

Some Important Markets and Trade Centres in India

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Abstract

From the ancient time markets and trade centres have played a pivotal role in the daily society as well as agriculture sector. After harvesting the farmers take the crops to a fixed place as they sell the crops at that place. Thus the concept of market was originated from the ancient time. In modern world also trade centres have become an important place for the trade and commerce sector. In the field of finance also trade and market centres have played a vital role. There are many towns in the world but all the towns are not important trade centres. Trade centres should be easily communicable by road and water ways. We see that trade centres are situated by the sea side or river side. The East India Company also setup their commercial centres on the bank of the sea. Without proper communication trade centres will not exist. In this paper attempt has been made to describe the main markets and trade centres of India and its neighbouring country which has a great role in the economic sector.

Introduction

Trade and commerce are the backbone of a country. Trade depends on the location of trade centres and good communication by both side road ways and water ways for export and import of the commodities. The proper market system and suitable trade centres play an important role for the economic development of a country. The following important cities and trade centres which played an important role in the development of trade and commerce in ancient India. This list includes cities of India and neighbouring countries.

Pataliputra

It is situated on the south bank of the Ganga (Lat, 25°15'E). It was not only famous for its political activities but also for an international mart. Arrian calls it as the largest city in India. Its commercial importance was for cast by Buddha. He told Ananda that it will be the chief city of the Aryans on the basis of its commercial road. It was the chief centre of transport. It was originally known as Pataligram. It was linked with all the important trade centres and ports of India by both land and water ways. It radiated towards Tamralipti via Rajagraha which chained the ports of East via Burma, Java, Sumatra and Borneo. The other road went to Barygaza (Boach) through Kausambi and Ujjain, to Nepal through Vaisali and Sravasti and to Taxila. Pataliputra was connected with China by two overland routes, one at the earlier stage by the Assam -Burma routes and the other through Nepal and Tibet.

Pataliputra was not only a commercial town but also an exporting station specially in stones. The Ramayana speaks of Magadha a place rich in mine treasures. So, we can say that the Pataliputra was a great emporium of India and played a very important role in early international commerce.

Puskalavati

This was the first gateway of ancient India on Uttarapatha (NH1) (Lat 33°42' N long 71°35' E). It was the capital of Gandhara Janapada, situated at the junction of important international land roads. It developed as an important commercial mart. It is called Purusapura in Jain canons. It was well known as the exporting station for wool and silver could be easily imported to India. It had a lion's share in the commercial transaction between India, China and Rome in the 1st century A.D. Indian trade with central Asia and China in the age of Sakes and Kusanas was carried by the North West route through Puskalavati.

Taxila

It was the capital city of Gandhara. Marshalls excavation report confirms that it was destroyed three times and rebuilt three times before the Bactrian Greek. It was the centre of international trade and served as an important land route between India and Central Asia and at times the western traders in their trade with China used the Taxila route. Taxila had also trade relation with

south Russia during the 1st century A.D. which was evidenced by some gold jewellery and other fancy objects or minor antiquities. Taxila was the nerve centre and the chief emporium for inland and foreign trade.

Sakala

It was the capital of Madra State. It was situated in the middle of Punjab in between Ravi and Chenab near Sialkot. From the very remote past it was a famous commercial mart. It was perhaps the important mart for slave girls imported from all the corners of the ancient world. Buddha Ghosh called this country the store of beautiful ladies. According to Pali literature it was famous for its beautiful women. Beautiful garments were found in the local market. The Mucedonians destroyed it and it was again rebuilt by Demetrius in honour of his father Euthydemus and named this city as Euthydemia.

National Highways Tamralipati - Kasi, - intraprastha - Taxila and Vaisali - Kushinagar, - Ahiksetra - Taxila met at Sakala. The other road from Roruka (Sauvira) merged here. This city played an important role in the western trade.

Indraprastha

It was the capital of Kuru. It is elaborately mentioned in the Mahabharata as the capital of the Pandavas. It is situated somewhere near old Delhi. It was from the very beginning the commercial city on the Royal road (NH1 (A)) Uttarapatha.

Mathura

Mathura was the capital of the Sursena country. Traditionally it was believed that it was founded by Satrugna after killing Yadava Lavana at the site Kadhuvana. According to Ramayana it was founded by Madhu. Later on, Madhu's son Lavanasura was defeated Satrugna. It is situated on the right bank of Yamuna 217 miles in straight line north-west of Kausambi. The Greeks were acquainted with this city by the name of Methora. It was an emporium of trade and people lived here on trade. A large number of land route from south India touched Mathura. It is interesting to mention that Kautilya speaks of cotton industry of Mathura.

