Circa 1500, given its scale and depth, the Asian economy was, more or less, synonymous with the world economy. India, both geographically and economically, was at the centre of this early modern (1500 AD-1800 AD) world economy. However, dramatic change was about to come in this state of affairs. The opening of the “all water route” from Europe to India and the accidental “discovery” of the Americas during the early modern period, led to a paradigm shift in the world. Did this signify a complete break from the past or did India, China and other Asian economies continue their sway over the world economy even after, as some call it, ‘Vasco da Gama epoch’ began? This paper aims to focus on India’s role in the changing world economy during these challenging times.

Notes:

1. It is suggested, that maps in paper or digital form may be used in the classroom to enhance the understanding of the students, although no map based questions may be asked.

2. Internal Assessment: There will be two tests of 10 marks each and 5 marks will be allotted for attendance.

3. Examination Pattern: Students would be required to answer any 5 out of 8 questions. Distribution of questions should be roughly proportional to the amount of reading material under each topic.

4. ‘Additional Readings’ given at the end are aimed at enhancing the understanding of the subject for teachers as well as students. However, no direct questions may be asked from them.
Unit 1: Introduction

C. 1500: The status and role of the Indian economy in the world production and exchange; trade routes (land based and water based); Financial networks.

Readings

1. Om Prakash, 1998, *European Commercial Enterprise in Pre-Colonial India*, CUP, Cambridge, Introduction, (pp. 1-7), Ch. 1, (pp.8-22)

Unit 2: Commodities and Networks: India in the World Trade, 1500-1800

The arrival and the impact of Portuguese ‘State of India’, The Dutch, English and French and other Minor East India Companies and European private traders on Asian production and international exchange.

Principal Commodities: necessities and luxuries, spices, textiles etc. and precious metals.

The changing Trade routes: Land based Trade, Coastal Trade, Intra-Asian Trade, Afro-Asian Trade, Inter-Continental and Inter-Oceanic Trade. The ‘new’ ‘all water route’ vs. the ‘old’ land based Eurasian route.

The Asian and African reaction (conflict and cooperation) towards the newcomers.

Emergence of an early modern world economy: The changing pattern of production, and exchange and India’s role in it.

Readings


Unit 3: Merchants, State, Financial Capital and Trade

Position of Indian merchant groups in international trade.

State, Diasporas and Networks: Asian and European merchants – interaction, cooperation, confrontation and exclusion. ‘Smuggling’ and ‘Piracy’.

Relationship between Merchants and States. Position of merchants in Asian States (maritime and land based) and European States in Asia.

1. Ashin Das Gupta, 1985, *The Indian merchants and the Western Indian Ocean: The Early Seventeenth Century*, *Modern Asian Studies*, 19, pp. 481-499 (Also available in Ashin Das


**Unit 4: Conclusion**

Situating India in the early modern world economy.

**Readings**


**Additional Readings**


11. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (ed.) 1994, Money and the Markets in India 1100-1700, OUP, Delhi, Ch. 6.


