CONCLUSION

The temple of the Jawalamukhi played a prominent, all encompassing role and constituted a powerful religious, social and economic entity. The temple of the Jawalamukhi catered not only to the spiritual needs of the people but also played an important part in their day to day life. The temple has not only been the centre of socio-economic activity but also a source of inspiration to the followers and devotees. The temple has come to acquire a self governing economic potential and significance.

The temple of the Jawalamukhi is a sacred place that inspires awe, inspiration and reverence with its religious fervour. It is considered as one of the most revered shakti peethas in India. The Jawalamukhi is believed to be flaming mouth of the goddess which has been worshipped since times immemorial. The meaning of the Jawalamukhi lies in the name itself. Jawala means fire and mukhi means mouthed. The Jawalamukhi temple has intrinsic beauty bequeathed with uniqueness for being sacred without there being a pervasive idol within its precincts. It consists of flames erupting from the earth below due to some volcanic eruption which, reverentially, is taken as the blessed flame by the devotees all over the country and outside. People visit this place from every part of the country to pay their obeisance.

The affairs of the temple of the Jawalamukhi have undergone varied changes, with the change at the helm of management. If, on the one hand, it had the impact of the Katoch rajas, to boast of, on the other the impact of gosains and bhojkis, simultaneously, rubbed off on it. It, explicitly, prospered under the Sikh patronage and then, as had
been their wont, the Britishers did exercise their influence on it. There was a consistent tug of war between the gosains and bhojkis for the assumption of authority over the temple. The gosains lost their hold on the temple because of the all round moral degradation that had set in and their indulgence in illegitimate affairs took a heavy toll and it landed into the lap of the bhojki priests, who hither had been merely wage earners in the temple and who were not loath claiming themselves to be hereditary priests of the temple and, with the issuance of patta by Sansar Chand, which vested the authority of the temple to the bhojki priest, their claim stood legitimized. After the formation of a new state of Himachal Pradesh, under the Indian Union, which took it over under the Religious and Charitable Endowment Act in 1984 it, subsequently, achieved all round prosperity under its paternal wings.

A management committee was constituted by the overbearing bhojkis that was able to exercise considerable influence over the temple affairs, its management, development, maintenance and sundry affairs. The rajas (Katoch and Later Patiala State) exercised considerable influence on the administration of the temple. Gosains also had a definite impact of their own which, discerningly, got manifested in the oral history but, gradually, they also lost their grip and influence though the grants were made in their name. In the temple of the Jawalamukhi, the bhojki priests played a key role in both the day to day, and overall management, they were the dejure care takers of the temple.

The management of the temple has underwent many changes and assumed names from time to time. They, steadfastly maintained and nurtured the election procedure on democratic lines. Its well said that absolute power corrupts absolutely and the bhojkis too were no exception to it as corruption had seeped into the marrow of their bones.
They were reckless in management, handling of pilgrims, taking care of the repairs etc. To aggravate matters further, they got involved in litigation, as they were held responsible for working against the laid down procedures of management of the temple in the past. Though it would not out of context to mention here that nothing could prove against them. The Britishers also laid down certain rules regarding income and expenditure of the temple in 1846 and later in 1909. A case had been filed by the local people of Jawalamukhi, keeping in view the decision of 1846 regarding income and expenditure of the temple as per the guidelines laid down by Edvard Leak (Assistant Commissioner) in deference to the wishes of local populace which wanted it to be modeled on the system of management prevalent at the Varjeshwari devi, Kangra, which, had, in turn, been laid with the help of the British government in 1908 after an earthquake of 1905. There may be some black sheep among them but their contribution in maintaining century’s long tradition and legacy and handing over the temple to the government in the form of institution from where the authority have taken another of expansion.

In the temple, bhujkis have retained their traditional form of worship which is imbued with unflinching devotion to the goddess. They, assiduously, continued with the same routine and rituals. It is found that no changes have been incorporated in the rituals and even no profound changes have been brought about in the timings of the temple since 1947.

