INTRODUCTION

SECTION: I

The Scope of the Thesis

The growth of cities represents a point of high culture in the growth of a community. The cities reveal its power and wealth; it is there that arts and crafts, trade and industries flourish. It is the city which provides the place of worship, the market, the hall of justice and finally the academy of learning - emblems of the settled life which begins with the growth of culture and life lived with the aid of permanent shelters, permanent utilities, permanent buildings for protection and storage, and man-made amenities of life in society.

In the seventeenth century medieval India, a large number of cities sprang up and came into prominence in course of time. Extensive work has been done on the political history of the Great Mughals, but very little work has been done to unfold the pattern of urban life, during that period. The urban life of northern India during the 17th Century, though so rich and fascinating a subject, has not received the attention it deserves. The works of Mr. Moreland, the late Prof. Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. Parmatma Saran, Prof. Yusuf Husain and others throw inadequate light on various aspects of this subject. These accounts otherwise valuable are too sketchy to give a vivid picture of that period. I have endeavoured to reconstruct the picture of urban life in northern India during
the 17th century and describe the rise of medieval Indian
towns, and to examine the trends of commercial, industrial,
and social life of the period based primarily on contemporary
accounts.

With the advent of the Mughuls in India, the social and
economic life of northern India in the 17th Century, underwent
a rapid transformation on all sides. The chief characteristic
of that age was that the social, economic and religious
institutions were not distinct from one another. They were
intended to jointly promote the welfare of the community at
large.

Indian History prior to the 17th Century was greatly
affected by the geographic/situation of the country. North
and north-western India had seen many invasions and internecine
warfare. It was a period of unrest and political turmoil.

With the advent of the 17th century there came stability of
the government and the people aspired and worked for a better
economic position. The consolidation of Mughul rule resulted
in uniformity of administration and peace and security of life
and property. The chief feature of this period was an attempt
at centralization of administration, suppression of refractory
elements, preservation of law and order and a noble attempt
to conciliate the conquered people. Large scale commercial
contacts with the rest of the world were also established
then. All these factors culminated in the growth of immense
towns in the northern region. The abundant resources of the
luxury
upper classes and their indulgence in/engendered by the
apprehension of the escheat of wealth and the relationship of
the enterp^i&irda in the commercial and industrial fields
moulded a new pattern of urban society. The growth of the
towns, their character and impact on the country as a whole
infinitely enhances the importance of the study of the
prosperous urban life of this period.

In the 17th Century the country reached the zenith of
her commercial prosperity and greatness. The village being the
the economic unit, on account of reformed revenue system, became
prosperous. The increase of wealth and the desire to find a
market for their surplus agricultural output, naturally, led to
the growth of the cities and the widening of urban activities.
Small markets therefore grew up where surplus goods were sold
through brokers, who were generally local men. In course of
time, these places grew up into mandia or markets, which later
developed into cities, varying in size and importance according
to the volume of trade and facilities for transport of
exportable goods.

Industries of considerable importance also developed.
The industrial organisation of the country during this period
was sound and articles of merchandise were made in such abundance
that the country was as a whole not only self sufficient, but
had a huge surplus which was exported to different regions of
the world. A comparative study of the contemporary industrial
conditions in India and Europe tends to create the impression
that in this respect India was more advanced than European
countries. Apart from these facts, a leading factor in the
evolution of urban society and moulding of its economy was the impact of the different European nations which had established trade with India. The English East Indic Company was launched on its fateful career of commercial enterprise here along with the Dutch and Portuguese merchants during the seventeenth century. The Indian towns became entrepots for the commerce of the known world. Numerous cities in different provinces became the centre of intense commercial activity. The middle class was the most influential class which had an effective control over commerce and industry of the country. Money was advanced to Indian producers and manufacturers, and the commodities were purchased and stored by the foreign merchants for export abroad.

It has been my particular effort to assess the value and significance of all those institutions, whether political, social, economic, or military which stimulated and contributed to the growth of urban life in the 17th Century. In discussing the various topics of the thesis, the relative importance of each has been fully kept in view.

I have ventured to divide my thesis into two parts. Part I deals with the scope and the sources. Part II contains the main theme, which has been subdivided into four broad sections. The first section deals with the main features of Medieval Indian towns, the second with the classification of towns, the third with the administration of the towns and the last one with the pattern of urban society followed by a summary of my statements and observations.
Under the subject 'Urban life of northern India in the 17th Century', I have attempted to trace the history of the towns of northern India, from Kashmir in the north to Burhanpur in the south, Chitagaon, Sylhet and Decca in the East to Thatta and Surat in the west. A brief reference may now be made to certain points of prime importance, treated in the different sections of the thesis.

In the first chapter I have attempted to show that geography and topography are not the only determining factors in the foundation of towns and for choosing their sites, but besides many other factors, like military and strategic considerations, administrative needs, commercial and industrial enterprises also play a conspicuous role. I have also examined the various trade routes which existed then. Besides these, the security, proper supervision, available amenities, transport facilities on these trade routes have also been discussed.

I have further attempted to show the extent to which the 17th Century witnessed the spread of urbanisation in different provinces, the prosperity of the towns including their growth in size and population at the different stages of the period; and finally a comparison with the contemporary European towns. The influence of the imperial camps and courts on the growth of towns too has been dealt with. I have also indicated the cause of the decline of towns such as natural calamities and decrease in commerce and trade. Under the head of town-planning I have attempted to show the layout of the important towns, their fortifications, walls and gates; the public institutions like public baths, mosques, caravansarais, gardens, tanks
walls, and government offices; the evolution of challas, development of different zones, markets, roads and the names given to them; the layout of the residences of the upper, middle and lower classes at different places.

The second section has been devoted to the classification of towns as administrative, military, commercial, port towns, industrial and religious and educational centres. I have spared no pains in illustrating the various types of industries and crafts that flourished in different towns of different regions, their manufactures and the hold on them of foreign merchants and the volume of exports.

In the third section, I have attempted to show a progressive change in town administration, the extensive powers of the Kotwal in matters of preserving peace and public security, and investigation of crimes and bringing the criminals to book; the administration of justice, provision of civic amenities, control of markets and the port administration.

