

## Everyday Life and Daily Economics: A Glance at the Banabhatta's Harṣacarita and *Kādambaī*

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With the decline of the Gupta Empire, a new chapter of changes started in the Indian subcontinent. However, the symptoms of these changes had started to reflect themselves in the Gupta period. These changes were not just political but could be seen in the socio-economic sphere as well. One needs to study to understand what kinds of changes are happening, and what do they signify. It is very important to study the reasons that were responsible for these changes and how far were these changes inevitable in the society.

During the early medieval period there were a series of changes which were very complicated and intermixed in nature. The "Land grant system" was one of such change. The first epigraphic record of a land grant is found in a Sātavāhana inscription of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE. It refers to the grant of a village as a gift in the *Aśvamedhā* sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> But a grant of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, mentioned the transfer of the king's control over salt, which implies that he retained certain other sources of revenue but in later grants from the time of Pravarsena -II<sup>nd</sup>; Vākātaka onwards (fifth century CE onwards). The ruler gave up his control over almost all sources of revenue including pasturage, hides and charcoal, mines

<sup>1</sup> R.S.Sharma, *Indian feudalism*. Macmillan, Delhi, 1980, p-2.

for the production of salt, forced labour, and all hidden treasures and deposits.<sup>2</sup> One also finds that during the time of King Harṣavardhana high officers were not paid in cash for their services to the state, for one-fourth of the royal revenues was earmarked for the endowment of great public services.<sup>3</sup> Earlier grants were given for religious purpose, while later grants became even more crucial because by that time land started to be granted not only for administrative purpose but also to run the state's economy.

The attempt to link up the land grant system with economic pattern of Northern India during the seventh century is not a very easy task. It requires unfolding the layers which existed within the system so that their nature can be identified. The idea of a decline of cities, urban markets, crafts, trade, and money in early medieval period is a very important part of the Indian Feudalism debate which helps to characterize and understand the nature of early Indian economy.

According to R.S .Sharma's theory of urban decay <sup>4</sup>it can be argued that by the beginning of second half of the third century urban centers started to decline because of decline in long distance trade. Urban decline means decline in the position of urban based artisans and traders. Artisans were forced to migrate to somewhere else. Because of decline in demand because of shrinkage in trade crafts production suffered. The next stage of urban decay happened around the time of the fall of the Guptas. Some cities

<sup>2</sup> Ibid ,p.2.

<sup>3</sup> On Yuan *Chwang's Travels in India*, T. Watters, ed, T. Rhys Davids and S.W.Bushell, London , 1904-05; Indian reprint, Munshiram Manohar lal, New Delhi, p-176.

<sup>4</sup> R.S.Sharma, *Urban decay in India (c.300-c.1000)* Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi,1987.

which flourished from ancient times such as Magdha, Śrāvastī, Vaisālī, Rājghāt, and Bhītā declined. B.D.Chattopadhyaya on the other hand, has questioned the theory of urban decay. He has argued that in the early medieval period certain urban centers had declined but new ones had started emerging. Xuanzang in his account mentioned flourishing urban centers such as Sthāneśwara, Vārānasī and Kānyakubja. Bāna also referred in the *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambaī* to Śrikāntha as *jana-pada* and *Ujjainī* as a famous market centre. Issues of crafts, trades, towns, markets and money have been intensely debated over the last forty years.<sup>5</sup> Instead of getting into the debate it may be useful to see what emerges from the two texts of Bāna.

### *Ownership of Land*

During the early medieval times land was considered as most desirable thing for kings. For him it was the symbol of prestige and sovereignty, on the other hand it was the source of livelihood for farmers and pastoralist communities. Smṛitikāras of the period focused and discussed the question of ownership. According to them the King is the lord of the land the titles *Bhūpati*, or *Bhūswāmī* meant that all land belonged to the King.

<sup>5</sup> K.M.Shrimali, *Monetization of Costal Economy: The Case Study of Konkan under the Silaharas* cited in *The Feudal Order : State Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India* .ed D.N.Jha Manohar, New Delhi. 2000; John.S. Deyell ,*Living Without Silver : The Monetary History of Early Medieval North India*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.1900; *State and Economy in Northern India: Fourth Century to Twelfth Century*, cited in. B.D.Chattopadhyaya, *Studying Early India:*

*Archaeology, Texts and Historical Issues*, Permanent Black, Delhi. 2000.pp.233- 262.

