



## TRADE AND CURRENCY IN SHRIGONDA TALUKA DURING BRITISH PERIOD

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In 1818 Ahmednagar district came under British control. The area of Ahmednagar district which came under British control was very large. After the capture of Ahmednagar by the British, Henry Pottinger was appointed as a collector to this District. He established law and order in Ahmednagar District. The British divided Ahmednagar district into various talukas. Ahmednagar was reorganized in 1869 for the convenience of administration. Shrigonda Taluka was created during this reorganization.<sup>1</sup> In 1869 Ahmednagar district had ten talukas, out of which Shrigonda was a newly formed taluka. At the time of formation of Shrigonda taluka there were 87 villages in Shrigonda. The economy of Shrigonda was different during the Peshwa period. During the British era, changes took place in this economy. From the presented research paper, the trade and currency in Shrigonda taluka during the British period has been discussed.

### Trade in Shrigonda

#### Import

After the opening of the Daund Manmad railway line, there was a drought in the year. At that time grain was imported from Jabalpur, Nagpur, Malwa, Indore and Kanpur. In general, grain was imported from Khandesh and Jabalpur. Rice was imported from Kalyan in Konkan by rail and from Junnar (District – Pune) through bullock carts. Neem used to be imported from the Nizam's territory at a cheap price. It was imported through Bhatia brothers. Some of these goods were exported to Europe via Mumbai. Kerosene was sent from Bombay to some cities by *Bohras* and *Bhatias*. It was also supplied to village retailers (*Marwaris*). Salt was imported from Panvel and Pen (Kulaba). The *Marwaris* or traders from the Nizam's territory used to send their agents to Panvel. From there, the salt used to come to Shrigonda and then reach the village vendors. Cloth was imported from Mumbai, Solapur, Paithan, Ahmedabad, Bagalkot, Karmala (Solapur), Nagpur and Yevala. Cloth was imported from Mumbai, Solapur, Ahmedabad, Madras, Malegaon and Ichalkaranji. The cloth used to come from Mumbai and Pune. Some traders used to buy cloth by contacting the actual mill owners.<sup>2</sup> Imports to Shrigonda mainly include textiles (indigenous and European), coconuts, rice and grocery items. The goods used to come from under the Western Ghats.<sup>3</sup> One can get an idea of the import trade here from the import through GIP railways. In 1917 the value of all kinds of goods imported into Visapur (17052), Belwandi (7592) and Pimpri (45467) Rs. Out of these three places, the value of trade from Shrigonda, which is close to Pimpri railway station, is higher than Visapur and Belwandi.<sup>4</sup>

#### Export

Exports from Shrigonda include sorghum, millet, wheat, gram, bitter gourd, safflower, groundnut, raw sugar or jaggery, oil, cotton, country cloth, cooking utensils, some chilli etc. After the opening of Daund Manmad Railway, there was a huge demand for grain from Jabalpur, Nagpur, Bellary. *Kardai* oil was exported to Pune, Mumbai and Gujarat especially Europe. Meal (cake) made from oil was sent as feed for cattle throughout the district.<sup>5</sup> Shrigonda was important as the largest market. At Shrigonda, goods were purchased through merchants. Goods come here from the entire taluka. After purchasing the goods, these goods were exported to Pune and various cities. These items were exported from Pimpri railway station near Shrigonda. Many people of *Teli* community had settled in Shrigonda. Through them, saffron seeds were sent to Bombay in large quantities.