In the last section of the thesis I have attempted to show the pattern of urban society, classified on the basis of the upper, middle and the lower classes, and their relations with one another. I have described their magnificent dwellings, their elegant dresses, rich diet, their appearance in public, equipage, conveyances, their social life, dealing with the feasts, celebrations, games and amusements, and finally their relations with the other classes. Then the layout and condition of the dwelling of the middle class, with their dresses, diet.
their social life and amusements, have also been given considerable attention. Their role in the growth of commerce and trade of the country, their relations with the nobles and other classes have also been dealt with. The standard of living of the masses and labourers, their poor dwellings, dress, food and occupation, the relations with their employers, amusements, festivals and community functions have also been discussed. How the urbanisation and the impact of Indo-Muslim Culture resulted in a new synthesis has also been dealt with in the last chapter.

I have also prepared two maps, the first showing the main towns and trade routes connecting them with the principal towns in northern India and the second, showing the layout of city Agra in the 17th Century. I hope they will be found interesting and informative.

My regret is that in view of the vastness of the subject I cannot claim to have exhaustively dealt with the subject. Therefore, far may it be from me to claim finality for my conclusions or exhaustiveness of the treatment. Some of the topics included in this work like 'town planning' and the preparation of maps are technical subjects which cannot be adequately treated by any one except a specialist, and as such I cannot claim to have done full justice to this aspect. My only hope is that my effort will stimulate further research in this subject which offers immense scope for work.
SECTION II

Sources

This work is based on original sources, which include accounts of contemporary foreign travellers and contemporary Indian writers. These sources do not contain any systematic account of the urban life of the country, but a substantial amount of information can be gathered by collecting and correlating the information contained therein.

The foreign travellers’ accounts have been selected from those available in English, and in making this selection, particular care has been taken to leave out nothing of any real importance, while such travellers who only repeat information already available in more representative accounts have generally been ignored. Some of the non-contemporary works belonging to the period a few decades earlier or later have also been used. These accounts often present a picture substantially the same as that of the contemporary accounts but the information collected from such sources have been always checked up by a comparison with them.

The Persian sources have mainly been utilised in translation. Contemporary foreign travellers’ accounts are perhaps the most important source for the study of the urban life of the country in the 17th Century. They are more important material, than the contemporary Persian literature as source and as such greater emphasis has been laid on them in investigating this source. The foreign travellers, having nothing to fear from the rulers/fearlessly state the
unvarnished truth, regardless of official frowns and favours. Being foreigners they recorded matters seemingly unimportant to Indian chroniclers.

A very large number of European travellers visited India during the 17th Century. These accounts differ in quality as well as the fullness of their description. These travellers belonged to different nationalities, professions and religions. Mostly, they consisted of merchants, doctors, envoys, ecclesiastics, soldiers, sailors, fortune hunters and adventurers of all descriptions. Mostly they were educated persons, belonging to very good families and had a vast knowledge and understanding of the prevailing conditions in the country, and have thrown much light on the life of the people of India.

This source is a perfect store-house of information regarding matters of historical importance. Some of the travellers have left us short journals; others have left us more ambitious works and full accounts of the places they visited, and supplemented the same with accounts of contemporary events. Their impressions left by the travellers are valuable and supply convincing, corroborative evidence of political, social and economic conditions of India. Their observations regarding India and the conditions of life of the people of India are not based on conjecture but on their personal experiences.

The records of successive travellers furnish enormous material for a critical and scientific study of the subject.
They describe events as also manners and civilisation of the people and the commerce and trade of the country. They give us an account of the standard of living of the various sections of Indian society, their dresses, food, games and pastimes. While studying these travellers' accounts, however, it is essential to be on our guard, as their accounts, often suffer from historical inaccuracies for different reasons. We must distinguish between facts and fancies, observations and opinions. In every case we must first examine that chances the individual traveller had for learning the truth. It is difficult to accept every traveller's account as trustworthy or otherwise as a whole, and so such their statements have been accepted or rejected on the basis of corroboration by other sources. They have their limitations. Their knowledge of the country was superficial. Travellers were inadequately informed about the geography of the country, had no access to authentic chronicles of the country, and for current events sometimes they depended on bazaar gossip and conjecture, without bothering to test the accuracy of such information. Travellers did not always bring an unprejudiced mind to a foreign land. In addition to it their unfamiliarity with the language, customs and manners of the country led to misunderstanding. Sometimes wrong information passed from traveller to traveller and thus it gained wider currency. Their credulity and carelessness often landed them in serious blunders. At places they became self-assertive.

However inspite of these limitations, the historical merit of these accounts considering the writers' learning, integrity and sincerity, cannot be minimised as a contemporary
source for medieval Indian history, and they will always remain indispensable for the study of the same. An exhaustive and critical study has been made of the growth of the medieval towns, their character and classification, their administration and pattern of urban society after going through all the available sources.

The foreign record include accounts of contemporary foreign travellers and the correspondence of the employees of the English, French and Dutch East India Companies. In addition to it Factory Records, Court Minutes, and accounts left by missionaries have also been studied. Amongst the early travelless the accounts of missionaries like the Jesuits and other English traders and envoys like Ralph Fitch and Thomas Roe are most important. These cover the period upto the first half of 17th Century, and later travellers, like Tavernier, Bernier, Manucdi and Thevenot were more enterprising than the others, and spent long years in India and acquired first hand knowledge of many towns and cities.