Kausambi

It is situated on the Yamuna about thirty miles south west from Allahabad. A royal road from Ujjain via Vidisa merged here. It connected Sravasti and Saketa in the north and Vidisa, Ujjain, Mahismati and Pratisthana in the south. The water way is also an important factor for its commercial development. It was connected by Yamuna upto Prayaga and then through the Ganga it was connected with Benaras, Pataliputra and Tamralipti. The sea ports and sea routes linked all the ports of India. It was a famous city from the very Vedic period.

Varanasi

Varanasi, the ancient capital of Kasi kingdom, was a great commercial city of the world. Commercially it was well placed and well privileged as it lay near the Ganges route and highway. It grew up into a great centre of textile industry and famous for precious and beautiful silk cloth. Arthashastra mentioned that the cloth of Kasi was the best among all the textiles. It was not only famous for cloth but also famous for sandalwood workmanship. It is equally famous for learning. It had a worldwide market. The Kasi cloth is found mentioned in the Milindapahlo as stored not only for local consumption but also for export to different foreign countries. It was the most important exporting centre where converged a network of highways leading to all marts and ports of India, especially to her sea port Tamralipti.

Campa

Campa, the capital of Angra was situated near the river of the same name (modern chandan) and Ganga, at a distance of 60 Yojanas from Mithila, Cunningham points out that Campa is represented by two villages Campanagar and Campapuri near Bhagalpur (Bihar). The city is mentioned as a place of Pilgrimage in the Mahabharata. It was built by Mahagobinda the minister of the emperor Renu. It was noted for commercial purposes and the trader's sailed from here to different places and outside India for

trading purpose. The Ganga's route was linked with Mithila. The traders of Campa played a prominent role for the colonial and commercial expansion in the east since the beginning of the 1st century A.D.

Saketa

This magnificent city of Kosala was the capital of Kosala before Buddha. It has been identified with modern Ayodhya. It was Prasenjita who made this city a commercial seat. He requested Bimbisara of Magadha to send a multi millionaire trader. Bimbisara sent Dhanajay who for the first time established seven chariot stations between Sravasti and Saketa for the easy movement of Sartha. It was situated between Sravasti and Kausambi.

Samkassa

It was an important commercial junction of North India. It has been identified with modern Samkisa in the District of Farrukhabad (UP). It was situated between Soreyya and Kanauj on the National Highway No.1.

Indraprastha

It was the capital of Kurus. It was situated somewhere near old Delhi. It was the junction of NH1 and NH1 (A). The traders of Indraprastha played an important role for the commercial development of our country.

Vidisa

It was the halting mart on Daksinapatha. Its commercial importance is attested by historical episode in Mauryah period. Ashoka married a beautiful daughter of a marchant. She was called Vedisā - Mahadevi. It was an industrial city famous for sharp edged shords and ivory work. It was an exporting mart for industrial product.

Ujjaini

It was the capital of North Avanti. It was stationed on the Rastrapatha (NH2A). Three highway merged at this place, First road from Rorukha crossing Jettutan, the other road from Sravasti via Kausambi crossing Vidisa and all reaching at Pratisthana or Paithan. Benaras was also linked with trade routes. The merchant of two cities (Benaras and Ujjaini) showed healthy competition not only in trade but also in learning. The Greeks exported wine to India where Ujjaini was one of their markets. It had trade relations with the west through land route via Taxila and Purusapura.

Mahismati

It was an ancient gateway of south. It was a great trade mart of Avanti on the Daksinapatha between Ujjain and Pratisthana. It was the capital of south Avanti. It is also mentioned as the market of foreign liquor. It is situated about forty miles to the south of Indore.

Pratisthana

It was the capital of Alaka Janapada and was the oldest town of the Deccanas which has been mentioned in the imperial Gazetteer. It was the last gateway of India from where the different trade centres of south India were connected. It was an exporting centre of perfumes to the west specially for Egypt. According to periplus it was an important centre of textile.

Tagara

It was one of the inland commercial marts of ancient India. It is situated at Osmanabad District of Maharashtra. It is 15 miles away from Paithan. It was an exporting centre of cloths of various kinds.

Dhannakata

It has been identified with Amravati situated on the right bank of Krishna. On the basis of inscriptions it can conclusively be taken to be a commercial town. A large number of inscriptions mentioned merchant, bankers, treasurers, perfumers which throw sufficient light on the commercial importance of the city. Later, it became the capital and town of Andhradesa. It was connected with a network of trade routes. Dhannakata was easily approachable by different roads from different corners in India.

Champavati

It was a commercial town near Bombay and has been identified with modern Chaula. Ptolemy called it Symulla, Periplus called it Semylla and Hiuen Tsang named it Chimolo.

Kalyan

It is situated near Bombay in the District of Thana. It has been mentioned by Periplus as Calliena. It was a commercial town during the period of Satakarnis.

Aurannaboas or Tyrannaboas

It has been identified with Malven of Ratnagiri district. It may be current name of Aranyavaha or Lavanavaha which may stand for the exporting mart of wood and salt.

