Chapter: 4
Trade and Commerce I

4.1. Causes behind the rise of Trade

Bengal enjoyed prosperity through trade and commerce since time immemorial. Ancient Bengal in the early period of its history comprised the present areas of Bangladesh and West Bengal, parts of Bihar, Assam, Tripura and Orissa of Indian territory. It actually denoted an aggregate of four major sub-regions: Puṇḍravardhana, Rāḍha, Vaṅga and Samataṭa-Harikela. For the present purpose, the term Bengal, therefore, is taken to refer to the areas comprising present Bangladesh and West Bengal in India.

The following discussion throws light on various aspects that led to the growth of trade and industry in the Indian sub-continent as well as in Bengal. It also seeks to explore in the geographical backdrop, the technical and scientific development, which contributed in the development of trade and industry. It is a commonplace axiom that the trade of any country depends for its healthy growth on a large number of factors such as political, geographical, economic, scientific, religion and technical. It is a proposed to examine here these factors one by one.

4.1.1. Geographical Factor

It is proven that physical geography provides a common denominator for all historical events. The geographical location and physical characteristics of the countries influence the economic development of the country at all times. On the basis of physical geography, India can be divided into three parts- the Himalayan uplands, the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Peninsular India.[1] The Himalayas are related to the region of Himāvat.[2] Among the Indo-Gangetic plains, the two main areas are the Āryāvarta and the Uttarāpatha.[3] The peninsular India corresponds with the Dakṣināpatha.[4] Among the divisions, the Indo-Gangetic plains were gifted with rich alluvial soil and high productivity. The

rich productivity of the region supplied the raw material for the flow of trade. Ancient Bengal lying on the Indo-Gangetic plains was located in South Asia with coastline of 580 kms on the northern littoral of the Bay of Bengal. The deltaic plains of the Ganges (Padmā), Brahmaputra (Jamuna), and the Meghna rivers and their tributaries occupied 79% of the country (Bengal). It had a rich river system that provided suitable channel for a rising trade flow. The river system did not only offer waterproof pattern, but it served a favorable irrigation system which accelerated agricultural production. The warm humid climate, in conjunction with the fertility of land, made the region an extra-ordinary productive agricultural land. This made the country capable of supporting a large surplus consuming class. The surplus production caused by the above factors fostered trade and commerce. Apart from it, ancient Bengal having with its many rivers and their tributaries provided a natural communication with its remotest areas. The area was connected moderately with land routes which also allowed a soft and smooth transportation. The riverine route seems to have been preferred over land route which involved many hazards.[5] The geographical advantages of the area exalted it to a distinguished position in the realm of inland trade. Thus it is clear that a favourable geography always helped Bengal to produce more commodities both agricultural and industrial, and to promote her trade items all over the Indian sub-continent and beyond. The confluence of the Ganges at the Bay provided an easy access to the sea. Thus, the connection to the sea gave excel to the overseas journey and naturally trade of items could easily reach to the overseas countries, where it was needed.

4.1.2. Economic Factor

Economic factors play a major role in determining the proper growth of trade. Like today, ancient India's economy was largely based on agriculture since the remote past. In the region of Bengal, agriculture was the main occupation of the people and agricultural productions increased by leaps and bounds. It provided many marketable commodities of mercantile value. Agricultural

products such as sugarcane, wine-plants, oil-seeds and some other plants yielding pigments, grew to considerable importance. Most of this items supplied raw materials for the manufacture of industrial articles. The government also adopted specific measures to improve the condition of farming and farmers. This is confirmed by Kauṭilya, who informs us that the Mauryan government introduced a special agriculture officer called *sitādhyakṣa* (the Director of Agriculture). His duty was to undertake measures for the promotion of agriculture.[6] The Mauryas also provided liberal agricultural facilities.[7] Since agricultural economy was very much based on irrigation facilities, the state provided special measures to promote irrigation works. The forest also played a leading role in the economy of the country. First, it ensured sufficient rainfall in the adjoining lands and made those lands more productive by retaining their moisture. At the same time, they offered food and shelter during disasters. But from the point of view of trade, they provided various products of high economic value. Kauṭilya has mentioned a significant number of commodities from the forest, such as strong timber (*sārdāru*), timber of the bamboo type (*veṇu*), creepers (*vallī)*, fibrous plants, plants yielding rope-making material (*rajjubhāṇḍa*), plants yielding flowers productive of dyes, medicinal herbs (*oṣadhi*), poisonous drugs (*viśa*)and fruit trees etc.[8] Kālidāsa also gives a detailed description of our forests and their resoures such as different types of hides,[9] musk (*mṛganabhi*),[10] lac (*lakṣa*)[11] and the yaktail (*camari*) etc.[12]

Animals and animal products also contributed to the economy of a particular region. Animals were of great economic utility chiefly, because they were used as beasts of burden and for ploughing and transport purposes. They also provided material for non-vegetables food, hides, skins, ivory, horns and bones etc. These products were of great marketable value. In the view of the importance of cattle wealth, the state appointed special officers to look after their proper care and unkeep. From the *Arthaśāstra* we have come to know that state appointed the superintendent of cattle *godhyakṣa* and *samāhartrā*. Their duty was to maintain the complete record of the cattle belonging to the state

and to the private individuals.[13] It has been mentioned that those who maltreated cattle, employed them at an improper time or misused them for carrying heavy loads, were compelled to atone for this serious offence.[14]

The super-structure of a nation's trade is broad-based on the framework of the healthy growth of industries.[15] During the period of our study trade obviously flourished and it is clearly understood that the healthy development of the industries must have been the precursor to it. The *Arthaśāstra* gives a long list of a number of officers employed by the state for regulating various industries. All these industries provided a rich source of revenue to the state and required highly sophisticated technology. This could hardly be possible within a private enterprise. So the state took particular care to foster the growth and development of these industries appointing *akarādhyakṣa* (director of mines),[16]*suvarṇādhyakṣa* (the superintendent of gold),[17] *sūtrādhyakṣa* (superintendent of yarns),[18] *surādhyakṣa* (the controller of spirituous Liquors).[19] Mining and metallurgy were the prime industries. Apart from this gold, yarns and spirituous liquors were other industries mentioned in the *Arthaśāstra*.[20]

For the development of trade, the human factor is as much important and, even more important than the material factor. No industry can flourish unless the workers are well paid and well kept. Therefore, the ancient rulers ensured that the artisans were held in high esteem and paid due wages.[21]

Another factor was the supply and demand forces. These basically refer to the behaviour of the specified market. Without proper demand, there is no significance of trade. A trader keeps an eye on the forces of demand in the market. A trader produces or buys items that have a lot of economic demand in the market. The state appointed a royal official namely *paṇyādhyakṣa* (the director of trade). In view of that, the officer was charged to investigate the proper demand and supply. In the first century AD, India acquired huge wealth through foreign trade because there was a lot of demand of Indian products in the Roman Empire such as iron and cotton. All this shows that adequate

measures have been taken to study the quantum of demand and supply in ancient India.

4.1.3. Technical and Scientific Factors

It is true that India's large number of products had successfully captured the international market. This proves that these products must have been of good quality. It is obvious that a good quality product always needs technical and scientific skill. Ancient Indian artisans gained wide popularity for their technical and scientific skills. It is a common fact that the products of rich quality always also have great demand in the market. In those days, Indian textile materials and irons attained remarkable reputation in foreign markets. The qualitative brilliance of some industrial output of Bengal is verified by indigenous and foreign accounts. Kauṭilya has highly praised the *dukūla* of Vaṅga while referring to the best products of other *janapadas*. In the *Agni Purāṇa* the swords of Bengal are mentioned to be of a superior quality with 'keenness of edge and the power to withstand blows'. The *Periplus* describes the Gangetic spikenard and muslins to be of finest sorts that found a ready market in the Roman world.[22]

Like textile products, iron articles also had good demand in foreign markets because of their high quality. A specimen is a pillar of Mehrauli near Delhi.[23] It is a single piece of iron. An extraordinary feature of this pillar is that it has never rusted and it still maintains its inscription very legibly. About the pillar, Percy Brown remarks that it is a "remarkable tribute to the genius and manipulative dexterity of Indian iron workers".[24]

Moreover, a significant development of the time was the discovery of monsoons in the Indian Ocean by the foreigners. In 47 CE, Hippalus discovered the regular pattern of the monsoons in the Indian Ocean.[25] This scientific discovery undoubtedly gave the Indo-Roman trade a great stimulus and sufficient value and variety. With favorable winds, traders were able to safely escape to India through a more direct route. It also made possible for them to visit Indian ports more frequently and in a relatively short period of time.[26] Available literary

sources prove that the mariners were aware of the wind and current aspects for the last two thousand years or more before. The Buddhist *Jātaka* stories and Jaina Canonicals mention ships moving by the force of wind (Pavanabālāsamahaya).[27] The Saṅgama period texts, such as Puraṇānuru, Ahananuru and Māduraikāñchī mention different types of seagoing ships, which moved in the seas with the help of wind sails.[28] The unknown author of the *Periplus* also delineates that the direction of winds helped the ships to sail in the sea.[29] Pliny in his *Natural History* mentions the south-west monsoon.[30] Similar thins have also been noticed by Fa-hien on his return journey to China along the route of the eastern coast.[31]

4.1.4. Political Factor

That politics and trade go hand-in-hand together is not a modern concept that originated in the West. Trade in the communist nations is directly ruled by the state. Our study of ancient Indian history has revealed that political factors played an important role in the development of the Indian trade and commerce. In Mauryan times, trade was directly patronized, regularized and encouraged by the state. They made well-established proper means of communication and transport. They constructed trade routes and trade centres adjacent to the trade routes and provided security for the traders. Permanent bureaucratic machinery was also set up for trade and commercial expansion. From the available sources, we come to know of a high official namely *panyādhyakṣa*, the director of trade. He was assigned some very important functions to perform.[32] Navādhyakṣa (the superintendent of ships) was another official appointed to look after the sea routes properly.[33] The Mauryas encouraged trade and commerce for revenues, accruing out of road taxes or octroi duties. The peaceful foreign policy adopted by the Mauryas also gave impetus to the development of trade especially with the Greeks. The authentic evidence furnished by Megāthenese also highlights the good foreign relations of the Mauryas. He mentions that these amiable relations gave impetus to the influx of the foreign travelers, over and above the traders,

into the country. To encourage commercial relations, the state had granted special privileges and opportunities for some time. Kuṣhāṇa king Kaniṣhka ordered the minting of enough coins to encourage trade. Apart from Nārada's testimony, several rules and regulations had been formulated by the state to protect the financial interest of merchants and traders.[34] Bengal patronized trade and commerce to an extent that a considerable growth of trade occurred since time immemorial.

4.1.5. Religious Factor

Trade and commerce was highly encouraged by the Buddhist and Jaina religions. Typical *stupas*, monasteries and *vihāras* excavated near the port and trade centres indicate that Buddhism had played an important role to the growth of maritime trade. An important aspect of Buddhism was to emphasize on the investment and multiplication of wealth and its approval of usury and the earning of interest.[35] Even Buddha himself witnessed the gift of gardens and *vihāras* or monasteries for the monks. The Buddhist accounts, paintings, *stupas* and Jātaka stories clearly indicate the development of trade. A sea monster representing Bhārhut's Medallion shows that threat to consolidate a boat is a clear evidence of Buddhist involvement in maritime trade.[36] Ajanta, Aurangabad and Ellora caves contain depictions of *Avalokiteśvara* as the saviour of the ship during distressful conditions. Besides sculptural evidence, the distribution of Buddhist settlements such as *stupas*, monasteries and *chaityas* situated near the ports and trade routes show the involvement of Buddhism in maritime trade. The legends of religious propagating mission of Mahendra, son or brother of Aśoka, or the dispatch of the tooth-relic mentioning the voyage of Dantakumāra and many other stories narrated in the *Piṭakas*, *Jātakas*, and similar Buddhist literature are indicative of the more liberal attitude of the Buddhist Saṅgha towards transoceanic voyagers. While the Brāhmaṇical *Dharmaśāstras* imposed restrictions on crossing the seas, the Buddhist literatures gave importance for the growth of trade and commerce.[37] So the rapid growth of Buddhism also helps the

traders to send voyages for trade purposes. Buddhists monks, traders and local residents gave gifts for construction of monasteries at trade centres, as it is clear from the inscriptions of Kānheri and Junnar.[38] Not only that, the pilgrims travelling to Buddhist shrines led to the discovery of new trade routes, which paved the way for the expansion of trade and commerce. The Buddhist pilgrims from different parts of the world desiring to visit the main centres of Buddhism in India, such as Rājgṛiha, Śrāvasti, Pāṭaliputra, Bodhgayā, Sārnāth, Champā, Nālandā, Kauśāmbi, and other places, who came by sea, must have landed at Tāmralipta and from here they went to various places.[39] It also appears from the *Samantapāsādikā* of Buddhaghoṣa containing references belonging to the 5th century AD that ship often traversed between Tāmralipta and Mahātittha.[40] In this way, Tāmralipta was well connected to different parts of India and also world and thus following this path the traders came to Tāmralipta and centering it, they spread to the remotest parts of the country.

There is also a corresponding approval of trade as a profession in the Jaina ideals. The excessive emphasis of the Jaina canons on non-violence considered that some living beings could be unintentionally killed during ploughing, but such harmful effects were not perceived in trade. So trade was preferred to agriculture in the Jaina tenets.[41]

4.1.6. Education

It has been argued that there appeared spread of literacy and this helped economic transactions over long distances and between different groups.[42] There is evidence of a large number of seals and pots that bear the testimony of literacy. Literacy no doubt helped the mercantile activities. Enamul Haque comments that “the spread of literacy to the extent, which could determine causes of maritime trade perhaps, could not have been possible without the prosperity generated as a result of the same commerce”.[43] Therefore, it seems that literacy invariably followed the prosperity. Otherwise, after nearly a thousand years, the broad literacy would have resulted in a far more remarkable

prosperity borne out of maritime transactions, which actually did not happen. It should be noted that the direct evidence of trans-oceanic trade during the Pāla period is almost non-existent

4.2. Rise and Growth of Internal Trade

Since the dawn of civilization trade has been a part and parcel of human existence. It has been a priority for proper existence and subsistence. Moreover, the economic stability of a state in a particular period depends on the quantitity of trade carried on in that region. Historians have always been interested in finding how flourishing trade was in different periods and regions. In India, volumes have been written on the aspect of trade and its nature, right from the ancient times to the modern. We have a dearth of information regarding our inland trade. The inscriptions shed little light in that regard. On the other hand, foreign travellers and historians have left their own accounts which throw a scanty light on internal trade. They had more interest in the foreign trade of a province. We can infer the state of inland trade from the description of foreign trade highlighted by the foreign travellers.

The indigenous and foreign sources of witness bear to the fact that perhaps in the middle of 4th century A.D., Bengal was commercially connected with other trade centres of northern India. Ancient sources often refer to important articles produced in Bengal. All these must have reached to the every centre in northern India. But it should be reminded that the history of inland trade began from the Harappan age. Though no individual Harappan merchant can be indentified or named, remains of a structure from Bānawali in Haryana have been identified as the residence of a well off trader.[44] Early Vedic pastoral economy seems to have halted commercial transaction temporarily. In the later Vedic period, when the Aryans settled in the northern regions, there was a new beginning in domestic trade. The merchants, known as *paṇis,*[45] probably appeared during this period. From the 6th century BC, when the revolution of production took place through the use of iron technology, the country's economy

evolved on the expansion of trade in different sectors of the economy. Internal trade at this stage was a requirement, and it was often sponsored by the rulers of the *mahājanapadas*. It seems that merchants and ruling classes worked in collaboration with each other. It happened due to the interest of the rulers in expanding the boundaries of their state and merchants' eager to expand their trade both by the route of land and water.[46]

The products produced in the rural areas regularly flowed to the urban areas as documented from the literary sources. The old commentary on the *Vinaya Piṭaka* specifically mentions that the king used to collect customs in the gate of the village.[47] Kauṭilya further said that the tax should be imposed on products that were produced in the villages or cities. *Arthaśāstra* mentions a fairly long list of articles and the rates of toll-tax to be charged upon them. It also clearly indicates that these variety of commodities flowed into the city.[48] Interestingly, the general rule was that products were not sold at the point of its origin. To meet the needs of the urban people, a large number of products were collected from the *janapadas*, villages and *nigamas*. As a result, each and every town became a centre of commercial activities. The reference to the *paṇyagṛha* mentioned in *Arthaśāstra* implies the existence of market in which each building was earmarked for a particular type of merchandise. Agricultural products of the village were sold in the village-market and the surplus was supplied to towns. The *Jātaka* stories refer to the existence of village-markets.[49] In return, the villages received agricultural and other implements required for manufacturing industrial goods. But such commercial transactions could have operated in villages or between a village and a town during the pre-Maurya era on a very limited scale. Under the state's initiative in the Maurya era, the process of rural-urban giving and receiving had spread widely.

The market place was known as *āpaṇa* during the time of Patañjali.[50] In the *Saudarananda*, Kapilavāstu has been described as the well-equipped market.[51] According to the *Milinda-pañha,*[52] there was a city of Sāgala famous for flowers, fruits, antidotes, medicines, ambrosia, precious stones and all kinds

of merchandises. In the same text Sāgala has been termed as *nānā-puṭa-bhedana* meaning the distributing place of parcels of different merchandises. Trenckner renders it as an entrepot of various merchandises coming from different quarters.[53] In addition, a picturesque description about the market of Sāgala is made in the *Milinda-pañha* where it is stated, "shops are there for the sale of Banāres *muslin*, of Kotumbara stuffs, and of other cloths of various kinds: and sweet odours are exhaled from the *bazaars*, where all sorts of flowers and perfumes are tastefully set out. Jewels are there in plenty…..and guilds of traders in all sorts of finery display their goods in the *bazaars* that face all quarters of the sky".[54]

In addition to earlier literary sources, some later texts also bear testimony to the existence of brisk trade. Varāhamihira mentions in his *Bṛihat Saṁhitā*[55] the local markets of villages and towns, where there were well decorated shops lined on both sides of the street. In addition to the ordinary shopkeepers (*āpaṇastha*) and traders, the rich traders (*arthapat*i) were known for boarding commercial products and taking to them to distant places for profit. The traders mentioned above have been referred to variously as *vaṇij*, *vāṇijaka*, *paṇyavṛt*ti and *paṇyāśrayin*, who satisfied the local needs of the people.[56] Hiuen-Tsang too, during the course of his travels, noticed shops on the highway and that of booths lined the roads.[57]

A part of the richer section of the rural communities, namely the landowners, as well as the people of the *nigamas* seems to have formed a portion of the consumers. The commodities accumulated in the urban centres were brought for this rich section of the society. The *Kūṭa-vāṇija Jātaka* supplies that the commodities were taken from the towns to the villages. The town-based merchants and landlords kept a close relationship with their rural counterparts frequently, as is evident from the *Jātakas.*[58] With the unprecedented growth of urbanization in northern India during the Śuṅga-Kuṣhāṇa period, villages and towns supplemented each other with respect to production and distribution.

Bengal located in the eastern side of India has been noted for its agrarian prosperity and brisk trade since at least the sixth century BC. There is no doubt that Bengal was rich in trade since ancient times. The benefits of peace and order established throughout northern India by the strong arms of the Guptas helped the expansion of internal trade.[59] This process was accelerated by the issuance of gold and silver coins by the emperors in abundance. Merchants travelled more or less along the well known land and water routes. There are plenty of literary evidences of brisk commercial transactions. As a part of the *bhukti* of Gupta Empire, Bengal was not detached from enriched trade and commerce that prevailed in north India. The sea ports mentioned in the records had served as the natural structure of import and export along long distance routes from the interior. India's most important trade centres in the early 6th century A.D. have been mentioned in the writings of Cosmas. The list includes 'Sindhu', 'Orrhotha', 'Calliana', 'Sibor' and no less than five marts of 'Male' on the west coast, as well as 'Marallo' and 'Caver' along this coast.[60] Among the other ports emerging in this period, Tāmralipta[61] might be mentioned at the top lying on the Ganges delta. Tāmralipta is identified with modern Tamluk, which was located on the right bank of the Rupanarayan. P.C. Dasgupa finds many textual references to Tāmralipta in ancient literatures.[62] In the *Jātakas* Tāmralipta is mentioned as Dāmalipti,[63] Ptolemy[64] called it Tamālitis, Pliny[65] mentioned it as Taluctae and Hiuen-Tsang referred to it as Tan-mo-lih-ti. Varāhamihira refers to it as a city.[66] Tāmralipti, from the point of the northern, eastern and central Bengal, form a separate and independent political unit, as found in the *sabhāpārvan of the Mahābhārata*. Sometimes it may also have formed a part of the *janapada* of Rāḍha or Suhma or Vaṅga. Its happy geographical position at the meeting place of land and water communications, as Hiuen-Tsang observed, helped the emporium of the vast trade of eastern India across the seas. It was the main port for voyagers from China, Indonesia and Ceylon to eastern India and back. We have direct evidence of brisk trade carried out from it into the interior. The people of the Ganges delta had the overwhelming share in the trade from

Tāmralipta proven by reminiscences of their maritime activities mentioned in the *Raghuvaṁśam* and the *Daśakumāracharita*.[67]

It may be said that trade and commerce constituted an important chapter of economic life in Bengal. It was the source of prosperity in Bengal, which is proven by the description of various ancient sources. The region was watered by many famous rivers such as Bhāgīrathī-Karatoyā-Brahmaputra-Padmā-Meghnā and many other tributaries. These rivers carried a huge amount of alluvial soil, which gave the region highly fertile land. The fertilised land of Bengal seems to have an important position in inland trade of India. The region was rich in agricultural products, mineral and natural resources and these were fruitfully utilised by the artisans of Bengal. And this led to the rise and growth of various industries yielding production of some commodities. These products were in great demand in other parts of India. Naturally exchange of commodities had been the necessity for the time. It also helped the area and its adjoining regions with a huge surplus production. This surplus production would have been either wasted or traded, as required. The then cultivators or traders opted the latter, so that they earned some dividends from trade. Thus, the surplus production caused by the above mentioned factors fostered the trade and commerce of the region.

The rivers were the sources of fishes which provided a readymade source of food to the delta dwellers. Moreover, the gulf region of south-eastern part of Bengal and so also many navigable rivers with natural ports provided a readymade system of inter-connecting waterways for easy communication and economical transportation. The river system of the Gangetic delta, no doubt, provided the merchants with the trade routes by water. The contact between the upper Gaṅgā Valley and the lower Gaṅgā valley on the one hand and with the valley of the rivers Brahmaputra, Mahanadi, Narmada and Godavari on the other, maintained a network of trade by land and water. The information is furnished by indigenous literary texts and accounts of foreign travellers. From the *Jātakas,* we come to know of the regular journeys from the cities like

Benāras, Pāṭaliputra and Champā sailing down to Ganges up to its mouth, or Dantapura.[68] We often hear about rental and express boats.[69]There was a land route in the mouth of the Ganges from Pāṭaliputra.[70] It is quite astonishing that the merchants preferred the water ways to land. It seems that there were many hazards on the land route. The difficulties of a journey by land routes were caused by the following:[71] I) natural barriers such as hills and forest, II) threats of wild animals or robbers as noted by Chinese traveler I-tsing in his journey from Tāmralipta to Bodhgayā III) travelling by animals carrying the goods at a slow speed, IV) undeveloped nature of the roads.

Likewise, there are other factors seems to have facilitated the early development of trade and commerce in Bengal. One is the qualitative and quantitative development of her production. As already mentioned, the famous *muslin* and sword made in Bengal were famous for all over the subcontinent and a large part of world. Another factor is the unrivalled facility for easy transaction of goods, received by the favourable network of various navigable rivers. The harbours on the Bengal sea-board in the south also facilitated the cause of foreign trade.

In the distant past, the exact nature of inland trade of Bengal cannot be ascertained due to scarcity of reliable sources. Only ancient inscriptions have focused on this. There was no enthusiasm about inland trade among the foreign travellers or writers. They instead focused only on foreign trade in their writings. But it is true that in spite of the active part of the traders in domestic trade, foreign trade could hardly run. Internal trade is not always dependent on foreign trade. But without internal trade, the country's economy can hardly be in the running position. On the other hand, the nature of industrial growth depends on the natural resources available in a certain area. This is the reason behind localization of some industries. Obviously, in exchange for imported commodities, there was a tendency to export surplus industrial production from one region to another. The localisation of industries thus created commodities for exchange between different parts of India imperative. So the people of a

particular area who suffered from scarcity of industrial products, needed to import their requirements from the nearby areas. In this way there flourished local trade which also be called the internal trade.

The village mart was an integral part of the rural life in ancient India. The *haṭṭa* or *haṭṭika* mentioned in various references were the local trade centres during the period of study. It corresponds to modern *hats*, which were usually rural level exchange centres of a periodic nature. From the Dāmodarpur copper plate, it is known that there were *hāṭs* or *bāzārs*[72] and from Khālimpur Copper-plate of Dharmapāla[73] it appears that *haṭṭikas* existed in early villages of Bengal. Keilhorn clarifies that the word *haṭṭikās* derives from the word *haṭṭa* or market and may mean 'market dues'. The grant of villages with its market places (*so-haṭṭa*), shops (*haṭṭiya-gṛiha*) and big markets (*haṭṭa-varo*) speak of existing lucrative trade in villages in ancient and early medieval Bengal.[74] Land grants often include *haṭṭas* amongst all other specific features of a donated plot. It is mentioned in the Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscription of Kumāragupta I (448A.D.)[75] that the village land was granted measuring five *droṇas* (?) with *haṭṭa* and *panaka* (?). On the basis of the inscriptions of the period of time, Niharranjan Roy said that certain trades would have been maintained through *haṭṭa* or *haṭṭikā* in the rural markets. He has come to the conclusion that the purchase and sale of local products and daily necessities in the rural markets styled as *haṭṭa* must continue.[76]

The towns were undoubtedly the main centres of trade. A Bronze Image Inscription[77], ascribed to the 9th century AD records the dedication of the image at Nālandā in the Devapāladevahaṭṭa or 'the mart of Dēvapāladēva' by Nisingha (?) ka, the wife of Soujjeka. It testifies evidences of the existence of other *haṭṭas* at Nālandā. Presumably, the *haṭṭa* referred to above was founded by Devapāla or conversely was named after him. This *haṭṭa* could be more eminent and larger than other *haṭṭikas*. The word *ajahaṭṭa* is found from the copper-plate of Mahendrapāla. The prefix *aja* definitely denotes goat. So, it may be presumed that goats and other domesticated animals were transacted at this point. Thus

the term *ajahaṭṭa* denotes a rural level market place as well as animal trading centre. Another inscription of Mahipāla I during early 11th century also gives us information on transaction at three *haṭṭas* namely Deśihaṭṭa, Jayahaṭṭa, and Gauḍahaṭṭa.[78] The *grāma* and *palli* (village/hamlet) also found from this inscription is connected with these three *haṭṭas* as suffix. The inscription also speaks of a merchant body, named *vaṇiggrāma* in north Bengal. This inscription is the first and unique document highlighting the presence of the *vaṇiggrāma* in early Bengal. It seems that all these three *haṭṭas* were under the control of the mercantile body. The merchants at these three *haṭṭas* appear to be members or belonging to *vaṇiggrāma*. These *haṭṭas* seem to be different from the shops (*āpana*).The important point is to be noted that *haṭṭa* is generally found in rural surroundings, and shops were functioned in urban areas. At the rural level the *haṭṭa* or the exchange centre is usually periodic as they were operated once or twice in a week. On the other hand, transaction at shops were run on a more regular or daily basis. The shop is expected to be involved in retail trade, and bulk items transactions are taken place in rural level *haṭṭas*. Records of some earlier epigraphic sources have mentioned Navyāvakāśikā as haven for traders and merchants.[79] The same thing applies to Koṭivarṣha.[80] *The Kathāsaritsāgara* mentions Puṇḍravardhana as a great place with shops in queue in the streets.[81] In the Kaman Stone inscription mentions an exclusive market named Kambalihaṭṭa and also to a cattle market.[82] In this market, the *Tabāqat-i-Nāsirī* mentions that 1500 horses from the north-east to Lakṣmaṇāvati were imported and sold here.

