



The Main Crops and Agricultural Production in the Sultanate Haryana (1206-1526 A. D.)

KEYWORDS

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In the sultanate Haryana, different varieties of crops, fruits and vegetables were grown by the peasants. The main crops were millet, shamakh, mash, mung, lobia, moth, wheat, barley, chick-peas, lentil, sugarcane, rice, cotton, jawar, gram, grape, banana, ginger, carrot and beat-root etc.

The crops were sown twice a year in the autumn (kharif) and in the spring (rabi) seasons. Ibn Battuta who has travelled various parts of India as well as the Haryana region also informed about the agrarian system of the country. "The Indians sow the fields twice a year in the autumn and in the summer. In summer, when the rains fall, they sow the autumn crops, which were reaped sixty days after the sowing. The kudhru, which was a kind of millet and from all the grains this was grown most abundantly. The qal which was like the anli (a kind of millet), The shamakh, whose seeds were smaller than those of the qal often grows without sowing. It was gathered by the people with great care from the fields. Each holds a huge basket in his left hand and in his right a whip with which he strikes the corn which falls into the basket. In this way, they gathered enough to live for a whole year. The seeds of the shamakh were very small. When it has been gathered from the fields it was placed in the sun and crushed in wooden mortars. Its husk flew away and a white substance remains. The mash was a species of peas. The mung was a kind of mash. But its seed was long and it was bright green in colour. The lobia was a kind of bean. The seeds of mote (moath) were small. The sesame and sugarcane were two other autumn crops. When the autumn crops harvested, the spring crops like wheat, barley, chick-peas and lentils were sown in the same fertile soil."

Afif provides valuable information about the kharif and the rabi crops of the Hissar shiq. He remarks, "The kharif crops were very good in the area but the rabi crops were not so good because wheat could not flourish without water, on availability water through the two canals for the region, both the season crops began to flourish." At Panipat the soldiers of Timur found a large store of wheat amount to ten thousand manns of the great weight (sang-i-kalan) or 160,000 of the legal standard (sang-i-shara), which indicates that wheat crop was grown by the peasants of Panipat or by the nearby villagers. Afif also gives an account about the three varieties of sugarcane of the region. Soft sugarcane, black as well as white, was of such a variety that one tried to remove its skin, the whole of it would be removed and the thinner roots would also pass in to the mouth. At the time of Amir Timur's invasion on India (1398), the Jat peasants of the Tohana region cropped sugarcane in their fields. Umri gives additional information about the use of sugarcane in sugar making. He states, "The sugarcane abounds every where in India. Among its varieties one was of black colour with hard

covering (shell). But it was excellent for chewing and not found in any other country. From other varieties, sugar was prepared in large quantities and it was cheaper than candy. It was not crystallized and rather resembles white flower."

As far as the rice is concerned, there were twenty one varieties of rice in India. According to Ibn Battuta, "It was sown by the peasants three times a year and it was one of the principal produces a great quantity of fine rice cereals."

In the north parts of Haryana, wherever the rainfall was high, rice was the chief crops for the kharif season while sugarcane and wheat were the main rabi crops. In the dry regions like Hissar, millet (bajra) and grain were the main kharif and the rabi crops respectively.

During the sultanate period, Thakur Feru was only a chronicler who gives an account about the production of main crops of per bigha which were grown in the shiqs of Hissar, Hansi and Bhiwani.

| Crops | Per bigha in mann |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Wheat | 45 |
| Rice | 15.5 – 18.5 |
| Jawar | 40 |
| Sugarcane | 10 |
| Cotton | 17 |
| Mung | 18 |
| Moath | 24 |
| Chola | 11 |
| Tila | 18 |
| Kagani | 20 |
| Sesame | 10 |
| Batula, Harhad, Kultha | 14 |
| Jeera, Dania | 10 |
| Junte (san) | 10 |

In the time of Muhammad bin Tughlaq, a number of varieties of the fruits and vegetables were grown in the country. Among from the fruits, figs, grapes, pomegranates, bananas, apricots, peaches, citron, lemon, oranges, sycamore, black-mulberries, melons, water melons, yellow and green cucumbers (khira and kakdi) were grown in India. Pears and apples were grown in smaller quantities than guava. Fruits Mango was another delicious fruit of the country. Umri assumes, "The banana abounds in India but it was rarely planted in Delhi and the area round. Besides these

fruits, there were also grown turnips, carrots, marrow, egg plant, asparagus and ginger. The people cooked gingers in the same manner as the carrot. Its palate was so tasteful that nothing can be compared with it. Beat-roots, onions, fennel, thyme were also found there." The sesame oil was used for light. Honey was abundant.

Firoz Shah was very fond of laying gardens where fruits and vegetables were grown in abundance. Hence, in the vicinity of Delhi, there were one thousand and two hundred gardens, full of greenery and blooming. The gardens which had been assigned as endowments or awarded to individuals in proprietary rights, the sultan regularized those endowments without any enquiries. He completed the construction work of thirty gardens of Alauddin Khalji. Eighty gardens were laid at Salora. In every garden, all kinds of fruits, palm dates, oranges, red flowers, wild tancy, plums and seven varieties of grapes, like black and white, were grown. The price of grapes was one jital for a seer. Different varieties of the dry fruits were also grown in the gardens. A revenue of one lakh and eighty thousand tankas was realized from these gardens (including the income of forty four gardens of Chittar).

Mango was one of the elegant autumn fruit of Hindustanis. The pronounce it aam or amb. Amir Khursrau called it naghzak. They were usually plucked unripe and ripen in the houses. It was sweet but has a sour taste. Mango was known as amra in Sanskrit, am in Bengali, am and amb in Hindi. Ibn Battuta has used the Hindi word which was current then, but has arabicized it as amba. Jamun was another fruit of India. Its tree was large. It was black in colour and has one stone. It was called jamon or jamun in Hindi, jam or phaunda in Bengali, Jambul, blackpuin in English, its botanic name was *syzygium cumini*.

The sweet orange was called naranj and thickly abounds in India. The other variety of orange was half way between the sweet and the sour. This fruit was as large as a sweet lime. The pomegranate was another fruit of India. It grown twice a year. The Indians called it anar- a word which transferred from the word 'julnar' for jul in Persian means a flower, and 'nar' in pomegranate.

It is clear from the above discussion that in the sultanate Haryana like the other parts of India the crops were grown by the peasants in the kharif and rabi seasons. Shamakh, millet, rice, cotton were the kharif crops. Wheat, and barley were the main rabi crops. A number of varieties of the fruits and vegetables like oranges, pomegranates, gingers and carrots were also grown by the peasants of Haryana region. Thakur Pheru explored additional information about the per bigha production of fourteen crops of the shiq of Hissar. Ibn Battuta additional descriptions about the samakh, jamun and orange were very important. Umri explored about more than two varieties of sugarcane. Afif gave account about the thirty gardens of Alauddin and one thousand and two hundred of Firoz Thughlaq which lay in the vicinity of Delhi and the Haryana region.

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