PREFACE

With the advent of the Britshers in India the new avenues of trade and trading activities were opened up as the Britshers were found quite enthusiastic about Indian trade. They (Britshers) were simply over awed to see the abundance of goods available in this country. They also gave an important testimony about the socio-economic conditions, than prevailing in the country. The Britshers like Ralph Fitch, John Mildenhall, William Hawkins, William Finch, Sir Thomas Roe, Thomas Coryat, Edward Terry, Ovington, Peter Mundy, Marshall, Streynsham Master, William Hedges, Herbert, Bowery, Fryer and Hamilton Norris etc. not only raised the prestige of their nation in their eyes of the Mughals, but were able to procure certain trade facilities for their country. The early Britshers explored the trade potential that existed in the country and gave an estimation of the various commodities. Thus message was conveyed through various writings of the travellers and the British people showed a great gusto for the Indian goods.

The present research work entitled "Society and Economy in Mughal India: A Critical Analysis of British Accounts" would rely heavily upon the European sources, particularly the British sources in the absence of suitable source material in Persian language. It is based on an intensive study of original sources. It presents a comprehensive and interesting picture of the socio-economic and cultural history of Mughal period beginning from 1556-1707. However, Persian sources relevant to my topic (Society and Economy in Mughal India) have been used and Hindi sources are also not neglected as some of them like Surdas, Kesav and Tulsidas etc. throw a good deal of light on prevailing socio-economic conditions of those times. Some Britshers have left valuable description of their observations and experiences in the land of the imperial Mughals in the forms of the various diaries, personal letters, official papers and communications addressed to their friends and relations in England. These sources throw a good deal of light on the social, religion, economic and cultural conditions of those times.
However, an earnest effort will be made to study several primary sources and almost all available secondary sources to give a fair and analytical picture of the present work. This study would be conducted without any pre-conceived notion and the conclusions would be done accordingly in the light of the facts obtained from the contemporary and near contemporary records.

The present study is a pioneering attempt to analyse and evaluate the “Society and Economy in Mughal India: a critical analysis of British accounts.” During mughal period, a number of Britishers visited India and provide valuable accounts in the form of the Journals, Diaries, Travelogues and Letters draw light into the day today lives of the people belonging to different strata of society and explaining the economic scenario.

Scientifically-planned and well arranged chapter of this work endeavour to throw sufficient fresh light on various aspects of the social and economic life of the people of that age. I have divided my Thesis into five chapters and a brief description is given below:

Chapter I refer to the Social Structure, food habits, housing, cosmetics and manners, dress and ornaments of both men and women, high and low.

Chapter II, has been well planned and deals with the social status of the women, early marriage, dowry, divorce, purdah, harem life, sati, jauhar prostitution etc. the pitiable lot of the Hindu widows has also been described in considerable details.

Chapter III deals mainly Agricultural and non-Agricultural production; there is a detailed account of fruits, vegetables, cash crops, forest produce and mineral etc. the contribution of village craftsmen, the Jeweller, carpenters, blacksmith, potters, weavers, dyers, tailors and washermen etc.

Chapter IV, Means of Travelling and communication deals with road building activity, Kos Minars, Bridges, Tanks and wells, The Adhawyas, Bats, Carvans, Banzaras, Coaches and Palquins, Horses, Camels, Cows, Oxen, Elephant
I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank the eminent Historians like Prof. Irfan Habib, Prof. Shireen Moosvi and Prof. V.N. Dutta, for having encouraged me regarding my project and gave some valuable tips during the 62nd session of Indian History Congress at Bhopal (M.P.).

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etc. the means of communication like Dak, Chauki, Mewars and runners, Post arrangements, Secret service etc.

Chapter 1, Urban Economy deals with development of towns consuming and producing classes, mandis market and towns, craft production, trade and commerce, import and export and professional class etc.

Finally, the conclusion gives main theme of all these works. It provides "resume" of all the above chapters and their importance related with the Mughal period.

In the completion of this work, I have been helped by a number of persons and institutions.

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[Signature]

Karam Chand