

Trade And Commerce Growth In Chamarajanagar Taluk

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Trade and commerce play an important role in the development of a region, as well as spreading its culture and heritage through transport-linkage, communication, and relationships. The main objective of this article is to characterise the growth of Chamarajanagar taluk from the traditional trade and commercial growth.

Chamarajanagara region was historically under the rule of many dynasties; the beginning of the rule of Gangarasari as Chola possession; the influence of Hoysalas spread rarely; Vijayanagara became the seat of the kings; the settlements of Palagaras; the Dalwais of the Mysore kings took place; and then the rule of the Mysore kings with the British came to an end and merged into the democracy of independent India. As its traces, inscriptions, coins, lakes, flower beds, temples, and other historical documents are evidence. Chamarajanagar, popularly known as Arikuthara, has acquired great importance historically and religiously. The agrarian community here successfully depended on agriculture for their livelihood, and later trade and commerce flourished among them. For that, producing the goods needed for trade and commerce and selling them and buying the necessary things that are not available among themselves has been done traditionally. Corresponding records are available from the very beginning of the Gangara Kaṅke, when a merchant class was created in the region and gained control of trade and commerce. The community is known as Vaishyas, Bhanjigashettas, Granthikas, Vaniyas, Setti, Shreshti, Shetty, and other communities are also identified in the field of small-scale trade and commerce from some records.

The role of trade and commerce in developing the economy of the country is very important. The system of business transactions involves producers, traders, and buyers, with the trader setting product prices and selling, maintaining profit. This system has evolved over time, with further trade and commercial organisations becoming socially and politically important. When we look at the meaning of the words business or commerce, Vanija, Vaniya, Baniya, Vaniya means merchant, and commerce means from the merchant. Even today, the Vaishya society is called as Vaniyars. In the Chamarajanagar part, this community is called by the name of Banajigashetta. For this community, trade is the main occupation; usually traders are the economic activity of an area. And it can be said that it is the basis of development—not only business, but they also played an important role in local administration and judicial decisions. It is recorded in the

inscriptions that during the Hoysala period, merchants helped their kings by defeating the enemies in battles as Pattanaswamis.

Interestingly, the inscriptions refer to the fact that the merchants here sold the goods bought from the locals to the merchants of other provinces; the merchants used bullock carts and donkeys to transport their goods. B.R. Heerematha identified several details in this profession, like oxen traders, konanasatti, kateyasatti, bananjigasatti, etc. The animals they used to carry goods were associated with his name. Called by name. They were instrumental in smooth trade between the provinces; they settled in strategic areas of the states and transported goods to different regions. There is a reference in the detailed inscriptions. ³ In this background, we get enough information about the business and commercial development of Chamarajanagar taluk.

Arikuthara is a region with a long and bright historical heritage of hundreds of years of plains, hills, lakes, settlements, and trade and commerce. Chamarajanagar district, situated at the southern tip of Karnataka, is known for its silk, sandalwood, mining, and forest products, which have historically embraced a distinct culture and diversity. Chamaraja Wodeyar, scion of the Mysore Wodeyar family, was born here. The state is surrounded by Tamil Nadu's Salem to the east, Coimbatore to the north, Mandya, Bangalore to the west, Mysore to the south, and the Nilgiri hills of Tamil Nadu, as well as the Kerala region.

Therefore, Haradanahalli, Halealur, Santhemarhalli, Kuderu, Chandakavadi, Narasamangala, Ummattur, Doddarayapet Harave, and Venkatayanachatra are major business and commercial towns of Chamarajanagar taluk. ⁴ Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar's father, Chamaraja Wodeyar, was born here in AD. It was named Chamarajanagar in 1818. AD In 1826, he built Chamarajeshwar temple here. ⁴

During the Ganga period, urban areas were ruled by Pattanaswamis, in whose time traders from Kerala used to come to buy goods here. An officer called Totigara was responsible for transport, protection, supervision of accounts, and reporting to his king. It is mentioned in the detailed inscriptions that usually the Jaina or Banajiga community were Pattanaswamis who received umbalis from the king. D. Das's work "Economic History of Deccan" mentions the Ganga inscription in which an agreement was made to purchase Umbali land belonging to Pattanaswami in the presence of the priest and townspeople.⁶

Reserchers found an inscription at Kempanapura that describes the conversion of Vellore, which was named after Rajadhiraja Charturvedhi Mangalaveva, into the town of Eravira by the merchant guild of Ayyapoli. This inscription contains the details of the goods to be provided to the merchant community going to another town in OnduriniA for business. Among such merchants there is a detail of identifying tailors and distributing clothes to them. ⁷ Haradanahalli, 5 km south of Chamarajanagar taluk, was formerly known as Kamcharapuri; Harada means merchant. The two names Haradanahalli and Kamcharapuri are the same. Traders from Satyamangala, Coimbatore, and Salem were coming here for trade and commerce. It was an important commercial centre and was ruled by a nobleman named Nanjaraja Odeya.

