



e-ISSN: 2319-8753 | p-ISSN: 2347-6710

IJRSET

International Journal of Innovative Research in
SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE | ENGINEERING | TECHNOLOGY

Volume 10, Issue 8, August 2021

ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.569

9940 572 462

6381 907 438

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www.ijirset.com



Economic Life of Vedic, Ramayana and Mahabharata Period

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ABSTRACT : In the Rigveda, the place of agriculture in comparison to pastoralism was Gaur. Of the total 10462 verses of Rigveda, only 24 mention agriculture. In agriculture, three words of importance are found in the root part of Hita - Udar, Dhanya and Vapanti. The word 'Yarshini' has been used for agriculture or agriculture. Even in the Ramayana era, the eternal and everlasting industry of the state, agriculture was a universal means of livelihood. The importance of agriculture, animal husbandry and trade had increased so much at this time, that it was counted as Trisah Vidya (equivalent to the three Vedas and the policy of punishment). The Vaishyas are called 'Krishi Goraksha Jivin', meaning they run their livelihood through agriculture and animal husbandry.

KEYWORDS: Agriculture was a universal means of livelihood

I. ECONOMIC LIFE OF VEDIC PERIOD

The early life of the Rigvedic Aryans was temporary. Therefore, animal husbandry was more important than agriculture in his life. The cow was the most important of the animals. Cow was counted in wealth. The cow is also called as Aghanya (unkillable), Ashtakarni (the one with pierced ears or the one with eight marks on the ear) etc. Apart from the cow, the second major animal was the horse. Horses were mainly used in chariots. The Rig Veda mentions a bull, a buffalo, a sheep, a goat, an Ushta (camel) and a sacred bitch named Sarama. Unlike Indus civilization, there is no mention of tiger and elephant in Rigveda. In the Rigveda, the place of agriculture in comparison to pastoralism was Gaur. Of the total 10462 verses of Rigveda, only 24 mention agriculture. In agriculture, three words of importance are found in the root part of Hita - Udar, Dhanya and Vapanti. The word 'Yarshini' has been used for agriculture or agriculture. The cultivated land was called "Kshetra" and the fertile land was called "Urvara". The land was divided into fields, in the middle of which were strips of land called "Khilya". The word "Khilya" has also been used for lands like Rati, Usar etc. The drains or kand made from the plow were called Sita. The word local for plough and Vrik for bull is found while the lavaha is called kiwash. The Rigveda mentions only one grain, Yava or Barley. The manure was called 'Shakam or Karish' while the barn was called 'Khal'. The Vedic age Aryans were leading a permanent life by organizing under a regular social system long before the Ramayana period. At this time the civilization had developed a lot. The society had become civilized and cultured. Vidya, art and skills had reached their climax.

II. ECONOMIC LIFE OF RAMAYANA PERIOD

Even in the Ramayana era, the eternal and everlasting industry of the state, agriculture was a universal means of livelihood. The importance of agriculture, animal husbandry and trade had increased so much at this time, that it was counted as Trisah Vidya (equivalent to the three Vedas and the policy of punishment). The Vaishyas are called 'Krishi Goraksha Jivin', meaning they run their livelihood through agriculture and animal husbandry. The agricultural business was protected by the state. It was the duty of the state to redress the sufferings of the farmers and livestock farmers, and to mobilize the means of their happiness and prosperity. It is clear from the receipt of Sita by King Janak while plowing the yagya land with a plow that even the Kshatriyas were not barred from agriculture.

During the period of Dasharatha-Rama, the Kosala kingdom was happy and prosperous from the point of view of agriculture. The entire Kosala kingdom was full of riches, full of happy and prosperous cows and was full of ponds, gardens and mango trees. During the time of Rama, there was never any mischievous and rainstorm in this region, nor did any fear arise from all sides. Farmers were permanently settled in their respective districts in a safe environment. So I was not inclined to change the place. Years were timely and sufficient. The fields were full of grains. The cities were full of wealth. The earth was full of ripe paddy and full of all kinds of medicines. Rain water was important in irrigation of agriculture. Nevertheless, artificial means of agriculture were also developed. The main sources of irrigation were



large reservoirs, small ponds, rivers and wells. The kingdom of Kosala had an abundance of ponds. From the point of view of irrigation, the fields were divided into two parts.

Dev Matrik : The fields which depended on rain water

Adev Matrik: The fields which did not depend on rain water.