Early Travellers:

The accounts of missionaries are of considerable importance and as such require a particular notice. The Portuguese entered India, quite a few years before the Mughals and occupied Goa, with a view to spreading Christianity in the neighbouring regions and in the domain of the Mughuls, they sent out formed the society of missionaries. The zeal and ability of the members inspired by the youthful energy of its wonderful organisation, soon gave it a predominant position in this field.
To realise their objects, a large number of missions visited the Mughul court especially under Akbar and Jahangir. The accounts of the Jesuit missions, provide us with abundant information with the general history of India. This source is of great importance and consists entirely of letters, and reports despatched by the missionaries themselves from various missionary centres and the capital towns of the Mughul empire. They were written when the missions enjoyed the favours of Akbar and Jahangir. The fathers, who resided at the Mughul court, were men of learning and culture, and in most cases accomplished writers. They were also keen and shrewd observers and, so far as their religious prejudices permitted, sympathetic observers./ Though their observations about the urban life are very scanty, their brief references are valuable. The occasional remarks about the cities, general condition of the country, social life and economic progress are important to us. Though quite a large number of Jesuits visited the Mughul court, the accounts of Father Monserrate, Du-Jarrice, and Father Guerreiro are worth noticing. These are available to us in the following books (i) Commentary of Father Monserrate, S.J., translated from Latin by J.S. Hoyland, annotated by S.H. Banerji. (ii) Akbar and the Jesuits. An account of the Jesuit missions to the court of Akbar by Father Pierre Du Jarric, S.J. Translation with Introduction and notes by C.H. Payne. (iii) Jesuits and the Great Mughuls, By Sir Edward Maclagan. (iv) Jahangir and the Jesuits, with an account of The Travels of Benedict Goes From the Relations of Father Fernao Guerreiro, S.J. Translated by C.H. Payne,
Father Monserrate (1580-1582):

Father Monserrate was admitted to the society of Jesus in 1558, and in 1578 he was selected to accompany Father Aquaviva to Agra in the first mission to the court of Akbar and shortly after his arrival he was appointed tutor to Murad, the second son of Akbar. He soon earned the esteem and affection of Akbar. While he was with the Emperor whether at Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Lahore or on the march to Kabul and Peshawar, he combined in him the earnestness of a missionary with the observant shrewdness of a historian.

Monserrate kept a diary in which he recorded all the important events and his experiences every evening during his stay for two and a half years in India. Monserrate says "I embraced every new experience or fact which the days journey or events had brought before my notice, for example the rivers, cities and countries which we saw."

Monserrate's commentary constitutes an extraordinarily valuable addition to our sources of information for the period. The most weighty subjects on which he sheds new light include the account of cities, trade and industries, insight into the social life, culture, general interests of the people, their standard of living, their customs and conventions, sports and recreations. It serves as a useful corrective alike to the eulogies of Abul Fazal and ironic observations of Badauni. However, in spite of the great value and reliability of his account, we have to be cautious due to his carelessness about proper names and the geography of the country. At places Monserrate has shown bigotry in attacking Islam.
The 'Historie' of Pierre Du-Jarric is not an original work, but it is from first to last a compilation, a series of extracts and abstracts from the Jesuits' writings. Its importance consists in its being an accurate reproduction of a large store of first hand evidence much of which is not available elsewhere. Du Jarric compiled his material into a series of continuous narratives of Jesuits' missionary enterprise, commencing from the year 1580, when the first mission came to the Great Mogul till the death of Akbar in 1605. From our point of view the outstanding interest of Du Jarric's compilation lies not so much in the references it contains to contemporary events as in the intimate light it sheds on the notable figures of the time and the insight it affords into the general conditions of life under Mogul rule. These records bring us in touch with the administrative machinery of Akbar's kingdom and better than every other part of the 'Historie' the daily life and surroundings of the humbler classes of the people. Du Jarric's account of the missions to Akbar merits a high place amongst our authorities for the history of India.

Ralph Fitch (1583-91)

'The voyage of Ralph Fitch to East India' - a merchant of London from 1583 to 1591, is of great interest and importance. Ralph Fitch's education, native shrewdness, his power of clear and concise description make his account very valuable. He reached Fatehpur Sikri from Golconda.
After a brief stay at Fatehpur Sikri, in 1585, he started to explore the eastern parts of India and went from Agra to Tanda and Bengal stopping at Allahabad, Benares, Patna, Bugli and Chittagong. Pitch was a shrewd observer and his account is based on personal experiences and observations. Whatever he saw or heard he has described in a simple way. He gives not only a detailed account of Indian cities, but also tried to make a comparative study of Indian towns and the towns of his country. He has also described the numbers of the inhabitants, houses, diets and dress and customs of the cities through which he passed, or stayed at. He also gives full particulars about Indian trade, the imports and exports, the means of transport, the various industries and the general economic condition of the people. The account of Ralph Pitch is trustworthy though screechy at times.

**John Heldenbill** (1598-1606)

Heldenbill, another Englishman visited India to acquire privileges of trade for himself and for his fellow countrymen. He visited Lahore, Agra and Ajmer and has described his transactions in India. His account, though brief, is of great value.

**William Hawkins (1608-11)**

William Hawkins was a Levantine merchant, well acquainted with Turkish and an experienced hand in business and navigation. William Hawkins was deputed as the representative
of James I to the Mughul emperor Jahangir for 'soliciting the grant of such liberty of traffic and privileges as shall be reasonable both for their securities and profit.' He left Tilbury as the commander of the Hector on March 12, 1607 on the third voyage of East India Company, and anchored at the entrance of Tapti river on August 24, 1608, as the first vessel to display the English flag on the coast of India. He reached Agra on April 16, 1609 and was given an audience by the Emperor Jahangir, who was much pleased and impressed by him and thus he secured the favour of the Emperor and was accepted as the resident ambassador and remained at the court with a rank of 400 horse.

The accounts of William Hawkins are on the whole reliable and give first hand information about the country visited by him. He had close contacts with the king, the officials and the nobles of the court. His account and description of the chief cities in the Mughul empire, the standard of living of the general masses as well as of the upper classes; commerce and trade of the country are interesting and of great importance. His information about the political history, state and government and foreign trade required a careful checking before accepting the same. Hawkins, despite his intimate association with Jahangir, did not know that the Mughul empire had more than five subdivisions. His Hawkins story should be read in conjunction with the narrative of William Finch, which supplements it in many ways. No doubt he was enterprising and resourceful, but he was arrogant and blustering.
Wiliam Finch (1608-11)

Finch was a fellow merchant of Hawkins and landed with him at Surat in August 1608. He toured widely and passed through different regions. Finch went as far as the frontiers of the empire in the east and north, and to Burhanpur in the South. Finch has fully related his experiences at Surat; he left Surat for Agra and then for Bayana for the purpose of buying a stock of indigo and also travelled to Lahore by way of Dihli, Ambula, and Sultanpur in this connection.

