

## **CHAPTER - VI.**

### **ECONOMIC CONDITION.**

The study of the inscriptions of the region are helpful in knowing the economic conditions of the period. These records reveal the information about agriculture revenue system. Taxation, trade and commerce.

#### **AGRICULTURE:**

The agriculture was the mainstay of the people and a source of income to the empire. The Belgaum district situated in the Northern part of Karnataka is almost a plain and fertile land. There is a small hill range at the Northern side of the region. The district drains eastwards. The Principal rivers of the district are the Krishna in the north, the Ghataprabha in the centre and the Malaprabha in the South. The river Krishna which is the notable big stream flows at the northern side of the region. The region consists both black and red Soil where the dry crops are grown at present. Therefore more or less the same situation could have been existed during the days of our period under study.

It is highly interesting to note here that in the region under study, agriculture was provided by the irrigation facilities like constructing the tanks and digging the wells etc., In the history of Karnataka also we find that there was no village or region left without tank being constructed. Because in the society it has been believed that construction of tanks and wells were considered an act of *Punya* or merit. This is quite evident from the inscription of Telsang dated 1122 A.D. which states that a villager Kamkanadaketa constructed a tank called Kallakere. and made a gift of land for the upkeep and repairs of the tank, further it is states that queen of Chalukya Vikramaditya VI granted twelve mattar of land for the renovation and repairs of a temple attached to Kallakere.<sup>1</sup>

There are also several other records which state that such tanks were generally constructed by the members of the ruling class and their officers people of the middle class influenced by the religious beliefs, used to come forth with some donations for the construction and maintenance of the tanks. So much so that every village could have its own tank to met the needs of localities. The inscriptions refer to the construction and maintenance of various types of tanks viz., Piriya-kere,<sup>2</sup> Betta-kere,<sup>3</sup> Kemgere<sup>4</sup> and Katte-kere<sup>5</sup> etc., It is known from other sources that the land was fertile on accounts of the Krishna, Malaprahari rivers, which might have enabled the people to have the irrigation facilities also. Crops were raised with the help of water drawn from such tanks, rivers and wells in addition to rain.

#### TYPES OF LANDS:

Lands in the Belgaum region as else where in the other parts of Karnataka, would be classified like wet and dry lands, grass and garden lands and waste lands. Similarly references are found about such lands indicating the nature of Soil to which it belonged. The Rematirtha inscription dated 1167 A.D. grant records the lands of paddy field and garden lands.<sup>6</sup> Another record from Sogal is interestingly making reference to the garden land and cultivated land.<sup>7</sup> There are also several other records which give ample testimony to the great attention paid

to the garden and garden crops particularly betel leaves and nuts in almost every part of the region.

#### MAIN CROPS:

During the ancient period the climate condition of the region was mostly the same as it is today. The dry crops like Jawar (Jola), Red-gram (togare), Horse-gram (Hurali), green-gram (hesaru), were raised by the farmers as they do now. The Oil seeds like Sunflower (Suryapana), Karadi-Oil (Kusubi) and ground-nut-Oil (nelagadale) were also grown in the fields. The inscription of the region under study frequently mentions the Oil industry, which was in flourishing conditions in those days. Plantation crops like betel-leaves (eleballi) and Sugar cane (Kabul) were raised so commonly, that we find these even today in several parts of the region. There are some other inscriptions which are frequently making reference to the several paddy fields. The rice was tanks and wells. For example several paddy fields were irrigated in Belgaum Kokatanur, Ramatirtha, Sogal, Srisangi and many other places.

#### LAND UNITS:

Inscriptions of the region under study mention that during the ancient period there were separate measurements for the units were very much for the measurement of different types of lands. An inscription from Huli dated 1162 A.D. States that Six Mattar of Cultivated land and two mattar of garden land were granted for the maintenance of the one thousand Mahajanas to enable them to worship the gold Agastyeshvara in the same place.<sup>8</sup> Here it appears that a unit of mattar was used for measuring the dry and wet lands as stated in the Kokatnur inscription.<sup>9</sup> Scholars like Dr. Altekar think that each mattar was equal to five acres of land.<sup>10</sup>

Nivartana was another Smaller unit which was little less than one mattar.<sup>11</sup> In the region under study the Halsi copper plate grant mentions that the fournivartanas of land were granted to god Jinedra at Palasika.<sup>12</sup> Another record

from Ramatirtha States that twenty five nivartanas of land were granted to the Mahajanas headed by the headman (gramadhikari) of Suvarnavada.<sup>13</sup>

An inscription from Badli States that 1000 Kammas of flower garden land were granted to one hundred Mahajanas at the same place.<sup>14</sup>

#### GUILDS:

In this connection it is necessary to refer to the various guilds that functioned during the period. A group of craftsman, merchants, agriculturists had their own trade guilds.

