

Market / Trade Centers in Ancient India

Introduction:

Trade and market centers played a crucial role in the economic development of ancient India. These centers were important nodes of exchange and commerce, where merchants and traders from different regions would converge to buy, sell, and exchange goods. Some of the key trade centers in ancient India included Taxila, Mathura, Ujjain, Pataliputra, and Madurai. These cities were strategically located on major trade routes and waterways, and they facilitated the exchange of goods and ideas between different regions and civilizations. The development of trade and market centers also led to the growth of urbanization, as more people settled in these areas to take advantage of the economic opportunities available. Overall, trade and market centers were an essential part of the economic and cultural fabric of ancient India.

This article aims to:

1. Understand about ancient Market or Trade Centers in India and its structure.
2. Learn about various Market/Trade Centers in ancient India.
3. Explore unique aspects of ancient Indian Trade Centers or Market Centers.

The evolution of markets and trade centers in ancient India is a complex and multifaceted process that was shaped by a variety of factors, including geography, climate, technology, and culture.

Here are some key factors that contributed to the development of markets and trade centers in ancient India:

1. **Geography and Climate:** Due to India's unique topography and climate, a variety of natural resources were produced, including precious metals, spices, and textiles that were in high demand elsewhere in the world. As a result, India developed into a significant hub for trade and commerce, drawing traders and merchants from as far as China and the Mediterranean. (Tirthankar Roy,2012)
2. **Technological Advancements:** Using irrigation and the plough, for example, increased agricultural output and resulted in surpluses of food and other things. This

excess facilitated the rise of specialised crafts like textile and metalworking, which in turn fueled trade and commerce. (Walter Scheidel,2012)

3. **Cultural Exchange:** India's extensive history of cultural interchange with nearby nations and civilizations, including Persia and China, aided in the dissemination of concepts, products, and technology throughout the area. This interaction influenced the growth of trade and commerce in India and aided in the establishment of fresh markets and commercial hubs. (Edward A. Alpers,2014)
4. **Political Stability:** Trade and commerce grew as a result of political stability, the establishment of huge empires like the Mauryan and Gupta Empires, and other factors. These empires built networks of highways, ports, and other forms of infrastructure that aided in trade and commerce and contributed to the development of a reliable and predictable economic climate. (Romila Thapar,1982)

Structure of Market /Trade Center:

The structure of market centers in ancient India varied depending on factors such as location, goods traded, and size of the center. However, there were some common features that can be identified.

1. **Main Market Area:** The bulk of the commercial activity happened in the main market area, which served as the market center's major hub. This neighborhood, which was often in the center of the city, was distinguished by a concentration of stores, stalls, and sellers who offered a wide range of items.
2. **Peripheral Markets:** Several market places featured peripheral markets, which were found outside of the city, in addition to the primary market area. These markets tended to be more niche and concentrated on particular products, such textiles, spices, or cattle.
3. **Warehouses:** Market centers included warehouses as they gave merchants a location to store their goods until they were sold. Bulk products like grain, spices, and textiles were frequently kept in warehouses that were situated close to the main market area.
4. **Transport Facilities:** To assist the flow of commodities into and out of the city, market places were frequently situated close to major roadways, ports, or riverbanks. Docks, wharves, and caravan stops were constructed to house traders and their cargo.
5. **Civic Amenities:** To meet the requirements of both traders and visitors, market centers also offered a variety of public services such water fountains, restrooms, and rest rooms.

6. **Regulations and Governance:** Local governments frequently controlled market hubs and were in charge of upholding peace and order, regulating commerce, and guaranteeing fair prices. In addition to regulating trade, upholding standards of quality, and defending the interests of their members, guilds and associations also served these roles.

Thus, the structure of market centers in ancient India was designed to facilitate trade and commerce, and to create a vibrant and bustling commercial environment that could attract traders from all over the region.