The above discussion gives us a good indication of the existence of a rapid inter-state trade. It is well-known that in this period, Tāmralipta became very powerful. The port was not only used by the foreign merchants, but also helped in conveying merchandise to the interior part of the country from other places. Three brothers named as Udayamāna, Śrīdhantamāna and Ajitamāna are mentioned in the Dudhpāni Rock inscription of Udayamāna.[83] It indicates that they travelled from Ayodhyā to Tāmralipta on trade purpose and added a fortune. In the 8th century, lively accounts of inter-state trade are found from Jaina works

Samaraiccakaha of Haribhadra and the *Kuvalayamāla* of Udyotāna.[84] The former contains a story of Sanudeva of Rājapura, a merchant who had a great experience of perilous journey to Tāmralipta, where he was looted by *śabaras* in the forest of Dantariktaka. An interesting episode in the next text describes the journey of two merchants from Varanasi to Dakṣiṇāpatha. After arriving in Pratiṣthāna, they made various types of trade and earned five thousand gold coins. They bought five precious stones by the earned money. On account of the hazards of carrying it, while travelling across insecure trade-routes, the merchants were said to have packed the stones in a dirty rug and disguised themselves as mendicants. References to individuals' travelleing from Ayodhyā and Champā to the south for the sake of trade are also found in the *Kuvalayamāla*.

The issuance of land grants during the concerned period paved the way for agrarian expansion. Early medieval sources are replete with the mention of Bengal's diversified agricultural output, both cereals and cash crops. In view of expansion of arable land over a vast area and the expansion in the form of countless villages, it helped in achieving all the increase in agricultural production. The contemporary texts and epigraphs eloquently recorded it. Hiuen-Tsang[85] provides an interesting description of abundant crops, fruits and flowers, and the production of plants. From the Maināmati Copper-plate of Ladahachandra,[86] we have learned that during this period, a better quality of rice named *boraka* was produced in Bengal. It not only grew rapidly, but yielded abundantly. Naturally, it was exported to nearby regions if needed. The rice produced in abundance was an important crop mentioned by Sandhyākaranandī. He described the high yield of rice in the Varendra region, which was called the sparkling crest jewel of the earth.[87] Lakṣmaṇsena's Ānuliyā Copper-plate mentions 'myriads of excellent villages consisting of land growing paddy excessively.[88] The Edilpur Copper-plate of Keśavasena[89] refers to a type of rice, whose name is *sāli*. It was one of the best of different varieties produced in different regions of Bengal. Some terracotta plaques found in Pāhārpur indicate

paddy fields. It is clear that throughout Bengal rice was considered as the most important crop. It is important to mention in this connection that this was not only for local use, but it was considered an important trade item. In fact, there was a great demand for Bengal rice in the internal as well as international market. Some people became wealthy by doing rice trading. Inscriptions on terracotta found in Chandraketugarh written in Brāhmī-Kharoṣṭhī script, testifies to a trader named Kodiholik Korchugma (or Karafgama). He was the owner of one hundred ploughs and enhanced his prosperity by rice cultivation.[90]

Sugarcane was an important crop in the trade relationship for the international market of Bengal. This product was sent to the neighbouring areas of Bengal after meeting local demand and earning enough from it. Puṇḍravardhana i.e., the Dinajpur-Rajshahi-Bogra region became so well known for the profuse production of sugarcane that the very name Pauṇḍra (a product from Puṇḍra) implied sugarcane from north Bengal. Thus Bengal received considerable wealth from manufacturing and exporting sugar to other parts of India. Thus in the 13th century Mārcopolo noticed it as one of the important commodities exporting from Bengal.[91] Again in the 16th century, the Portuguese traveler Bārbosā noticed Bengal competing with South India in the supply of sugar to different parts of India, China, and south-east Asia. Though the period mentioned in the references is far later than ours, the conditions mentioned therein, must have prevailed earlier and so this is applicable to the period of survey.

The cotton produced in Bengal seems to have been of great commercial value. It can be mentioned that textile industry and trade were very old. The Deopārā Copper-plate Inscription of Vijayasena[92] speaks of it. We know from this side that ordinary villages were also familiar with cotton seeds. Early medieval Bengal was specially noted for its superb textile products as is evident from the works of Chau ju Kua, Marco Polo and Arab authors.[93] The authors noticed that textile of Bengal assumed excellent quality. However, since the first century of the Christian era, Bengal's main exporting material was textile products. It may

be inferred that not only in the ancient period, but in the early 19th century A.D. the trade was a big source of income in Bengal. The finest variety of *muslin* was produced in East Bengal (mainly Vaṅga) and North Bengal (mainly Puṇḍra). The items of luxury-goods or things considered otherwise valuable, including precious textiles, were collected by king Aśoka for his Siṁhalese friend, Devanāmpiya Tiṣsa. Thence these were sent to Ceylon towards the middle of the 3rd century B.C. through the port of Tāmralipta.[94] A variety of cotton was found in the Varendra region, as mentioned in *Rāmacharita*, and exported to foreign markets. The Muslim geographers are eloquent about textile in this region. From the description of Sulaiman, it is testified that there was a thing made in this country (Ruhmi) which was not found anywhere else. This fine and delicate element is a dress which was accepted through sign-rings.[95] The text *Chu-fan-chi* written by Chau-ju-Kua, during the thirteenth century A.D. describes "Fine swords, *tou-lo* cotton stuffs and common cotton cloth were products of Pong-k'is-lo i.e. Vaṅgāla".[96]

Not only the objects of rice, sugarcane and cotton, Bengal was also famous in production of various other objects such as oil seeds, spices like *ela*, a mask, black aloe, sandal etc as well. Contemporary evidences refer to fruits, orchards of great commercial value. Hiuen-Tsang also refers to the abundant growth of *panasa* (jack fruits) in Puṇḍravardhana and gives a detailed account of the fruits, which was highly popular in the region.[97] Bengal epigraphs provide valuable information about other objects produced like betel-nuts, palms and coconuts. The Rāmapāla Copper-plate of Śrīchandra,[98] and Anuliā Copper-plate of Lakṣmaṇasena[99] mention coconut and betel-nut cultivation. The Ashrafpur Copper-plate[100] also mentions land cultivating betel-nut palms and coconut trees. It must have formed an important cash crop in Bengal. A passage in the *Rājataraṇgiṇī*[101] tells us of a king of Kashmir, who spent his entire revenue in procuring betel-nuts. It is presumed that Bengal's opulence in betel-nuts made her an important partner of Kashmir in this flourishing trade. Betel vines were cultivated also in the region. On the basis of the information provided by

Manasāmaṅgala of Vaṁśidāsa and *Chaṇḍīmaṅgala* of Mukundarāma Chakravarti N.R. Roy elaborately tries to prove that there was an expansion of trade and commerce in different regions of Bengal. Bengali traders carried their products to Gujrat from the coast of south Bengal. Commercial crops, such as betel nut and coconut were two main items produced and traded to other region. Betel was well known by the word of *guyā* or *guvāka*, but later adopted the name of the *supāri*. Thus, it was known by that name throughout India. However, among the villages of Bengal, especially in east Bengal, it is still known as *guvā* or *guyā*. The evolution of the word for betel is intricately connected with the history of Bengali commerce and its merchandise. The name of the modern city of Gauhāti (Guwāhāti) may come from this *guyā*. A market (*hāṭ*), where betel was sold would be guvāhāti or guyāhāti, later on corrupted into Gauhati. In the ancient times, the item (betel) was exported to Persia and Arab lands, whose merchants loaded the item in a ship in the West Indian port of Surparaka or Supparaka or Soparā. This item that reached to the western coast must have come from eastern India or Bengal through transit trade. The archaeological evidences of Bengal show that till the time of the East India Company, there was a great deal of revenue being generated by the broad trade of betel, as Bengal hold a monopoly in the trade of betel. The item was carried in the sub-continent. The Bengal traders flowed in the coastal area of south-west India and Gujrat. Thus the trade in betel nut brought opulence to Bengal.

Betel-leaves (*pān*) were grown in different corners of Bengal, mainly in the Nāvyamaṇḍala, an administrative unit in Vaṅga. B.C. Sen relates this unit with the Barishal area in present Bangladesh.[102] It is generally believed that betel was chewed with *karpūra* after a full meal. The cultivation of betel was very popular in ancient Bengal.[103] The Betka Vāsudeva Image Inscription of Govindachandra[104] informs that the farmers of the village Betka lived in the region from the beginning. It clearly speaks of a village at Pāikpārā and in the adjacent village of Betka, where a flourishing family of betel-leaf cultivators lived in. They were generally known as Bārui or the Bārujībī. They formed a distinct class in the

whole of Bengal and the lucrative profession of cultivating and selling betel-leaves had made them well-to-do, hard-working, self-accredited, religious and peaceful. The Calcutta Sāhitya Parishat Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena[105] refers to Barajas or betel-leaf plantation, yielding high revenue.

Arab writers also mention swords from east Bihar, which were under the control of the Pāla rulers. The other valuable items that appeared in Arabic texts are aloes wood exported through the port of Samandar/Sudkāwan. The aloes wood is, however, noted in the Arab accounts as a product of Qāmarun or Kāmarūpa, i.e. the Brahmaputra valley. According to Ibn Battuta, the Qāmaruni aloes wood was brought to the port of Sudkāwan by floating the logs of wood down the Blue River identified with the Meghnā.[106] The aloes wood of north-eastern India reached the Arab world through Sudkāwan, which received the product through transit trade with north-eastern part of India. Another exotic commodity was the rhinoceros horn, brought from the north-eastern part of India to Bengal coast for export to the Arab world in the form of transit trade between the Bengal littorals and the north-eastern region.[107]

The trade in salt was popular too, and it was very much profitable. Bengal was rich in ocean salt. The coastal area of Bengal produced sufficient salt. In the two medieval poems mentioned a little earlier, salt is also one of the trade items. After meeting the local consumption, the surplus was traded with adjoining areas and the sub-continent. Bengali merchants came to exchange ocean salt for rock salt. Pepper was prosperous too in the same period.

Apart from agricultural products, Bengal was enriched with diamonds, pearls and gold, bay leaves, spices and so on. Among the Buddhist *Jātakas,* there are many stories of Tāmralipta as a trade centre. In the *Kathāsaritasāgara* of Somadeva, there are a number of references to merchants in the course of their enterprise setting out from Pāṭaliputra bound for Puṇḍra or Puṇḍravardhana. This way also has been referred to by I-tsing, when he took the westward road from Tāmralipta to Budhagayā. His travelling companions were hundreds of merchants. The trade of Tāmralipta has been mentioned in various books. The trade between

Gauḍa and Gujrat is also mentioned in Vidyāpati's *Puruṣa-parīkṣa*. Hiuen-Tsang speaks of Gangābandara located in the mouth of the Gaṅgā, and also mentions the commercial prosperity of Tāmralipta and Karṇasuvarṇa. According to *Kathāsaritsāgara,*[108] Tāmralipta was an entrepot for wealthy and rich merchants involved in the thriving maritime trade with Ceylon, Sumatra and other places. From all these, it seems quite reasonable to think that whatever prosperity ancient Bengal had, came mainly from trade and commerce. The most important evidence of this is found from Dāmodarpur Copper-plate. It indicates that the merchants were the most important member of the group of people, who were asked to testify the land grants. This indicates the prosperity of country evidently through trade and commerce.[109] In addition, we have seen from epigraphs that from 5th to 8th century AD, at least five citizens were granted land. Among them, two were royal officials- one local administrator and a prominent, two represent the traders and merchants and one would be the representative of the craft guilds.[110] It is now clear that traders and merchants had some influence in the administration. Because of trade and commerce, all income was transmitted to these merchants and traders. Hence, they were able to influence the administration. Thus it may be presumable that ancient Bengal's fortune, so greatly dependent on trade and commerce, was directed from the homes of the traders, merchants and merchant princes.[111] The medieval Bengali literature bears the testimony through the story of merchants and their initiatives. It is noteworthy that their names were also mentioned as Dhanapai, Hirāmanika, Dulāldhana and other names made up of words denoting wealth and opulence.[112] Before the eighth century A.D., inscriptions show that there was considerable influence of the merchant princes and trading companies in the government and society.

Ptolemy[113] mentions a regular journey from the east to the west coast. *Periplus* also suggests the remarkable exports from Bengal to famous mart Nelcynda including articles, such as fine pearls, ivory, silk-cloth, spikenard, malabathrum, transparent stones of all kinds, diamonds and sapphires. The

connection between Dāmirica (Tamil Land) and the Ganges in terms of silk-trade is referred to in the *Periplus*[114] and from the same source, we know of the commercial link between Barygaza-Barbaricum and Paithan-Tagara in the Deccan (Map-2).[115] This rich trade was managed by both water and land routes. The river system of the Gangetic delta provided merchants with trade routes by water. Following the course of the river Ganges and its tributaries, there established a connection between lower and upper Ganges valleys. The emergence of market town and ports in the lower Ganges valley was considered to be the main artery in the development of river economy of the country. The maritime conjunction of the Ganges with the Bay of Bengal provided the region easy access to the sea. The goods of the *sārthavāhas* of northern and eastern India were widely transited by river Ganges. It played a prominent role in an internal trade. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* mentions the trade from Varanasi to Puṇḍravardhana. From this route through Magadha and Champā companies of merchants trailed the countless bullock drays. It was quite good that these routes were very populous. There was also an extensive water route along the Gaṅgā and the Bhāgīrathī to Gangābandara-Tāmralipta and the Roman Empire. In the medieval literature of Bengal, there are detailed descriptions of ports and different lands along this river course. It is quite clear that the Tāmralipta and Gangābandara were the main ports of maritime trade. There are some references in the *Periplus* and Ptolemy to trade transactions between Gangābandara and Tāmralipta and the remote Roman Empire on the coast of South India. The great epics frequently refer to Tāmralipta as a sea port of Bengal in the post-Vedic and Buddhist periods. It is known form the *Periplus* that malabathrum was brought from the eastern Himalayas. This would hint at the prevalence of the inland trade of Bengal with the north-eastern frontier regions also. This is also proved by the import of silk from China to the Ganges and thence exported to the Tamil lands.

It is to be noted here that we are using the name Gaṅgābandara even though for the Romans the port 'Gañge' and 'Ganges' were the same. Since the name is reminiscent of the river Gaṅgā, we must keep in mind that the name was

given by foreigners, and there is no way to verify what this port was actually called by the local residents. The port was named after the river Gaṅgā. The traces of ships, boats on the terracotta seals and seal impressions found from Chandraketugarh strongly suggest that it was probably a riverine port having facilities of access to the sea. It bolstered up long distance trade through this port. Excavations conducted have yielded archaeological remains of different ages, from the time of the Mauryas to that of the Pālas. Archaeological excavations unearthed among many other things the punch marked coins of the Maurya age, cast copper coins of the late Suṅga period. These discoveries strongly corroborate the fact that Chandraketugarh had cultural and commercial contact with the outer world. This riverine port was known only from the archaeological sources. An early impression of the towns in the Gaṅgā Valley can be discerned from Hiuen-Tsang's account. They were in a distressed and deserted condition.

Devaparvata figured in the Kailān Copper-plate of Śrīdharanarāta (c.AD 665-750), was another port, which carried out a transit trade with other regions. The place was encircled by the river Kṣīrodā (modern Khīra or Khirnāi). Both the banks of the river were adorned by boats, elephants bathed in the river. Devaparvata is further described as *sārvatobhadra*. It means that either it was approachable from all four sides or it had gates on all four sides. It is referred to as *athamattamātaṅga-śata-suka-sukha-vigāhyamāna-vividha-tīrthayā naubhir=aparimitābhir=upārachitakulayā parikṣitād=abhi-matanimnagāminyā kṣīrodayā sarvvatobhadrakād=devaparvvatāt*.[116] After a century from this date, the Asiatic Society Copper-plate of Bhavadeva Abhinavamṛgāṅka (765-80) again mentions the Kṣīrodā river and adds the epithet *jayaskandhāvāra* (Royal camp) to Devaparvata.[117] All these leave a picture that Devaparvata had a distinct orientation to riverine communications and it maintained intimate contact with the inner river channel and the marine connection to the Bay of Bengal until the first quarter of the 10th century. Thus it can be said that Devaparvata was a

riverine port in Samataṭa in the 2nd half of the 7th century AD. It was also the principal political centre of the Rāta rulers.

There were several seaside trade centres including Vaṅga mentioned in the *Milinda-pañha*. The archaeological references indicate a place name, Vaṅgasāgara, meaning 'the sea (*sāgara*) of Vaṅga'. While Vaṅga generally covered the central part of deltaic Bengal (i.e. Dhaka-Vikrampur-Faridpur), it also occasionally included areas near the coast, known in ancient times variously as Vaṅgāla(Vaṅga+āla) and Anuttaravaṅga (southern Vaṅga).[118] Ancient and early medieval Vaṅga thus extended up to Barishal-Buckerganj areas of the present Bangladesh. Vaṅgasāgara may, therefore, stand for the eastern sea of India and it may easily be equated with the present Bay of Bengal. The Madanpur Copper-plate also identifies Vaṅgasāgara with the Bay of Bengal.[119]

Several historians have worked on the theme of trade in early medieval north India as well as Bengal. One set of historians such as R.S. Sharma, D.N. Jha, B.N.S. Yadav and D.D. Koshambi suggest that trade and commerce declined during this period. There are views among the scholars that there was a time, when regional powers thrived in the sub-continent due to the absence of a strong centre. It affected the lives of the people. It brought into being an economic system, which many Marxist historians compared with feudal system. It is the view of R.S. Sharma that the feudalisation of Indian economy led to the languishing of trade, especially long distance trade between the 4th and 12th centuries AD. Commercial activities gradually declined in two stages, first from 700 to 900 CE and then from 900 to 1300 CE. Basically, commodities were this time mainly produced for self consumption in local self sufficient village. It was due to a large generation of land grants. R.S. Sharma argues that at this stage in three regions there was growth of self-sufficient and closed rural economic units such as the Ganges-Yamuna Doab and Rajasthan under Gurjara-Pratihāras, Bengal and Bihar under the Pālas, and the Deccan under the Rāṣhtrakūṭas. This supposed development of closed village economy led to the marginalisation of trade. The commodities produced in certain areas were consumed locally

without any need for their exchange.[120] The then chief political powers, like the Rāṣhtrakūṭas, the Pālas and the Senas did not issue any currency. Coins of other dynasties did not have high metallic element and purity and thus were ineligible for long-distance trade.[121] This deficit of the availability of metallic coins forced the state to issue land grants as an alternative means of cash payment by the kings to their traders. So the decline of trade and decreasing commercial activity played an important role in the overall decay of the non-agricultural sector, thereby creating and integrating self-reliant and closed rural economy.

The decline of trade from the 6th to 9th centuries CE is evident in the near absence of coins in both north and south India.[122] The vibrant money economy of the previous century was replaced by an economy, where the cowry shells worked as the main medium of exchange. It is recommended by archaeological and literary information using a lot of cowries. It implies the continuation of maritime trade, since these were mainly imported from Maldives islands. But it has been advisable that these cowry shells were restricted for long-distance transactions, which required precious metals of coins. So, the money economy arising from the lack of metallic currency eventually led to a decline of trade.

Among other reasons, one is the division of political power. As a result local leaders exerted the power of land grabbing and the emergence of middle Zamindars imposed high taxes on the peasants. They reduced the interest of trading activities. Frequent political wars also discouraged the commercial activities during this phase. The evidences from the post-Gupta archaeological record of the urban sites show that the decline of trade led to the decay of many towns. Archaeological evidences reveal the collapse of the old commercial centres in the post-Gupta times, especially Vaiśhālī, Pāṭaliputra, Rājghāṭ and others. The archaeological evidence is supported by the travel account of the 7th century AD of Chinese Buddhist pilgrim alias traveller Hiuen-Tsang. In his view, the traders living in these cities were forced to move to the rural areas in search of an alternative market for the restrictions of market manufacturers. Perhaps, it was the reason behind the depopulation of cities. Therefore, there was decline

or decay of urban centres on a pan-Indian scale. In the absence of regularised market, the products such as iron, oil, salt, spices and fabrics, needed by the villagers were made by themselves or found in the weekly fairs. It led to the emergence of small unit production moving towards a self-sufficient economy.[123]

The reason for the decline of foreign trade is the expansion of Arab power at the north-western border of India during 7th-8th century AD. This led to unsafety for Indian merchants in the land routes. In addition, interrelationships between Tibet and China at this stage also affected the flow of products in the Central Asia route. Moreover, due to Arab attacks, the important commercial centres and ports and the trade of western seas of India got threatened and trade decreased. However, at the end of the 10th century A.D., these Arabs played an important role in the growth of maritime trade. Apart from this in the early medieval period (A.D. 700-1200), India's foreign trade might have suffered due to reasons more than one, such as the apathy and inability of the Indian states to protect the interest of the merchants, increase in piratical activities in the sea, taboo against sea-voyages as enjoined by the Brāhmaṇical law-givers. Above all, competition with the Arab and Chinese merchants, who were equipped with advanced shipping techniques accelerating to the decline of Indian trade and commerce.[124]

The emergence of feudalism in Bengal is also a matter of discussion. Bengal was not outside the arena of feudalism of northern India. We find several references from land grants issued by the Guptas. The Dhanāidaha Copper-plate Inscription of Kumāragupta I (432-433 AD.) [125] records a grant of land to a Chandogya Brāhmaṇa. Similarly the two Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions of the time of Kumāragupta I[126] (444[127] and 448[128] AD) refer to the lands granted to the Brāhmaṇas in Bengal. There are many similar donations coming from this area of religious origin. The symbol of medieval European feudalism was independent and self-sufficient economic unit, which came into existence in medieval Bengal. The rise of the local unit of production is a proof of lack of currency from the Gupta era. Internal trade also had not improved, as is proven

by various developments. In northern Bihar, eight commercial routes in ancient times crossed at Mithilā, one of which was the Mithilā-Tāmralipta route.[129] But interestingly in the early medieval period, not a single reference has been made about them, probably because it was extinct in that period.[130] Even referring to the internal trade activities of Bengal in the inscriptions and literatures, there are few references to them and they mainly refer to the local market *haṭṭas*.[131] We can surmise that the trade deficit had come down, because internal trade itself had decreased. During this period, internal trade had become simplified due to reduced foreign trade. However, the foreign trade of Bengal had increased gradually till the 6th-7th century A.D., and subsequently started to decline. This process started in the middle of the 7th century A.D. and the commercial activities of the Tāmralipta had to come down within a few days of this century.[132]There is no reference to Tāmralipta as a sea port in the epigraphic records after the Dudhpāni inscription, palaeographically assigned to 8th century AD onwards. Moreover, no commercial centre was introduced in Bengal between the 8th and the 13th century A.D., and it appears that Bengal played no role in external trade for at least 500 years.[133] Due to the reduction of foreign trade, economic relations between the coastal towns and interior towns as well as cities and villages were affected.[134] This might have played as an adverse effect on languishing domestic trade.

Trade reduction was also indicated by the low status of traders, merchants and artisans. The *sārthavaha* is mentioned frequently in sources as an important figure till the Gupta period.[135] But later on, there was no use of the term. The status of Vaiśya comparatively became lowered in a society, which was dominated by the same landed aristocracy. The artisans and craftsmen had a similar fate in store. Therefore, the crafts and industry were determined for the śūdras during the early medieval period.[136] The artisan class was despised.[137] The decline of crafts and trade is also indicated by the meaning of the changes in certain technical terms. The terms *śreṇī*, *nigama*, *vīthī* and *vaidehaka* or *vaideha*

lost their economic connotation and generally came to signify social groups or rural units.[138]

But the contention that India as well as Bengal's trade suffered decline in the early medieval period may be re-examined. Critics of Sharma such as Harbans Mukhia, B.N .Mukherjee, B.D. Chattopadhaya, Ranabir Chakravarti have quoted a lot of references to prove the existence of brisk commercial transactions during the Gupta times. They categorically refute the arguments made by the scholars referring to the decline of trade during the post-Gupta era. The accounts of Chinese, Arab and Persian travellers' describe trade by both land and sea. Alberuni, the famous 11th century AD Arab traveller from Central Asia, describes the existing trade-routes in northern India. John S. Deyell has shown, arguing against Sharma's thesis on the lack of coins, that there was a significant introduction of coins in western, northern and north-western parts of India in 750-1000 AD and in some 1000-1200 AD. There was trade by sea on the west coast of India, although it was less compared to trade in the east coast. The Byzantine emperors and Sāssanids of Iran showed great interest in the maritime trade of the Persian Gulf and the Arab Sea.[139] The distribution of Red Ware sites in coastal Gujrat, the Indus delta, the Makaran coast and Iran's coastal areas indicate presence of an extensive trade network.

Self-sufficient village economy is considered a myth by the critics of Sharma. They argue that the Indian village always imported two items from outside. These were salt and iron, and there was lack of these in Bengal.They give a great deal of evidence for trade, urbanization and money economy of early medieval India. This regional level study on the basis of numismatic, epigraphic and, to some extent, archaeological data, has adequately shown the prevalence of different types of merchants, various levels of market places and exchange centres. They argue that land grant economy aided in the expansion of agriculture, and thereby led to a growth of rural economy. As a result, local and regional trade centres emerged to become a vital linkage with the markets of urban centres. B.D. Chattopadhaya argues that although there is evidence of the

collapse of some old urban centres in the medieval period, at the same time, others grew, and new ones also emerged.[140] He criticises Sharma's view that urban centres had declined due to the collapse of foreign trade. He also argues that this decline could not reduce the decline in domestic trade and lead to the decline of urban centres. Both B.D. Chattopadhayaya and Ranabir Chakravarti demonstrated the presence of trade, market places and traders in the Indian sub-continent such as North India, Rajasthan, and coastal Konkan in the early medieval period. B.N. Mukherjee also questions the lack of currency and Sharma's thesis on trade deficit. He argues that there was no evidence of unusual abatement of trade, but in the early medieval period, there was a continuous dynamic trading activity in some areas. He mentions on the strength of various historical sources the different regions of different places, which were famous for production. He highlights the regional, inter-regional and international trade, by citing references from indigenous and foreign travel accounts. The intensity of production and commercial activities might vary from region to region. But there was no evidence of decline in trade in northern India in the early medieval period. He further concludes that there were no shortage of currency in several parts of northern India, and it was used as a means of exchange for facilitating trade and commerce. Thus a trail in number of earliest medieval currencies indicates their use in currency conscious areas for commercial transactions. Moreover money in the form of cowries, coins and units of pure metal encouraged the trade.