Finch was better informed and has more correctly stated the history of the Mughul empire, as compared with the other early travellers, who visited this country in the early 17th Century. He has carefully recorded the details of his journey, fully describing the extent of the country. It is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Mughul empire in the early years of the seventeenth century. Its chief feature is the topographical information gleaned by him either in his own journeyings or by diligent inquiry from others. Purchas says of it that it is "supplied in substance with more accurate observations of men, beasts, plants, cities, deserts, castles, buildings, regions, religions; than almost any other, as also of vairies, vares, varres." His description of the important cities, their layout, commerce and industries, administration, the trade routes and the account of different sections of the society is very helpful and authoritative in reconstructing the picture of urban life, though a few minor errors however can be detected in his Journal.
Thomas Coryat (1612-17)

Thomas Coryat was the first Englishman who travelled through India, with no intention of trade, but was inspired to see this strange country and write a book about his experiences. He was educated at Winchester and Oxford and earned some reputation as a writer. Before visiting India he had already undertaken a continental tour of France, northern Italy, Switzerland and Germany. In India, he visited Sultan, Lahore, Delhi, Agra, Ajmer, Jandu, Kandahar and Kharra. He remained in Agra, for about 14 months. Coryat had the true gift of observation and has narrated fully and accurately what he saw, including many small details which other travellers have passed over as unworthy of notice. It is unfortunate that only a few letters written by him from India have survived.

Nicholas Withington (1612-1610)

Withington came to India as an attendant to Captain Best, an employee of the East India Company, but as Surat he was taken into the service of the Company, due to his linguistic attainments. He visited Surat, Ahmedabad, Cambay, Sarkhoj, Thatta and Agra and as much he found interesting things, which he has related in his journal. He has thrown much light on commerce and trade, trade routes, and administration and also offered a description of the cities. He wrote whatever was essential as he had to deal with the masses. His work is quite reliable.

Sir Thomas Roe (1615-1619)

Sir Thomas Roe came to India in 1615, as the ambassador of James I to the court of Jahangir at the instance of the
East India Company. Roe came of a good family and combined shrewdness, readiness of resources and business ability. He obtained the experience and culture by a varied training in most favourable circumstances. Roe was educated at Oxford and the Inns of Court and was familiar with the court as well as Colleges, with government and diplomacy as well as with history and law. In short, he was a man of the Elizabethan era, fond of politics, pictures and plays and intimate alike with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chairman of East India Company.

Roe's account is based on his keen observations, and being a good writer gives a vivid and picturesque description of kings and the things he saw. The account given by him in his Journal is both reliable and illuminating. He got sufficient information about the history of the country, by getting an opportunity of visiting a large number of towns, as he remained with the king and his camp. Thomas Roe's account throws much light on the commercial conditions and prospects, description of cities, customs of the inhabitants of India and other Indian affairs. He describes the chief cities of the Mughul empire partly on the basis of his personal observations and partly on the basis of the king's register. His account about the trade relations between England, Portugal and India throws a flood of light on its conditions and prospects. Roe's account is reliable, but it would be rather risky to depend wholly on it as it becomes unreliable when he treats of matters which did not come under his own personal observations.
Edward Terry (1616-1619)

Edward Terry, a Protestant clergyman of the Church of England was educated at Rochester School and Christ Church Oxford, from where he obtained the Master's degree. He travelled in India between 1616-19 as chaplain to the embassy of Sir Thomas Roe. He remained in India for more than two years with his patron and wrote his book after his departure from India. His account which offered 'a good farewell draught of English India liquor', was the outcome chiefly of his own observations during two and a half years which he spent in this country. It is a record of what the author had himself observed and bears traces of a vigorous and penetrating mind stimulated by a strong interest in its strange surroundings. His interest is further evidenced by the fact that although he had no intention of staying in the country, he took pains in acquiring knowledge of the institutions and social conditions of our country.

Terry joined Sir Thomas Roe near Ujjain, and accompanied him to Ujjain and then went to Ahmadabad, where he remained for about nine months. The account of Terry is really a very important source of information for our work. He was a good observer and of balanced views and had also the broad mindedness to appreciate the good points of the inhabitants. Terry has critically examined the customs and institutions that existed in Mughul India. Amongst other important subjects on which he particularly throws light are the conditions of the different classes of society including their
standards of living, their manners and customs, dress, food, drinks and means of amusement. He also gives an account of the commerce, trade and industries existing in different towns. The account of the social and economic life, in general, form an important source of information. Terry made acute and penetrating observations and much valuable information is contained in these accounts for reconstructing the picture of urban life of Jahangir's India. Inspite of the value and authenticity of the work, Terry's writing, from the historical point of view, suffers from some defects. Terry's account lacked accuracy like that of his patron Sir Thomas Roe, when he went beyond his personal observations and based his account merely on unreliable information. It is correct to say that his criticism of Indian institutions while always fresh and reliable is sometimes highly prejudiced, unjust and ridiculous.

Francisco Pelsaert (1630-1627)

Francisco Pelsaert was a Dutchman from Antwerp, and an employee of the Dutch East India Company. He sailed for the east in 1618 as an assistant in the Company's commercial service. In 1620, he was posted in India and reached Agra via Surat, where he remained for about seven years. He was later raised to the position of a Senior Factor. His work is primarily a commercial document but it also gives a detailed account of the social and administrative environment in which commerce had to be conducted. Besides the production of indigo or the trade in spices, he also throws light on the
administrative system, the standard of living of the masses and the upper classes and the social and religious customs of the people. He gives a vivid description of Agra city and the development of commerce and trade of the different provinces particularly of Bengal, Agra, Lahore, Gujrat and Burhanpur. His description of various places appears to be based on his personal observations. He visited different towns and examined them minutely. He mixed with the people and the great advantage of getting first hand information by mastering the Indian languages. He is at times prejudiced and exaggerates the deplorable condition of the masses.

