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Industries of Sanduru Taluk: A Historical Overview

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ABSTRACT: Sanduru and Sanduru Environment are located in the Ballari district, often known as the Karthikeya Tapovana. During the Krutayuga, Tretayuga, Dwaparayuga, and Kaliyuga, it went by the names Devagiri, Swarnagiri, Divayachala, and Lohachala. Swami Karthikeya is said to have prayed to Lord Brahmadi's gods for Tarakadi Asura's death.¹ Since then, it has served as a natural destination, a place of worship, and an industrial site. Due to the splendour of nature and its natural resources, several enterprises have existed since ancient times. The Ballari Parisarada Samskrutika Parampare Volume I and the Gazetteer of the Bellary District were used to review all of those industries.

KEYWORDS: Industries, Sanduru Taluk, Sandur Manganese and Iron Ores Ltd., Mining Operations, Vijayanagara Steel Project, Toranagallu, Vijayanagara Steel Project, Toranagallu, Village Oil Industry, Pottery.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Sanduru royal dynasty has a town and a talk centre named Sanduru (sometimes spelt Sandur). The princely realm of Gorpade only covered 1258 square kilometres. And the talkative of the Ballari district of the former Madras State, which had a population of 1,91,166, was all around it (1947). Given the situation, it had no choice but to work with the Indian government, which took on the job of integrating the princely kingdoms. On April 1st, control of Sandur was given to the Indian government. With the addition of Chorapur and Tauranga RI circles in 1950, Sandur separated itself from the Ballari district. The Hosapete taluk borders Hosapete on the north and west, while Kudligi borders it on the south.

The taluk's area is 1258 square kilometres. Additionally, the 2001 census found 1,91,166 people living there. This represents 9.43 per cent. 15 per cent of the district's total population and land area. Ballari has legal control over the Sandur Taluk—revenue division with a three-ring indicator.

II. GEOGRAPHY

The location of Sanduru is. It is 565 metres (1853 feet) above sea level on average. Sandur, along with the nearby settlements of Dowlthpur, Ramgad, Swamihalli, and Donimalai, is surrounded by lush mountains, valleys, and narrow gorges.

Climate:

Due to its elevation, the tropical savannah climate of Sandur is colder than that of the semi-arid regions of Ballari and Vijayanagara. The highest recorded temperature in Sandur was 42 degrees, while the lowest was 6 degrees. Sandur gets 750mm of precipitation a year, however, there have been times when it has received more than 1000mm.

This taluk contains the largest tract of forest in the Ballari district. Tigers once roamed Sandur's rich woodlands. In this location, there are a lot more typical wild animals. This talismanic climate's lush hills and dense forests are generally colder but dry throughout the year. Sandy, reddish-red, fertile clay is found in the Sandur Taluk, and some.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF INDUSTRIES OF SANDURU TALUK

A recognised component in the development of a region's economy is the requirement for the development of industries. The majority of the raw resources required for the growth of its enterprises are produced favourably in the

Sandur Taluk. The Sandur is abundant in valuable natural resources and essential raw materials needed for the growth of major contemporary industries; these resources must be methodically exploited and used for capital works of a productive nature intended to increase the prosperity of the Sandur people.

Both Vijayanagara and Ballari Mineral riches are abundant in certain areas, particularly in iron ore. According to Robert Bruce Foote, the area between the Sandur hills' twin ranges is "affluent in iron, richest in all of India, and one of the richest in the world."²

Additionally, the area is rich in manganese, with the ore possessing an average of 43% manganese dioxide. General engineering, village oil, and pottery are a few additional significant enterprises that may be highlighted. This article offers the historical viewpoint of some of the important industries. In the following sections, an attempt is made to briefly summarise these and other enterprises' provident facilities to industrial labour of the Sandur taluk.

IV. INDUSTRIES OF SANDURU TALUK

The taluk's Sandur Hills are renowned for both their natural beauty and the lush splendour of the trees that surround them. In this taluk, mining is a significant industry. Mineral-rich mountain ranges run parallel to Sandur's east and west. These include Kumaraswamy Hill, Ramanadurga, and Donimalai. Large amounts of iron deposits can be found in the Ramanadurga and Donimalai ranges. Manganese is extracted in this location.

Mineral Based Industries

One of the biggest producers of manganese in the nation is Messrs. Sandur Manganese and Iron Ores Ltd., which has a lease on 29 square kilometres of land in the Sandur taluk for iron and manganese ores. The company now produces 2.5 lakh tonnes of manganese ore annually. It has built a pig iron plant with an installed capacity of 100 tonnes of foundry-grade pig iron per day at Vysanakere on the Hosapete-Harihara road, near the raw materials.³

Sandur Manganese and Iron Ores Ltd.