B.N. Mukherjee in another article analyses the situation of trade and money in the western and central parts of eastern India from 750 to 1200 AD. During this time, under the major dynasties, namely Pālas and Senas encouraged the continuous movement of traders, development of industry and trade articles.[141] On the one hand, Ganges and its branches provided convenient channels of communication, on the other hand, the sea- coast served as base for maritime trade. The presence of large scale trade in commodities and special industries proves that this region was enriched with industry and faster trade.

Under Pāla-Sena regime, trade in local commodities and import of foreign items were alive in the region as also export of valuable articles produced locally or brought from territories beyond. However, during this period the volume of trade was relatively less than that in the following period. The inscription refers to local shops, markets and big markets. A part of the wealth could be acquired by the ruling class by taking part in trade.

Thus from the above discussion, it may be concluded that trade and commerce had not fully disappeared in the early medieval period. The volume and variety of Indian trade in the early medieval period, apparently, was comparatively less than the pre-Gupta era or in the modern times. Changes occurred in the list of imported and exportable items in different countries in due space of time. But some essential everyday items, such as drugs and spices, remained same. The trade of luxury items was still alive. Due to the backward navigation techniques, and the risk of pirates, neighbouring countries were forced to pull into luxuries, which were relatively low in volume and weight to meet the demands of the ruling class. There was strong competition among Arabs, Indonesian and Chinese traders. As a result, it reduced Indian merchants to perform the role of distributing goods in their country.[142] The emergence of feudal lords, and other chiefs accelerated the demand for luxurious items in foreign countries. But this trade contributed to deterioration ofprofits in India though it proves that feudal system also gave acceleration to flourishing trade and commerce in the early medieval period.

Now the perception of the solid base of feudalism with its rigorous features existed in the early medieval Bengal has to be reviewed. It is to be said that the existence of feudalism was not fully acknowledged in north India, but cannot be altogether denied that some of the characteristics of feudalism were present. However, though Ramsharan Sharma and other historians have given priority to feudalism, it is not fully based on solid historical basis. There are plenty of literary images of brisk commercial transactions. For instance, the term *kraya-vikraya* in the sense of commercial transactions appears in the famous

Sanskrit lexicon, the *Amarakoṣa* or the *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana*, ascribed to the Gupta period. Kālidāsa seems to have been well aware of *vipaṇis* or shops which were sometimes arranged on both sides of the road (*apānamārga*).[143] The Gupta records from Puṇḍravardhana (North Bengal) and the Gupta seals from Vaisali in North Bihar regularly refer to the chief merchant of the city (*nagaraśreṣthī*), and the leader of the caravan traders (*sārthavāha*).What is particularly significant is the inclusion of the representatives of the mercantile community in the district board (*viṣyādhiṣṭhānadhikaraṇa*) in north Bengal during the fifth and sixth centuries A.D., though they were not by any means government officials. This tendency to allow representations of local interest groups at district-level administration is one of the innovations of the Gupta provincial administrative system.[144] The active role of the merchant in the town council is also portrayed in the contemporary drama, the *Mṛicchakaṭika* of Śūdraka.[145]

The history of early medieval south-east Bengal probably refers to the weak foundation of Marxist historical theory. The theory of the Marxist historians is refuted with study of coins and trade comparatively with other regions. Dr. Ghosh and Datta in their article say, "The factors like the trade routes sustained by the river system of the south eastern Bengal, the capacity to yield marketable commodities to meet the local and international demand, commercially active urban centres and a bureaucratic structure necessary for maintaining the economy based on agriculture, industry and commerce helped in the flourishing trade and commerce of the south eastern Bengal".[146] The excavations in the Lālmāi-Mainámati region have unearthed 400 coins at different stages, which clearly indicate that a fluctuating money economy had flourished in this region. It proves that the regional rulers felt the need to maintain the metal coin to meet the economic needs of the country. The gold coin of the last ruler of Abbasid Caliph[147] has been excavated. It clearly indicates the contact with Arab region. It is not difficult to explain the constant pressure of the metallic currency in this region for centuries before the Muslim advent. The existence of the trade of south-east Bengal as indicated in the literary and

numismatic evidences has not been highlighted in the epigraphic records of pre-Muslim rulers of different areas of south-eastern Bengal. The inscriptions of that time hardly mention the name of merchants and artisans. Thus, it is clear that the existence of trade and currency cannot establish a feudal economy based on the feasibility of society's agricultural authority and self-governing economic units.[148] Despite the emergence of trade and commerce in south-east Bengal that stretches from the 8th to the 13th century, the commercial possibilities of the western and northern regions of Bengal might have been lost. Tāmlralipta and Gangābandara lost their importance as international ports as has already been mentioned above. From the pressure of the trading and artisan class on the agricultural land, obviously the local trade in the region was reduced.[149]

Though the northern and western Bengal had lost their importance before the pre-Muslim era, but the Vaṅga-Samataṭa and Harikela regions of south-eastern Bengal was perfectly represented in numismatic history. This fact has become even more powerful from the comparative research of land donations of south-eastern Bengal and south-west Bengal. The Chandra of deltaic Bengal gave land grants to the densely populated agricultural areas. It indicates less pressure on land in the Sylhet-Tippera region and the diversion of a considerable section of population to trade and commerce.[150] On the other hand, the land grant in the northern and western parts of Bengal indicates much pressure on land. Thus, there was a significant amount of trade in the south-eastern part of Bengal and in that region there was conclusive proof of the continuous minting of high quality of silver coins, cowry-shells, *chūrṇi* or *chūrṇa* (dust currency of silver and gold) over no less than before the 7th century A.D. (6th to 13th centuries).[151] This means of exchange clearly establishes the fact that there was a brisk trade and commerce in south-east Bengal, though the prevalence of trade in south-west and north Bengal is in question. In this regard, P.K. Bhattacharyya has pointed out that the south-east Bengal could not have flourished in the field of trade and commerce isolatedly in the early medieval time unless it could use the other regions of Bengal as hinterland.[152] However, it

can be said that there was unique existence in Bengal. The positive presence of industries, trade, commerce etc. kept the economy of Bengal active. So, it can be said that although there was a divergence of feudalism in North India's economy, it can never be applicable to Bengal. We have enough evidences available in favour of the brisk trade of south-east Bengal. M.R. Tarafdar rightly said that Harikela, Samataṭa and Vaṅga formed an economic unit in the pre-Muslim period and these parts were in constant communication with one another particularly along the river routes.[153]

We know that about the middle of the 9th century A.D. Tāmralipta of south-western Bengal lost its importance in Bengal's international trade. Since then or before another port called Samandar[154] developed in south-eastern Bengal. Since the 7th century and later, up to the advent of the Muslims in India, Samandar played an important role in eastern India maintaining her trade relation in and outside of Bengal. Samandar being located very near to the Sandwip Island should reasonably be identified with a modern Chittagong or a port nearby. Al Idrisi and Khurdadbah articulate highly of Samandar as a port.[155] It had indentation which favoured the ingress and egress of ships with merchandise.

In the early medieval period Samandar was a premier port of Bengal. It was in a flourishing condition and carried on brisk trade till the 14th century AD. Thereafter, the port of Chittagong reached to the height of its importance in the 15th and 16th centuries A.D. When we turn our attention to the western part of Bengal, we do not see a major port like Samandar in the south-eastern part of Bengal. A copper plate (dated 1196 AD)[156] refers to Dvārahāṭaka indicating its riverine connectivity. It was located on the eastern bank of the river Gaṅgā and emerged as a small riverine outlet. It can be explained the name Dvārahāṭaka as a *hāṭaka* or *haṭṭaka* (local level trade centre) located at the *dvāra* or gate. Ranabir Chakravarti believes that Dvārahāṭaka was connected with the benefits of an internal waterway and a local level trade centre and the opening of the sea.[157] The most important point to note is that from the 9th century A.D. onwards the

major seaborne outlet of the Bengal coast shifted from the western (Rāḍha-Vaṅga) sector to the south-eastern (Samataṭa-Harikela) zone with far reaching consequences. The other ports located on the littorals of Bengal were certainly less famous than Samandar. On the other hand, these ports were mostly riverine in character, and played an important role in inland riverine communication in coastal Bengal. These riverine ports provided important links to the deltaic hinterland with the major ports on the coast.

According to Akhbar al-Sin wa'l Hind, articles related to the import and exports items have been of special interest during the concerned period. The most important is the *muslin* of Dhaka which was not found in any other region. It is very fine and beautiful. In the country there was also found gold, silver, aloes-wood and al-samar (i.e. camara or fly chaser) cloth from which fly-whisk was made. In this country, there was also found the market of *al-bishan* (i.e., horn) and *al-karkaddan* (rhinoceros).The Chinese manufactured girdles out of it. The price of a single girdle in China went up to two thousand, three thousand or even more dinars.[158] So the items mentioned above clearly indicate that the goods exported from the region of Bengal including Samataṭa in the 9th century A.D. were *muslin*, aloes-wood, yak tails (for fly-whisks), and rhinoceros horns. According to Ibn Khurdadhbh's *Kitab* (c. 846-847 A.D.), rice and aloes-wood were brought in Samandar by means of a river from Kārmut (Kāmarūpa?), and other places.[159] This aloe wood that came to this country was of a superior quality and had a delicious scent. This grew in the mountains of Kāran.[160] According to Hudud al-Alam(982 A.D.), "In no place of Hindustan are fresh aloes found but in the possessions of the king of Qamarun and of Dahum. These countries produced in large quantities good cotton which grew on trees yielding their produce during many years. The product of this country was the white conch which was blown like a trumpet and was called shank. In this country there were numerous elephants".[161] Good quality of cotton textile produced in north Bengal is mentioned in the foreign source of 9th century. The Arab geographer Ibn Khurdadbhih wrote about the extraordinary beauty and fineness of cotton

textiles produced in Pāla kingdom.[162] According to Al-Idrasi's *Nuzhatu-i-Mushtak*, rice, various grains, especially excellent wheat, could be obtained from Samandar.[163] The sources quoted above clearly indicate the intimate trade contact of Kāmarūpa with Samandar. This matter was further emphasized by B.N Mukherjee.[164] He mentions that Samandar was an important port for landlocked Kāmarūpa to export as well as import various commodities. Beside aloes wood and rhinoceros' horns, yak tails were brought from Tibet through Bhutan and/ or of Kāmarūpa. Other items mentioned in the Arab accounts were rice, conch, shell and muslin. Rice exported from Samataṭa could very well have been a local product. Further researches reveal that local *jugee* families also manufactured handloom products. Similar handloom products were also well known in greater Comilla district. Hence, local handloom products as well as *muslin* brought from Narsingdi down the Brahmaputra and the Meghna could have been exported from Samandar.[165] B.N. Mukherjee has shown that from 7th to 8th centuries A.D., Kāmarūpa imported *gośtṛsa-candana* (a costly variety of sandalwood) probably from Timor, camphor from Kedah (Malaysia), coral and pearls from south India, copper from Singhbhum (West Bengal).[166] Moreover, if Ibn Battuta's mid-14th century A.D. assertion regarding import of cowries can be taken as valid for Sulaiman's 9th century A.D., then it is possible to believe that *cowrie* was another item of import from Maldives.

It must have also been mentioned that the horses coming to India from different sides of the Indian sub-continent had been traded around Bengal and other parts of India. The Tamil textual impressions of maritime transportation show that the horses were brought to the Coromandel Coast from the north. It is logical to assume that these horses had reached the coastal areas of Tamilnadu from the areas of Bengal coast.[167] It should be noted that *kohi* was a horse from the mountainous north-eastern border of the subcontinent and might have been the same as the *tāṅgan* horse.[168] It has been described in later chapter that *kohi* horses reached Bengal regularly in the 12th and the 13th century A.D. Bengal. Then it was exported to eastern Deccan. Thus, it can be said that *kohi* horse was

brought to eastern Deccan through Bengal, an area which had already experienced its regular arrival from the north-east. In this light it was found that Bengal not only brought the mountainous horses, but also was associated with transit trade with eastern Deccan. In view of the familiar and well-established chain of communication between Bengal and Eastern Deccan,[169] it would be possible to infer Bengal's active role in the supply of north-eastern horses to Andhra and in addition to their demand and sale in Bengal itself.

There is an important observation that there is no mention about *maṇḍapikā* in Bengal.[170] But it appears in early medieval sources which existed in different parts of northern India. The term in question literally stands for a pillared and covered hall or a pavilion.[171] It also was an exchange centre and also as a centre of collection of levies, commercial tolls and duties that related with the modern word *maṇḍi* which means a wholesale market. It was a big trading unit as compared to *haṭṭikā*. Ranabir Chakrabarty discovered on the basis of greater research activities the existence of a trading centre called *saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka,* which is larger than *hat* in the initial stage of Bengal.[172] In the year 971AD, Śrīchandra's Copper-plate of Chandra dynasty[173] found at Sābhār near Dacca, referred to the existence of *saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka,* which refers to a place where the products are meant to be preserved. Ranabir Chakravarti refers to *saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka* as trade centre with warehousing facilities.[174] Probably the connectivity of large markets in the rural and urban area in the riverine Bengal was maintained by the river-ports. It is clear from the sources that the class of officers known as *śaulkika*, *haṭṭapati*, and *tārika* who were attached to trade and commerce. The Pāla records mentions *śaulkika* in charge of collecting *śulka* at the commercial centres. Manu explains the term of *śulka* in the general sense of duties paid by merchants.[175] The *haṭṭapati* used to take care for the works of Hats and above all there was the superior authority of *tārika*. Another official found from copper plate grants of the period was *gaulmika*.[176] U.N. Ghosal refers to him as collector of custom duties. All these indicate the brisk internal trade and the source of income through trade to the govt. exchequer. It is important

that the cities were the internal trade centre. From the inscriptions of Gopachandra, Dharmāditya and Samāchārdeva,[177] we find the *navyāvakāśikāyam* (meaning administrative centre) along with the centre of traders. It definitely means a town. The inscriptions of Budhagupta and Kumāragupta highlight the importance of city 'Kotivarṣha'.[178] Frequently mentioned in the inscriptions are the words for the various types of markets, shops and stalls, traders, shopkeepers and assistants. Inscriptions after the eight centuries A.D., have spoken of land grants in many places, including the markets and some of the jetties. A tax was imposed in the market and there was a commercial duty and ferry charge under the supervision of some royal officers, such as market supervisor, custom officer, *and* ferry officer. They maintained a prosperous and healthy trade, from which the government received a bonafide profit.

The officers, who looked after the trade related matters, are known also from the references inscribed in the land grants. Senior officials such as *vyāpāra karaṇḍaya* and *vyāpāra viniyukta*[179] did the special duty of tax collection. They were undoubtedly employed to look after the activities of trade and commerce concentrated in small and large towns. In addition to the towns, some trade and commerce was conducted in the markets of the rural areas, where locally produced items and articles of everyday needs were bought and sold. Great rivers of this province, and the coastal areas of Orissa and Chittagong afforded excellent riverine and coastal trade and traders were mainly aided by vessels and naval forces. It is believed that a large section of the people of Bengal was engaged in the construction of ships, and there was a prosperous trade in the whole of Bengal. Such a department of commerce must have been a most important source of revenue. Its duties would have been to levy customs-dues on internal and external trade. It would no doubt have been expected to look after harbours and marts in order to maintain trade and probably to exercise some kind of maritime jurisdiction. It must have been a most profitable department of the state.[180]

The information about maritime boundary and ports are known from the sources. The rivers and canals were the primary means of communication to move from one end to the other trading centres. The roadways were not neglected. According to the Chinese travelers Fa-hien and Hiuen-Tsang, the roads were means of transport of commodities. In the Chittagram Copper-plate of Dāmodardeva of the Deva dynasty, reference has been made of the *rājapatha* running through the villages.[181] During the initial stage of Bengal's trade, internal trade was very much brisk and roadways were given importance in this trade. A prominent historian Ranabir Chakrabarty says that buffaloes, asses, camels were mainly used as a means of transporting commodities. Prominent historian Brajadulal Chattopadhyay says that there were bulls carrying goods. Reference may be made to the roads in that context. The Chinese story of Kiaten, refers to a road from Kāmarūpa to Magadha through Rajmahal hills. There were also roads from Magadha to China. Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang came to India by this route. A road reference was found from Ayodhya to Tāmralipta as already mentioned. Therefore, it can be assumed that there was a connection between the Ganges Valley and Ayodhya in the delta region of Ganges Valley. A connection between Kanauj to Gangāsāgara via Ayodhya, Varanasi, Patna, Muṅgyr had been traced. Saṅgam literature shows an awareness of the fact that products of Ganges delta came to the port of Puhar. The Gangetic nard was brought to the far south India is proved beyond doubt by the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* and also a second century loan Agreement between the two Roman traders in Muziris, in the coast of Malabar.[182]

A section of available Chinese evidences and epigraphic documentation significantly suggests that around 7th century A.D., the Samataṭa area started as a point of contact with the coastal region. Thus it also helped Bengal to start a long-distance journey in the Bay of Bengal. Devaparvata (earlier mentioned) from 2nd half of the 7th century A.D. to first quarter of the 10th century AD emerged as a lively inland riverine port, and is identified with the Mainámati-Lālmāi in Comilla district (Bangladesh).[183] There were three *naudaṇḍakas* or boat

parking stations around it.[184] The term *nāvatakṣeṇi* found from Faridpur in present Bangladesh (*nāvātākṣeṇī*) seems to have denoted a ship/boat building harbour(nau=boat/vassel/ships, ātā=door-frame; kṣeṇī from kṣayaṇa=harbour).[185] The regularity of riverine trade in deltaic Bengal is unmistakable as these boat-parking stations were mentioned as landmarks in rural spaces. These could have provided the facilities of inland movements in a riverine (*nadīmātṛka*) area like Bengal, which was known for its connections with the Bay of Bengal. The inscription also includes a villa-*bhaṅga* (the Bāṅgla word *bil*, moss covered with water), which was connected with *niṣkrānta praviṣṭaka* (the entry and exit facility of the vessels).[186]

Ranabir Chakravarti examines the names of certain terms, expressions and positions written in some copper plate inscriptions[187] and proposed the existence of the inland riverine ports Navyāvakāśikā in Sābhār and Devaparvata in the Mainámati-Lālmāi of south-east Bengal. These were provided with significant connection through the riverine routes between the littorals and the interior. The grant of land to Śukradeva also indicates some officers, who had a duty to look after the daily activities of the place. They are *nauvāṭaka*, *ardhanauvāṭaka*, and *gocchakapati*. The term *nauvāṭaka* occasionally occurs in some records in the sense of a fleet of boats. R.G. Basak suggests that the word *nauvāṭaka* meant the head of the royal navy.[188] The expression *ardhanauvāṭakas* stands for an officer of the same department, but junior to the *nauvāṭaka*.[189] The presence of the officer looking after the mercantile marine, along with his sub-ordinate at Vaṅgasāgara-*saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka* further highlights the commercial significance of the non-rural settlement. The next term *gocchakapati* is equated with Sanskrit *goṣṭhakapati*, i.e. the administrative head in charge of pasture lands and cowherds.[190] But recent researches take this term to refer to an officer in charge of *goṣṭha*/*goṣṭhīs* or guilds. The presence of an officer at a commercial center, such as the *vaṅgasāgara-saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka* looking after *gosthis* or guilds is an obvious possibility. Thus, the work of these officials, such as *nauvāṭaka*, *ardhanauvāṭaka* and *gocchakapati* emphasized towards non-rural sector of the

economy. They have lowered the material interest of the Chandras in Vaṅgasāgara-*saṁbhāṇḍāriyaka*.[191]

Moreover, voyages of Chānd-Sadāgar, Dhanapati, Śrīmanta, the heroes of the Maṅgalkāvyas, are also evidence of indigenous trade in Bengal, mainly the riverine and coastal regions. We get references from the *Maṅgalkāvyas* of a list of important seats of trade and commerce namely, Begad, Saptagram, Adiadaha, Ghusudi, Santipur, Navadvip, Guptipara, Phulia, Halisahar, Mahespur, and Triveni. Places like Betad are considered, on the basis of archaeological evidences, to be old as the Gupta or even as pre-Gupta era.[192] The description of the journey voyages of the heroes of *Maṅgalkāvyas*, although covered with religious emotions and imagination coloured pious feelings should contain a stratification of truth.[193] However, the discussion that has been discussed so far, it should be assumed that an internal trade was running without any interruption for hundreds of years from Puṇḍravardhana to Vaṅga-Samataṭa. The market towns near the riverbank were often connected by short distance routes, whose purpose was served.

In this context, emergence of *chaturakas* in Bengal should be noted during the Sena rule. In the first half of the 12th and early 13th century A.D., an unknown type of settlement started. This is *chaturaka*. It seems that *chaturakas* is neither a village nor a full-fledged urban center. The information of four *chaturakas* namely Betaḍḍa-*chaturaka,* Urā-*chaturaka,* Nava-*saṁgraha-chaturaka* and Lauhaṇḍa-*chaturaka* have been found so far in Sena records. These were often a convergence of rivers and overland routes and acted as nodal points. A case in point is Betadda-*chaturaka* mentioned in the Govindapur copperplate of Lakṣmaṇasena,[194] (1179-1206 AD), which had the Gaṅgā as an eastern landmark or boundary (*purve jāhnavi*). This place is identified with the Betor in the Howrah district. The Portuguese accounts of 16th century A.D. highlighted the importance of Betor for supplying the crucial riverine connection up to the famous port of Saptagrāma.[195] As Portuguese's big ships could not flow upstream through the Sarasvatī river to reach the port of Saptagrāma, they

anchored near Betar to reach the destination of Saptagrām through the inland riverine vessels. Betadda-*chaturaka* was given special importance in connection with the indigenous riverine network in the western part of the Bengal delta.

From available sources, it is very difficult to know the prices of various articles in the market. But compared to modern times, things were much cheaper in ancient Bengal than even as late as 15th century A.D. Chaitanyadeva's marriage ceremony was performed by several cowries and it was mentioned by the poets as a great example of a costly marriage.[196] Several lines in the Kavikaṅkaṇa's *Chaṇḍīmaṅgala* also described the abundance of articles in those days.[197] Buying and selling of goods was carried out through the system of barter, although there was a medium of exchange in the form of cowries copper coins for smaller, and gold and silver coins for greater transactions. Although traders were generally honest, some of the dishonest dealings were in the market, especially after the trade and commerce reduced. The picture of Murāri Śīla in Chaṇḍīmaṅgala[198] and the story of the merchant mentioned in the *Saṅkhamālā*[199] highlight the facts that in the fall of their commercial activities, Bengali traders had lost their traditional honesty and integrity.

4.3. External Trade

Since the very beginning of the human civilization, one of the important instruments for inter-cultural communication is trade. Colin Renfrew has ascertained that "it is reciprocal traffic, exchange or movement of materials or goods through peaceful human agency".[200] No country at any stage of its economic development has subsisted in a state of isolation. Its economic interests have ever been intimately linked up with those of other countries. Naturally, therefore, its international trade has formed an integral part of its own economic development. Giving a right fillip to the international trade our ancient people laid our economic development on a very stable and sound foundation. There are two types of trade - 1. Material items whose natural distribution is limited to salt, wood, tin, wine, cotton etc. 2. Products that are produced in

limited areas, such as slaves, through higher knowledge or other economic factors.[201]

It is generally believed that the basis of ancient Indian economy was primarily agriculture and the producer's surplus was available for meeting the requirement of the deficit areas, both near and distant. This made the basic economic activity leading to the development of trade. India was a country abundant in both agricultural and non-agricultural products. So she had made a trade relation with the outer world since remote past to utilise her surplus production. So there is a long history of lively interests of scholars in the history of trade and urban development in early India .The historiography of early Indian trade also shows a distinct preference for the study of long-distance trade-both overland and overseas, the study of export and imports, the survey of routes of communication and the enlisting early Indian ports.

Trade has been carried out through land and water, which is often referred to in the ancient literary works. The ancient references constantly refer to the commercial activities of India within territory and beyond. It was possible to develop this trade of India due to the positive commercial communication in different regions of country. The sources of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain literature and archaeological evidences also provide information about the economic activities of the Indian people. Hindu literary sources, such as the *Epics*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Smṛtis*, the *Arthaśāstra*, the *Amarkoṣa*, the *Nitisāra* etc. and many others contain special references to the economy and economic life of Indian people throughout the ages. The *Jātaka* stories provide precious information for rebuilding the economic history of ancient era. Later Buddhist works like the *Milinda-pañha*, *the Mahāvastu*, *the Mahābhāṣya*, *the Divyavadana*, *the Aṅgavijja*, *the Buddhacharita* and *the Saundarānanda* also deal with the concerned period of study. It provides us with valuable information of traders and their trading activities. The important information about rapid trade via land as well as sea routes also has been known from the Jaina canonical sources. There are references in ancient indigenous and foreign accounts mentioning

flourishing trade and commerce in ancient India and Bengal. We find the earliest references of the indigenous sources that traders desiring wealth sent ships to sea;[202] parties of merchants went on the ocean[203] in ships with a hundred oars,[204] to distant lands for sale and barter.[205] Thus, trade was such a vital element in the life of people. Probably this commercial intercourse led to an overflow of ancient Indian culture to the land of the Mitanni near the western land of the Euphrates before the 15th century B.C.[206] There we know of chiefs with decidedly Indian names- Artatama, Sutarna, Dushratta.

Since early times, Bengal had played a significant role in the field of foreign trade. But we have no definite evidences to ascertain the fact that when Bengal came into prominence in the field of transaction of her commodities. Nevertheless, it is presumed that it was in the Gupta period, when peace and prosperity established under their strong and central administration, there developed a rich and prosperous foreign trade throughout the whole of northern India. Being a part of the Gupta Empire, North Bengal must have greatly benefited from this. Thus, it must be said that there were some amount of internal as well as external trade before the Gupta age. But large scale of commercial transaction between Bengal and beyond should be dated from the time onwards, as is evident from the Dāmodarpur Copper-plate. From the plate, it is gleaned that representatives of the trading and mercantile classes played an important position in district administration under the Gupta Empire.[207]

Archaeological and literary evidences strongly indicate that in the early centuries of Christian era (the second half of the first century AD to the second half of the second century AD) trade relation were made between Bengal and south, south-east Asia and China through land and maritime routes. Various indigenous and non-indigenous sources, such as *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, *Arthaśāstra*, *Geography of* Ptolemy, *Milinda-pañha* etc., provided valuable information about the trade of Bengal in our concerned time.[208] Finally, the recent discoveries of Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī inscriptions of the early historical sites of Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, etc in the lower section of West

Bengal ensure the vibrant trade in the first Christian era. From the very early times, Indian goods had a wide market in different parts of the world. In the west, Indian goods were sent to Persia, Arabia, and the coasts of Africa and to the countries of Europe. Indian goods were also shipped to China, Ceylon, Burma, Indonesia and the Indian archipelago. Merchants from many countries, in the east and the west, came to the parts of India and carried away Indian goods to their countries, where there was great demand for them.[209] Many commodities were imported to India from the world outside. Although a detailed list of exports and imports is lacking, it can be safely concluded from the available sources that a great variety of commodities were exported from, and imported to, India. According to B.N. Mukherjee, "several indigenous and Chinese texts indicate that in the early centuries of the Christian era (4th or 5th century A.D), Vaṅga had direct or indirect trade relations through sea routes with some countries of South Asia, China, Sri-Lanka, Egypt and even certain parts of the Peninsular and Western India".[210] Due to the discovery of a large quantity of commodities of Indian origin from various parts of south-east Asia including Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, Malaysia, Java, the emphasis is on the maritime history of India's eastern coast. The scholars firmly believe that from the first century to the 5th century, people of south-east Asia and India engaged in a movement for trade and commercial activities. Most of the outgoing and incoming trade products were negotiated through the ports of Bengal. According to Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, ports are "the place of contact, where goods and people as well as cultures are transferred between land and maritime space. It is a knot, where ocean and inland transport lines meet and intervene."[211]

Bengal, the prosperous region situated in the east of India maintained a brisk trade relation along with religious and cultural contacts and exchanges with Indian sub-continent, Central Asia, South-east Asia, China and other regions of the world. The remote areas like the eastern Mediterriean were also associated with the coast of Bengal, although perhaps only indirectly. It must be clearly pointed out that there was no Bengal as such in ancient times. It was practically

congeries of different units. There was neither any uniform, nor unilinear socio-economic development in those four units, which were never unified under a single paramount political power in the pre-AD 1200 times.[212]

It is known that there developed riverine communication in Bengal at a very early age due to her geographical location. The delta with innumerable channels of the Gaṅgā-Brahmaputra-Meghnā descending into the Bay of Bengal offered unique, but natural arterial ways to upload habitations. The easy navigability of rivers for long distance traffic helped her to develop the internal trade. The fame of Bengal's industries soon created demands abroad for some of its commodities. The *Mahāvaṁsa* refers to overseas trade between Vaṅga and different countries of the east in these lines: "As a wealthy sea power scrupulously discharges his port dues and, putting forth on to the high seas, voyages to Vaṅga, to Takkola, China, Sovira, Surattha, Alasanda, Kolapattana, Suvarṇabhumī or some other ports where shipping congregates".[213] Although not all of the places mentioned here can be identified, but it is not doubtful that commercial relations between Bengal and other countries, such as China and south Burma were definitely established by the above statements. Again, we learn from the *Kathāsaritasāgara*[214] that traders of Tāmralipta established trade relation with remote countries like Lanka (probably Ceylon) and Suvarṇadvīpa (possibly Sumatra). The traditional land routes had their limitations. So in view of the necessity of expanding economic activities sea ports emerged. The prosperity of these ports then depended on the resources of their hinterland and their access to the network of routes. The gradual advance in the technology of boat-building along with development of navigational aids and techniques must have played a vital role for the promotion of seafaring activities. This fact is borne out by archaeological as well as literary evidences. However, it is to be remembered that several overland trade routes existed between Bengal and the east and south-east Asian countries from the beginning of the Christian era.

