Chapter-VI

Socio-economic exchanges of traders

Agriculture and crafts in India are not sharply separated. Although artisan-castes do exist in both urban centres and rural settlements, in their leisure time the peasant households do some craft work like preparing mats, baskets, simple-furniture etc. Craft-work as well as agricultural-work in India is seasonal. Weekly-markets in India thrive in less densely populated areas, difficult terrains (as for instance, the hilly-tracts of Srisailam), and where there is weak, administrative-authority. They remain independent of administrative or political-control.

Normally, the buyers and sellers at weekly markets do not
pay taxes to local authorities here. If they bring goods in bullock carts they of course pay 'octroi'. But many of them bring headloads of vegetables, etc and travel by foot. Hence, the tax and transport costs are minimal. In India, the rural and urban production centres are not clearly separated and there are overlappings. The sacred complexes are the initiators of new techniques of production in handicraft, art-work, etc—the crystal-work in Srisailam, bronze-work in Thanjavur, and terracotta work in Vishnupur (West Bengal) to cite a few examples, have received the patronage of temples. New designs and patterns are also made possible by the financial assistance from temples or
sales agencies connected with the temples. Thus, art, trade and temple form an interconnected trio.

Having looked at these exchanges here, it is necessary to assess their selling and buying potential as an useful frameworks for our schedules. The implications of the findings are an interesting cases of certain practical as well as their interaction with floating-pilgrims. These traders been interviewed and guided towards better conclusion of this chapter, respectively speaking.

Trade and commerce came into an increasing use as a medium of exchange at Srisailam.

Business began between the buyers and sellers and gave way to transactions. The practice of paying the village
handicraftsmen in cash for the sacred-goods supplied by them, particularly for the pilgrims and the major agricultural-implements, began to spread within the sacred-complex market. While generally, the services of traders required for ritual-process continued to be remunerated in kind, and in some cases of a tendency towards cash-payments.

In the traditional market-economy of this temple-town, custom and status (as determined by the caste-system, the joint-family system and the feudal-socio-political hierarchy) regulated the division of labour, terms of barter (now-a-days contracts only), remuneration for

services, rate of interest, economic-activities and dealings, and commercialist's place in society. Now, in the market society of Srisailam, this regulatory role is performed by competition and contract. Such a change has been noted in other sacred-complexes of India also.

The commercialisation attained its highest level of development in the area and that came to be established from about the middle of the nineteenth century. The goods are carried on by employing a large number of local tribals, namely, Chenchus as wage-workers. The core of the commercial-activity conforms, more or less, with the heart of the sacred-city. Besides,
maintaining its reputation for sacred-goods, silk-fabrics, brass-ware, wooden-toys and tobacco-products, which are carried mainly on cottage basis. Another important industry, which has blossomed here is of manufacturing carpets (handloom). Now-a-days, Srisailam exporting its handloom-carpet to many countries. Srisailam has emerged as a major manufacturing centre of crystal-lingas. This industry has made good progress. Hundreds of diamond-cutters have been encouraged by the Devasthanam here to cut and polish them for sale. In the recent past, many more new types of exchanges have come up and it is indeed a

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2. ibid....
3. ibid....
matter of great satisfaction that temple is constantly marching ahead in terms of income, while gracefully maintaining its religious-importance.

The focus of this chapter is on an important group of entrepreneurs belonging to the "Komatee-community", known for their involvement in indigenous banking and money-lending, they became an indispensable inter-link in the establishment of the shops here. In addition, at present Komatees were behind the formation of new chairmanship for Devasthanam. The post 1947 period was marked by the entry and expansion of other caste-groups, namely, Paddys and Lingayats.

4. From the Notices on income, distribution and expenditure 1988 of Sri Siva Devasthanam, A.P.
Today, these three castes are in the foremost of leading business-houses in Srisailam. There was a rapid and remarkable growth in the number of shops in Srisailam between 1951 and 1987. There is an interconnection between these shops—distribution and sacred-complex in certain respects. There are big shopkeepers in Srisailam. They possess large-scale transactions; the extra-income from which is utilised for maintenance and to meet the expense of their private-maths and trusts. Darugas, rest-houses, schools, hospitals and sacred-routes in these area compose a huge socio-economic investment, which dwarfs the trading-transactions here.

5 ibid...
At present, here Raddys, Lingayats and Komatees are leading merchants. The subsequent interaction of rural and urban pilgrims influenced socio-cultural traditions here; the growing pastures also supported a flourishing animal-husbandry. Cow and cattle-markets (the main-livestock) could be found on mela days. A wide-variety of handicrafts and trades grew up on the basis of a fertile lands owned by the Raddys.