The farms of the Kosala kingdom were mostly Adeva matrikas. It is clear from this that the means of irrigation were available in sufficient quantity. Rivers flooded the region during the rainy season, making the region fertile. The alluvial area of the Gomti river was used for pastoral purposes. Although the king was the owner of all the land. However, paying taxes to the state by the subjects is an indicator of the land ownership of the state. The field was called Kshetra or Kedar. After clearing the bushes of the field, plowing was done. The farmers used hard hinges, urns, axes, hoe, kumbh, kshur, khanit, thunk, datra, parashu, piak, phal and longal prong plough etc. in agricultural work. Agriculture and animal husbandry were mutually complementary occupations. The cattle-dominated villages were called Ghosh. The joint mention of village Ghosh in Ramayana indicates the closeness of these two types of settlements and the mutual dependence of agricultural animal husbandry. The Kosala region was full of cattle (Dhora). Lakhs and crores of cows have been mentioned on the site. From an economic point of view, cow farming was more important. The work of ploughing, traction and transport was taken from the bullocks. Horses had a prominent place in economic life after the cow, the bull. Cottage industries were run with the materials obtained from animals. The cottage industry of making milk products was prevalent in the rural areas. The elephant industry was also very advanced. The full economic benefit of the forest produce was taken. Those who got their livelihood from the forests were called Vanjeevanahs. Metal industry was also prevalent due to the availability of various minerals. The textile industry was also in great progress. Commerce trade was in the hands of Vaishyas. Major cities were the main centers of trade. Ayodhya was a major city from the point of view of commerce and industry. Ancient India was far ahead of many countries in the rest of the world in terms of industrial development. Even before the Ramayana and Mahabharata period, Indian business organizations not only traded far and wide, but they were so economically strong and socially capable, organized and powerful that it was impossible even for the then heads of state to ignore them.

Social Condition: At this time the Aryan society was definitely divided into caste-grandson. Basically it was division of labour. The caste system was more rigid than in the earlier era. Where the castes of the time of Rigveda were more rigid in the form of classes. And his position was found to be very uncertain and mixed. At the same time, a definite separation had been established among the castes of the Ramayana period. The nature of the four characters was clear. In the description of the city of Ayodhya, it has been said that Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas engaged in their respective deeds used to live in it.

Mahabharata period:

After the Ramayana period, another era begins in Indian history. Which is called Dwapar. The power of the Suryavanshis had weakened in this age. Small kingdoms were established under Kosala. Their cultural history is bleak in the Pamre Dwapar Yuga. Only in the Mahabharata era does some light fall on their cultural life. From the point of view of livelihood and economic development, at this time the society of this region was self-sufficient and all-encompassing. Generally the society of the time was agrarian. Although there was a provision of different crafts, industries and professions for the people of different classes and castes. However, the main sources of livelihood of the people were agriculture and animal husbandry. Adequate development of agricultural work and agricultural means had taken place. Trade and occupation were also one of the major means of livelihood. The division of varnas in social life was on the basis of merits and deeds.

Buddhist period: Pre-Situation - During the Mahabharata war (about 1400 BC), all the states of India were divided into two sides, Kauravas and Pandavas. The kingdom of Kosala was with the Kauravas. This war of Mahabharata (in which the whole of India was involved) ruined the condition of the whole of India. The widespread bloodshed and massacre had left an atmosphere of sorrow, grief and despair all around the country. After this war, along with Indian history, the history of Kosala Janapada also falls into darkness. It seems more likely that this part of the Gangetic plain remained forested and uninhabited for a long period. After that, tribal people and mixed castes gained power here and there and established the rule, but from the Terai in the north to the Son valley in the south of Sakya Muni Buddha (550 BC) there were two major ethnic (dynastic) states named Kashi and Kosala. Rise within the political organization. Under which small states abandoned the monarchy and established the republic. Kashi Kosala consisted of 18 republics, 09 mallicks, and 09 lichchivas. In Kosala district, a republic named Malla was established between the Rapti and Gandak rivers. Kushinagar and Pava were its two main centers. Thus the Malla nation became a completely



independent republic from Kosala. Varanasi, Ayodhya, Saket, Shravasti were prominent among the cities. These cities were connected to each other by road transport. Crafts and business were in great progress. The craftsmen and businessmen had freed themselves a lot by being completely dependent on the rural peasant masses. Now they started making more goods than the needs of the people of the village. and started sending him out. For the advancement and protection of industries, businessmen formed their own organizations, which became famous by the names of Sangh, Nigam, Category, Pug, Niya, etc. Before Buddha the society was divided on the basis of color or varna. It did not take the form of the caste system of the later period. Birth is the determinant of highness or lowness, this was recognized only in the lower class of the society. The primacy of karma was noticed by all and it was accepted that people who were considered small, could rise above good deeds. Kosala had great fame in Buddhist era India. The areas along the banks of the rivers, which were fertile alluvial soils, were inhabited by agriculturists and all cultured people. Intensive and self-sufficient village communities were established in the valley plains along the main river routes. We do not hear about lonely dwellings anywhere.

The characteristics of economic life were developed village institutions. Each of which was the owner of the land. As regards his ownership of the land, only such a limit was considered, which the chief had to pay in the form of tax in the state. The permissible part of the state, which was measured by the village headman and removed, lived from one-sixth to the twelfth part of the produce. The king had the right over the non-caste land and the unnatural land or property. Due to the absence of the system of zamindari, there were more small farmers of similar status. The work of security and justice of the village was mainly in the hands of the assembly. The assembly itself used to do many works of public interest like irrigation, roads, dharamsala, meeting place etc. Apart from agriculture, many industries and trades were the basis of economic life. Much progress had been made in this direction. The main 18 crafts of this period are mentioned.