Kanchi

Kanchi was for the first time mentioned in the Mahabhasya. It is Canjeevaram in the chingle put district of the Madras State. The Chinese came to Kanchi by foreign ships to purchase pearls, glass, rare stone and strange products, giving gold and silk in exchange.

Madura

It was the capital of Pandvas. The Ramayana mentioned it as a beautiful city which was full of Raksases. This city is situated on the right bank of the river Vaigai. It is full of magnificent temple like the famous Minaksi temple.

It was an important market town as reported in the Tamil opics. It was an exporting centre for pearls, newls and cloth. In the great market of Madura are exposed for sale "Carts, Chariots and Ornament." Madura attested foreign merchant for carring overseas trade. Madura mentioned by Ptolemy as the roal city of Pandion.

Barbaricum

Barbaricum was the most important sea port from the very begining of the Indian history. The exporting cities like ttarappa, Mohanjodaro and others were linked with this trading port. From this port traders sailed to the Persian Gulf and through Red sea upto Egypt and the other seas of the west. It was a market town and a famous port.

Bharukaccha

It is identified with modern Broach in Gujarat. It was a sea port town trading with the west. According to Ptolemy, it was the greatest seat of commerce in western India. It is situated on the river Narmada. This port was linked up with all the important marts of India by roadways.

Suppara

Pali Supparaka is modern Sopera in the Thana district of Bombay. It was situated 37 (Thirty Seven) miles to the north of Bombay. There was a regular Trade between Bharukaccha, Supparaka and Subarnabhumi. It was linked by a road with Savasthi, 120 leagues to its north east. Those dealings were an important trade of this locality. It was also a great seat of trade during Mauryan period.

Korkoi

Korkoi was another sea port of India. Periplus called it Comer. According to Mahabharata, Shahadeo conquered Kanyatirtha. The Silappadikaram refers to it as one of the greatest ports of the time. Ptolemy also calls it a cape and town. It was equally an important religious place.

Puhar

This was a celebrated city of ancient coastal country of India under the name of Kakandi. It is situated on the north stream of the Kaveri River. It was according to the periplus an exporting port of spices and mostly exported different types of spices and other Indian goods. The foreign traders had their headquarters at this place. It was the centre of perfumes, cosmetic, powders, incense, silk, cotton, sandal wood, coral, pearl, gold and precious stones. It was also a centre of ship building.

Kantakasela

This was the famous port of Andhra the important kingdom of South India. The port is mentioned in the Amaravati inscription. It is located at the mouth of the river Maisolos. It may be identified

with the modern Gudura in the Bandar taluq of the Krishna district under the Andhra rule of Kantakasela as a very important port. It played an important role in the international trade.

Caritrapura

It was the next trading station of Orissa. It had been described by Yunan Chwang as a trading station near the shore of the ocean in the south - east of Wutu. It was a retiring place for the sea going traders and strangers of distant lands. It was also a great mart for rare commodities.

Dantapura

It was the capital of ancient Kalinga. It was called palour by Ptolemy. Pal (tooth) and ur (city) = Dant (tooth) and pur (city). The Mahabharata speaks of a town called Dantakura. Sulvain Levi places it in the neighbourhood of Chienecote. It may be the modern Jagannathpuri of Orissa.

Tamralipta

It was one of the great sea ports of India, which was connected by both sea and land routes with the west and the extreme far east. It was linked by road with Rajagrah, Sravasti, Benaras even upto Taxila and again it was connected with the middle east countries through Susa and other cities of Mesopotamia, the Asia Minor and upto Black Sea, having sea routes circling south India crossing Arabian Sea, Red Sea, and different ports in the west. It had also land route to China via Taxila and Bactria and water route crossing Burma, reaching to Chinese ports. The Mahabharata mentions, Tamralipta brings tribute to Yuddhisthira. Bhima conquered this region. Prince Mahendra made his journey by water from Pataliputra to Tamralipta on to cyclon covering 7 days only. Tamralipta may be identified with medern Tamluk on the bank of the Rupnarayana.

Moreover, there were many market and trade centres which played an important role for the development of trade centres and commerce in ancient India. These markets and trade centres are Soureyya, Vermia, Kampilla, Samkassa, Vaisali, Hithila, Sravasti, Ahicchatra, Kancanapura, Patals, Byzantium, Naura, Tyndis, Muzirls, Balita, Kolkai, Poduca, Sopatma and so on.

Conclusion

The economic development of a country depends considerably on its physical features and geographical position. It is clear from the above discussion that a large number of market and trade centres and their water ways and land roads for commerce were well organised from early times. Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Bay of Bengal were the seas through which international trades were carried on. On the other hand, there were routes through Turkestan, Indo-Assam Burma China route, the Indo-Tibetan China routes which played an important role for developing the trade centres and economic development of our country.

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