The Economics of power in a tribal-market; At Srisailam, Chenchu-tribe occupied a special-status. V.F. Haimendorf writes: 'with exception of those chenchus, who live here are also unlikely to be drawn into participation in the economic and ritual activities. Ironically, the recent
rebuilding of the temple and its re-establishment as an important centre of pilgrimage have damaged the Chenchus interests here. The trader was technically sufficient and advanced to exploit them always to his commercial advantage. 'Puttis' (big size-baskets) are used by them to cross the river Krishna with the goods for exchange. This is the focalpoint for their socio-economic exchanges. Rendering specialised services, the economy of the Chenchu tribe is mainly interdependent on the herds they possess and their trade contacts are directly interconnected with the exchange needs of visiting pilgrims. Animal and animal products like wool, hide and skin are for sale or exchange.

6. Heimendorf, Ch.V.P., Tribes of India, Oxford University press, Delhi, 1982, p. 203.
of their livestock. They are the main constituents of their economy here. It is to supplement their income from herds that they carry other activities like hunting, fishing, collecting the medicinal herbs and roots for sale in festive-season for visiting Kannadiga-pilgrims. Some kinds of medicinal roots are collected by them and sell them in melas. Chenchus generally purchase grains, salt and other articles from the areas, where these are easily available at a cheaper rates from sellers. They sell them in the weekly-markets in and around Srisailam, where these commodities are scarce and where a marginal-profit is possible.

7. From the 'Note on Tribal-welfare activities in Tiger Reserve Srisailam', prepared by the Field-Director of Project, 12.07.1986.
As brokers of cattle, goats and sheep, etc., these groups render so called ritual-services too. They have specialised themselves in professions like basket-making, rope-making, mat-making, smithy, burglary, selling of drugs, selling of teenage-girls for prostitution (flesh-trade) as well as beggary, etc. A few of them are blacksmiths and prepare agricultural-implements and other requirements for the landowning-castes apart from collecting-money, grains, clothing from the rich-pilgrims.

Many devotees have utilised their nomadic-services at local level on several occasions. These Chenchus are transporting wood collected illegally from local -

8. From my field-data.
9. ibid...
forest here. The wood is sold to agents, who resell them at towns for a profit. Such large-scale felling of trees by tribals had led to vast tracts of forests disappearing in the Srisailam area.

**Competition among the artisans as selling-agents:** The production-activities operating in Srisailam included artisans many of whom have inherited their skills on a hereditary basis. Their wares included particularly silk-products, brass-ware, wooden-toys, crystals and ivory-goods. Of these various producers, we may judge the weavers, virtually all migrated from Karnataka with their skill in making Mysore-silk sarees. They have played a significant role in sustaining the ritual-life of this

10. ibid...
11. ibid...
temple town, on the other hand, both for their supplies of yarn and for marketing their goods, they depended heavily on merchants as middlemen or agents. Sociological observers have pointed to this close interrelationships. Both are interdependent on the goodwill of; the two communities are therefore closely bound to each other by economic-ties. There is also evidence to suggest that they participated in the sacred-ceremonies as well as civic-functions. There is nexus between economic activity such as trade and socio-cultural interaction.
classification of Markets

Market activity is very high in the festive-season. We can find the intra-specific relation among the sellers and buyers according to my explanatory-notes on the present samples. Open-competition, commercial-density and socio-cultural exchanges are vibrant factors here till today.

1.) Srisailam: It falls on the festive-days with a good competition. Commercial-potentiality is the big-share at temple arena by licensed shop-keepers. It is the main centre for all socio-economic exchanges in ritual-terms. At the same time, castes and tribes interaction is visible still today and a comparable source for sociological understanding in detail. For example, one coconut cost is
fixed at Rs. 3.75 paisa by the Devasthanam. But that is available at Rs. 4.37 paisa in the open-market due to the much demand of pilgrims during festivals. At Sri-sailam, we can find the new suppliers for their more comings from pilgrims.

2. Siddhavatan: The mini-markets of Siddhavatan, Alampur and Kottapokonda, namely in Telugu "Sonthalu" (weekly-fairs) will give some capacity for above suppliers. They will be much familiar at Sunigota (up-campus of Sri-sailam), Tripuranthakam and Kollasadvaran (towards Karimnagar-border). Buyers and sellers will extend their length of stay at these markets. It is quite clear that a variety of objects were sold in this sale and most of
themselves acquired by the pilgrims here. These included
agricultural implements, domestic utensils, wood-carved
door, ivory, skin, sandalwood carvings, cloth, stone and
earth-veneers, wooden doors, windows, etc. Besides these,
cheap jewellery and ornaments, cosmetics, shoes and sacred
books were also sold. A variety of food articles were
sold in the tea-stalls, fruit-stalls and sweet-shops for
thousands of pilgrims who throng this town on festive
occasions. Arrangements for entertainments in the form
of cinema, circus and shows of dancing-dolls were also
organised. The volume of economic transaction made in this
town is quite appreciable. The amount of tax paid
varied with the type of stall, space occupied by it and
position of the shop. The petty makeshift shops called
'shost-shops' were the most numerous. Cheap cosmetics
and other fancy-goods were sold by them. They assemble
the special-foods, flowers, leaves, spices, water (ganga-jal),
milk, fragrant-substances, and other ritual paraphernalia
and place them in various containers in order to attract
the customers, i.e., pilgrims.