As per the verdict of modern science, water is the ultimate source of human life. Therefore, since time immemorial, water route has served as the

very cradle of human civilization. It is believed that the merchants' fleet was ready to trade with other countries. The enterprise organizers would run the project by blowing the gong and invited co-partners for the enterprise. During this time, organizers could often get participants from other traders of locality or other places.[215] For example, it is stated in the *Purāṇa* that when a merchant announced his intension to start a sea-voyage for trading purposes, some merchants came from remote places.[216] Likewise, it has been described in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*[217] that when Viduṣaka, an adventurous young Brāhmaṇa, reached the port of Tāmralipta, he himself met with a specific merchant named Skandhadāsa, who was interested in crossing the sea. In his company, the merchant's property entered a large freight ship and he travelled by the sea. These examples are important.

Now the people from distant area desired to involve in the enterprise brought their cargoes by the boats along the Ganges and its tributaries. Besides, others brought their goods in ports by carts, loads, bundles or other ways. The owners of two freight-vessels were called *dvināvadhana,* and those who had five boats called *pañcanāvapriya*.[218] These terms might not have been applied in Bengal or even in eastern India, but it was applicable to the appropriate cases in the riverine areas of India. The merchants, who were ready to run overseas trade, sacrificed flowing jewels and other valuable items to maintain water and stream before starting their journey by boats in the ocean.[219] The concerned merchants again propitiated God with sacrifices with animals and offered prayer to God after the safe arrival of the ships at the destination and return to the port of origin.

There is a story in the *Digvijaya* section of the *sabhāparvan* in the *Mahābhārata*, as to how Bhima subjugated eastern India and conquered Tāmralipta and the neighbouring coastal region. Bhima's success in the region might have been due to the naval facilities. In a country dominated by a network of rivers, boats must have been the foremost means of communications. In Kālidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa*[220], the Vaṅgas are referred to as *nau-sādhanodyatān*,

which speaks of the skill of the people in the use of boats for all purposes including war. The early Bengali *Charyāpadas* frequently refers to boats with seagoing vessels and mention their component parts. For small trips, rafts were used. The ferry boats were also used and had to be paid through the cowries.

The trading activities in Bengal had been occurred due to the rise of the central political structure in the heart of Ganges Valley. The lower delta of natural peninsula of the sea played an important role flourishing trade and commerce in Bengal. The evidence of Kauṭilya's *Arthaśāstra* in this regard reflects mostly the contemporary Mauryan reality and deals with social conditions and institutions especially in region nearer to the epicentre of Mauryan dominions, namely Bihar and certainly a substantial part of north Bengal. The *Arthaśāstra* clearly indicates the regulatory function of the state in matters of trade. It refers to foreign merchants. Towards the closing centuries of the first millennium B.C., Buddhism played a positive role in the expansion of maritime activities. The liberal attitude of Buddhism towards trade and commerce gave an impetus in the flourishing of the commercial activities with the outer world.

Though the commercial activities of Bengal have been recorded in our ancient literature, but it is not sufficient to write a formidable economic history. Moreover, the contact and volume of this trade are not well-known as the references are mostly casual and scattered in various works like the *Jātakas*, the *Kathā* literature and other indigenous sources, the account of classical authors and the records of the Chinese court analysts and travellers, works of Arab geographers, ships and others. They throw a little bit of light alongside the foreign trade of Bengal directly passing through the port of Tāmralipta. The fascinating story of import and export trade through the port of Tāmralipta can probably be detected some eleven hundred years ago, but the information is not equally distributed. Apart from the first two or three centuries of the Christian era, the information was most dissatisfactory. There are many questions arising out of an investigator's mind which cannot be answered properly.

A large number of Gupta coins found in different parts of Bengal are important from the economic point of view. Bengal was famous as a textile and silk manufacturing centre to those of countries. The Gupta epigraphic records like Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Grant indicate the respected position of *śreṣṭhīs* and *sārthavāhas*. Epigraphic evidences indicate the royal recognition of services provided by merchants for the development of the country's economy along with the relevant time. In this connection 'ship-type' and 'camel-type' coins can be considered found in Chandraketugarh, Tamluk and Atghara may be considered.[221] With the royal consent the coins issued by the traders of the guilds giving significant evidence to propose an attitude of patronage on the part of the king towards the *śreṣṭhīs* and the *sārthavāhas*.

Trade economy continued in the post-Gupta era. The Kotālipāḍa plates bear witness to the fact that there was a meeting point of the merchants and traders named Navyāvakāśikāyam.[222] The same grant refers to the building of a ship harbor, indicating overseas trade. A large number of gold coins related to the period of Samāchāradeva,[223] and the references to *dināras* in the epigraphs[224] used for transactions during this period, suggest that money economy was very common during this time.

From the post-Gupta era till the coming of Muslims, the maritime activities of Bengal are reported in various epigraphic records. There are mentions of river boats and harbours in the Gunāighar Copper-plate of Mahārājā Vainyagupta, dated c.507-08 A.D.[225] References to ships and dockyards and custom officers called *viṣayadhiniyuktak-vyāpāra-kāraṇḍaya* or *vyāpāraṇḍya* are found in two grants of the time of king Dharmāditya and *viṣaya-vyāpāra-viniyukta* in the grant of king Gopachandra.[226] Both were engraved in the 6th century AD. The former had been the chief customs officer in the district and the latter was under his subordinate. It is well known that there were regular naval forces for the purpose of conducting war. The Nālandā copper plate of Dharmapāla[227] describes a victory camp at Pāṭaliputra carrying multiple vessels on the path of the Bhāgīrathī. Occasionally, the term *nau-vāṭaka* occurs in many

records which refer to river crafts or naval establishments.[228] The Deopārā inscription[229] mentions the victorious naval expedition of Vijayasena on the way to the Ganges. All these activities prove that there must have developed the vessels carrying goods for transportation.

It can be said that maritime activities were vibrant since ancient times in Bengal indicating trade and expansion of royal power along the Gaṅgā and its tributaries and distributaries. But it is also evident from archaeological discoveries that maritime trade had not been increased in different geographical sub-regions of Bengal in a same momentum. A large number of archaeological antiquities have been found through excavation and exploration in north, south and south-west of Bengal with inscriptions, often short and cryptic. These were written in Kharoṣṭhī, Kharoṣṭhī- Brāhmī and /or Kharoṣṭhī along with Brāhmī legends. These are pots, jars and saucers, or their pieces and seals. Considering the purpose of their issue, the seals have been identified as, among others, I) trader's identification tickets, ii) transit documents and sale licenses, and iii) seals of trading communities.[230] Most of these inscribed seals show ships or boats with one or more masts, and are fitted with a banner. Sometimes, they are shown with grain stalks in a basket, or two horses. These were written for different periods from the 1st to the 4th or the 5th centuries A.D. It has been established that traders of post-Mauryan and pre-Gupta Vaṅga exported horses and probably also rice to south-east Asia. They also maintained coastal trade with peninsular and western India. The regional rulers of south-eastern Bengal felt the need to continue with the metallic currency. But their counterpart in the north, south and south-west had to opt for trade by barter or through the cowries. The standard currency was no longer needed in the Pāla-Sena domain due to the breakdown of Roman Empire and consequently the decline of maritime trade. It influenced the late and post-Gupta north and south-west Bengal. But maritime trade continued in South-east Bengal.

Earlier, the consequences of linking up Bengal's maritime trade with Mediterranean region through the eastward expansion of Roman trade ports and

urban centres resulted in a developed sea-borne trade. Bengali merchants were not only enriched, but also elevated to higher level of political and social influence. But the rise of Islamic power led to the break-up of the trade in the Mediterranean region. The Islamic advance might have been disastrous and far-reaching and the subsequent ascendancy of Arabs and Persians in Asian sea-borne commerce could have been the reason for the immediate decline in Bengal's sea trade.

Now some discussion can be focussed on the commodities, which were imported and exported to and from the ports of Bengal. It is difficult to determine the exact number of commodities and their volumes due to scanty inscriptional evidences. Despite the above mentioned fact, efforts have been made to determine the quantity of import and export in Bengal from various elements from ancient to medieval Bengal. Afroz Akmam says that the Magadhan empire along with other northern powers like Śuṅga and Kuṣhāṇa got an gateway to the outside world through the ports of Bengal during this time. The deltaic Bengal became also a supplying centre of items of trade delivered in the newly rising overseas trade.[231]

Rice is the staple food of the people of ancient Bengal. The deltaic alluvium soil of this country produced in large quantities of rice. In the first half of the 7th century A.D. Hiuen-Tsang approved this region of agricultural prosperity. The crop of San-mo-ta-ta (Samataṭa) and Tan-mo-lih-ti (Tāmralipta) has been described by him. There are available evidences that Bengal particularly lower Bengal continued to maintain agriculture as the mainstay of an agrarian economy in early part of Christian era. This region was particularly famous for producing good quality of rice. A number of inscriptions found from lower Bengal testify to the above fact. Several stylised representations of pulses of grains being carried on ship or vessels are found on the seals. This is a clear proof that rice was exported as a local product of Bengal.

Textile was one of the main local items of trade from the ports of Bengal. We can assume that Gangetic spikenard, pearls and the finest of all *muslins*, were

shipped from a significant traffic location. The *Periplus* described that in the first century A.D., fine *muslin* was a quality export commodity from lower Bengal. This is the earliest specific reference to *muslin*. It states that *muslin* of the finest sorts, which were called Gangetic, was shipped from a market-town, which bore the same name as the river, Ganges.[232] It had received fame from all corners of India even before that time which is evident from *Arthaśāstra*. The *Arthaśāstra*[233] mentions the making of garments, one of which was known as *dukūla*, made of a inner bark of a plant and others *kārpāsika* (cotton cloth) produced in Vaṅga, *patrorṇa*, a wild silk grown in Magadha, Puṇḍra and Suvarṇakudya (Kāmarūpa), *kṣhauma*, a coarse variety of linen manufactured in Puṇḍravardhana and Vārānasi. *Arthaśāstra* mentions them as Vaṅgaka*,* which means that they were produced in the region of Vaṅga. There is evidence of export of textile from Bengal to south-east Asia. According to Ranabir Chakravarti, the Bengal coast is thought to be able to meet the demand of the 'west' for textiles and spices.[234]

In the first century of the Christian era, silk was one of the items exported from Bengal. The *Periplus*[235] testifies that in the early part of the first century, raw silk, silk yarn and silk cloth were merchandised through the port named Gañge lying on the river Ganges. S. Jahan mentions that in the first century, raw materials of Chinese silk, silk yarn and silk were brought as transit items in Bengal. Thence, it was shipped from Gangābandar for being traded to distant countries. The book mentions trade in China. Chinese silk, floss, yarn and cloth went to Limyrike (or Dāmirica, i.e., Drāviḍa country) via 'the Ganges River'.[236] Therefore, the Gangābandar played an important role in the export of textile, malabathrum, silk, spikenard, etc. It is to be mentioned that the trade in cotton garment is terminal in nature, while the export of the Chinese silk to south India was transit trade. These items from south Indian ports seem to be sent to the west. So these products were integrated into the Bay of Bengal and finally with the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean Sea trade.[237]

The port of Gañge is also interesting for exporting pearl. The *Periplus* says that the pearls were brought from the market town situated on the bank of the

Gaṅgā.[238] According to Schoff, the worst varieties must have been 'small, often irregular and usually reddish', and were found in river Gaṅgā.[239]

Gangetic spikenard is an herb, usually found in the east of the Himalayas. Generally, the oil from the Gangetic spikenard is extracted and it is considered to be valuable ingredient in the preparation of ointment and perfumes. *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* proves that it was exported from the port of the Gangābandar to Rome.[240] In the 9th century Ibn Khurdadbah listed India's exported agricultural products, such as diverse species of aloe-wood, sandalwood, camphor and camphor-water, nutmeg, clove pink, cubele, coconut, vegetable substances and textures of velvet coffon.[241] He mentions cinnamon, galangal (galingale) and kamala, besides porcelain, sugar-cane, pepper, cassia, silk and musk as articles imported from the east.[242] Māsudi, who visited India in 916 AD, mentioned the products of India as nutmegs, cloves, camphor, arecanuts, sandalwood and aloes-wood.[243] In the seventh century A.D., bamboo was exported from India to Al-Khatt. In *the Kāvyamiṁāmśa* of Rājaśhekhara, we find mention of various species of aloes and grapes as well as fragrant plants and trees (lavate creeper and granthiparnaka trees) as products of eastern India or Pūrvadeśa. Here we can examine the evidence of the Nandāpur plate of Gupta year 169,[244] which refers to a village named Jaṅgōyikā in north Bengal. It can be noted that the *Arthaśāstra* speaks of a different variety of sandal-woods. In this description we find a kind of *agaru* (resin of aloe) and also a kind of *tailaparṇika* (leaves producing oil such as Eucalyptus) named *jōṅgaka*, probably derived from the name of the place of its origin. The above mentioned articles were the products of Kāmarūpa. J.C. Ghosh[245] explains that this part of Assam was in the c. 7th century AD under Bengal. It is noteworthy that Abu' Zaid[246] mentions the name of an aloe-wood named *al kāmruni*, which was produced in Kāmrun and was exported to Multan.

Malabathroom or chinamomum is a common item of the Himalayas mainly found in the eastern Himalayas. The word 'malabathrum' was possibly derived from a compound of *tamāla* (the Sanskrit name of *Cinnamomum*

albiflorum) and *patra*, 'a leaf'.[247] Its leaves are fragrant and used as spices in south Asia. The *Periplus* testifies that it was available in a market town situated in the river of Gaṅgā.[248] The scholars, such as B.N. Mukherjee, Ranabir Chakravarti have also agreed that malabathrum was one of the most important commodities exported from the Gangābandar along with textiles, rice, pearl etc. It is already mentioned that malabathrum was not a product of Bengal, and it grown in the Khāsi and Jayantia hills in north-eastern border area. It was brought to the port of Gañge for further shipment.[249] It was considered as one of the most valuable elements for Roman peoples for ointments and perfumes.[250] The demand of the Roman consumers for malabathrum clearly indicates that the product was exported from the Gangābandar.

Kauṭilya speaks about elephant resources of Bengal as well. He says that elephants of Kaliṅga, Aṅga, Karusa and the East were the best.[251] This view is also supported by Diodorus Siculous. He tells us that Gangāridae emerged as the repository of the greatest number of elephants, which were the largest in size. It can be assumed that during the time of Pliny and Ptolemy, ivory was considered as a very valuable object and it was common during the time of Kauṭilya.

Sugar was another product that was used for trade at that time. Śuśruta[252] mentions that Puṇḍra had produced a special variety of sugar (Puṇḍraka) in large quantities. There is reason to believe that the best form of *ikṣhu* produced in Puṇḍra region was considered to be the most popular product for the world market.

The Bengal spice gained a unique position in the list of export and it is known from Pliny's description. Arab writers find interesting information about the export of the kingdom of Rahma (Pāla Kingdom). They testify to the export of horns of rhinoceros from the kingdom of Rahma to China. The Liang-Shu in the *Chau Ju-kua*[253] enlists this article as an export item, together with other products. We also learn more from the Arab writers that *samara* (yak-tail) hair was grown, from which fly-whisk were made with handles of ivory and silver in the Ruhmi kingdom.[254] Scholars believe that not only raw materials, but the

products produced from *samara* were exported. *Akhbar al-Sin wa'l Hind* clearly indicates that the goods exported from the region of Bengal in the 9th century A.D. are *muslin*, aloe-wood, yak-tail (for fly whisks), and rhinoceros horns.

Semi-precious stone beads were items of long-distance trade network. In Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, the beads of semi-precious stones, such as agate, carnelian, amethyst, jasper, quartz, amber, garnet and crystal have been found from stratified level of recovered Kuṣhāṇa artefacts. A large number of beads of semi precious stones, such as carnelian, agate, quartz, amethyst, crystal, chalcedony, chart and jasper from Wari-Bateshwar are also found. Beads found from Mahāsthāngarh are made of agate, carnelian, chart, chalcedony, crystal, jasper, garnet, marble, onyx, etc. Since the find spots of these beads were port sites or in lose vicinity of such sites, it is suggested that that semi-precious stone beads were exported from Tāmralipta, Gangābandar and Wari-Bateshwar in early centuries of Christian era.[255]

Beads were another item that were produced in north India or lower Bengal and exported abroad mainly south-east Asia.[256] As these beads have been traced from different parts of south-east Asia, especially Thailand, there are reasons to believe that the objects might have been imported from the port of lower Bengal. Chandraketugarh has also yielded barrel-shaped beads with white or black etched band on carnelian. It appears, therefore, that Bengal, particularly coastal Bengal had at least two important bead manufacturing centres and these beads were distributed to different early historic sites of coastal Bengal as well as south-east Asian countries during the early part of the Christian era. It must be said that archaeological beads are a sign of maritime trade, because presently they are found in present Wari-Bateshwar and Mahāsthāngarh in present Bangladesh and Tamluk, Bāṇgarh, Chandraketugarh, Harinarayanpur and Deolpota in present West Bengal, Ban Chiang, Ban Tung Ketchet, Kok Samrong, U Thong, Krabi and few more sites in central and north-east Thailand and Khao San Kaeo in southern Thailand and Baikhano in central Burma etc.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the rouletted ware was exported. It was considered a luxury item. The distribution of rouletted ware extends on the eastern coast and other early historical sites of lower Bengal. This type of ware has been reported from the stratified level of Kuṣhāṇa sits at Chandraketugarh, Tamluk, Mahāsthāngarh, Wari-Bateshwar, Maṅgalkot, and Nātsāl, and through exploration in other early historic sites, such as Deulpota, Boral, and Atghara. Rouletted ware has also been found in a number of sites in the Indian sub-continent, Srilanka and South-east Asia.

In about 999 AD, the main articles of China's import in the history of the Suṅga Dynasty have been mentioned as 'Pin-t'le' or steel. Mārco Polo[257] describes it as Kermen's product, and according to Yule it is *hundwaniy,* meaning 'Indian steel' which enjoyed a great reputation.[258] It is possible that glass was widely manufactured in India and especially in Bengal. The mention of glass as an item of trade has been found in the list of merchandise of Dhanapati. It is found in the account given by Kavikaṅkana.[259]

Turning to the import trade of the Gangetic Valley, the first place might be given to horses. It is known from the medieval work *Tabāqat-i-Nāsirī*[260] that in the market of the city of Lakhnauti, about fifteen hundred horses were sold. All the saddle horses came into the territory of Lakhnauti from mountainous region named KRMBTN. This KRMBTN is identified with a place either in Bhutan or Tibet. These horses of hilly areas have been branded as the *kohi* variety of horse which is also sometimes identified with the horses from Yunān in southern China.[261] We have more evidence that the horses were a valuable component of India's import trade. *The Abhidhānaratnamālā*[262] mentions as an example of the excellent horses those of Persia, Vanayu, Cambod, Kamboja, Bahlika, Sindhu. The Turuska horses figure amongst the best breeds in the *Upanītibhāvaprapañcakathā*. B.N. Mukherjee[263] suggests on the basis of the Chinese account of K'ang T'ai that the Yue-chi merchants were importing them to the Ko-ying country by the sea. The Yue-chi traders were either Kuṣhāṇa merchants, and or dealers in the vast Kuṣhāṇa realm. As Ko-ying is located in the

Malay Peninsula, K'ang T'ai thus clearly refers to about overseas trade to south-east Asia to transport horses from Indian sub-continent.[264] Later, the discovery of a copper drum at Java Island in south-east Asia usually shows the views of two men in typical Yue-chi dresses. It also indicates the relation between them.

The veteran Venetian traveller was aware of the availability of excellent and strong horses in Carajan. This Carajan is identical with Yunnan and the Yunnanese town of Talifu. These horses were sent to India through the Brahmaputra valley named as the southern Silk Road for sale.[265] According to Polo, Aniu also exported horses to India. There are difficulties in determining Aniu's location, but Digby has no doubt that it was located somewhere in the south of Carajan.[266] Polo talks about a western way of connecting Aniu with Caugigu, which in its turn connected Bengala with a land route. Therefore, the horses from Yunnan could reach Bengal via Pagan, which was connected to south-eastern Bengal and Lusāi and Tripura hills. Following Polo, the journey of land from Carajan to Bengala could be completed within 45 to 55 days.[267]

Even in the first century A.D. the *Periplus* mentions that silk were imported from China to Ganges and then exported to the Tamil lands. The phrase *chīnāṁśuka* (Chinese silk) is often found in contemporary literature. Evidently, during the period of research, silk trade continued to flourish. Chinese cocks and porcelains were also part of India's import trade. Gems from south-east Asia were imported, as it is known from the stories described in the *Upanītibhāvaprapañcakathā*.

Precious metal silver and gold were imported into this subcontinent by a port in the area of Vaṅga. On the basis of the *Periplus,* H.B. Sarkar has said that the accruing of yellow metal appeared in the concerned area from the Roman world for purchasing *muslin* and other items. It is already known that gold-grains might have flowed into the markets of Gañge. But it appears that the gold-mine in this region did not exist. This gold might have reached to this place through Tripura from the rivers of Assam and north Burma. B.N. Mukherjee has suggested that gold could have been imported from outside or could have been procured

by washing river sands in or near the territory of Bengal.[268] It may be presumed that Bengal was well connected through land routes with south-east Asia, and one of the overland routes connected Chittagong with lower Burma through Ārākān. This way the silver movement was carried out from the border areas of Burma to flow in Bengal.

Cowrie was another item imported from abroad. Probably, cowries were a medium of exchange at that time. It might have been imported from the Maladives. Chinese sources compared it to gold and silver. Silk was also a matter of import and could reach Bengal through trade. B.N. Mukherjee and Ranabir Chakravarti supported this view.

The exports and imports are referred to in the *Maṅgalakāvyas*. Vaṅśidās in his *Manasāmaṅgala* has said that the exports of Bengal were betel leaves, betel nut, lime, catechu (*khayer*),cardamom (*elāchi*),fruits, vegetable-roots, pulses, onions, garlics, camphor, water-weeds, goats, sheep, radish, dry fish, sugarcane, jute, wooden utensils and furniture, earthen wares, oil, and clarified butter, kumkum, poppy etc, while the imports included emerald, gems, quick-silver, pearl, musk, golden bricks, diamond, corals, ruby, ivory, sandal wood, royal maces, cowry, gold and silver utensils, gold furniture, bell-metal utensils, honey etc.[269] Again from the *Chaṇḍimaṅgala* of Mukundarāma, we may derive a list of exports and imports. The exports were deer, coconut, ape, pigeon, fruits, jute, glas sea-salt, cloth, oyster-shell, haritat, joani, chua, sheep etc. while the imports included horses, conch, clove, wood-apple (*taṅkā*), elephant, parrot, jayphal, betel nut, white emerald, cowries, rock salt, pots pearl, diamond, *jirā*, sandal-paste etc. Although these books refer to import-export products in the background of the 14-15th century A.D., this description applies also to the entire era.

