



ECONOMIC CONDITION OF TANJORE UNDER THE NAYAKS AS GLEANED FROM THE INSCRIPTIONS OF RAGHUNATHA NAYAKA

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Sculpture of Raghunatha Nayaka

ABSTRACT :

Raghunatha Nayaka was the most illustrious of the Tanjore line of Nayaks, As well as the main prop of their fame and glory. His rule was one of peace as it marked the revival and development of the many sided, Economic as well as Cultural activities for which Tanjore had been famous through the ages.

KEYWORDS : *Raghunatha Nayaka , Tanjore line , Economic.*

INTRODUCTION

Raghunatha Nayaka's appointment as Yuvaraja, even while he was a youth, who has been noticed already, and he was the joint ruler of the kingdom, along with his Father, for a number of years. During that period, he distinguished himself in the Wars of the Emperor. During the Nayak period the economic condition was determined by the nature of agriculture, industrial sector and

Trade means of internal and external. Yet, industry and trade were at their low ebb. The state Nayaks paid priority to the growth and development of agriculture. The traditional system of agriculture existed in this period. The consequent wars, rebellions and famines, which affected the growth of agriculture considerably.

The Nayak age witnessed a new developing trend in the economic activities. Growth of Industries and the attempt for extensive colonization in the European world had its impact in the Tamil land as well. The western trading communities began to land and expand their activities. Yet the traditional economic structure and behavior was undisturbed continued. The Tanjore Nayaks has occupied mostly the river Kaveri region of Tamil land. The eastern plain was infested by moving bands of high way men. It hindered economic activities, trade and commerce. The cultivable products were different in type and nature. 'Kar' and 'pisanam' were the two main cropping seasons. There were summer crops. It belonged to the special season called 'Kodaippu' *Kuruvai* was the chief wet crop. *Varagu* and *Thinai* were the chief cereals. Green gram (pachchai payaru) Black gram (ullundhu) and horse gram (*kollu*) were chief among the pulses produced. Hemp and Cotton were some of the commercial crops. Rain was the deciding factor for the success of crops.

The Portuguese and the merchants gained ground in the beginning. But in due course the Dutch and the English gained importance in this region. Paddy, cane sugar, other millets, cotton and silken clothes became chief articles of trade in the international markets. Indigo was also exported to the western world. Gold, quick silver, tin, lead, copper, brass, luxurious articles and foreign drinks were imported. Among the natives, the Chettiar and the Muslims stood in the forefront of overseas commerce. Chinakkon Chetti and Seshadri Chetti earned name and fame in the Western commercial world. They had an association with western merchants and also in the eastern Commerce. The Chettiar had trading colonies in Malacca. The Muslim merchants of east coast had contact with Bengal, Malacca and China for commerce.

AGRICULTURE:

Agriculture was the most important occupation of the people. This played a vital role in determining the economic growth of that period. People solely depended on the monsoons for cultivation. Particularly the South east and northeast monsoons gave fertility to the soil. In the fertile areas the people gave importance to cultivate paddy. The monsoons were not always regular. Sometimes they betrayed the people. There prevailed cruel famines due to lack of seasonal rain falls.

Though the monsoons gave fertility to the soil on certain occasions, it caused destruction to the people. The sudden floods in the rivers or cyclones in the coastal areas caused untold miseries to the agriculturists. The cyclone due to frequent low pressure in the Bay of Bengal was a permanent menace to the people of Tamilnadu. It not only destructed the agricultural products but also the residences of the people.

To save the people from flood, dams were constructed across the rivers. The river water was brought for irrigation through channels. The Kaveri River in Tamil land played a major role in determining the economic condition of the people. Where there was no river water, the agriculturists utilized the water from the wells and *kulams* for cultivation which were regularly maintained by the local bodies in the village. In certain places, the agriculturists utilized spring water for cultivation.

FAMINES:

Due to the lack of monsoons, there were famines during the region of Nayaks. A Jesuit missionary in his letter dated November 1622 mentioned the cruel famines which affected severely. It caused untold miseries to the people. Thousands of people died. No one came forward to bury them. The accumulated dead bodies on the banks of the rivers were swept away by the river water due to flood during monsoons.

Due to the shortage of food, the prices of the food grains were increased tremendously. Particularly due to the famine in 1709, the prices of food grains raised to its zenith. It was recorded that prior to the famine eight maraikal paddy was sold for one *panam*. But in later, a maraikal of rice was sold for four panams.