Joannes de-Laet

Joannes de-Laet, the Flemish geographer, philologist and naturalist was the Director of the Company of the West Indies and later on of the Dutch India Company. It was during his term of office that he gained knowledge of India, by keeping in touch with East Indian affairs, and published in 1631 De Imperio Moghol Logis'or the Empire of the Great Mogol. De Laet did not come to India at all and he is pre-eminently a translator and compiler, but his compilations are learned and laborious, faithful and reliable. As a result of De Laet's position as a Director, his interest in the affairs of the east, and his friendship with the merchants enabled him to obtain quick and truthful information of the happenings in India. De Laet has used the material of Pelsaert and other foreign travellers. His work is a complete Gazetteer of Janhangir's India, and gives a detailed and reliable account
of the towns, their splendour, administration, trade routes, articles of trade and production, the standard of living of the masses and the upper classes and as such it is enduringly useful. Inaccuracies there are, but this is a defect which it shares with all the contemporary accounts in Indian chronicles too.

Pietro Della Valle (1623-1625)

Pietro Della Valle, was a Catholic gentleman of noble family of Rome with Catholic education and convictions. He had no taste for trade or profit of any kind, but visited India out of intelligent curiosity, to grasp the learning of the Aima and to study the religions of India, with particular reference to finding the similarities in the religions of Egypt and India.

Della Valle visited a large number of towns of the western coast. He deals with the places of business of European traders, foreign factories and the volume of trade in the country. His account of port administration shows his sanity of judgement. He also gives a graphic account of the western cities of India particularly of Surat, Ahmedabad, Cambay and Baroch. In addition to it, he also refers to the government policy towards the subjects like Hindus, Muslims, and foreigners, and noticed that the Mughul rule was tolerant in the extreme. He was the first traveller who noticed the communal harmony maintained by the Mughul government. For example, Della Valle noticed that in the
towns, where Hindus were in majority there the killing of
the cows was prohibited. His accounts of the pattern of urban
society, the standard of living, employment conditions and
customs and manners of different communities are very authentic.
He took pains in depicting the life of the various sections
of the society. He participated in processions, feasts,
celebrations, games and sports of the country. He minutely
examined the conditions of the lower classes, especially of
the Indian servants. It is unfortunate that Pietro Della Valle
did not visit the interior of the country and as such had
little to say about it.

Peter Mundy (1628-1634)

Peter Mundy was one of the most remarkable travellers
of England, who was selected as a Factor of the East India
Company in 1627. During his stay in India from 1628-34 he
remained in the service of the East India Company and held
responsible positions at different places. He served as
'Register' to Surat and afterwards he was transferred to Agra.
During his service, he got ample opportunity of travelling
widely, through large and small towns of different regions
of northern India.

The account of Peter Mundy is full of interest, noting
and commenting as he does on everything that attracted his
attention. Mundy wrote his diary every day, thus providing
a connected narrative from one place to the other. As has been
mentioned, he travelled widely in the country and as such,
he gives a detailed account of the routes, towns and caravanserais, which he passed during his journey. His descriptions of Agra, Fatehpur Sikri, Burhanpur, Patna, Benares, Ajmer, and Surat etc. are very valuable. He also gives a vivid and picturesque description of the markets, offices, public buildings and houses etc. He gives the best contemporary account of the commerce and industries of different places.

Peter Lundy had social intercourse with the upper classes and as such he observed accurately their social life. He also gives an account of the administration of the towns. He took much interest in learning the day to day activities of the common man, and of the places which were visited by him. He also describes social and religious customs of the people and also their standard of living. He gives us first hand information about the produce and manufacture of those commodities which were exported to England. He had personal dealings with the brokers and merchants and narrates their character and dealings in business. Lundy’s errors are remarkably very few.

Frav Sebastien Hanrique (1628-1643)

Catholic

Hanrique was a Portuguese missionary who remained in India from 1629 to 1643 on missionary work. He was attached to Bengal from 1629 to 1637. Before coming to India, he visited Persia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, China, Philippines and Java; and as such he gathered wide experience and ample knowledge.
Henrique's account is very valuable as it throws great light on the urban way of life. Though a missionary he examined things as a merchant. His account is both interesting and useful. Henrique personally visited a large number of towns in India and tells us about their general appearance, and the commerce and industries which flourished there. After visiting the towns of Bengal, he moved on to Patna, from where he travelled by land to Lahore.

Henrique gives a fanciful account of Agra and of other towns in its vicinity. He reached Lahore, after visiting Dhli and passed through Thaneshwar and Sarhind and then on to Multan and Thatta. He also came into contact with the king, priests, officials and also their womenfolk. Henrique came in very close contact with Asaf Khan, who was friendly towards him. He attended the dinner party which was given by Asaf Khan to Shah Jehan in Lahore. His minute account of Asaf Khan's dinner party, his wealth and way of living truly reflect the standard of living of the upper classes. He also throws much light on the life and condition of the middle classes and of government officials.

Henrique's account has a few defects, as he seems to be biased against Muslims and speaks of them as barbarians. At times he becomes self-assertive.

John Albert De Mandelslo (1638-1639)

Mandelslo was a young German of noble birth and of liberal education. He joined the embassy as an Attaché.
who were designated by the Duke of Holestone to Russia and Persia. After sharing their adventures for three years, he parted company with them at Isfahan, with a view to visiting India. He arrived at Surat in 1638, and left India in 1639.

