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Savitribai College of Arts

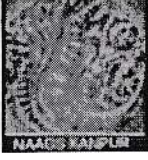
Pimpalgaon Pisa, Tal. Shrigonda, Dist. Ahmednagar

CONTENTS

SR NO	TITLE	AUTHOR	PAGE NO
1	KALA-AZAR: ITS IMPACT ON THE GROWTH OF POPULATION OF ASSAM WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BRAHMAPUTRA VALLEY (1881-1921)	Pronob Morang	1-8
2	SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF BHOJPURI FOLK SONG	Saurav Kumar, Nikhil Prasad	9-15
3	KINETIC OF THERMAL DEGRADATION OF SYNTHESIZED METAL OXIDE NANOPARTICLES BY TGA AND DSC ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES	J. M. Rami, IC. D. Patel	16-25
4	METAPHYSICAL LOVE: A REVIEW	Ms. Vibha Khajanchi, Amisha Raj	26-28
5	DHARMA IN INDIAN CONTEXT: AN ANALYSIS	Dr. Apeksha Singh, Shreya Singh	29-32
6	WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A BRIEF STUDY	Dr. Saurav Kumar, Arindam Sharma	33-41
7	A CASE STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF IND-AS 115 REVENUE FROM CONTRACTS WITH CUSTOMERS (IFRS 15) ON REVENUE OF TATA POWER LIMITED	Sandeep Baneshinh Kagda, Dr. Hukmaram D. Pawar	42-55
8	CHALLENGES AND IMPACT OF EDUCATION IN THE EARLY TANGKHUL NAGA SOCIETY	Gratis Yangya	56-61
9	A STUDY OF SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF TYPE OF SCHOOLS AND ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS OF AHMEDABAD DISTRICT IN Gujarat	Dr. Sanjay M. Gupta Alpehkumar K. Chakravarti	62-67
10	A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF IT ENABLED SERVICES ON ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE OF THE HOTEL INDUSTRY IN PUNE CITY	Mr. Lionel John D'mello Dr. Vikas Dole	68-75
11	INDUSTRY IN SHRIGONDA TALUKA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD (1818-1947)	Dr. Navanath Dattatraya Wajage	76-79
12	A STUDY ON CHANGING PATTERN OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR DURING COVID - 19	Dr. Anju Sigroha, Soniya	80-89




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INDUSTRY IN SHRIGONDA TALUKA DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD (1818-1947)

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Shrigonda taluka was totally dependent on agriculture during the British period. During the British period there was no development of industries in Shrigonda. The second Survey Settlement Report of 1919 states that, "Shrigonda is a purely agricultural taluka and there is no industry or factory in this taluka. Weaving business is also found with great difficulty. There is no metal based industry in this taluka.¹ Actually, Ahmednagar district is basically an under developed district in terms of industry. Most of the population of Ahmednagar depended on agriculture and agro-based industries. Weaving business developed in Ahmednagar district. But it was developed in North Ahmednagar district. Sugar industry was started in Ahmednagar during the pre-independence period. But the development of this industry took place after 1948 i.e. after Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil started a sugar factory on cooperative basis. Considering the situation of Shrigonda taluka in 2022, there are two cooperative and two private sugar factories in this taluka. During the pre-independence era, the sugar industry in Shrigonda was in its infancy.

The development of sugar industry took place in Ahmednagar district during the post-independence era. According to 1961 statistics, there were 24 industries in Ahmednagar district. Among them 11 factories (46%) sugar factories were registered. This included two factories in Shrigonda taluka. Belwandi Sugar Private Limited and the second factory of the same company was at Srigonda.² Belwandi Sugar farm is a sugar factory was under the supervision of M/s. Dahanukar and Co. Ltd. , Mumbai. In 1950-51, the average sugar production of this factory was 250 bags per day. Also 1800 acres of land was under sugarcane cultivation.³ Although the cooperative sugar mill industry developed later in Shrigonda. Sugar was produced in the pre-independence period from the official factory of Belwandi Sugar Farms Limited. Factories at Belwandi and Shrigonda were supplied with sugarcane from the Ghodnadi basin. These two factories depended on the water of Ghodnadi.