Such fields are variously referred in the epigraphs as Banajigas,<sup>15</sup> Nakharas,<sup>16</sup> the five hundred Svamins of Ayyahole,<sup>17</sup> the Settis,<sup>18</sup> the Settiguttas,<sup>19</sup> Munnuridandas,<sup>20</sup> Birudas,<sup>21</sup> Biravanigas,<sup>22</sup> Gavares,<sup>23</sup> Gatrigas<sup>24</sup> and Okkals.<sup>25</sup> Normally these guilds were purely economic organisations which were controlled the administered in guild organisations. Especially they were so busy in conduct of their, trading activities by providing the several goods and articles to the customers as per their requirements. For example, the guild of tambuligas were engaged in producing and trading of the betel leaves. These guild maintained their own militions for protecting their members. Mention may be made here that a guild of Settiguttas of the three thousand and four towns, and the Settiguttas of the eight towns in the two Six hundred districts carried out its commercial activities in the region.<sup>26</sup>

The copper plates at Bedkihal dated 1931 A.D. is important as it states that the trade guild of Five Hundred Svamies of Ayyavole and its affiliated bodies had maintained their own guards to protect the merchants that belonged to their guilds and that they were encouraging their worriors by conferring honorary tiles such as "Chaser of the enemies".<sup>27</sup> The term the 'Five Hundred of Ayyavole' has been interpreted by Scholars differently. According to some the words stood for a body of traders that consisted of 500 members in the central executive. Some other were of the opinion that 500 members were the original founders of this trade

guild organisation that played an important part in South India from about 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> Century A.D..<sup>28</sup>

It is worthy to note here that these guilds were not only engaged in their trade activities but also engaged in the socio-religious activities. They participated enthusiastically in the public affairs of the town like making endowments to the temples and tanks etc., In the inscriptions of the region under study they themselves figured as a very generous donors of the numerous grants. Particularly the temples were financially helped by them for its maintenance. An inscription from Hirisingi modern Sirasangi dated 1186 A.D. States that Nakharas were gave a Specified money and articles of worship for conducting the festival of Chaitra and Pavitra in the Habbeshvara temple at the same place.<sup>29</sup> Another record from Telsang dated 1122 A.D. States that a Sivappa-Shetti of the vaishyakula granted twelve mattar of land for the temple of Revaneshvra at the same place.<sup>30</sup>

Finally these trade guilds were acting as a trustees of endowments. This is quite evident from the record of Sirasangi dated 1186 A.D. which states that a several endowments granted by the some fiscal Officers and others to a local temple Hebbesvnara under acharya of Vamashaktideva.<sup>31</sup> Another record from Telsang dated 1147 A.D. states that the several dealers like two-Five Hundred Svamins, the Mahajanas of Telsanga, the Settis of the thirty Six camps and Banajiga Settis had acted as the trustees of money, which was collected from the people and they were authorised to spend that money for the maintenance of the satra (Feeding house) of the place.<sup>32</sup>

Thus it appears that guilds played an important role in the economic and religious life of the people in the region under Study. They not only contributed towards the progress of trade and commerce but also encouraged several public activities like construction of tanks and religious works like building of temples etc..

### INDUSTRIES:

During this period numerous kinds of industries existed in different parts of the region. The study of the inscriptions throw light on some important industries which were effectively managed according to the ancient methods by the traders of guild.

Oil industry was one of the major industries, that flourished during the period in the region. Generally every village had an oil managers and stone mills to extract the oil. They catered to the needs of the common man, temples and palace. Oil and their mills were formed the most popular and gift to temples. Mention may be made here that, a record from sirsangi dated 1186 A.D. in the region states that Habbeya-Nayaka made a gift of land and oil for daily offerings and perpetual lamp in the temple of the Habbeshvara in to the hands of Vamashaktideva, the acharya of the temple.<sup>33</sup> Another record from Munavalli dated 1222 A.D. which states that Jogadeva-Chamupa, younger brother of Purushottama-Dandanayaka made some grant of taxes for perpetual lamp to the temple of Svayambhu-Panchalingadeva.<sup>34</sup> Another record from Badli refers to Teliga Sohi Setti.<sup>35</sup> These records indicate the business of Oil industry and financial position of the industry owners generally.

