

ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE

Kashmir was traditionally an agricultural country. With its fertile soil and abundance of water-supply, agriculture was the principle source of food and wealth. Kashmir has generally been one-crop-a-year economy because of the climatic constraints.

Rice was the staple crop of Kashmir. About $\frac{3}{4}$ th of the cropped area was under rice cultivation. Cultivation of rice presupposes abundance of irrigational facilities which existed in the valley. The destruction of rice crops always resulted in scarcity and famine. Besides rice we have evidence of the cultivation of barley and pulses too.

Fruit cultivation seems to have been practised in Kashmir from ancient times. we

have mention of grapes and grape-gardens in the Rajtarangini. Hiuen Tsang remarks that Kashmir produced abundant fruits and flowers. Among the fruits grown were pears, wild plums, peach, apricot and the grape Bithana also. Says mentions grapes growing in abundance in Kashmir.

The cultivation of Saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir since ancient times. Saffron was extensively cultivated. There were also some forest products like kuth and dhupa which were used in medicine & trading purposes.

As rice was the staple food of the people and it was prone to floods, different rulers took measures to protect the cultivable land from floods. Damadara built stone like dikes in order to guard against inundations. Baladitya built an embankment to protect the cultivable lands from floods & the surplus water was channelled to irrigate crops. Attempts were also made by Lalitaditya who arranged for conducting the waters of Vitasta at Cakra-dara and distributed it to various villages. Suyya also tried to regulate the course of Vitasta and changed the confluence of Vitasta and Sindh to Shadipur. But all these attempts could not protect the people from the wrath of floods and famines. Serious famines occurred during Partha & Harsha's reign which took a heavy toll of lives. With the

Swelling population ^{also} put a great pressure on land. Agrarian Taxation :- As agriculture was the main stay of economy, land revenue was the major item of the income of the govt. In normal times, the share of the state was $\frac{1}{6}$ th of the produce. There is no indication of land revenue settlement in Kashmir but the mention of the office of Gramakayastha (village accountant) and Skandaka (Lambardar), indicates that some sort of record showing peasants' holdings in land and his revenue liabilities existed. The land revenue seems to have been taken in kind as is proved by the detailed account of Abul Fazl, which shows that the revenue administration in Kashmir was similar in the Hindu times as well.

In addition to land revenue, cultivators had to pay other taxes, both direct and indirect. Samatkaravarman levied contributions for the monthly pay of the Gramakayasthas & Skandakas from the villagers. Samatkaravarman instituted the system of levying Begar from the villagers. Besides the revenue from land, the kings levied direct taxes of all sorts from town and city dwellers ^{from officials} and market shops.

Samatkaravarman established two new revenue offices called Atapathbhaga ^{house tax} and Grahakritya. The ^{tax} authorities resorted to heavy taxation through the officials of Aksapatala and Grahakritya. King Yasaskara appointed four city-perfects (Nagaredhikara) in order to increase his revenue. The condition of the people was

deplorable during the reign of Harsa. He stopped all means of collecting funds for meeting his extravagant expenses. During the comparatively peaceful reign of Jaysimha, some of these imposts were abolished. Large stipends were paid to outstanding poets, scholars etc. to the Udbhata, Jayabada's chief Pandit, was paid a sum of 100,000 dinars as his daily allowance. This constituted a serious drain on the royal treasury. Industries and professions on P.N.R. Banerji.

Non-Agricultural Economy :- Although agriculture was the main occupation of the people of Kashmir, there were several industries also. The most notable industries were ^{manufactures of} textiles, leather goods, Jewellery, Smithery, Stone-work, wood-work and pottery. Both Woolen & Cotton textiles were produced in ancient Kashmir. Fine cloth was produced in the valley from times of remote past. Hiuen Tsang mentions that the people of Kashmir wore clothes of white linen. According to him there were 3 types of clothing - Kansheya (silk & muslin), Kshaumo (linen) and Kambala (blankets). Thus we find the existence of a kind of silk industry in Kashmir. Kalhana refers that Samakrasapatra was an important centre of cloth weaving (esp. woolen) and also an important centre of transac-
tion & sale of cattle. Smithery was also an important industry. Implements were needed for agric

funeral purposes, weapons for the army - swords, arrowheads, daggers, and domestic utensils for cooking & storage purposes.

Pottery was also an important industry. Earthen pots, vessels and rings were used by the people which indicates the existence of a highly developed and flourishing industry.

Kashmir was also fairly advanced in glass manufacture, particularly bangles. In the Rajtarangini it is stated that the merchant Padmaraja despatched to King Bhoja of Malwa, the wares of a ^{potter} ~~potter~~ filled in large glass jars.

Goldsmiths also flourished in Kashmir. Kalhana refers to gold bangles, armlets, rings etc worn by kings, queens & nobles. Leather-work was also practised. Chinese sources tell that the people were wearing leather doublets. Kshemendasa says that leather water bags were important items of camp luggage of Kayastha officers. Kalhana says that 100 dinars were paid to the leather workers for stitching ~~clothes~~ shoes.

Woodwork was also practised. Besides these, some minor professions were also practised like gardeners, fishermen, garland-makers, barbers etc. Gardening, fishing, garland-making.

Trade & Commerce :- The strategic position of Kashmir made it an important centre of trade. There was brisk internal & external trade. The principal items of commerce within the country were wollen cloth, food grains, grapes, wine, Saffron, cattle, iron implements, earthen ware, bronze and

Copper utensils. Internal trade was both inland and waterways. River Vitasta played an important role in riverine transport because of which cities flourished on the banks of the river.

Important trading centres were Parvapura, Hushkapura, Puranadhistana, Samakapattana. Kashmir had also trading relations

with the neighbouring countries. Kalhana mentions that Kashmir had political and cultural relations with "Loh". Important trading route was Baramulla-Gandhara route. Hiuen Tsang also entered through this route. Al-Beruni, in Kitab ul-Hind mentions that it is the best entrance to Kashmir. The second route was the Northern route which ran from the North (Ouzang). We don't have detailed accounts

of the items of export and import. But it is presumed that the chief articles of export were raw-wool, manufactured woven-cloth, hides, leather goods, fruits like pear, wild plum, peach, apricot and grapes. Kashmir also exported saffron and kuth (costus) and small quantities of silk. The demand for the Kashmirian saffron in Indian markets was very great in ancient times. In Harsha's Ratnavali we have a reference to saffron of Kashmir being preferred to that of Parasikas.

Among the important items of import was salt & Pir Panjal was the main route through which it came to Kashmir. Plin calls this route Laranasarmi. Spices

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Cotton and silk piecegoods were also imported from the rest of India. Besides, precious metals, copper & brass for coinage were also imported. Marco Polo mentions that Coral which was carried from the western parts of the world, had a better sale in Kashmir.

The mountain passes were guarded by rulers & watching stations were maintained. Besides soldiers, custom officers were posted for the collection of duties. Kshemendara mentions Suktasthana (custom posts) at the end of the Panjal route & Sankhikas who were posted there. A passage of Rajtarangini points out that the commodities coming and going through these watch posts were stamped & registered by the custom officials and custom duties were paid on the import & export of articles.