



MARITIME TRADE AND COMMERCE IN MEDIEVAL ANDHRA FROM 10th TO 15th CENTURY A.D.

Dr.Dudekonda Ramanjineyulu,
Lecturer in History,
TRR Govt.Degree College,
Kandukur,

Introduction

The Andhras and the Andhra rulers, since ancient times, showed unsatiable keenness and care in fostering trade, commerce and industry. ``Andhra Desa and the Andhras``, states V. Yosodadevi, had a profound role in moulding India culture through the ages. Andhras` contribution in the making of Greater India is nothing short of a marvel. The trade and commerce and maritime activities of the Andhras started as early as the seventh century B.C. and continued upto the beginning of the nineteenth century. They enjoyed their heydays under the Andhra Satavahanas, the Kakatiyas, the Reddis, the Rayas (Vijayanagara kings) and the Qutub-shahis through normal conditions prevailed under the Ikshvakus, the Salankayanas and the Vengi Chalukyas.¹ A brief survey of the trade, commerce and industry of the Andhras through the ages in general and that of the period under our consideration in particular is essential to understand in proper perspective the corporate activities of the guilds.

The natural and historical factors helped to a very great extent to foster trade, commerce, industry and the maritime activities of the Andhras. The extensive coast-line from Kalingapatnam in the north to Pulicat in the south with numerous ports and harbours was most suitable for the maritime activities of the Andhras. These ports served as the emporia of trade with the Eastern countries. The entire Andhras is criss-crossed with rivers and their tributaries. Godavari, Tungabhadra, Krishna and Pennar were the Principle Rivers. The pre-historic settlements of man are discovered in the Krishna-tungabhadra Basin. These rivers were not only navigable up to their mouths for considerable distances but also supplied water to the fertile plains for the development of agriculture. The agricultural surplus thus produced enabled the kings to promote trade and commerce.

Metals like iron, copper, lead and zinc and minerals like the marble, limestone and diamonds were available in several places of Andhra Pradesh located in the present Guntur district, was a very rich source of mineral wealth. It is evident from the account of Strabo that lead was available in considerable quantities near Karampudi. Copper is now found both in Palnadu and Vinukonda taluks. A portion of the village Guttikonda is known as Kolukulapalem where even today iron furnaces and iron stones and minerals are seen. The hill called Inupakonda is in that village. Several mines of snow-white marble, granite and diamonds are found in the Palnadu region.² It is evident from the testimony of the Venetian traveller, Marco Polo, who visited the Andhra country in the 13th century that diamond mining was one of the most flourishing industries in Andhra.³

The prosperity of the Hellenistic world(330 B.C-160 B.C.) comparative peace and progress that prevailed in the Deccan and South India, the Roman demand for the luxury goods, the discovery of the monsoon winds by Hippalus (A.D. 45) urge for the maintenance of the maritime commerce with profit motive and above all the peerless patronage extended by the Andhra rulers were the other important factors that fostered trade, commerce and industry.

The emergence of the Satavahanas opened new vistas in the history of Deccan, Andhra Pradesh and South India. They came to light at a time when the communications between south and north were at the lowest ebb. The Satavahana kingdom was located in between south and north and hence acted as a 'bridge kingdom'. They became the transmitters of the ideals and institutions from north to south and also paved the way for the development of communications and diffusion of trade and commerce.⁴ Further by virtue of controlling the seaports located on the west and east of India, the Satavahanas gave a new direction and dimension to the maritime trade and commerce. The development of agriculture and the consequent production of agricultural surplus, the development money economy and the patronage extended by the Satavahana kings and queens gave the desired support and stimulation for the development of commercial activities in the ancient Andhra Pradesh.⁵

The Satavahanas developed both internal and external trade. Numerous industries flourished in the country, e.g, oil industry, hydraulic industry, braziers, iron-workers, masons, potters, leather workers, carpenters and goldsmiths. Several trade routes connecting principal towns and cities came into existence.⁶ The agricultural surplus, development of trade routes, promotion of trade and commerce and the introduction of money economy paved the way for urbanisation. Several important cities and seaports, like Pratisthana, Soparaka, Barhukachcha, Ghantasala, Amaravati, Misolia(Machilipatnam), Vengi, Kalyan, Tagara, etc, came to limelight.⁷