Types of Market Centers:

There were several different types of market centers that existed in ancient India. Here are some of the most important types:

Shreni:

Shrenis were groups of businessmen and merchants who were experts in a particular field. They were a typical aspect of Indian civilization and were crucial in controlling trade and business. The Shrenis frequently built their own marketplaces, called shreni-bazaars, where they would buy and sell products. (Upendra Thakur,1977)

- Suvarnagiri Shreni Bazaar in Pataliputra
- Sopara Shreni Bazaar near present-day Mumbai
- Rajagriha Shreni Bazaar in present-day Bihar
- Saurashtra Shreni Bazaar in present-day Gujarat
- Mathura Shreni Bazaar in present-day Uttar Pradesh
- Ujjain Shreni Bazaar in present-day Madhya Pradesh.

Haats:

Haats were occasional markets held in villages and small towns. They served as significant hubs for the interchange of products and ideas and were often held once a week or once a month. Haats were frequently set up around certain products, such textiles or spices. (D.N. Jha,1982)

A Haat was a small market that was set up for a few hours or a day in a village or town. On a particular day of the week, these marketplaces were often held, and local vendors would travel

there to offer their wares. Haats played a crucial role in promoting local trade and commerce and giving rural areas access to a greater range of commodities. (Sankar Datta and Biplab Datta, 2013)

- Sonargaon Haat, located in present-day Bangladesh, was a major trading center for textiles, spices, and other goods.
- Konark Haat, located in present-day Odisha, was a popular destination for traders of sea shells, pearls, and other marine products.
- Sonapur Haat, located in present-day Bihar, was a hub for cattle trading and also traded in textiles, spices, and other agricultural products.
- Chandni Chowk Haat, located in present-day Delhi, was a center for the trade of textiles, spices, and other goods.
- Kottayam Haat, located in present-day Kerala, was known for its trade in coconuts, spices, and other agricultural products.
- Purana Qila Haat, located in present-day Delhi, was a center for the trade of textiles, crafts, and other goods.
- Pushkar Haat, located in present-day Rajasthan, was a famous trading center for camels and other livestock, as well as textiles and handicrafts.

Evidences of Haats in ancient India:

- Inscriptions mention a number of urban centres and towns such as Varanasi, Kataka (Cuttack), Jajpur, Suvarnapattana, Vihitpura, Purusottampur, which were situated on the banks of the rivers. These towns and trade centres were connected by both inland and water routes (4th century BCE) (Patra B. 2008).
- Many Ganga inscriptions refer to different hattas. They were Jayanagara hatta, Kivalelo hatta, Vattakesvara hatta, Painnapada hatta, Golaoda hatta, Salhogramanava hatta, Jankhera Jayapura hatta, Purushottamapura hatta, Sidranga hatta, Kantopadi hatta, Vadanaga hatta, and Saragadanava hatta. These hattas were probably good business centres in ancient times. (Patra B, 2008).
- The Hamsesvara Temple Inscription (7th- 8th century CE) of the Bhaumakara period speaks of a hatta that seems to have been organised in the vicinity of the temple called Madhavesvara. An inscription of Mahabhavagupta Balarjuna (750-800 CE) found in

the Gandhesvara temple Sripura refers to the malakaras (gardeners) of navahatta (new market). (Patra B, 2008).

