INTRODUCTION
The present study focusses attention on the history of the Mughal Subah of Malwa in its political, administrative, social, economic and cultural perspectives. It fills in a wide lacuna of a systematic study of the Mughal Subah of Malwa in the series of historical studies of the region.

Chapter I deals with pre-Subah background beginning with geographical, topographical and strategic importance of the Subah in necessary details and highlights as to how it became a centre of attraction to the warring states intent on coveting Malwa. In the latter part of the Chapter the landmarks of the history of the Malwa Sultanate and the circumstances leading to its decline and the transformation of the region into a regular province of the Mughal Empire are narrated.

The discussion on the Mughal administrative structure is split into two Chapters II and III. One deals with the position, powers and role of the Subahdar and the distinctive character of the governor's peculiar function in the distant region of Malwa in matters of war and peace in the midst of turbulent circumstances, insurgence and situation of aggression and attacks. He was in direct communication with Central authority. His position in the hierarchy of Mughal bureaucracy was unique and his powers and functions were of great importance to sustain the Mughal edifice of administrative system and its efficient functioning.
The Subahdar was supported by a network of officers in the province. The provincial diwan, bakhshi, sadr, qazi and in the sarkars and parganahs the officers known as the faujdar, kotwal, qazi, amin, patwari etc. ensured the maintenance of law and order, justice and tranquillity, revenue realisation and the strength of the enforcement of imperial edicts and authority. These form the discussion of a separate Chapter III which gives details in this important sphere of the study.

Chapter IV is entitled the Economic structure. The discussion spreads out to various categories of economic activities like the state of agriculture, nature and output of food-grains and other kinds of produce, the growth of trade and towns, forest products, textile manufactures, the production of exquisite fabrics, pottery and glaze-work, minerals, mints and standards of general economic prosperity- all dealt with in necessary details.

Malwa had a speciality in the manufacture of salt which was an essential and indispensable commodity of common use. Paper was another important industry located at Mandu. Textiles of different hues and colours, designs and style and embroidered with gold and silver and quality fabrics of semi-transparent fineness were the special and unique industrial products of the Subah. Chintz of colourful and excellent design
were sent out to different places in India and abroad. Muslims of Chanderi and Hasilpur and turbans of Sarangpur and long cloth from Dhar in Mandu were commodities in great demand. A special cloth known as Do-dami and Chintz from Sironj were famous for their delicacy and thinness and were specially in great demand in North India.

Malwa had also specialized in the manufacture of ornaments of gold and silver. The industrial arts of Malwa not only exhibited the artistic taste and expertise of the region but also brought wealth and dividends to the skilful manufacturers and artisans. The availability of marble in abundant quantities in the region added to the scope of the work of artistry of the people of Malwa. The mints and markets of Malwa speak of the opulence of the region. Malwa was on the crossroads from the North and the South and constituted a bridge connecting the North-South, political, commercial and cultural inter-relation and therefore its importance as a connecting link for the transport of culture and commerce was of immense value. The Mughal Empire with its ambitions of political expansion and administrative and cultural unification found it a convenient spring-board for its accelerated pace of progress. Certain towns of Malwa like Mandu, Sironj, Sarangpur, Ujjain, Chanderi bear evidence of cultural, commercial and industrial activities of the people of the province. These are widely scattered and stupendous signs of prosperity and fullness of life bursting with efflorescence in the region during the Mughal
times. Not only contemporary works of History, art and culture but also the remains of the architectural monuments and artefacts testify to it.

Chapter V deals with society and culture and depicts the multifarious human activity and various aspects of growth in the economic, cultural, political and administrative fields which combined to set a pattern to social development, lifestyle and the value and importance attached to social norms and cultural enrichment, the prosperity of the people and the variegated social structure is glimpsed from the social pattern that has been emerged from contemporary literature and artefacts from Malwa. In Malwa as elsewhere in India the disparities in rank and position and strata of society presents a picture of a wide gap between the rich and the poor and the presence of a negligible middle class in society. A vast majority of the people of Malwa lived in villages and agriculture was their mainstay of sustenance. The provincial government was keen to promote the cause of agriculture in order to promote the lot of the people and augment resources revenue of the Subah. The economic and social pattern was such as to maintain the gulf between the rich and the poor. The caste-system was rigid and complex and was a great deterrent to social mobility and cohesion. Women were respected and given opportunity to learn arts of culture and education but they had many restriction and handicaps and which tended to inhibit them from shining forth and display
their talents. Sati and Jauhar were the great vices of the age. The discussion covers all the various aspects of social life, social customs, ceremonies, usages, fairs, festivals, education literary output, medical sciences growth of Sanskrit and Persian literature and sundry other by products of social pattern and way of life.

Chapter VI analyses the Sufi orders and their social impact. The Sufi movements had enriched the socio-religion life of the people of Malwa. It was a phenomenon which was introduced to India with the Muslim contact. Before the Muslim arms could reach various parts of India, Muslim commerce and religion had produced significant appearance and impact in the various parts of India. Malwa too, was influenced by the Islamic religious traditions and movements since long. The advent of the Sufis added new dimensions to the socio-religious pattern in the region. The Sufi silsilahs which played a vital role to mould the life of the people of Malwa were the Chishti, Shattari and the Qadiri. Very soon Malwa was studded with Sufi shrines and Khanqahs where instructions in spiritual and moral teachings were imparted. Sufism infused new life and vigour in society and made a deep impact upon the life of non-Muslims as well. There was tremendous interaction and people were effected by the simplicity and profundity of the Sufi ideology, concepts, mystic discipline, social equality and the efficacy of pious acts of doing good to others and coming to the rescue of the weak and the downtrodden in their social degradation. The impact of
Sufism gave rise to numerous Pantheistic and religion sects with emphases upon egalitarian and philanthropic notions of social behaviour thereby stirring the entire social life in the region. Sufism also became a great propagator of the educational and ethical values and education through the medium of Khanqahs and shrines which were interspersed far and wide into the subah. Sufism thus became a harbinfer of human peace.

In this way the study unfolds various uncovered aspects of the history of the Subah of Malwa under the Mughal rule, 1562-1707. It is an attempt to depict the picture of the Mughal Subah of Malwa in its true colours, based upon a variety of contemporary and later sources and to highlight the region as a segment of its entirely in the overall picture of Mughal India. It would help to supplement the various aspects of study of this region with a view to linking them with the Mughal policies and administrative and socio-economic pattern obtaining in other regions of the country so that in totality Malwa may be reflected as a vital organ of the entire body-politic of Mughal India.