The post satavahana period also experienced considerable maritime activity. The Nagarjunakonda valley, under the Ikshvakus, attained international celebrity for commerce and Buddhism. The Pallavas of Palnadu, the Salankayanas of Vengi and the early Chalukyas of Badami, etc. Contributed their share for the

promotion of trade and commerce. Thus the Andhras played a glorious art, before the 10th century A.D. in promoting trade and spreading Indian culture in the countries of the Far East.⁸

The 10th century A.D., Marked the decline of the internal and external trade. The civil wars in the Vengi kingdom, the Western Chalukyas-chola conflict to establish their control over vengi Mandala and the rise of the feudatories considerable disturbed the political set up of Andhra Desa which in its turn hampered the growth of the internal and external trade and the industrial progress.⁹ But the Kakatiyas of Warangal (A.D 1000-1323) took very keen interest and evived the trade, commerce and industry.

The Kakatiyas brought the entire Andhra Desa under their rule. The reigns of Ganapatideva and his gifted daughter, Rudramadevi, form the most glorious period of Kakatiya history. It was under Ganapati deva, however, that the sway of the Kakatiya, first attained its widest expansion, and their armies carried the limits of the empire though only for a time, as far south as Kanchipuram and beyond.¹⁰ Rudramadevi and Prataparudradeva maintained intact the territorial integrity of their kingdom and in doing so they even lost their lives. During this period, trade, commerce and industry reached its ad summum.

It is evident from one of the Warangal inscriptions that several craftsmen and manufactures of various kinds of commodities formed into guilds and took to the professsion of not only manufacturing but also selling their goods in an a fair located near to their own villages or towns or cities. The weavers, oil-mongers, smiths, potters, jewellers or gold smiths, basket-makers, mat-makers, vegetable-sellers, tin-dealers, etc. Were some of the craft-corporate organisations that are referred to in the inscriptions mentioned above.¹¹ It is very interesting to note here that dealers in betel-leaves, coconut, mangoes, tamarind and other fruits and pickles are also found referred in the Kakatiya inscriptions.¹² Several beharis(merchants) dealing in wheat, greengram, paddy, jawar, salt, ghee, pepper, mustard, honey, camphor musk, silk, precious stones, pearls, beads, tarmaric, onions, ginger, roots, yarn, etc. Are known to the period under our consideration. It is evident from the above information that trade and commerce became a highly specialised craft and the articles of necessity and luxury were made available to the people by the desi(local), svadesi (native) and paradeshi (foreign) beharulu in the kakatiya period. The existence of a highly organised trade, craft and professional guilds will also give us an idea about the volume of internal trade that has been turned out during this period.¹³

The overseas trade which received a setback in the pre-Kakatiya, period received sufficient stimulation and encouragement during the time of Ganapatideva. The Motupalli inscription of Ganapatideva, bears testimony to his earnestness in the economic progress of the kingdom. Marcopolo mentions precious stones and fine cotton goods as the chief articles of export from Motupalli.¹⁴ The Motupalli abhayasasna fixed the following rates of duty.

- (a) Goods coming from the southern side on one hundred of import 3 packages and on 100 clothes of export 2 coins.
- (b) Goods coming from the north on hundred packages of imports 5 packages, and 100 clothes of export 3 coins.
- (c) On goods exported to foreign lands 3 (coins) on 100 clothes.
- (d) 7 on 100 earls.¹⁵

Another remarkable feature of this period is that the trade routes and the transportation facilities increased by leaps and bounds. The roads between Ballary-Nellore, Ballary-Chittoor, Raichur-Kolanupaka and Kalyana-Kolanupaka-Anumakonda were some of the ancient inter-state routes of trade.¹⁶ The salt producing coastal towns like pedaganjam and the sea-port of Motupalli were linked with Ballary through Tripurantakam and Kurnool. Hanumakonda and Warangal, the two metropolitan cities were connected with all other pemptas or market in the kakatiya kingdom by good communications have now become the national and state highways with minor adjustments.

