

A Biographical Sketch of European Travellers to India (1556-1707)

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ABSTRACT

This article throws light on the biographical sketch of the travellers' who not only witnessed and experienced the Indian culture, religious ceremonies and the society in the Mughal state but also penned down their observations on the basis of their perceptions and experiences. When we piece together their treatises, they give us interesting insight about the religious and cultural landscape of the Mughal Empire. A detailed account of their contacts with the state and the society will help us understand the original contributions to the accounts which they have written during or after their visits to India.

Key Words: European, India, Mughal, Religious Accounts, Travellers.

Introduction

European interest in India persisted since classical times and for very cogent reasons. India and material riches were synonym words for at least three thousand years before the British Indian rule. India because of its wealth had historically been a magnet for many foreign invaders. Milton's phrase in *Paradise Lost* "the wealth of Ormus or of Ind" is very well known and Shakespeare refers to India as "the climax of great opportunities for this world as virtue is with regard to the world to come" (Gupta, 1979).

Hegel (1770-1831) pointed out "India as a Land of Desire". Since ancient times, all nations directed their wishes and longings to gain access to the treasures of this land of marvels. The manner, by which these treasures have been passed to the West, is of great historical significance (Gupta, 1979).

Bjoran Landstrom, a Swiss author of the *Quest for India* who studied the story of 3,000 years of voyages is of view that "the routes and means were many, but the goal was always the same to reach the fabled land of India a country overflowing with fabulous riches of gold, silver precious gems, exotic foods, spices, fabrics....."(Gupta, 1979). Arnold Toynbee, the prominent historian said that the world economic history "becomes intelligible only when you have taken into account the Indian factor in it" as "India has also been a major force in the world's history in the very different field of economic" and that's why the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes, the French, and the British fought with each other for the most profitable trade with India (Gupta, 1979).

Many European travellers from different countries such as England, France, Italy, Holland, Germany, Portugal and Spain visited India during the Mughal rule (1526-1707). Quite a few of them could leave valuable accounts of their observations experiences in the form of memories, diaries, journals, travelogues, personal letters, communications addressed to their friends and relatives in Europe, officials papers and reports of their missions. These travellers reflected on a variety of subjects ranging from Mughal political courts, social life, customs, religion and some of the most neglecting sections of Indian society. These travellers also offered exotic knowledge of the outside world, although many conflicting travellers' tales had to be assessed against each other. For example, Monserrate and other Portuguese warned Mughal emperors that perfidious England was a tributary of Portugal. Hawkins denied this and in turn, warned the Mughals against Portuguese duplicity (Fisher, 2007).

A brief introduction of European travellers is given below who visited India during the reign of Great Mughal Emperors during 1526-1707AD.

Dutch Travellers

Francisco Pelsaert (1620-1627) came to the Dutch factory of Agra in December 1620. The main aim of his arrival was to promote the Dutch trade in India. During his stay, he mostly wrote the business reports for his company but in these report he mentioned the business activities, administrative set up and glimpses of social life during the reign of Jahangir. This travelogue is based on his seven years (1620-1627AD) observations and experiences during his stay in India (Pelsaert, 1925). He mostly remained in Agra but also travelled from Lahore to Kashmir.

English Travellers

The first Englishman alleged to have visited India was Sighelmus around A.D 883. Perhaps he was sent by King Alfred to the shrine of St.Thomas in South India. Father Thomas Stephens who went out to Goa in 1579 and remained in India until his death in 1619, started his journey in India as a rector of college at Rachal in Salsette, latter devoted himself to missionary activities (Kaul, 2002). He was one of the earliest Europeans to take an interest in Oriental languages; he published a grammar of the Konkari dialect and in 1615, he wrote a remarkable poem, entitled the *Kristana Puran* in Konkari (Marathi) which is a classic of that speech (Garratt, 1938).

Ralph Fitch (1550-1611) was a merchant of London and one of the earliest English travellers and traders to visit Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, India and South East. He came to India in 1583 and visited the south East Asia during 1583-1591.