The temple has been a repository of prodigious amounts of money, jewellery, gold, land grant and foreign currency etc. They have been, regularly, receiving donations from various sources over a long period of time. The temple has, not surprisingly, acquired enormous wealth over the years. The rajas, who had been victorious in battle,
often, made rich contributions to the temple of their *kul devi* (family deity) and, by way of thanks giving, would make endowments in the form of ornaments, jewels, vessels, and so on. They, magnanimously, contributed to its repair and construction, and even extended their help to the priests of the temple, at a personal level. They visited the shrine on the occasion of every success of theirs and made grants in order to propitiate the deity. In the past, land grant was made to maintain the *dharamshala*, the *bauli* (tank) and the temple of the Jawalamukhi as a whole, and it was, of course, given in perpetuity, though it was later resumed with the assumption of the British government.

Earlier, the grants were made by the *rajas*, particularly, by the *rajas* of the Patiala State. The grants were in the form of cash, articles, gold, silver, besides *sadavarat* was built and rooms were build in the house of their priest for themselves and later which was granted to the concerned priest, and their contribution in also in repair and maintenance also merits a specific mention. The *rajas* patronized the institution as well as the individuals by bestowing grants on them. They conferred grants on different occasions and for different purposes. Most donations were made at the time of different festivals like *Navratras*, *Dushera* and *Diwali*. After independence, and the gradual decline of the Princely State, the temple had lost its patronage for a while and with that the *rajas* were replaced by the Industrialists, businessmen, NRI’s, big and small traders, MLAs, started giving endowment and offered huge donations. Donations were made for construction of *kirtan bhavan*, *langar*, *kund*, huge gate of the temple etc. Even army was not found to be lagging behind as far as making donation is concerned; the silver doors were presented by the Dogra regiment. The new emerging middle class has prodigiously and generously contributed to the donations for financial needs of the temple. They made donations in the
memory of their dear ones. With this, the temple economy has grown by leaps and bound.

The Jawalamukhi being a revered temple for the people of a large part of the country and also for people visiting from other countries, naturally, receives large offerings. With the government take over, each and every offering is accounted for and the sanguine wealth of the temple used for the welfare projects and their maintenance. It has, indubitably, led to the growth of not only the place but also of the place where it is located.

The temple has also been a catalyst of preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of the area. It has served the purpose of social integration, economic moral amelioration and sustenance of the people and their cultural survival.

The temple has perennially, played the role of the employer by giving employment to various categories of the people of the area. Many servants, artisans, supervisors, musicians, gardeners and their likes have been employed by the temple. It has been extending patronage to musicians and recitors of sacred hymns etc. and directly and indirectly, helping in the growth in the true sense of the term.

The temple has been discharging even the function of the money lender. The regular and meticulous handling of funds and the receipts of gifts in cash, goods and services, evidently bring capital to the temple which it, unwaveringly, invests in productive ways. It helps people in times of need; eg, to the distressed father anxious to perform the marriage of their daughters, for better medical treatment, for historical trip, or for some, indefinite, yet genuine purposes.
The Jawalamukhi temple is regarded as a permanent major consumer of goods. Items such as coconuts, sandal, rice, incense, beetle, pulses, sugar etc. are the items which are needed in large quantities daily. With better connectivity and provision of better and organized facilities for boarding and lodging, streamlined procedures for performing puja and different rites and rituals, naturally, the number of pilgrims to the sanctorum has shown an upward spiral.

The temple had an impact on its surroundings which witnessed a boost in their economic activity. It has given a worthy shape to the town and opened new vistas of employment. Hotels, dharmshalas, markets, mansions etc. have shown a mushroom growth and this, in turn, has shown marked growth in the population of the town. From a tiny village has Jawalamukhi has assumed the stature of a township, perceptibly, the reason being the rise in population and opening of new vistas. All this has been made possible because by renewed trust of the masses that throng the temple in millions, particularly, during the navratras- twice a year. Even otherwise, people can be seen forming a beeline to the sanctorum throughout the year and round the clock. It can be, vociferously, concluded that the temple is a regulator of social, cultural, moral, educational and economic aspects of the blessed land where it stands majestically with its head held high and, more often then not invokes admiration, humility, uprightness and, of course, unwavering faith and unflinching reverence in the believers from all walks of life every strata of life- from within the country as well as from the alien lands.