



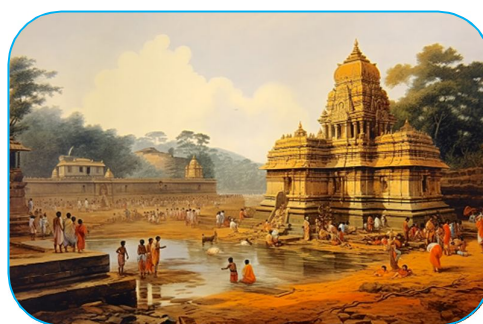
ROLE OF SANTHES (FAIRS) IN THE VIJAYANAGARA PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The reign of Vijayanagara is a very important chapter in the history of south India. About 6000 inscriptions are available in south India relating to the history of this Vijayanagara Empire. Which spanned four dynasties, ruled for about 400 years, Inscriptions belonged them about 2500 have been found in various parts of Karnataka. Among these inscriptions about 200-250 Kannada inscriptions tell us about the santhes of that time, and it's Structure the various merchant communities involved. The merchant Community political influence, customs system other aspects such as finance, tariff facilities weights and measures etc. are available



KEYWORDS: south India relating , spanned four dynasties , merchant communities involved, customs system.

INTRODUCTION

Among the sources of the time was the promotion of new products and markets. The role they played in both the promotion of trade on the one hand and the establishment of trade routes on the other is evident. These indicated a major change in the trend of the economic situation. Production increased for a wider market. It no longer remained confined to a small area of the village. From the inscriptions and the writings of the local authors of the reports of foreign travelers, the sources point to the enormous encouragement of trade through sanctuaries and markets. Every village had its own santhe.¹ These Santhes and markets contributed substantially to the revenue of the state government from the levy levied on the sale of goods and the entry duties collected in Santhes.² Taxes levied in the centuries. This is evident from the inscriptions which indicate that the number of weekly fairs mentioned in various sources and in absolute value must have played a significant role in undermining the self-sufficient chapter of the rural economy. Between the 14th and 17th centuries a number of new melas and santhes were established.

Santhe business is a continuous process. During the Vijayanagara period, the traditional Santhe system of the Hoysala Period and earlier continued for the most part. But it was accompanied by many changes. The establishment of the santhes led to the development of towns. The gathering of sellers and buyers at a specified place at a specified time is called 'Santhe' thus santhe was a major trading Centre. In the conurbation where Santhe took place. Merchants and buyers were provided with advantages such as well transportation and plenty water. Local traders and its president run the Santhe. The president was also the Chairman of the municipal Council and the expenses incurred by the santhe were met by duties collected when the stock was sold or bought. This duty was collected in the form of cash or goods. Farmers and traders used to give land and many taxes to the president to conduct santhe. The

place where santhe was held was called Pete. Santhe or Santhepete, Santhe were initiated or validated at the behest of Nadugowda or Maha Mandaleshwar or a Minister.

In A.D. 1362 all the Peasants and subjects of Kayivara-nadu, all the Nanadesis in Pekkundra and the 18 castes established a fair at Kayivara and Nominated Periya Nayaka as Pattanaswami.³ in A.D.1418 at the instance of Chikkamuddayanayakathe Chief of the Hemmadinandu. Bellegavanda Started a fair⁴ Belur inscription of A.D 1382 States that a list of 26 towns where the santhes were held. They are Vijayanagari, Hastinavati, Doraswamudra, Gutti, Penugonda, Advani, Udayagiri, Chandragiri, Mulavaipadevedu, Chaturangapattana, Mangalore, Barakuru, Honnavar, Chandavar, Araga, Chandragutti, Annegere, Huligere, Nidugallu, Tariyakalhukalleya. Singapattana, these 26 town santhes were carrying out important functions of distribution and collection of agricultural produce. Distribution and storage of important agricultural products were carried out. Important agricultural products like Paddy, Maize, Millet, Bari, Barge, Sava, Wheat, Chickpea, Linseed, Safflower, Jaggery, Sugar, Oil, Ghee, Salt, Betel-nut, Pepper, Onion, Sugar cane are produced during the year. Were being sold, exchange of goods took place on a large scale during the Vijayanagara period. Many merchants and farmers, who came from Karnataka and the Karnataka region dressed in many unknown costumes. Sold clothes, grains, spices, perfumes and prostitutes or women slaves during these santhes.⁵