- Bayana inscription from Bharatpur dated 955 CE refers to the presence of two mandapikas at Sripatha and Vusavata, both noted for trade in horses. This inscription also provides crucial information regarding the range of activity at the mandapikas, which makes it quite evident that Bayana was being drawn towards inter-regional and foreign trade.
- Rajor inscription (960 CE) of Pratihara Mathanadeva while referring to the presence of a hatta at Rajyapura mentions the items brought for exchange at the centre, which included clarified butter, oil, sacks of agricultural produce and collika leaves.
- An inscription of the time of Chauhan Asvaka dated 1143 CE refers to organisation of a horse fair held at Bali. Similarly, in 883 CE assembled thirty-four horse dealers hailing from different countries on the occasion of a horse fair at Pehoa. (Gupta G, 2020).
- The Puri Copper Plate inscription of Bhanudeva II (312 CE) refers to as many as five hattas , such as Dolatanga hatta , Tarapur hatta , Khadionga hatta, Mahantapadi hatta , and Adhanca Okhala hatta .The Alalpur Plates of Narasimhadevan (c. 1294 CE) refer to Uchabhapada hatta, Vyayalakshmipura hatta and Varanga hatta. (Patra B, 2008).
- A record from Delwara dated 1434 CE informs about a grant of 5 tankas from the cloth market, and 2 from the salt market. We get reference to around eighty-four marts or mandavi at Anahilapattana, each one being separately assigned to a different commodity. (Gupta, G. (2020).
- An inscription on a bronze image from Nalanda refers to Devapaldevahatta. Another seal from Nalanda refers to Srinalandasrihatta. An inscription on an image of Avalokitesvara found in the Surya temple at Bargaon near Nalanda refers to another hatta or mart named Talahatta (the whole area of this part of Bihar is still known as Tal, because of low land area. (Kumar A, 2006).
- Some mandapikas or hattas appear to have been situated at major urban centres like Anhilwada where they are described as pattanamandapikas, distinct from mandapikas or hattas, which are smaller trade centres closely related to their adjacent rural hinterland. Some mandapikas in Gujarat and Rajasthan must have participated in the brisk external trade, which is quite visible from the items exchanged at these centres. (Gupta G, 2020).

Nagaras:

Nagaras were large metropolitan areas that were important centres for commerce and trade. They were frequently found at strategic locations along trade routes and served as residences for a range of merchants, dealers, and artisans. Nagaras were frequently distinguished by their thriving bazaars and markets. (Tirthankar Roy,2011)

- Pataliputra: The capital city of the Mauryan Empire, located in present-day Bihar.
- Ujjain: An important city in ancient India, located in present-day Madhya Pradesh.
- Mathura: A major center of trade and commerce, located in present-day Uttar Pradesh.
- Taxila: An ancient city located in present-day Pakistan, known for its international trade and as a center of learning.
- Varanasi: An ancient city located in present-day Uttar Pradesh, known for its religious and cultural significance.

Sreni-Nagara:

The cities known as Sreni-Nagaras were built around the shrenis, or guilds of tradesmen and merchants. Each shreni in these centres typically specialised in a specific trade or craft, making them frequently highly specialised. Sreni-nagaras were significant hubs for the flow of products and ideas and were crucial to the ancient Indian economy. (Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya,1981)

- Puhar: A Sreni Nagara located in present-day Tamil Nadu, which was a major center for maritime trade.
- Kaveripattinam: Another Sreni Nagara located in Tamil Nadu, which was known for its trade in pearls, precious stones, and textiles.
- Ujjain: A Sreni Nagara located in present-day Madhya Pradesh, which was a major center for trade and commerce, as well as for religious and cultural activities.
- Mathura: A Sreni Nagara located in present-day Uttar Pradesh, which was a major center for the production of art and crafts, as well as for trade in textiles, perfumes, and spices.
- Pataliputra: The capital city of the Mauryan Empire, which was a major Sreni Nagara and center for trade, commerce, and intellectual activity.

Puri:

Large markets known as puris were held on a regular basis, frequently on fortunate occasions like holidays. They were frequently hosted in open areas and distinguished by their joyous atmosphere and the range of things they offered. (Shailendra Nath Sen,2010)

- Pushkar Fair: This is an annual five-day fair held in the town of Pushkar in Rajasthan, which dates back to the 12th century. The fair is held in the month of Kartik and attracts thousands of pilgrims and tourists from all over India and beyond. It is known for its lively atmosphere, with traders selling a variety of goods such as textiles, jewelry, and household items.
- Sonapur Mela: This is an annual fair held in the town of Sonapur in Bihar, which has a history dating back to the Mauryan period. The fair is held in the month of Kartik and is known for its large cattle market, where traders from all over India come to buy and sell livestock. In addition to the cattle market, the fair also features a wide variety of other goods, such as handicrafts, clothing, and food.
- Mahabalipuram Dance Festival: This is an annual festival held in the town of Mahabalipuram in Tamil Nadu, which dates back to the 7th century. The festival is held in the month of January and features traditional dance performances by artists from all over India. In addition to the dance performances, the festival also features a large market where traders sell a variety of goods such as textiles, handicrafts, and jewelry.