Mandelslo visited the chief cities of Gujrat like Surat, Ahmadabad, Broach, Baroda and Cambay and also visited the Mughul head quarters at Agra and Lahore. Mandelslo was no scholar, yet his account of his tour in India is full of illuminating observations on the political history, commerce and industry of Gujrat province, its towns and the social and economic conditions of its inhabitants. His account of the cities of Gujrat is based on his personal observations and experiences. He actually passed through these places, which he describes and enjoyed the hospitality of the inhabitants and foreign merchants. The most valuable part of Mandelslo's travels pertains to his tour through Gujrat. At some places he has committed factual mistakes, which could have been avoided. His graphic account of the life and the standard of living of the governor is very trustworthy and accurate. Mandelslo twice dined with Azam Khan, governor of Gujrat, and frequently visited him. Thus he got the opportunity of coming in close contact with the leading men of the province. His account of the wages and prices is based on verbal reports. It seems Mandelslo was much interested in commerce of the country, and so he has recorded it in detail. Mandelslo's account is of immense help to us in reconstructing the picture of urban life of India.
Among the other early travellers to India, may also be mentioned James Lancaster, Nicholas Downton, Dodsworth, John Knight, Linschoten, Walter Peyton, Alexander Childes, Joseph Salbancke, Thomas Best, Henry Middleton, Richard Steel, John Crouther, Alexander Sharpey, and Thomas Kerridge.

Later Travellers

John Baptist Tavernier (1631-1668)

Tavernier is known as the most renowned traveller of the 17th Century, and pioneer of trade with India. He was an eminent French jewel merchant who travelled several times in India between 1641-1668. Before coming to India Tavernier had travelled in different parts of the world, and had visited Constantinople, Persia, Baghdad, Aleppo, Alexandria, Malta, and Italy.

Tavernier saw more of India than perhaps any other traveller in the 17th Century. He studied the various aspects of the towns and has described them at length on the basis of his personal experiences. He was an acute observer and understood the economic conditions of the country and the prospects of foreign companies in India.

The account of Tavernier is a most authoritative work regarding the commercial history of different towns and provinces, their mineral resources and of the forces at work in the economic life of the country. His observations and judgements, which were confined to matters of commerce,
industries and trade are most reliable. He furnishes us with many details respecting Indian manufactures in different towns and hence is very useful for our subject. Tavernier visited all the important towns of the country like Agru, Dihli, Burhanpur, Lahore, Surat, Cambay and Dacca. The principal value of the work consists in his observations on the towns and cities, the contemporary condition of the trade, highways, administration of the towns, security of travel and his occasional comments on the social and economic life of the period. His records immensely help us in identifying the small towns and other urban centres which otherwise are not traceable.

His account concerning the frauds, which can be practised in manufacturing goods, whether by the roguery of the workers or the knavery of the brokers and buyers, and the measures adopted by the government against such practices, is valuable and interesting.

Tavernier was certainly not always an eye witness of the events which he describes. As a historian he is not always to be trusted, as he had no education. There are some discrepancies in his account. His account lacks the systematic arrangement of the subject, correlated chronology and a reconciliation of really or apparently contradictory statements. His historical chapters, for instance, may have been derived from Bernier’s writings or from conversations with him; and the places he had not himself visited were of course founded on information collected from various sources.
Francois Bernier (1656-1668)

Bernier was a trained physician and a man of superior education, with a keen eye for the things which interested him. He was attracted by the desire of seeing the world and thus visited Palestine, Egypt and Syria before coming to India. He travelled out of curiosity, not only with a desire to see the towns and countries, but also to know the inhabitants, commerce, trade and industries, administration of the towns, government policy as well as the interests and manners of its people. During his stay in India he visited a large number of towns like Surat, Ahmadabad, Lahore, Kashmir, Agra, Dihli, Raj Mahal and Kasimbazar and was an eye witness to many events. Bernier's Travels in the Mughul Empire (1656-68) is a celebrated work and a first class authority for a study of social life in the second half of the 17th Century.

Bernier was closely attached to the court and worked in the capacity of a physician under the great Mughuls. The description of the towns, their administration, and amenities available in them are the out come of his personal knowledge. His clear and concise account shows his capacity for observation and of independent judgement. He stayed with Danishmand Khan, a leading Mansabdar at court and he derived his information from him. In addition to him he also used French men, Portuguese, European merchants, ambassadors as sources of counsels and interpreters as information about the country and its people.
Bernier is at pains to compare every custom and institution of France with that of India, and labours to prove in every possible way the superiority of the former. Thus we find that he contradicts himself at several points. His criticism of Indian institutions, conditions of peasants and labourers and the tyranny of the upper class and administrative officials, may appear to be partly biased and partly due to the fact that the knowledge of these facts which he has described was based on hearsay. Despite it the general impression which he gives of the country and the people shows his intelligence.

Niccolao Manucci Venetian (1653-1708)

Niccolao Manucci, was an Italian traveller, who was enlisted as an artillery man in the service of the Mughuls in India on eighty rupees a month. He also served Shah Alam in Agra and Dihli, he gradually adopted medicine as a profession. As an historian Manucci presents us with a 'somewhat mingled yarn'. No doubt, Manucci was not a learned traveller, a self-educated man. He was an acute observer and had the advantage of a long and close experience of the country. He visited a large number of towns and travelled through Burhanpur, Handiyah, Sironj, Harwar, Gwalior, Dholpur, Agra and Dihli, and while he was entrusted with an expedition eastwards, he travelled through Patna, Rajmahal, Dacca, Hugli and Kasimbazar. Regarding towns he gives abundant and varied details. His account is extremely vivacious. Manucci's detailed description of the various towns, about their general
appearance, commerce, industry and administration is based on his personal visits, observations and experiences.

In spite of all this, his account is not free from blunders. His supposed extracts from the Mughul official chronicles, for the reign of Jahangir are a tissue of absurdities. They are distortions of the facts. His anecdotes are based purely on bazar gossip.

But for the account of the reign of Aurangzeb, Manucci is a writer whose statements cannot be ignored; where they can be verified they are historically accurate, and a fair inference is that where he is not contradicted by other contemporary accounts he may be accepted as trustworthy. He is indeed quite honest and particular, as a rule, about the sources of his information. He says "I mean to write without passion, but with all possible exactitude and sincerity." It does not mean that what he says must always be believed. He was at times misinformed and prejudiced. His prejudice may be judged from his statement that Indian customs are evil, hateful and abominable. Manucci was on the staff of Prince Dara Shukoh and as such had a strong dislike for Aurangzeb. His account of Indian customs and religion is faulty. Therefore his references should be accepted with caution. It seems that in his voluminous narration, he did not forget the interest of the readers and as such at times he is just trying to provide interesting and not accurate information about the country.
Streynsham Master (1675-80)

Master was specially commissioned to reorganise the affairs of the East India Company in all the dependent factories of Fort St. George, of which he was appointed Agent. He arrived Ft. St. George in 1676 and his 'Diaries' continue the story till January 1680. The Diaries are chiefly concerned with the internal administration of the Company and are a little disappointing from the point of view of our subject.

