



A Research Review of The Economic Structure and its Effect on People During Mauryan Empire

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Abstract:

Historians have discussed the disparity between tax systems in different regions of a single empire and their possible causes. The tax rate on water and rent varies depending on the irrigation method and soil fertility. In maximal Indian composition, the standard tax rate is set at one-sixth of production, with some suggesting increasing taxes by up to one-third or one-fourth of production in times of emergency. Some historians argue that a crop tax of one-fourth of one percent is a significant burden on the populace and could lead to a justifiable uprising against the government. The property rights of inhabitants were progressively expanding, with farmers reclaiming abandoned land. The law recognized this expanding authority, and the practice of lending land to others increased significantly. The law was particularly stringent for indifferent farmers, who could be seized but entrusted to others for development. During the Mauryan period, the privileges of both cultivators and the monarch increased concurrently, with both cultivators and the monarch's individual ownership increasing. The land system lacked the capacity for centralization, and the monarch required a large sum of money to meet his regular and fundamental requirements. The land was the only reliable and primary source of income, and the quantity of national land was expanded through various means. Mauryan governance was founded on townships or districts, with dense forests providing firewood, fodder, hunting fowl, and game animals. Before the third century BCE, commuting was difficult for the municipality, and local residents or foreigners were appointed to the ministers and associations within the municipality.

Keywords: *Economy, Mauryan Era, Tax Systems, Mauryan Governance, Land Systems, Regular Tax.*

Content

Any kingdom or empire's economic system reveals itself as a significant social force. Other social forces, such as the religious force, the cultural force, the philosophical or reflective movement, etc., are inextricably linked to this economic structure. This is why, the majority of the time, a discussion of the economic system is not simply a description of the economy or the economic condition of the populace, but also a social portrait. This also applies to the Mauryan period. Contemporary inscriptions cannot be relied upon for a comprehensive understanding of the

Mauryan economic system. Due to their disciplinary nature, the inscriptions shed little light on the contemporary economic system. Nonetheless, a comparison of the information gathered from the inscriptions and the information from 'Indica' and 'Arthashastra' exposes a substantial quantity of crucial information. There is no doubt that the economic system of the Mauryan period had a significant impact on the social structure of today. And it is also true that the contemporary social structure had a significant impact on the economic system. Therefore, it can be stated, for greater clarity, that the social structure and the economic system not only influenced each other but were also interdependent.

The majority of the Mauryan economy was founded on agriculture. However, this does not imply that other resources had less impact on the economy. This merely indicates that agriculture is a priority in the modern economy. Most likely, the condition has not changed as of today. During the pre-Mauryan era, the animal husbandry-based economy had already transformed into an agricultural economy. During the Mauryan period, however, this economy grew stronger. Notable is that, due to the expansion of the agricultural industry, other industries flourished as well.

These tax relief and rent reductions have been discussed by the historians. As the birthplace of Buddha, the monarch exempted the villagers of Lumbini from all taxes, as they were only contributing one-eighth of their entire output as tax. The term 'Udavalike' has been employed for the first one, which generally refers to tax relief. Probably, this alludes to the gift or gratuity that every village was required to pay. Undoubtedly, the Atthabagiye eighth element has been mentioned in relation to production. It is unknown whether the natural payable tax figure was decreased, which could have been one-fourth or one-sixth, or whether the natural payable was one-eighth, which was maintained. If the latter is true, the monarch was not required to specify the tax amount. Now that the village is exempt from the tax on land, it is more likely that the tax on commodities will be reduced by a small amount, not by half. Therefore, the natural tax rate in that region was undoubtedly one-sixth. Evidently, the tax rate in Rummindei was significantly lower than the one-fourth tax rate in Pataliputra. It was conceivable that such a northern location as Rummindei was not as fruitful as the areas close to Gahana. With the expansion of settlements beyond the valley's fruitful lands, perhaps a variety of new taxes were implemented. Therefore, it is more likely that the base of Megasthenes' one-fourth percent tax rate was the quantity of tax collected near the capital, which he deemed pertinent to the entire nation.

As tax and revenue are the most important aspects of an empire's economy, the tax rate system must be explained in depth. On the basis of the information provided by Megasthenes and their own, ancient European authors who have discussed the ancient Indian taxation system have made a number of contradictory claims. Although Aryan has not spoken much about the specified tax rate, most authors have discussed the specified tax amount, which was one-fourth of the field's output. However, Strabo has stated something entirely distinct. According to him, producers previously received one-fourth of the harvest as compensation. Therefore, it can be inferred that the remainder was destined for the king's inventory. Strabo's statement can be explained in two ways: first, he may have provided incorrect information. Perhaps the source from which he obtained the information was incorrect, or he was unable to

discern its correct meaning. It is more reasonable to conclude that Strabo's statement is false. Second, perhaps Strabo is correct. In this instance, he may have intended to state that the farmers who used to cultivate the king's special land would take a quarter portion for themselves. This explanation cannot be accepted, as Strabo would have mentioned the farmers cultivating the special lands if it were true. However, it must be remembered that Arthashastra discusses this type of income.