Some inscriptions depicted about individuals establishing a fair .in A.D.1528 Mallappa of Elabarige caused the construction of a shop or stall, and made a gift of the same together with the toll revenue of the fair held at Malapura and some land at Maraba to the god Suryanarayanadeva.⁶ An inscription from Sidlaghatta tells that in A.D.1531 Garbha Sarumahaparte allocate to one Thimmappa the Basavapattana village as an Umbali Manya for the weekly fair. This how a village could be turned into a town by establishing a fair, an inscription from Anekal records that in A.D. 1412. Junjoji-Nayaka's son HiriyaMudiya-Nayaka established a santhe in Somagondanahalli.⁸ Again in A.D. 1418 Junjubay-Nayaka's son Jaka-mude - Nayaka established a fair by the hands of, Balla-gaunda of Himmare-nad belonging to his office of Nayaka. All the gaudas, settis and others of the nadu granted the Pattanaswamitana along with land and free from all tolls.⁹ In this case after the establishment of the fair by the Nayaka. The nadu granted tax free. In A.D. 1531Kalhasti-Nayaka concede the custom duties and tolls of the santhe of Chikka -Malur.¹⁰

An inscription dated 1316 A.D. of Kanakanahalli of Bangalore District states that the Samanthagowdas of Hommalige and the chokkanadusgranted land to Pattanaswami Chokkasetti for the establishment of a Santhe at Galihal along with eighteen times. Pattanaswami levied a toll in Santhes and collected ¹¹. An inscription dated 1538 A.D. States that Veerannayaka donated the tolls and other revenue collected by settis and Pattanaswami's during the santhe held during Friday at lakshmanapura in the name of service to Goddess Mahalakshmi of Haruhe lakshmanapura.¹²

Inscriptions mention that Santhes donated tolls for service in temples. A.D. 1529-30 The Revenue collected on the town street of VijayaVirupapura (Kampli in HospetTaluk) was donated to the god Mallikarjuna. A.D. in 1530 the toll collected on that Santhe was, donated to the service of Bhairavas.¹³

In the Vijayanagara period the towns were divided into outer pete and inner-pete based on their location. Santhe day santhe was usually held in outer-pete. The rest of the day business was going on in the inner market. There were separate markets for selling different items. The open shop was opened only on Santhe day. The down town shops functioned every day. There were varieties of shops like Haradageri Generl Store, Open store, Dharma Store, Devastore, Manyada etc. Religious shops, god shops and valid shops were exempted.

Nunez has described the Santhe of Vijayanagara like this here Santhe was held every evening. There are ordinary horses, riding horses, fruit and garden crops and wooden items were sold. Every Friday there was a feast of pigs. Chicken and dried fish, Santhe was held every day in every part of the city. Opposite Virupakasha Temple there was Santhepet, one town of Vijayanagar was called Achyutarayana pet and the other town was called Krishnadevaraya's town. It is known from the inscriptions that there were grain shops here.¹⁴

As the traces grew wide in new extension different people walked around him, so it was customary to call those towns by the name of the person. Who built this town, apart from ordinary Santhes, there were special religious Santhes. In some centuries Santhe-Sunka a tax on goods sold was not levied. The village level they used to arrange daily Santhes of the Village deity. Usually a temple was built in the center of the place where the festival was held on the day of the week of that god. They used to collect a portion of the proceeds from the transactions that took place on the Santhe day and used it for the Dasoha of the students of Mahamanya's Student hostel.¹⁵

FOOT NOTES:

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3. Epigraphia Carnatica .S.Ct.95-p.326
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5. Epigraphia Carnatica..Bl.Text P.29
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