CHAPTER-X
CONCLUSION

With the occupation of territories in the Bari Doab by the leaders of the Sikh Sardars in the 1750s, there started a process which motivated directly to dislodge the Afghan governors, administrators and petty officials who were appointed by Ahmad Shah Abdali to rule in different parts of the Punjab. The successive invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali drawn the Sikh-Afghan struggle long and for a short time, prevented the unification and delayed the consolidation of Sikh power in the Punjab. But, in 1765, the Sikhs brought their long relentless struggle against the formidable might of the Mughals and the Afghans to a successful conclusion and embarked upon a career of conquest and consolidation of power in the various pockets of the Punjab. Consequently, a new political order came into being which is known as Misaldari in which the Sikh Sardars occupied territories and set-up principalities. Similarly, after the end of the Afghan menace, the hill chiefs asserted their supremacy over weak hill chiefs and subdued most of them in order to became paramount power. Some Muslim chiefs rose to power either by taking advantage from the Afghan monarch Ahmad Shah Abdali and Timur Shah or resisting the political authority of the Afghans.

After carving out territories the Sikhs and the non-Sikh rulers understand clearly the imperative need of the revival of trade and manufacturing activities for the prosperity and progress of their territories. At that time, however, the greater number of towns and cities suffered either decline or destruction during Ahmad Shah Abdali’s successive invasions. Soon after consolidating firmly on a permanent basis at a distinct place or headquarters, they strongly and intensely directed their attention, energy and ability to the revival and growth of that distinct place and some other important places which came directly or indirectly under their influence. From emerging this situation they created conditions to ensure stability which determined not only the growth of towns and cities but also exhibited a competition and collaboration among the various rulers to show their skill and ability in terms of the management of the affairs of towns and cities. To appease and pacify the feelings and emotions of the inhabitants they strengthen the foundations of law and order.
Conclusion

For the defense of the territory and the people they constructed new forts and repaired the old ones. After sometimes, traders, artisans, manufactures and businessmen of different areas and regions were stimulated and invited courteously to change their residence and settle in their respective areas who abandoned and departed from their home towns and cities to migrate other parts of the country to find employment and to secure a better prospect of future during the successive invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali.

There were two types of towns and cities which were effected by their fortunes in the process of revival and growth. In the first place, the towns and cities which served under the Mughals and enjoyed some sort of political and administrative status such as Lahore, Multan, Gujrat, Sialkot, Batala, Jalandhar, Dipalpur, Wazirabad, Bhera, Satghara, Jalalpur, Jhang, Kahnuwan, Jammu and Basohli. On the other hand, Amritsar Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Dera Baba Nanak, Kapurthala, Sujanpur, Hallowal, Rahon, Fatehabad, Phillaur, Sayyadwala, Nur Mahal, Pathankot and Tira-Sujanpur were some of the places which grew up all afresh during the late eighteenth century.

Lahore served as the premiere city of the Mughal empire. When the three Sikh Sardars Gujjar Singh, Lehna Singh and Sobha Singh occupied the city of Lahore in 1765, most of the localities were in dilapidated condition and city wall was razed to the ground. The three Sardars intensely and strongly focused their mental ability towards the rehabilitation of the city. On the request of the distinguished persons they strengthen the condition of law and order and issued a proclamation that whosoever oppressed the subjects would be punished strictly. They identified the areas and localities of the thieves and anti social elements and take stern measures to punish them. For the beautification and defense of the city they constructed buildings, mansions and forts. For the common people Gujjar Singh laid forty wells for the supply of water and got constructed 15 shops and 150 houses. They not only invited common people to reside there but also persuaded the traders, businessmen and craftsmen settle down here and conduct their business and economic transactions. Through their efforts and endeavours a considerable stability appeared in Lahore which resulted in the increase of economic transactions. When
Conclusion

Ranjit Singh Sukarchakia occupied the city of Lahore in 1799 the process of stability and growth continued.

The development of Amritsar was fully characterized. Having a status of being the religious capital of the Sikhs, it played a very vital function to produce organic life in the Sikh struggle for independence and always had been remained a centre of attraction and inspiration for the Sikhs throughout their struggle. The Sikhs assembled in great numbers at the time of Baisakhi and Diwali to consult their military operations as well as to have a holy dip in the sacred tank and make offerings in cash and kind at Harmandir Sahib. Here, every important gurmata was passed by the Sikhs.

