



ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF DIFFERENT DYNASTIES IN ANDHRA (From 1300 A.D. -1600 A.D.)

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ABSTRACT

Andhra Pradesh lies between 13°-20° latitude and 70° longitude and the Bay of Bengal on the east a line drawn from Madras to Bangalore and from there to the confluence of the Varada and the Pranahita rivers and from there across the Mahendra into the sea shows the extent of this region. The Telugu language is spoken in a wide area. The border line of this linguistic area starts in the north on the shore of the Bay of Bengal. It follows the Risikujla river, crosses the Eastern Ghats and enters the former Bastar state. Then it crosses the Saban river which separates the Sunkum and Bijji taluks and reaches us confluence with the Godavari including, the southern parts of the districts of Chanda and Pun. From there the line goes south and reaches the confluence of the Manjira and the Godavari going farther south. It separates the Kannada and Telugu areas of the Bidar district. From here it runs straight to the south, cuts through the Bellary district and passes through the Anantapur district into the Mysore State taking within its fold the districts of Bangalore, Kolar, Nandi and Chittaldurg. Then it passes through the North Arcot and Chengalpattu districts and ultimately reaches the Bay of Bengal. This paper deals economic conditions of different dynasties from 1300 A.D.- 1600 A.D.

KEY WORDS: Economic Conditions, Musunuri Nayakas, Velmas, Reddi Kingdom, Vijayanagar, Bahamanis and Qutub Shahis.

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people. The agriculturists were given all assistance by the state for carrying on cultivation. Remissions of taxes were made in times of famine and failure of crops. Trade, both inland and foreign, was vigorously carried on. The ports of the empire carried on brisk trade. Foreign trade was mainly in the hands of the Portuguese and the Arabs but Indian merchants also owned ships and traded with Ormuz, Sri Lanka, China, etc. Spices like pepper, ginger, cotton, precious metals, salt, betel leaves, etc., were the chief articles of trade. The Andhra Region was liberated from the Muslim rule and divided into many petty Kingdoms in 1330 A.D. such as the Musunuri Nayaka's (1325 A.D.-1363 A.D.) established their power at Warangal, Kingdom of Velma's established at Rachakonda (1336 A.D.-1425 A.D.), Kingdom of Reddies founded at Kondaveedu. Among these, the Reddies was a mighty kingdom. Besides, the Kingdoms of Bahamani and Vijayanagar as the neighbouring states to them. Though they were busy in fighting with one another for expansion of their kingdoms, they established stable government to their people.



METHODOLOGY

The research methodology used for the purpose of research on the present topic is exploratory and analytical. The library technique has been used extensively as the research is qualitative in nature. This dissertation is the result of both primary and secondary sources.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE DIFFERENT DYNASTIES IN ANDHRA

MUSUNURI NAYAKAS

It throws light on the system of taxation in that period. It gives vast information about the kinds of taxes that prevailed in this period. In this period seven types of taxes were collected from peoples such as:

1. Krishi tax (tax on agriculture)
2. Tax on mines
3. Gokulam – (tax on cattle)
4. Sunkam (tax on travel)
5. Vanikineyee – (tax on business)
6. Nandanavanam (tax on recreation or gardens)
7. Kappamu (tributes from feudatories or subordinate chiefs)

Except the land tax, all these taxes were paid in the form of kind and the land tax has collected in the form of grains and stored in the Royal granaries known as Rachagadelu. The collected cash was sent to the royal treasury.

The work also mentions (*Sakalaniti Sammatamu* and *Vasishta Ramayanamu*) about the war-strategies that follows during the time of the war especially to suppress the enemies, to plunder the villages and set-fire the houses in villages and poison the wells. In addition, the work focuses on the administration of the accountant of the village who discharges the accounts of the income of the villages. It mentions that the Karanam was the accountant of the village. He maintained accounts related to the extent of the arable and waste lands, cultivation of the shallow land, the wet and dry cultivation, taxable on rent free land, an estimate of the crops grow, the assessment on the produce of crops of the lands under the previous and the present government, the total extent of the brahmadaya and devadaya lands, the village services and every item concerning the administration of the village services and public works. He measured the fields, the crops, and determined the king's share of produce. Each arikapu had to pay and maintained registers regarding their transactions. Every deed or document was properly drawn up and singed by witnesses, that is, it bore the Saka year, cyclic year, month, fortnight, tithi the weekday, the country, its King the place where the business was transacted, name of the village and every other matter of importance, with the signature of the writer of deed were entered in it. It was then duly attested with signatures of the witnesses.