He travelled through the heart of India to the court of the Great Mughal Akhbar, then at Agra. Fitch then visited Benaras, Patna, Kuch, Behar, Chittagong etc. (1585-1586). He then pushed on by sea to Pegu and Burma. In 1588, he visited

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Malaca. He returned back to London during 1591. His experience was greatly valued by the founders of the East India Company, who consulted him on Indian affairs.

Fitch's account '*England's pioneer to India and Burma*' is a firsthand account of Indian history and its amazingly rich variety of people and products. He had written many accurate descriptions of the social, religious and political life in India. On the whole, he had been genuinely enthusiastic about India in so far as it offered enormous possibilities for trade (Prasad, 1980). Mr. J. Horton Ryley, entitled Ralph "England's Pioneer to India" (Foster, 1978).

John Mildenhall (1560-1614AD) was an adventure of a more disreputed type. He was the one of the first to make an overland journey to India via Kandahar in the assumed character of an ambassador, who wished to conclude some commercial arrangement with the Emperor Akbar. Mildenhall travelled to India and reached Lahore in 1603 and from there he reached the court of the Mughal emperor and had discussions with him. He praises a lot about the religious tradition of Akbar. Although he was a merchant but his accounts throws light about the religious policy of Emperor Akbar (Foster, 1978).

William Finch was an English traveller who visited India (1608-11AD) during the reign of Jahangir. In the meantime the English Company had established itself in Agra and was in search of the other trade centers and concessions in India. William Finch was the companion of Capt. William Hawkins. They were sent from Agra to Lahore in connection with certain transactions in Indigo. Finch kept a large journal, which is reproduced by purchase, and from it we learn that he reached Lahore on 4th February, 1611. The account given of his travels is of especial value as showing the routes then followed from Delhi to Lahore and from Lahore to Kabul and Kashmir. He gives a detailed description of the Fort in Lahore, the gardens outside the city, and the tomb of Anarkali, then still under construction (Maclagan, 1921). Finch also tells us about Jahangir's liking of Christian paintings.

William Hawkins (1585-1613), the youthful but widely travelled English merchant, ambassador and explorer, reached Surat in Gujrat on the first East India Company fleet to India. He remained here from 1608-13. King James I (1603-25AD) had delegated Hawkins to negotiate with emperor Jahangir (1605-27AD) for trade concessions and a permanent English base (factory) for its merchants (factors) (Fisher, 2007). Hawkins knew Turkish which enabled him to communicate directly with Mughal officials and the Emperor Jahangir appointed him as a high official and given him a *mansab* of 400. Through Hawkins account, "*The Hawkins Voyage*", we also come to know the English and Portuguese rivalry in the Mughal court. Hawkins was the first Englishman to have written about the Mansabdari system and to have conveyed some idea of it to his countryman (Prasad, 1980).

Nicholas Withington was an English adventurer who came to India in the year 1612 and remained here till 1616. He came with Captain Thomas Best whose victory over Portuguese is said to have marked the first rising of British star in the

East (Anderson, 1854). It exalted the prestige of English as warriors and secured for them a royal fireman granting general and perpetual trade and the establishment of factories in Surat, Cambay, Ahmadabad, or any other part of the country within the Mughal domination. Withington's account, "*Early travels in India*" conveys not only a picture of those objects which the traveller saw but of his personality as well. He seems to have been as clever as he was brave, and his literary qualities, though not first rate, are undoubtedly above of an average adventurer.

Thomas Coryat (1577-1617) was the English traveller and writer of the late Elizabethan and early Jacoban age. He was the son of a Clergyman and was educated at Winchester and Oxford. He is principally remembered for two volumes of writings he left regarding his travel, often on foot, through Europe and parts of Asia. In 1608, he undertook a tour of Europe and published his memories of the event in 1611. This volume gives us a vivid picture of his life in Europe during the time. Ever restless, he set out once again in 1612, this time on a journey that would ultimately lead to Asia, the Eastern Mediterranean area, Persia and eventually India. He also met with Jahangir in his court when he was in Ajmer, Gujrat. During his stay in India (1612-17), he sent out a letter describing his experiences; his "*Greeting form the Court of the Great Mughal*" was published in 1616. In his letters, he seems to be very biased towards Muslims and Holy Prophet (PBUH), but on the other hand, he praises the religious freedom during the reign of Jahangir and compares his religious policy with other contemporary Muslim Countries (Foster, 1978).

