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Giridhari Prasad Das
The present work "India - West-Asia: Commercial Interactions in Ancient Times (6th Century BC to 3rd Century AD)" is an outcome of my research work. In this work every effort has been made by the researcher to unravel every fact giving due importance. The primary source is the main stay of the work while secondary sources are taken into account to make a deeper analysis, keeping the views of different historians in the very mental framework. One constraint has always troubled me that the lack of primary sources especially the archaeological sources of West Asian lands. Here, secondary sources are given much importance to construct the commercial history. But it should not be construed that this work pays negligible importance to the foreign sources.

The maritime history not only refers to the overseas contacts of a country with other countries but also other associated fields such as cultural intermingling, navigation skills, ship building and selling goods. The economic history of Indian subcontinent was initially dominated by the study of agrarian economics. The recognition of significance of trade became a topic of interest among the historians in the later phase. To discuss the trade of a subcontinent like India, spreading from Himalayan to Kanyakumari, is not an easy task. The priority is given mostly to exchange system and money economy. The trade history of India and Rome is much-debated topic. Therefore this topic did not evince any interest in me to present the old wine in new bottle. Again, if it will be accepted that the Vedic people were of Iranian origin then it creates an interest among the people to know their predecessor's connectivity and interactions with the West Asian people in ancient times. Taking this into account an all out effort has been made by the researcher to dig out every information, keeping nothing under carpet.
A commercial intercourse between two lands can't be weighed on the basis of exchange of goods only. Therefore researchers focus not only trade but also consider allied topics like social, political and cultural matter. The work examines various trading related activities at different levels including social bars, which were impediment on the path of development of trade. Therefore the social attitude of trade and traders and attitude of ruling classes towards the foreign trade are also highlighted in this work.

The research work covers the period from 6th Century BC to 3rd Century AD. The trade of India and West Asia during this period was varying from one region to another. Therefore it is very difficult to present the picture of trade in one dimension. Again, it is highly unreasonable to think that the development of trade from a simple exchanging system to the complex market place trade was always linear in its structure. In the early part of this trade, the money economy was not playing a predominant role but in the later phase the money economy played a crucial role. This trade was favorable to India, is clearly established from the comments of Pliny. But it is very difficult to determine the quantum of trade.

The introductory chapter seeks to explain how the forces of exchange of commerce became an important part of the study of Indian trade history. The second chapter points out the impact of political relations on trade in additions to exchange of goods. The chapter dealing with Mauryan periods highlights the elaborate arrangement of Mauryas to get a control over trade and exchange of cultural ingredients. Last chapter makes a threadbare discussion of everything including exchange of goods, market places, system of transport and communication etc. Finally the conclusions of the research work are presented in the last section of the work.