Jean de Thevenot (1667)

Thevenot, a French gentleman, was a traveller of a far higher stamp. He belonged to the rare company of such travellers, who are seekers of true knowledge through personal experiences and observations. His natural curiosity attracted him to India. Thevenot visited more countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, than any of his contemporaries. His education and family environment made him a true scholar. Thevenot completed his education at the University of Paris. He was an ardent student of geography, and natural sciences, and had studied the accounts of early travellers and was also influenced to a great extent by his scholarly uncle. The 'Indian Travels' of Thevenot is a work of abiding interest to the students of Indian history. Thevenot remained only a
year or so in India, but he visited a very large number of
towns and places, and in such a short stay he studied the
life and condition of the people in the country. He threw
much light on varied aspects of urban life. Thevenot's
narrative shows him to be a thoughtful observer. He had
the advantage of securing first hand information about India,
being conversant with Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, and secondly he freely
moved among the people. He had the reputation of being a
keen observer and an able writer. Thevenot, did not confine
himself to describing the general condition of the country
and its people, but he also took pains to study the various
institutions, administration, commerce and industry, which
is the most valuable source for the study of urban life of
our period. None of the travellers had the industry,
scholarship or critical acumen that Thevenot had. Thavenot
has recorded from his personal experiences, the roads he
traversed, the towns he visited, the men he met, the things
he saw, the amenities he enjoyed, the discomforts from which
he suffered and the difficulties he encountered. He describes
through personal experience the administration of towns and
ports, security of life and property and the law and order
existing there, which informs us of the practical working
of the administrative system of the Mughuls. Inspite of
his best efforts his account of India suffers from occasional
errors. He depended on hearsay, particularly in regard to the
civil administration, and recorded events which he did
not personally witness.
Thomas Bourey (1669-1679)

Thomas Bourey was an independent trader and a sailing master in the east. He remained in the eastern regions of India particularly Bengal from 1669 to 1679. Thomas Bourey was a well-educated man for his time, an acute observer of all that went around him and was deeply interested in the inhabitants of the country. He was well acquainted with the writings of Bernier and with Mughul history, down to his own time. His book 'A Geographical account of countries round the Bay of Bengal', contains his observations and experiences in Bengal. He personally visited Dacca, Cuttack, Hugly, Patna, Knaiznbazar and Balasore, besides other important commercial centres. His account throws much light on the commerce, trade and industries, men and manners of India, and the general appearance of the towns of India in the last quarter of the 17th Century.

Many of his observations are of exceeding interest and unusual value, and a unique contribution to medieval Indian history.

John Marshall (1668-1672)

John Marshall is renowned as being the first Englishman, who really studied Indian Antiquities. He was a graduate of Cambridge University and was famous as a writer and traveller. He was selected a Factor to serve in Bengal by the East India Company. Marshall gives his general impressions of Mughul India. Like his contemporary Thomas Bourey, and
his predecessor Peter Lundy, Marshall was a keen observer, ever on the alert to acquire information. His notes afford valuable details on all kinds of subjects. During his tenure of office in India Marshall made an extensive tour of eastern India and studied there the character of the towns, commerce and industry and the routes which he followed in the course of his journey. He was an enthusiastic enquirer, and his zeal in recording all that he heard on these subjects is amazing. His remarks on the growth of towns and experiences at the custom and octroi posts, show at his acuteness. Marshall has made no attempt at grouping his subjects systematically, but jotted down his experiences and observation of things which specially impressed him.

Abbe Carre (1672-1674)

Abbe Carre, a French gentleman of high education and an ecclesiastic, was sent to India on a mission entrusted to him by the French minister Colbert, under the French East India Company to support the French trade in India and to watch over the conduct and motions of the English and the Dutch, travelled to but also to observe his own countrymen. He travelled India through Syria, Iraq and Persian Gulf, reaching Surat in 1668.

During his stay in India from 1672-74, visited Goa, Surat, Bombay, Madras, Golconda and Bijapur, but from our point of view, his account of Surat is most valuable.

His Journal certainly contains many very curious pieces of information, with a great deal of interesting intelligence.
He was an observant traveller, like Bernier and Tavernier, and showed an interest not only in the country through which he passed, but also in its inhabitants and its history. He mentions everything that he saw in Surat, and judging from his valuable remarks in the Journal, his power of observation and description were remarkable. His accounts have some errors, which were mostly due to misinformation and due to some exaggerations, but most of his statements are corroborated from different accounts.

John Fryer (1672–1681)

John Fryer was an eminent British physician and a member of the Royal College of Physicians. He was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, and obtained the degree of M.B., followed by that of M.D. John Fryer possessed a singularly wide and varied knowledge of different subjects and was well versed in the learning of his age. He was specially interested in questions connected with natural sciences. He was connected with the East India Company, as he was appointed as a surgeon at Surat in the service of the Company. He gives us a valuable narrative of the coastal towns, which he visited in person and displayed much industry in collecting information regarding the social and economic life of the inhabitants. He gives an excellent account of the foreign factories in India. His account includes a description of the towns, streets, houses, public buildings, markets and the inhabitants of the country. He took particular interest in studying the important industries of the country,
and the standard of living of different sections of society. It is true that Dr. John Fryer had no knowledge of the vernacular dialects and as such he was largely dependent upon an interpreter, but inspite of that his account is trustworthy. John Fryer did not tour the great cities of the interior and among his contemporary travellers as such he has committed mistakes common to his sketches of the austerities practiced by the Fakirs, the customs of the people of Surat, and the middle classes are admirable.

