finest handicraftsmen, astronomer, scientists, artists, painters, musicians, men of literature with all the concomitants of a medieval state, Bukhara retained its excellence in managing the affairs of state best reflected through the administrative structure, land tenure and taxation system which were a continuation of old practices and a fine combination of Turco Mongolian and Perso-Islamic traditions. The critics try to highlight that the rulers were guided by the age-old norms and did not follow the accepted legal and moral bindings. The Amir who was the highest authority in the pyramidal structure of state as a matter of policy, ruled autocratically and despotically. The rich landlords, powerful feudal officials and the bais supported and reinforced the imperial exploitative machinery in the villages. The situation could hardly change under the Manghit dynasty. During the second half of eighteenth century and the first half of twentieth century, the ruling elite is said to have kept the common folks under the yoke of tyranny and subjugation. Exploitation and extortion was intense. The extent of dogmatist and the unchallengeable position of the religious authorities had further restricted the modernization. The Russian explorers like Obruchev, Berg and Ignatiev and travellers like Burnes, Vambery and
Polovtsoff and several others opined that Bukhara was at that stage devoid of any good cultural and social attainments, anarchy prevailed. These superficial observations and one-sided presentations need reconsideration. Another view, which is widely put forward, is that in the second half of nineteenth century the Bukharan Amir had to face the Russian attacks, the brunt of which they could hardly bear as they lagged far behind their contemporary counter parts in military technology and art of warfare. They were attacked by the Russians in earlier centuries also and even then it was this drawback due to which they had no match with them. In all the battles fought between the Russians and the Uzbegs throughout the long span of several centuries one thing was clear and similar that there were less Russian casualties as compared to the Bukharans. This means that the Russian superiority of arms had contributed to their success. It is also believed that Bukharans were lagging behind in the use of all kinds of firearms. As already mentioned, contemporary writers also complained about this want. They pointed out that the negligence of Bukharans towards new military techniques and use of cannons and latest methods of warfare was responsible for it. There were no trained people to handle these cannons and artillery, if the rulers somehow managed to buy them. Beside, those who were benevolent
enough to supply the cannons against huge sums never guaranteed the quality and use of the cannons, which were supplied by them. They could have outlived their utility but for the ignorant and ambitious buyers it did not matter much. This was not the case with Bukhara only. The other sister Khanates were also similarly lacking in comparison to Russia. Thus one can say that it was the match of Asiatic Bukhara and European Russia. The defeat was a foregone conclusion. But lack of arms was not the only deficiency the Bukharan Amirs suffered from. The sources refer to the fact that farsightedness, tactics, strategy, political wisdom were the qualities the Bukhara elite of those days lacked. Since both the Khiva and Khoqand Khanates were till 1850s and 1860s the next-door neighbours of Russia and could easily get the modern equipments of warfare. Could the Russians, who were themselves keen to occupy Bukhara Khanate be willing to arm their enemies arms which could and were to be used against them is altogether a different story. After three successive battles in 1868 Bukharan Amir had to sign a peace treaty with the Russians and accepted vassal status. No doubt the Amirs of Bukhara failed to sense the forthcoming danger in the innocuous friendliness of Russia, the rulers of other two Khanates also could be blamed for their folly that they could not form a joint front or a coalition against their
common enemy — Russia. It seems that in Bukhara the clergy also played a greater role. To some extent they guided the Amirs. At a time when Russians offered for peace, the Bukharan Amir lost the opportunity only due to growing pressure of zealous religious groups, who were clamouring for jihad against Urus-i Bedin (Russian infidels). The Amir had no choice but to fight against the Russians. Ahmad Makhdum Danish categorically criticised them for their repeated blunders, as they had not fully prepared themselves for the terrible battle. The civilian population and common people were innocent and totally ignorant of methods of warfare. The driving force for these gullible followers was the call for jihad and the only weapon they had in their hands or could afford to carry were wooden sticks. Some of them were even without such a "weapon of defence" and went empty handed.

Bukhara had many natural resources to generate wealth but they were not duly exploited. In the rural sector of agriculture, which was mainstay of Bukharan economy, no effort is seen for the development. It remained backward as it was before. The government did nothing to improve the cultivation of cotton, which ultimately turned into "white gold" of Central Asia. No doubt there was a good system of water distribution for agriculture but it is said that the "chief
discomfort of Bukhara" was water. The water of rivers was not fully used. This naturally affected the Bukharan agriculture and finally its economy. Common people were living in miserable conditions. On the contrary the privileged class had all sorts of ease and comforts. The Amir had his flourishing business and a huge amount in his private coiffures.

The Noble Bukhara, which was known for its literary and cultural activities and scientific knowledge, was now exposed to many evil practices, which crept in Bukharan society. One modern writer comments that in Bukhara of Ulugh Beg's times, people were highly learned and greatly developed. At this juncture Bukhara needed reform but the Amir was said to be "adamantly relentless". The liberal Bukharans wanted for the creation of modern society and modern way of life as they had experienced in the countries like that of Ottoman Turks or in Russia when they were out of Bukhara for pilgrimage, educational or commercial purposes. The Jadids demanded certain reforms in educational spheres only. Perhaps they viewed it as the first step to eradicate the evils of a static society. But the rigid and conservative section of society came in their way. They came down heavily on them. Even under enlightened Amirs the reforms pledged could not be undertaken as was the case
under Amir Alim Khan. It needs to be reconsidered and examined how and why these reforms could not be brought to practice. The intentions of imperialists were as much open to suspicion as their flinching faith in the potentialities of the natives whom they looked down upon as incapable of good governance. Although there was centralised administration, which gave institutional cohesion, the medieval administrative structure of Bukhara was not adequate for modern demands of the state. The Jadids were aware of this necessity but they were a handful and could hardly transform the system in a jiffy. The administrative structure of Khanate of Bukhara is said to have outlived its utility a better system of governance must have attracted them to switch over to the changing order. How efficacious it was is indeed a matter of debate for the arguments on both sides are very strong.