Sir Thomas Roe (1581-1644AD) was an English diplomat of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Roe was an accomplished scholar, a patron of learning and of upright character. In 1614, he was elected as the Member of Parliament for Tamwarth. He was the duly accredited ambassador form James 1 (1603-25AD) to Jahangir. The task assigned to him was to negotiate a treaty giving security to English trade in India. Roe arrived at Surat in September 1615, and marched as soon as practical to the court. Roe became! a favorite of Jahangir. He was his drinking partner.

Roe's "*Journal of the Mission to the Mughal Emperor*" is a valuable contribution to the history of India in the early 17th century. It is chiefly useful as a faithful record of the manner in which business was done at the court saturated with intrigue, treachery, and corruption (Smith, 1988). Roe went home in 1619. Although he had failed to obtain the formal treaty desired, he secured considerable concessions to his countrymen and laid a solid foundation for the East India Company.

Among the preachers sent to India by the East India Company in the early years of its commercial transactions in the East, none is perhaps more widely known today then Edward Terry. He come to India with the Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe and remained as his Chaplain for two and a half years. Terry remained in India from 1616 to 1619, but he had only himself seen parts of Malwa and Gujrat-a fact to be kept in mind when reading his generalization about India

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(Foster, 1978). Although he has some misunderstandings about Islam and the Muslims but in his travel account, “*A Voyage to the East Indies*” he does not confine himself to the description of one particular aspect of Indian life, but tries to draw a comprehensive picture that is credible and authoritative (Prasad, 1980). Therefore, Terry has been recognized as an important contributor to Anglo-Indian literature; it is not because of any unmerited privilege granted to Sir Thomas Roe’s Chaplain. It is his work, his achievement that entitles him to this praise.

Peter Mundy (1596-1667AD), the son of an English merchant, spent much of his youth traveling in various capacities, including as a cabin boy and merchant, through France, Spain and Mediterranean. In 1627, at the age, of 33, he gained employment from the East India Company (Fisher, 2007). He visited India thrice between 1628 and 1656 and having come to Surat in September, 1628 as a cabin boy on a merchant ship of the East India Company, he joined the Agra factory in 1630 (Temple, 1907). He later on visited western India besides a number of towns of Malwa and Bihar. In the accounts of his travels, he refers to some of peculiar socio-religious customs of the people, their economic conditions and has a great deal to say about the Mughal polity and events of political importance. Of course, his account, “*Travels in Europe and Asia (1608-1667)*”, contains a number of silly mistakes. For instance, he describes Nurjahan as the mother of Shahjahan. Similarly his assertion that Jahangir nominated Bulaqi as successor is based on bazar gossip.

In the capacity of an eyewitness, Peter Mundy’s description of Agra, its markets, and its houses is both vivid and picturesque. He compares Fatehpur-Sikri with European cities in point of conformity of buildings. Nothing significant indeed, escapes his attention, and his comments are often of great value on account of their accuracy. The depiction of severe famine of 1630 and the description of the suffering of the people is very touching. He never indulges in traveller’s tale.

Henry Lord was a Chaplain to the East India Company in Surat (1624-1629). He ensured himself a permanent and unique place in the history of Zoroastrian studies by writing “*A Display of two Foreign Sects in the East Indies*”. It is the first significant work written in English on Indian religion, Indologists, and cultural historians. Lord’s work is different in style and content to the accounts of contemporary European Travellers, because he had made a serious attempt to understand the religions rather than condemn them.

