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RESEARCH ARTICLE

CHRONOLOGY OF TRADE AND COMMERCE IN ANCIENT INDIA

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Abstract

The history of trade and commerce in India is a fascinating journey that stands for thousands of years and reflects the Nation's pivotal role in global trade. India's strategic location, wealthy sources, and cultural range have made it a hub for exchange routes connecting the East and West. From ancient civilizations to the modern era the story of trade and commerce in India is one of the continuity and transformation marked by significant contributions to global commerce. From the historic Indus Valley civilization to the Mughal Empire and the demanding situations of colonialism. India's trade history has been marked by adaptability, resilience, and contributions to global commerce. In the modern era, India continues to play a prominent role in the global economy demonstrating its commitment to trade and economic growth on the world stage.

Introduction

Trade comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'trade' which means "carrying goods to market". Trade is referred to as a basic economic activity that involves buying selling and exchanging different goods and services between two or more parties involved in the transaction. Trade made between two parties is called bilateral trade and when it occurs between more than two parties it is called multilateral trade. In change the possession of rights or offerings is transferred from one

individual to any other in attention to coins or coins equivalents. Earlier the trade was a little cumbersome since it followed the better system where goods were exchanged in return for other goods or commodities. It is difficult to assess the precise cost due to the unique commodities kind of worried inside the exchange. With the advent of money, this process became more convenient for both the seller and the buyer. Trade can be domestic as well as foreign. Domestic trade means within the border of the country and foreign trade means across the border. Foreign trade is done through

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investment in security or funds and can be termed as imports and exports.

Commerce is referred to as an economic activity that involves the exchange of goods and services or valuables between two entities. It involves the purchasing of goods and services by large organizations. Commerce mainly deals with the trade activities taking place between Nations. It is sub-classified as trade and auxiliaries to trade. The scope of trade is wider than that of alternate which now no longer most effectively refers back to the alternate of items and offerings however additionally consists of all the sports that can be essential for the crowning glory of that exchange. that acts as an aid in the successful completion of the exchange. Once the goods are synthetic those cannot be attained without delay to the customer, the equal has to skip via a sequence of activities. The first wholesalers will purchase the product, and with the use of transportation, the goods will be made available to the shops and the identical banking and coverage provider can be availed with the aid of using him to have safety in opposition to the lack of goods. The retailer will then sell to the ultimate customer. In short, it can be said that commerce is the branch of business that helps to overcome all the hindrances that arise in the facilitating of exchange. Its major function is to satisfy human wants both basic and secondary by making the goods available to different parts of the country. No matter where the goods have been manufactured, commerce has made it possible to reach the world.

Early Indian trade evidence dating back around three and a half millennia shows that the Indian subcontinent was recognized as a key commercial zone in ancient times. Economic activities can also be widely seen in the public life of Indians in the Stone Age. Indian trade prospered in all forms from the beginning, whether it was restricted to domestic or long-distance external trade and whether it was carried by land or water. Trade in ancient India was mostly concentrated on luxury things such as precious metals, species, and exotic fibers, but as shipping got quicker, more dependable, and less expensive, even commonplace items such as olives and fish paste were shipped over long distances. Ideas and cultural practices spread as a result of increasing interaction

between civilizations brought about by commerce, notably in the fields of language, religion, and art. International trade resulted in the formation of trading emporiums, which frequently became colonies. As the struggle for resources and access to profitable trade routes became more intense, monarchs sought to steal the wealth of other Nations and empires, which sometimes ended in battles. There is evidence that Marine trade persisted on a large scale during the Vedic (1500-800BCE) Mauryan (324-187BCE), Kushana (approximately 30CE- roughly 375 CE), and Gupta eras, as well as succeeding periods of South Indian Dynasties such as Pallavas, Chalukyas, and Cholas. The slogan of Rig Vedic sailors was "May our ship embark to all regions of the globe."

Trade in ancient India

The impact of trade and commerce on a nation's growth is undeniable. The expansion and development of the country's commercial enterprise zone are regularly inspired by its geographical setting and environment. India, with their Himalayas to the north and seas to the south, has a unique advantage. The get entry to sea routes has facilitated the growth of trade to different parts of the world. In historical times, India led the sector in exporting commodities like silk, cotton, sugar, and valuable stones. India's famous species were also sought after in the West, traded through the famed spice route. These goods were traded for gold and silver from various Nations. However, the arrival of the Industrial Revolution in the West impacted Indian change significantly. Trade and commerce had been key drivers in shaping India's economy. Archaeological findings suggest that both land and Sea trade substantially contributed to the increase of India's economy. India became the world's main business hub, with commercial cities like Harappa and Mohenjo Daro. Ancient India had great trade relationships with Nations like Mesopotamia, buying and selling commodities like gold, silver, Terracotta pots, treasured stones, pearls, etc,

India's prominence in global trade and commerce:

- The Indian business community, particularly the Hindus were known for their business acumen, resourcefulness, resilience, and integrity.

