

# History of Toll Collection

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Manasi Tatke



GreenEarth Social Development Consulting Pvt. Ltd.  
[contactus.greenearth@gmail.com](mailto:contactus.greenearth@gmail.com)

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## History of toll collection

### Origin

The original turnpikes — dating from the 15th century — were indeed spiked barriers, but they were designed to be placed across roads to prevent sudden attack by men on horseback. Later ones were horizontal timbers fitted with spikes, a version of what is called a cheval de frise, but the Oxford English Dictionary suggests that the mounting timbers of the originals may have been vertical, since a slightly later sense was of a horizontal cross of timbers turning on a vertical pin, set up to exclude horse-traffic from a footpath, which is in essence the device we now call a turnstile.

From the middle of the 17th century onwards, many new toll roads were created in various parts of Britain through acts of Parliament. They were run by trusts, the tolls supposedly being put towards the cost of maintenance. Early toll gates were modelled on the old turnpike barriers and so the roads became known as turnpike roads, later shortened to just turnpikes.

### Ancient times

Toll roads have existed for at least the last 2,700 years, as tolls had to be paid by travellers using the Susa–Babylon highway under the regime of Ashurbanipal, who reigned in the 7th century BC. Aristotle and Pliny refer to tolls in Arabia and other parts of Asia. **In India, before the 4th century BC, the Arthashastra notes the use of tolls.** Germanic tribes charged tolls to travellers across mountain passes. Tolls were used in the Holy Roman Empire in the 14th and 15th centuries.<sup>1</sup>

### Kautilya's Arthashastra

Vartani : road cess collected at frontiers by ferry-men on head loads, small animals, cattle, animal without cloven hooves and cartloads.

Patthanam: port duties

Regulation on toll dues fixes the rates of gate taxes which say gate dues (dvaradeya) shall be 1/5th of toll dues; this tax may be remitted if circumstances necessitate such favour.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toll\\_road](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toll_road)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.indianetzone.com/51/regulation\\_toll\\_dues.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/51/regulation_toll_dues.htm)