Oil industry

Metal based industries were not much developed in Shrigonda. However, in the agro-based industry, the industry of oil extraction by processing oilseeds was running on a small scale. According to available figures for 1919 in Shrigonda 55 oil mills, 25 textile mills and 31 woollen handloom industries were available.⁴ This shows the bad condition of industries in Shrigonda. The industry of producing oil from oilseeds developed to some extent in Shrigonda. This was the traditional occupation of the people of *Teli* community. Oil was extracted from oilseeds like safflower, groundnut, sesame, etc. In 1951 A.D. the number of oil factory in



Ahmednagar district was 461. Some of the oil factories were in Shrigonda. Oil was extracted from the seeds of *neem* and castor. Shrigonda taluka had thousands of neem trees. Oil made from bitter lemon was used to make soap.⁵ Groundnut, safflower, sesame and other oilseeds were easily available in the local market. Oil makers used the old type of wood dust. This wooden *ghana* was driven with the help of bullocks. Rarely in some places the new method of oil spills was used.⁶

Fishing industry

There are no long-flowing rivers in Shrigonda taluka. Hanga, Seena, Saraswati, Dev are small rivers and two big rivers Ghod and Bhima flow through Shrigonda taluka. Due to the small size of the rivers Hanga, Seena and Saraswati, there was no fishing on these rivers. But in the waters of Bhima and Ghod rivers, fishing was done during heavy rains. In 1927, Visapur Lake was constructed. The area of this lake is bordered by the villages of Nimbavi, Pimpalgaon Pisa, Visapur and Koregavan and fishing was used in this place. Ahmednagar district has 13 lakes and its total area is 2580 hectares. Out of this 522 hectare area belongs to Visapur Lake alone and this is where the fishing business started.⁷ This lake used to come under the water conservation department of Zilla Parishad during the pre-independence period. Here too, seasonal fishing was done instead of year-round fishing. Fishes like prawn (*Kolambi*), *Dangat*, *Pangat*, *Alkoot*, *Maral*, *Tambat* were bred in this place. A fish called *Kirkit* was in great demand in Shrigonda. This was the traditional occupation of *Bhoi* and *Koli* people. Later, a dam was built on Ghodandi at Chinchani. Therefore, the area for fishing also became available in Chinchani pond. In this way fishes were deliberately produced in Visapur Lake (Hanga River) and Chinchani Lake (Ghod River) and sold in the local market.⁸

Other industries

Apart from the above industries, small scale industries such as jaggery, *sorameth*, *dorkhand*, *kathya*, *chappal*, etc., were also in existence at the local level. Due to the production of sugarcane in Shrigonda, jaggery was produced locally. In 1965, there were 32 jaggery mills in the entire district, which accounted for 20 percent of the total industry. Shrigonda taluka played an important role in jaggery production.⁹ Apart from this there was industry of rope and *kathya* making in Shrigonda. General facility centres were created with the aim of developing industries throughout the district. One of the five facility centres was located at Shrigonda.

Soramith was also produced to some extent in Shrigonda taluka. This business used to be done at the local level, people from the community like *lonari*, *pardeshi*, *koli* were involved in this business.⁶ Villages of Ahmednagar district (it also included Shrigonda Taluka) *Soramith* was made from February to the end of May. This *soramith* was sold to licensed crackers and gunpowder manufacturers.¹⁰

In this way, industries like oil, sugar, jaggery, rope making, *kathya* (coir) making and fishing were done in Shrigonda taluka before independence. The main source of income in British India was land revenue. That is why the British took the initiative in providing irrigation facilities as well as starting railways and roads. It does not seem that efforts have been made to develop such industries. In rural areas, people used to earn their livelihood by doing small businesses. Villages were not self-sufficient during the British period as they were during the Peshwa period. But due to the commercialization of agriculture by the British, all these villages became dependent. Therefore, agriculture was forced to be the main occupation instead. British documents relating to Shrigonda shows that, the British who closely consider the agricultural revenue. It is noticeable that they were not interested in development of industries.