According to Manu<sup>6</sup>, the pastured land was community's property and could not be divided. Rivers, tanks, ponds and woods were also the part of communal property. This concept of property prevailed in early medieval times. In *Harṣacarita* Bāna has presented a picture of community land. He shows a "singing herdsmen mounted on buffalos, pursued by sparrows greedy for swarms of flies, gay with tinkle of bells bound to their necks, roaming herds of cow make white its forest".<sup>7</sup> It is clearly understood that the communal property was enjoyed by the every section of the society without any restriction.

The concept of *Bhūpati*<sup>8</sup> was proposed in Dharmaśhāstrās where the king was not only a ruler but also the owner and protector of land. *Medhātithī* made two statements about property, "The King as the lord (*prabhur-āśau –bhūmi*) of the soil at one place and elsewhere stating that the field belongs to him who made it fit for cultivation by clearing it".<sup>9</sup> He was contradicting him self or pointing to the prevalence of alternative varieties of ownership. Royal ownership of land was supported in the early medieval texts. Bāna mentioned, the King Harṣavardhana was the lord of the land as well as the protector of land including his subjects also. At one place king Harṣa granted Brāhmaṇs a hundred

<sup>6</sup> Patrick, Olivelle. *Manu's Code of Law: A Critical Edition and Translation of the Manava-Dharmasastra.*: Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 2006.

<sup>7</sup> *Harṣacaritā*, p.101.

<sup>8</sup> For relevant details regarding this theoretical aspect. See, Romila Thapar, *From Lineage to State: Social Formation in the Mid- first Millennium BC in the Ganga Valley* , Oxford University Press

, Delhi, 1990; also see, R.S. Sharma, *From Gopati to Bhūpati: A review of the changing position of the king*, Studies in History, vol.2. 1980. pp.1-10.

<sup>9</sup> Lallanji, Gopal, *Economic Life in Northern India C.AD 700-1200*, Motilal Banarsidass Delhi, 1965.p.5.

villages delimited by thousand ploughs. This happened when he was planning to begin his *digvijāy*. Royal land charters supported the idea of King's ownership of land. The Madhubani copper plate inscription dated 632 CE <sup>10</sup> gives useful information of a land grant by king Harṣa in which he has transferred the right of village land to two learned Brāhmaṇs. Earlier it was falsely enjoyed by the others. Description of *Brahmādeya* land in *Harṣacaritā* helps to trace the authority of private land ownership. It is clear from the above descriptions that the Royal land ownership was very strong and the king retained land rights with himself.

During the time of king Harṣa officers were not paid in cash for their services to the state. They usually got a piece of land in exchange of their services. And that land may be accounted in the category of private land. Bāna describes some big orchards of fruits (mango, peach, and pomegranate) which were well secured by the guards. However it is not clearly mentioned in the text, whose property they were. The profit from and

demand for fruits would be the reason for the protection of the orchards.

### *Type of Crops*

In the early medieval ages there was considerable change as far as the cropping pattern is concerned. During the period one not only finds varieties of crops which were grown but also that some crops had emerged as a staple food for the poor sections of the society. The main factors for increasing crop production during the early medieval times

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<sup>10</sup> *Epigraphica Indica* : A collection of Inscriptions, Supplementary to the Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Jas. Burgess, (ed), vol .I Archaeological Survey of India, Delhi, 1983, p.71.

may be identified as expansion of wet cultivation and a greater domestication of wild and marginally grown cereals.<sup>11</sup> The introduction of new food crops, vine-crops and garden products, and changing food habits of the people may also have contributed to the enhancement.

*Harṣacaritā* and *Kādambarī* help us to understand the different types of crops that were grown in Northern India during that period. These texts also portray the picture of cultural variation in food habits and way of living. On the basis of literary evidences crops can be distinguish in two groups: food crops and cash crops

*Food Crops*: Food crops include some cereals such as, wheat, rice, barley, corn and so on. Besides there were some different varieties of fruits including; mango, peach, pomegranate, vine- orbours, and dry dates.<sup>12</sup>

*Cash Crops*: These crops could not be directly used for consumption, they needed some processing, and these crops were grown to earn cash income by selling them directly in the market. During the early medieval period the crops produced included, sugar cane, cotton, betel leaves (*tambūla*) arceā-nut, silk-plantation and sandal wood. These were the most desirable and were in daily demand by every section of the society.

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<sup>11</sup> *Harṣacarita* , p.285.

<sup>12</sup> *Harṣacarita*, pp.101-102.

