A host of scholars have worked on the economic history of India from time to time. A lot of work has been done on the subject but unfortunately scanty attention has been paid to the economic history of India during the Kuṣāṇa period.

Various eminent scholars such as B. N. Mukherjee, B. N. Puri, G. R. Sharma, G. L. Adhya, A. N. Bose, Pran Nath, M. A. Buch, R. N. Saletore, Bhaskar Chatopadhyaya, Kameshwar Prasad, B. R. Mani and many more have dealt with the economic aspects of the Kuṣāṇa period of Indian history from time to time. Some of them have been too general in their observations while the others have concentrated on only one or two aspects of the economic life of people. Even the works of eminent scholars such as B. N. Mukherjee, B. N. Puri, Bhaskar Chatopadhyaya, and G. R. Sharma etc. more or less deal with the political and social aspects of the Kuṣāṇa period of Indian history. It has not been possible to work upon each and every minute aspect of the economic life of India during the Kuṣāṇa period.

The present work makes an attempt to undertake a micro study of the economic life in northern India during the rule of the Kuṣāṇas in India.

To make the work comprehensive in nature we have studied all the works on the subject by modern scholars carefully noting their observations and findings. Thereafter we surveyed many of the original texts (with their translations) which are relevant for our study in order to have a peep into the injunctions laid down by them. We have surveyed and analysed various inscriptions of the Kuṣāṇas and their contemporaries. Coins of the Kuṣāṇas recovered from different parts of India are also adequately utilised.

The focus of this work is to analyse different aspects of the economic life of northern India during the rule of the Kuṣāṇas which include the currency system of the Kuṣāṇas, agrarian system during the Kuṣāṇa period and the assessment of the land revenue, various industries producing during the early centuries of the Common Era, various internal and external trade routes active during the Kuṣāṇa period, various commodities in which the trade was carried on, guilds and their
activities, various towns and cities in northern India and the impact of the Kuśāṇa economy on the living standard of the people etc.

The entire work has been divided into eight chapters followed by the conclusion.

The first chapter deals with the origin of the Kuśāṇas, their entry into the subcontinent, their establishment in India, extent of their empire and their decline.

The second chapter is on the currency system of the Kuśāṇas. We shall survey the literary sources referring to the currency system during the Kuśāṇa period, the origin of the Kuśāṇa coinage, early Kuśāṇa coinage and the development of their currency system under Kuśāṇa rulers, weight standard followed by them, specific gravity of their coins, percentage of pure gold in their coins, various denominations of their coins, different mints and provenance of their coins etc. They were the first imperial power in India to issue cold coins for the first time in India and that too on a large scale. The copper coins too were issued on a very large scale along with the gold coins as we have found the copper issues in a large number from different regions of India and from the regions outside India. The issuing of the coins on such a large scale gives reflection of the Kuśāṇa economy.

The third chapter is on the agrarian relations and land revenue during the Kuśāṇa period. Under this theme the village community, the types of land, the ownership of land, land tenure, survey of land, the size of the land holdings, land grants, land sale, measurement of land, the economic differentiation among peasants and the assessment of land revenue is discussed.

The fourth chapter is on the industry. In this chapter the establishment and organisation of the producing for local consumption as well as for trade is discussed. Industry plays a significant role in the economic life of people and the nation as well. The focus will be on the study of various types of industries such as the textile industry, the metal industry, the glass industry, the wood industry, the stone industry, the ceramic industry, the bone and ivory industry, the leather industry, and the perfume industry etc. which were there during the Kuśāṇa period.
The fifth chapter deals with the trade and trade routes which were active during the period of the Kuśāṇas. The Silk Route and the Great Northern Route played a significant role to make the Kuśāṇa economy quite prosperous. The items of trade, the medium of transport, the medium of exchange, and the weights and measures etc. are also studied.

The sixth chapter is on the guilds which functioned as traders, manufacturers, and banks etc. The organisation of the guilds, the rules and regulations followed by them, the powers and function of the guilds and the state control over the guilds is the focus of the study.

The seventh chapter deals with the towns and cities which were there during the period of our study. The rise, the continuation and the decline of the cities is the main focus of study.

The eighth chapter is on the standard of living of the people i.e. their residence, food and drinks, dress, ornaments, education, sanitation, medical and health facilities during the Kuśāṇa period.

Lastly, there is the conclusion which includes the findings of the survey of the economic life of northern India during the Kuśāṇa period.

Chandigarh

Askwani Kumar