There were many important trade centres distributed throughout the kingdom Orugallu, panugallu, Alamur, Magatala, Manthane, Mopur, Perur, Valpur, Tripurantakam, Penugonda, Pedaganjam, Macherla, Nellore, Durgi, Gudivada, Ghantasala, Tangeda, Yenaradala, Kopparam, Kochcherlokota, Nandalur, Dornala, Etc., were some of the cities of our period. They also became important trade centres.¹⁷

The Kakatiyas developed seaports for the sake of reviving the sea-borne trade. Besides Motupalli, few more coastal towns were used to serve as ports in those days. Krishnapattanam, located in the present Nellore district, seems to be an active sea-port in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries A.D. The Telugu Chodas of Nellore who were the subordinates of the kakatiyas are notice to have patronised trade in this port.¹⁸ Similarly, Chinganjam in the resent prakasam district, used to be a seaport even from the satavahana period.¹⁹ Divi or Hamsaladivi, at the mouth of the river Krishna, was a port under the Velanati chiefs from whom the town was conquered by Ganapati deva.²⁰

Individual merchants and guilds may also at times maintain their own carts, oxen, horses and the like to a certain limit but that was not always adequate to meet the needs of their trade. The Tripurantakam inscription records the remission of a sunka on 300 perika oxen in the town of Tripurantakam which belonged to the temple. The Kampus who own the oxen for hiring purpose were called perika-varu and the oxen were called perika-edlu. The grant was made by pothanapreggada, Ganapaya, the Sarvadikari, an agent of the kings.²¹ This set of people is included in the Lepakshi Copper Plate grant as Perikala-ettivuvaru, who transport the perika or packalloads.²²

The rivers were also used for the transportation of the merchandise. The two perennial rivers Godavari and Krishna the courses which in Andhra Desa are by no means small in length must have played an important role during the period under our survey.²³

Under the Reddis (A.D. 1325-1448), the political successors of the Kakatiyas, Andhra Desa enjoyed a period of renaissance and efflorescence. The Muslim invasions and the fall of Warangal dealt a death blow to the internal and external trade. Prolaya Vema Reddi restored peace in the Andhra Desa. His successors Anavota, Annvema, Kumaragiri and Kataya Vema not only expanded the Reddi kingdom but also consolidated it considerably. They took very keen interest in fostering trade and commerce. The Telugu poet ketana in his Andhrbhasa-bhusana refers to a route to Ayodhya from Kanch passing through Nellore and Orugallu.²⁴

Nicolo De Conti refers to another inland route from Vijayanagara to Udayagiri on the east coast which passed through Chandragiri.²⁵ Addanki, Kondavidu and Kandukuru, and other important towns in the Reddi kingdom must have been connected with one another by broad ways. Besides these broadways there were other narrow pedestrian tracks leading to each and every village. It may be stated here that the trade routes were also the pilgrim routes and vice-versa Srisailam, Tripurantakam, Ahobilam, Draksharma, Tirupathi and other places were famous centres of pilgrimages and attracted the pilgrims from all corners of the country for many centuries before the Reddi rule.²⁶

Paes who visited Vijayanagara in the reign of krsnadevaraya informs us that they were used in crossing the Tungabhadra near the city of Vijayanagara.²⁷ Textile industry was in a flourishing condition. Spinning, weaving and dyeing were the other industries that are allied with the textile industry. Several varieties of cloth, called after the places of their production, are known to this period.²⁸ Anavota Reddi, restored the port of Motupalli to its former glory. He issued an abhaya-sasana, like the Kakatiya Ganapati deva, giving concessions to merchants coming to settle and trade at Motupalli, and to those tradesmen of other ports and islands coming there on business. He fixed the duties on articles of export and import. This charter of A.D. 1358 was incised in both Tamil and Telugu languages.²⁹

