CONCLUSION

The proposed thesis seeks to present a different picture regarding the identity of Mughal rule (1526-1707) in India. The period under review cannot be called a dark age full of atrocities, oppression, exploitation, socio-religious intolerance, injustice and irregularities as has been painted by many historians who happened to write with preconceived notion and therefore distorted evidence and twisted facts. In fact when Muslims came to India they found the land an abode of great civilization with huge national resources and rich cultural heritage. Political transition of authority was easily achieved by Muslims and they in no time adopted India as mother country and gave up practically all connections with the land they came from. By the time the Mughal period approached the Hindus and Muslims for living together for long as neighbours, despite of minor misunderstanding and diversities, came nearer to each other and became co-inhabitation. Both in urban areas and in countryside. The co-existence for long thus resulted in cultural give and take. Dara Shikoh rightly saw within Hindu-Muslim co-existence, the meeting of two ocean (Hindu-Muslim) and cultural synthesis despite of diversities to local threats and misgivings continued to grow.

During the Sultanate as well as the Mughal period, the religion was more or less a matter of personal faith and not a source of strife in the society. Mutual aspirations, adjustments, admiration and understanding existed. The liberal religious movements in the form of Sufi, Bhakti and the numerous religious syncretistic cults, worked in a big way in creating and promoting harmonious co-existence of all Faiths. The teachings of the Saints, which were the combination of Vedanta and Islam, succeeded in convincing the masses that
of God is One. The Saint's conviction that the way to reach Him was not through reading and reciting the Scriptures or renouncing the world but by true devotion and service of the needy made them popular and revered figures. Their followers both Hindus and Muslims flocked to their place for guidance, blessings and sometime for assistance during hard times. Gradually, exclusiveness or belief in superiority of one's own religion disappeared and respect for all religions became the norm of the day. Besides, the liberal religious movements had social significance too. The Saints opposed the orthodoxy, rigidity and divisions of every kind. They emphasized the principles of equality, freedom and fraternity. The common kitchens and common set of rules and regulations promoted brotherly feelings and broke all barriers among their followers. They came to regard themselves as members of one large family and in such cordial atmosphere feelings of hatred, distrust and disharmony had no place. The Sufis, the Bhagats and the heads of various Orders were thus great integrators.

The teachings and the rapidly increasing influence of the saints irked the orthodox sections of both the communities. But they could not restrain the new wave of religious liberalism, which swept over the entire country, despite hard efforts.

However, the saints could not have succeeded had the rulers then been tyrant or bigot. The rulers because of their political compulsion or liberal outlook allowed religious freedom to their subjects. Not only Hinduism and Islam had evolved a healthy pattern of synthesis. The Sikh religion and the numerous cults founded by Hindus and Muslims, emerged and flourished during their reign. The rulers not only respected and revered the saints but
many of them even became their followers. They visited their places for blessings, built tombs in their memory, wrote books, and composed verses in their honour.

Liberalism and not orthodoxy governed the public or private life of the rulers whether Hindu or Muslim. The Muslim rulers gave lands, *jagirs* and endowments for the construction and maintenance of temples and the Hindu and Sikh Rajas built mosques and tombs. The Muslim rulers even built small temples within the palaces and forts for their non-Muslim wives and officials. *Quran* and *Puranas* were placed together and were read with reference alike. They respected religious feelings of their subjects and were impartial in religious matters.

The Muslim rulers were not *Jehadis*. They did not impose their creed upon their subjects. Barring a few instances, conversions took place out of free will. Rulers like emperor Akbar and Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin, provided freedom to their non-Muslim subjects to renounce the religion, if it had been forced upon them, and to rejoin the one of their ancestors. Often conversions were the concomitants of war but as features of normal policy they were rare. Had it been the policy of the rulers, the Muslim's would have outnumbered the non-Muslims. Even in Agra and Delhi, the centres of the Muslim power, the Muslims did not form even one-fourth of the total population. Even during the reign of Aurangzeb forcible conversion did not takes place. He did not convert Shahu, the grandson of Shivaji, who along with his family remained, in his custody for many years. Aurangzeb even arranged his marriage with Hindu girls and with Hindu religious ceremonies. Under the prevalent religious freedom, one could choose the religion and join or formulate the cult of his
choice. If Hindus joined Islam then a good number of Muslims became Sikhs and Vaishnavas.

