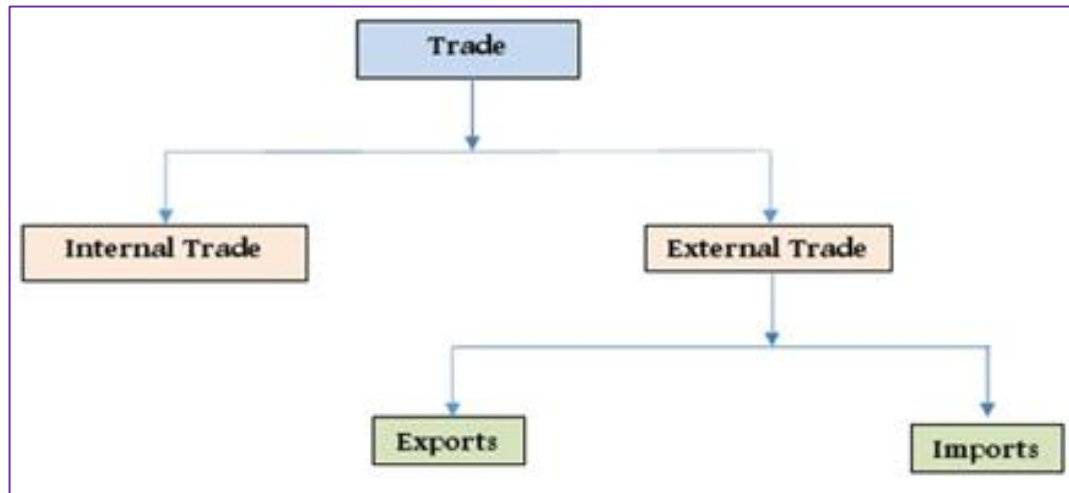


TRADE IN ANCIENT INDIA

TYPES OF TRADE



PROCESS OF TRADE



Producer



Wholesaler



Retailer



Consumer



MAJOR CITIES IN TRADING ROUTE

- These trade networks expanded considerably in extent and diversity before and during the Indus Civilization (2600–1900 BCE), when cities like Mohenjo-daro (Sind), Harappa (Punjab), Rakhigarhi (Haryana) or Dholavira (Gujarat) became major trade centres.

KAUTILYA ON TRADE

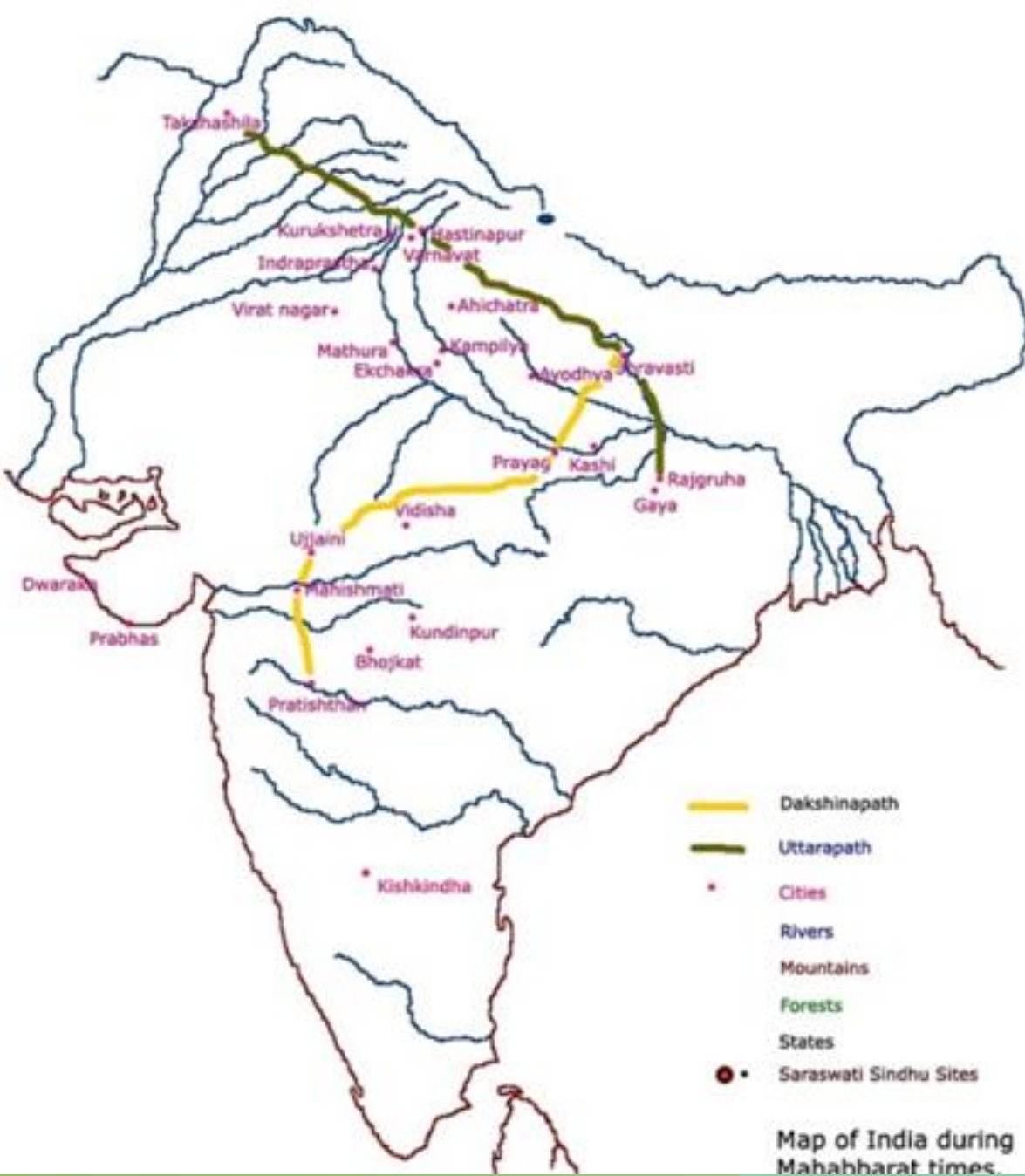
- Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra mentions trade as one of the three major types of economic activities and describes the duties of the 'Superintendents' of Commerce, Tolls, Shipping, Mining, Textile, Labour, etc.
- The state should make sure that trade routes were safe, and goods were not adulterated, or consumers duped by unscrupulous traders.