- Indian goods had been famed for his or her advanced quality. The specialty of Indian merchandise made them appealing to investors worldwide.
- The Indian network had a knack for shipbuilding, coupled with the knowledge of sea routes, winds, and navigation. This allowed them to venture to far-off lands for trade.

Trade during the Harappan Times

The Harappan carried out trade both within India as well as with the outside world like South Europe and Egypt. The Harappans exported exceptional Muslim material and imported commodities that covered metals and treasured stones. Harappans carried trade through land and sea routes. The dockyard at Lothal gives adequate proof for the Maritime trade. When urban civilization grew in towns such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro India established trading and economic relationships with Sumer, Egypt, Oman, Bahrain, and other Western Asian countries. The establishment of urban centers in the Indus Valley civilization coincided with the development of excess agricultural production, which was first noted in India with the rise of trade and craft (2600 to 1900 BCE). The civilization of the Indus Valley was successful. The main sources of income them as Agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, trade, and commerce. Pots, weaving tools, and pieces of metal were also observed with the aid of archaeologists indicating that they traded those items with different cities. Seals belonging to the Indus Valley civilization also show their involvement in exports. The important profession of the Indus Valley human beings turned into agriculture and the second one turned into the domestication of animals. The land obtained a very good quantity of rainfall and turned into wealth in herbal vegetation.

Agriculture

It was the main profession of the people of the Indus Valley. The land became quite fertile while the Harappans used to stay there. In the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, leftovers of large granaries were found suggesting that they produced more than their requirement. Barley and wheat had been grown via way of means of them on a big scale. They also group some other crops such as pulses, cotton, cereals, dates,

melons, peas, etc. There is no clear proof of rice, however, a few grains of rice have been observed in Rangpur and Lothal. The Harappans had been the primary humans to develop cotton. Domestication of animals

Animal husbandry

It was another occupation for the Indus Valley civilization. The seals depicted animals and suggested that the domesticated cows buffaloes, goats, sheep, pigs, etc. Camels and jackasses have been additionally domesticated. Bones of camels were acquired in massive numbers from many websites however there may be no signal of them at the seals. Terracotta figures of a horse were determined at Nausharo and Lothal.

Crafts and industries

The Indus Valley people were highly skilled. They made pottery, steel vessels, equipment and weapons, weaving and spinning, dyeing, and different crafts. The weavers wore cotton and wool. They knew about leather, but there was no evidence of silk to be found. The humans of this civilization belonged to the Bronze Age and used tools made of stones, but they knew about gold, silver, copper, lead, and bronze. Ornament-making was also an occupation of the Indus Valley people. They made very fine-searching and inventive adorns the use of gold, silver, valuable stones, etc. Many people were engaged in bead-making at Mohenjodaro and chanhodaro and Lothal. They used various precious stones such as carnelian, lapis, agate, and jasper to make beads. The Artisans of coastal settlements used shells to make pendants, rings, bracelets, beads, etc. They used a pottery wheel to make glossy pottery. Some systems had been the product of burnt or dust bricks, which means that Bricklaying became a crucial craft.

Trade and commerce

The archaeological remains such as enormous granaries, multiple seals of clay, and instruments to measure weight were found by archaeologists in Mohenjo Daro, Harappa, and Lothal, suggesting that the people of the Indus Valley were involved in trade and export. To produce crafts, they wished for loads of uncooked materials. Clay was available locally, but

they had to acquire metal outside the alluvial plain. Raw substances have been offered into the city through alternate routes through buyers and craftsmen. They were used to make jewelry, pottery, and metalware. Bullock carts had been used to move items from one area to another. They also used the river route along the Indus and its tributaries for transportation.

Trade during Vedic Times

The Vedic period is defined as the period between 1500 and 500 BC. The Vedic Aryans had been pastoralists in the beginning. Their number one interest became livestock raising. For milk, meat, and skin they raised cattle, sheep, goats, and horses. Cows have been speculated to be the supply of everything. People engaged in a variety of economic pursuits in addition to cattle raising and small-scale agriculture. Hunting, carpentry, tanning, weaving, chariot making, metallic smelting, and different industries are examples. A better system was used to exchange the fruits of these activities. Cows however had been the maximum famous approach to commerce.

Agriculture

Agriculture became the mainstay of the Aryan economy. The cornfield known as 'urbara' or 'kshetra' was plowed by bullock-pulled Plows. Irrigation and manure utility structures are no longer unknown. Several Vedic hymns were written in praise of God and goddesses who prayed for prosperous crops, timely rain, or the welfare of domestic animals. The main products were barley and wheat—oil seeds and cotton plantation were also common terms at this time. Paddy's was created on a small scale.

