

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC ELECTIVE COURSE (DSE): Merchant and Mercantile Practices in India

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION, ELIGIBILITY AND PRE-REQUISITES OF THE COURSE

Course title & Code	Credits	Credit distribution of the course			Eligibility criteria	Pre-requisite of the course (if any)
		Lecture	Tutorial	Practical/ Practice		
Merchant and Mercantile Practices in India	4	3	1	0	12 th Pass	NIL

Learning Objectives

This course explores the ways in which merchants and mercantile practices have been approached, appropriated and understood in Indian history. The diverse narratives of a high degree of merchant mobility, institutional adaptation, and diversification into banking and manufacturing map out dimensions of variation reflected in a huge diversity of business practice and social organization. The endeavor is to familiarize students with merchant communities and practices distinguished by location, geographic scope, and type of commodities traded. Their regional distribution, internal and social organization, standards for behaviour, and resource opportunities varied accordingly and thus one could analysis historical evolution of merchants and mercantile communities of the IndianSubcontinent and their changing role. Here response and adaptation of the mercantile communities towards the changing socio-political environment too becomes vital to be explored.

Learning outcomes

Students will also learn what histories of merchants and mercantile practices can tell us about ex-change patterns across social formations. We will aim simultaneously to see merchants and mate-rial culture more generally, as playing a fundamental role inthe shaping of our past.

Theory and Practical/ Field work/Hands-on-learning:

Through the course students are expected to continuously interact with the mercantile sector through programmes built into the academic curriculum like field studies, internships, projects, audio-visual projects and its cluster initiatives.

SYLLABUS OF DSE

Unit I: Introduction: Situating merchants and mercantile practices in Indian History

1. Sources and Historiography: Inscriptions, Bahis, Khatas, Khatpatras,
2. Inception: Mechanism and means of exchange and involvement of groups (barter, coined and uncoined money)

Unit II: Origins, Identities and Organizations of Merchant Communities:

1. Crafts and commerce in early historical India: Craft Guilds and Trading Guilds (Shreni, Puga, Nigama, Sartha) the Craftsperson as a Petty Trader: Organization, rules, and regulations;
2. Occupational specialisation and spatial distribution: Nagaram,
3. Mercantile Public Identities: Chettiers, Baniyas, Jains, Marwaris, Shikarpuris, Banjaras, Bohras, Parsis

Unit III: Social Interface and world of the Merchants

1. Momentum of Markets, Urbanisation and engagement of merchants in exchange practices/development of Mercantile spaces- qasbas, bazaars, katras, melas and haats,
2. Merchants and mercantile practices in relation to the state and temple in Medieval India.

Unit IV: Changing patterns of Mercantile Communities & Practices:

1. Growth of interregional specialisation and India's interaction with Global trade.
2. Merchant families, marriage alliances, family firms, and mercantile elites,
3. Money, instruments of exchange, banking and interest,
4. European Trade, Companies and Agency houses.

Practical component (if any) - NIL

Essential/recommended readings

Unit I: This unit seeks to introduce the concept of Mercantile activities and the role of merchants through the analysis of Inscriptions, Bahis, Khatas, Khatpatras, The idea is to make student familiar with the inception of mechanism and means of exchange and involvement of groups. **(Teaching time: 9 hrs. approx.)**

- Adhya, G.L., Early Indian Economics: Studies in the Economic Life of Northern and Western India c. 200 B.c.-300 A.D; Bombay, 1966. {Chapters II ('Industry') and III ('Trade')}
- Gokhale, B G; 'The Merchant in Ancient India'; Journal of the American Oriental Society; Apr-Jun 1977; Vol. 97, no.2; pp. 125-130.
- राधाकृष्णचौधरी, प्राचीन भारतार्थिक इतिहास, पटना इन्स्टीट्यूट; 1979, विनोद बिहारी प्रकाशन.
- {अध्याय 10 एवं 12.}

- Majumdar, R.C., Corporate Life in Ancient India; (third edition), Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1969, {Chapter I ('Corporate Activities in Economic Life')}

Unit II: This unit deals with origins, identities and Organizations of Merchant Communities. The unit will also trace Crafts and commerce in early historical India and look at Religious, Caste and Regional Variations in Mercantile Public Identity. **(Teaching time: 12 hrs. approx.)**