Thus we may hold that trade balance was favourable in India as before in the concerned period. The demand for luxurious products in the western and other oriental countries was so high that Indian traders were able to acquire huge wealth. As a result, they wielded many strengths and influences, and even

figured out as king's hereditary officials as it is evident from Darbat Sāntināṭha Image Inscription of the period of Kīrtivarmana, dated to the year (Vik) 1132 (1075 AD).[270] The fame of Bengal abroad convinced the foreign powers to develop contact with Bengal. An inscription dated in 702 A.D. in Java mentions that a *guru* at the Sailendra court was the resident of Gauḍa. In 1834, four inscriptions were made on a piece of a stone slab, found in northern part of the Wellesley province in Malaya peninsula.[271] They are inscribed in Sanskrit and in Indian alphabets of the 4th and 5th centuries A.D. One of them, a man named Buddhagupta became famous for his successful voyage, an inhabitant of Raktamṛittikā. Kern identifies it with the kingdom called chi-tu of the Chinese sources and located it with Siam or its neighbourhood. On the other hand, N.J. Krom,[272] R.C., Majumdar[273] and N.R. Roy[274] located it in India. A Javanese text, the *Nagara Kṛtagama*, written in 1365 AD, included Gauḍa in a list of countries, from where merchants as well as other classes of people came in large numbers to the Javanese capital.[275]

Convenient transportation facilities were required for extensive trading activities, which were pronounced by *Yuktikalpataru* corroborated by other evidences.[276] The texts show the use of four footed (horses and elephants), two-footed (*pālkis*), footless (boats) and many-footed (chariot), as well as carts of different sizes and 'aerial cars' to be used by kings. Shipbuilding industry also achieved high levels of efficiency and improvement at this time. It may be mentioned here that the word *nauvāṭaka*(the fleet of boats)[277], and *nau-vitāna*[278] used in several inscription interprets the facilities of boats. Vaidyadeva, the great and favourite minister of king Kumārapāla has been referred to in the Kāmāuli Copper-plate. From the plate, it appears that he obtained victory in a naval fight in southern Vaṅga.[279] A.K. Maitreya[280] refers to a flotilla of boats. Sandhyākaranandī[281] noted that the king Rāmapāla during his campaign against the Kaivarta rebel Bhīma in Varendra, crossed the Ganges using a ship and reached the northern bank safely. A regular ferry service can be proven from

tārika words occurring in the inscriptions, indicating an officer of charge of ships and ferries.[282]

In the succeeding centuries the sea-borne trade of Bengal gradually expanded, both in volume and extent. Tāmralipta since the beginning continued to enjoy the position of the trade-emporium in the east. In the fifth century A.D. the Chinese traveler Fa-hien visited the country of Tāmralipta, the capital of which was a sea-port. The itineraries of I-tsing, who visited India at the end of the seventh century A.D., inform us how Tāmralipta was connected with the network of sea-routes running through the Bay of Bengal and the Indian Ocean. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* of Somadeva refers to Tāmralipta pre-eminently as a home of the rich merchant named Dhanadatta.[283] They carried on overseas trade with such distant countries, such as Srilanka[284] and Suvarṇadvīpa.[285]

The prosperity of Tāmralipta was, no doubt, caused by brisk trade and commerce. We find the phenomenal growth of Tāmralipta, not only as the principal sea-port, but the gateway of eastern India as well, till the end of the Hindu-Buddhist period. Its fame as an emporium of trade spread even far outside its boundaries. The Pāli Texts, especially among the *Jātakas*, can bear testimony to the fact of regular journey from Tāmralipta. The *Mahāvaṁśa* mentions the journey of Prince Vijaya with his 700 followers from Bengal to Ceylon.[286] In addition to Prince Vijaya, *Mahāvaṁśa* mentions that the Ceylonese king Devanāmapiyatissa (204-207 B.C.) sent a mission to Pāṭaliputra. The group embarked at Jambukola of northern Ceylon and reached the port of Tāmralipta in seven days safely and from thence reached the port of Pāṭaliputra in seven days. The return trip of the party also covered the distance between Tāmralipta and Jambukola and reached the latter place on the twelfth day. But it is not clear from the text, if the journey stretching 12 days refers to the journey between Pāṭaliputra and Jambukola or Tāmralipta and Jambukola. However, a later portion of the text of *Mahāvaṁśa*[287] shows that it took 14 days since the transit of the southern branch of the Bodhi tree from Pāṭaliputra to Ceylon.[288] If these data could be relied on and wind tunes were favourable, then the journey of

non-stop vessels plying between Tāmralipta and Jambukola in Ceylon took about seven days. The journey of Prince Mahendra from Pāṭaliputra to Tāmralipta and thence to Ceylon also took the same time.[289] The sea-going fleet of the fourth and third century B.C. could use the course of the Gaṅgā up to Tāmralipta, and echoes of these have been highlighted in some of the *Jātaka*-stories. For instance, the *Samudda-Vāṇija-Jātaka*, describes the story of carpenter, who was unable to deliver furniture at a scheduled time, for which he had bargained. As a result he had been emigrated with his families in a ship having built secretly and proceeded along the Gaṅgā for an island home in the overseas. The *Saṅkha Jātaka*[290] also indicates the same course. The *Mahājanaka-Jātaka*[291] also describes the adventures of a prince, who started his journey along with other traders from Champā with products for export to Suvarṇabhūmi, but got ship wrecked in the mid-ocean. Ancient Buddhist literature thus proves that the western belt of the Bay of Bengal saw brisk intercourse between Tāmralipta and Ceylon, possibly expanding to Suppāraka-Bharukaccha. The trade-route to the south and the west was thus a coastal route. There is no definite proof in the accounts of pre-Christian centuries that Tāmralipta's intercourse with the Far East cut across the Bay of Bengal. As a result of these maritime activities, a number of good ports gradually sprang into existence on either shores of southern and western India.[292] It is clear that this pre-eminence of Tāmralipta was due to the fact that it commanded the entrance into and exits from the Gaṅgā.[293]

Another port named Gañge has been mentioned along with Tāmralipta. The port-city was situated on the tributaries of Gaṅgā in the deltaic Bengal. A large number of scholars prefer to equate the port of Gañge with the well-known archaeological site of Chandraketugarh. During the first three centuries of Christian era at any rate both Tāmralipta and Gañge seem to have enjoyed the same status as port cities. But Gañge does not seem to have left any mark on the memory of the people nor any trace in our tradition, literary or historical. It is evident that about the third century B.C. both reached their peaks during the so-called Suṅga-Kuṣhāṇa period (c. 150 B.C.-300 AD.) and faded out of history in the

6th-7th century AD. Yet the memory of Tāmralipta still survives, even though as nostalgia, while no one seems to have heard even of Gañge, or of Chandraketugarh either. The reason behind the fact is that probably Tāmralipta stood on the main course of the Gaṅgā-Bhāgīrathī which was much more important than Gañge (or Chandraketugarh) lying on a branch of the same river. The river on which Gañge situated had no hoary tradition, and hence no sanctity and therefore no claim on the mind and imagination of the people.

In other words, the ancient sub-division of Rāḍha and Vaṅga were the main outlet of the Bengal coast of the Bay of Bengal. In the Dudhpāni Inscription of 8th century A.D. we find Tāmralipta as a port. Along with Tāmralipta, there are a number of early historical sites not far away from Tamluk, e.g. Bāhiri, Tikasi, Tilda, Pānna Amritberia, Nātshal, Badur, Nandigram, Latpatia, etc. Among these Bāhiri, Tikasi and Tilda deserve special mention. The sites may indicate that these were in ancient times connected with riverine and ultimately the seaborne trade in south-western Bengal.[294] By no means can these be compared with to Tāmralipta. But their riverine contacts and ultimate access to the sea may underline their significance as smaller ports, which could have acted as supporting or feeder ports for a much larger harbour nearby like Tāmralipta.[295] It is hardly surprising that Tāmralipta practically overshadowed these smaller harbours. But there were other ports which were less prominent than Tāmralipta, but certainly played a role in the maritime tradition of Bengal.

The heydays of Tāmralipta as a principal port disappeared by the 8th century A.D. The main cause of its decline has been attributed to hydrography. By the 10th century, 'the channel on which Tamluk was situated, and which afforded the facilities for navigation was silted up'.[296] A study of available Chinese evidence strongly suggests that around the 7th century, the Samataṭa area gradually began to emerge as a point of contact for coastal as well as long-distance voyages in the Bay of Bengal. It is, however, not possible to evaluate at the present state of our knowledge whether the gradual emergence of Samataṭa to commercial prominence contributed to the fading away of Tāmralipta in the

Rāḍha region. There is a compilation of comments accumulated from various historians that due to the fall of Tāmralipta in and around the 8th Century A.D., a slump spread to Bengal's growing long-distance maritime trade for several centuries

After Tāmralipta, Samandar, located near Chittagong came to limelight, and maintained trade relation with the outer world. At the same time south-western Bengal under the rules of the Pālas and the Sena saw the slump in trade. South-eastern part of Bengal succeeded to regularise the trade. Not only water, trade through land with abroad was also conducted in ancient Bengal. Being situated on the eastern most point in the eastern side of India, Tāmralipta was connected indirectly by a land route. The close connection of Tāmralipti started with Suvarṇabhumī since early past. Tāmralipta was also linked with Peukelaots by the Pāṭaliputra-Taxila Royal road leading to central Asia. An indirect land-route connected it to Barygaza on the Arabian Sea. Land route between Bengal and China via Sikkim-Tibet and with Burma via the Puṇḍravardhana-Kāmarūpa played a role in maintaining the flourishing trade relations. There was a very close contact via land route of China between Bengal and mainland of south-east Asia. The important role of Bengal in the field of foreign trade with China, Tibet, Central Asia, Roman world, south-east Asia and Ceylon through land and water should be given special attention. We already come to know that the trade of Bengal with the outer world includes these countries, where the merchandise was needed. Thus, we can say that Bengal's foreign trade was not an isolated phenomenon in a pan-Indian background, and it was not a completely separate enterprise of Bengalees in foreign trade.

4.3.1. South-East Asia

Since the first century, Indian literature had depicted and referred to south-east Asia as 'Golden Island' or 'Golden Peninsula' or 'Yavadipa' or 'Suvarṇadīpa'. The *Arthaśāstra* of Kauṭilya mentions the earliest positive reference to Southeast Asia as 'Suvarṇabhūmī'.[297] During the Second World War,

the word 'south-east Asia' started to be used.[298] The region has been further divided into two distinct sub-regions, mainland south-east Asia (or Indo-china) that comprise modern states of Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar (Burma) and western Malaysia, and maritime south-east Asia (Peninsular south-east Asia) that comprises of the modern states of Indonesia, East Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, East Timor Brunei, Cocos Islands and Christmas Island.[299]

Bengal, which covers the Ganges delta and the Trans-Meghna region in the south-eastern parts of present Bangladesh, was ideally suited to connect South-east Asia from remote past. Bengal coast, covering from Suhma to Harikela sub-regions, was the largest delta in the world. The fluvial network paved the way for riverine communication between the coast and the interior. There is no doubt that the Ganges delta provided the landlocked Ganga plains with crucial outlet to the Bay of Bengal. On the other hand, the Bay of Bengal inextricably was linked with mainland and maritime South-east Asia. Harikela's close proximity with the Arakan contributed to the overland corridor to mainland south-east Asia also. This combination of the overland and maritime networks with South-east Asia is nowhere to seen in the subcontinent.[300]

By the first century of the Christian era, many parts of south-east Asia and India were part of the world-trading network (Map-3). Although this period is marked by the dominance of the Indian Ocean by the Roman trade, it was also a witness to establishing trade relations between India and south-east Asia. The sources of this early relationship between India and south-east Asia are inadequate and weird. We have specific evidences of connection between a king of Bengal and his south-east Asian contemporary in the early medieval period. The Nālandā copper plate grant of Pāla king Devapāla[301] (C.821-861 AD) supplies the information of donations of five villages to Bālaputradeva, the Sailendra king of Java and Sumatra, for the construction of a monastery at Nālandā. One can postulate the presence of many Buddhist devotees from Southeast Asia at Nālandā *vihāra*.

Since the first four or five centuries of Christian era, regular trade and cultural contacts had flourished between Bengal and south-east Asia over land and sea routes.[302] The geographical location of Bengal made it very well at the doorstep towards the Suvarṇabhūmī, the 'Land of Gold', which is found in ancient literatures. Being located in a transit zone between south-west and south-east Asia, Bengal had many common features with south-east Asia: rice and fish are the staple diet, betel-nut and betel-leaf chewing are common, the *luṅgi* (sarong) is the main dress for men and there are similarities in the way many tropical articles, such bamboo, are used.

Located in the eastern province of the eastern coast of northern India, Tāmralipta is indirectly connected to a land route and directly to the south-east Asian countries by the sea route. It seems that the close relationship between Tāmralipta and Suvarṇabhūmī, mentioned as Chryse[303] in the classical accounts, had begun in the early period.[304] The impact of Indian trade, culture and religious missionaries in south-east Asia was so powerful and amazing during the first century of the Christian era. Most scholars believe that it must have been preceded by less intense people to people contacts.[305] Chinese accounts of Chang Kien (126 B.C.), Shang-she, the Chinese ambassador to Afghanistan (420-479 A.D.) and Kia-ten (785-805 A.D) etc. referred to the existence of many such overland routes connecting Bengal with east and south-east Asia.[306] The Indians had commercial as well as cultural relations with the Far East from ancient times via the said route, and from there the Indians then proceeded to Martakan, to the Isthmus of Kra and then to Malaya and other Far Eastern countries.[307] The Buddhist monasteries of Pāhārpur and Lālmāi (Mainámati) of present Bangladesh, the Ānanda Vihāra at Pagan in Burma and the great Borobodur in Java are the embodiments of historical and architectural links of the same cultural chain.[308]

Bengal, favoured by the sea-coast, had ready access to the sea-routes easy, and thus it aided the trade and traders. It should be reminded that before the beginning of the Christian era, Bengal entered into the field of foreign trade

by the sea, and it played a vital role in sea-borne trade and cultural expansion of India, especially towards Sri Lanka and the countries of south-east Asia. The maritime space of this trade and cultural link was the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea of Indian Ocean. The ancient ports located at the mouth of Bengal delta was the only outlet for the landlocked whole north and north-east India, at least for the first two hundred years of Christian era. The combined Chinese, classical, indigenous literary sources and archaeological materials suggest that Bengal forcefully entered into an interactive overseas trade of mutual benefits with south-east Asian countries from 1st century AD. It continued to hold this key position up to 4th-5th century AD. The port of Tāmralipta or Gañge, the capital port of the Gaṅgāridāe country, were the centres, from where the trading items were transacted.[309] From the ports of Bengal horses, textile, rice, spices, ceramics including rouletted ware and black knobbed potteries, beads, pearls etc. were exported to south-east Asia. Apart from artefacts related to Indian religion, architectural sculptures had also been transferred with the movements of the people to Southeast Asia. In the same period, Bengal used to import forest products including spices, medicinal herbs, medicinal seeds, resin and others with turtle cells, silver and many other items from south-east Asia.

It is a significant milestone in the maritime history of Bengal in the case of horse trade in Bengal after the discovery of evidences of horses. The figure of a horse on a ship engraved on a seal found in Chadraketugarh, lower Bengal makes it quite definite that horses were an item of maritime trade from any Indian port. It shows within a circular border a masted ship, a *svastikā* symbol, a horse and a marginal legend. According to B.N. Mukherjee, the legend could be dated to 3rd century A.D. The horse on the deck is clearly visible with the elongated neck and other morphological features of the upper part of the body. This type of seal is generally related to the process of authentication of a transaction, which is very important from the perspective of trade.[310] He has suggested that the man associated with horse trade was possibly of non-Indian origin, or he might have lived in north-western India. They used the script of Prākṛit and Kharoṣṭhi that

came from the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent.[311] They were ethnically part of a non-Indian Yue-chih tribe of central Asia. Some of them settled in lower Bengal (probably Chandraketugarh or Tamluk region) in connection of their trade activities. Initially, they were involved in rice trading activities. But subsequently they used to engage in other trading activities, such as horses which had great demand in south-east Asia (Fu-nan) as well as south China. They imported horses from the north-west frontier or Central Asia and then transshipped them to the Far East and south-east Asia through the ports of Bengal. Perhaps some of them were employed in south-east Asia for the trading purposes of horses.[312] It is mentioned in view of the above that the horse, especially good quality war-horse, was always a rarity in India. It had to be regularly imported from the north-western borderland of the subcontinent.[313]

One of the main products exported from the port of Bengal was a textile. In the early days of the Christian era, well-known cotton fabrics were exported to south-east Asia from Bengal. It is very difficult to prepare the history of textile from the remains, which are very difficult to obtain since the material is fragile and easily perishable. However, the recent testimony of cotton fragments and thread found in the cemetery site at Ban Don Ta Phet in central Thailand is very significant in this context.[314] It is very important from the point of view that it strengthens the evidence of early textile exported from Bengal to south-east Asia. Remains of textile evidence have also been found at Ban Chiang in south-eastern Thailand.

That ancient Bengal was agriculturally enriched is proven by a statement made by Hiuen-Tsang in the 1st half of the 7th century A.D. He mentions the crops grown in San-mo-ta-ta (Samataṭa) and Tan-mo-lih-ti (Tāmralipta). Bengal particularly in lower Bengal continued to maintain agriculture as the foundation of an agricultural based society, where successful crops were the main reason for the success and the prosperity of the people. Fertility of soil and adequate rainfall encouraged the production of crops and cereals. This region was particularly famous for producing fine quality rice. Several Kharoṣṭhī and

Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī inscriptions and legends received from the lower Bengal justified the presence of agricultural activities in Bengal. The seal and seal impressions found in this region often represent the cultivation of grain pulses raised from ship or vessels. Two terracotta seals from Chandraketugarh mention the presence of a rich peasant community in lower Bengal.[315] There is no doubt that there was a surplus production of grains in Bengal, especially rice and a portion of surplus products was exported.

Spices were also exported from the port of Bengal. The *Periplus* refers to export of the malabathrum (*tejapāta*) from Gañge country. But we know that since malabathrum was not available locally in Bengal, it is likely that they were brought from north-eastern India, and reached different destinations including south-east Asia. Another significant event in the view of recent archaeological excavations reveals that all the rouletted ware found in south-east Asia, south India and Srilanka originated at a site called Chandraktugarh in lower Bengal.[316] This means that Chandraketugarh was the production centre of all rouletted ware. However, this deluxe earthen-ware was distributed through a varied network. This ceramic type was probably in great demand in the market. The discovery of rouletted ware from Tra-Kieu in eastern Vietnam, Sambrian and Buni grave sites in Indonesia, Bukit Tengku Lembu and Chansean in Thailand and Kuala Selingsing Perak in Vietnam, was very significant in the context of recent findings by Gogte.[317] Therefore, we can conclude that the rouletted ware in question was produced in Bengal, and along with other trade commodities these were exported to South-east Asia.

Another trade item exported to south-east Asia was bead, which was classified as a luxurious item. Most of the Indian beads exported from Bengal to south-east Asia were either manufactured in north India or local production centres like Chandraketugarh. We can identify the beads found in different sites as etched carnelian bead, etched agate and glass bead.[318] The earliest evidence of Indian beads comes from the cemetery of Ban Don Ta Phet in Thailand in the early stages of the Christian era. This site has been excavated with 3000 stone

and glass beads, of which 8.5% are glass beads. According to Glover, these glass beads were built in India and exported to south-east Asia. The engraved carnelian agate beads found at Ban Don Ta Phet, U Thong, Krabi and a few more sites in central and north-east Thailand and Khao San Kaeo in southern Thailand and Baikhano in central Burma etc. must have been originated in North India as rightly suggested by Chin-you-di and exported to south-east Asia through the port of Tāmralipta.[319] The technique of etching or staining with white design first appeared in Harappan bead industry and then again, the tradition reappeared in the Ganges Valley between 600 B. C. and 200 A. D. Therefore, the etched beads either on carnelian or agate must have been produced in India. The engraved carnelian or agate beads found in south-east Asia were probably exported through Tāmralipta of lower Bengal, which had as its hinterland the entire North India, at least, during the early part of the Christian era.

The carnelian pendent showing a leaping lion found at Bon Don Ta Phet and the similar lion-engraving on a crystal found at Chana and Khuan Luk Pat and Dharmarajika Stupa in Thailand associated with the Buddhist religion indicate the exportation of the items from North India through Tāmralipta. Another interesting artefact, a comb made of Indian ivory, was found from Chanseh in Central Thailand, dated a time between 1st and 3rd century AD by its excavators.[320] Gañge country also exported the pearl and opaque glass known from the reference of *Periplus*. Thus, the items of exports and imports involved in trade activities since early times to the period of study were grains, textile products, and various types of spices, aloes wood, sandalwood, swords, cowry-shells, precious metals and horses in which Gangetic *muslin*, spices and horses were valuable products. Grains and *muslins* were exported as essential products by sea transport from Bengal, but the horses, aloes-woods were believed to be shipped in south-east Asia as a part of transit trade.

In search of cultural ties between Bengal and Thailand, Haroun-Er-Rashid says that the distribution of neolithic chopping tools forced us to believe that the eastern region of the sub-continent has been culturally influenced by south-east

Asia, probably since 5000 BC.[321] It can be assumed that there was a certain trade and cultural contact with the mainland and islands of south-eastern Asia, and this intimate intercourse was covered in these two areas at once. On the basis of this intimacy and corelation, Niharranjan Ray assumes that the religious and cultural characteristics of Bengal, together with other parts of India, gradually spread to other regions on the basis of trade relations. Territorial expansion follows other countries in the same way - after the arrival of merchants primarily, the religion and priests who would follow soon. Eventually military and cultural influences inevitably succeeded through this historic sacrosanct process or rules.[322]

4.3.2. China

China and ancient Bengal were separated by the terrible geographic barrier of the Himalayas. Like India, China had very close contact with mainland south-east Asia through land routes. Sufficient data are available in Indian works of the pre-Christian period establishing India's connection with China. The Chinese has been mentioned in several ancient Indian works such as *Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, and Manusmṛiti* etc as Cīna. The *Mahābhārata* represents the Chinese as heroes belonging to the warrior race, honoured with invitation to the sacrifice and even being allowed to serve food. The *Manusmṛit*i (*the Law book* of Manu) relegates them to the lowest stratum of the Indian *varṇa* system, the Śūdras.[323] Contrast the following statements of Manu with the previous ones, "Some Kṣhatriya tribes, having no contact with priests, and having lost their profession gradually became Śūdras. They are the Pauṇḍrakas, the Udras, the Dravidians, the Kambojas, the Yavanas, the Śākas, the Paradas, the Pahlavas, the Chinese, the Kirātas, the Daradas and the Khāsas".[324] The *Vāyu Purāṇa* also mentions the people of *cīna* (China) and its location in the Himalayas.[325] Kauṭilya, the author of the *Arthaśāstra* mentions both China and China cloth (*cinapattaśca cinabhūmija*),[326] while Śuśrata refers to China cloth as *cinapatta.*[327] Another famous epic of Kālidāsa, *Kumārasambhava* also mentions Chinese silk as *cinaṅśukaih kalpitaketumalam* i.e. banners waving to breeze

unfold their silken broidery over gates of gold.[328] Thus, it is clear that China and China-cloth (*cinapatta*) were known to India as early as the fourth century B.C., if not earlier. Till Kauṭilya's time in the 4th century B.C. land routes were preferred as compared to water routes for the sake of security. Among water routes the coastal-hugging route is better than the middle of the sea route, because the former goes to many ports. He recommends the river route for its relative safety and continuous service.[329]

In history, there were three silk roads[330] connecting China with the Indian subcontinent. One was northern Silk Road which originated from the central region of ancient China and extended into Europe through north-west China and Indian sub-continent. Secondly, there had also been a contact on the oceans to the south of China and the Indian sub-continent. The third was the most important, which closely related to ancient Bengal. This route had been called the southern Silk Road.[331] Its history runs over 2400 years, longer than the history of the two other silk roads quoted before. Many Chinese and foreign scholars believe that the southern silk road was the earliest link between China and the Indian subcontinent and also proved to be the shortest distance covered by ancient Chinese inhabitants of border areas, when they entered the Indian sub-continent through Myanmar.

Some ancient documents indicate that Chinese silk was commonly used in the Indian subcontinent 2400 years ago by the dignitaries. At that time or later, some Sanskrit classics such as the *Mahābhārata* bear testimony to this fact. Tea and sesame had their sources in the Yunān-Guizhou Plateau. It is quite possible that these two plants were also introduced to the West by the Southern Silk Road. Study shows that iron-ware and iron-smelting techniques also followed the southern-silk road into the Indian sub-continent, and even further to Central Asia and Rome. Rice cultivation in Asia might have started in Yunan of China and the Assam state of India roughly around the same time. Gourd, balsam pear, eggplant, sugarcane and haricot were the plants introduced from the Indian sub-continent to China. This route (southern silk route) is also called the 'Tea-horse

road'. It was a crucial economic lifeline for China, Tibet and the Himalayan kingdom's of north-east India for over 1500 years. The route passed from Sinchuan and Yunān provinces in south west China, through Tibet and the Nathula pass in Sikkim, down to the ports of Bengal in India. Perilous to travel to Tibet through, 'Tea-Horse Road',[332] locally referred to as 'Cha-ma-gu-dao', was mostly used for importing tea from China and exporting wool, medicines and warhorses from Tibet. From India, it was the more exotic commodities, such as spices, corals, pearls, and incense that made their way out. The trade between China, Tibet and India started with this route during the rule of the Western Han dynasty of China between 206 BC and 24 CE. Yunān was the world's oldest tea-producing area and this tea was sold in Tibet in lieu of Tibetan Yak. However, during the rule of Tang Dynasty, this route grew in importance, when a severe catastrophe occurred in the northern and western regions of China, creating a huge demand for the Tibetan warhorses. 'The Tea-Horse' route was used not only for trade, but also had a significant role in matters of faith. It worked as a highway for cultural exchange, and it was via this route that Buddhist education spread across the Himalayan kingdom and China.

Bengal was well connected with China and Tibet through this very route. It can be concluded that the land routes, which connected Bengal to Tibet and China extended further to south-east Asian countries. It mainly connected Bengal with south-east Asia and formed a long network of roads. Adhir Chakravarti talked about a road extending from south China by way of north Myanmar, Manipur and Kāmarūpa to Afghanistan.[333] In ancient times, Chinese silk and bamboo were believed to have been exported to Afghanistan through Bengal. It has been mentioned in *Hsien Han-Shu* by Pan Ku and *Sse-ke* or *Shi-Ki* by Tsu-ma-Kuang that in 138-126 BC the Chinese diplomat Chang Chhien in his diplomatic mission in Bactria discovered that bamboo artwork and cotton clothes of south-western China were being exported in Bactria through the land route of Szechwan and Yunān of South-western China and north India and Afghanistan.[334]

Thus, it can be assumed that these commodities had reached Bactria through the land routes of North Bengal, Kamarūpa and upper Myanmar.

In order to gain a clear idea about the extent of trade carried on between Bengal and China, a detailed list of commodities involved in the trade is given here. According to Fā-hien, Bengal imported gold, silver, satin fabric, coloured taffetas, blue and white porcelain, copper coin, musk, vermillion, quicksilver, grass-mats and pepper.[335] Most of these items were imported from China in exchange of which according to HYCKTL (His-yang Ch'ookung Tienlu) included *muslins*, especially *pei-po* washed white, pearls, precious stones, horses, horse saddles with gold and silver work on them, opaque vessels with gold engravings, *sa-ha-la*, *che-fu*, rhinoceros horns, crane's heads, kingfisher feathers, crystal sugar, frankincense, *hei ta-li-pu*, cotton velvet, parrot beaks, coarse rhubarb, gharuwood, catechu, ebony, sapanwood, pepper , areca-nuts and other things.[336] The export of pearl from the port of Gañge is also interesting. The Chinese emperor Wu-ti is believed to have sent emissaries to purchase lustrous pearls and other items, and the party reached Huang-chih, i.e., the Ganges. It has been suggested by Wang Gungwu that the merchants of the pearl-ports of Hsu wen and Ho p'u in south-eastern China encouraged this mission to supplement the stock.[337] The author of the *Periplus*, a few decades after the reign of the Chinese emperor Wu-ti, also speaks highly of the Gangetic pearl. It is an indication that its reputation had not suffered any decline since the days of the emperor. As a matter of fact, the Mleccha kings of deltaic Bengal were reported in the *Mahābhārata* to have paid their tributes to Yudhiṣṭhira with it. In the 1st century AD., the volume of this trade was still great, as it would not have otherwise come within the purview of the author of the *Periplus*. But the existence of gold mines in the region of Gañge would appear somewhat surprising, as Bengal does not produce any gold. It probably accrued from the flow of the yellow metal from the Roman world for purchasing *muslin* and other items referred to earlier. It might also be recalled that, in an earlier epoch, the Chinese emissaries had also come with gold and silk for the purchase of some items from the deltaic region of

Gangetic Bengal. The currency of gold coin called *caltis* and abundance of gold in the hands of the business community, and in the upper echelon of the society might have created the wrong impression of a gold mine in the locality of Gañge. There were several conjectures supplied by Schoff that since gold was not produced in Bengal, it might have been brought to this place through Tripura from Assam and north Burma through river routes.[338]

According to Huang Sheng-tseng, pei-po or pi-pu pieces were 0.622 by 17.416 metres in size, 'evenly woven, fine and white'. The size given in the Chi-lu hui-pien version of *YYSL* and in Hsi-yang fan-kuo chih was wider by 0.311 metres.[339] Nevertheless, this type of cloth had already become very popular in China during the 14th century A.D.[340] The *sa-ha-la* was stuff from Bengal used as a tribute. Its name was a transliteration of the Persian word *saqalat* as it was evident from a Chinese-Persian vocabulary list of 1549.[341] The Persian name might have been transmitted either directly or through the medium of Malay *sakelat*, which meant the 'scarlet stuff'.[342] Huang Sheng-tseng mentions *che-fu* together with *sa-ha-la* as tribute articles from Bengal. The expression *che-fu* obviously stands for Ma Huan's *so-fu*, a term for woolens of all kinds found in Aden and Hormuz.[343] Ta-pu is a kind of coarse cloth, hei ta-pu being 'black coarse cloth', whereby *li* became redundant. In Bengal, there is a kind of quilted mattress called *tuli*, occurring often in Bengali literature of the fifteenth century A.D.[344] We would however take *hei ta-li-pu* to mean a certain kind of black coarse cloth on the basis of its frequent occurrence in Chinese writings of this period.[345] Ptolemy tells us about the prevalence of plenty of diamonds in the country of Sabarae along the Ganges River.[346] It is found from *Periplus* that diamonds were exported along with other articles from Bengal. Raw-silk, silk-yarn and silk-cloth seem to have been brought on foot through Bactria to Barygaza and then to Dāmirica (Tamil Country) by way of river Ganges from Thinae (China).[347]

The *Periplus* is of the opinion that only the best quality of tortoise-shell, available only at Chryse (Suvarṇabhūmī), was probably transported through

Ganges to Nelcynda, Barygaza or Ariaca wherefrom it was exported to the Western world.[348] The silk imported from China has been mentioned by poet Kālidāsa.[349] From the Ganges Valley, the silk-worm was carried to the west, and it gradually spread to Khotan, Persia and Central Asia. It is notable that instead of being directly imported from China, the products of the silk-industry often went to the countries onthe borders of northern-western India from the Ganges Valley.[350] Among the commodities imported to Bengal, tortoise-shell and pepper from Chryse might be mentioned.