Economic advancement of Amritsar was solely responsible to the efforts made by the Sikh Sardars which reflected particularly in the construction of the Katras. The katras were separate political units functioning under the autonomous chiefs. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Kanwar Bhag Singh, Jai Singh Kanhiya, Jaimal Singh, Amar Singh Bagga, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Khushal Singh and Sahib Singh, Jhanda Singh Bhangi, Ganda Singh Bhangi, Gulab Singh Bhangi, Karam Singh and Nihal Singh established their Katras, encouraging traders and craftsmen to reside in them. Each Katra covered large areas and it had an independent market of its own. The Sikh Sardars constructed residential buildings of inhabitants and appointed officials for maintaining security as well as for economic transactions. Each Katras was administered by the Sardars or his nominee independently and represented the estates of a chief within the limits of which its owner was supreme. Each Katras provided all the necessities required to the inhabitants in general and to the trading and mercantile classes in particular who had established here.

A large number of towns and cities of the Mughal times like Lahore, Multan, Sialkot, Batala and Jalandhar reflected a significant continuity in the process of manufacturing activity in the period under study. The status of these cities became important when these were adopted as the administrative headquarters by the new rulers of Punjab. These urban centres manufactured a number of articles in response to the local consumption in the home market and for the export demand. Many were famous for woolen, cotton and silk textiles while others were known for metal work, leather work, paper, pottery, wood-work, saddles, salt and iron.
Conclusion

During the late eighteenth century, the position of Lahore in terms of major manufacturing and trading centre can be ascertained from the different kinds of articles which were manufactured for the purpose of trade and consumption in the home market. Being famous for its craftsmen, the principal items manufactured at Lahore consisted of fine textiles, blankets, shawls, white cloths and fine and coarse piece goods and weapons.

Amritsar was developed during the late eighteenth century and in a short time it had emerged as a leading centre of manufacture and trade. Through the successful efforts of the Sikh Sardars it became a grand emporium of trade for shawls and saffrons. The workers, artisans and craftsmen of Amritsar manufactured some kind of coarse cloth, inferior silks, *dushalas*, quilts, quilted cloaks, sables, colours and dyes.

Multan was another centre of manufacture during the late eighteenth century. The items manufactured at Multan were piece goods, white cloths, *chintzes*, silk and cotton articles, richer varieties of *lungis*, *lacha*, *khes*, *gulbadan*, brocades, tissues, woollen carpets, shoes, pottery, ivory stuffs and saddles.

Batala served as a market for the agricultural produce of the surrounding countryside and it was connected with the markets of smaller towns on all sides. It was famous for its jaggery, *susı* and *lungi* cloth, leather work, particularly saddles and shoes, coarse quality *pashmina* and shawls.

The towns of Dinanagar, Pathankot, Suanpur, Dera Baba Nanak and Sri Hargobindpur also continued some considerable manufacturing activity. The articles manufactured by these towns were not of good standard in terms of quality but they were reputed to be the best when these manufactured items were consumed in local and surrounding markets. The items of manufacture and trade of these towns consisted of *loııs*, woven shawls, coarse *pashmina* work, leather work, carved wood and dyed fabrics.

Blankets of good quality were made at Malka Hans whereas Pakpattan was known for its *Lungis* and *Dohars*. Similarly, Kamalia and Qabula were famous for its manufacture of *ghee*. Qasur was known for its leather work and textile industry.
Conclusion

In the Jalandhar Doab, Nakodar was famous for the *chandeli* and other similar kinds of textiles. In Phagwara, several kinds of coarse textiles were manufactured. The crops like wheat, barley, gram, *moth*, *mung*, *jowar*, *urad* and the sugarcane were produced in larger quantities here. *Gur* (jaggery) could be referred as the specialty of this area. Bajwara and Rahon were famous for their cloth products. Coarse cloth and *chintzes* were manufactured at Sultanpur. The other agricultural produce of the Jalandhar Doab which entered the market included rice, oil, tobacco and fruit. Our sources refer to several non-agricultural products in the Jalandhar Doab such as brass, copper and bell metal utensils in Phagwara, bows and arrows, silver wire and laces in Jalandhar.

In the Rachna Doab, Sialkot maintained its former status as the centre of manufacture with slightly changes in the form of manufactured merchandised goods. In the early eighteenth century, it was well known for its paper industry, *chikan* work and for manufacturing of *jamdar*, *katar* and *barchhi*. During the late eighteenth century, it was famous for its paper, embroidered muslin, fine *lachas* and *lungis*, quilts, brocades, daggers and spears.