The historians have discussed the disparity between the various tax systems in different regions of a single empire and the possible causes. "The statement that the tax was imposed on one-fourth of the commodities is merely an estimate. Alternatively, it applied to extremely prolific regions, such as the vicinity of Pataliputra, with which Megasthenes was more familiar. The fixed quantity of tax was undoubtedly to vary based on the circumstances of the various localities. In Arthashastra, it is stated that the tax on water varies from one-fifth to one-third of one percent depending on the form of irrigation. Undoubtedly, a similar circumstance existed with regard to rent, although the degree of difference may have been smaller. In maximal Indian composition, the standard tax rate has been set at one-sixth of the production. In this regard, one-fourth of production is increased. Occasionally, this figure was one-eighth, one-tenth, or even one-twelfth of a percent. In times of emergency, Arthashastra suggests increasing taxes by up to one-third or one-fourth, or instituting a system of producing commodities twice. However, this system is only applicable in regions where precipitation is used for irrigation and the soil is fertile. According to some historians, a crop tax of one-fourth of one percent is a significant burden on the populace, which could lead to a justifiable uprising against the government. The fact that one-fourth of one percent of tax is relatively excessive compared to regular tax is undeniable. Decades later, the circumstance worsened. During the reign of Akbar, the standard tax rate was one-third of one percent.

N. Ghosal believes that there were three distinct types of land systems. Somewhere, farmers ruled the land; somewhere, they were the country. And elsewhere, there was collective land proprietorship. According to him, the property rights of the inhabitants were progressively expanding. Farmers were reclaiming enormous stretches of abandoned land. Farmers' proprietorship and communal possession of properties were distinguished by law. There are indications of the expanding privileges of cultivators in the Arthashastra. The law recognized this expanding authority. The practice of lending land to others increased significantly. Regarding indifferent farmers, the law was particularly stringent. His property could be seized. However, this was no longer feasible. Now, his land is entrusted to others for development, if necessary. However, the first individual retained possession of his land. In cases of collective possession, a village's land revenue was formerly collected collectively. Also concurrent was cultivation. To determine the revenue boundaries between villages, they were plainly marked. The system existed to collect penalties for contract violations at the village level. It is assumed that during the Mauryan period, the privileges of both cultivators and the monarch increased concurrently. In addition to decreasing collective ownership, producers' individual ownership increased. The land system lacked the capacity for centralization. Alternatively, it was impossible for the monarch to leave all of the land in the hands of the cultivators. The monarch required a large sum of money to meet his regular and fundamental requirements. In addition to the military, there were numerous salaried

employees. The land was the only reliable and primary source of income. Other resources lacked certainty. Therefore, the quantity of national land would be expanded through various means. If a person did not have a will prior to his demise, his estate would fall under the jurisdiction of the country's residents on desolate lands. However, those who constructed a home on this type of acquired land would be granted tenancy but not ownership. D. D. Koshambi takes a divergent stance on this issue. According to him, Mauryan governance was founded on townships or districts. Between the various villages in the same township was dense forest. This forest would provide firewood, fodder, hunting fowl and game animals. These municipalities' borders were given special protection. Before the third century BCE, commuting was difficult for the municipality. After paying a substantial sum, permission was required for this. The ministers and all members of the associations within the municipality were all local residents. Occasionally, foreigners were appointed. Tusaspha is such an illustration. Respectfully, Mauryan governance was a compilation of the governance of all these municipalities.

The township's land was divided into two classes. State tax was levied on one category of land (in Arthasastra village, it was known as Rastra'). On these territories formerly existed a traditional form of government. State taxes were a legacy as well. The principal tax was one-sixth of one percent of all commodities produced. An additional tax is sacrifice. The origin of the concept of sacrifice can be traced back to the gifts that the monarch would accept during tribal offerings. During the Mauryan period, everything vanished, including tribal leaders and the army, except for the government's regular tax collection. Aside from this, levies for gardens, compensation for harvests ravaged by animals, and fees for using the country's water bodies were also required. Ashoka ended sacrifices in Lumbini, the village where Buddha was born. Additionally, he reduced other taxes from one-sixth to one-eighth of a percent. This attitude towards the villagers is supported by specific state policies. Kautilya has stated that the villagers' impotence and only their day-and-night labour in agriculture contribute to the increase of revenue, Bisti crops, and oil in the treasury. The Greek authors have discussed the apathy of Indian cultivators. This was also explained by Koshambi. He stated that, according to modern conflict law, the Sudra farmers' lives were not in danger. His fate was unrelated to the outcome of the conflict. He understood that the outcome did not matter to them. Therefore, they were uninterested in this issue. The Mauryan emperors used to subjugate states but did not priorities incorporate them into their empire; they frequently returned the conquered territory. They merely desired to colonies the desolate territories of the conquered state and harvest its mineral resources. In the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., according to Koshambi, Magadha was a state that accepted state policy as science.

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