TAXES:

In 1622, Tanjore came under the direct administration of Raghunatha Nayaka. He and his successor followed the same system of tax collection of Vijayanagar rulers, the tax collecting officers like Manikaram or Ambalakaram collected the revenue of the villages and remitted in the government treasury. When the Nayak ruled in Tamil land at those times they collected the various kinds of taxes from the people. Among them, land tax, Property tax, trade tax, Salt tax, grass tax and industrial taxes were important. Based on the fertility of the soil, taxes were collected. Mainly lands were divided in to fertile and unfertile lands. Records mentioned that taxes were fixed based on the nature of the land, type of harvest and total expenditure. Likewise taxes were also collected from the houses based on its size and facilities. Taxes were also collected from the domesticated animals such as cow, bull, lamb etc. Apart from these tax they also collected '*Ayam*,' '*Manoviruthi*,' '*Karaiturai*,' and '*Sungam*'.

In addition to the above taxes special taxes were collected for the maintenance of army. It was called '*Padaikodai*' records mentioned that people used to pay taxes on bow and spear. The Valangai and Idangai caste groups were compelled to pay their taxes to protect their rights in the society. The people in the society were, more concerned about the festivals in the temples. So for conducting festivals, the temples collected special taxes from the people. This tax was called "*Pidari Vari*". Again at the time of marriage, the marriage parties were forced to remit taxes to the government. Moreover, the traditional takes such as irrigation tax, boat tax, padikaval, Kalappaivari, Nattukanakkuvvari etc. were collected from the people. The Nayaks also collected taxes from the forests, courts, pearl fishing etc. Generally, one half of the product was collected as tax. They were remitted in kind or in cash. People suffered a lot due to the cruelty of taxes. Sometimes the government conceded their demands and reduced the taxes. Generally taxes were collected by force without any mercy.

INDUSTRY:

The Nayaks were not given more important to the growth of industry. Even then the various sections of the people in the society followed certain traditional industries like black smithy, Carpentry, Spinning, Weaving, Pottery making, oil manufacturing, garment making, fish catching, and hair dressing, etc. industries flourished in the Nayak periods.

Government used to collect certain taxes from these industries among them, tharikadamai, Chekkukadamai, Arisikannam, Ponvari, Chemponvari, Meychelvari, Pattucadai Noolayam, Marakkala Vari, Ulaivari etc were important. Certain inscription belonged to this period mentioned that government also collected form parattayar and salt. The state also collected professional tax. It was collected from judges; village heads and high official of the state.

TRADE AND COMMERCE:

Nayaks were concentrated on both internal and external trade. Probably the foreign trade was under the control of the Europeans. They purchased the commodities produced inlands and exported to foreign countries. Likewise, they imported foreign goods and sold in the local markets. The Nayaks granted various concessions to them. Tax was not collected from them. So government concentrated more on collecting taxes from local markets (Angadies). They were number of established markets at the important centers of the kingdom. The commodities manufactured in the local areas were brought to these markets for sale. The merchants in the markets purchased these commodities. All markets were crowded with buyers and sellers. Here were two types of merchants. The petty merchants used to collect and sell commodities by roaming here and there. Another group of merchants stationed in a particular place and sold their commodities. The merchants stored their commodities in the ware houses situated very near to the markets. The government collected commercial taxes from the merchant's. Special officers were appointed for this purpose. The people highly respected the traders because they had great influence in the society. The traders were settled in separate places. Robbery was common in those days. The traders were not free from the danger of theft and murder. So due protection was given to them by the government. Due to highway robbery, the merchant moved from one place of other place in caravans. Local carts were utilized to transport commodities articles were also brought to the market on head. Tolls were collected from the cart on roads. Revenue officials collected these tolls. A road available in the country was utilized for the transport of commodities. The roads leading to the markets were linked with important towns and trading centres. The frequent wars and famines disturbed the steady growth of trade.

CONCLUSION:

Now we shall examine the nayaka's commitment or involvement in the state economic administration. There is no doubt that nayakas played a crucial role in the state revenue collection. There are a large number of sixteenth-and seventeenth-century inscriptions which record the remission of ayyam, manovaruthi, and other by nayakas in favour of artisans, merchants, and cultivators. This is a fact which is concerned by everybody, but the debatable point is whether the remission or collection of these taxes by the nayakas was made of their own accord, implying that it was a local affair having nothing to do with the state. or whether it was made by the nayakas under the orders of the state. In other words, whether the money thus collected by the nayakas was transferred to the state treasury or not. It may not be easy to say anything categorically on this point, but there are many pieces of evidence to show what the nayakas tax collection was under state control and that the money was transferred to the state treasury. First of all, Nuniz gives us the amounts of revenue which some eleven important nayakas had to remit to the state treasury. After their enumeration Nuniz writes.

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