Lord’s account, as Will Sweetman suggests, was not always accurate, but was informative. Thus he achieved one of his two aims, to satisfy the desire of his compatriots for novelty by bringing light to custom, laws, castes and ceremonies previously unknown to them. As a Protestant Christian, Lord’s other aim shared by many writers of his time was to reveal these religions for the composed fictions they were (Sweetman, 1999). Lord’s book informs readers about the way in which seventeenth-century European viewed the religious traditions and practices they encountered during their time in India.

Sir Thomas Herbert is one of the less known travellers of the Mughal period. After studying at Oxford and Trinity College, Cambridge, he went in 1627 to

Persia as secretary to an English Embassy which was sent therein that year. He reached India in 1634 and remained here for two years during the course of which he paid a short visit to Surat and the surrounding districts (Herbert, 1677). He returned home and wrote description of his travels. His account contains a very fair picture of the closing years of Jahangir's reign and of the operations that placed Khurram on the throne.

The credentials of Sir Thomas, for writing an account of Mughal India, are based on his brief visit to the Indian shore. His description begins with the reign of Timur and it goes down to the accession of Shahjahan. But he seems to have paid little to the chronology and the sequence of events. Herbert also gets confused with unfamiliar Indian names (Nanda, 1994). John Marshall was a factor in East India Company. He was appointed by the East India Company on 8th January, 1668 and had his first glimpse of India on 3rd September, 1668. During his stay in India, he visited Bengal, Hugli, Madras, Balasora, Malda, Patna, Murshidabad and Aurangabad. He went back to England in 1672 and died there in 1677 (Khan, 1927). His travel accounts consist of notes of information on all sorts of subjects, based on hearsay as well as his personal observations. He gives his opinion on the trade and economy of the same period especially (Nanda, 1994). He had good knowledge of Arabic and Persian and continued his study of Hindu religion and philosophy is quite detailed. But his account of both Hinduism and Islam is confusing as he misinterprets several terms.

Thomas Bowrey (1650-1713AD) by occupation was a sailing-master. He began his career at Fort St. George Madaras. His brief Indian travels took place on the Coromandel coast in Bengal and in Golconda. On which he gives multifarious information to his reader. He was well acquainted with the writing of Barnier and the Mughal history down to his own time. His account, "*The Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669-79*" is simple but most quaint and interesting. He is an acute observer of all that went on around him. His description and careful portrayal of native boast are among the best of its kind (Nanda, 1994). His references about many notable Anglo-Indians of his day are of additional interest. He showed these men in their ordinary daily life, rather than in their official character as they appear in the company's records (Nanda, 1994).

Johan Fryer was a surgeon in the East India Company. The sphere of his travels included Coromandel and Malabar coasts, and trips to a little way inland a various places between Combay and Goa. Though his account "*A New Account of East India and Persia*" 3 vols is confined to limited filed, yet he is a valuable source of information on polity and socio-economic conditions of the times (Fryer, 1912). He had little knowledge of the vernacular dialects, and was largely dependent upon an interpreter. His knowledge about the Mughal Empire was confined to meeting a few of its officials.

In spite of these shortcomings, his work is, as rightly observed by Sir G. Birdwood, the most delightful book ever published on these countries, and valuable for the graphic descriptions it gives of the factory like and general condition of the people of India in his time" (Fryer, 1912). Fryer was familiar with

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the works of Herbert, Tavernier and Bernier (Nanda, 1994). His observations upon what he saw, are instructive as well entertaining.

Alexander Hamilton travelled in the Eastern parts of India and maintained a long account of his experiences, "*A New Account of East Indies*", 2 vols. He combined the functions of trader and traveller and in course of his peregrinations, visited most of the countries and islands of commerce and navigation between the Cape of Good Hope and the island of Japan. In his travelogues, the focus of his description is mainly on socioeconomic conditions of the period. Hamilton seems to have been acquainted with all parts of India which bordered on the Eastern Coast. His account makes interesting reading, but it is mostly a repetition of what earlier travellers had recorded. His wide experiences, however, at times, gives his statements a peculiar value, and saves him from many of the pitfalls into which less travelled writers were led (Nanda, 1994).