Tourism as an industry here. Tourism is the main stay of
temple's income in several ways. Indian National Tourism
policy has recognized Tirupati as one of the selected
spots for the foreign-tourists. It is approved by the
Planning Commission's National Committee on Tourism.

Tirupati has much scenic beauty, its flora and fauna

12. From the 'Fortnightly Reports on Socio-cultural
developments of Tirupati-Gayathri', 1986-90.'
can enhance the domestic as well as foreign-tourists.

A special day-time bus-service linking the Indian Air
Lines has been proposed. The service starts from
Srisailam and terminates at Bengaluru (covering 700 km.
distance with a halt in the touristic-spot and the
pilgrim-place). The bus-service, especially, meant for
tourists of foreign-nationalities, has been sponsored by the
local-merchants association and at the behest of the
Department of Tourism with a collaboration of Devasthanam.

Medical as well as other facilities are well arranged
for them. According to data collected in 1988, the number
of foreign-tourists entering Srisailam via Bengaluru
and Hyderabad stood at 1780 excluding Indian-visitors.
Hairy Merchandise: From time immemorial flourishing locks have remained a symbol of human vanity. This explains why human hair has become a major money-spinner for countries like India and China. Indeed the lustre of Indian hair has made it a hot favourite in international fashion-centres. Indian hair, in quality, ranks second to Italian hair. Significantly, before the arrival of synthetic wigs in the global market, Indian hair enjoyed a virtual monopoly. The biggest rival to India is China, which in the early eighties, became the Chief Exporter of human hair. However, in this trade India became the largest supplier to foreign countries by exporting hair.

13 From my field data.
worth several crores. The Indian hair is used mainly in
the production of wigs but it is also utilised in the
food-processing and drug-industries. A lion’s share of
Indian human hair comes from the pilgrim centres of
Andhra Pradesh in South India—Srisailam and Tirupathy.

For centuries, thousands of devout Hindus have been off-
ering their hair to presiding deities of big-temples.
The hair is collected and auctioned once in three months
to the highest bidder. It is estimated that about
17,000 kgs. of hair is offered at an auction at one
time for rich-buyer, which fetches Rs. 17 million to

the temple authorities. Srisailam is the hub of hair

14, ibid...
15, ibid...
export in India. There are at least half a dozen exporters
in this sacred-city, who send the hair to markets in South
Korea, Hongkong and the Philippines. The hair is mainly
collected from Devasthanam's barber-shops in the Srisailam.
The local-exporters generally employ many teenagers par-
ticularly from Chenchu-tribe here to go the Devasthanam's
saloons and barber shops and bring back hair tied in
bundles. According to exporters in Srisailam, depending on
the length and quality, each kilo of exported hair-fetches
from Rs. 4000-Rs. 9000 a kilo in foreign-markets. But, the
setting up of the petro-chemical industrial complexes
at Srisailam in Kurnool district of Andhra pradesh has
the potential of gobbling up a large chunk of human-hair
that would otherwise have ended up in the overseas
market.

The interrelationship between technological-development
and socio-commercial and economic-milieu; As the above

technique got perfected, there was diversification of

objects. Technological-viability of such industry not

only ensured its large scale application in various areas

but its growing demands must have exerted pressure on

local-smiths for manufacturing better and more efficient
tools and agricultural-implements. It was bound to influence

the productive-forces of the respective-periods.

The qualitative-improvement in farming-objects appears

18 ibid...
by 90s. These tools and implements had the capacity to make a positive impact on the temple's economy. Better impact leading to still better output by the sellers in walk of agricultural-communities, with easy accessibility to ones of high-quality in Srisailam region, a land which also required good agricultural-implements for the productive-cultivation.