Shroff Bazaar:

A market with a focus on the trading of money and other financial instruments was known as a Shroff Bazar. They were often found in places with a lot of traders and merchants, like port cities or significant commercial hubs. By offering a trusted method of exchanging money and other financial assets, Shroff Bazaars were crucial for promoting trade and business. (Claude Markovits,2002)

- Saraf Bazaar, Delhi: Located in the heart of Old Delhi, Saraf Bazaar was a bustling market for gold and silver merchants during the Mughal period.

- Zaveri Bazaar, Mumbai: One of the oldest and largest gold markets in India, Zaveri Bazaar has been a hub for jewelry trade since the 19th century.
- Johari Bazaar, Jaipur: This market in the Pink City of Jaipur is known for its colorful and intricate jewelry, as well as textiles and handicrafts.
- Manek Chowk, Ahmedabad: Originally a vegetable market, Manek Chowk in Ahmedabad is now a popular hub for gold and diamond merchants.
- Chatta Bazaar, Hyderabad: Located near the famous Charminar, Chatta Bazaar is a vibrant market for traditional Hyderabadi jewelry and clothing.

Mandi:

A market with a focus on agricultural products was known as a mandi. These markets were crucial for linking farmers with consumers of their commodities since they were frequently situated in or close to farming areas. Local governments frequently controlled mandis to guarantee fair prices and stop agricultural exploitation. (Singh J P, 2010).

- Sonepat Mandi, Haryana: In ancient India, Sonepat Mandi was a thriving marketplace for agricultural goods, especially grains like wheat, rice, and barley. It was renowned for its extensive trading activity and the calibre of its produce, and it was situated on the Yamuna river's banks in modern-day Haryana. As local farmers brought their crops to sell during the harvest season, the market was very busy. (Rajpal Singh, 2017)
- Other examples of mandis in ancient India include Chandni Chowk Mandi in Delhi, Monda Market in Hyderabad, and Kalupur Mandi in Ahmedabad. These markets were essential for the exchange of agricultural products and played an important role in the rural economy of ancient India.

Mandis was of different types such as:

- **Agricultural mandis:**

The concept of mandis or markets for agricultural products has been present in India since ancient times. During the Mauryan period (322 BCE - 185 BCE), there were large markets known as "srenis" which were supervised by the state. These markets were used for trading goods and services, including agricultural products.

- **Trade mandis:**

In the Gupta period (320 CE - 550 CE), mandis were established as centers for trade and commerce. These mandis were often located near major cities and facilitated the exchange of goods between traders from different parts of the country.

- **Administrative mandis:**

Mandis were also used as administrative centers in ancient India. During the Mughal period (1526 CE - 1857 CE), the emperor Akbar established a system of mandis that served as administrative centers for collecting taxes and conducting other government activities.

- **Religious mandis:**

In ancient India, mandis were also associated with religious institutions such as temples and ashrams. These mandis served as centers for spiritual and cultural activities, as well as for the exchange of goods and services between the devotees and the priests.

Thus, the types of market centers in ancient India were diverse and multifaceted. From the haats and mandis that were the backbone of local trade and commerce, to the sreni-nagaras and shroff bazaars that were hubs for specialized trades and financial transactions, the markets of ancient India played a crucial role in the development of its economy and society. The establishment of large empires, the use of advanced agricultural techniques, and the exchange of ideas and technologies with neighboring regions all contributed to the evolution of markets and trade centers in India. Today, India remains a major player in the global economy, with a vibrant and dynamic marketplace that reflects its rich history and cultural diversity.