- Champakalakshmi, R., Trade, Ideology and Urbanisation: South India 300 BC to AD 1300; Oxford University Press, Delhi. 1996, {Chapter 5 ('The South Indian Guilds: Their Role in Early Medieval Trade and Urbanization')}
- Chakravarti, Ranabir; 'Monarchs, merchants and a matha in Northern Konkan (c. 900-1053 AD)'; IESHR: 27,2, 1990.
- ———; Trade and Traders in Early India; London, 2020.
- Das, Dipakranjan, Economic History of the Deccan: from the First to the Sixth century A.D.; Munshiram Manoharlal; Delhi; 1969. {Chapters XII ('Organisation of Industry and Trade') and XIV ('Banking and Allied Business')}
- Gopal, Lallanji, The Economic Life of Northern India, c. A.D. 700 – 1200; Motilal Banarsidass, Varanasi; 1965. {Chapter IV ('Guilds')}
- Subbarayalu, Y., 'Trade Guilds of South India up to Tenth Century'. Studies in People's History, 2(1), 2015, pp. 21–26.
- Jain, V K; Traders and Traders in Western India 1000-1300 AD; South Asia Books; 1990.
- Jain, Shalin, "The Urban Jain Community, Commercial Mobility and Diaspora", (Chapter 4) pp. 158-205; portions dealing with social role of Jain merchants- Shantidas Jauhari and Virji Vora, pp. 255-267 in Identity, Community and State: The Jains under the Mughals, Primus Delhi, 2017
- Karashima, N., Y. Subbarayalu and P. Shanmugam, 'Nagaram during the Cola and Pandya Period: Commerce and Towns in the Tamil Country, A.D 850- 1350'. The Indian Historical Review, Volume XXXV, No I (January 2008), pp. 1- 33.
- Kosambi, D.D., 'Indian Feudal Trade Charters', Journal of Economic and Social History of the Orient, 2(3), 1959, pp. 281-293. Reprinted in B.D. Chattopadhyaya, ed., Oxford India Kosambi.
- Markovits, Claude, "The Gate of Khorassan: the Shikarpuri network, c. 1750- 1947", The Global World of Indian Merchants, 1750-1947 Traders of Sind from Bukhara to Panama, CUP, 2000, pp. 57-109.
- Markovits, Claude (2008). Merchants, Traders, Entrepreneurs: Indian Business in the Colonial Era. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan (Part III on 'Merchant Networks').
- Mehta, Makrand, Indian Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Historical Perspective, Delhi, 1991.
- Mehta, Shirin, 'The Mahajans and The Business Communities of Ahmedabad' in Dwijendra Tripathi ed., Business Communities of India, Manohar, 1984, pp. 173-184.
- Nilakanta Sastri, K.A., The Coḷas (Revised edition, 1955), {Chapter XXII ('Industry and Trade')}.
- Sircar, D.C., Studies in the Political and Administrative Systems in Ancient and Medieval India; Motilal Banarsidass; Delhi; 1974), {Chapter XIII ('Charter of Viṣṇuṣeṇa') and Appendix VI ('Traders' Privileges Guaranteed by Kings')}
- Ray, Rajat Kanta ed, 1992, Entrepreneurship and Industry in India, 1800-1947, Delhi, OUP

Unit III: This unit will explore the growth and expansion of mercantile world of activity and its

interface with Urbanization, exchange spaces, state and temple in Medieval India. **(Teaching Time: 12 hrs. approx.)**

- The Cambridge Economic History of India 1, 1200-1750, edited by Tapan Raychaudhuri and Irfan Habib (Chapters II, III.3-4, IV, V, VII, X-XIII)
- Ardhakathanak, Translation: Mukund Lath. (ed. Translation), Half a Tale, Ardhakathanak, Jaipur, 1989
- Irfan Habib, 'Banking in Mughal India', Contributions to Indian Economic History, ed. Tapan Raychaudhuri, Calcutta, 1960, pp. 1–20.
- ———; 'The Currency System of the Mughal Empire', Medieval India Quarterly, Vol. iv, 1961.
- ———; 'Merchant Communities in Precolonial India', The Rise of Merchant Empires, Long- Distance Trade in the Early Modern World 1350–1750, ed. James D. Tracy, Cambridge, 1990.
- Hall, Kenneth R., Trade and Statecraft in the Age of Cōlas; Abhinav Publications; New Delhi.; 1980.
- Haider, Najaf, "The Moneychangers (Sarrafis) in Mughal India", Studies in People's History, 6, 2, 2019, pp. 146-161.
- Om Prakash; 'The Indian Maritime Merchant, 1500-1800'; Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient, 2004, Vol. 47, No. 3, Between the Flux and Facts of Indian History: Papers in Honor of Dirk Kolff (2004), pp. 435- 457; URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25165056>
- Pradhan, Sulagna; 'Three Merchant of Thirteenth Century Gujarat'; Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 2017, Vol. 78 (2017), pp. 275-281; URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26906095>.