Post Buddhist period (Hindu period):By the fifth century during the post Buddhist period, the rural republics had disappeared. Once again most of this region became sparsely populated and forested. However, the Kassel fell apart during the period of the Shugans' hegemony. However, the castes here, which had suzerainty over the land, were not completely destroyed. Kshatriya castes were mostly dominant. There were two classes of Kshatriyas – Vedic Kshatriyas and Buddhist Kshatriyas. Similarly, among the Brahmins also there were two classes. But the class of Brahmins who had become Buddhist, now after the decline of Buddhism returned to Hinduism, so the already existing traditional Brahmins did not give them an equal place. As a result another caste emerged in the Hindu society above the Kshatriyas and below the Vedic Brahmins. This caste belongs to Bhumiars. Vaishyas and Shudras were further influenced by Buddhism, but their social status was not affected by being initiated into Buddhism and again returning to Vedic religion at the time of decline of Buddhism.

In the first century AD, this region was occupied by the Kushanas. After that, around 320 AD, the Gupta dynasty took control. After that, around 320 AD, the Gupta dynasty took control. The travel descriptions of two Chinese travelers Fahien and Hiuen Tsang in the fifth and seventh centuries also shed light on the then culture. At this time Vedic (Brahmin) and Buddhism were operating simultaneously. It is known from the descriptions of Fahien and Hiuen Tsang that in the fifth and seventh centuries, most of the Saryupar plain was forested. The picture of Buddhist pilgrimage and the capitals of the ancient republics which is found in the travel description of Fahien, a clearer picture is available from the travel description of Hiuen Tsang. After the disintegration of the ancient republics, the major religious centers and cities were gradually becoming devoid of people. Only 200 families survived in a huge city like Shravasti. Kushinagar and the border villages were almost desolate and unpopulated. The city walls were broken for many miles. The cause of this destruction is uncertain. But possibly, apart from mutually destructive war, natural calamities like earthquake and flood were more responsible for this. People were slowly moving south, leaving their old settlements. In the fifth and sixth centuries, this region came under the Maukhari dynasty of Kanya Kubja (Kannauj). As evidenced by the low gold metal coins of Kannauj second order found in Faizabad, Pratapgarh and Bahraich districts. From this time till the end of 12th century (till the Ottoman invasion), the region remained under the control of Gurjar, Pratihara and Gahadaval dynasty of Kannauj. During this long period, Kannauj remained the center of political and cultural revolution of North India.

Pre-Middle Period (Adivasi Occupation Period):After the death of Harsha (647 AD) anarchy spread throughout northern India. Small princely states were formed all over the country. They were constantly absorbed in local quarrels. At the same time, they continued to struggle for rights and territorial boundaries over Kanauj. Thus, due to the chaotic conditions of mutually destructive war, as well as the encroachment of foreign invasion, the government people appeared to be suffering. And their religious wars ended in such a disastrous way that they were unable to hold power



for a long time. Therefore, as a result of the prevailing conditions of anarchy for a long period, the suzerainty of tribal groups like Bhra, Pasi, Thatara, Lodh, Dom, Arakh, Ahir Kurmi etc. was established in this region. Although little is known about their place of origin and their entry into this region. However, their relation to this region is as ancient as the Indus-Valley civilization. Thousands of years ago the Aryans had subjugated these tribal castes. And drove them to the hilly areas of the north and south. Those who had taken refuge in the inaccessible forests of these areas. And now when the days of the Suryavanshi Kshatriya castes came, they became strong. And after leaving the hilly areas in groups (herds) they settled on the entire Ganges plain. C.A. Elliot observes that "The scene before us in Oudh (as well as in others areas of Ganga plain) at the fall of historic curtain (during the days of Ramchandra and a few centuries that followed) is an un-inhabited country and a large colony of Surjbansis occupying Ayodhya as their capital. When the certain rises again (after the death of Harse) We find Ayodhya destroyed, The Surjbansis utterly banished and a large extant of country ruled over by aboriginals called Cheros in the for East Bhars in the center and Rajpasis in the west". Thus it is concluded that these Bhars and other similar tribal castes came out of the unhealthy refuges of the inaccessible forest areas of North and South and established their suzerainty over this region in about the seventh century. The area of possession of the tribal masses was divided into various princely states. The boundaries of each dominion area were demarcated in physical forms like wild land and big river etc. Each region was independent of each other. Each chief exercised his authority over his isolated territory and community (caste-group). None of them accepted the leadership of others. The possession areas of these tribal groups were protected by fortifications and forests. The width of such protection was from a few furlongs to a few miles. In this way the regional princely states were self-sufficient in terms of security. In the beginning such communities were republican. In which there was no king. But before being displaced by the Rajputs, they were divided into small jagirdars, ruled by kings and generals. Undoubtedly, the pre-medieval tribal possessions provided the necessary basis for the emergence of medieval communities.

III. CONCLUSION

With the development of civilization, human life was based on agricultural work, agriculture was the basic basis of economic source. As the cultural development progressed, agricultural practices also changed and the status of industry was attained. In the present time, directly or indirectly, the basic needs of human life are fulfilled only by agricultural products. Agriculture is the basic basis of human life in the physical and scientific age from yesterday to today.

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