Table depicting the importance trade/market centers that existed in India from BC to AD

Time line	Trade/Market Center
3rd millennium BC	Harappa and Mohenjodaro
6th Century BC	Taxila, Patliputra
3rd Century BC	Ujjain, Kaushambi, Puhar
1st century BC	Kanchipuram, Mathura, Varanasi
1st century AD	Uraiyur, Karur, Kaveripattinam
2nd century AD	Peshawar, Madurai, Arikamedu
3rd century AD	Pratishthana, Vallabhi, Kanchipuram

6th century AD	Thanjavur, Mamallapuram, Sarnath
7th century AD	Nalanda, Kanauj, Muziris
8th century AD	Srivijaya, Thanjavur, Konark
10th century AD	Ujjain, Thanjavur, Maldives
12th century AD	Delhi, Devagiri, Vijayanagara
14th century AD	Gujarat, Madurai, Bengal
16th century AD	Agra, Ahmedabad, Goa, Surat, Jaipur
17th century AD	Hyderabad, Lucknow, Calicut, Masulipatnam
18th century AD	Kolkata, Murshidabad, Pune, Mysore
19th century AD	Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Surat, Hyderabad

Source: Self compiled list by referring various sources

Unique aspects of Ancient Indian Trade Centers or Market Centers:

1. **Diversity of goods:** Due to India's unique topography and climate, a variety of natural resources were produced, including precious metals, spices, and textiles that were in high demand elsewhere in the world. As a result, India developed into a significant hub for trade and commerce, drawing traders and merchants from as far as China and the Mediterranean. (Goswami, 2008)
2. **International trade:** Ancient Indian trading hubs participated in global trade, and traders from the Roman Empire, China, and Southeast Asia visited India to conduct business. For instance, the Romans used the port city of Arikamedu on India's east coast as a major commercial hub, exchanging Indian textiles and spices for imported goods like wine, olive oil, and glassware. (Kallie Szczepanski, 2020)
3. **Sophisticated trade networks:** Trade hubs in ancient India were a component of complex commercial networks that extended throughout the Indian subcontinent and beyond. Via a network of middlemen, traders exchanged products along well-known land and maritime routes. (Sen Tensen, 2003)

4. **Religious and cultural significance:** Important temples and pilgrimage sites may be found in or close by many ancient Indian commercial hubs, which were also significant from a religious and cultural perspective. For instance, Varanasi served as a major hub for trade and business as well as a key Hindu pilgrimage site.
5. **Role in shaping Indian history:** Ancient Indian trading hubs were crucial in influencing Indian history because they facilitated the transfer of knowledge, skills, and culture across many nations and peoples. For instance, Pataliputra, the capital of the Mauryan Empire, served as a significant hub for trade, commerce, as well as for cultural and intellectual pursuits. (Dutta P, 2012)
6. **Currency and banking systems:** Ancient Indian trading hubs had highly developed monetary and banking systems. For instance, punch-marked coins were used as currency during the Mauryan era, and the emperor Ashoka established a system of banks to control commerce and banking. (Kosambi D D, 1965)
7. **Guilds and associations:** Ancient Indian trading hubs were frequently built around guilds or associations that were in charge of policing commerce, upholding standards of excellence, and defending the rights of their members. (Kulke H & Rothermund D, 2004).
8. **Use of technology:** Early users of technology included ancient Indian trade hubs, who used bullock carts and boats for transportation as well as wind and water power for milling and grinding. (Chakravarti R, 1999)
9. **Urban planning:** Several trading hubs in ancient India had excellent planning and organisation, with streets, markets, and residential areas built out in a grid. For instance, the Indus Valley Civilization's city of Mohenjo-daro had a well-designed grid layout with public buildings, granaries, and an advanced drainage system. (Kenoyer J M, 2006)
10. **Importance of education:** Ancient Indian commerce hubs valued education highly, and many of these hubs had universities and other learning institutions. For instance,

the modern-day Bihar city of Nalanda was a significant Buddhist learning centre that drew researchers from all over the world. (Bloom J L, 2010)