The Sandur Manganese and Iron Ores were started as a private limited company, in the year 1954, by *Shri Yeshwantrao Hindurao Ghorpade*, the former ruler of Sandur, to take over the mining lease granted to him by the State Government in 1953, over an area of 29 square miles. This mining lease was previously held by a foreign company called the G.S.M. Co. From 1907 to 1953. This new company was converted into a public limited company in July 1964 to establish an electro-metallurgical industry in the area mainly for the production of foundry-grade pig iron of which there was a considerable shortage in the country. The authorised capital of the Company, which was Rs. 50 lakhs, in the beginning, was increased to Rs. one crore, and later to Rs. 1.25 crores after devaluation.⁴

The Company decided to install a 15,000 KVA electric reduction furnace and got a project report prepared by M. S. Dastur and Company, Consulting Engineers. A 10-year agreement was entered into between the Company and the Mysore State Electricity Board in 1968 for the supply of power on a stable basis since electricity is a crucial factor in this power-intensive industry. The electric reduction furnace, which was designed to produce 40,000 tonnes of foundry-grade pig iron per annum initially, was obtained from an Italian firm and was erected at Vysanakere on the bank of the Tungabhadra near Hosapete. After completion of the work, this metal and ferroalloys plant was inaugurated on 20th February 1969. The capital cost of this project was Rs. 3 crores, of which the foreign exchange component was Rs. 1.18 crores. The share capital raised for the project was Rs. 73.5 lakhs, including Rs. 22 lakhs of foreign participation. Apart from the finances obtained within the country, the Company also obtained Belgian and Italian credits towards the import of machinery on a deferred payment basis.⁵

This 15,000 KVA electric reduction furnace of the Company is said to be one of the biggest of its kind in the country. It is capable of making several electro-metallurgical products and is equipped with three Sodeberg, continuous, self-baking electrodes. The slipping of electrodes is controlled by a hydraulic system, which is a special feature of this furnace. The control room is provided with sophisticated equipment to ensure fine control over the furnace operation. The main raw materials charged into the furnace for the production of pig iron are ore, coke, limestone and quartz. Some manganese ore is also added whenever required.

The furnace taps at regular intervals when the molten pig iron flows into the ladles, which are lifted by electric overhead travelling cranes, and placed in position for the pig iron to be poured into the moulds of the pig casting machine. The plant has a well-equipped maintenance shop and laboratory for the analysis of raw materials, pig iron and slag to ensure proper quality control. It produces both standard grade and special grade electric pig iron of good quality.

The future expansion programme of the company envisages, among other things, the installation of a pre-reduction kiln to increase the production of foundry-grade pig iron to about 70 to 80 thousand tonnes per annum.⁶

Mining Operations

The existence of manganese ore in the Sandur area was first discovered by one Capt. Newbold as early as 1838 and the first prospecting licence for this ore appears to have been granted in the year 1906. The Sandur manganese ore is known to possess an excellent mechanical and chemical composition. It is reputed for its low phosphorous content. As already stated earlier, the Company holds a mining lease, extending over an area of 29 square miles, for mining manganese and iron ores. In 1968, the Company produced about 2.1 lakh tonnes of manganese ore as against its initial production of about 30,000 tonnes in 1954. It exported about 1.7 lakh tonnes of ore during the year 1968 to Europe and Japan. From 1969 onwards, the Company's exports further increased and the figure stood at about three lakh tonnes during 1970-71.⁷

The quality of iron ore in the Sandur range of hills is also said to be one of the best in the world, with an iron content ranging from 62 to 66 per cent. The Company has also undertaken mining of iron ore in recent years and is understood to be producing about, a lakh tonnes of ore since 1969-70.⁸

The mining area has an integrated system of internal transport by diesel locomotives, self-acting inclines and ropeways. The labour strength of the Company is over 3,000 and the construction of quarters for them with adequate facilities has progressed steadily since 1954.⁹

Vijayanagara Steel Project, Toranagallu

October 14th, 1971, was a red-letter day in the modern Ballari district, for it was on that day that the Prime Minister of India inaugurated work on the fifth steel plant in the country in the public sector, at Toranagallu in Sanduru taluk, which was once the archway to the glorious Vijayanagar empire. While it is undoubtedly a significant event for the industrial development of Mysore State as a whole, the district of Bellary in particular can look upon the event as a turning point in the history of its development. Aptly christened as the Vijayanagar Steel Project, it is designed for the initial production of two million tonnes of steel with provision for future expansion to four million tonnes. The plant, which is to be wholly designed and built by the Central Engineering and Design Bureau of Hindustan Steel Ltd., is expected to be commissioned by about 1978. The latest engineering and technological innovations in the iron and steel industry would be adopted in this ambitious project, which is estimated to cost about 300 crores of rupees.¹⁰

Toranagallu was selected for the location of the steel plant because the rich iron ore is available in abundance in its vicinity. The reserves are so ample that they not only meet the needs of the present project and its future expansion but also leave a large surplus for export. The ore in this area is of very high quality and ranks among the richest iron ores in the world. The vast reservoir on the perennial river Tungabhadra, which is close by, assures enough water supply to the new steel town. The State Electricity Grid lines, fed by the Sharavathi and Tungabhadra Hydro-Electric Power Stations, which pass through this area, meet the power needs of the steel plant and the township. Rail and road communications are well established in this area. While Toranagallu itself is a railway station, the nearby town of Hosapete is linked with both the broad gauge and metre gauge railway lines. Thus, in all aspects, Toranagallu offers a better site for this integrated large-scale steel project. Only coal, which is not available locally, has to be obtained from outside.¹¹