In 1614, Raja Wodeyar captured this town. 9 Records show. AD In the Bagali inscription of 991, the reference to Ayuvole Ivoorvar is the first reference, as explained by Dr. B. R. Heeremath in his work "Inscriptions of Traders." 10. AD In one of the edicts of 1272, the representatives of different classes discussed the conversion of the village Mooguru into a town. The process of turning Mugur into a town was held by three classes of representatives, including the officials of the country representing the Hoysala kingdom, agricultural leaders, and business leaders. There is a reference in the inscription to the giving of a charter to the sattis and to build a shrine at that place in accordance with a covenant.¹¹

Nature and Growth of Trade and Commerce of Chamarajanagar Taluk

For the life of the people of a region, more resources are not available, the necessary necessities of life are necessary for a comfortable life, so if there is not enough production to carry the life, the life becomes unstable, so they have to engage in trade and commercial affairs and folk crafts to lead the life. Thus there is a close relationship between civil life and economic life, without the development of one, the other cannot develop. Trade and commerce economic progress is an essential part of life. Thus, the people of that time were aware of a complementary system for an orderly distribution from the system of exchanging things. The types of trade that started from infancy started to grow crops in different areas according to the soil in the respective periods, thus keeping the abundantly grown dawasa grains and selling the extra dawasa grains and buying the necessary ingredients. People used to gather at Sante. Thus, it can be said that the birth of saints is not a means of trade.

Santhe: has been associated with business or commercial growth for hundreds of years. Along with the trade development, Santhe was developing with the economic progress of that place or town. The officials thought it was a religious message, so there is a mention in the records that Santhe was conducted by the king's officers, or Pattanaswami. The word santhe is derived from the word sanskatada samstha/sasthe; an organisation was called a specific association; that association formed a convenient system for conducting trade or commercial transactions. There are records that Santas were started by rich people, Nadgavundas, Mahajanas, Nadaprabhus, and Pattanaswamis, groups of traders used to start Sante together. The Mahaprabhus and 5 Gaudas built the Santa in 1277 AD, as documented in the Moogur inscription and the Chamarajanagar inscription 13,14.

Once the santhas were established, a day of the week was held to complement the respective geographical system to be held in order; the teraknambi santhu was Thursday. Santhemarhalli is celebrated on Tuesday and Chamarajanagar on Saturday. The name Santhe is still seen as a place name, for example, Santhemarahalli. Sante was held once a week, and they used to buy household appliances and agricultural tools needed for a week there. ¹⁵ In Sante, agricultural products, oil seeds, vegetables, fruit-hampalu, jaggery, salt, spices, rasas, perfumes, and intoxicating water called Nira were available early in the morning. ¹⁶

Market:

Market, derived from English, refers to a selling point in Kannada. 17 markets in Chamarajanagar Taluk, including Halealur, Santhemarahalli, Kuderu, Chandakavadi, Narasamangala, Ummattur, and Doddarayapet Harachhavetra, contributed to state revenue by offering low-priced goods.

Fairs:

Chamarajanagar Taluk hosts one-day to one-month fairs, attracting thousands for various events like Deva Utsav, Theru, Puja-Punishkara, Harake, Kandaya, Veeragase, Kondotsava, mass weddings, cultural programs, and business transactions. Fairs originated from ancestral practices, providing a platform for people to sell agricultural produce and articles, and evolved into organized gatherings at specific locations. Fairs were an incentive for trade and commercial transactions. 18 Ummattur Urakati, Biligiriranga, Kasturu Bandi, Chamarajeshwar, Chandakawadi Haradanahalli fairs.¹⁹ On the pretext of a fair, people gather together to buy the things they need, "Jana Malo Jatre." Fairs play an important role in the development of trade and commerce¹⁹.