Here the question is not to identify and categorize the crops in different groups, but the purpose is to know how far were these crops fulfilling the society's demand and in that process whether they were not helping to provide a source of lively hood to that section that was related with the agricultural production.

During the seventh century cereals like wheat, rice and corn were the staple food used by the north Indian people and barley (in the form of powder) used with jaggery as "sattu" and consumed by mixing it with water, particularly in the summer season to remain cool. Rice and corn on the other hand were not only used for meal but they also had ritual significance. *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* give evidence where "fried corn and boiled rice" were offered to god and to ancestors. Corn was the new crop it could be cultivated in minimum time and it required less amount of water. In that way a new crop had been included in the list of cereals. In the *Āṣṭāṅga Samgraha*,<sup>13</sup> a text of seventh century, *kāngu* (tax tail millet) was described as an inferior grain, and consumed by the poorer starta of the rural population. In *Harṣacarita* Bāna mentioned heaps of burning *Sāstikā* (a kind of rice grown in sixty days, commonly called *sāthī*).<sup>14</sup> It appears that there was a pressure of population. In order to full fill the demand for that section it was necessary to domesticate the wild crops.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Āṣṭāṅga Samgraha*, a text of the seventh century, in which Kāngu was describe as an inferior grain, and consumed by the poorer starta of the rural population .for more detail see, Om Prakash, *Food Drinks in Ancient India*, part-2 Delhi, 1961.

<sup>14</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.256.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.90.

Bāna referred to varieties of fruits and their orchards which imply cereals were not the only source of food. Fruits were also included in the meal of the people. Besides hunger, now taste also mattered. It brought a change in the food habits and life style of the people. The vine and pomegranate orchards were present in the Srikāntha region. These were properly fenced, and fruits too were covered with net to protect them from birds. It shows the fruits were costly. And their industry was also flourishing. These orchards would require labour services to serve them. But here it can not be said what was the mode of income for those who worked in the orchards. Because in that period along with the land people on that land were also granted and it was ordered by the grantee. The people belonging to that land had to serve the donees and their mobility was restricted.

The use of jaggery, molasses, and candid sugar <sup>16</sup>(crystallized white sugar) by the people of Srikāntha region shows their familiarity with the crop. Bāna saw sugar-cane

enclosures in the field near by Srikāntha region<sup>17</sup> and sugar plantation in Vindhya region.<sup>18</sup> It can be said that the people of Northern India were habitual of sugar cane. The use of sugar was not restricted to northern part of India, as its plantation in south India was a common phenomena by the fifth century. It also appeared that “the manufactured of jaggery was concentrated in the hand of a professional class who worked sugar-

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.,p.264.

<sup>17</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.264.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.102, 256.

process in village huts and sold both sugar cane juice and crystal sugar to customers who approached these huts.”<sup>19</sup>

Social manners and ritual requirement led to the expansion of cultivation of betel leaves and areca- nut.<sup>20</sup> Betel leaves rolls were prepared with ingredients such as be rich in camphor, rakkola cloves, and nutmegs. Prior to *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* we do not have plenty of account of the use of betel leaves and their cultivation. These texts give us lots of evidence, where it was taken after the meal, and it was also a part of cultural custom. Princess Kādambarī welcomed her friend Mahāśvetā, and prince Candrāpīda paid honor to them with offering betel leaves with areca-nut.<sup>21</sup>

In Sthāneśwara we find that the people were habitual of betel leaves but we do not find places where the betel leaves were grown. On the other hand in *Kādambarī* we have clear evidence; the people of Vindhya and Ujjinī were not only habitual of betel leaves (*tambūlikā*) but they also cultivated it.<sup>22</sup> Alberūnī notices the Indians ate betel-leaves with lime after dinner to strengthen their power of digestion while the chewing of betel-nuts acted as an astringent, on the teeth, germs and stomach.<sup>23</sup> The increase in the demand for cash crops in day to day life reflects the picture of society. To meet those needs more land was required and more labour was required to cultivate it.

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<sup>19</sup> R.N.Nandi, *State Formation Agrarian Growth and Social Change in Feudal South India C.A.D 600-1200*, Manohar, Delhi,2000, p.99-101.

<sup>20</sup> *Dictionary of the Economics Products of India*, vol-6, pp- 247-56; Betel leaf is to be a native of Java.

<sup>21</sup> *Kādāmbaī*, p. 248.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., P.56,102, 146.

<sup>23</sup> *Alberūnī's India*, Q.Ahmad, (ed), National Book Trust, 1983, p.237.