John Ovington was an English Clergyman who came to India during the reign of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). He visited Surat and Bombay and wrote an ambitious and racy account of India, "*A Voyage to Surat in the Year 1689*". In this travelogue, considerable remarks are found on the coins of India and the Kingdom of Persia. His account contains some by no means despicable evidence related to the method and the result of Mughal administration. He also gives considerable space the social habits of the inhabitants of Surat. In Ovington, account of his learning, inquisitiveness, patience and circumspection is praise-worthy, but a few faults due to his partisan spirit, his religious prejudices, and the diffuseness of his style are also noticeable (Nanda, 1994).

Sir William Norris' travel account, "*The Norris Embassy to Aurangzeb (1699-1702)*", substantially enriches the historical literature of the period from 1699 to 1702. The detailed, well-documented and erudite account of the embassy is a valuable contribution (Nanda, 1994). Norris was sent to India as a representative both of King William III and also of the New or English East India Company. His mission covered over three years (1699-1702AD), a period which was pregnant with lupine consequences. It saw the decline of the Mughal Empire and the union of the two rival Companies.

His account possess great historical value and gives a full account of day to day events and the matters concerning the embassy and also adds much to our knowledge regarding the life at the Mughal court. The main object of Norris in recording this account was to report the progress of his mission and to record particularly the customs, manners, policies and interest of the Great Mughal and other Princes for the King's information. His unfamiliarity with India's customs and language often betrayed him in to what, in one engaged in a diplomatic mission, can only be described as blunders. Yet as a source of information, his journal is very rich in depicting almost all aspects of the society of that period. He was not without prejudice but his impressions, so far as the people themselves were concerned, were unbiased at least by racial felling or religious bigotry (Nanda, 1994).

French Travellers

Jean Baptiste Tavernier was among the first important French travellers to India and considered as a prince of rambles. He made six voyages to the East from 1631 to 1657. He visited India for the first time in 1640 and repeated his visits during the succeeding years. His travels extended to the greater portion of the country while in India, he became a friend of Bernier and travelled to Bengal with him. At Jahanabad, in the autumn of 1665, Tavernier had an audience with Aurangzeb, offering him some valuable presents, and selling to him a number of precious stones (Tavernier, 1889). In 1666, at Surat Tavernier met Thevenot at Bandar Abbas in 1667, and he had an interview with Chardin.

Tavernier's account "*Travels in India*" is one of the most important works for the economic history of the Mughal period. His description of roads and highway is full of interest. His remarks on political history are, of course, a mixed yarn. He narrates things as they occur and unlike Bernier does not attempt any interpretation (Nanda, 1994). He tells very little about the peasantry of the revenue-system but his description of the precious stones of the Mughal Empire and Aurangzeb is very reliable (Tavernier, 1889). We must remember that he was not a scientifically trained observer who visited India with the intention of describing the country and its people. He observes it from the point of view of a merchant and nothing engages his attention so much as a successful bargain (Tavernier, 1889). But always striving to comprehend local customs he depicted in rich detail but differing degrees of accuracy. Banjaras, the holy city of Benaras and the burgeoning trade between Europeans and Indians (Fisher, 2007).

Of the all European travellers during the time of Shahjahan (1628-1658) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707), who have recorded their impressions about the East, Bernier's account "*Travels in the Moghal Empire*" is most popular. Francois Bernier was a French physician and natural philosopher. Before coming to India he visited Palestine, Syria and Egypt. In 1658, when he was on his way from Surat to Agra, he met Dara near Ahmadabad (Bernier, 1916). The professed object of his visit was to accumulate knowledge and the desire for seeing the world.

Bernier was patronized at Delhi by Danishmand Khan a leading mansabdar. He occasionally refers to the source of his information in his narrative. The battle of Dharmat was described to him by a French gunner in the service of Aurangzeb. He also consulted European merchants who had settled in this country besides the ambassadors, counsels and interpreters (Nanda, 1994). His description of the war of succession is very graphic though his portrayal of the character of Jahanara is far from accuracy. He personally witnessed Dara being paraded in Delhi and also Sulaiman Shukoh's arrival at the court.