VELAMAS

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State had provided good irrigation facilities thus, its derived income from land-tax. Industries such as textile and weapon making were well flourished. Regarding the economic conditions, some accounts revealed details about the people. The society was predominantly an agricultural one there was a little scope for development of industries on a large scale. Farmers due to agriculture works were busy for a few months in a year. Because of much leisure, every handicraft became a cottage industry and every craftsman was an artist. The industrial workshop was a simple affair with simple apparatus. There is reference to furnaces and big bellows made of buffalo hide, fitted with iron tubes. Likewise, the work Bhojarajiyam mentions about the podu-cenu (podu-field) cultivation followed by the Vanacharas (foresters) in the forest areas. The term podu-cenu was mentioned in a particular context that was a brahmana who lost his way while going to a town called Hemavatapura meets a Vanachara a foester in a forest and asks him to show the way when the latter takes the former to his podu-cenu (podu field). Besides this practice of mortgage of land and the term jattu or jatti meaning mortgage occurs in works. It is used in the context of cultivation of paddy and sugar-cane in wet lands by the farmers.

The work *Rukmangadacharitam* give information about the revenue of the period and mention a number of items of income, and also the sources of revenue which derived from the following areas. They are: 1. Agriculture 2. Ganulu (mine) 3. Goraksa (Cattle) 4. Sunkamu (Tolls) 5. Vanijyam (Trade) 6. Sringaravanamu (Pleasure Gardens) 7. Appanamu (Tax)

Further, the state also maintained registers for income and expenditure. Thus, a considerable income to the royal treasury was derived from above mentioned sources. For exchange purpose, the coins were in vogue. The above work refers the coins as paikamu, which means copper coin.

Besides the revenue system, the book also mentioned about the system of judiciary in this period and punishments awarded in civil cases, which seem to not so cruel and inhuman but severe, in the criminal cases and default to liquidate a debt was punished very severely.



A verse in the *Rukmangada Charitra* enumerates various punishments, inflicted on a person who was unable to pay the tax or to repay his debt, such as mutilation of limbs, blinding the eyes, melted lead pouring into mouth, snails penetrated into nails, fire to alive and whipping. It also refers to mural paintings such as Krishna leelas on walls, kings and queen portraits.

REDDI KINGDOM

The economic conditions of the period was like that, the rulers paid much attention to storage of water for the purpose of agriculture, which was the main source of the country's prosperity and canals were dug for carrying water from the sandy beds of rivers and rivulets. Irrigation by canals wherever possible was a special feature of the low laying facts. Many Agraharas were irrigated by such artificial canals.

The agriculture implements were very few and simple and they were made by the village blacksmith who was one of the twelve servants of the village. Its services were remunerated by inams called vritimanyams. The east coastal area was famous for cultivation of paddy and variety of fruits and pulses. They had good water supply to lands and built a number of tanks, wells and canals for irrigation purpose to lands. Though the overseas trade in South India during the medieval period was largely in the hands of the foreign traders, the Andhra traders were also very enterprising and took an important part in it.

Haravilasam of Srinatha gives a graphic description of foreign trade carried on by a setti of Simha Vikramapathanam (Nellore). It gives us an idea that the Andhra merchants were very enterprising and maintained trade links with foreign lands also. The text informs us that Avachi Tippayya Setti and his brothers Tirumala Setti and Semui Setti. Imported valuable articles by both land and sea and supplied them to Harihararaya-II (1377 A.D. - 1404 A.D.) of Vijayanagara, Kumaragiri Reddi of Kondaveedu, Feroz Shah Bahmani and Gajapati rulers of Orissa. They had imported the goods such as Champhor and Plants from Punjab, gold from Jalanogi (Sumatra) elephants from cylon, fine horses from Hunumanji (Ormuz) Mysk from Goa, Pearls and musk from Contnagi (Chantage) and fine silk from China. Because of their economic prosperity they had trade contacts with foreign countries.

In addition, a place being Tavaji (Taivan) and Goa which supplied Sandal, aloe-wood, camphor, rose-water, musk and pollen of saffron, were imported collectively. Besides these goods they also imported articles made of gold, rubies and horses and courtesans.

VIJAYANAGAR KINGDOM

The Vijayanagar empire was a density populated and economically well flourishing state. While studying the economic condition of the people, the population was divided into two broad classes, the consumers and the producers. The former class included the aristocracy, the nobles, officers of the government at the centre and the provinces thearony, the police, teachers, prests, the traders besides domestic servants etc. The producing classes include agriculturists, artisans, weavers, oil pressers, blacksmiths, carpenters, idol makers, etc. The upper class which compriased nobles, feudal chiefs, and high government officials led a luxurious life.

The middle class, who included teachers, scholars, physicians and soldiers were well off weavers, artisans, barbers, washer men, leather workers at the lower wing of the society were able to making both ends meet. Generally, people lived in thatched houses in rural areas. Thus, it seems that there was great disparity between the economic status of rich and



the poor in the society. Besides, their main occupation was agriculture and agro based cultivation.

The rulers paid most interest and attention to agriculture. 70 per cent of the population depended on agriculture for their livelihood. The Vijayanagar region was usually very fertile, capable of giving abundant crops. According to Abdul Razzak, in Vijayanagar, "Most of the land was well filled and fertile". The Inscriptions of the period which refer to the rearing of two or three crops on a piece of land which could not have been possible unless it was fertile and had ample irrigation facilities. The kings gave importance to provide irrigational facilities for agricultural improvement. The irrigational system was used at the time of insufficient rain or famine. Irrigational works are three types such as tank irrigation, river or canal and dam works and well and lift works. In the kingdom great attention was paid to water storage works and construction of tanks. For instance, in 1369 A.D. the first Vijayanagar dynasty constructed a huge tank in Cuddapah district. This tank has many channels. Hence through a channel to Sureveru tank at Penugonda and gave it the name Pratapa Bukkaraya mandal Channel.