In conclusion, market and trade centers played a crucial role in the economy of ancient India. They were not just a place to exchange goods but also served as important social and cultural hubs. These markets operated under the supervision of various guilds and associations, such as the shreni, which played a significant role in regulating trade and commerce. The rise of large empires, such as the Mauryas and Guptas, saw the development of well-organized market centers and efficient trade networks that spanned across the Indian subcontinent and beyond. The importance of markets and trade centers persisted through the medieval period, and many of these sites continue to thrive today as bustling economic hubs.

Photos of Markets in Ancient India



Ancient ruins of Hampi Sule

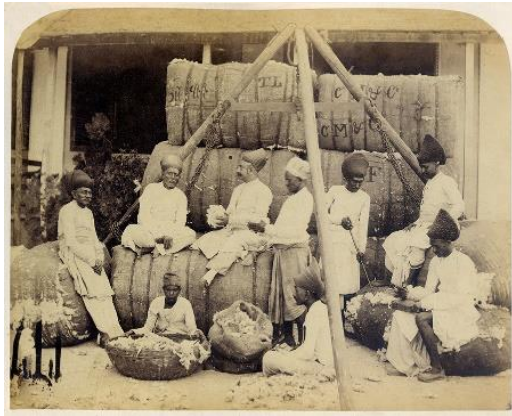
Bazaar

Source: <https://www.alamy.com/ancient-ruins-of-hampi-sule-bazaar-hampi-karnataka-india-image432553966.html>



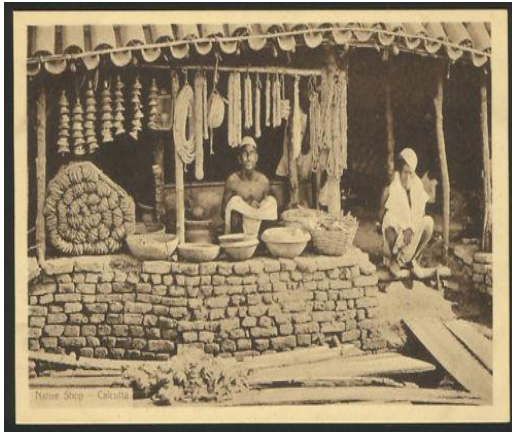
Ancient ruins of Krishna Bazaar

Source: <https://depositphotos.com/170129496/stock-photo-ancient-ruins-on-krishna-bazaar.html>



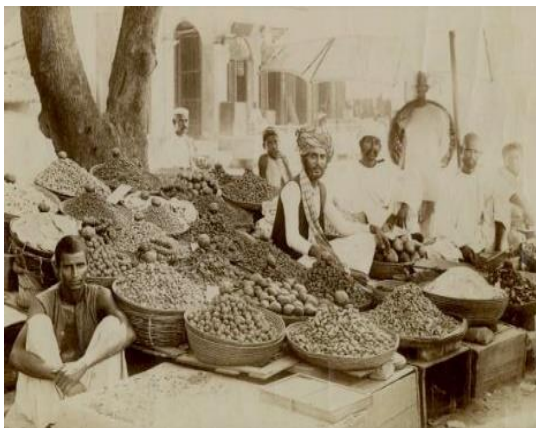
The Cotton market, Bombay
(Mumbai) 1855 – 1862.