Bernier's observation on the defects in the military system of the Mughal are correct. His description of Delhi, Agra and Kashmir is interesting and his tribute to the Taj. Being a highly educated man and philosopher, he sometime finds it impossible to divorce idealism from reality. His eloquent description of the evils of despotic government is instances of this type (Nanda, 1994).

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Another noted French traveller of Shahjahan's period is Thevenot. During a span of thirty-four years, he visited a large number of countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. In January 1666, he arrived at Surat. From there he travelled overland to Ahmedabad and Cambay and further north. He returned to Surat but was not to stay there for a long. Across the Deccan peninsula, he proceeded towards Masulipatam on the Eastern-Coast passing through Burhanpur, Aurangabad, Golconda and spent only two hours at Ellora (Sen, 1949).

Conversant with Turkish, Arabic and Persian Thevenot freely moved among the people of Middle East and India. Thevenot's account, "*Voyages*" is a work of abiding interest. Not confining himself to an account of Indian people, he also tried to describe its fauna and flora (Sen, 1949). His remarks on the administration of Gujrat, and especially of Surat are very valuable. His account relating to the custom-house possesses value of its own. Thevenot also depended on hearsay particularly for the history of the ruling dynasties and the civil administration of the country and consequently his account is not free from occasional errors. The most valuable and reliable part of Thevenot account is that where he records his personal experiences. In fact determining the historical merit of Thevenot, one should always bear this fact in mind (Nanda, 1994).

Abbe Carre was another leading French traveller during the Aurangzeb period. His journal gives a detailed account of his travels from France to India. His work, "*The Travels of the Abbe Carre, in India and the Near East, 1672 to 1674*", first published in two volumes at Paris in 1699, was based upon his dispatches between 16th March 1672, and 26th October, 1674 (Faweet, 1947). His observations on European traveller of Southern India have special value because most of the seventeenth century European travellers confined themselves to Western and Northern India.

His account throws some light on the movements of Shivaji during 1671-72. On French East India Company's activities in Mughal India, he writes that the only farman granted was that by which the French Company was allowed to trade at Masulipatam. He comments on the mutual relations of the Dutch and French and the Dutch trade in Mughal India. References to socio-religious affairs are also to be found occasionally in his account (Nanda, 1994). Carre's fairly good knowledge of the chronology of the events add to the volume of this work. He showed interest not only in the description of the country through which he passed, but also about its inhabitants and history.

Italian Travellers

Cesare Federici was an Italian merchant and traveller. In 1563 he left his native Venice very desirous to see the East parts of the world. He travelled via Aleppo and Harmus and then crossed the Indian Ocean. During this travel he was captured and carried by the Portuguese to their Coastal enclave at Diu in Gujrat and then to their colonial Capital Goa. After extricating himself from Portuguese confinement, Federici ventured inland in 1567 through dangerous territory towards Vijayanagar.

As he explored Indian's interior, Fedrici noted intriguing features of the societies and cultures he found there. He identified people as either Moor or Gentiles and provides us with one of an increasing number of European accounts of Sati (Fisher, 2007). He also visited Christian who claimed to have been converted by the Apostle Saint Thomas in person, and who followed the Syrian branch of eastern Christianity. Federic carried on from India to Southeast Asia. After his eventual return to his native Venice, he published his account in 1587. It was almost immediately translated into English by T.Hickok as "*Voyage and Travail of M.C. Federici, Merchant of Venys*".

Manucci (1639-1717) reached India in 1656 when he was only fourteen years old. By for the most voluminous writer among European travellers during the period of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb, Manucci possessed a working knowledge of Persian and Turkey, which helped him to understand and express his views freely. His account was originally written partly in Italian and partly in French and Portuguese (Irwin, 1907). Manucci's account "*Storia Da Mogor or Moghal India*" gives a vivid picture of the last six years of the reign of Shahjahan and deals fully the first twenty one year of the reign of Aurangzeb.