## Irrigation

Irrigation is a crucial stage in-input in cultivation. On the one hand it increases the possibility of a good heap of crops whereas on the other hand it helps farmers to have an assured quantum of crops with regularity. During the early medieval period the irrigational facilities were there but the technology was very different from modern days. During that time there were two types of irrigation. The natural way of irrigation where farmers had to depend upon the rain water to irrigate the field, while in the artificial way of irrigation; tanks, ponds and wells were used to irrigate the field. Both the texts *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* bear evidence for the cultivation of wheat and rice large scale. These crops were not just the staple food of people but they were also used for rituals. Bāna describes that when he was going to visit the king Harṣavardhana he saw the fields were being irrigated by *Rahat*<sup>24</sup> Persian wheel,<sup>25</sup> while in Vindhya new tanks and ponds were dug to irrigate the wet rice land.<sup>26</sup> Bāna has revealed that the pious inhabitants of Ujjain built bridge, wells and other devices for irrigation at their own expenses.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.102.

<sup>25</sup> During the Early Medieval times it is an issue of debate. Were the fields irrigated with the help of “Persian Wheel” in India prior to the 13<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> Century. For discussion on this issue see, B.D.Chattopadhyaya, *Irrigation in Early Medieval Rajasthan*, in *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1997(1994) pp. 38-56; Upinder Singh, *A history of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12<sup>th</sup> century*, Pearson Longman, Delhi, 2008, p-583.

<sup>26</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.287.

<sup>27</sup> *Kādambarī* p.69.

The above description helps to understand the picture of Northern India's agriculture and irrigation system. But what about the rest of India? According to B.D Chattopadhyaya in Rajasthan where water was scarce, artificial irrigation well included *dhimādā*, *vāpī* and *agrahattā* and tank included *taḍaga*, *puṣhkarīṇi* named after one who built it, was the only life line. It had played a significant role in the expansion of agriculture expansion and cultivation of *bājṛā*, millet and sesame seeds (these crops required minimum amount of water) on that land.

The southern part of the subcontinent did not lag behind. R.N.Nandi's<sup>28</sup> work helps us to understand and correlate the various dimensions of agriculture of a different region. In south India we find some new crops such as, *rāgī*, *bājṛā*, and *jawār* began to be cultivated. The use of artificial irrigation had taken the shape. The first clear evidence of the use of tanks with “sluice-weir” devices was found in Mulbagal tālūk Inscription dated 750 CE which refers to the transfer of a plot of land below the sluice of a tank.<sup>29</sup> With the passage of time it became a common technique used to irrigate the field. It was an



innovative tool to fuel the agrarian growth rapidly.

### *Artisans and their Crafts*

The early medieval period marked the beginning of a new age in Indian history when certain economic factors played a decisive role in paving the way for a new social and political structure based on the land system. Art and crafts are important is as they

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<sup>28</sup> Nandi, op.cit.,2000.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.93.

are related to the socio- cultural pattern of the society and have a bearing on its material life. According to S.K.Maity, “India has always been rich in her natural resources, which can be broadly grouped under three heads: mineral, animal and plant produce. All these rich resources offered a scope for large number of handicrafts and professions.”<sup>30</sup>

Crafts are to be considered very much a part of economic and cultural transformation through out the ancient time. In order to understand their significance during the early medieval period division of artisans and their crafts is necessary. *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* both give a vivid picture of different artisan groups. These groups include, black smith, leather worker (*carmkāra*), gold smith, worker in coch shells, (*samakhakār*) potter (*kumbhakāra*), weaver (*kuvindakā*) barbar, painter, carpenter and *mālākāra*. With regard to artisans and their crafts B.D.Chattopadhyaya has pointed out, that crafts bring the question of caste hierarchy and untouchability.<sup>31</sup> Suvira Jaiswal<sup>32</sup> also says that during the early medieval times profession became a determinant factor to decide caste. Due to this not only the profession came to be known by the caste, but also indicated social status.

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<sup>30</sup> Maity, op. cit, 1970, p.132.

<sup>31</sup> Chattopadhyaya, op. Cit,2003, p.227; also see, B.D.Chattopadhyaya, Markets and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan, in *The Making of Early Medieval India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi.1997.; Ranabir Chakravarti , Monarchs, Merchants and a Matha in Northern Konkan(C.AD 900-1053) cited in, *Trade in Early India* ed. Ranabir Chakravarti, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 20001.pp.257-281.