The state was not theocratic and the *Ulema* were not allowed to interfere in the state matters. Even an orthodox king like Aurangzeb did not pay any heed to the *Ulema* if it did not suit his designs. Temples or mosques were destroyed out of momentary fury during war. Aurangzeb is not the solitary example. Maharaja Ajit Singh and Banda too destroyed the mosques. However, in peacetime, the rulers not only visited the sacred places to pay their respect but also gave liberal grants and sought counsels and directions from the religious saints.

In the liberal religious regime, the Muslims kings and commoners alike celebrated festivals like Diwali, Dussehra, Holi Shivratri, and Basant Panchami with as much enthusiasm as they celebrated Eid, Bakrid or Shab-e-barat. These festivals were the national festivals and the state used to provide finances and made arrangements for the ceremonial pomp and show. Except Aurangzeb, all other Mughal emperors, the royal families and the nobles till the end of the empire, used to participate in the festivity with devotion.

Literature is the mirror of the age in which it flourishes. From this point of view the medieval period was the age of enlightenment of which any Indian can be proud of. The harmonious literature produced in this period is unprecedented. The liberal religious atmosphere devoid of fear, discrimination or prosecution ensured the freedom of expression. Saint Tulsi wrote *Ram Charit Manas*, Surdas composed *Sursagar*, Guru Arjun compiled *Guru Granth Sahib* and Mira's immortal songs in devotion of Lord Krishna aroused the religious fervour all over the country. Had the rulers been fanatic, such great
works could not have been written. Hindu writers wrote literature and composed poems on Prophet Mohammad, the Muslim writers wrote in praise of Rama Krishna and Sarswati and enriched the Vaishnav literature. Abdur Rahim. Jaisi Raskhan, who wrote with great devotion for Hindu gods were patronised by the Muslim rulers.

It were the Muslim kings who made the Hindus to know their religion by getting the Hindu religious scriptures translated into local languages. Earlier only the Brahmins had the privilege of the knowledge of the Shashtras as all of them were written in Devbhasha, i.e., Sanskrit. Under the supervision and patronage of the Muslim rulers all the Hindu religious and non-religious works were translated not only in local languages but also in Persian thus enabling the foreigners to easily acquire the knowledge of Hinduism. The works were hugely decorated and preserved in the royal Libraries.

The rulers considered deliverance of justice to all without any bias as their religious duty. Even a commoner could drag a king or a noble to the court without any fear. None was deprived of justice as it was completely free or charge. There was no animosity of any kind between Pandit and Qazi. Both used to sit together and decided cases of their respective community members if they desired so. The Muslim rulers had established a rule of law, which was in many ways more humane than that administered in the contemporary Europe. The death sentence, which was inflicted for theft in England, was reserved for serious offences under the Muslim administration in India.

Many of the Sultans and Emperors had Hindu wives who exercised influence even in state matters. And who can say that the Rajput rajas and
other Hindus who co-operated with the Muslim rulers and consented inter-
religious marriages were not actuated by broader secular and patriotic outlook,
rather than by a mere sense of their individual interest. Many Sultans and
Emperors were born of Hindu mothers and were put on the throne, even by
passing the claims of those born of Muslim mothers. How could such rulers
hate or prosecute their Hindu relatives and their religion.