The Reddi kings maintained trade contacts with China, Simhala (Ceylon), Panjara, (Sumatra), Jalanongi (Malay Peninsula), Gova (modern Goa), Yampa or Yapa (Jaffna, a province in the north of Ceylon), Bhita (Assam, and to the south of Manasarovara), Tarunasiri (Tarnassari in the Malaya peninsula), Tavayi (Modern Tavoy in the Malay peninsula), Romana (Pegu in Burma) etc.,³⁰

The Vijayanagara Empire which was established in the second quarter of the 14th century A.D. also contributed for the development of trade and commerce of the Andhra Desa. The development of agriculture and industry and finally the introduction of money economy on a large scale paved the way for the development of internal and external trade.

The internal trade continued to be in the hands of the native merchants. They enjoyed the patronage of the kings. The richer among them were encouraged to settle in the capital, so that they could supply the needs of the palace promptly. It is known from the testimony of Paes that the merchants were induced by Krishnadevaraya to live in Nagalapur, the new city, in very beautiful rows of buildings made after their

manner with flat roofs.³¹ The Raya's example was followed by his subordinates. Tax concessions were given to the settlers during the initial years.

It is known from the Amuktamalyada that every village had a fair of its own.³² Bales of cotton yard and silk, cereals like rice, cholam and ragi, rasavarges like sugar and oil, perfumes like sandalwood, camphor and musk besides a variety of pulses, fruits, and nuts are referred to in the inscriptions.³³

It is known from the Athavanatantram, cotton and silk products manufactured at Dharmavaram, Tadipatri, Adoni, Gutti and Ballary were exported to Srirangapatnam in the South; woollen blankets, nuts iron grains and sandalwood were despatched from chitradurga to biher places cotton from Adoni to Kolar and Siddhagatta. Tobacco which was introduced to our country by the Portuguese, was obtained from Dharmavaram, Chirumana and Recherla, along with ghee and oil, to the neighbouring districts. Spices like pepper and cardamom besides areeanuts were imported from the districts of Nagar into optimum, asafoetida, musk, cotton, shawls and pearls came from the north to Balaghat.³⁴

The foreign travellers, inscriptions and kaifiyats refer to various trade routes of the period under question.³⁵ The trade route between Gutti and Munimadugu and another route connecting Ahobilam with Porumamilla, Baddevolu, Kambham are referred to in Kaifiyats.³⁶ Barbosa hints at a trade route connecting vijayanagara and Pulicat.³⁷ An inscription of the time of Krishnadevaraya gives us an exhaustive list of vehicles used for transport purposes. They were the Kavadis, head-loads, pack horses, pack-bullocks and asses.³⁸

The Vijayanagara age also witnessed the development of foreign trade. Almost the whole of the foreign trade passed through the hands of the Arabs and the Portuguese.³⁹ It should be noted here that the internal trade was organised through the guilds. The Vijayanagara emperors in general and that of Krishnadevaraya in particular, were responsible for the decline of the Arab trade.⁴⁰ The Portuguese merchants did not confine themselves only to the horse trade. Besides Arabian horses, they did trade in velvets, Damaskes, and Sathens, Armesins of Portugal, and pieces of China, Saffron and Scarlets.⁴¹ Thus the Portuguese came to dominate the foreign trade of the Vijayanagara empire.

It is evident from the Amuktamalyada and the Athavana Tantram that horses, elephants, precious stones, sandals, pearls, glass, broad cloth, indigo, nutmeg, mace, silk, china cigars, damask, camphor mercury and clove were the principle commodities that were imported into the Vijayanagara empire.⁴² The exports were food stuffs like rice sugar, wheat and millets etc. Aden and ormuz, spice and drugs to Persia and Yamen, metals like iron to ormuz, finished goods like cotton cloth and porcelain ware to ormuz, printed textiles to pegu and Sumatra and to bantam.⁴³ The Vijayanagara import maintained trade contacts with Sumatra, moluccus, Ceylon, china, jedda, Aden, ormuz, Mecca, pegu, yemen, bantan, Malacca, etc.⁴⁴