**William Hedges (1681-1687)**

William Hedges was appointed as the Director of the East India Company with special powers of an Agent and Governor of their affairs in the Day of Bengal and the factories like Kasimbazar, Patna, Balasore, Salda, Dacca and Bengal Hughly which were subordinate to Hedges kept a diary and wrote day to day account of what interested him. Though his diary includes the period from 1681 to 1688, his account of his stay in office at Bengal from 21st July 1682 to August 30, 1684 is of great importance. In 1684 he was dismissed from his post.

The diary of William Hedges is one of our most valuable sources of information regarding the contemporary events and conditions in Bengal. His observations throw a flood of light on the state of things in the towns of Bengal, the tremendous growth in the Indian industries and the English East India Company's making huge investments in textile goods.
His statements enable us to understand the growth and character of the towns. Hedges toured the towns, where the factories of the companies were located and gathered all maintained sorts of information. He had also/social intercourse with some Mughul officers, who furnished him with/first hand information.

**Alexander Hamilton (1688-1723)**

Hamilton was a shrewd Scot, who carried on free trade in the eastern seas, between 1688-1723. He visited India during the reign of Aurangzeb and has at several places commented upon the laws and customs of the people. He has given a valuable account of the provinces, their/wealth, inhabitants, important towns and trade and commerce. His account of Sindh and Gujrat may be accepted as more trustworthy.

**Giovanni Francesco Gemelli Careri (1695-1699)**

Careri, an Italian doctor was one of the seasoned European travellers, who visited India in 1695, Careri was a student of jurisprudence and a lawyer by profession, and had attained the highest distinction in the University, where he got the degree of Doctor of Civil Laws. Careri, besides being a man of literary tastes, was also interested in travelling and by 1683, he made an extensive tour of European countries, and was familiar with the published works of Thevenot. Careri mostly remained in/coastal towns, like Surat and Cambay and gives a detailed account of the commerce and industry of these towns. His account of these
tovms is based on his personal observations. He has been roundly accused of literary piracy, but it is preposterous to suggest that Careri could produce a work so informative and accurate without personal investigation.

Factory Records:

In addition to foreign travellers' accounts, factory records of the various Companies trading in the east, from form a very valuable original source of information for the history of our period. The published records and administrative English manuals of the Company include the Letter Book of the East India Company, letters received from its servants, and calendar of the Court Minutes of the Company. These series cover the period from 1600 to 1708. These letters and mainly records which have been collected by William Foster deal mainly with the history of Indo-European trade, the commercial transactions of the foreigners in the different towns of the country, the towns which were the principal marts for the different European trade and region where goods were manufactured. These invaluable letters and reports help us in reconstructing the political, commercial and economic life of the country during the 17th Century.

The servants of the Company, though mainly concerned with trade and commerce throw important sidelight on the administration, and social and economic life of the country. The Company's agents and officials had to proceed
to important commercial towns for procuring commercial goods and as such they came in close contact with Indian merchants, artisans and the commercial life of the country. The officials wrote letters about their experiences on various subjects like the condition of the towns from commercial and economic point of view. These letters also contained information concerning the scope of trade in various towns, recommendations for starting new factories, exports and imports, obstacles in their business, while particular attention was paid to information regarding the products and manufactures of India. They also dealt with the condition of the artisans, labourers, merchants, brokers and the relations between them; the administrative and economic policy of the Mughul government and the English, and their relations with the Mughul government and officials. They also give topographical details about many cities of the Mughul empire and the various roads and means of communication between these cities.

**Accounts of Indian Writers:**

The information on the present subject from the Indian writers is mainly derived from general histories and statistical, administrative and institutional accounts. This information is generally available from the conventional Indo-Persian histories and from administrative manuals and records. In addition, autobiographies, biographies,
topographical accounts, archaeological survey reports, gazetteers and other material has also been fully utilised.

Most of the Indian historians recorded political events, centring round kings, nobles and the high officials of state. Persian chronicles, are mainly concerned, excepting a few, with wars, conquests, revolts, intrigues and palace revolutions. "We find accounts in these chronicles of the magnificent ceremonial observances of the Court, the jewels, swords, drums, standards, elephants and horses bestowed upon the dignitaries of the empire and the extravagant but spectacular life of the upper classes. The Indian writers seldom record the condition of the society, its conventional usages or the recognised privileges of different sections, its constituent elements and their mutual relations. They are equally deficient in observations regarding commerce, industries, police, security of life and property, civic amenities, local administration and such other subjects of importance to the society. "Its (history's) great object", says Dr. Arnold "is that which most nearly touches the inner life of civilized man, namely, the vicissitudes of institutions, social, political and religious....". Insipite of the paucity of material relevant to our inquiry these chronicles yield much valuable information. The general histories, which have been utilised in this work are Babur Nama, Humayun Nama, Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri, Akbar Nama, Tabaqat-i-Akbari, Muntahibut-Tawarikh and Ma'asir-i-Alamgiri. In addition to, other histories which have been used in translation are Makhzan-Afghani and Tarikh-i-Khan-Jahan Lodi of Niamat-Ullah, Khafi Khan's Mantakbul...

Amongst other sources may be mentioned the invaluable Ain-i-Akbari, Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh, Chahar Gulshan, Mirat-i-Ahmadî (supplement) etc. The most useful source for our study is Ain-i-Akbari, which is a mine of a vast variety of information and contains the most systematic account of the towns, their character, growth, trade and industries, and their administration. Ain-i-Akbari is one of the greatest works and stands unique amongst the Muhammadan histories of India.

The Chahar Gulshan, an important source used in this work was written by Ray Chaturman Kayasth, which was completed in 1759-60. The last portion of the book was completed by his grandson Chandar-Bhan Kunahi Kayasth Saksena, surnamed Ray-zadeh. It consists of the history and topography of India to A.H. 1173/1759-60 in four Gulshans. (i) the subahs (provinces) of Hindustan, (ii) the subahs of the Deccan, and (iii) routes from Dehli to various parts of India; (iv) Muslim and Hindu saints. A portion of this work was translated and annotated by Jadunath Sarkar in his book 'The India of Aurangzeb'. 