The Muslim rulers ruled as national kings. They identified with all the
sections of the Indian society and not with any particular section. They never
attempted to impose the civil law of Islam on non-Muslims. They took care of
the religious sentiments of their subject. Cow slaughter was banned and
separate arrangements of cooks, Qazis and Pandits were made even in the
sarais built on the roadside for the travellers. Their outlook was progressive and
their rule was not oppressive. Merit was the criterion for every job. Whosoever
possessed the talent was richly rewarded and was provided with all state
assistance in further development of the talent. Attempts were made to rescue
the people from evil practices prevalent in the society. It were the Muslim
rulers who banned the Sati practice though we give credit to British only. The
Hindus were treated at par with the Muslims and were not discriminated on any
ground. The Muslims rulers and the involves not only recruited Hindus in the
state services but also fully trusted them. So much so that the Hindus were
entrusted to guard the state treasury and in the absence of the king even the fort
and the palace, in fact they enjoyed hegemony in the financial field. Not only
the Muslim nobles but the kings as well used to borrow money from the
wealthy Hindus. Had they been hostile to Hindus, they would not have allowed
the Hindus to grow economically. The Hindus managed the finances of the
state and they also acted as the confidential advisor to the Muslim rulers. It was thus impossible for a Muslim king to rule over his non-Muslim subjects who formed the majority and to manage the economy of the state, in an autocratic manner.

Though that was not the age of democracy yet the government was of the people and for the people. The desire to make a place for themselves in the history of the country and the memory of the people, made the rulers work for the welfare of the people and the development of the country. They built strong forts, colleges, libraries, students hostels, hospitals, rest houses for the travellers, excavated tanks, laid down roads and gardens all over the country. The encouragement and patronage provided liberally by the state made Indian artisan manufacture goods of amazing beauty and quality. Artisans created wonders in every art. Taj Mahal was the crowning glory. To see this land of splendour and majestic magnificence, the merchants from far off countries, endangering their lives in crossing many unknown seas, came to this land to acquire Indian goods. The head of their respective Governments, including the British Queen wrote letters requesting the Muslim emperor to grant permission to the merchants for trade. India was the largest producer of the industrial goods in the entire world. Almost every nation was indebted to India for their supply in exchange for gold and silver. The country was economically not only self sufficient but was exporting its products in large quantity to other counties and was getting gold in return. All parts of the country were flourishing in manufacture, agriculture and commerce. European travellers had testified that under the Mughals India was rich beyond compare.
The rulers were able to layout vast sums of money for palaces, temples, mausoleums, gardens, canals, tanks and irrigation reservoirs. Even military disturbances and dynastic wars were absorbed without much difficulty in to the general prosperity. The prosperity of the country could not have ushered in had there been no peace, amity and good will.

There was unity in diversity. The diverse religions, cultures and languages did not cause divisions but strengthened the harmonious co-existence and enriched the country in every field. People lived happily, as their kings were generous, just and benevolent. They stood on his side and fought for him even with their co-religionists. The Muslims professed a common faith yet they had no common centre of religious authority in India or outside India, like the Roman Catholic Church or later the national Churches of Europe which gave the feeling of belonging together. They were Indian Muslims and their loyalties were towards this land. So much so that Tumur regarded most of the Indian Muslims no better than heathens. During Akbar's rule even Afghanistan was captured and was made a part of India. They regarded their country as sacred. The last wish of dyeing wife of Dara was that she should be buried in her homeland Hindostan. Emperor Bahadur Shah cried and lamented in agony for being away in Rangoon and longed to see and got buried in the lap of his motherland.

All the rulers whether Muslims or Hindus, committed inhuman crimes for the sake of power. Aurangzeb was not the exception. In the words of Sir Jadunath Sarkar. "There was no crime which a Rajput would not commit for the sake of land. Father killed the son and the son murdered father. Women of
the noblest rank gave poison to their trusting kinsmen. Kings took the lives of loyal ministers. None, not even the highest born descendant of the God Rama, shrank from buying the aid of an alien plunderer to decide his domestic contest”.

Though there were wars between Muslims and Hindus yet they were just as frequent or infrequent as those between Muslims and Muslims or Hindus and Hindus. Besides no war was ever fought on religious or communal issue. The rulers whether Muslims or Hindus fought with one another for their imperial designs but if the warring rulers belonged to two different religions, it was given a religious colour by the biased historians and sometimes by the rulers themselves. Akbar had no religious animosity with Pratap so was Shivaji with Aurangzeb but unfortunately their wars are characterized as religious wars fought for the defence of Dharma.

Conflicts and confrontation here and there but generally the Mughal India (1526-1707) was an age of enlightenment, elevation, eloquence, peace, progress and prosperity which made this land a paradise on earth, a golden sparrow and the Jewel of the East.