In the Chaj Doab, Gujrat, Bhera and Sahiwal were famous for their manufacturing and trading activities. Gujrat during the Mughal period was famous for its swords, daggers and embroidered muslin. In the late eighteenth century, the items manufactured here were swords, matchlocks and daggers. Apart from these warlike implements, it was also well known for its shawls, embroidery, brass vessels, wood-work and shoes.

Bhera was famous for its excellent stone cutters and its manufacture of arms, cutlery, belts, cotton cloth, iron, rice and sugar. Similarly, Sahiwal was the city where *salus* were dyed in very fine colours. The coppersmiths of this place made fine vessels of copper and brass. It was also famous for its turners in ivory and wood works.

In the Sindh Sagar Doab, Rawalpindi was the most important centre of trade and manufacture. It was famous for the manufacture of brass and copper wares. Pindi Gheb, Fatehjang and Dangli manufactured textiles, blankets, packing bags, saddles, lacquered legs for bedsteads and low chairs. In Mankera, *lungis*, *gulbadan* and *chintzes* were manufactured.
Conclusion

Salt was an important item consumed by the people. The use of salt was comprehensive as the people employed it in the process of making vegetables for eating. There were salt mines at Kheora, Makhiala and Khoorg and from these mines a considerable quantities of salt was extracted and it was exported to different places in the Punjab as well as in different parts of Hindustan. Pind Dadan Khan, Kusak, Miani, Ram Nagar and Kalabagh served as a market for salt extracted from the Salt Range. With a passage of time, these places grew in importance owing to the trade in salt.

Turning to the hills, Rice of a very good quality was produced in the area around Kangra fort. Silver ornaments and tinsel printed cloths were made at Kangra. Nurpur was famous for the manufacture of *pashmina* shawls. Rehlu, in Chamba territory, produced the best quality of rice. Good quality blankets were made in Kulu, Lahul and Spiti.

Inter-state trade continued even during the times of political unrest and upheaval. The overland route connected Punjab on the one hand with the Mughal empire and on the other with Persia and Central Asia. The articles of export to these distant areas consisted mainly of camels, horses, rice, sugar, white cloth, matchlocks, swords and bows and arrows. The articles of import from there were swords, horses, fruits, iron, lead, sulphar, salt, spices, shawls, saffrons, variety of cloths, pearls, gold thread, elephant’s teeth, broad cloths, nutmecs, cloves, dry dates, coconut, indigo, sheep and camels. Besides it, local trade was also common in the Punjab. For the peasantry, the local markets must have been of incomparably greater significance and they sold their produce in the nearby town or surrounding areas. From small town or villages articles of trade were carried out from one place to another in response to the demand of consumption. The articles of merchandise were carried out by the members of the caravans who participated in the inter-state trade to travel in groups for the purposes of carrying out trade with other countries.

In this period not only the trade routes of the former times were employed but in the new political situation new trade routes had come into being. This change was ascribed primarily to the Sikh ascendancy. One important result of this change in the route of trade caused, in some way or another, to the great prosperity of nearby towns. In this connection, stability and prosperity of Jammu was directly
linked with this change. Besides it, Ranjit Dev, the ruler of Jammu, largely contributed to its wealth and prominence. He encouraged traders and merchants of all communities to settle down here. His administration provided the basis for the prosperity by utilization of resources properly. Around 1770s, Jammu had become a flourishing city and a very important centre of trade and commerce. From here shawl trade was carried out to other places particularly Amritsar and Lahore. However, the increasing resources of the state of Jammu probably were a source of his strength and influence. But its importance did not remained much longer. After the accession of Brij Raj Dev, prosperity of Jammu was eclipsed owing to its sack by Mahan Singh Sukerchakia and the more rigorous demands on the inhabitants of the city.

The means of transportation in the plains were animals like horses, camels, mules, asses, donkeys, buffaloes and cows. In the desert areas which connected Multan to Rajasthan or Sindh camels were generally used. In the hills, the articles of merchandise between Jammu and Kashmir were transported by men usually by Kashmiris. Horses or mules were not used in transportation because of the absence of adequate paths and steepness of the mountains.