The Vijayanagara emperors like the kakatiyas, the Reddis, etc., took very keen interest in developing not only overseas trade but also ports. In A.D.1390, a trade charter at motupalli on the model of ganapatideva and anapota reddy was issued by Devaraya I.⁴⁵ Some of the Tuluva emperors especially

Krishnadevaraya, took great interest the ports. He made them suitable places for importing foreign commodities; and offered protection to the foreigners who migrated either owing to famine, pestilence or strike in their own land. Honawar, Bhatkal, Mangalore, Cumbola, Quilon, Kayal, Nagapatnam, Mailapur, Pulicat, etc. Were some of the sea-ports of the Vijayanagara empire.⁴⁶

It is thus evident from the above discussion that the Andhra Desa and the Andhra witnessed hectic inland and maritime trade and commerce, saved a brief period before the emergence of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. During the time of the Kakatiyas, the Reddis and the Vijayanagara kings the trade and commerce of the Andhras reached its highest water-mark. The inland and the over-seas trade and commerce was conducted through highly organised trade guilds. It should be noted here that the maritime trade of the Vijayanagara period was monopolised by the Portuguese and the Arabs. It is with the background, now we may proceed to discuss the origin, evolution and organisation of the guilds in the mediaeval Andhra Desa.

REFERENCE

1. V. Yasodadevi, Andhra's Contribution to Indian Culture, Trade and Commerce, S.V. University Oriental Journal, Tirupati, 1973, XVI, pp. 95 ff.
2. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. VIII, p.10.
3. Henry Yule and Cordier, The book of ser marcopolo, the venetian concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the east. London, 1936, Vol. II, pp. 359 ff.
4. Thapar, romila; a history of india, i, 1981 (London) pp. 99 ff.
5. Himanshu, p. Ray; Monastery and Guild Commerce under the Sathavahanas. Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986, pp.90 ff.
6. V. Yasodadevi, op. Cit., p, 97; Himanshu, p. Ray, op.cit., pp.112ff; B.V.R., Rao, Navigations of the Andhras, Rajahmundry, 1926, pp.72fg.
7. H. Sarkar, Growth of cities in Andhra disa, X Andhra Pradesh history congress, presidential address 18-19th January, 1986, Guntur.
8. Ibid., p.99,
9. K.A.N Sastry, foreign trade under the kakatiyas, journal of oriental research madras 1934, VIII, part IV, pp,317 ff.
10. P.V.P. sastry, the kakatiyas of warngal, p, 256.
11. N.V. Ramanaah (Ed.) inscriptions of Andhra Pradesh Warangal district Hyderabad, 1974, Wg. No.63.
12. Ibid., P.V.P sastry; op. Cit., p. 243.
13. Ibid.
14. Epigraphia indica, vol. XII, pp. 183 ff; P.V.P sastry, op cit., pp.254
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.,p.250.
17. Ibid. pp. 252 ff.
18. JAHRS, vol. XXV, pp. 118 ff.
19. P.V.P., sastry; op. Cit., p. 257.
20. Ibid.
21. South Indian inscriptions vol, X, No.304.
22. Annual reports on south Indian epigraphy (AR), 1918, p. 174.
23. SH, VI, No. 652; P.V.P sastry, op.cit., p. 251.
24. Andhrabhashabhushana, V. 12, p. 4.

25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.,p.391.
27. R.Sewell; forgotten empire p. 259, London, 1900.
28. M.S. Sarma; History of the redid kingdom, pp. 386 ff, waltair, 1948.
29. AR, 1910, para 61, p. 118.
30. M.S. sarma op. Cit., pp. 408 ff; V. Yasoda op. Cit., pp, 103 ff.
31. R.Sewell; op. Cit., p. 244.
- 32..Amuktamalyada secunderabad, 1970, 79, IV, 35.
33. N.V. Ramanaiah; studies in the third dynasty of Vijayanagara, madras, 1935, p. 295.
34. Ibid., p, 296.