Unit IV: This unit will take up changing patterns of Mercantile Communities & Practices with Growth of interregional specialisation and Global prospective of trade, establishment of mercantile elite groups/families. The unit will also deal with the gradual and increasing involvement of European trading companies and emergence of agency houses. **(Teaching time: 12 hrs. approx.)**

- The Cambridge Economic History of India 2, 1757-1970, edited by Dharma Kumar and Meghnad Desai (Chapter IX, 'Money and Credit, 1858-1947', by A.G. Chandavarkar).
- Chaudhary, Sushil and Michel Morineau ed., Merchants, Companies and Trade: Europe and Asia in the Early Modern Era, CUP, 1999.
- Ray, Rajat Kanta, 'Asian Capital in the Age of European Domination: The Rise of the Bazaar, 800–1914', Modern Asian Studies, 29(3), pp. 449–554.
- Roy, Tirthankar, "States: A Political Theory of the Community", (Chapter 2), pp. 45-88; "Merchants: Guild as Corporation", (Chapter 3), pp. 89-129; "Artisans: Guilds for Training", (Chapter 4), pp. 130-152 in Tirthankar Roy, Company of Kinsmen: Enterprise and Community in South Asian History 1700- 1940, OUP, 2018.
- Rudner, David; 'Banker's Trust and the Culture of Banking among the Nattukottai Chettiars of Colonial South India'; Modern Asian Studies, 1989, Vol. 23, No. 3 (1989), pp. 417-458; URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/312703>.

Suggestive readings

- Business Practices And Monetary History, Unit 22 in Block-5 Expansion and Growth of Medieval Economy-II,

<http://egyankosh.ac.in//handle/123456789/44532>

- C.A. Bayly, *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars: North Indian Society in the Age of British Expansion, 1770-1870*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Chakravarti, Ranabir; 'Nakhudas and Nauvittakas: Ship-Ownning Merchants in the West Coast of India (C. AD 1000-1500)'; *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 2000, Vol. 43, No. 1 (2000), pp. 34-64; URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3632772>.
- Chatterjee, Kumkum; 'Collaboration and conflict: Bankers and early colonial rule in India: 1757-1813'; *IESHR*; 30,3, 1993'.
- Colonialism And Trade: 1857-1947 Unit 27 in Block-6 Trade and Markets <http://egyankosh.ac.in//handle/123456789/44534>
- Goitein, S.D., 'Portrait of a Medieval India Trader: Three Letters from the Cairo Geniza, Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies 50(3), 1987, pp. 449-64.'
- Habib, Irfan, 'Usury in Medieval India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 6 (1964), pp. 393-419.
- Irfan Habib, 'The System of Bills of Exchange (Hundis) in the Mughal Empire', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 35 Session, Muzaffarpur, 1972*, pp. 290-303.
- Mahalingham, T.V. 1940 (1975), *Administration and Social life under Vijayanagar - Part II Social Life* (Revised edn).
- Mehta, Makrand. (1991). "Vaishnav Baniyas as Merchants, Sharafs and Brokers: The 17th Century Parekhs of Surat" in Makrand Mehta ed., *Indian Merchants and Entrepreneurs in Historical Perspective with Special Reference to Shroffs of Gujarat: 17th to 19th Centuries*, Delhi: Academic Foundation, pp. 65- 90.
- Merchants And Markets: 1757-1857 Unit 26 in Block-6 Trade and Markets <http://egyankosh.ac.in//handle/123456789/44535>
- Mukherjee, Rila; 'The Story of Kasimbazar: Silk merchants and Commerce in Eighteenth Century India'; *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Fall, 1994, Vol 17, No. 4, pp 499-554; URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40241304>
- Pushpa Prasad, 'Credit and Mortgage Documents in the Lekhapaddhati', *Puratattva*, No. 18, 1987- 88, pp.94-95.
- Patra, Benudhar; 'Merchants, guild and trade in Ancient India: An Orissan Perspective'; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*; Vol 89, 2008; pp.133- 168.
- Steensgaard, Niels, *The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century: The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1974.
- Trade, Trading Networks and Urbanisation: North India, C.AD 300 to C. AD 1300, Unit 14 in Block-3 Early Medieval Economy and Its Continuities, <http://egyankosh.ac.in//handle/123456789/44516>
- Tripathi, Dwijendra. (1984) (ed.), *Business Communities of India: A Historical Perspective*, Delhi: Manohar.
 - टेम्बल, रिमस ए. (1978). *मारवाड़ी समाज व्यवस्था से उद्योग में*, नई दिल्ली: राधाकृष्ण प्रकाशन.

Note: Examination scheme and mode shall be as prescribed by the Examination Branch, University of Delhi, from time to time.