Downtown:

A merchant's place with a cluster of shops is called a town; daily trade and commerce take place in the town, and the merchants who live permanently in the town have to pay taxes. During the reign of Vijayanagara kings, Paleyagars, and Mysore Wodeyars, there is mention in the records that towns were built in many parts of the taluk. Chamarajanagar taluk, including towns like Doddaraipete and Somwarpete, developed into significant trading centers due to their strategic location.

Agriculture:

Agriculture is the backbone of any province's economic development. The majority of people in this region live through agriculture, the lion's share of the resources that fill the coffers of the region. Hundreds of years ago, millet, wheat, corn, and siri grains were grown in this region. The farmers of this region believe that 80% of the crops depend on rain. In the absence of water, farmers used to farm using wells and ditches. Although there are no rivers, there are about 860 lakes in the taluk. 21 farming tools like sickle, hoe, plough, tree, 22 plough, and yoke were used. Lingayat and Okkaligarade²³ were involved in agricultural activities. Shudras had two classes: landowners and landless. Balalonayaka, son of Veerabhadranayaka, restored a lake after Mahaarasa Uyyambali's construction and ordered its income to be submitted to the royal treasury.

Revenue:

Revenue is the main component for the overall development of a province; without collecting revenue, no development work is possible. Historically, past kings used geographical factors to determine revenue and

assess the subject's status. Citizens used to submit gold, silver, copper coins, or dadas grains to the government as taxes prevailing at that time. A revenue officer appointed by the king collected taxes. He was called Karanika or Kulkarani. Pattanaswami²⁷ used to collect revenue in towns. In the villages, the Gaudas or Shyanabhogas used to collect taxes. The collected taxes were again used for the development of villages, construction of roads, lakes, canals, and temples, and livelihood. Tax was collected strictly. At that time, coins were called by the names Dhramya, Suvarna, Kasu²⁸ etc. During the Ganga period of Talakad, the land was measured and 1/6th of the revenue was to be paid to the government as tax. Taxes²⁹ were collected from professions, excise, and mines. During his time, copper coins were shining like gold coins. 30

During the Chalukya era, an officer called Grama Bhogika looked after the accounts of the local administration by issuing coins weighing 50 or 60 grains. During his time there was a merchant association. It had an independent position. 31 During times of emergency, high taxes were levied on citizens. The land of the village was owned by the village head.³² During the Avata period, one mana (11.02 kg) was a seru (17.28 kg), and a visa (3 seru) was a rajasheru, a nivartane (measurement of land) 33 during the Rashtakutas, 1 out of the total produce of land revenue. Citizens had to pay 6/6 as tax to the government. The Nagardhipati was the head of the city in Gramini or Gauda villages.

During the Chola period, date palm cultivators paid annual taxes to landlords Irai and Karai, as well as a seed tax, and exported to Tamil region. During the Hoysalas, taxes were based on land and irrigation wealth, profession taxes like Uruludere and Ganadere, and silver and gold coins were in circulation. During the Vijayanagara period, goods were sold with the consent of various merchant ranks, including Banajigara, textile, Grantika, Veerashaiva, Manigara, Weaver, and Shanubhogas. Pattanaswamy, an officer, imposed taxes on imports and exports, with a 5% tax on rock sugar, jaggery, oils, and 6% on clothes, rugs, and handicrafts. Blacksmiths, coppersmiths, bronzesmiths, and goldsmiths were required to pay profession tax, which was 10 paisa per cart of goods and 100 paisa per coconut. The Chamarajanagara region was ruled by Mysore lords who issued gold, silver, and copper coins, known as Tara, pana, and kasu³⁷. Randhirakanthirava Narasaraja Wodeyar and Chamaraja Wodeyar, born in Terkanambi and Chamarajanagar respectively, had extensive rule, with their temples contributing to the development of lakes and canals. During Chikkadevaraja's reign, gold, silver, and copper coins were issued, with cash in English tattooed. Taxation was regularized, and toll booths were opened for duty collection. Navkoti Narayan was awarded for reducing expenses and saving 9 crores in the treasury, requiring daily payments of 7,20,000 pagodas and issuing 46 copper coins and 23 cranes.³⁹ The Chamarajanagar taluk's business and commercial development evolved from the Ganga era to the Mysore rulers, showcasing the evolution of the trade and commerce sector.

Footnotes :-

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26. Karnataka Volume 4 of Epigraphy, Somasamudra Inscription – 300 page 193
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