



The Means of Agriculture Production in the Sultanate Haryana (1206-1526 A. D.)

KEYWORDS

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In the sultanate Haryana, the agricultural means were very simple and traditional. Generally, the peasantry ploughed the fields with iron phala plough in which the pair of oxen were yoked. They have their own land or acquired on hire from the zamindars. The peasantry for the agricultural purposes domesticated the bullocks. The water of artificial means of irrigation like the canals, wells and tanks was used also to irrigate the crops. The peasants prepared the fields with the help of spades, hal, phalis. The cattle dung was used as fertilizer to fertile the soil.

For the actual cultivation the tiller required simple equipment of a plough, a pair of bullocks and of course the land. The land could be ancestral legacy, acquired personally or received on hire from the landlord zamindar in the original, to cultivate for the reason, or as might be stipulated in the tenancy contract. Should the land be received by the cultivator for crop sharing, it was useful for both of them the parties to be clear about the stipulated clauses regarding the crops to be sown, the supply of appropriate quality of seeds, bullocks, labour and the category of fertility level of the piece of land in question.

The bullocks too could be owned, hired or purchased. The sale and purchase of cattle both for agricultural purposes and dairy products, in the rural markets selling at low rates, was a common feature of the local scene. The plough a horizontal beam structure, was termed takh-i-is-trash in the Persian Lexicon and hal in the local, dialect. The soil was ploughed with the iron plough in which oxen were yoked. The iron phala plough was used for ploughing the drill or harder soils since the ancient times. The dictionary, Miftah-ul-Fuzala, compiled in Malwa in 1468-69, contains that the Hundi term phal applies to the iron coulter with which the soil was broken. The wood-cum-metal character of the plough made it imperative for every village society to incorporate carpenters and blacksmiths in its fold since the earliest days.

In each rural settlements blacksmiths occupied an indispensable position, in order to manufacture all kinds of iron tools and implements of agricultural. Similarly, the leather artisans had manufactured leather buckets- called driti for the peasants from drawing water from wells.

The bulk of imperial dominion was composed of the level terren of alluvial soil with certain exemptions, such as the craggy Siwalik and the hills of the Arawali of the north and south Haryana respectively. Besides these regions, arid region of the south Haryana adjoining the thar desert.

In the areas of inadequate rainfall, such as Mewat region, attempts were constantly made to provide artificial means of irrigation. These could be channels, canals, subter-

anean canals (kakrez in the original), wells, both ordinary and with Persian wheel attachments, strong and substantial bunds, tanks and masonry reservoirs, sometimes running into rules. Some of these reservoirs were built near spring sources.

Before the onset of the monsoon, each peasant prepared the land for sowing the crops for the next season. For this purpose, he was required to plough and after a month to dig and break up the cloded soil into smoothness and turn over the moist earth, by means of a pair of shovels or spades, joined to-gather a horizontal plank and drawn by a couple of men. In order to clear the land of stones and weeds two or four pronged metal projections described as tongs, phalis in the vernacular, were used to collect them together, but in case of thorny weeds sickle was more effective. He then checked for the underground moisture in the soil. The land was classified in accordance with its descending degree of fertility, referred by Haji Abdul Hamid Ghazvi, but set out more explicitly in Sirat-i-Firoz Shahi, as the land, already under plough, soft and alluvial soil, land responsive to irrigation by small channels, elevated and mountainous land, low and swampy land and finally arid and deserted land.

The allocation of crops for particular arazi who presumely made with a view to its fertility potential, which, in its turn determined its pre-sowing treatment. The grain seeds to be moistened before actual sowing while the seeds of lentils and vetches were to be mixed with cow dung for faster growth and higher production.

Prior to ploughing and leveling, it was necessary to fertilize the land. Drowning of cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goat and birds, ducks excepted, made a good fertilizer, but those of horses and camels were considered to possess much greater potency. Dried grass and straws too were used to fertilise the fields. Furthermore, in order to prevent breeding of wooly worms in its process of decomposition, ash of wood fuel, as an insecticides was mixed in the manure heap. After then the manure was scattered all over the fields, which was then ploughed and leveled repeatedly, in order to fully mix the manure in the earth, to be left out unattended till the break of monsoon.

It is evident from the above discussion that the peasantry of the Haryana region farming with ploughs, bullocks, spades, phalis and other agricultural implements. The oxen were yoked in the plough. Usually, the peasants were the owner of their fields or acquired land from the zamindars on hire. In addition to the river water, the water of canals, tanks and wells was used to irrigate the crops, especially in the dry region like Mewat. The peasantry prepared the fields before the beganing of monsoon. The cattle dung of

boffaloes, sheeps, goats was used as fertilizer to increase the fertility of the fields. To prevent breeding of wooly worms in the crops, fruits and vegetables, ash of wood fuel as an insecticides was mixed with cattle and scattered in fields.

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