



Political Interpretations of Trade Relations: New Reflections on King Devaraya II & His Economic Policy

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Abstract: *The booming progression in the field of economy , land grants, commerce , tax collection, financial system, market growth , foreign exchange , export & import etc had significant & stable association with the royal personalities during the Vijayanagara period . The rule of Devaraya II is remembered for his balanced attitude towards maintaining a stable governmental machinery with the ushering requirements of an expanding economy. This paper disseminates the highlighted images of king Devaraya II as a farsighted king who, focused attention on managing an equilibrium between warring trading factions & chartered trade management laws along ethical lines*

Key words: *King Devaraya II , Expanding economy, requirements of trade trade regulations*

Introduction

King Devaraya II was an important king of Vijayanagara dynasty who ruled between 1424 - 1446. He was an ambitious & motivated ruler. He was a great scholar himself. He was a great warrior king as he is referred to in his inscriptions as gajabentegara or hunter of elephants. He extended his territories up to Krishna River. Persian ambassador Abdul Razzak maintains in his travel account that his kingdom extended from Ceylon to Gulbarga. Contemporary accounts hold that the King received annual charges from Ceylon, Pegu, Quillon, Pulicat. With a vast army ranging from 10-

11 lakh soldieries & he also maintained a grand fleet. All these geographical subjugations helped him to expand his sway over a vast area. He had to face the demands of a booming economy as well. The expanded markets demanded large scale exports & imports while local trade has also broadened beyond limits due to military requirements. This expansion of local & overseas markets required the market orientations & king Devaraya considering the influx of market economy harped on maintaining evenness in his economic policies.

Objectives of Study



1. this paper tries to focus on King Devaraya's regime with flourishing export & import trade &
2. this paper tries to underline on how requirements of a market economy demanded regulatory supervision
3. this paper tries to spotlight on King Devaraya's visions about maintaining an authoritarian management of business .

Methodology of Study: This paper has utilized the primary sources of inscriptions from Devraya's period along with several secondary works.

Analysis

Political Divisions Under Devaraya II -the following were the important political division of Devaraya II. ((Dr. Nagaraju H M – Devaraya II & his times 1997).

Badami seeme
Behuranadu
Chennapattana
Edanadu
Hanivurunadu
Holeyahonnurunadu
Honnavalli seeme
Hoysalanadu
Kadabandanadu
Kalalenadu
Kukkalanadu
Morasunadu
Mudugalanadu
Nalavattunadu
Nidugallunadu
Niduvalanadu
Nuggehallinadu
Ponginadu
Saataligenadu

Talakadunadu
Tolavalanadu
Uppagundanadu

The Economy during King Devaraya II

During Devaraya's regime, Enlargement in geographic expanse had culminated in the urbanization .Besides semi urban settlements were on the swing. Interior markets had almost doubled. Safeguards given by the king to their merchants needed further partnerships. The taxation policy had to be meticulously implied. Urbanization and related transformation of settlements had its own impact. The monetization and the increasing role of production for markets was a visible change, the volatile and unpredictable relationship between long-distance exchange and local political and economic structure always had a good connectivity with each other which lead to intensification of production; and the shifting roles of religious and other institutions such as mutts, temples, and guilds was visibly very clear. (Kathleen D. Morrison-Commerce and Culture in South Asia 2011).

The major mints were on the banks of River Krishna. Pack animals were used for carrying goods regularly. Sante was looked after by pattanaswami – who supervised the whole running procedures. Several inscriptions of this period refer to nearly 80 trade centers during this period . There were



separate markets for each commodity. The markets for agricultural & nonagricultural products was separate as left & right hand caste communities affiliations .(Dr. Paramashiva murthy – prohaddevarayana shasanagalu, prasaraᅡa , hampi kannada vidyalaya hampi 2007).

