

The Study Of Agrarian Economy In Kurnool District

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The agricultural production, the prosperity of Rayalaseema depended on economic activities connected with various industries. The industries of Rayalaseema in general Kurnool in particular were of two kinds 1) Agricultural based industries or the industries which directly depended on agricultural raw materials, Among them, may be made of textiles, and production of jiggery, sugarcane, oilseeds and neeli (indigo), 2) Industries which depended up on non-agricultural sources particularly metals, wood etc., both the types existed in Rayalaseema.

Industries required raw materials such as Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron and Diamonds. Rayalaseema soil provided good opportunities for the Reddy and Kamma farmers to grow cash crops like cotton, sugarcane and oil seeds. Black soil area of the region was suitable for the cultivation of cotton. Oil seeds were grown in dry areas of Rayalaseema. Sugarcane was grown wherever natural and artificial irrigation sources were available. As far as metals were concerned we may note the following information¹.

Traces of gold workings are numerous in all districts of Rayalaseema. Along with Gold, the mines of Diamonds, Silver, Copper and Iron might have been come up. Ancient mines of copper exist in the Kurnool and Nellore districts. In the tracks situated between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers hematite occurs in the huge amounts. Metals that were not available were imported from foreign countries. Quick silver from Judda, Copper from Eastern countries and Lead from Mecca and Eden were some of the metals imported. In addition to the patronage of Rayas, the local markets and foreign markets too, further developed industries in Rayalaseema region.

There were famous centers for cloth production in Rayalaseema. Jammalamadugu, Dharmavaram, Tadipathri, Gooty and Bellary were some them. The course cloth was available in all the places. The weaving communities had their craft guilds basing on the castes. Kula seti was the head of the Serni or Guilds. Vamanur in Cuddapah district had a weavers guild. The raw material required was cotton which was grown in plenty in Rayalaseema region. Neeli (Indigo) was a vegetable dye produced by the farmers for the textile industries. The dying of yarn and also cloth was done by the weaver himself. As referred by the poet Srinatha there were cotton shirts, Uttariyams, etc in use by the people. The trade in cotton textiles was flourishing condition. There was also demand for cotton cloth in European markets².

Alloy industry was also in thriving condition. The bronze which began to be used on extensive scale in the 10th and 11th centuries continued to flourish during the Vijayanagara period. Regarding the localities of manufacture according to Appadorai “ they too had the tendency to get established near the places of worship where pilgrims met or near the courts and centers of business” Tirupati and Kalahasthi probably might have become famous centers for this industry. The industry was in flourishing condition in some other important business centers.

The precious metal and stones used in this industry were gold, silver and many varieties of diamonds. The Agasala or Kamsalas were the experts in making ornaments. Sri Krishnadevaraya gave a gift crown and varieties of ornaments with nine kinds of gems to Lord Venkateswra. He gave a gift of a necklace, a ruby and a diamond pendant inset with an emerald, a pair of bracelets set with rubies to Lord Lakshminarasimha of Ahobila. These were some of the ornaments prepared by our Goldsmiths. The presenting ornaments to the deities of the temple by the people Royal officers and the kings reveal the flourishing condition of the Jewellery industry. There are inscriptions one at Faunivari Pale (Hindupur Taluk) confirming the exemption of taxes on marriages, on bullock carts loaded with paddy³ etc,

Though Rayalaseema did not have any sea coast there was salt industry in thriving condition during this period. It was manufactured from saline earth which was removed and spread on the surface of the pans specially prepared. After the water was evaporated, salt remained. It would be found in crystals. The local rulers

in Adavani seema issued orders to regulate this industry. It was also popular because there were inscriptions containing presentation of salt pans to the gods of the temples. The emergence of artisan guilds in textile and metal industries of only contributed to cohesion among the various communities but also to the qualitative improvement of each craft. Even today enters like Dharmavaram have retained their reputation for the production of textiles. The evidence suggests that Kaikkolars were producing cloths of high quality. The distributive aspect of economic condition of the region forms a vital element and to that burring problem, we shall focus our attention⁴.

The Vadla caste had representation in the twelve ayagar of the village because it was the most important and indispensable craft from the villagers point of view. In Nallamala forests wood for the furniture was available. The Vadrangi had to prepare the wooden materials require in the construction of buildings and houses. All these reveal the flourishing condition of the industry. The wooden Rathas were also built by the Vadrangi an without his presence the Rathas would not move.

There was also reference about pattu sales in Amuktamalyada. Gooty, Rayadurga and Bellary were centers for silk industry. The silk fabrics of Rayalaseema might have competed with the Japan silk in the local markets. As silk was also imported. The following are the industries pursued by the members of Panchanamvru, Silpa. Kanchara and Agasala⁵.

There was a need for agricultural implements, domestic articles, knives, sticks etc., all made of iron. In every village there would at least be one blacksmith. As the profession was of vital importance the Kammari had his place in the twelve ayagars of the village. He had his inam and meras from the ryots. Many philanthropists and royal officials gave them dasavanda gifts of lands for constructing temples. The temples at Tadipatri and the temple complex at Lepakshi with fresco paintings and statues at the temples were the fine examples of the magnificent achievement of our sculptors maintaining the Vijayanagara School of Architecture throughout the period. The ornamentation on the pillars and ceilings further reveal their artistic taste⁶.

Oil crushing was another industry thriving as a cottage industry. The caste engaged in this industry was Gandla Balaja. "Akhiladesala Telikavegaru" denotes thousands of sects of oil mongers belonging to various categories. Oil was obtained from seeds of gigilly, linseeds and caster seeds. It was useful as one of the items of food as a cooking media, as a hair-oil and as also lighting purposes. There were rich people in Gandla Balanja Caste who gave gifts to the deities of the temples as many of the epigraphs in Rayalaseema reveal this⁷.

The sugarcane juice could be obtained by hand pressing mills. The juice was boiled in large pans and jiggery was made. Sugar was in powdered shape as stated by Barbosa. It was a prosperous industry. The farmers and other merchant class were engaged in this industry. Palmsugar was obtained from date palms which were known to Rayalaseema people⁸.

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