We are informed by the Chinese travellers that there were wealthy shipbuilders in Bengal, whose ships carried cargoes to various foreign countries for trade. The merchants involved in this trade were mostly Muslims and certainly large in number. In fact the lure of foreign trade was so widespread in Bengal that numerous sailors joined as crew in these ships. Thus these frequent visits abroad led to close relations between Bengal and other countries. Such a relationship also evolved between Bengal and China, and although this took place in the days of Cheng Ho, the China-Bengal trade was largely carried on independently of the Cheng Ho voyages as was, for example, China's trade to the Sulu Islands or Brunei. Hence, Chinese envoys to Bengal were nominated separately; only on rare occasions where they loosely connected to Cheng ho's expeditions as might have been the case with the return journey of Chou Ting.

On the basis of some early Chinese records, it is safe to assume the existence of a regular sea trade in the lower limits of Ganges and Tonkin.[351] It is evident from Kan-Tai's testimony that there was a regular maritime route between China and Tāmralipta in the middle of the third century B.C.[352] *The Milinda-pañha* refers to overseas trade between Vaṅga and other countries towards the east. This indicates that commercial relations between Bengal and countries that lay to its east, such as China and south Burma did exist.[353] The account of I-tsing clearly shows that the sea-coast from Tāmralipta to Canton was dotted with a number of thriving ports.[354]

The fall of Tāmralipta as a port in the 8th century A.D. enhanced immensely the importance of Samataṭa-Harikela.[355] From the 8th century A.D. onwards, the main maritime contacts between the coastline of Bengal and other countries including China in the Bay of Bengal was shifted to Samataṭa/Harikela, where Samandar emerged as a port. Since then, it started playing a vital part of the maritime contacts and communications in early Medieval Bengal. Devaparvata, capital of Samataṭa, emerged as a lively inland riverine port of prominence from the second half of the 7th and until the first quarter of the 10th century AD. It is identical with Mainámati-Lálmái in Comilla district (Bangladesh).[356] It maintained trade relations with the outer world and kept the country from the clutches of feudal economy. The relation between Bengal and China continued in the medieval period even beyond the data noted above.

4.3.3. Western World

The relation between India and the West started as far back as the beginning of the Indus Valley Civilisation. The relation continued even after the downfall of Maurya dynasty. The establishment of the Roman Empire and the increasing prosperity of Roman nobility created a huge demand for Indian luxury goods. It gave a further impetus to the trade relation between India and the Roman Empire during early centuries of Christian era. Rome had enriched itself by plundering and extracting tributes from many foreign lands and has acquired a taste for all kinds of luxuries. The capital of the greatest empire of all time in Europe was filled with such huge people, who had inherited a lot of wealth, and whose sole occupation was enjoyment of these riches. Of all items, Indian products were the most popular. To meet the demand, new and big efforts had been made to increase trade with India, and it has achieved a degree, which will still be astonished. Romans' demand of Asian luxury goods was unprecedented. Chinese silk, Indian pearls, jewellery, fine *muslin*, medicines, sopecie, spices, incense, ghee, elephants, dyes, cosmetics, oils and perfumes all had been

brought in high prices.[357] It seems that at the end of the first century A.D. Chinese silk and furs were sent from the Indian ports to the western countries.

The close contact with Indians to Europeans can be found in the middle-east trade centers, where both were involved in trade. When the Europeans looked at the beauty of India's products or goods, Indian traders looked at Europe as a consumer market. The interaction that came out of the trade meeting in remote countries was really exciting. India was a major exporter, and there was a great demand for Indian ivory, rice, cinnamon, ginger, pepper, barley-stone and muslin in countries around the Mediterranean and other European countries. Europeans learned the use of horses, when it was brought to the soil by the traders of the east. According to E. Pococke, "the whole of this state of society, civil and military, must strike every one as being eminently Asiatic; much of it specifically Indian".[358]

The intimate contact between Bengal and the Western countries beyond India was facilitated firstly by the Achāemenid expansion of territory towards the east and then by Alexander's conquests in Asia. The establishment of peace under Augustus in 58 B.C., and the inclusion of large areas up to the mouth of the Red Sea in the Roman Empire gave an impetus in the early sailing networks. As a result of this increased demand from Mediterranean markets the focus of maritime trade in the subsequent centuries shifted to the ports along the west coast of the Indian sub-continent. From the middle of the first century of Christian era, northern and southern India became involved in maritime trade with the Roman Empire. For many centuries, India had a trade relationship with the eastern-Mediterranean by water. There was a demand of Indian products in these countries. But this trade was mainly controlled by Arab merchants. But from 50 AD onwards, the Roman Empire and India became directly involved in the trade due to number of reasons. In fact, our country began to benefit so much from this trade and the Roman gold began to drain so much that Pliny became very worried about it in the 2nd century AD. The flow of gold reached India especially through the ports of Bhṛigukaccha, Kalyāṇ, Nelcynda, etc. of

western India. In fact, the Śaka-Sātavāhana struggle, and the expedition of Chandragupta II to western India happened because of Bengal's aim to secure the right over gold in western India. B. N. Mukherjee suggests that the territory of Gaṅgāridai or the country of Gaṅgā (including lower West Bengal and coastal Bangladesh up to the Padmā)[359] had no direct maritime contact with the Roman Empire.[360] He also argues that during the early centuries of the Christian era the same area was economically and politically influenced by groups of people coming from the north-western section of the Indian subcontinent, and they involved in trade with South-east Asia and peninsular India.[361] The authenticity of these two hypotheses has been questioned by D.K. Chakravarti.[362] D.K. Chakravarti claims that the rouletted ware and amphora samples, recovered from some of the lower sites in West Bengal, indicate its contact with the Mediterranean region. He finds similar indications in an alleged Greek inscription from Tildāh (Medinipur District), a clay replica of a *tetradrachm* of Athens (?), and certain female figures in terracotta, which are taken by him to be imitations of Roman originals in bronze or stone.[363] Contrary to Dr. Chakravarti's claim, none of the rouletted ware and amphora found in lower West Bengal can be proven to be imported directly from the Roman Empire. This could be brought from southern India to the concerned region or made there from the imitations coming from the same direction. It is well-known that there was a commercial contact of south India with the Roman Empire.[364] The alleged Greek inscription has not yet been read by a 'professional classical scholar' as admitted by Dr. Chakravarti. Its present deposition is not known. So its evidence cannot be considered at the present stage of our knowledge. But even if the inscription has rightly been to have written in the Greek, it need not have been left in the locality concerned by someone coming directly from the Mediterranean region. Greek was a spoken language in the 3rd century B.C. in the Indian frontier, as indicated by the Greek edicts of the Maurya emperor Aśoka and the Greek inscription referring to the son of Aristonax discovered within the limits of ancient Arachosia (i.e., Afghanistan around Kandahar). Since the north-western

section of the Indian subcontinent had established commercial contacts with eastern India in the last centuries B.C., traders speaking Greek language could have certainly visited the area of the famous port of Tāmralipta in the early centuries AD.[365] If the so-called Greek inscription and the alleged replica of an Athenian tetradrachm were genuine artefacts of the ages mentioned, these could be in the result of travel by the traders of north-western region. Thus, none of the information provided by Dr. Chakravarti can prove direct maritime contact with the Roman world.[366] On the other hand the literary data clearly prove that the products of the Gaṅgā country reached the Roman world through the ports of south India. Therefore, no maritime communication developed between the country of Vaṅga or Gaṅgā and the Roman world.[367] Moreover, it can be said that the discoveries of a large number of Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī inscriptions in lower West Bengal can be explained only by the hypothesis of the presence of groups of the Kharoṣṭhī using people from the north-west.

The *Periplus*[368] refers to goods from the east coast being taken overland to Ter, Paithān and finally Bharuch at the mouth of the Narmada. A greater use of this overland route might be traced to increase Mediterranean trade and the shift of the power base to the western Deccan under the Sātavāhanas. However, improved technology facilitated circumnavigation of the peninsula. It was perhaps the urge both to tap the revenues from maritime trade and to avoid confrontation with the Kṣatrapas that led to the expansion into the lower Krishna valley by the later Sātavāhanas in the first-second centuries A.D. In the middle of the 1st century A.D., Hippolas's discovery or rediscovery of the periodic alternation of the monsoons in the Arabian Sea[369] also promoted increased volumes of trade without facing the natural calamities of the earlier centuries. By the middle of the 2nd century A.D., the western traders anxious to import luxury goods and other items from the east were embarking in ever-increasing numbers from the Italian port of Ostia for Antioch. Here originated what came to be known in history as the Silk road.[370]

Roman and Greek traders travelled to ancient Tamil countries, presently south India and Sri Lanka, and strengthened trade with Tamil states of Pāṇḍya, Chola and Chera dynasties. Trade between the Graeco-Roman world and the Indian subcontinent was established a few decades before the start of the Common Era during the time of Ptolemic dynasty. It continued long after the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The Ptolemaic dynasty used to trade with Indian states using the Red Sea port. With the establishment of the Roman Empire, the Romans used these ports to improve existing trade relation.

The items of trade were humans and animals. Indian slaves were said to have reached Rome during the time of Ptolemy Philadelphos.[371] The female slaves were also sent from India to Socotra. These were probably exported to the Roman Empire by the Arabs or the Greeks, who lived in that island.[372] The reference has been also mentioned to the Indian as attendants, trainees of elephants, fortune tellers, cooks etc. in Rome. India exported parrots, cobras, small pythons, tigers, lions, leopards, dogs, elephants, one-horned rhinoceros, monkeys, jackals, Indian wild asses, antelopes, camels, giraffes, fowls and pheasants etc.[373] Animal products like skins, hides, clean butter, silky white hair, wool, odour produced from the musk dear, hides, teeth and horns of rhinoceros etc. were also exported.[374] One of the most important items of export was ivory. It was used for artistic work on statues. The Romans used ivory to create figures, furniture, book covers, musical instruments and ornaments. Tortoise shells were exported to Rome, which was used for veneering. Pearl was one of the most important articles in trade between Rome and India. Shank prawns were exported from India for the construction of ships, ornaments, musical instruments etc. China's silk was one of the most important articles in the trade in the Roman Empire and it was carried through the northern part of Indian sub-continent. Sometimes Bengal played a role of mediator between China and Roman Empire. This might have surely impacted the regions also.

There was a lot of demand for Indian cotton in Rome since ancient times. After the discovery of the monsoon, the export of cotton increased, and it

became an important part of the oriental trade. Muslin of Bengal was very famous in Rome. There was a great market in Rome, which was so famous among the ladies of Imperial Rome. Thus there was great demand of *muslin* and other luxury articles from the east, which resulted in serious drain of wealth from the Roman Empire.[375] Bengal, famous for manufacture of *muslin*, is sure to have received a share of this Roman gold. In subsequent times, in the description of Suleiman, Ibn Khurdabah, Chau Ju Kua and Marco Polo the lucrative trade in cotton textiles of unique fineness has been mentioned. *Periplus* mentions that the best quality cotton was known as *monache*.[376] The textile comes from Ujjain and Gagara to Broach from where it was exported to Arabia and Egypt. Indus also exported *muslin*. Muslins of Trichinopoly and *muslins* of Masulipatnam and Ceylon were also very popular. The best *muslin* came from Varanasi and Dacca.[377] Wood was exported to Rome from India. Warmingtom has classified this structure into two categories, such as ornamental and timber wood, and secondly fragrant wood used as a medicinal drug. Sandalwood, teak, black wood and ebony were exported from Broach. India also exported fruits such as coconut, jackfruit, peach, apricot, lemon etc. The Romans import of camphor, pulp of purging cassia, guinea grains, nut-meg, tama ring, the stone fruits, myrobalan, exudation of Deodar, pan and betel nut etc.[378]

It is seen from *Periplus* that the ports on the western coast of India such as Barygaza, Sopara, Calliena, Tyndis, Damirica, Mujiris, Nelcynda etc. were directly related in the trade with Roman World. Pliny testifies that during his time, the sea and the road links between Rome and the Asian countries were connected. The Ganges Delta was specifically mentioned for the understanding the significant textile, the Gangetic *muslin* of the *Periplus*.[379] The *Periplus* also knows of the transportation of *nard* (fragrant oil) along with the textiles, two Gangetic luxuries in considerable demand in the Roman Empire. This were transported through coastal journey through the port of the Tamil coast, and then to Muziris (Cannanore or Caranganore) in the Chera country, the premier port in Malabar, appearing prominently in the *Periplus.*[380] In the 2nd century AD,

shipping of Gangetic nard through a naval contract agreement is now confirmed. It shipped 60 vessels of the Gangetic nard, Hermapollen, which lies in Anchor in Mujiris, from where it reached Alexandria in Egypt through the different stages of overseas, overland and fluvial trips. From there, it was finally sent to Rome. As mentioned in *Periplus* the ports of Malabar (i.e. Naura, Tyndis, Muziris, Bacare and Balita etc.) served as an importer for Roman traders. These ports were connected by regional routes (overland route) with the ports on the east coast of south India. Then the route further progressed along the coast to Dosarene (Orissa), Gañge (Bengal) and Chryse Chora and Chryse Chersonesys (i.e. Suvarṇabhūmī and Suvarṇadvīpa of the Sanskrit sources).[381]

There is no doubt that Bengal had an important role in export-import transactions in India. Ptolemy told us a lot of diamonds across the Ganges river in the country of Sabarae. It is gleaned from the *Periplus* that Bengal sent diamonds along with other articles of trade. They were malabathrum, Gangetic spikenard, pearls and Gangetic *muslins* of the finest sorts.

The archaeological remains related to the Roman world discovered from the hinterland of ancient 'Gañge' also prove this part of India's strong role as well as Bengal in commercial relation with western world. The accounts of Pliny (1st century AD) and Ptolemy (151-165 AD) also provide us with the information of trade. The abundance of the trade of the Graeco-Roman world had increased tremendously with eastern India through the port of Tāmralipta. It is also to be noted that Ptolemy's mention of Tamolites and Pliny's Talucate are no other than Tāmralipta itself.[382] During the first-second century A.D., ancient Roman trade with Tāmralipta had been proven by the discovery of a fashionable terracotta sprinkler of the Roman origin. References of port of Gañge found in the work of *Periplus* fits well with the description of the port of Tāmralipta. It is believed that in the third century, with the unprecedented growth of foreign trade of Bengal, there was a process of development as a trading centre of Tāmralipta. The roulleted wares[383] and wine vases of Roman origin, terracotta figurines betraying Hellenistic influence and some black pottery cups discovered from

Chandraketugarh , terracotta tablet inscribed with Greek characters (1st-2nd century AD) found at Tilda, the coins of Roman emperors found from the Tamluk-Mayurbhanj Road at Bamanghati,[384] the terracottas and potteries of Roman origin discovered from Tamluk proper, preserved in the Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta, may be considered as evidence that there was brisk trade between Rome and Bengal. The ports of Nelcynda, Barbaricum and Barygaza on the west coast, played a major share of trade and commerce with the Romans. But it is difficult to ignore the role of ports such as Gañge and Paloura located in the coast of the Bay of Bengal in the Indo-Roman trade that flourished in the first three or four centuries of the Christian era. The trade commodities like malabathrum, Gangetic spikenard, Gangetic *muslins*, silk from Thinae and pearls have gained fame in the Roman markets. Pliny says that the malabathrum, which occupied a prominent place in the perfumery of the Roman elite, should have a smell like that of the nard, but other Roman writers seem to have confused it with the Gangetic nard mentioned in §63 of the *Periplus*. Indeed, malabathrum and the spikenard were the two most valuable ingredients in the preparation of ointments and perfumes in the Roman Empire. The pepper and sandal-wood, for which Chryse was famous, had been carried by the traders of littoral Bengal who operated frequent voyages to Suvarṇabhumī, to export the commodities to the western world through Gañge, Nelcynda or Barygaza as the circumstances demanded. The discovery of gold coins of the Roman emperors Constantine and Gordian at Bamanghati linked with Tamluk, and of Greek tablet mentioning the 'thanks giving of an unknown Greek sailor' found at Tilda seem to have thrown light on an unknown phase of the Indo-Roman trade.

4.3.4. West Asia

With the establishment of Sātavāhana empire in the Deccan and the Kuṣhāṇa Empire in the north gave a fresh impetus to the growth of economic and cultural contacts with the West Asia,[385] a large part of area which was either within the sphere of the Roman Empire or under its spheres of influence. India

had been closely connected with central Asia through silk route since the 3rd century AD to till the 15th century A.D. The discovery of sea route from Europe to India made the overland trade unviable because it was more risky, long-journey, more expensive and seafaring ships carrying cargo could be much larger than the carriage of land. The caravan traders (*sārthavāhas*) worked as a medium of exchange of art, culture, ideas and technology. Many areas along the trade routes became famous for their specific products. For example, Khotān was famed for jade, carpets and silk fabrics and hemp cords; Bukhara was well known for carpets; Bādākhshān for the lāpis-lājuli and ruby; Tibet for musk and *paśhm* wool; Turfan for *paśhm* wool and Kashmir for its saffron, fine shawls and calligraphic books. In short this region developed into important trading centres in this east-west trade, which was operated through the silk route.

Arab writers often refer to some products exported and imported in the kingdom of 'Rumhi', which was known to lower Burma and Bengal. The information given by them is relevant. The nature of export and import does not materially change from age to age, unless significant technological advances happened. The accounts left by the author of the *Periplus* , Ptolemy, Strabo and some Arab writers help us to identify the import and export articles. From Pliny we come to know of imports in India of gold, corals and flax from Egypt. By the end of the middle age, the resources and means of production in Bengal were continuously unchanged by its people. Ibn Khurdadbah[386] tells us that the country of 'Ruhmi' had made cotton cloth, which had a huge demand. Another renowned writer Suleiman[387] mentions that the cotton, manufactured in Bengal, was so fine. Export of cotton was also referred to by Marco Polo.[388] Ibn Batuttā, Sulaimān and Māsudi record that the horns of animal named 'Unicorn' were exported from the Kingdom of Ruhma to China to be made into fashionable and costly girdles.

The Arabic accounts provide regular information to the port of Samandar. It seems to have been known to the Arab merchants with the port. Instead, the direction of the Arabian ship could be understood in the Bay of Bengal and on

the coast of Bengal. It is obviously likely that the Arab *dhows* made their presence felt as mercantile marine over the greater parts of the Indian Ocean, including the Bay of Bengal. It would be the logical to infer that Arab *dhows* regularly visited a major port like Samandar on the Bengal coast.[389] Indian and Arab sea-going ships seem to have shared a common character: the timber structure was never perfect, but stitched and sewn with coconut coir (*rajju*). That is why the traditional Indian ship had been described as 'not as iron' (*nilloham*).[390] The most preferred material for manufacturing the wooden ship was teak. Indian teak and coconut coir regularly figured as exports of India to West Asia.[391] Arab accounts rarely failed to take note of planting coconut and cordage availability on both the seaboards of India and Nicobar islands. Regular reference of *nārikela* or coconut as a product of Bengal was seen in the earliest medieval inscriptions, especially among people from delta or coastal Bengal.

The Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions found on pots, seals and plaques in Bengal, indicate that merchants were involved in horse-trading and the horses were brought from central Asia through north and north-western part of sub-continent to Bengal.[392] Possibly they were exported to south-east Asia by boat.[393] Later on, traders from this region came to know the Buddhist community .The community used local Brāhmī and the people from north-western region knew the Kharoṣṭhī and as a result, a mixed Brāhmī-Kharoṣṭhī writing developed. Thus the Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī and Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions found in Bengal, Orissa, Thailand, Vietnam, Bali and Fu- show that the Kharoṣṭhī could be transferred to Southeast Asia with a horse trade.

Central Asian horses were known to have been imported into the north-western markets in the early centuries AD.[394]Horse and elephants of livestock had special significance. These were an integral element of the armed forces in pre-modern times and effective symbols of power, prestige and pre-eminence in society. There was available an indigenous supply of excellent elephants in India. But horses, especially war horses, were always rarity in India. Thus the battle horse was a constant demand in India and most of the time it was imported for

political powers at very high prices.[395] The caravan traders always preferred horses to carry their articles, as they were the fastest means of communication.[396] That was to begin to import more growth in horse trade in India. The copper plate land grants of Pālas and Sena frankly mention cavalry and officers-in-charge of the cavalry. It also speaks of a description of the supply of best horses in countless numbers (*aprameya hayavāhinī*) from the north or north-western regions in the form of tribute (*prabhṛtikṛta*).The copper plates from the time of Buddha's reign to Dharmapāla provide an almost stereotypical account of army officers down to the reign of Viśvarūpasena including the charge of cavalry (*naubalahastyaśvagomahiśājāvi-kādivyāpṛtaka*). It is well-known that the perfect battle horse never developed in Bengal and Bihar. In medieval Bihar and Bengal, the Sena rulers had a powerful cavalry as it is evident from their kings' assuming the title of *aśvapati* (lord of horses), along with *gajapati* (lord of elephants) and *narapati* (lord of men).

The horses from the north-western frontier of India were imported to the Gangetic valley of Bengal since the early past. The north-western horses were certainly the most coveted ones, but the Senas could also procure horses from an alternative and perhaps nearby sources at north-eastern mountain regions. It is tempting to suggest that this changed scenario of the import of horses in Bengal probably holds the key to the disappearance from the Sena records of the standardized description of the arrival of northern horses in Bengal. The account of Kang Tai[397] (249-50AD) provides the information of exports of horses from Bengal to Ko-ying country by the sea regularly and frequently as attested by B.N. Mukherjee.[398] Ko-ying can be identified with the area of coastal Malay Peninsula or on the coast of Sumātrā.[399]

The silk imported from China had been mentioned by poet Kālidāsa.[400] From the Ganges Valley the silk-worm gradually moved towards the west and spread in Khotān, Persia and Central Asia. It is notable that instead of going directly from China the mysteries of silk industry sometimes went from the Gages valley to the north-western frontier India.

4.3.5. Africa

India and Africa are separated by the Indian Ocean. The horn of Africa and the Indian subcontinent have a geographical proximity that had played an important role in the development of relations since ancient times. Little is known about the contacts between Indians and Africans before the first century CE. The only surviving source, *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, dated to mid-first century AD, refers to the trade relationship between the Kingdom of Aksum and Ancient India around the first millennium. It draws a brilliant picture of the rich trade between India and the western Indian Ocean region, which includes a wide range of areas from the Somali Horn and other African littoral countries to Egypt along the African coast of the Red sea coast. This information of the *Periplus* includes that India's trading contacts existed not only in Egypt and the coastal states, but also in northern Somalia, the ancient land of Punt, Kush (Sudan) and Axum kingdom. There was an impact of Indian Ocean in the central-southern hinterland of Africa especially Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the interiors of Tanzania. The Arab historian, Al-Māsudi, who travelled in 915 AD to Persia, India and China, records that central African products of gold and ivory were imported in exchange for cotton and other commodities that were exported them. More presence of Indian traders in Africa appears in concrete evidence in the Islamic era. Venetian traveller Marco Polo (1254-1324 CE) praised Gujrati and the Saurashtrian traders on the east coast of Africa and regarded them as the best and most honourable in the world.

Merchants sold cotton, glass, and other materials in exchange for gold and soft-engraving ivory with the help of monsoon wind. The impact of Indian architecture on the African empire shows the level of trade development among the two civilizations. Under the Ptolemaic regime, Ancient Egypt sent two trade delegations to India.[401] The Greek Ptolemaic dynasty and India used to improve bilateral trade using the Red Sea and the Indian port. Controlling the western and the northern end of south Arab and other trade routes from India, Ptolemy

began to use trading opportunities in India before the Roman Empire. But according to the historian Strabo, the volume of trade between India and Greece was not comparable to that of Indo-Roman trade later. *Periplus* has mentioned a time when sea trade across India and Egypt did not happen directly. In this situation the cargo was sent to Aden. The *Periplus* mentions export of sugar from India to East Africa. There is no doubt that Bengal was famous for Puṇḍra-ākh*,* which definitely means sugar. It is not impossible that large quantities of sugar were exported from the Bengal.

4.3.6. Srilanka

The *Mahāvaṁsa* mentions that the founder of the Siṁhalese community had roots in the ancestors of eastern India. According to legendary records, the foundation stone of the Siṁhalese community was led by King Vijaya, who belongs to the king of Vaṅga. He travelled and conquered the country of Lanka in 544 B.C. and he gave its name the country of Siṁhala.[402] Since 3rd century B.C. onwards, Ceylon seems to have got in touch with Magadha through Bengal. If the story of sea conquest of the island of Srilanka of Vijaya is considered true, Sri Lanka's contact with Bengal must have started somewhere in the 5th century BC.[403] The fact also has been supported by the stories recorded in the *Samuddha-Vaṇija-Jātaka*, the *Saṅkha Jātaka*, *and the Mahājanaka Jātaka* etc. From the stories of *Jātakas,* we find that there were commercial relation between both the countries since the sixth-fifth centuries B.C. Srilankan Pāli Chronicle, compiled from earlier sources and written between the 4th century A.D. and the early part of 5th century A.D., speak of a country of the Vaṅgas and a nearby country of the Kaliṅgas. In the *Mahāvaṁśa*, there were some details of sea journeys from Bengal to Srilanka.[404] Tāmalitti[405] is mentioned in the *Mahāvaṁśa*, which was probably the same as Tāmralipta. In this way, from different references from the *Mahāvaṁśa* we find mention of the voyages from Tāmralipta to Srilanka. In this way ancient Buddhist literature furnishes this information that the western part

of the Bay of Bengal connected between Tāmralipta and Ceylon, possibly extending up to Supparaka-Bharukachchha.