Source: <https://digitalcollections.smu.edu/digital/collection/ea/id/759/>



Native shop at Calcutta

Source: <https://www.oldindianphotos.in/2011/10/native-shop-of-calcutta-kolkata-vintage.html>



Spice market – India 1875.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spice_market_in_India_in_1875.jpg

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Comprehensive overview of the literature that is referred and cited in the study:

Sonepat Mandi: A Historical Overview by Rajpal Singh:

About the reference: This research paper provides a historical overview of the Sonepat Mandi in present-day Haryana, India. It describes the origins of the market, its development over time, and the factors that contributed to its success as a hub for agricultural trade. The paper also discusses the impact of modernization and globalization on the Sonepat Mandi and its future prospects.

The Role of Urban and Rural Markets in the Economic Development of Ahmedabad District: A Study of Kalupur and Bavla Mandis by M. S. Patel:

About the reference: This research paper examines the role of the Kalupur and Bavla Mandis in the economic development of the Ahmedabad district in Gujarat, India. It analyzes the characteristics of these markets, their impact on the local economy, and the challenges they face. The paper also explores strategies for improving the functioning of these markets and enhancing their contribution to economic growth.

The Economic and Social History of India by Tirthankar Roy is a chapter in The Oxford Handbook of the Indian Economy edited by Chetan Ghate.

About the reference: The chapter provides an overview of the economic and social history of India from ancient times to the present day. It covers topics such as the organization of agriculture, trade and commerce, money and credit, and the impact of colonialism on the Indian economy. The chapter also discusses the role of caste and religion in shaping economic relationships and highlights the diversity and complexity of the Indian economy throughout history.

The Ancient Economy by Walter Scheidel is a chapter in The Oxford Handbook of the Roman Economy edited by Walter Scheidel.

About the reference: The chapter provides an overview of the ancient economy, focusing primarily on the Roman Empire but also discussing other ancient civilizations such as Greece, Persia, and China. It covers topics such as the organization of agriculture and trade, the use of money and credit, and the impact of warfare and political institutions on economic development. The chapter also discusses debates among scholars about the nature of the ancient

economy, including discussions about whether it was a market economy or a state-controlled economy.

Cultural Exchange and the Indian Ocean World by Edward A. Alpers:

About the reference: This article explores the cultural exchanges that occurred across the Indian Ocean region throughout history. It discusses the ways in which Indian Ocean trade facilitated the spread of religion, language, and cultural practices, as well as the movement of people and ideas.

The Economic and Social History of Early India by Romila Thapar:

About the reference: This article provides an overview of the economic and social history of India from ancient times through the medieval period. It covers topics such as agriculture, trade, urbanization, and social stratification, and discusses the ways in which these factors contributed to the development of Indian society.

The Economic Role of the Shreni in Ancient India by Upendra Thakur:

About the reference: This article focuses on the role of shrenis, or guilds, in ancient Indian society. It discusses the ways in which shrenis contributed to the development of trade, commerce, and industry, and how they served as a form of social and economic organization in early India.

Trade and Commerce in Ancient India: A Re-Examination by D.N. Jha:

About the reference: This article re-examines the existing literature on trade and commerce in ancient India, discussing the different types of trade and the impact of trade on society and culture. The author also examines the role of guilds and associations in regulating trade and argues that the Indian economy was not as isolated as previously thought.

Haats: A Window to Rural Markets by Sankar Datta and Biplab Datta:

About the reference: This article explores the role of haats, or periodic markets, in rural India. The authors discuss the various types of haats, their organization and function, and the role of haats in facilitating economic transactions and social interactions in rural communities.

The Historical Roots of India's Market Economy by Tirthankar Roy:

About the reference: This article traces the historical roots of India's market economy, focusing on the development of trade and commerce in ancient and medieval India. The author argues that India's market economy has a long history and that the country's economic development has been shaped by both internal and external factors.

The Social and Economic World of the Sreni: A Study in Ancient Indian Economic History by Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya:

About the reference: This article discusses the organization and functions of the sreni, which were guilds or associations of merchants and craftsmen in ancient India. The author analyzes the social and economic roles played by these organizations in the wider economy and society of ancient India.