Textile industry was yet another flourishing industry in the region. An inscription from Telsang is interestingly making reference to Saree shops and perfume sellers. Every year one haga from each of the retail dealers in sarees (Sirseyanikondur maruva pavanigar) for the provision of Sire (Saree) for the use of the Brahmaniti (Brahmain Women) who cooks and serves in the Satra (the feeding house) was supplied.<sup>36</sup> But there is no single evidence regarding the Varieties of cloths in the inscriptions. But it can be proved from the other sources like growing a cotton and representatons of the sculptures which depict the variety of clothes in different fashions. In the History of Karnataka we find that textile industry was so common which was spread all over the country during the period.

Jewelry industry was highly specified art of different groups of the people like merchants, manufacturers and goldsmiths. An inscription from Telsang dated

1147 A.D. States that Chalukya emperor Jagadekamalladeva his Subordinate Mailugi-Kshonipala granted permission to officers for collecting the artisan taxes. This records itself suggests the various kinds of artisans living in the society.<sup>37</sup> From the study of Sculptural representations it appears that various kinds of article were made of gold and silver along with jewels and others: Particularly the sculptures of Belgaum, Sogal Munavali, Examba, Shankeshwar, Halsi, Soundatti, Telsang and many other places depict the numerous ornaments, which were worn by both men and women gods and goddesses.

The betel processing industry was another industry of the region. A record from Munavali dated 1222 A.D. is interestingly making reference to the existence of Tambuligas i.e. betel traders in the society.<sup>38</sup>

Bangle industry was another flourishing industry. An inscription from Kshugrama, modern Belgaum dated 1261 A.D. is interestingly making reference to Balagara-Sthala (Centres of bangle manufacturers), Senalli, Kallakundarage and Nitturu which were centres of bangle manufacturers in the society of the region.<sup>39</sup>

#### COINAGE:

Quite a number of coins are known to us from the study of inscription in the region. Specially gold and Silver coins appear to have been in circulation during the period. In the history of Karnataka we find various types of gold coins like Gadyana, Niska, Dramma, Pana, Pon, Vardha etc., and coin of silver like Bele, Visa, Pava, Kani, Kasu, taras etc. and these were in use during this period.

Among the gold coins, Gadyana appears to have been the most popular coin not only in this region but also else where in the Karnataka. This was also called Hon or Pon or even Pon-gadyana pon or hon in Kannada. This coin was also known as Suvarna. Probably Gadyana and Nishka were identical.<sup>40</sup> An inscription from Venugrama (Modern Belgaum) dated 1199 A.D. states that a gift of two-Gadyanas of gold was made by Mahamandaleshvara Kartavirya IV to the eighty four Mahajanas of Venugrama for the up-keep of god Ishavaradeva for the

gods rangbhoga.<sup>41</sup> Another record from Belgaum dated 1261 A.D. Stages that mahasreshthi Ishvara Ghalisasa who paid fifty gadyanas in return for the village, kauvada which is regranted to the Mahajanas.<sup>42</sup> All these records here indicate that a gold coin gadyana seems to have been mainly Vogue in the period of the region. It is also interesting to note here that there is no Single evidence regarding exact weight and value of this gold coin in the inscriptions of the region. Scholars like Dr.A.S.Altekar opined that one gold gadyana must have been weighed about the ninety six grains.<sup>43</sup>

Besides these, other coins also seem to have been circulating in the region. An inscription dated 1252 A.D. belong to Kind Krishna is interestingly making reference to the Pana.<sup>44</sup> There record says that the aruvattakkalu (Sixty Cultivators) together granted to the temple of Jaggeshvara one Nisa for every heru and one Pana on a risit i.e. darsana to the same temple. Here also it is very difficult to know precisely the exact relative value of these coins. Scholars Dr.A.V.Narasimbha Murthy Sumarises that a Visa was equal to one Sixteenth or one twentieth of pana and pana was equal to one tenth of each gadyana.<sup>45</sup>

Finally it seems that the minting of such coins were done at the capital because the inscriptions of the region do not throw light on the minting of the coins.

#### TAXATION:

The inscriptions reveal to us that taxation was the main source of income in the region during the period. Taxes were of various kinds such as taxes on cultivated land and residential sites, taxes on agricultural produce and property taxes on the sale and purchase of commodities, tolls on the goods brought for marketing and the like.