In the body of this work "Manucci constantly refers to the sources of his information. His description of the War of succession is almost accurate and trustworthy. Undoubtedly Manucci was a better informed and more experienced man than Bernier, whom he contradicts vehemently and hold in utter contempt. His other objects of scorn where the Portuguese, the Jesuits, Aurangzeb and like many others (Nanda, 1994).

Manucci's style, though simple and non-literary, is extremely vivacious. In his mode of narration, he never fails in carrying his readers along with him. At the same time, he is seldom guilty of prurience or lubricity. As a writer, Manucci presents us with a somewhat mingled yarn. His extracts from what he calls the chronicles of Mughal officials for the reigns preceding that of Shahjahan are a tissue of absurdities. These fables were no doubt current among the people, but they are nothing but the distortion of the facts. Regarding the reign of Shahjahan, particularly the latter years and for the fifty years of Aurangzeb's reign, Manucci is a writer whose statements cannot be ignored (Nanda, 1994).

Gemelli Careri hailed from Naples and reached India in 1695. He was lawyer by profession and was awarded Doctorate of Civil Law. Before reaching India, he travelled in Italy, France, England, Belgium Holland, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Portugal. In his work, "*A Voyage Round the World*", he gives description with minute details. Careri was keen to have an audience with the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, who was then encamped at Galgala waging a war against the powers of the South (Sen, 1949). Through the good officials of the Christian soldiers in the Mughal army-Careri succeed in obtaining admission to the court of the emperor of whom he had left a fairly good pen portrait. Careri does not however, and greatly to our knowledge of these subjects, which were discussed by many of the preceding travellers. However, as a source of information regarding the condition

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of Aurangzeb's army on the eve of Deccan campaigns and work is most indispensable (Nanda, 1994).

German Travellers

Johann Albert von Mandelslo was a German traveller who visited India during the reign of Shahjahan. He arrived at Surat in April 1638. During this stay in India, he made a tour of the country and visited Ahmadabad, Cambay, Goa, Agra and Lahore. He left Surat on 5th January, 1639 and returned to his native country in May 1640. The first English translation of Mandelslo's account rendered by John Davis, was published at London in 1662 (Commissariate, 1931).

As a source of information on the Mughal polity and socio-religious customs of the people chiefly of those of Gujrat the work is excellent one. Mandelslo gives a detailed account of the Mughal administrative system, some of which is imaginary and the rest bearing contiguity to actual facts. The most valuable part of Mandelslo, travel refers to his tour through Gujrat. All this is first hand and based on Mandelslo's personal experience and observation. Mandelslo's account of the visit to the viceroy of Goa, of the great religious establishments and churches of the Jesuits and of the royal hospital in this city is also first hand. This part of his narrative bears all the impressions of veracity and when he is not an eyewitness, he takes care to tell us plainly that the information was given to him by others during the journey (Nanda, 1994).

Portuguese Travellers

In 1579, Portuguese father Antonio Monserrate (1536-1600AD) travelled with fellow Jesuits at the request of Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605AD) from Goa to the imperial court of Fatehpur near Agra. Monserrate, a person of much learning, was directed to prepare a history of the mission; and obeyed the command by writing an excellent Latin treatise, "*Commentary on His journey to the Court of Akbar*", which ranks as one of the principal authorities for the reign of Akbar (Smith, 1988). Once at the imperial court Monserrate and his companions struggled to convert the Emperor and members of his family to Catholicism. The rising rivalries among the Portuguese, other Europeans and various factions in the Mughal court and administration thus come through powerfully in Monserrate's account. However his sectarian missionary perspective colours his observations of Hindus and Muslims as well as of European Protestant (Fisher, 2007). The Jesuits fathers especially used an offensive language about Islam and its founder which is not a pleasant reading for a Muslim.