Animal husbandry

The financial system of the early Vedic length became agro-pastoral. Agriculture along with animal husbandry had an equally essential part in raising people's economic standards. Cattle rearing became a tremendous vocation and the cow became respected and revered with the aid of using the Aryans as a supply of wealth and monetary prosperity. Gauda and Gopa had been answerable for each day's pasture feeding of cows, buffaloes, sheep, and other domesticated animals such as horses, dogs, donkeys, and goats

among others. The animals had been especially branded by their proprietors for his or her identity amid big herds of cattle. Craft and technology

Craft and technology were not ignored by Vedic Aryans. Indeed, they'd verified notable talent in woodworking, metallurgy, and pottery, and tannery—carpenter's major merchandise have been chariots, automobiles, and boats. Metal workers used to make a variety of decorations and weapons. Spinning and weaving were handled by the waver community. Some artists prepare leather items mat stitching and works. Only one metal is described as Ayas in Rig Veda which was identified as copper. Copper was used to make vessels while iron was used to make weapons.

Trade and commerce

Trade and commerce were major aspects of the early Vedic economy, which valued both internal and external trade equally. In the Rig Veda, we discover specific prayers for attaining fortune through Maritime pursuits. Pani was a guild of merchants who monitored and managed economic activities. The medium of weight turned into Mana, and the automobile turned into an essential unit of commerce. The Aryan's commercial vocation is evidenced by the Vedic descriptions of their sea trips and trading activity.

Transportation

The transportation system is a sign of a developed economy. Horse or Bullock chariots have been the mode of tour on the land path whilst boats and ships have been the mode of shipping on the ocean path. As a result, both local and international commerce contributed to the country's continuous economic growth.

Trade during Mauryan and Kushana times

Manufacturing activities were brisk in Mauryan rule. According to Greek sources who mention the fabrication of chariots, carts, weapons, and agriculture tools as well as the construction of ships, gold embroidery dresses with valuable stones, and floral robes made of excellent cotton were been manufactured. Fine wines, colorants, glass vessels, costly silver vessels, singers beautiful maiden for the

harem, and the finest ointment were imported into India. India exported fine silk, Muslin, spices, perfumes, medicinal herbs, Indigo, sandalwood, pearls, ivory, iron, steel, and so on.

Chandragupta Maurya installed unmarried foreign money throughout India, a community of local governors and administrators, and civil service to provide justice and security for merchants, farmers, and traders. Farmers were freed of regional kings' tax and crop collection burden. Instead, they paid through a nationally administrated system of taxation. The system operated under the principles of Arthashastra and ancient Indian treatise that included advice and how to collect taxes, administer trade and agricultural resources manage diplomacy. The Mauryan Empire changed into strict sales collection, however, it additionally funded several public works initiatives to beautify productivity. Thousands of roads, waterways, canals, relaxation houses, hospitals, and different sorts of infrastructures were constructed during the period through the development of trade and commerce. The northern and Southern lands which together formed "the grand route of India", became the arterial trade routes for the silk trade, along with their feeder channels, especially during the Kushana period(30 CE-375 CE), which collected China, South East Asia, Central Asia, and Europe countries.

Trade during Guptas and later period

Commercial activity developed during the period of the Gupta dynasty (3 century CE -543 CE). This helped the country to develop financially and economically. The Gupta Empire was known for its flourishing trade relations with other countries including China, Rome, and Southeast Asia. The trade of spices, textiles, and precious stones like diamonds and rubies was prevalent during this period. Agriculture became the spine of the economic system for the duration of the Gupta period. The land was classified into different categories based on its fertility, and taxes were collected accordingly. The farmers were given incentives to improve productivity, and new techniques like crop rotation and irrigation were introduced. The surplus food production led to the growth of trade and commerce as the farmers could not

sell their excess produce Taxes were collected at a higher rate than usual.

Trade items range from everyday necessities to valuables and luxurious items. Pepper, sandalwood, elephants, horses, gold, copper, iron, and mica had been amongst them. The numerous inscriptions and seals monitoring Artisans, merchants, and guilds attest to the thriving craft and trade. Guilds remained the maximum vital group in the manufacture of products and business enterprises. They maintained nearly complete autonomy with their internal organization, and the government abided by their laws. The corporation of guilds, of which each guild was a member generally drafted these laws. During the Gupta period, the lending of money at the exorbitant rate of interest was common. The coastal ports and towns were linked to Persia, Arabia, and Byzantium on one hand and Sri Lanka, China, and Southeast Asia on the other hand. Fahien describes the risks of the ocean direction that connects India and China. Rare gems, pearls, fine textiles, and aromatics were among the items traded from India: India purchased silk and other items from China.

Conclusion

India mostly concentrates on luxury items such as precious metals like gold, silver, Rubies, Iron, etc. spices, and exquisite fabrics was been carried on. Shipping was done quicker so some items such as olives and fish paste were been shipped over long distances. Trade enhanced cultural interaction, resulting in the spread of ideas and cultural practices, notably in the fields of language, religion, and art. Import and export developed the Indian economy effectively and efficiently. This created a way for international trade. This international trade created a way to develop the Indian economy.

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