Taxes were collected in kind as well as in cash. The land revenue was a major source of income to the state. The tax on land was purely depended upon its fertility of the soil and the yield. This is quite evident from the Telsang record which frequently mentions that the grant of twelve mattars of back-soil land and



twelve mattar of cultivated land i.e. wet land was made to the temple of Ravaneshvara at the same place.<sup>46</sup> Another record from Ramathirtha dated 1167 A.D. States that a grant of paddyfield eight mattar of cultivable land and 25 nivartanas of land, ten mattar of garden land was donated to the Svayambhu Rameshvara Temple.<sup>47</sup> Hence it is very clear that the Value of the land was based on its fertility and yield. Land taxes like Siddhaya<sup>48</sup> and Pannaya<sup>49</sup> are mentioned. Here these taxes seem to have stood for fixed amount of tax on cultivable land.

An inscription from Telsang dated 1147 A.D. is interestingly making reference to different kinds of taxes. The record registers a gift of incomes in kind and coin realised from the several dealers numbering from two five hundred Svamins, the Mahajanas, the Settis of the thirty-six camps, the Banajigas and the Nakaras for the maintenance of the satra of the place. The following duties are levied on the articles of Merchandise:

<u>Source</u>	<u>Amount of Income</u>
1. Ass-buffalo and Cart-loads of Paddy imported from outside.	two mana of Paddy on each load worth a hon.
2. Head loads of grains coming in.	One Mana on Paddy worth a hon.
3. All selling temporary Dealers irrespective of their being privileged merchants or owners of temple shops.	One mana of Paddy each every day.
4. Salt marts.	One Sollage every day on each mart.
5. Baskets of badu (Vegetables)	Vegetables every day.
6. Gold merchants or jewellers.	One haga every month on each shop for the payment (achigara) of Brahmanas.
7. Retail gold shops.	2 ½ Visa every month on each shop.

8. Sari (cloth) shops and retail      2 ½ Visa every month on each shop.  
Perfume merchants.
9. Selling agents in Sari.              One haga each every year for  
purchasing a Sari for the female  
Brahman cook of the Satra (Satrakkatt-  
ikkuva Brahmanitige).

The income thus realised were utilised for the maintenance of the Satra or free feeding house.<sup>50</sup> Another record from Sirasangi stated 1186 A.D. states that Habbeya-Nayak made grant of some taxes for burning perpetual lamp in the temple of Habbeshvara.<sup>51</sup>

An inscription from Ramathirtha dated 1167 A.D. States that certain revenue officials took decisions on rates of the various taxes one Nagadevayya is stated as Sunkaverggade (tax collector).<sup>52</sup> A record from Kokatnur dated 1306 A.D. is interestingly making reference to different kinds of taxes like Siddhaya (Income tax). Kirudere, Kirukula dayadramma, house tax and military tax etc.<sup>53</sup>

It is to be mentioned here that, the exact nature and Significance of these taxes are not known. Thus it appears that the burden of the numerous taxes were properly distributed among the different Sections of the society. It is also interesting to note here that exemptions from taxes and remissions granted to individuals and groups were numerous. For example in inscription from Kokatnur dated 1306 A.D. grant mentions that sixty mattars for Mettugeya bhoga (a particular service) at the steps of the temple of Kallinatha were exempted from tax. Note that there existed taxed (Karavula) and untaxed (many) Oil mills in the village.<sup>54</sup> The term dandaya is also referred to in the same record and it was known as the military tax or revenue from the judicial fines.

### TRADE:

Trade also yielded considerable income to the state. We have seen above that sale and purchase of goods were taxed. Tools were paid for the entry of

commodities into the village or town area. There were shops where in these crops like Vegetables, cotton, turmaric, jaggery and ginger are sold and these were taxed.<sup>56</sup> Interestingly the inscription is making reference to the local commodities and the commodities that came from outside ll. i.e. Berurinda bandu Marusu...<sup>56</sup>

The market arrangement was made in every area made for the market (i.e. Sante) in where these commodities were sold and also purchased from outsiders. The gavundas and nakharas of the place have been describe as the persons who were followers of the rulers of the Vira banaja Samayas. A passage says:

..... Virabananju samarga dharamma  
 Pratipalakar appa Sagandhavarttiya hanni-  
 ravargavundagal Mukhya stale smasta  
 nakhara mummuri dandagal.....<sup>57</sup>

Trade was mostly inland. Contacts with neighbouring states were also established. It is interesting to note that Hirisingi had attracted merchants from all over the Tamil and Telugu countries besides those in Karnataka.<sup>58</sup> Conveyances for carrying merchandise were the carts and animals like bullocks, donkeys, buffaloes and elephants.

This is what we know about the trading system of region during the period under study.

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