Financial institutions in Shrigonda

Shrigonda taluka is an agriculture based taluka. Industries did not develop much in Shrigonda during the British period. But some economic institutions related to agricultural life seem to



have developed during the British period. In 1884 AD, among the nine European migrant bungalows in the district, there was one at Kolgaon on Ahmednagar Daund highway. In the following period, a bungalow was also made available for tourists at Shrigonda.¹¹

Among the communication facilities of British India, the post was very important for communication. In 1884, Ahmednagar district had 21 sub-post offices. It had post offices at Belwandi and Shrigonda. The sub post master working here used to get an annual salary of Rs 120 to 480. Out of 30 post offices of Ahmednagar, shrigonda were five post offices in villages namely Kolgaon, Pargaon, Pedgaon, Sarola and Valki in Shrigonda. The post office is in charge of the school master and he used to get a salary of 24 to 72 rupees per annum.¹² The rivers Ghod and Bhima in Shrigonda taluka were ferries for crossing rivers for the purpose of communication. In 1884, among the 11 ferries in district, Pedgaon and Nimgaon Khalu in Shrigonda taluka were located in the Bhima River basin on. These ferries were made available through district local funds and were used during the rainy season from June to October.¹³

To provide tools and goods required by the farmers. Buying and selling teams also used to give loans on pledge of goods. So the farmers could not wait for the right price. In 1950-51 a branch of the Purchase and Sale (*Kharedi ani Vikri Sangh*) existed in Shrigonda Taluka.¹⁴ Apart from this, economic productive institutions were created to encourage businesses in rural areas. In 1950-51 an organization was functioning at Shrigonda for the purpose of providing financial assistance to labourers. This organization worked to provide loans to labourers. Such organizations were also financially supported by the government.

In the pre-independence period, the administration of the district was conducted through the District Local Board. Public Health Department of Ahmednagar District Local Board used to run clinics in rural areas. Ahmednagar District Local Board used to run 12 Allopathic and two *Ayurvedic* clinics for public health. In Ahmednagar district 13 H.M.P.centres were available. In 1949-50, among the 13 allopathic clinics in Ahmednagar district, there was one at Shrigonda. In cooperation between the Government and the District Board, H.M.P. Centers were started. One of these centres was functioning in Pimpalgaon Pisa village in Shrigonda taluka.

Agricultural schools were established in Ahmednagar district for modern or scientific method of farming. In 1950-51, out of 38 agricultural schools in Ahmednagar district, three agricultural schools were in the villages of Kolgaon, Pimpalgaon Pisa and Mandavagan. Agricultural credit societies were established in order to develop the agricultural sector in rural areas. The Co-operative Acts of 1904 and 1912 gave impetus to the Co-operative sector in India. In 1918 AD, the first agricultural credit institution was registered in Shrigonda under the name Kavthe Agricultural Cooperative Credit Society. After that 23 Agricultural Credit Societies were established in the taluka till 1950-51.¹⁵ The first Co-operative Multipurpose Society in Shrigonda taluka was started in 1917. The organization was registered as Shrigonda Cooperative Multipurpose Society Limited.

Till 1950 there were four societies in Shrigonda. In 1944 Agri Non Credit Society was established in Shrigonda. Producers Society was established to provide financial support to artisans. Four societies existed in Shrigonda between 1923 to 1949. In 1948, a supervising union was formed. In 1949, a home loan institution was established in Shrigonda taluka. The name of this organization was Nagar Refugee Cooperative Housing Society.

Between 1917 and 1949, various cooperative societies were established in Shrigonda Taluka. If we consider all these cooperative societies, most of them were started to encourage agricultural and non-agricultural businesses. Between 1917 and 1950, the total number of societies in Shrigonda was 42 which were established for different purposes. This numbers shows the importance of cooperative sector in rural areas.

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