<sup>32</sup> Suvira Jaiswal, *Caste: Origin, Function and Dimensions of Change* , Manohar, Delhi, 1998.

Early medieval texts and other sources discuss about the various artisan groups. Their patron class, their art of crafts and their social status as well. The demand for art and crafts came from different classes of the society. These can be divided into three categories: royal palace, feudal class, and common masses. Royal palace patronized the artisan and their crafts to meet their day to day demands. Along with it they also were the major sources for the maintenance of their courtly culture and status hierarchy. During

the early medieval times trade and crafts were still in demand as shown by Chattopadhyaya and Ranabir Chakrabarti<sup>33</sup>

*Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* give some example in support of these artisan groups and show that these artisans and their crafts still had a market. At the time of Rājyaśrī's marriage, skilled artists from every country were summoned which included leather worker, carpenter, gold smith, painter, barber and so on.<sup>34</sup> Besides that varieties of fabric such as, texture of linen, cotton, bark-silk, spider's thread, muslin, shot –silk (resembling slough of snakes, imprecceptable except to touch)<sup>35</sup> Bāna mentions in the text that such fabric were flourishing as their demand came from ruling class. There were some other items which were used in the palace such as ornaments made of gold, pearl, shell, couches and semi precious stone. King Parabhākarvardhana gifted his pearl necklace to an attendant on hearing the news of prince Harṣa's birth. Similarly king Tārāpīda too gifted his *Dupattā* which he wore, on hearing the news of his son Candrāpīda's birth.

<sup>33</sup> For more detail see, B.D.Chattopadhyaya, Market and Merchants in Early Medieval Rajasthan, pp.89-120; Trade and Urban Centres in Early Medieval North India,pp.130-155. cited in, *The Making of Northern India*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1997.

<sup>34</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.158.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.159-60.

Bāna refers in the *Harṣacarita* that Bhandi, son of Harṣa's maternal uncle, wore earring made of pearl and precious stone and a bracelet made of *pukhrāj* (yellow stone) on his wrist.<sup>36</sup> The other items used in the palace were glass made of brass metal, ivory boxes (for cosmetics and betel, arecā-nuts, etc.). Interestingly royal elephants tusks were ornamented with the golden bangles.<sup>37</sup> On the basis of the above description it can be derived that artisan groups had reasons to flourish in their profession during the seventh century in northern India.

Feudal classes or *sāmantās* basically start featuring after the Guptas. It represents a class who were not equal to the paramount king, yet they were included in the political hierarchy and started to follow the palace's custom. Bāna refers in *Harṣacharitā* that *sāmantās* used to wear gold armlets and bracelets ( *kāyūr*), used ivory boxes to keep betel leaves and areca nut, cosmetic product too At the occasion of Rājyaśrī's marriage feudal women presented such boxes to her.<sup>38</sup> The use of ivory was very common in Harṣa's time. Bāna has shown that "ivory roof was made on the shrine of Kāma" and that ivory ornaments especially, ear ornaments (*danta patrā*) were very popular amongst all sections of the people.<sup>39</sup> It indicates that those art and artisan groups who earlier served for the royal palace now started to work for these feudal classes

<sup>36</sup> V.S.Aggrawal, op. cit, 1965, p.68.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.40.

<sup>38</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.159.

<sup>39</sup> *Kādambarī*, p. 104, 121.

Artisan groups basically represent the common masses of the society. So it was very common to have demand for their product amongst that class. Bāna suggests that, “copper utensils included fire- trays, oven, simmering pan, spites, copper sauce-pans and frying-pans were in great demand by the household”<sup>40</sup>. Two points emerge from here firstly, mud- utensils were slowly supplemented with the coming of copper utensils in functioning but pottery continued to be in use. Secondly, the variety of utensils mentioned above indicates the development of metal industry during the time.

The other items demanded by the common people included, cotton clothes, silk clothes, dye-colored clothes, jewellery made of gold (very limited), shells, and of ivory. It conveys that during the early medieval period in Northern India every section of society had their own demands according to the status and necessity. Within these demands the range of income of the people can be looked at and identified.

### Markets

Artisans their crafts and market were interlinked. Market provided a place to the artisan groups where they could go and sell their products and earn their livelihood. Sharma <sup>41</sup> has shown in his work, that in the early medieval period market centers started losing their importance, as long distance trade had decline. However, some new centres seem to have emerged. In *Harṣacarita* Bāna mentions, a market centre in Sthānśwara city (*Śrikāntha jana-padā*). He gives a vivid description at Harṣa’s birth and celebration,

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<sup>40</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.263.