Apart from oilseeds, wheat, oil, pulses were also exported.<sup>6</sup> In Shrigonda taluk Shrigonda, Kashti, Pedgaon, Mandavagan, Belwandi Budruk and Kolgaon were important weekly markets. According to the figures of 1899 the weekly inflows and outflows in rupees in the weekly markets were as follows. Shrigonda (Rs. 1782), Kashti (Rs. 360), Pedgaon (Rs. 335), Mandavagan (Rs. 280), Belwandi Budruk (Rs. 235), Kolgaon (Rs. 110) used to trade like this. Also, in the local market, rice, wheat, sorghum, bajri, tur and grains, sari, turban, European cloth, oil, ghee, coconut, chilli, salt, betel nut, vegetables, fruits, goat and sheep etc. were traded.<sup>7</sup> The GIP railway passes through the central part of Shrigonda taluka and connects the two towns of Daund Manmad. Pimpri, Belwandi and Visapur these three important railway stations were in Shrigonda on this railway line. Goods were exported in large quantities from there. In the year 1916 AD, the exports of goods from these three railway stations from Shrigonda were as follows. Among the agriculture based goods (Rs. 24887), Belwandi (Rs. 54476), Pimpri (Rs. 128696) were exported. Bark, wood, grass and other wild products were exported from Visapur (Rs.1379), Belwandi (Rs. 71758) and Pimpri (Rs. 128696). While among other items it was exported like this - from Visapur Rs.2612, Belwandi Rs.734 and Pimpri 6769 Rs.<sup>8</sup> In 1916 the total export value of all the goods exported from Visapur was Rs.29078. The total export value of goods exported from Belwandi was Rs.126968. While the total export value at Pimpri station was Rs.155377. From this it is understood how was the exports of Shrigonda taluka. And in the economy of Shrigonda the importance of GIP railways is also highlighted. In AD 1919, the balance of trade in Shrigonda taluka can be seen from the value of imports and exports from all the three stations namely Visapur, Belwandi and Pimpri. Shrigonda Taluka was connected from the east to the west by GIP railways. Exports of agro-based commodities depended on fluctuations in the production of these commodities. Therefore, there is no great expectation of growth of trade here, this was noted by the British. But in wartime conditions there was a great demand for tanning bark and oil. The British also mentioned that there was a great deal of trade in these goods. Trade balance of Shrigonda taluka was an important aspect of trade of Shrigonda.<sup>9</sup>

### Currency and Banking

During the Peshwa period, various types of rupees were used in currency. When the British conquered the Maratha kingdom, there were 994 gold and silver coins in existence in India. After the British established power in Ahmednagar, the revenue began to be collected in cash. Along with this, the policy of increasing the revenue rates was also decided. The policy of depositing the revenue in the coins of the specific types, was also decided. In Maharashtra, the British government tried to eliminate the bad quality coins from circulation in order to collect revenue in certain coins only. For this, contact was made with moneylenders in Ahmednagar district through Kamavisdars. And various coins were priced in terms of company rupees. The British government adopted the *Ankushi* rupee as the currency standard for Ahmednagar province. A rupee on which the *Ankush* symbol is marked is called *Ankushi* Rupee.<sup>10</sup> During the early days of the British rule, copper coins such as *Ankushi* Rupee, *Belapuri* Rupee, *Chambhargondi*, *Chandwadi* (Nashik), *Jaripatka* (Nashik) and *Vafgawi* Rupee were used. Around 1820, the British Government was issued an order for 110 blank or new *Ankushi* 101 *Sulakhi Ankushi*, *Nirmal Chandwadi*, *Kore Vafgari*, 101 1/8 *Nirmal Jaripatka*, 105 *Nirmal Barik*, *Belapuri* and *Kore Chandwadi*, 106 1/8 *Sulakhi Large Belapuri*, *Chopi* and *Chambhargondi* coins. These coins were in existence till 1835. After that coins containing silver and copper were in use. The silver coins were the royal rupee, eight *annas adheli*, 4 *annas pavali*, 1/8 *chavali*<sup>12</sup> 1/12 of an *anna* is a *pie* or a *kavadi*. These coins were used to buy vegetables or retail items. 1/4 *annas* value was 80 *kavadi*.<sup>13</sup>







Different currencies were in use in different regions of India till 1835 AD. British introduced single currency in India in 1835. At this time the gold coins in India were discontinued and the silver rupee coin was considered as the standard for the whole of India. Therefore, in 1835, silver coins were used in Shrigonda. After 1835 till 1947 this currency was used by the British. Between 1870 and 1883 AD there were only nine banks in the entire Ahmednagar district. From this banks transactions were done with Pune, Mumbai, Solapur, Nashik, Dhule and Nizam's State. Transactions from 10 rupees to 5000 rupees used to be done through these banks. In the post-independence period, there was a change in this situation. In 1972 the following bank branches were functioning in Shrigonda taluka . State Bank of India (Shrigonda), Central Bank of India (Shrigonda), Ahmednagar District Central Cooperative Bank (Shrigonda, Belwandi, Ghargaon) Ahmednagar District Urban Central Cooperative Bank (Shrigonda), Bank branches were functioning like this. During pre-independence period the condition of banks in Shrigonda taluka was not very good . Since the talukas are based on agricultural income only, all income was going to the British through land revenue Banking business was not much in this place.