The steel plant is expected to have large-capacity furnaces with the latest engineering and technological innovations. The question of setting up large L.D. converters for steel-making and continuous casting units is also being considered. The finishing mills will include inter alia a wire rod mill of four lakh tonnes capacity, a light merchant mill of three lakh tonnes, and a light and medium section mill of five lakh tonnes, totalling about 1.2 million tonnes of finished steel. In addition, the plant will also produce four lakh tonnes of billets a year. About 10,000 acres of land are being acquired for locating this steel complex, which is expected to create employment opportunities for an estimated 20,000 to 25,000 skilled and semi-skilled workers in the first stage. The steel plant will also provide scope for several ancillary industries in the area, including foundries for the manufacture of ordinary and alloy castings, slag granulation and slag cement plants, etc..¹²

A strong base already exists for further agricultural development in the area. Industrial development in the major and ancillary sectors, which is sure to follow the establishment of the steel project, will ensure speedy progress in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy. Thus, an area that, barely 25 years ago, was known to be a famine area and whose economy was subjected to frequent strains, will perhaps emerge as one of the richest and most productive parts of the country.¹³

General Engineering Industries

The general engineering and industrial units were 39 number in the district in 1970, of which as many as 25 units were located in Ballari city and the rest at Hosapete, Sandur, Siruguppa and a few other places. The total capital investment of these units was about Rs. 16.12 lakhs and they employed about 290 persons. Of these, as many as 16 units were engaged in

the manufacture of agricultural implements since there has been good demand for them because of the several agricultural development and extension schemes taken up under the Tungabhadra Irrigation Project. In addition, some other units which were engaged in the manufacture of buckets, trays, drums and the like also manufactured agricultural tools and implements. (According to the Lead Bank Survey Report of the Syndicate Bank, there were altogether 50 units engaged in the manufacture of agricultural implements in the district.) Of the remaining units, about a dozen were engaged in servicing and repairing automobiles, servicing oil engines, bodybuilding, repairs of machines and such other allied items of work, while two units were making steel furniture, safes, cabinets and the like. In addition to these, there were three units producing household utensils, hospital equipment and surgical items, two units manufacturing barbed wire for fencing, a unit making wiring pipes and other manufacturing small drilling machines.¹⁴

Village Oil Industry

As already stated earlier, the village oil industry is fairly old in the Ballari district. Before the establishment of oil mills, oil was produced mainly using village ganas, several of which exist even now, by ganigas or vaniyars who have this as a hereditary occupation. Oil is produced from groundnut, castor, gingelly, sesamum, etc., in ganas and wooden mills driven by bullocks. The main centres of production of oil by this method in the district are Tambrahalli, Hosapete, Chigateri, Lakshmiपुरa, Ballari, Thekkalakote, Siruguppa, Kolagalli and Sandur.¹⁵

To improve the economic condition of those who are still dependent on this indigenous industry for their livelihood, efforts have been made to bring them into the cooperative fold by organising industrial co-operative societies and extending them financial aid and assistance in other forms. During 1970-71, there were nine such oil gana industrial co-operatives in the Ballari district, one in each of the above-mentioned centres. At that moment if the time Mysore State Khadi and Village Industries Board extended a total financial assistance of Rs. 1,29,700 to these societies, of which Rs. 7,500 was in the form of a grant and the rest as loan.¹⁶

Pottery

Pottery has also been one of the ancient rural industries in the Ballari District. The potters in the district mainly produce unglazed cooking pots and also other articles like earthen pitchers, water jars, frying pans, dishes and the like. Although the gradual increase in the use of cheap metal vessels has greatly decreased the demand for earthenware in recent years, there is still some demand for the latter. Ballari, Sandur, Sirigeri and Aladahalli are among the important pottery centres in the Ballari district. The equipment of a potter consists of the traditional wheel, frames and buckets. Making quality earthen products depends more on the skill of hands than on equipment. Since the economic condition of the people pursuing this profession is bad, efforts have been made over the last decade to bring the potters also into the cooperative fold by organising industrial co-operative societies of potters and extending them financial aid and assistance in other forms. Four such industrial co-operatives, one in each of the centres mentioned above, have been assisted financially by the Mysore State Khadi and Village Industries Board to an extent of Rs. 42,510, of which a sum of Rs. 11,210 was in the form of a grant and the rest as a loan.¹⁷

V. CONCLUSION

The geography of a region is complementary to history and provides an environment for industrial activity. As a result of all its efforts to innovate all its activities from time immemorial, today the industry is moving towards new technologies. This is no exception to the Sanduru environment. Today, however, the mind has to survive without harming the environment and its host. If technology is a part of the life of success, then the environment is shaping up. If industrial activities continue without damaging the wildlife and historical monuments of this environment, the sender will remain a beautiful place in the future. Otherwise, it will lose its cultural beauty and transform into a wasteland.

END NOTES

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3. Ibid, P.216.
4. Ibid, P.224.
5. Ibid, P.224-225.
6. Ibid, P.225.
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11. Ibid, P.229.
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