<sup>46</sup> Sharma, po.cit, 1997, p.162.

when it was robbed and compensated by the royal treasury.<sup>42</sup> In *Kādambarī*, Bāna describes a beautiful market in the following words, in Ujjainī, there was a big market – roads, where, heaps of conch’s oyster-shells, pearls corals, and emerald gems were available from all famous places<sup>43</sup>. It means the markets were there but now they were regionalized

Xuanzang’s account helps us to speculate about the urban pattern of Northern India during Harṣa’s time. With regard to Sthānśwara he says, “There the families were rich and given to excessive luxury and they had large accumulation of rare and valuable merchandise from every quarter.”<sup>44</sup> Then after he moved towards Kānyākubja and praised

the city in these words: “The people were honest and sincere who used bright shining fabric.”<sup>45</sup> Both descriptions convey the scenario of town and market and its products and the life of the people. The view that we get of northern India’s markets are solely based upon the literary sources. Here archaeological source remains silent. We do not have enough published excavation reports and the report we have, are remain un sufficient to provide substantial data.

However, excavations at Sthāneśwara and nearby of this site reveals some new equation to understand the material culture of that period. Excavation at ‘Harṣa ka Tila’ Sthāneśwara, Theh, Polar, Agroha, make it clear that these sites represent the settlement

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<sup>42</sup> *Harṣacarita*, p.145.

<sup>43</sup> *Kādambarī*, p.67.

<sup>44</sup> .Beal, op.cit, p.183.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.207.

of towns. Besides this, the exploration at Pinjor, Pehowa, Jind, Sirsa, and Sonipat represent the pattern of life which may also be termed as town life and urban settlement.<sup>46</sup> Evidences of massive building<sup>47</sup> activities are reported from Harṣa ka Tila, several terracotta figurines<sup>48</sup> are also reported from this site. Therefore, we may enrich our understanding and built an idea about the nature of settlements.

Bāna refers to the name of some places from where horses were bought: arattā, Kamboja, Bharadvaja, Sindha and Persion.<sup>49</sup> It means the transaction between the other region and countries was still continuing. *Sudristhi* who was the book bearer of Bāna had worn a white dress (*dupattā*) made up of a fabric of *Pundṛa-desa*, also chewed betel leaves which seem to be the custom of that class.<sup>50</sup> On the basis of information from the texts one can have an idea of markets, market products, interaction with other region and country and the economic activities of the period.

### *Women and Economics*

The place of women in the society has always been a matter of debate. Patriarchy managed and governed the role, duties and status of women. She was made a puppet in

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<sup>46</sup> B.M.Pande, *Archaeology of Thanesar: A Brief report on Excavation at Harsha ka Tila, Historical Archaeology of India: A Dialogue between Archaeologists and Historians*, Amita Ray and Samir Mukherjee.(eds) New Delhi, 1990.pp.148-149.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.149.

<sup>48</sup> S.P.Shukla, *Sculptures and Terracottas* in the Archaeological Museum, Kurakshetra University, Kurakshetra, 1983,p.72.

<sup>49</sup> *Harsacarita*, p.65.

<sup>50</sup> V.S.Aggrawal, op.cit, 1965, p.52.

the hands of male folk. Her presence was rarely acknowledged. However, they played a very significant role in running the household economy. The *Harṣacarita* sheds light on women, her history, her role and her participation in the economic sphere, where she tried to earn money to fulfill the needs of her family. He mentions that, “Village wiveshastened (in hurry) in route for neighboring villages, all intent on thoughts of sale and bearing on their heads buckets filled with various gathered forest fruits”<sup>51</sup>. It highlights two things. Firstly, it helps to understand that women were not only helping to run the household economy, but that they also established engagement in daily economics. Secondly, women were actively engaged in public sphere as well.

The picture which emerges after analyzing the various economic facets of early medieval period is significant. The period which is said to have experienced several changes including the decline of long distance trade, decay of market centres and reduction of demands for arts and crafts does not entirely emerge to be so from the texts. Literary evidences of the seventh century, for instance the *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* present a opposite view regarding to the ‘decline theory’. The other textual sources of the same period also conformed it. These textual sources provide data which shows a continuous development in the agrarian sector, trade and artisans crafts. The beginning of temple construction provided an opportunity to the artisan class. Hence, we can conclude that the seventh century was a period of change and not of decline.

<sup>51</sup> *Harṣacarita*,p.288.

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