The business communities were actively engaged in the process of collection and distribution of merchandised goods and were thus the intermediaries between the producers and consumers. They resided mostly in urban areas, including qasbas or small towns. These communities were from amongst different socio-religious and regional groups like the Khatris, Aroras, Banias, Mahajans, Batras, Bhatias, Suds, Banjaras, Khojahs and Parchas. Some of them, particularly the Khatris, Aroras and Banias claimed their origin from the Rajputs. There were groups like the Kashmiris and the Shikarpuris who were known by the name of the region to which they belonged.

In the occupations and corresponding economic roles of the members of the business communities no clear cut distinction can be made because the people who were traders were adopting the profession of moneylending and shopkeeping. Some of them owned land. They arranged the raw material for the artisans to manufacture necessary goods and paid them wages or remuneration for their output. The leading
businessmen helped the various rulers and the agriculturists by providing them loans in times of need.

The various new rulers’ policy towards trade and business communities shows that they realised their importance in the economy of the state as well as in the lives of their subjects. They granted them facilities like exemption from certain taxes and protection from robbers. They constructed shops and serais for the convenience of the leading businessmen.

Decline and revival of trade was not a new phenomenon. We find that the trading activity has a history spreading over many centuries. Therefore, this phenomenon of trading activity must be judged in its true historical perspective. Our present analysis has shown that the continuous invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the beginning of our period led to a widespread devastations which, in turn, effected the economic prosperity of the region adversely and reduce the traders, artisans, craftsmen, businessmen and cultivators to a low state of subsistence. Common villagers were also in a miserable condition. The battles and the struggle between the Sikh Sardars for both scramble of land and for supremacy created a new kind of environment in which the possibility of war cannot be minimized. Their competition and collaboration in terms of organising the policies in both positive and negative attitudes vitally effected the prospect of internal and external trade. The merchant felt insecure owing to so many independent chiefs who taking advantage of the existing political chaos and anarchy found robbery highly profitable. In these circumstances, the traders had started migrate to safer areas. Turning our attention to the later part of our period of study, we find a somewhat visible signs of sound economic prospect. In this context, the process of urbanization and the incoming of traders, artisans, craftsmen, businessmen into towns and cities were significant. It is interesting to note that the migration to outside areas and the incoming of the traders and craftsmen into the towns were the reverse and the obverse of the same situation, accounting largely for the strengthening and weakening the structure of economy in the region at the same time.

The financial resources of the various new rulers of the Punjab were different from each other according to the size and extent of their principalities. It is quite evident from the resources they had at their commands. The number of chiefs who
Conclusion

commanded resources of more than 10,00,000 rupees a year was much less. A small proportion of the chiefs possessed resources ranging from 5,00,000 to 10,00,000 rupees a year. The number of chiefs whose revenue ranged between 1,00,000 to 5,00,000 rupees a year was considerable. A large number of the chiefs commanded revenue worth more than 50,000 but less than 1,00,000 rupees a year. A much larger majority among the new rulers was of those whose resources were less than 50,000 rupees a year.

This kind of financial structure was mainly rested on the foundation of land revenue and tribute which were regarded as the main source of income besides others. These economic resources directly or indirectly, determined not only the economic status of the principalities but also influenced the nature of economy. Better utilization or preservation of these resources provided the basis of stability to the states which directly related to the increase of income because these were the main edifice and structure which could strengthen the roots of finance of the chiefs.

In the time of the ascendancy of the various new rulers during the late eighteenth century, the systems of assessment and collection of land revenue remained the same as under the Mughals. In this connection, the policies and their implementation for the collection of land revenue become significant when we find that the majority of the Sikh rulers belonged to the cultivating class or to the classes associated with it. To ensure the collection of land revenue, they were more concerned with the security and peace to the peasants and the development of agriculture. The Sikh Sardars and non-Sikh chiefs encouraged and promoted the interests of the Jats, Rajputs, Arains, Awans and the Gujars who were directly engaged in agricultural pursuits and operations. They also protected, defend and guard the rights of the Tarkhans, Lohars, Kumhars, Chamars, Mochis, Jhiwars and the Chuhras who supplied all necessary implements and labour. The agricultural communities produced a large variety of food and non-food crops such as Wheat, gram, barley, maize, rice, sugarcane, cotton, oilseeds, tobacco and spices which were grown almost all over the Punjab.