After two years of frustrating efforts at the imperial court, Monserrate joined Akbar's punitive expedition across North India and the Punjab against Akbar rebellions half brother Mirza Muhammad Hakim (1554-85AD) in Kabul. During the campaign he recorded his observations about the religious ideas of Akbar and Mughal army and its war machinery. Akbar's tolerant behavior about different

religions is very vivid in his commentary. Monserrate describes his adventures in the third person (Fisher, 2007).

Friar Sebastian Manrique (1585-1669AD) a Portuguese missionary traveller visited India during the time of Shahjahan in 1640. He travelled widely in India, and visited Goa, Bengal, Patna, Lahore, Agra, Sindh and Multan. Though Manrique was Portuguese but he chooses to write in Spanish. After returning to Rome in 1643, he published his work in 1649 (Manrique, 1926). His high flown language, colourfully recounts his overland adventure, which consumed three years of his life and tells us much about everyday life on the roads of Mughal India (Fisher, 2007).

Manrique makes some valuable observations on the political and socio religious condition of Bengal. He describes the great Mughal fertility of the Gangetic plain, and the quality of its cotton fabrics. In Northern India he was struck by the richness of the people, the fertility of the soil, and the abundance and cheapness of food items (Manrique, 1926). He refers to the weighing ceremony of the Mughal Emperor, the Mughal Darbar, growing building to Taj Mahal and peacock throne. His description of the license and luxury of the Mughal officers is quite reliable. But while dealing with historical events of which he had no personal knowledge, he mixed up facts with fiction. The most outstanding instances of this kind is the account of the rebellion of Shahjahan (Nanda, 1994).

Spanish Travellers

A Spanish missionary traveller Novarrete visited India during the times of the Aurangzeb. Having travelled around the world, Novarrete describes his visit to, and work in China, the Philippines, Indonesia, Madagascar, St. Helena, Portugal and Italy. From China he reached Goa on 14th December 1670. On 8th January, 1671 he landed at Swally the sea port of Surat (Navarrete, 1961). He then travelled inland to and from Golconda the wealthy capital of Qutb Shah Sultanate.

Novarrete touches almost all aspects of social life along the Coast of Coromandel. Being a missionary, he gives more attention to religious questions. He comments on the personal life of the king of Golconda (Abdullah Qutb Shah, 1627-1672AD) who indulged in the worldly pleasures, had the least regard to his government. He refers to Shivaji as a bandit and describes the difficulties created by him in 1670 around Goa (Navarrete, 1961). He had an observant eye, together with a nag for cultivating men of affairs. As a source of information, Novarrete's travel account is quite valuable for all aspects of human life in Decan during the later half of the seventeenth century.

Conclusion

In addition to reflecting the values of their times and of each individual author, these accounts had profound effects on European's perception of India. Many of today's scholars have pointed out how the genre of the travel narrative developed

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in post-Enlightenment Europe, resonating a large trend (Pratt, 1992). The explicit desire to identify oneself as an individual, distinguished from others as one makes progress through life appeared increasingly in European travel narratives from the sixteenth century onward, spreading to her individualistic genre like novels and autobiographies (Rubies, 2000).

To conclude it may be stated that like the contemporary Persian chronicles the accounts kept by European Travellers, who mostly came from England, France, Italy, Germany, Portugal and Spain fall under a separate category of the primary historical sources material for the Mughal period. These accounts are based on personal observations as well as the contemporary and earlier works on the history of the Mughal period. These accounts have a very wide scope and throw a flood of light on various aspects of human life, like the polity, social life, religious beliefs and practices and trade and economy of the period. Their authenticity varies from each other according to the objects, mental makeup and sources of information of the authors. Some of accounts contain street gossips were as a few reflect the racial religious and national prejudices borne by the travellers towards an alien people. In fact some of them were half educated and hence hardly capable of observing minutely or precisely recording their impression. On the other hand some travellers, though well-educated often compared the Mughal government and Indian institutions with those of Europe and emphasized the evils without making due offered Indian exotic knowledge of the outside world. But as a whole, these travel accounts draw a fair picture of the period which is not only full of interest but also throws fresh light on the uneasy meeting of East and West.

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