

Preface

The present research seeks to find out the socio-economic condition of the people of Bengal. While the political history of early Bengal has always been paid due attention by the historians, economic and social history has received a relatively less focus, but it earnestly requires attention. The history of the people necessitates the study of the socio-economic history and Professor R.S. Sharma happened to have played the pioneering role in this regard. Later on, B.N.S.Yadav, D.N.Jha, B.D.Chattopadhyaya, D.C.Sircar, B.N.Mukherjee, Ranabir Chakrabarty and many others are the pioneers, who have already focussed mainly upon the socio-economic features of that time. The feudalistic monarchy of that time has evoked a sort of criticism and finally the thought seems to have emerged that it was not at all the feudalistic phenomenon out and out. Trade and commerce were not neglected altogether in many parts of the country. Bengal was also one of the important areas which did not neglect trade and commerce. The idea of pursuing research on the topic especially for unearthing the features of brisk commercial contact with various parts of south Asia dawned upon me when I saw a lot of coins and many archaeological findings in a wide area around the Bay of Bengal.

The present study offers a critical understanding towards the historicity of the existence of varieties of industries, trade and commerce in ancient Bengal. The discussion refutes the traditional notion of lack of trade and commerce in the early medieval north India as well as Bengal. It intends to explore the origin of trade and commerce from the earliest times and up to the period of survey.

It would be proper on my part to deal with the genesis of the present dissertation entitled 'Industry, Trade and Commerce in Early Medieval Bengal: A Historical Investigation'. It was, in fact, in the early days of my struggling years, that I was impressed very much by some writings of R. C. Majumdar, N.R. Roy, B. D. Chattopadhyaya, B. N. Mukherjee and Ranabir Chakravarti. They raised some issues of economy of Bengal from the early period of Bengal and other times. My

beloved teacher and now colleague Dr. Gaur Chandra Ghosh of Islampur College also inspired me to think about the area concerned. So, when I got the chance to pursue my research work, I took this topic as a field of study.

I gracefully remember and acknowledge my heartfelt gratitude to my respected supervisor Dr. Sudash Lama, Associate Professor, University of North Bengal. He has helped me with many valuable and scholarly suggestions in preparing my dissertation. He has always helped and guided me throughout the period of the process of preparation of my thesis. His support and suggestion always motivated me to work on my thesis sincerely and fast. I shall be failing in my duty if I do not express my heartfelt gratitude Dr. Anita Bagchi, former Professor in History, North Bengal University. She happened to be the pioneering spirit behind my work from the beginning to the end and helped me by offering valuable suggestions to come out the intricate problems I faced when my work was in progress. I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude to another man, who is my teacher and also a friend and philosopher to me Dr. Gaur Chandra Ghosh, Associate Professor of Islampur College. He has always been the pathfinder in my life, and has always inspired me to explore the new field of work. His worthy suggestions have enriched me in preparing this dissertation. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to another person named Dr. Soham Pain, Assistant Professor in English, Chopra Kamala Paul Smriti Mahavidyalaya, who always encouraged me to do the research in proper way and checked the whole thesis meticulously and guided me from time to time to enrich the work.

I was lucky enough to come in touch Subhashda, an employee of Asiatic Society of Bengal, Kolkata, who helped me very much to find out the copies of various journals, which are not only rare, but can hardly be located even in some of the richest libraries. I have tried my best to examine such sources in the light of connected documents or to test such materials from a historical point of view. I am grateful to the Director and staff of the some academic centres, such as National Library, Kolkata, West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata, National Achieves,

Delhi, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Delhi, Library of University of North Bengal. They provided me with all the relevant source materials needed for my dissertation. I am also grateful to the staff and members of Numismatic Society of Bengal, India, Indian Museum and various centres situated in Kolkata. I am indebted to Professor Bijoy Kumar Sarkar, University of North Bengal, for his scholarly and encouraging suggestions regarding my study. I am also thankful to Dr. Dalia Bhattacharya, Head, Department of History, University of North Bengal and also to the faculty members of the Department of History, University of North Bengal for their encouragement.

My heartfelt thanks to all my colleagues, who have helped and cooperated to finish my research, work in time. Lastly, I take this opportunity to acknowledge a deep sense and indebtedness towards my father, wife and only son (Aitareya), whose unending sacrifices have gone a long way in helping me to prepare this work. No word is sufficient to express their contribution to my research work. I remember my dearest mother, who is no more in this material world, but her blessings are always with me.

It is my sincerest hope that the present work would encourage the next generation to take up and explore some other areas of research which have not been highlighted in the present work.