

An Analysis of Trade and Commerce in the Princely States of Nayagarh District (1858-1947)

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The present Nayagarh District consists of Ex-princely states of Daspalla, Khandapara, Nayagarh and Ranpur. The chief occupation of the people of these states was agriculture. When the earnings of a person was inadequate to support his family, he turned to trade to supplement his income. Trade and commerce attracted only a few thousand persons of the Garjat states of Nayagarh, Khandapara, Daspalla and Ranpur. On the other hand, trade and commerce owing to miserable condition of communications and transportations were of no importance for a long time. Development of means of communication after 1880 stimulated the trade and commerce of the states.

The internal trade was carried on by means of pack bullocks, carts and country boats. The external trade was carried on with Cuttack, Puri and Balasore districts and Central provinces by means of carts and pack-bullocks but during rains by country boats.¹ The export trade consisted of rice, sugarcane, oil seeds, clarified butter, cotton, coarse cereals, timber, Lac, turmeric, honey, hides and other jungle products. The articles imported were foreign cloths, sugar, kerosene, iron utensils, spices, salt etc.²

A. DASPALLA

In Daspalla, owing to the facilities of water and land communications, trade and commerce

had taken rapid strides. Formerly the outsiders only carried on trade here. But of late, some of the residents had turned traders. During the rains and winter, the export and import trade was carried on by country boats through the river Mahanadi which commercially connected the state with the British districts, especially with Cuttack and Puri. But in summer the trade was carried out by bullock carts through Cuttack-Sonepur Road and Jatni-Nayagarh-Daspalla Road.

Rice, Kolthi, Bell-metal utensils, timbers, Kamalagundi silk cloths, dyeing materials produced from the Kamalagundi tree, bamboo, mustard, til, molasses, myrobalan, nusevomica, hide, horns, bones and a lot of minor forest produce, cotton, Mahua flower were the chief articles of which the Daspalla State exported. Kerosene Oil, Cooanuts, foreign made cloths, yarns, sugar condiments and fancy goods were the chief articles which the state imported. Both the export and import had of late years been brisk. In years of poor harvest rice was not allowed to be exported with a view to keep down the prices. In the Satpatna villages, there was a large community of Marwari Mahajans who did a fairly good business by both exporting and importing the articles stated above. Next to them were the *Telies* (Oil men) and *Kumuties* who did the

business. The trade was not registered in the state as necessity for it had not been felt.³

B. KHANDAPARA

In Khandapara State, trade was generally carried on by local *teli*, Thoria and Kansari Mahajans. The export trade consisted mainly of rice, paddy, pulses, gur, cotton, timbers and bamboos. Cloth, Kerosene oil, Salt and articles of luxury constituted import trade of the state.⁴

Nijgarh the Headquarters of Khandapara was the only place that could be called a town. There was no *Haat* in the State. But Nijgarh, Kantilo and Khalisahi afforded ample facilities and well served the purpose of markets. Kantilo in the Khandapara State situated on the right bank of the river Mahanadi was a considerable seat of trade, to which merchants from Cuttack brought salt, spices etc. to exchange for rice, cotton, wheat etc.⁵ Kantilo served as a connective link between several Feudatory States on the north and the west and the central provinces as also Banki, Khurda and the Khurda Road Railway station. At each of these three centres, the principal commodities found for sale were Rice, Salt, Cotton, Brass and bell-metal utensils, pulses and vegetables, Kerosene oil, Manchester and country cloth, Gur, Cotton fabrics, Coconut, oil and oilseeds, iron and lead etc.

The annual *mela* that took place at Kantilo on the Magha Ekadasi (in spring season) continued for five days. This was very largely attended by the people of this State and the neighbouring states and of the Government Estates of Banki and Khurda. It offered an opportunity for sale of various commodities imported from several places. To enlarge the outlook of the people an agricultural and industrial exhibition was also held there during the *mela* days.⁶

During the year 1944–45 in Khandapara, commerce remained dull as before due to

prevailing war conditions. The State Price Controlling Board met from time to time and controlled the prices of almost all the essential commodities. It checked the tendency of profiteering of the traders. The state obtained almost all controlled articles including standard clothes from British India and arranged their sale to the public at controlled rates through recognized dealers. It also took special care for equitable distribution of the same throughout the state.

As in previous years prior to 1944-45; *gur*, brass and bell metal utensils, hide and horn of cattle and deer, forest products, livestock etc. timber and wooden ware supply materials were chiefly exported from the state. Clothes, yarn, sugar, salt, condiments, matches, wheat and wheat products, Kerosene, mustard and coconut oils, medicines, soap and fancy goods of all kinds were the main articles of import to the states.⁷

The River Mahanadi was made great use of especially just after rains for the floating down of timbers and bamboos and also molasses to Cuttack and miscellaneous trade with Sambalpur and Raipur in the Central Provinces.

C. NAYAGARH

Nayagarh which was the headquarters of the state was the only place called as town with 509 houses and a population of 1912 during 1932-33. The other important places were Itamati, Sarankul, and Orgaon. Itamati was a big village with 758 houses and a population of 3,190. It was situated near the Khurda border and was a big trading centre, where a bi-weekly *Haat* was held. The traders were mostly Marwaries whose business extended from Itamati to the interior of the state and neighboring states and the British territory. Weavers figured prominently in this village who weaved fine sarees, napkins and *matkas*. There were also some bell-metal workers (Kansaries) who had migrated from Kantilo in

Khandapara state. They manufactured various kind of utensils. Those were commonly used by the people of this part.