After the middle of the 3rd century A.D., regular traffic between Tāmralipta and Srilanka seems to have continued. Thereafter we read about the voyages of Fa-hien (5th century AD), Hiuen-Tsang (7th century AD), I-tsing to Srilanka. I-tsing has reported on the journey to Harikela from Srilanka. H.B.Sarkar has pointed out that in the 8th century AD that there appeared to have been revolutionary changes represented by the shifting of trade route from the Gangetic valley to the far south. It made southern India and Srilanka the half-way house on the east-west trade route with the help of direct communication through the Andaman-Nicobar to the Malay Peninsula. This reason for this he points to the rise of the Abbasids in western Asia, the growth of Chola Empire in southern India and increasing splendour of the Śrīvijayan monarchs. However, Sarkar seems to overlook that the case of Tāmralipta was lost much before the turbulent years of Mātsyanyāya from mid-7th to mid-8th century AD. Once the sailors and navigators found ways and means to sail across the Bay of Bengal sometime in the second half of the 2nd century, it was inevitable that Tāmralipta in particular and all other ports of Bengal would gradually lose significance unless they could offer quality commodities obtainable only from there. Therefore, one should remember that merchants would gather, given a stable political condition, if there was an opportunity for trade. Samandar provided such opportunities under stable political condition.

On the whole, the main feature of Bengal's foreign trade was a large export of manufactured products. Raw materials for further manufacture and agricultural products exported abroad should also be identified as the products of country's exports. But in terms of value, export exceeded the imports, and the textile of different varieties made a reality. Another feature of the trade of ancient Bengal might have probably been some of the entrepot trade, which still continues in a slightly different form. Silk, agaru and sandal from Kāmarūpa, pearl from Ceylon, silk from China, spices, gold, and precious stones from south-east

Asia and horses from central Asia were brought to the ports and towns of Bengal and thence to be re-exported to different countries. From this entrepot trade left a handsome commission in the process for the country.

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[4] Law, B. C., *op.cit*, p. 14.

[5] Sen, Gour Pada, *Some Aspects of the Economic Life of the Lower Ganges Valley (1st Century AD to 8th century AD*, Ph. D thesis, Burdwan: University of Burdwan, 1977, p. 179.

[6] Kangle, R.P., (tr.), *The Kauṭilya Arthaśāsta*, Bombay: University of Bombay, 1960, p. 76.

[7] *Ibid*, p. 33.

[8] *Ibid*, p. 67.

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[10] *Ibid*. 65.

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[16] Kangle, R.P., (tr.), *op.cit,* pp. 55-56.

[17] *Ibid*, p. 58.

[18] *Ibid*, p-75.

[19] *Ibid*, p-78.

[20] *Ibid*, p. 58, 75, 78.

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[23] *Ibid*, p. 139.

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[26] Agarwal, R.S., *op.cit*, p. 21.

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[49] *J. Nos*. 302,459, 488.

[50] *Mahābhāṣya* . IV. 2. 104, p. 295, L. 16.

[51] Aśvaghosa, *Saundarānanda*. I, 43.

[52] The city was situated in a delightful country. It was surrounded by water and hills. There was abundant of parks and gardens, groves, lakes and tanks. The author remarks that the city was full of paradise of rivers, mountains and woods. *Davids, T.W. Rhys.,(tr.), The Sacred Book of the East: The Questions of King Milinda,* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1890, p. 2.

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[60] Cosmas, *List of Indian Ports*, p-366-367.The above mentioned Sindhu resembles with port of Indus delta; Calliana is Kalyana on the east coast of Bombay harbor; Sibar is related with Chaul situated 25 miles south of Bombay; Caver resembles with Kāveripaddinam at the mouth of the Kāveri River.

[61] Tāmralipta was an international sea port on the Bay of Bengal. It is considered one of North India's primary trade outlets with the outside world. The so-called royal road was at the eastern end of the port town of Tāmralipta. The early Buddhist traditions often refer to Tāmralipta as a port city, especially the port in an embarkation. The tradition recorded in the Purāṇas often mentions to the people of Tāmralipta. In connection with Bhīma's digvijaya story, the *Mahābhārata* speaks about Tāmralipta. The Purāṇic tradition indicates that Tāmralipta was a neighbour of Vaṅgas, Sumas and Karvatas. But the Chinese travelers give

interesting accounts of Tāmralipta. Fa-hien, the Chinese traveler came to India in the 4th century A.D. went to Tāmralipta from Champā. The distance was described to be about 50 *yojanās* to the east. The next important Chinese traveller, named Hiuen-Tsang came into this port of the country during 7th century A.D. He gives a detail of his journey in Eastern India. From his account we know that Tāmralipta was the neighbouring part of Puṇḍravardhana, Karṇasuvarṇa, Raktamṛittikā and Samataṭā.

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[64] Ptolemy, *op.cit*, VII.

[65] Pliny, *Naturalis Historia*, Book-VI.

[66] Varahamihira, X, 14.

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[72] Basak, R.G., 'The Five Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions of the Gupta Period', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, 1919, p. 113-145.

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[125] Mukherjee, R.K. and Maity, S.K., 'Dhānāidaha Copper-plate Inscription of Kumāragupta I (AD 432-433)', *Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions*, Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1967, pp. 42-43.

[126] Mukherjee, R.K., and S.K. Maity., 'Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions of the time of Kumāragupta I (444 AD and 448 AD)', pp. 45-47.

[127] *Ibid*, pp. 45-46.

[128] *Ibid*, pp. 47-48.

[129] Aquique, M., *Economic History of Mithilā* (c. 600 B.C-1097 A.D), New Delhi: Abhinav Publications, 1974, pp. 141-144.

[130] Chattopadhyaya, B.D., 'Trade and Urban Centres in Early Medieval North India', *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. I, No-2, 1974, p. 218; Chattopadhyaya, B.D., *The Making of Early Medieval India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 132-154ff.

[131] Majumdar, R.C. (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 659-660.

132 Roy, N.R., *op.cit*, p. 396.

[133] Thakur, V.K., 'Beginnings of Feudalism in Bengal', *Social Scientist,* Vol.6, No-6/7, 1978, p. 76.

[134] Sharma, R.S., *Social Changes in Early Medieval India (c. AD. 500-1200),* first published by Dr. Amrik Singh for Devraj Charama Memorial Lecture Committee, Delhi, 1969, p. 2.

[135] Basham, A.L., *The Wonder That Was India*, Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1954, p.225-228.

[136] *Manusmriti*, X, 99-100; Agarwala, V.S., *India as Known to Pāṇinī (A Study of the Cultural Material in the Aṣhtādyayi)*, Lucknow: University of Lucknow, 1953, p. 78.

[137] Al-Beruni,I, p-101; Hemadri,*Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi*, Prāyascittakhaṇḍam, Calcutta: Asiatic Society, 1911, p. 99.

[138]Sharma, R.S., 'Indian Feudalism Retouched', *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol. I, No.2, 1976, pp. 326-327.

[139] *Ibid*, p-1-102.

[140] Chattopadhay. B.D., *The Making of Early Medieval India*, pp. 130-182.

[141] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Commerce and Money in the Central and Western Sectors of Eastern India, 700-1200', p. 65-66.

[142] GopaL, Lallanji, *op.cit*, p-159-160.

[143] Ghoshal, U.N., 'Economic Conditions', in R.C. Majumdar, (ed.), *The Classical Age*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970, pp. 599-601.

[144] Basak, R.G., 'The Five Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions of the Gupta Period', pp. 113-145; In this chapter the prominent position of the *nagaraśreṣthi* and the *sārthavāha* has been discussed in the five copper plates from Dāmodarpur, dated from the Gupta Era 124 to 224, i.e. AD 444 to 544.

[145] Kale, M.R. (ed.),The *Mṛcchakaṭika of* Śūdraka, Bombay: Booksellers' Publishing Co., see Act IX.

[146] Ghosh, Gaur and Abhijit, Datta., 'A Critical Approach to the Trade and Commerce in Vanga-Samataṭa- Harikela during the early Medieval Period', *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies,* Vol. XLIX, Nos-3 & 4, 2009-2010, p. 151.

[147] Khan, F.A., *Mainā*m*ati*, Karachi, 1963, pp. 25-27; Rashid, M.H., 'The Mainā*m*ati Gold Coins', *Bangladesh Lalit Kala*, Vol. I, No-I, p. 58.

[148] Tarafdar, M.R., 'Trade and Society in Early Medieval Bengal', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. IV, No. 2, 1978, p. 283-84.

[149] Roy Nihar Ranjan, *op.cit*, pp. 236ff.

[150] Morrison, Barrie, M., *Political Centres and Cultural Regions of Early Bengal*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 1980, pp. 99-100.

[151] Chakraborty, Ranabir, 'Paid in their own coin', *The Statesman*, November, 7, 1992.

[152] Bhattacharyya, P.K., Presidential Address, *Paścḥim Baṅga Itiḥās Saṁsad*, Uluberia College, Kolkata, 1992

[153] Tarafdar, M.R., 'Trade and Society in Early Medieval Bengal', p. 280-281.

[154] From 9th to 12th centuries A.D., quite a few Arab and Persian treatises on geography and maritime activities have referred to a port in eastern Bengal called Samandar. B.N. Mukherjee, Abdul Karim and Ranabir Chakravarti have identified the place with Chittagong, whereas Dani on the mouth of River Meghna, Minorsky somewhere in the Ganges delta while Maqbul Ahmad has suggested Sonārgaon near Dhaka city. However, none of their arguments appear to agree completely with the location of the port as reported by Ibn Khurdadhbih and Āl-Idrisi.

[155] Ahmad, S. Maqbul., (tr.), *Arabic Classical Accounts of India and China: Book One Al-Masalik Wa'l-Mamalik by Ibn Khurdadhbih and Book Two Akhbar Al-Sin Wa'l-Hind by Sulayman Al-Tajir et Al,* Shimla: Indian Institute of Advance Study, 1989, p. 44; Elliot and Dowson,(ed.)., *op.cit*, p. 90.

[156] The plate was discovered from Rakshasakhaḍi in 24 Pargaṇās(present South) district of West Bengal. It is located in the auditorium of the Ganges and Bay of Bengal. Sircar, D.C., 'Epigraphic Notes: Rakshaskhali (Sundarban) plate: Śaka 1118', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. 30, 1953-54, pp. 43-45.

[157] Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Between Villages and Cities: Linkages of Trade in India', *in Explorations in the History of South Asia: Essays in G.Berkermer,Herman Julke, Tilman Grasch and Jurgen Lutt,(eds.), Honour of Dietmar Rothermund* ,Delhi: Manohar, 2001, p. 109.

[158] *Ibid.*

[159] Elliot and Dowson. (ed.), *op.cit,* p. 90.

[160] *Ibid.*

[161] Minorsky, V., (tr. and explained), *Hudū al-Ālam, 'The Regions of the World', A Persian Geography*, London: Luzac & Co, 1937, p. 87.

[162] Eaton Richard, M., *The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204-1760*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p. 11.

[163] Elliot and Dowson, (ed.), *op.cit*, p. 90.

[164] Mukherjee, B.N., The *External Trade of North-eastern India*, New Delhi: Har-Anand & Vikas, 1992, p. 57.

[165] Jahan Shahnaj Husne, 'Samandar: An Important Centre for Maritime Activities in Bengal', *Journal Bengal Art*, Vol.5, 2000, p. 240.

[166] Mukherjee, B.N., *The External Trade of North-Eastern India*, pp. 56-58.

[167] Champakalakshmi, R., *Trade, Ideology and Urbanisatin in South India (300BC-AD 1300)*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 189.

[168] During the time of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, the Tāṅgana horse, same as Taṅghan horse was considered suitable for the royal stables in the 7th century AD. Cowell, E.B., and F.W. Thomas,(tr.), *The Harṣacharita of Bāṇabhaṭṭa*, Benares: Motilal Banarsidass (rep.), 1961, p. 201.

[169] This connection is known as the first half of the 7th century from the accounts of Hiuen-Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who traveled in the greater part of the subcontinent from 629-645 AD. He started a journey from Bengal to reach the Tamil land through Orissa and Andhra Pradesh and reached the destination. Beal, Samuel. (tr.), *The Life of Hiuen Tsiang by the Shaman Hwui Li*, pp-134-138; Beal, Samuel., (tr.), Si-Yu-KI: Buddhist Records of the Western World, pp. 194-217.

[170] Chattopadhyaya, B.D., 'Markets and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan', in Ranabir Chakravarti(ed.), *Trade in Early India,* 2015, p. 282-311; Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Trade at Maṇḍapikās in Early Medieval North India', in D.N. Jha (ed.),*Society and Ideology in India, Essays in Honours of Professor R.S.Sharma*, Delhi, 1996, pp. 69-80; Chakravarti,Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 187-200; This type of middle category trade centres is displayed as *maṇḍapikās* in north India, as *peṇṭhās* in the Deccan, and as *nagarams* in the far south. There is a distinct possibility that the genesis of the *maṇḍī* in north India and the *peṭh* in the Deccan can traced in the early medieval *maṇḍapikā* and *peṇṭhā*. It has been argued that the *maṇḍapikā* and the *peṇṭhā* were usually larger than smaller, rural-level market centres and weekly marts (*haṭṭa/aḍḍa/santhe*) and periodic fairs (*yātrā*), but stood below the very large trade centre in an urban area (nagara/pattanal/mānagaram).In other words, one would like to see in the *maṇḍapikā* and *peṇṭhā* a middle-tier market centre which provided the vital linkages between large urban markets and their rural hinterland. The real strength of *maṇḍapikā* and the *peṇṭhā* remains in the adjacent rural areas.

[171] Williams-Monier, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986 (First published by Oxford University Press, 1899), p. 175.

[172] Chakrabarty, Ranabir, *Prāchin Bhārater Arthanaitik Itihāser Sandhāne*, p. 153.

[173] Śrīchandrade (*vahkuśa*)li śri-Pauṇḍra (bhu)kty=antahpati-Yolamaṇḍale Vaṅgasāgara-*saṁbhāṇḍariyake*. Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate Śrīchandra: Year 44', p. 57.

[174] Ibid.

[175] Buhler, G., (tr.), *The Laws of Manu, (Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 25)*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1886, p. 307.

[176] Maitreya, A. K., *Gauḍalekhamālā*, Rājśhāhi, Varendra Research Society, 1319 (B.S.), p. 16, 39.

[177] Pargiter, F. E., 'Three Copper plate grants from East Bengal', *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXXIX, 1910, pp. 193-216; Banerjee. R.D.,'The Kotwālipārā Copper-plate of Samāchāradeva', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (New Series), Vol. VI, p. 429; Pargiter, F.E., 'The Ghugrāhati (Kotwalipara) Grant and Three other Copper-plate Grants', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, (New Series), Vol. VII, 1911, p. 475-476; Bhattasali, N.K., 'The Ghugrāhāti Copper-plate Inscription of Samāchāradeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. SVIII, 1925-26, pp. 74-86.

[178] Basak, R.G., 'The Dāmodarpur Copper-plate of Kumāragupta', p. 133.

[179] From the copper plate of Gopachandra we found the officers or persons who were under district administration. They were *sādhanika* and the officer who looked after the *vyāpāra*. The word *sadhanika* is not in dictionary. It would likely seem to mean a person who transacts any kind of trade or who carries any matter through. He had been no doubt employed by the lord of the district for trade purposes on his behalf. The position of the *vyāpāra* officials

depend on the meaning of the term used in the plate, namely, *vyāpāra-kāraṇḍaya* and *vyāpāraṇḍya* and *vyāpāraya viniyukta* and *pradhāna-vyāp*.

In ordinary Sanskrit *vyāpāra* means occupation, business, and trade or professional ones. But here it seems to have particular trade, traffic, commerce with reference to merchandise. There is special meaning in Bengal where *bepāri* means merchants or trader and especially a trader carries his products about to different marts. The word *kāraṇḍaya* is not given in the dictionaries. Kāraṇḍa, therefore refers to one who manages, regulates trade. *Vyāpāraṇḍya* would be a word of precisely similar formation from the root vyā-pr or the word vyāpāra. Vyāpāraṇḍa would mean one who manages trade, and *vyāpāraṇḍya*, the business of managing trade. Thus both *vyāpāra-kārāṇḍaya* and *vyāpāraṇḍya* used to say the same words and who that there was an official who was appointed in charge of trade and this refers to *vyāpāraya-viniyukta* as the third expression. The fourth phrase *pradhāna-vyāp* seems to refer rather to the principal traders or merchants. The *sādhanika* was clearly a higher officer who looked after the *vyāpāra*. Pargiter, F.E., 'Three Copper plate grants from East Bengal', pp. 193-216.

[180] *Ibid.*

[181] Majumdar, N.G., 'Chittagong copper plate of Dāmodar', p. 158.

[182]The loan agreement shows that the Gangetic nard was brought to south India along the eastern coast and then would be sent to the port of Red Sea to be taken to the port in Malabarese port of Muziris. Casson, (ed.), *Periplus Maris Erythraei*, 1989, p. 85, Section 56; p. 89, section 60; p. 90, Section 64.

[183] A.B.M., et al, *Mainámati-Devaparvata*, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, Dhaka, 1997, p. 1-75, 93-124, 233-275; Chowdhury,Abdul Momin, 'Devaparvata' (A stronghold in southern Bengal)',*Journal of the Varendra Research Museum*, Vol. I, 1972, pp. 60-67; Chakravarti, Ranabir Chakravarti., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp. 142-159.

[184] Sircar, D.C., 'The Kailān Copper Plate Inscriptions of King Śrīdharanarāta of Samataṭa', pp. 221-241; Pargiter, F.E., 'Three copper plate grants from East Bengal', p. 201; Sircar, D. C., 'Faridpur Copper-plate Inscription of the time of Dharmāditya-Regnal Year 3', pp. 350-354.

[185] Sircar, D.C., 'Faridpur Inscription of Dharmāditya', p. 353; Pargiter, F.E., 'Three Copper-plate Grants from East Bengal', p. 196; Basak, R.G., Sir Ashutosh Mukherjee Silver Jubilee, Vol. III, Part-II, p. 475ff; Chakravarti Ranabir, 'Maritime Trade and Voyages in Ancient Bengal', *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. XIX, 1992-93 (1996), pp. 145-171.

[186] *Ibid*, pp. 340,363-77.

[187] The inscriptions are Kailān Copper-plate of Śrīdharanarāta (665-675), Asiatic Society Copper-plate of Bhavadeva (765-80 AD), Paśchimbhāg, Madanpur and Rāmpāl Copper-plates of

Śrīchandra (925-75) and Calcutta Sāhitya Parishad Copper-plate of Viśvarūpasena of the 13th century.

[188] Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra: Year 44', pp. 55-56.

[189] *Ibid.*

[190] *Ibid*, p. 55.

[191] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Commerce and Money in the Central and Western Sectors of Eastern India, 700-1200', pp-65-83.

[192] Banerjee , R.D., 'Saptagrāma or Sātgāon', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1897, p. 112 f.

193 Mukherjee, R.K., Indian Shipping: *A History of the Sea-borne trade and Maritime Activity of the Indians from the Earliest Times,* Calcutta, Longmans, Greens & Co., 1912, ch. V, pp. 148-154.

[194] Lakṣmaṇasena issued this copperplate in its second year of rule, as AD 1181. Majumdar, N.G., 'Govindapur copper plate Lakṣhmaṇasena', p. 97.

[195] Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Between Villages and Cities', pp. 109-110.

[196] Dasgupta, T.C., *Aspects of Bengali Society from old Bengali Literature*, Calcutta, 1935, p. 306.

[197] *Ibid*, p. 307.

[198] Sen, D.C., *Vaṅgīya Sāhitya Parichaya*, Calcutta, 1914, p. 349.

[199] Cf. Dasgupta, T.C., p. 365.

[200] Renfrew Colin, 'Trade and Culture Process in European Pre-history', *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 10 (2-3), 1969, p. 152.

[201] *Ibid*, p.154.

[202] *Ṛig Veda*. I. 48.3.

[203] *Ṛig Veda*, I. 56. 2.

[204] *Ṛig Veda*. I. II6. 5.

[205] *Atharva Veda*. III. 15. 4.

[206] Iyengar, P. T. S, *Life in Ancient India in the Age of the Mantras*, Madras: Srinivasa Varadachari & Co, 1912, pp. 121-123.

[207] Basak, R.G., 'The Five Dāmodarpur Copper-plate Inscriptions of the Gupta Period', p. 128.

[208] Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 8*;* Jahan, Shahnaj Husne , *Excavating Waves and Winds of (Ex) change: A Study of Maritime Trade in Early Bengal,*2006,Oxford*:* BAR International Series, 2005, p. 5.

[209] Hirth, F., & Rockhill, W.W.,(tr.), *op.cit*, p. 112.

[210] Mukherjee, B. N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī -Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 17.

[211] Kidwai, Atiya Habib, *Conceptual and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and port-hinterlands, Ports and Their Hinterlands in India (1700-1950)*, New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1992, p. 10.

[212] Morrison, B.M., *op op.cit cit,* p-17.The book highlights the uniqueness, political, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the four main sub-regions of the early Bengal.

[213] Wheatley, *The Golden Khersonese*, Kualalumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1961, p. 181.

[214] Tawney, C.H. (tr.), *Somadeva's Kathāsaritasāgara (The Ocean of Story)*, Vol. VI, London, 1926, p-211. This text was composed in Kashmir in the second half of the eleventh century, but may incorporate older traditions.

[215] Dalal, C.D., and P.D. Gune, (ed.), *Bhaviṣayattakaha of Dhanapāla*, Baroda, Govt. of His Highness the Mahārājā of Gaekwads of Baroda, 1923, pp. 16ff; Johnson,(ed.), *Trisastisalakapurusacarita* of Hemachandra, Vol. I, Baroda: Oriental Institute Gaekwads Oriental Series, 1931, pp. 7ff.

[216] Puri, B.N., *India under the Kuṣhāṇas*, Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1965, p. 117.

[217] Tawney, C.H. (tr.), *op.cit*, Vol. I, Kolkata, 1880, p. 139.

[218] Agarwal, V.S., *op.cit*, p. 155.

[219] Frazer, James George, *Golden Bough*, Vol. II, New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894, pp. 155-170.

[220] *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV, 36.

[221] Ghosh, D.P., 'Ashutosh Museum of Indian Art'*, Studies in Museum and Musicology in India*, 1968, pp. 44-52.

[222] Pargiter, F.E., 'Three Copper Plate Grants from East Bengal', p. 200.

[223] Mukherjee, B.N., *Post-Gupta Coinages of Bengal, Calcutta, Coins Study Circle*, 1989, pp. 5ff.

[224] Pargiter, F.E., 'Three Copper Plate Grants from East Bengal', p. 195, 200, 204.

[225] Mukherjee, R.R., & S.K.Maity, 'Gunāighar Copper-plate of Mahārājā Vainyagupta', p.70; Bhattacharya, D.C., 'A newly discovered copper plate from Tippera', *The Indian Historical Quaterly*, Vol. 6:1, 1930, pp. 45-60.

[226] Pargiter, F.E., 'Three Copper Plate Grants from East Bengal', p. 200.

[227] Bhattacharyya, P.N., 'Nālandā plate of Dharmapāladeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII, 1935-36, p. 290.

[228] Kielhorn, F., 'Khālimpur plate of Dharmapāladeva', p. 249, 252 n; Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra: Year 44', p. 55 ff.

[229] Majumdar, N.G., 'Deopārā Inscription of Vijayasena', p. 54.

[230] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', pp. 49-69.

[231] Akmam, Afroz, *Early Urban Centres in Bangladesh*, Vol. I (Thesis), Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta, 1991, p. 53.

[232] Schoff, W, H. (tr.), *op.cit*, p-47.

[233] *Arthaśāstra*, Bk.II, Ch. II.

[234] Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 120.

[235] Schoff, W.H, (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 48.

[236] *Ibid*; Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 120.

[237] Charkravarti, Ranavarti, Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society, p. 120.

[238] Schoff, W.H. *op.cit*, p-47; Jahan, Shahnaj Husne, *op.cit*, p. 66.

[239] *Ibid*, p. 256.

[240] Schoff, W.H., *op.cit*, p-47; Chakravarti,Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 120; Sarkar, Himanshu Bhusan, 'Export and Import Trade of Bengal', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XV, 1973, No. 1-4, p. 188.

[241] Ferrand, Gabriel, *Relations de Voyages et Textes Geographiques Arabes, Persans at turks Relatifs a l' Extreme-Orient du 8e au 18e siecles; traduits, revus et annotes*, Paris: Ernets Leroux Editeur, 1913, p. 31; Majumdar, R.C., and A.D. Pusalkar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. IV, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, Bombay: Bharatiya Bhavan, 1955, p. 403.

[242] Sastri, K.A.N., *Foreign Notices of South India*, Madras, University of Madras, 1939, p. 21.

[243] Cf. Majumdar, R.C., & K.K. Dasgupta, (eds.), A *Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. III, The Indian History Congress, 1960, p. 216.

[244] Majumdar, N.G., 'Nandapur Copper plate of the Gupta Year 169', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIII, 1935-36, pp-52-56; Ghosh, J.C., 'Notes on the Nandapur Copper Plate of the Gupta period 169', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, 1937-38, p. 126.

[245] Ghosh, J.C., 'Notes on the Nandapur Copper-plate of the Gupta Year 169', p. 126ff.

[246] Elliot and Dowson, (ed.), *op.cit,* p. 11.

[247] Sastri, S.M., *op.cit*, pp. 219-220.

[248] Schoff, W.H., *op.cit*, p, 47.

[249] Chakravarti ,Ranabir., 'Maritime Trade in Horses in Early Historical Bengal: A Seal from Chandraketugarh', *Pratna Samikṣha*, Vol. I, 1992, Directorate of Archaeology: Government of West Bengal, p-155-160.

[250] Sarkar, Himanshu Bhusan, 'Export and Import Trade of Bengal (c.300 BC to c. 800 AD)', p. 189.

[251] Bose, A., *Social and Rural Economy of Northern India, Cir 600 B.C. - 200 A.D.*, Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1961, p. 258.

[252] Śuśrūta, *Śuśruta Saṁhitā*, p. 45, 138-40.

[253] Hirth, F., & Rockhill, W.W., (tr.), *op.cit*, p. 113.

[254] Elliot and Dowson, (ed.),*op.cit*,p-5; Renaudot, *Ancient Accounts of India and China by two Muhammadan Travellers*,London,1733, p. 17.

[255] Jahan, Shahnaj Husne, *op.cit*, p. 66.

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[258] Niyogi, P., Contributions to the Economic History of Northern India (10th to 12th centuries AD), Calcutta, 1962, p. 140

[259] Kavikaṅkan, Caṇḍī, Vol. II, p. 814.

[260] Elliot and Dowson. (ed.), *op.cit,* Vol. II, 1869, pp. 311-312.

[261] Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Early Medieval Bengal and the Trade in Horses: A Note', Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. XLII, 1999, pp. 194-211; also 'Equestrian Demands and Dealers: The Early India Scenario(up to C.1300)', in Bert G. Fragner, Ralph Kauz, Roderich Ptak and Angela Schottenhammer (eds.), *Horses in Asia: History, Trade and Culture*, Vienna, 2009, pp. 145-160; Gupta Chitralekha, 'Horse Trade in North India: Reflection on the Socio-Economic Life', Journal of Ancient India History, Vol. XIV, 1983-84, pp. 186-206.

[262] *Abhidhanaratnamālā*, II, p. 284.

[263] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 18.

[264] *Ibid*; cf Chakravarti, Ranabir., *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, p. 121.