Indian Business and Nationalist Politics 1931-39: The Indigenous Capitalist Class and the Rise of the Congress Party by Claude Markovits:

About the reference: This book examines the relationship between the Indian business community and the nationalist movement in the early 20th century. The author argues that Indian capitalists played an important role in the political mobilization of the nationalist movement, and that their economic interests were closely tied to the demand for political independence.

Trade and Commerce in Ancient India: From the Earliest Times to c. AD 300 by Shailendra Nath Sen:

About the reference: This book provides an overview of trade and commerce in ancient India, from the earliest period up to around 300 CE. The author discusses the organization of trade and commerce, the role of merchants and traders, the nature of economic exchanges, and the development of markets and trade routes.

Mandis in India: A Study of Agricultural Marketing by J. P. Singh:

About the reference: This book focuses on the role of mandis, or agricultural markets, in India's agricultural marketing system. The author examines the history, organization, and functioning of these markets, as well as the challenges they face in the contemporary period.

Merchants, Markets and Exchange in the Pre-modern World by Uma Prasad Goswami

About the reference: This article discusses the role of merchants and markets in the pre-modern era, with a focus on South Asia and China.

Roman Trade with India by Kallie Szczepanski

About the reference: This article explores the nature of trade between the Roman Empire and India, including the types of goods traded and the routes taken.

Trade and Trade Routes in Ancient India by Tansen Sen

About the reference: This article examines the trade routes that existed in ancient India, including the land and sea routes, and the goods that were traded.

The Role of Trade in Ancient India by Pradipta Dutta

About the reference: This article discusses the importance of trade in the economic and social development of ancient India, including the role of ports and trade guilds.

An Introduction to the Study of Indian History by D.D. Kosambi

About the reference: This research article provides an overview of the historiography of ancient India, including its economic and social history.

A History of India by Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund

About the reference: This provides a comprehensive overview of Indian history, including its economic and social development.

Trade in Early India by Ranabir Chakravarti

About the reference: This article focuses on the nature of trade in ancient India, including the types of goods traded and the organization of trade networks.

The Indus Valley Tradition of Pakistan and Western India by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer

About the reference: This source provides an overview of the Indus Valley civilization, including its economic organization and trade networks.

Knowledge, Power, and Practice: The Anthropology of Medicine and Everyday Life by João Biehl and Byron Good

About the reference: This is a broader work on anthropology, but includes insights into the economic and social factors that shape healthcare and medicine in India.

Merchants, Guilds and Trade in Ancient India: An Orissan Perspective

About the reference: This article provides a brief information about overseas trade and maritime activities, indeed, played a vital role for the economic prosperity of ancient Orissa. It provides most of the evidences and inscriptions which are mentioned on the stones in the temples about market places and products that will be sold. It also discuss Kalinga's export and imported products and activities.

Emergence and Spread of Exchange Centres in Early Medieval Western India

About the reference: The present article basically seeks to look into the emergence and spread of exchange centres, popularly known as maṇḍapikās and haṭṭas, in western India during the early medieval period (c. 600–1300 CE). Large-scale land grants, introduction of better means of irrigational facilities such as araghṭṭa and vapi acted as catalyst for the growth of agrarian economy, leading to the availability of marketable surplus. All this altogether led to dynamic upsurge in trading activities, ultimately providing a favourable ground for the rise of exchange centres in different parts of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Political initiative by the rulers, rise of temple economy, organisation of fairs and festivals and the spatial context of an exchange centre were enabling factors. Merchants and merchant groups also in their capacity played a crucial role in the growth of exchange centres during this period.

Market centers and trade routes in late ancient Bihar.

About the reference: This article discuss about market centres in ancient Bihar which also played a role of religious centres. It also provides some evidences of inscriptions and sculptures of Nalanda of Bihar which have mentioned some of the hattas. It provides trading places and trade routes of ancient Bihar such as Savatthi (Sravasti), Rajagriha, Setevya, Kapilavastu, Kushinara, Pava, Hathigama, Bhandagama, Vaishali and across Pataliputra.