The importance of Orgaon and Sarankul had greatly increased on account of the existence of the famous temples of Raghunath Jew and Ladukesh Mahesh in the above two places respectively. There were a few merchants of *kumuti* class at Orgaon who carried on import and export trade with Berhampur and Ghumsur in the district of Ganjam.

Besides the *Haat* at Itamati, there were 2 other *Haats*, one at Drudura and the other at Bahadajhola. The latter was commonly known as Manikpatna Haat. The Drudura Haat was a small one and its usefulness was confined to the people of Mahipur and Korada pergunas. Bahadajhola or Manikpatna Haat was originally started by the late Raja Bahadur Ajay Chandra Das, the then Government Agent of the state in the year 1903. Since that time it had been increasing in importance and had become a prominent trading centre of the state.

The commodities that were generally found for sale in the above said haats included Rice, Manchester and country cloth, salt, *Gur* (Molasses), cotton, cotton fabrics, Brass and bell-metal utensils, cocoanut, pulses and vegetables, oil and oilseeds, kerosene oil, iron, lead, etc.

The special feature of the Bahadajhola *Haat* was that, it had practically the only cattle market in the state to which livestock consisting of cows, bullocks, buffaloes, and goats were brought in large numbers for sale. This place also was laying as it on the border of Kandhmal tracts afforded opportunities to the backward Kandhas to enlarge their outlook and to sell their commodities at competitive prices.

Of the annual fairs (Melas), the most important was the Jagar Mela of Sarankul. Next

to it, the Ramanavami Mela of Orgaon and Panchudola Mela of Itamati. The Jagar Mela of Sarankul began towards the end of February and continued for more than a week. This was very largely attended by the people of Nayagarh and neighbouring states and specially by the people of Ganjam district. This Mela attracted shopkeepers, artisans and traders from all over the state as well as from the neighbouring states and British districts. It offered an opportunity for the sale of various commodities. The Ramanavami Mela at Orgaon commenced from about the middle of April and continued for 9 days. It was also a fairly big fair. The Itamati Panchudol fair was comparatively a smaller gathering and continued only for 2 or 3 days.

Trade in Nayagarh was generally carried on by local Marwaries, Telies and Kumuti Mahajans. The export trade consisted mainly of rice, paddy, pulses, molasses, cotton, timber and bamboos. The import trade of the State consisted of cloth, kerosene oil, salt and articles of luxury.⁸

The principal occupation of the people of Nayagarh state was agriculture. Paddy, *Mung*, *Biri*, *Mandia* were the chief agricultural products. These were exported to Khurda sub-division and Ganjam District of Orissa province as in the previous years till the month of June 1942. Then the export of Paddy and its by-products were completely prohibited in the State while other food grains were controlled subject to payment of duty, fixed by the state.⁹

During 1942-43 in Nayagarh; hides, bones and some forest products such as timber and bamboo etc. and other minor forest products were exported. The chief articles imported during this period were cloth, cotton yarn, silk, kerosene, wheat and wheat products, vegetable oil, spices, fancy goods and articles of foreign manufacturers. After meeting the local consumption, food grains

etc. as detailed below were exported from the state to British India or to adjoining states during the year 1945-46.

<u>Name of the commodities</u>	<u>Quantity of export</u>	
1. Mung	8207	maunds
2. Rice	38	maunds
3. Mandia	1003	maunds
4. Chana	2845	maunds
5. Kulthi	1793	maunds
6. Gur	26984	maunds

Hides, bones, and forest products were also exported during this year as per previous situation.

D. RANPUR

In Ranpur state, there were daily markets in Ranpurgarh, Rajsunakhala, Gopalpur, and Chandpur and weekly markets at Ranpurgarh and Rajsunakhala. The weekly market at Ranpurgarh was held on Wednesdays and Sundays. At Rajsunakhala, it was held on Thursdays and Mondays. Vegetables, stationeries, country made clothes, earthen pots, baskets, sweet meats, agricultural produces and dry fish were sold in the weekly markets. The speculators purchased agricultural produces and vegetables in large scales for export to the outside. The people of the villages assembled there to sell their goods and purchase their daily requirements. People also got a chance of meeting their friends and relatives. In daily markets; fresh vegetables, Chilika fish and dry fish were sold. There were also biweekly market at headquarters where country products were bartered for iron, cotton, blankets, cloth, silk, wheat, clarified butter from the Khandapara State.

There were 3 kinds of weights in use in the state. One was standard Seer of 80 *tolas*, the other was Katki Seer of 105 *tolas* and the third

one was locally called *Biga*. All controlled commodities and salt were sold in standard *seers*. All other articles were sold in *katki seers*. Fish, vegetables, gur and turmeric were sold in *Bigas*.

In villages of Ranpur, agricultural products were sold in *Nauties* and *Mans* made of canes. Paddy lending business was always carried on in *Nauties*. One *Nauti* represented 5½ Katki Seers while measuring only rice, mung and wheat. But one *nauti* paddy would be 5 standard seers in weight. One *Nauti* was equal to 8 *mans*. Rice was ordinarily sold in *mans*. In Kandhanagarh and Champagarh zilla people used a brass *nauti* of 8 seers in Katki.¹⁰

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