The Case of Sugar

Sugar was grown in canara which was exported to Persian gulf & was a very profitable business. This canara region was blessed with heavy rainfall & powdering of sugar was a very herculean task & it was traded locally into plains where it was powdered dried & pocketed into small pouches. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete, Kolar district no 72 dtd 1430 AD maragallu).The Vijayanagara kings encouraged a policy of progressive reclamation of land by offering land inducements by way of exemption from taxes. A vast area was brought under cultivation through clearing of forests which was an important part of land policy which accorded amplification and augmentation in land revenue collections. (Dr. Nagaraju H M –Devaraya II & his times - prasaraᅡa Mysore university Mysore 1997). Successful schemes were executed to mitigate the hardships on account of insufficient water supply by constructing tanks, sinking wells, digging canals, making slices, and embankments. This was a part of their policy to improve agriculture. The granting of land and money for

public utility services was considered a great charity and it received royal sanctions immediately. (Dr. Nagaraju H M – Devaraya II & his times - prasaraᅡa Mysore university Mysore 1997). King Devaraya also supported these types of donations. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete).

The Significance of Maragallu Inscriptions of Devaraya

The Maragallu inscription of Devaraya II is an illustration of his political envisioning of economic intrusion . It throws new light on economic derivatives of political ambitions. It mentions santhe or regular fare which was held weekly. It was a congregation of merchandises from various places. The following were the important items of trade oxen , animals , horses , ghee, cereals , oil seeds , oil , aromatic goods , rice , spices , etc. Palm sugar & sugar was an important item of trade. the following were the important occupations mentioned in that inscription .carpenter, iron worker , jeweler , washer man , saloon man, etc. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete, Kolar district no 72 dtd 1430 AD maragallu).

Inland Trade

Local tradesmen traded with goods of all types as all members of the community were considered as stakeholders they shared equal responsibility in trading management .They had to pay taxes



equally. Specific grant of land was meant for running fare weekly. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete, maragallu inscription). It was a sarvamanya type of land donation. Given by panchalas meaning local leaders of the area with the consent of all community members this place was considered for weekly fare. It was designated as land for running a periodical fare. It was not to be used as for any other purpose. This inscription stipulates that if violation of rule or breach of rules was noticed it would be met with rigorous punishment. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete, Kolar district no 72 dtd 1430 AD maragallu inscription).

Significance of UDUPI Inscription of Devaraya II

Another inscription from udupi mentions disputes between business men & traders of that area. (Epigraphia carnatica Vol X Bangaru pete, Kolar district no 72 dtd 1430 AD Udupi inscription) The king mediated between warring factions & dealing with them cautiously made a charter to be written bordering ethical standards of business & contained violation of any such behavior with grave consequences such as fines. He specifies the goods should be stored in a ware house which would be built in the land donated for that specific purpose. The doors would be facing North & all neighborhood traders would work towards trading in a compatible way. (Dr.

Paramashiva murthy – prodhadevarayana shasanagalu, 2007).

The Imperatives of the Maragallu Inscription

The inscription is the first of its type which is hailed for regulatory supervision of the king over trade & export business. The inscription supposes that price of the items traded would be specified. It stipulates the trading regulations by adding ethical management.

Centers of Trade - the following were the important centers of trade ((Dr. Nagaraju H M –Devaraya II & his times - prasaranga Mysore university Mysore 1997).

1. Bankapura
2. Barakuru
3. Basruru
4. Goa
5. Honnavara
6. Mangaluru
7. Mudugallu
8. Rayachiru
9. Udupi

Important Ports Under Devaraya II-

the incursions of king Devaraya's armies into Ceylon had a great impact on Coastal trade as Ceylon agreed to supply war elephants. The elephants from Ceylon were not only tuff but were traded primarily for was purpose . (Sanjay Subramanyam – The Political Economy Of Commerce 1500-1650).The Political enmity with



Bahaman kingdom had locked the roads earlier used for importing of horses & elephants. The coastal ports thus came in handy for these imports. Tourist writer Abdul Razaak, mentions about nearly 360 ports with heavily trading articles during his visit. (Sanjay Subramanyam – The Political Economy Of Commerce 1500-1650). Thus the political requirements & political farsightedness of king Devaraya II resulted in great promotion of trade management rules for economy. Understanding the demands of the expanding economy drew ethical borders. His identifying the role of merchants in expanding economy was reflected in his promotion of brotherhood among factions & promoting ethical standards. (Dr. Paramashiva murthy – prodhadevarayana shasanagalu 2007).

Conclusion - thus the political interpretation in managing trade relations were justified & King Devaraya II being a visionary could envision the importance of growing economy for a growing kingdoms & his interventions in trade management was politically motivated . He wanted the political friendship of neighboring kings as he had to manage huge army.

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