[265] Yule, H., (tr.) *op.cit*, Vol.2, 1873, p-78; Yang Bin, 'Horse, Silver and Cowries: Yunnan in Global Perspective', *Journal of World History*, Vol.15, No-3, 2004, pp. 281-322.

[266] Digby, Simon, *op.cit*, 1971, p. 43.

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[268] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p-32; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Coastal and Overseas Trade in pre-Gupta Vaṅga and Kaliṅga', in Ranabir Chakravarti (ed.),*Trade in early India*, p. 201.

[269] Chakravarti, D., (ed.), *Manasāmaṅgal of Vaṁsidās*, pp. 380-390,392-393.

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[271] Wheatley, Paul, *op.cit,* 1961, pp. 274 ff.

[272] Krom, N.J., *Hindoe Javaansche Geschiedenis*, 1926, p. 73.

[273] Majumdar, R.C., *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East, Vol. II, Suvarṇadvīpa, Part-I-Political History*, Dacca, 1937, pp. 82-83 .

[274] Roy. N. R., *op.cit,* p. 297.

[275] Pigeaud, Theodore, *Java in the 14th Century*, Vol.III, 1960, p. 98.

[276] Sastri, Isvara Chandra (ed.), *Yuktikalpataru*, Kolkata, p. 10; Chaudhuri, Mamata, 'Ship Building in the Yuktikalpataru and Samarangana Sūtradhara', *Indian National Science Academy*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1975, pp. 137-138.

[277] Kielhorn, F., 'Khālimpur plate of Dharmapāladeva', p-249,252 n; Basak, R.G., 'Madanpur Plate of Śrīchandra: Year 44', p. 51 ff.

[278] Kielhorn, F., 'Deopārā Stone Inscription of Vijayasena', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, 1892, p. 309; Majumdar, N.G., 'Deopara Inscription of Vijayasena', p. 48, 54.

[279] Arthur, Venis, 'Copper-plate grant of Vaidyadeva, King of Kāmarūpa', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. II, 1892, p. 350.

[280] Maitreya, A.K., *Gauḍalekhamālā*, p-14; Chakravarti Prithwis Chandra, 'Naval Warfare in Ancient India', *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. VI, 1930, p. 645.

[281] Sandhyakaranandī, *Rāmacharita*, II, 9-11.

[282] Mukherjee, R, and Maity, S.K., 'The Moṅghyr Copper-plate Inscription of Devapāladeva', p. 130; 'Bhāgalpur Copper-plate Inscription of Nārayaṇapāla', p. 182; Sen, B.C., *op.cit*, p. 541.

[283] Tawney, C.H., (tr.), *op.cit*, Vol. I, 1924, p. 153.

[284] *Ibid,* Vol. III, 1925, p. 211.

[285] *Ibid*, p. 175.

[286] *Mahāvaṁśa*, XI, p. 23-24.

[287] *Mahāvaṁśa*,XI, p. 37-39.

[288] *Mahāvaṁśa*,XIX, p-8 & 22-23.

[289] *Vinaya Piṭaka*, III, p. 338.

[290] *Jātaka*, IV, p-159, No. 166'15-17, No. 422.

[291] *Jātaka*, VI, p. 32-35, No. 539.

[292] Sarkar, Himansu Bhusan., 'Bengal and Her Traffic-Routes in the Bay of Bengal and South-East Asia (c. 300 B.C to 300 AD)', *Journal of Asiatic Society Bengal*, Vol. XIV, Nos. 2, 1972, p. 75.

[293] *Ibid.*

[294] Sengupta, Gautam, 'Archaeology of Coastal Bengal', in H. P. Ray and Jean Francois (eds.),*Tradition and Archaeology, Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1996, pp. 113-128.

[295] *Ibid.*

[296] Mookerjee, Radahakamal, *The Changing Face of Bengal: A Study in Riverine Economy*, Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1938, p. 185.

[297] *Arthaśāstra*, II. 11. 79, 81.

[298] It is only in comparatively recent times that the region roughly east of India and south of china, but excluding Australia and the Pacific Islands, it is called 'Southeast Asia'(A word that is not beyond the second world war) and the area is seen as an entity in our rights to the rest of Asia. This fact has long been recognized by China, who has always mentioned to Southeast Asia in its totality by one name Nan Yang, the Southern Seas. Now it is believed that in India Chinese influences play dominant roles in shaping the culture and civilization of this region, beyond any doubt. The Indian coast looks so clear that scholars are known as ' Farther India' or 'India beyond the Ganges', and Indian scholars now talk to the glory of 'Greater India'. Coedes, G., *The Indianised States of Southeast Asia*, Canberra, Australian University Press, 1968, p. 14-36.

[299] Chihara Daigoro, 'Hindu-Buddhist Architecture in South-East Asia', *Studies in Asian Art and Archaeology*, Vol. 16, 1996, New York: Brill, p. 17.

[300] Ghosh, Suchandra, 'Buddhist Cultural Linkages Between Bengal and South-east Asia', in A.M. Chowdhury and Ranabir Chakravarti (ed.), *History of Bangladesh Early Bengal in Regional Perspective (up to c.1200 CE), Vol. II*, Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2018, p. 649.

[301] Shastri, H., 'The Nālandā Copper-plate of Devapāladeva', *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XVII, 1923, pp. 310-327

[302] Datta, Asok, 'Bengal and South-East Asia-Early Trade and Cultural Contacts', p. 50.

[303] Chryse is mentioned as chryse chora and chryse chersonesys which indicates Suvarṇabhūmī and Suvarṇadvīpa of the Sanskrit sources, although the places are the same. Arora Udai Prakash, 'Greek Geographers on the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia', in G.C. Pande (ed.), *History of Science, Philosophy and Culture in Indian Civiliation,Vol.1,Part-3(India's Interaction with South-east Asia)*, New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publisher, 2006, p. 180.

[304] Schoff, *op.cit,* pp. 45, 47.

[305] *Ibid.*

[306] Choudhury, A.M., '*Bengal and Southeast Asia: Trade and Cultural Contacts in Ancient Period*', in Srisuchat (ed.), *Ancient Trade and Cultural Contacts in Southeast Asia*, Bangkok, Thailand, pp. 95-114.

[307] Imamuddin, S.M., 'Bengal's Maritime Trade with the Far East up to the Sultanate Period', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum),* Vol. XXVII, 1982, p. 10. Far East is a geographical term commonly referred to as East Asia (including north-east Asia), Russian Far-East (part of north Asia), and Southeast Asia. South Asia is sometimes also included for economic and cultural contacts.

[308] Wheeler, Robert. Eric. Mortimer, *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*, London: Royal Book Co., 1950, pp. 98.

[309] Datta, Asok., 'Bengal and South-East Asia-Early Trade and Cultural Contacts', p. 52.

[310] Chakravarti, R., 'Maritime Trade in Horses in Early Historical Bengal: A Seal From Chandraketugarh, pp. 155-60.

[311] The discoveries of seal inscribed in Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī scripts from U Thong in Lopburi province and Khean luk pat of Krabi province in Thailand; Sembiran in Bali, Indonesia and OC-EO in Vietnam etc. are important clues in the context of our growing interest about the form and substances of the early maritime trade activities between Bengal and South-east Asia. The discovery helps us to understand the exact concept of the relationship between two far regions of the Christian era. Kharoṣṭhī scripts and a form of north-western Prākṛit from the second half of the 1st century AD to 5th century AD were found prevailing in some areas of lower Bengal. B.N. Mukherjee suggests that one or more than communies of Kuṣhāṇa merchants of North-western India migrated to the territory of lower Bengal. After being settled in Bengal they engaged in trade with south-east Asian countries of horse along with rice. It is in this connection that they brought Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī scripts to South-east Asia. Therefore, it is very important to discover this script in different regions of South-east Asia because it refers to the direct trade link between Bengal and south-east countries. It is expected that in the near future, our understanding of this mutually interactive trade relation will be more clear and meaningful as the scripts has with the coming of many more records in such scripts.

[312] Datta, Ashok, 'Bengal and South-East Asia-Early Trade and Cultural Contacts', p. 56.

[313] Gupta, Chitralekha, 'Horse Trade in North India: Some Reflections on socio-economic life', *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, Vol. XIV, 1983-84, pp. 186-206.

[314] Glover, I.C., *The Southern Silk Route: Archaeological evidences from early trade between India and South-east Asia, Ancient Trade and Cultural Contacts in South-east Asia, ed. by Srisuchat*, Bangkok, 1996, pp. 59-94.

[315] Chakraborty, R., 'Maritime Trade and Voyages in Ancient Bengal', *Journal of Ancient Indian History and Culture*, Vol. 19(1-2), 1989-90, pp. 145-171.

[316] Gogte, Vishwas, D., 'The Chandraketugarh-Tamluk Region of Bengal: Source of the Early Historic Rouletted Ware from India and South-east Asia', *Man and Environment (Journal of Indian Society for Pre-historic and Quaternary Studies)*, Vol. XXII, Vol.1, 1997, p. 78-83.

[317] *Ibid.*

[318] Haque, Enamul, 'Bengal and South-east Asia-Early Trade and Cultural Contacts', *Journal of Bengal Art,* Vol.3, *1998,* p. 57.

[319] Chin-you-di, Nothing is New, *Muang Boran Journal*, Vol. 4 (4), 1913, p. 6-16.

[320] Bronson, B., and Dales, G.F., *Excavation at Chansen*, Thailand, 1968-69: A Preliminary Report, Asian Perspective (15), 1978, pp. 15-46.

[321] Rashid, Haroun- Er, 'Ancient Association between Bengal and Thailand', *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bangladesh*, Vol. XIX, No-1, 1974, pp. 25-26.

[322] Hood, John. W.,(tr.),*op.cit*, pp-121-12.

[323] Jha, G.,(tr.), *Manusmṛti with the Manubhāṣya of Medhātithīm,* Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1926, p. 249

[324] Burnell Arthur Coke, (tr.), *Manusaṁhitā*, Vol. X, London: Kegan Paul, 1891, pp. 43-44.

[325] Mitra, R.L, (ed.), *The Vāyu Purāṇa*, Vol. I. Calcutta: Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1880, 45. 118-47. 42, 458. 58, pp. 362,465-466.

[326] *Arthaśāstra*, II, 11, 14; Kangle, R.P.,(ed.), The *Kauṭilya Arthaśāstra*, Vol.III, Bombay: University of Bombay, 1960, p-74.

[327] Bhisagaratna, K. L., *An English Translation of the Śuśrata Saṁhitā*, Vol. I, Calcutta: Wilkins Press, 1907, pp. 166-167.

[328] VII, 3; Suryakanta, (ed.), *Kumārasambhava of Kālidāsa*, New Delhi: Sāhitya Akademi, 1961, p. 86.

[329] *Arthaśāstra*, VII. 12. 300.

[330] The concept of the Silk Road has fascinated Europeans for more than a century, symbolizing the exchange between the West and the East since antiquity. However, the issue of what exact route it followed is not an easy one to resolve. The term 'Silk Road' was first coined by German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen in 1877 as the collective name given to the network of trade routes linking China to Central and West Asia, the Mediterranean as well as India. Silk was the most influential, though by no means the only; product traded on these routes, hence its name Silk Road. China is the first country to produce silk which has been one of its most important contributions to the world. In addition to silk, the route facilitated the trade of other fabrics, spices, grains, fruits and vegetables, animal hides, wood and metal work, precious stones and other items of value. The Silk Route was also known as the Silk Road.

[331] Southern Silk Road was closely related to ancient Bengal. Many scholars believe that this route existed from the fourth century going back to a date earlier than the Qian Dynasty of China. .According to historical records, during the Qin and Han Dynasties, the Southern Silk Road started from the province of Shu (modern Chengdu plain),ran through the province of Yunnan, Kunming, Dali, Baoshanand Ruili to the south and enter Myanmar and India. During the Tang and Sung Dynasties, trade and people to people exchanges grew more active on eventually creating many branch routes. One can enter Myanmar, passing along the river

Irrawaddy and crossing the Chindwin river and the Naga Mountain hills, arrived Assam state of India and then to Bengal. Another one ran from Yunnan of China, followed by Irrawaddy River southwards to the Ruili River and Mandalay. After turning north-west it passed the Prome and entered Manipur state of today's India through the Arakan Yoma. It should be noted that all these different routes concurred in Puṇḍravardhana before reaching the Indian plain.

[332] According to Yang Fuquan, "The 'Tea and Horse Caravan Road' of south-west China is less well known than the famous Silk Road. Its route crosses some very high and dangerous terrain. It begins from Sichuan and Yunnan provinces in Southwest China, runs along the eastern foothills of the Hengduan Mountains, a center of tea production in China, then crosses the Hengduan mountain range and deep canyons of several major river, the Yalong, the Jinsha (the upper reaches of Yangtze), the Lancang (Mekong) and the Nu(Salween),thus spanning the two highest plateaus of China(Qinghai-Tibet and Yunnan-Guizhou) before finally reaching India south of the Himalayas. The name of the road indicates its importance in the trade of tea and horses, but other products passed along it as well. Horse caravans carried tea, sugar and salt from Sichuan and Yunnan to Tibet and brought back colourful local mountain goods. The Chinese over the ages often bought warhorses from Tibetan and other ethnic groups of Southwest China, and these too over this road. The road also served as a significant corridor for migration as well as a channel for cultural communication among the ethnic groups in western China; beyond this, it was a bridge for international cultural and economic exchange between China and India". Fuquan, Yang., 'The Ancient Tea and Horse Caravan Road, the Silk Road of Southwest China',*Newletter*,Vol.2,No.1, p. 1.

[333] Chakravarti Adhir, 'Bāṅglā O Bahirbiśhwa (Prāgauponibeśhik Kāl)', *Itihās Anusandhān 4*, (in Bangla), Calcutta, 1989, p-53; Bhattacharya, Nripendra, *Bāṅglār Arthanoitik Itihā*s, (in Bangla), Calcutta, 1390 BS, 2nd Edition, p. 19.

[334] Chaudhury, P.C., *The History and Civilisation of the People of Assam to the 12th Century A.D.*, Gauhati: University of Gauhati, 1959, p. 381; Bhattacharyya, A., *op.cit*, pp. 106-107.

[335] Ch'eng-chun, Feng.,(ed.), *Hsing-Ch'a sheng-lan chiao chu*, Sanghai, Chung-hua shu-chu, 1957, p. 41; cf. Ray Haraprasad., Trade and Trade Routes between India and China c. 140 B.C.-A.D. 1500, Kolkata: Progressive Publishers, 2003, pp. 107-108.

[336] Pei-po, sa-ha-la, che-fu, hei ta-li-pu mentioned in the Chinese sources are important items of cotton textiles. Fang, Hsieh. (ed.), Hsi-yang Ch'ookung Tienlu, Peking, 1982, pp. 90-91.

[337] Sarkar Himanshu Bhusan, 'Export and Import Trade of Bengal (C. 300 B.C. to C. 800 A.D.), pp. 177-198.

[338] Schoff, W.H. (tr.), *op.cit*, pp. 47-48, 258-259.

[339] Fang, Hsieh.,(ed.), *op.cit*, p. 88; Ta Hsiang.,(ed.),*Hsi-yang fan-kuo chih*, Peking, 1961, p. 39; Ch'eng-chun Feng.(ed.), *Ying-yai sheng-lan Chiao-chu*,Taipai,1962, p. 60.

[340] Paul, Pelliot, *Cheng Ho hsia His-yang k'ao*, tr. and annotated by Feng Ch'eng- chun (rep. Taipei, 1970), p. 138.

[341] Ross, E.D., 'Fresh Light on the Word Scarlet', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 4, 1908, p. 403.

[342] Rockhill, W.W., 'Notes on the Relations and Trade of China with the Eastern Archipelago, and the Coast of the Indian Ocean during the Fourteenth Century', *T'OUNG Pao*, Vol.16, 1915, p. 606.

[343] Ch'eng-chun Feng., (ed.), *op.cit*, pp. 56,67; Mills, J.V.G.,(tr.& ed.),*Ma Huan: Yingyai Shenglan, The Overall Survey of the Ocean's Shore*, London, Hakluyt Society, 1970, p. 156.

[344] Sen Sukumar*, An Etymological Dictionary*, *c. 1000-1800 AD*., Vol. I, Calcutta: Eastern Publishers, 1971, p. 406.

[345] Shih-chen Wang, *Feng-chou tsa-pien (Ts'ung-shu chi-ch'eng e., no. 2810)*, ch.1, p. 10.

[346] Ptolemy, *Geographike Huphegesis*, VII, 1. 80.

[347] Schoff, W.H., *op.cit*, p. 48.

[348] Sen, Gour Pada, *op.cit*, p. 203.

[349] *Raghu*, XVI. 43.

[350] *Encyclopedia Britannica* XX. p. 663.

[351] Bhattacharryya, A., *op.cit*, p. 108-109.

[352] Petech, L., *Northern India According to the Shuni-Ching Chu*, Rome, 1950, p. 53-55.

[353] Wheatley P., *op.cit,* p. 181, 269-272.

[354] *Ibid*, p. 44-45.

[355] Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp.160-186; Bhattacharya, D.C., 'Harikela and the Ruins at Mainamati', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 20 (1-4), 1944, pp. 1-8; The important point is to be noted that from the 9th century onwards, the main seaport of Bengal was transferred from western region (Rāḍha-Vaṅga) to south-eastern region (Samataṭa-Harikela).

[356] Husain, A.B.M., et al, *Mainamati-Devaparvata*, pp. 1-75, 93-124, 233-75; Chowdhury, Abdul Momin, 'Devaparvata, A Stronghold in Southern Bengal', *Journal of the Varendra Research Museum*, Vol. 1, 1972, pp. 60-67; Chakravarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp. 142-159.

[357] Singhal, D.P., *India and world civilizations*, Vol. I, London: Rupa & Co., 1993, p. 79.

[358] Pococke, E., *India in Greece or, Truth in Mythology*, London: John J. Griffin and Co., 1852, p. 12.

[359] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 65f.

[360] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Coins of Pre-Gupta Bengal', Studies in Archaeology: Paper presented in Memory of P.C. Dasgupta (ed. by Ashok Datta), New Delhi: Books & Books, 1991, pp. 303-305; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Trade, Traders and Media of Exchange in Pre-Gupta Vaṅga', in A.K.Jha(ed.), *Coinage, Trade and Economy*, Nasik: Anjaneri, 1991, p. 46.

[361] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p-23f; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Trade, Traders and Media of Exchange in Pre-Gupta Vaṅga', p-42f.

[362] Chakravarty, D.K., N. Goswami and R.K. Chattopadhyay , 'Archaeology of coastal West Bengal: Twenty-Four Parganas and Midnapore Districts', *South Asian Studies*, Vol. X, 1994, pp-155-158 (Among these three writers, D.K. Chakravarty is solely responsible for registered opinion, p. 159).

[363] *Ibid*, pp. 155-156.

[364] Begley, V. & Puma R.D.de., (ed.) *Rome and India – The Ancient Sea Trade, Madison*, The University of Wisconsin Press,1991, pp. 8f; Murthy, A.V.N., & Sharma, I.K., (eds.), *Śrī-Rāmachandrikā*, Vol. II, New Delhi, 1993, pp. 397f.

[365]Jones, E.J.,(ed.),*The Mahāvastu(Mahāvastu-Avadana),* Vol.11, London,1952, p. 162; Cowell, E.B., & Neil, R.A., *The Divyavadana*, Cambridge: The University Press, 1886,ch.XXV, pp. 509,511; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhi and Kharoṣṭhi-Brāhmi Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 21, N.40a, p. 38, n. 81.

[366] Mukherjee, B.N, 'Comment: Early Maritime Trade of Vaṅga- A Review of the Data', *Pratna-Samiksha*, Vol. 2&3, 1993-94, p. 165.

[367] *Ibid.*

[368] *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, Sec. 51.

[369] *Ibid*, Sec. 57.

[370] Boulnois Luce, *Silk Road: Monks, Warriors & Merchants on the Silk Road*,Odyssey,2005,p-50;Grousset, Rene, *The Empire the Steppes a History of Central Asia*, New Jersy: Rutgers University Press,1970, pp. 39ff.

[371] Warmington, E.H. *op.cit*, p. 145.

[372] *Ibid.*

[373] *Ibid*, pp. 146-155.

[374] *Ibid*, pp. 157-162.

[375] Wild, J.P., & Wild, F., 'Rome and India: Early Indian cotton Textiles from Berenike, Red Sea coast of Egypt', in R. Barnes (ed.), *Textile in Indian Ocean Societies*, London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 11-16.

[376] *Periplus*, 6. 14; Schoff, W.H.,(tr.),*op.cit*, p. 189.

[377] Warmington, *op.cit*, p. 210-211.

[378] *Ibid*, p. 216-21.

[379] Ray Niharranjan Ray, B.D. Chattopadhyaya , Ranabir Chakravarti and V.R. Mani (eds.), *A Sourcebook of Indian Civilisation*, Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2000, reprinted 2002, pp-298 299; Schoff, W.H.,(tr.), *op.cit*, pp. 44-48.

[380]Charavarti, Ranabir, *Trade and Traders in Early Indian Society*, pp. 54-55.

[381] From the accounts of *Periplus* it is seen that some such areas were known to the writer in Khryse, where it was not clear to him. It could be Myanmar orthe huge gold mine region of Malay Peninsula, comprising the states of Pahang, north of Malacca. The same difference between a 'golden region' and a 'golden island' occurs in Indian texts as shown in *Periplus*. The oldest texts, such as *Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Jātaka* stories, *Arthaśāstra* and many other texts, are found in the name of 'Suvarṇabhūmī' and 'Suvarṇadvīpa'. These names became so familiar that from the beginning of the 1st century, many Indians and Greeco-Roman writers, Arabs, Chinese and Tibetans also mentioned them. Many Greek and Arab writers believed in ancient traditions that the Land of Khryse Island of Khryse was made of gold. Arora, Udai Prakash, *op.cit*, p. 180; Bhattacharyya, A., *op.cit*, p. 109.

[382] Ptolemy, *op.cit*, VIII, p. 1, 73; Pliny, *Natural Historia*., VI, pp. 21-22.

[383] The Rouletted Ware was first identified and dated by Wheeler at Arikamedu (Wheeler, R.E.M., et al, 'Arikamedu', *Ancient India*, No.2, 1946, pp. 17-24.) Wheeler assigned to it a date of the first-second century AD. Since then the ware has been found all along the east coast from Chandraketugarh and Tamluk in the lower Gaṅgā delta to Sisupalgarh on the Orissa coast, several sites in the lower Krishna basin to Korkai on the Pandyan coast and Kantarodai on the north coast of Srilanka. Begley, 'From Iron Age to Early Historical in South Indian Archaeology', in J. Jacobson (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of India and Pakistan*, New Delhi, 1986, p. 304-305.

[384] Cunnigham, A., *Archaeological Survey Reports*, 1874-75, Vol. XIII, pp. 72-73.

[385] Western Asia, south-western Asia or south-west Asia is the western most sub-region of Asia. It significantly overlaps with the middle-east (or the Near East). The main difference usually was the exclusion of the majority of Egypt and the inclusion of the Caucasus. Hindukush, Karakoram, Kuen Lun and the major obstacles of the western Himalayas existed. The trade relation between India and Central Asia developed since ancient times. It had a strong influence on the socio-economic development of both the regions. In fact, India and West Asia have pre-historic relations, since trade relations were established between Mesopotamia and Indus Valley and Harappan civilisation. But there is deep depth in these relations as both of them had economic and commercial relations from the time immemorial. Through Bahrain,

from ancient Sumeria to the Indus Valley civilization and Harappa, the people of that area are known as Meluhhā by West Asia, one of their only active trade partners.

[386] Elliot & Dowson, (ed.), *op.cit*, 1.15; cf. Gopal, Lallanji., *op.cit*, p. 150, f. n. 5.

[387] Ferrand, G., Relations de Voyages et Textes Geographiques Arabes, Persans et Turks-Relatifs a L'Extreme-Orient du VIIIe au XVIIE siecles, Paris: Erenest Leroux, 1913, p. 44, 105.

[388] Yule, Henry. (tr. & ed.), *op.cit,* Vol. II, p. 115.

[389] Lewis, A., 'Maritime Sills in the Indian Ocean 1368-1500', *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, Vol. XVI, 1973, pp*-238 364 Chakravarti, Ranabir, 'Ships, Seafaring and Ship-owners: India and the Indian Ocean (700-1500)', in David Parkin and Barnes, Ruth (eds.), *Ships and the Developments of Maritime Technology in the Indian Ocean,* London: Routledge Curzon,2002, pp. 28-61.

The Arabs did not use the word *dhow* to refer to their ships. Arabic words like *markab*, *jilab*, *burama*, *shafara*, and *jahaj* are referred to by various ships, both coastal and those which travelled overseas.

[390] Gopal, Lalanji, 'Indian Shipping in the Early Medieval Period', in Lokesh Chandra, et atl, (eds.), *India's Contributions to World Thought and Culture*, Calcutta, 1970, pp. 108-122.

[391] Broadhurst, R.J.C., (tr.), *Alrihla (The Travels of Jubayr)*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1952.

[392] Mukherjee, B.N, 'A Note on a section of the Pattinippalai', in A.V.N., Murthy, & I. K., Sharma *(eds.), ŚrīRāmachandrikā*, Delhi, 1993, p. 397f.

[393] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Coastal and Overseas Trade in pre-Gupta Vanga and Kaliṅga', *in* S. Chakravarti(ed.), *Benoytosh Centenary Volume*, Benoytosh Centenary Committee, Calcutta, 1996, p. 181-192; Mukherjee, B. N., *The Economic Factors in Kuṣhāṇa History* ,Calcutta, Pilgrim, 1970, pp. 37-38.

[394] Dani, A.H., *Chilas-The City of the Nāṅgā Parvat (Dyamar)*, Islamabad, 1983, illustrations numbered 72, 73, 78, 89, 132 etc.; *Human Records on the Karakoram Highway*, Highway, Islamabad, 1983, p-76 & map n.4; Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 18.

[395] Chakravarti Ranabir, 'Early Medieval Bengal and the Trade in Horses- A Note', *Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 42, No. 2, 1999, p. 194.

[396] Ghosh Suchandra, 'The Route of Horse Trade in Early India (up to C.500 AD)', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Millennium 61st Session, Kolkata, 2000-2001, p. 126.

[397] K'ang T'ai's Wu shih wai kuo chuan quoted in the Tai-ping Yu-lan, ch. 359; Etudes Asiatiques, Vol. II, pp. 248-250.

[398] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Coastal and Overseas Trade in Pre-Gupta Vaṅga and Kaliṅga', pp. 207-208; Chakrabarty, Adhir, 'Bāṅglā O Bohirbiśhva', *Itihās Anusandhān-4*, pp. 56-57.

[399] Mukherjee, B.N., 'Kharoṣṭhī and Kharoṣṭhī-Brāhmī Inscriptions in West Bengal (India)', p. 18 & 21, No.43 & 44.

[400] *Raghu*, XVI, 43.

[401] Stanley M. Burstein, 'State Formation in Ancient Northeast Africa and the Indian Ocean Trade', University of California, Los Angeles.

[402] Geiger Wilhelm (tr.), *The Mahāvaṁśa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, London, Pāli Text Society, 1912, pp. 53-58.

[403] Jahan Shahnaj Husne, *op.cit,* pp. 161-62.

[404] Geiger Wilhelm (tr.), *op.cit,* pp. 55-61.

[405] *Ibid*, p. 128.