In 1498 A.D. during the time of Saluva Narasimharaya a valley in the Anantapur district was converted into a tank and named Narasimbudhi. The kings formed new villages by cleaning forests and bringing fresh lands under cultivation, and there by increased the grass yields from land. There are some important crops.

Rice being the staple food of the people, it was the principal crop grown on a large scale. Rice grown is of two types, they are white rice and red rice. White rice was consumed by rich classes. Red rice consumed by the poor class. In addition to rice, wheat, barley, varagu and tinai, cereals occupied the second place in agriculture. It was not so common as the other grains, since no one ate it except the moors (Muslims). They cultivated green gram, black gram, Bengal gram, horse gram, red gram, black pulse and beans, etc. All these grains were produced in great quantity because these were used as food by men and also used for horses. Sugarcane was grown, whenever the soil was suitable and water was available.

Spices were produced both for consumption within and export to foreign countries. The most important of the spices produced in the country were pepper, particular black variety and also cinnamon, cloves, ginger, cardamom, and aloes. They were largely produced in the west coast and exported to foreign countries where they were in great demand. They also cultivated many kinds of garden crops like vegetables and fruit trees. Among the fruits grown were the bread fruit, plantain, fig, citron, grapes, mango, orange, lime, lemon, pomegranate, jack fruit, cucumber and many other items. Besides these products, there were two more important ones, the coconut and the betel leaves. Vijayanagar had a plentiful supply of different kinds of flowers.

BAHAMANIS

In the Bahaman Kingdom, trade and commerce was in flourishing state. Nikitin, the Russian traveller, who was in the Deccan during 1469-74, provided ample information regarding the commercial activities of Bidar. He says that horses, cloth, silk and paper were chief merchandise. He also mentioned the Bahamani seaports Mustafa bad, Dabul were well connected with other Indian as well as with African ports. Horses were imported from Arabia, Khurasan and Turkestan. Trade and commerce were mostly controlled by Hindu merchants.

QUTUB SHAHIS



Agriculture was the back bone of the nation's economy in general and each kingdom in particular was fairly developed land for irrigation that produced enough grains. The agriculture life of the people depended on various methods employed for irrigation. Generally, all crops are cultivated on rain water and running waters (irrigation channels). During 16th century, many Europeans travellers Tavernier (a French Traveller), Thevanot (a French Physician), Mackenzie (British Writer), Pel Saert (Dutch Writer), William Methwald (British Writer), visited India and also visited Kingdom of Golkonda, and recorded the conditions of Golkonda in their accounts. They parised Golkonda was high prosperous country in their records. According to them the towns and villages were fruitful and plenty with corn, rice, cattle, sheep, goat, fish, other necessities for human life. There were great water storage lakes, to keep in the water for drinking and harvesting. These dams or tanks are sometimes half league long and after the rainy season is over, they open the sluices from time to time to let out the water into the adjacent fields, where it is received by drivers, little channels to water particular lands.

The Sultan had power to distribute waste lands to landless farmers. But he has no power to give away cultivated land, which is the property of cultivator or a person in house possession. The King can dispose only of his own right on the soil and that right consists only to the Muslims and also Kharaj (the revenue that by fixed). This can be exempted, except in favour of the poor, the devotees, the blind and Ulema and so on. All grant holders should not cultivate it for three years continuously, it returns to the Sultan and he many give it to another, for property in wasted land is acquired by cultivation. Likewise, the prominent features of agriculture, the Hindu and Muslim systems clearly lay down the principles that to create properly in waste land. It was necessary that such land could be occupied with the consent of the king, that should be cultivated, and generatged revenue. If failing to remain to the orders absolutely, the Hindu and Muslims within the limits defined, the king can take the land away and give it to another. This farming system was adopted by the Sultans of Qutub Shahis.

CONCLUSION

The rulers paid much attention to storage of water for the purpose of agriculture, which was the main source of country's prosperity. They inherited a system of irrigation which had been in use on the soil from times immemorial. The main feature of the system is an existence of a network of tanks and reservoirs in which rain-water was collected and stored for the utilization in the cultivation of the soil. In this period also majority of the people lived in villages and led an energetic communal life. Most of the villagers tilled their own lands, although the kings often attribute the ultimate owner of the land. Most of the land holdings were small and worked by the owner with the help of his family or hired labour. The king also owned large lands which were cultivated by the serfs and the labourers in return for a fixed payment to them. The farmers cultivated different varieties of rice besides cereals. The rice range includes Sartika, Karpurabhogam and Rasangi and so on was grown. They also cultivated fruits, vegetables and flowers.

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