I would like to make it clear that the technological skill for overall economic-prosperity is visible to-day here along with socio-cultural, ritual and political-factors. However, it may safely be argued that technology, particularly agricultural-implements played a key-role in bringing about much demand to local-traders here.
Civic-Taxation: In the recent years, new forms of taxation have been levied by the Devasthanam to cover the costs of administering the town and once they had taken direct control. A local-tax (indirectly) to support the investments for developmental activities was introduced under the act of new endowments committee collected revenues for a police-force, conservancy and other improvements. Ultimately the octroi-tax on their imports became the 'backbone' of temple's income, providing more than half the revenues. Other revenue derived from taxing pilgrims as well as from assessments for water, light and eventually cottages (for staying pilgrims). These were supplemented

19. From the proceedings of Board of Revenues, 1989-90, printed by the temple's executive-body, Srisailam, A.P
20. Ibid...
by income from rents and licences. Initially the executive
officer of Devasthanam functioned as the head of this
committee. The temple's board became increasingly represen-
tative after the British raj, however initiated firstly
by late Shri P. Laxmaya garu here. It consisted of 37
members and 21 whom were elected. Interest continued high
in civic-participation and these elected members exhibit
great interest in the work, and the attendance at meetings
reaches a high-average with a rare interactions. The domi-
nant-castes of the town have gained positions in the
civic-bodies of the sacred-town to protect their own
private interests. Hence, licences to shops, hotels,
allocation of contracts for road-building, etc are
controlled by these better off sections.
Such units provided the building-blocks out of which commercial-solidarities were perceptibly emerging among these professional-groups here. The commercialisation of sacred-goods and the rise of the own bodies were by origin intrinsic-changes within the economy and sacred-culture of Srisailam. Continuous-connection with the pilgrims, dependence on service-income expressed in what we may call the dominant economic-institution. It was fostered by a group of entrepreneurial-castes with common professional practices, who were also linked together through a sacred system, respectively looking into our facts and figures of field-schedules.
Commercial-character: It may indicate a stage of emerging business-activity, which was primarily an economic-mechanism connected with trading-pattern involving monetary-exchanges.

The structure of Srisailam-town with streets containing regular shops on the bothsides also appears to have been incorporated for socio-cultural and economic-transactions.

Commercial-exchanges might have originated along before here on the lines of barter system with special reference to seasonal-markets(Santhalu). I have looked at the similar situation in other networks. We can find some kind of commercial-hinterland for the maintenance of such huge monastic-establishments. For example, the Lingayat-mathas such as 'Veer-Virath Basavaeswaraya, Potuluri Veer-Saiva
Lingayathulu, Sarangadhara, Manekaeswari and Pandita-aradhya have owned 13 shops and this reveals a nexus between traders and spiritu-religious bodies here. Santalu (weekly-markets) are existing till now here. Jajmuni-type of interrelationships are visible from the last few decades.

To some extent, where the system of castes and tribes reaches its most perfect expression and the greatest number of ritual-specialists and jajmans as kamins are on hand for the protection of visiting-devotees from the above trader's exploitation.

Here, the external-trading material included perishable goods like animal-skins, grains from the local-jugles, etc. We can account the vast quantity of such resources from 'Chenchu-tribe' here.
traders are very much interested in these goods for their manufacturing-units. They give more incentives to local-tribe and smuggled them out according to the information provided by the local Forest and Customs officials. Two smugglers were caught in red-handed in 1987 along with some other idol-lifters. The traders became most an important community as they are the Chief-organisers of transactions, bankers, controllers of currency, patrons of socio-religious leaders and source of prosperity for Devasthanam.

Of course, they are merely profit-oriented. But the some of their profit-proportion goes into 'good-works' like sponsoring or supporting dharmasalas and schools here.

21. From my field-data.
The changing-patterns of business-culture: Such socio-cultural exchanges continues now here. Regular trade-centres also in existence. The determinant factors are monetary-exchange, bargain-settlement, new-establishments, interaction with farming-communities here. The socio-ritual and economic exchange appears to have operated through a system of contracts. The measurable-scarce, storable and standard-medium of like bonds, shares, gold, silver, crystals and gems are acceptable to all trading groups irrespective of some stigma or barriers. Thus it could be defined as a movement governing economy of an sacred-unit and operating in weekly-markets and here on the basis of the ratio of demand and supply through a commonly acceptable-monetary medium of exchange.
That is to say it deals with all aspects of pilgrim behavior from devotion to their dedication to Lord here apart from their economies. It is an interesting that the Justice Challa Kondayya Commission Report of Andhra pradesh's Government in 1983 to 87 is mostly descriptive about their income and resources in written. Where it dwells on the causes of misusing temple-lands and indicates mostly economic or economy interrelated causes. Although cross-checked by my field-schedules to such posing dichotomies, the utility of their stand for commercial goals through their sub-systems at local-markets(fairs) seems to have been given a reasonably rigorous application in the income field. They concerned with the purchasing attitudes toward pilgrims and a variety of other.