TRADE WITH GREEKS

- Megasthenes, a Greek envoy to the Mauryan Empire, mentions a Royal Road connecting Pāṭaliputra, Magadha's capital, to the delta areas.



TRADE ROUTES – UTTARAPATHA AND DAKSHINAPATHA



- Two major routes, called Uttarāpatha and Dakṣiṇāpatha, connected the northern and southern parts of the country.

TRADE WITH ROME

Roman traders frequented south Indian ports. One early Tamil text states, for example, “The beautiful ships of the Yavanas [a word for Greeks or Romans] arrived filled with goods such as oil, wine, glass vases, gold and silver coins.”

TRADE WITH ROME

- They took back home timber, sandalwood, precious and semiprecious stones (such as beryl or quartz), pearls, ivory, tortoise shells, spices (especially pepper, which they not only consumed but used for mummification), textiles (especially muslin), perfumes, medicinal and aromatic plants, and peacocks. Indian wootz steel was also exported to the Mediterranean world, where it was used to make lighter and sharper swords, among other weapons
- The findings of thousands of gold, silver and copper Roman coins in India, mostly in the South, bear testimony to this intense trade. Many coins depict the Roman emperor Augustus (63 BCE – 14 CE); he himself wrote, “Indian kings often sent me embassies, as no other Roman head had received so far.”



TRADE WITH GREECE



- The 1st century BCE Greek geographer Strabo notes that in his time, about 120 ships sailed for India in a single season from the Red Sea port of Myos Hormos. Berenike (or Berenice) was another Egyptian port that saw many ships sailing to and from India, and where excavations have brought to light evidence of such trade.
- Inscriptions in Tamil language and Tamil Brahmi script have been found on potsherds at another Red Sea port, Quseir al-Qadim, dating back to the first centuries CE. Since there was no Suez Canal in those days, goods traded in either direction had to be offloaded in Egypt, either at Alexandria on the Mediterranean or at some Red Sea port and carried overland. East Africa was also part of this trade network. The same sea routes were later much frequented by the Arabs for their trade with Indian ports.

PORTS AND SAILORS

- Indians too were shipbuilders and sailors. There is evidence (some of it from Greek texts) that shipbuilding was a flourishing activity right from Mauryan times.



Indian ship on lead coin of Vasisthiputra Sri Pulamavi, testimony to the naval, seafaring and trading capabilities of the Satavahanas during the 1st–2nd century CE.

NĀGADATTA TO SUVARNABHŪMI



- Early Buddhist and Jain literatures corroborate this: a Jain text, for instance, refers to a merchant, Nāgadatta, who travelled to Suvarnabhūmi (a reference to Sumatra) with five hundred ships to conduct trade.