### Markets

Since the middle ages weekly markets have been important in terms of trade. Due to the lack of shops in small villages, the villagers depended on the weekly market for daily necessities. Internal trade was depended on permanent markets and weekly markets in cities or big villages. During the British period, weekly markets used to be held at Pedgaon, Kolgaon, Mandavagan, Belwandi, Kashti and Shrigonda. Shrigonda taluka had the six important markets mentioned above. 250 to 1500 people used to come to this market.<sup>14</sup> Grains, cotton, cloth, groceries, vegetables, blankets, fruits, utensils, slippers etc. were traded in this market.<sup>15</sup> 25 of these markets were for cattle. Out of 72 markets, six markets were in Shrigonda. There was a cattle market at Kashti. After 1878, with the opening of the Daund Manmad railway trade of Shrigonda was increased significantly. Around 1899 AD, weekly markets like Shrigonda (Monday), Kashti (Saturday), Pedgaon (Friday), Mandavagan (Tuesday), Belwandi Budruk (Sunday), Kolgaon (Wednesday) were held in Shrigonda Taluka. In the Middle ages, the village of Pimpalgaon Pisa (Friday) also used to hold a market. Pimpalgaon Pisa was a famous market during the middle Ages. But during the British era, the importance of this market decreased. The market at Pedgaon was also important during the Mughal and Maratha periods. There was a permanent market at Pedgaon during the Mughal period. During the British era, the importance of this market decreased. Only 1900 people used to visit this market. By 1950 more weekly markets like Ban pimpari (Sunday), Bhangangaon (Thursday), Mhase (Thursday), Yelpana (Wednesday) were added to the markets. In AD 1889, the Shrigonda market used to trade in grains like rice, wheat, sorghum, *bajri*, gram, *tur* and other minor grains. In clothes, saree, choli, turban, foreign cloth etc. items used to be traded up to 1000 rupees. In grocery, oil, ghee, coconut, jaggery, chilli, salt, betel nuts etc. used to have a turnover of up to 372 rupees. Vegetables and fruits were traded at Rs 40 and goats and sheep at Rs 25. In this, a total of Rs. 100 in the market at Kolgaon. Whereas the market at Shrigonda used to have a turnover of Rs.1782. This means Shrigonda was the biggest market in the taluka.<sup>16</sup>

In the post-independence period, changes in government policies led to the establishment of market committees. This policy was designed for the benefit of farmers. Farmers should not be hindered, also the government should control the trade and prices, Market Committees were formed for this purpose. In 1960 a market committee was established in Shrigonda. But actually the work of this committee started in the year 1966. The market committee here used to do business with the cities of Karmala, Solapur, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Baramati etc.<sup>17</sup> Today the government controls all market committees in Ahmednagar district and efforts are made to get fair



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price to the farmers. In 1950 the status of markets in Shrigonda taluka was as follows. In Shrigonda there were 12 weekly markets and 1 cattle market. The number of people coming to the market was 814. Cattle market at Kashti was an important market. Thus the markets in Shrigonda taluka was of local type and trade was carried.

#### References and Footnotes

1. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District , p.2.
2. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, p.501
3. First Survey Settlement Report, Shrigonda Taluka, Bombay, 1889, p.5
4. Second Survey Settlement Report, Shrigonda Taluka, Bombay, 1919 p.4.
5. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, p.503.
6. First Survey Settlement Report, Shrigonda Taluka, Bombay, 1889, p.5
7. Ibid, p-114.
8. Second Survey Settlement Report, Shrigonda Taluka, Bombay, 1919 p.4.
9. Ibid, p-5.
10. Padmakar Prabhune, *Maharashtratil Chalnacha Itihas*, Pune, 2007, p.52
11. Bombay Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, 1884, p.299.
12. Ibid, p-301.
13. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, p.507.
14. Bombay Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, 1884, p.551.
15. By 1960, this number had gone up to 191.
16. First Survey Settlement Report, Shrigonda Taluka, Bombay, 1889, p.4
17. Maharashtra State Gazetteer, Ahmednagar District, p.538.



  
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