For the assessment and collection of land revenue the Sikh Sardars and non-Sikh chiefs employed three methods batai, kankut and zapt. The first involved the division of the crop between the state and the cultivator after harvesting. This system
Conclusion

was mostly favourable among the peasants because of its simplicity and equity. The second concerned with the assessment of the share of the government on the basis of the standing crops before harvesting. The third associated with fixed cash assessment per unit area which was generally known as zabt. This system was largely applied to the superior or perishable crops like cotton, indigo, sugarcane, tobacco, poppy, safflower, chillies, oilseeds, pulses and vegetables. However, the systems of assessment, batai and kankut were largely applied for much larger area than zabt during the period of our study. On the whole, these systems were in operation not only in the plains of the Punjab but also in the hill areas.

Realization of revenue was conducted in both cash and kind. Regarding the rate of assessment only moderate rate was charged from the cultivators and was generally lower than what had been in the Mughal times. At some places it is mentioned as one-half but generally it was less going down to even one-fifth or one-sixth of the produce. On the crops of daily consumption such as fodder for cattle or vegetables or fruits, the normal charge was one rupee per mound. It is interesting to note that the government’s share in batai and kankut could be commuted into cash if the cultivator agreed to. In this connection, the rate of assessment was two-fifth.

It appears that there was a general tendency of deductions imposed on the peasants in lieu of the expenses incurred on cultivation. These deductions were levied before the division of the crop between the state and the cultivators. In this connection, pachotra or five percent share of the produce to the chaudharis or muqaddams was prevalent. Besides this, weighman’s fee and carriage charges were also recovered from the cultivators in the form of authorized or unauthorized cesses. Moghla or share of the government in the case of indigo was assessed in cash per maund in the territories of the chiefs of Bahawalpur.

To expand their economic base further, the Sikh Sardars and non-Sikh chiefs levied taxes on pasture land and orchards. Sufficient income poured into the exchequers of the chiefs from these taxes. Hak-buha, tik and ghiana were some other cesses and taxes in addition to the above which were collected from the villagers in some areas. The house tax usually collected from the Kamins and non-proprietary residents of the villages. Tik was levied on the non-Sikh principalities at the rate of 2 or 4 rupees per 32 maund of grain. In the hills, a cess called ghiana was
imposed on the professional owners of cows and buffaloes who did not pay *tirni* tax. *Nahrana* or water tax for the supply of canal water for irrigation continued to be levied on the cultivators wherever the canals existed.

For some rulers booty was also a good source of income. The booty was mainly collected by the process of conducting a war. The victorious army committed plunder and loot on the vanquished subjects whenever an opportunity arose. In this context, the interests of the merchants and craftsmen suffered extensively.

The tribute was an important feature of the polity of late eighteenth century Punjab. It contributed to the state’s economy substantially. The realization of tribute depended largely on the status of suzerainty. In the context of suzerain-vassal relationship, the most powerful chief became the overlord of less powerful chiefs and determined the relations on the basis of his strength. This institution of the Mughal times continued to survive under the times of new rulers of the Punjab. They adopted and employed it with an equal ease and consistency.

Ahmad Shah Abdali and his successors were fully contended with the idea of suzerainty and they exploited the resources of the various chiefs of the Punjab by assimilating them in the sphere of suzerain-vassal relationship. But their efforts did not fully succeed owing to the ascendancy of the local powerful chiefs. They had become paramount not in the plains of the Punjab but also in the hills. For example, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Charhat Singh and Mahan Singh Sukerchakia, Hari Singh Bhangi, Jhanda Singh Bhangi, Gujjar Singh and Sahib Singh Bhangi, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia, Jai Singh Kanhiya were the names who had become sovereign rulers of their territories and extracted tribute from the non-Sikh chiefs of the Punjab. In the hills, Ranjit Dev of Jammu and Sansar Chand of Kangra also followed the policy of tribute for some time. Later, they had become the tributaries of the Sikh rulers.

An important point of the socio-economic set up was a certain degree of self-sufficiency and autonomy which enabled not only the various parts of the region to function properly and effectively without the existence of a centralized state but also encouraged people to adjust with the new political change which reflected the process of continuity by the policies of the Sikh Sardars and non-Sikh chiefs during the late eighteenth century. From adventurers, the Sikh Sardars and non-Sikh chiefs became possessors who had everything valuable to lose. With the occupation of
Conclusion

territories and establishing good administration they enlightened the minds of the ignorant. They devised and formulated tremendous policies by which they achieved big things from a small beginning. Their decisions had effected the destinies of millions. This is appear from the fact that the commercial as well as agrarian economy of the Punjab reflected the signs of stability, growth and revival during the later decades of eighteenth century.