MARITIME TRADERS TO CHINA AND FAR EAST

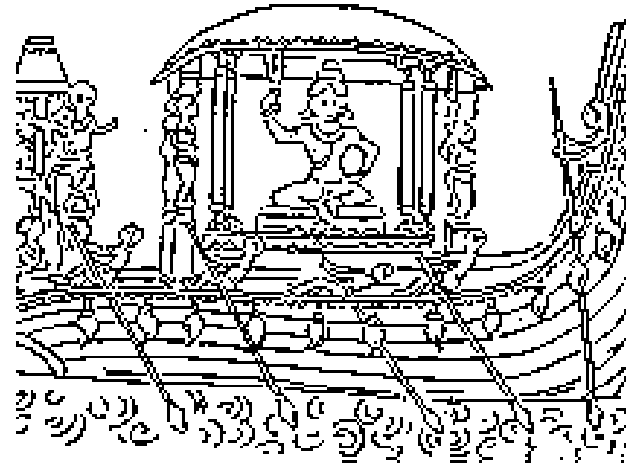
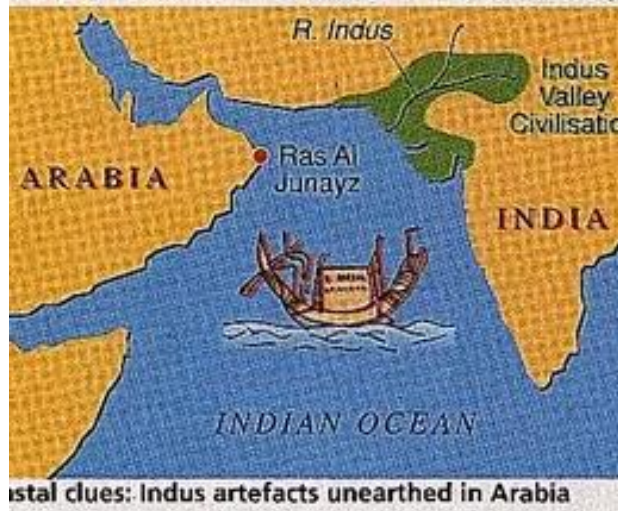
- Chinese historical sources refer to maritime traders bringing indian products to china as far back as the 7th century bce. glass beads and bangles found in the malay peninsula, java and borneo point to a trade contact with southern india going back to the 1st millennium bce.

Greater India

Little is written about India's maritime history but it is both ancient and extensive. Odiya-Bengali seafarers travelled to and settled in Sri Lanka in the 6th century BCE. Vessels from Gujarat and other points on the west coast travelled to the Arab lands, east Africa and Egypt. But it is in Southeast Asia that voyagers from the east coast, Odiya-Bengali, Tamil and Andhra, made spectacular headway. Indianised states formed a great arc from Myanmar to Bali in the Indonesian archipelago. Initially motivated by commercial interest, Indians became culturally and politically dominant before fading away from the 14th century CE.



SANSKRIT TREATISE ON SHIPBUILDING



- A Sanskrit treatise on shipbuilding, Yuktikalpataru of Bhoja Narapati, of uncertain date, describes in detail various kinds of ships, their proportions and sizes, the materials out of which they were built, the ways to decorate them, etc.



- Land routes were, of course, part of this network, especially the famed Silk Road through which countless caravans of traders crossing many kingdoms connected the Mediterranean world with Asia.

THE FAMOUS SILK ROUTE

CHOLAS TO FAR EAST



- By the 9th century CE, the Cōlas kings of south India had built a navy powerful enough to briefly conquer parts of Malaysia (Perak) and Indonesia (the Śrīvijaya kingdom).

KALINGA TO FAR EAST

In the next millennium, Kaliṅga (modern Odisha) and Bengal were engaged in a busy traffic with Burma and all the way to Java; the 7th-century Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang noted that merchants left from Puri “for distant countries”. By the 9th century CE, the Cōlas kings of south India had built a navy powerful enough to briefly conquer parts of Malaysia (Perak) and Indonesia (the Śrīvijaya kingdom).



BY-PRODUCTS OF TRADE – CULTURAL EXCHANGE

- Indian texts emphasize that merchants and traders are to follow ethical principles in their businesses, and they were indeed respected and often praised by foreign travellers for their good character and trustworthiness. Thus the 12th-century Arab geographer al-Idrisi writes, “Indians are naturally inclined to justice and never depart from it in their actions. Their good faith, honesty, and fidelity to their engagements are well known, and they are so famous for these qualities that people flock to their country from every side.”



THANK YOU