

**THE WEAVER COMMUNITIES OF THE KANCHIPURAM REGION**

**Circa. A.D. 700 - 1700**

**A CASE STUDY**

**New Delhi**

**August 1978**

**Vijaya Ramaswamy**  
**Centre for Historical Studies**  
**Jawahar Lal Nehru University**

D E C L A R A T I O N

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements of the degree of Master of  
Philosophy of the Jawaharlal Nehru University. I  
certify that no portion of this dissertation has  
previously been submitted for the award of any degree  
or diploma of this or any other University.

*Vijaya Ramaswamy*  
VIJAYA RAMASWAMY

*R. Champakalakshari*  
SUPERVISOR

*Ram K. ...*  
CHAIRMAN

C O N T E N T S

	Pages
	-----
Preface	
CHAPTER I Introduction	1-16
CHAPTER II The Weavers and the Economic Structure Circa A .D. 700 - 1350	16-42
CHAPTER III The Weaver Guilds, the State and Society Circa A.D. 700 - 1350	43-69
CHAPTER IV The Weavers and the Economic Structure Circa A .D. 1350 - 1700	70-97
CHAPTER V The Weavers, the State and Society Circa A.D. 1350 - 1700	98-121

Select Bibliography

A bbreviations

\* \* \*

## P R E F A C E

I must begin by expressing my deep debt to the pioneering scholars in the field of the Socio-economic history of South India. But for the broad foundation of facts provided by them, a micro-study of the present sort would have been impossible. In this dissertation an effort has been made critically to analyse the socio-economic status of the weaver communities of the Kaichipuram region with special focus on the historical position of the Kaikkola caste of weavers.

I must express my gratitude to my guide Dr. R.C. Champaklakshmi for her firm conviction in the feasibility of my topic which at one stage appeared to me to be too arduous a task to pursue and for her constant encouragement. My thanks are due to Prof. S. Bhattacharya for the unfailing sincerity of his advice and criticism from which I have greatly benefited. I must pay a special debt of gratitude to Prof. Bipin Chandra for the extraordinary kindness he has shown me in the course of this study. Dr. Meenakshi of the Centre has been most kind in giving me her ready help in resolving certain problems arising out of literary Sources. The Senguntha (Kaikkola) Sabha of Madras and especially Mr. Arimuthu Mudaliyar was instrumental in putting me in touch with much of the

indigenous literature. I would also like to thank the librarian of the Maraimalai Adigal Library, Thiru Muthukumaraswami for his kind cooperation and help. Finally, I must thank Kavignar N. Kandasami of Rasipuram who provided a considerable part of the information used in this dissertation, belonging to that rare and selfless brand of scholars who believe in research for its own sake and are of immense help to students like me in search of help and guidance in the course of research.

\* \* \*

## CHAPTER I

### Introduction

Weaving is probably the oldest profession in the world because the need for clothing is as basic as the need for food. The pre-eminent position enjoyed by this industry in Indian history is evidenced by the innumerable references to it in inscriptions and literature. The Rig Veda says that day and night spread light and darkness over the earth as weavers throw a shuttle on the loom.<sup>1</sup> The Hindu God Vishnu is called Tantuwardan or weaver because he is said to have woven the rays of the sun into a garment for himself.<sup>2</sup> Manu also refers at some length to the organisation of the weaving and dyeing industries.<sup>3</sup> The importance of the textile industry in South India is also attested to from very early times. The Mahabharata says that among the tributes paid to Yudhishtira were the fine muslins (Sella) of the South.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting that while in India, from very ancient times, the weaving industry was a flourishing one, in Europe cotton was still unknown. Herodotus, the famous Greek traveller and historian, thought that cotton was a kind of animal hair like sheep's hair.<sup>5</sup> The Roman

- 
1. N.S. Varadachari and Pundam Baker; Hand Spinning and Weaving (Sabarmati, 1926), pp 14-10
  2. Watts, Dictionary of Commercial Products, Vol. IV, pp.43-46
  3. N.S. Varadachari, op.cit, p.10
  4. Ibid.
  5. Ibid., p.11

historian Arrian testifies to the export of dyed cloth from Masulipatnam or 'Masulia'.<sup>6</sup> It is also said that during the time of the Roman emperor Arilian, cloth was purchased for its weight in gold. The quality of Indian dyeing too was proverbial in the Roman world. Thus, in St. Jerome's 4th Century Latin translation of the Bible, Job is made to say that wisdom is more enduring than the 'dyed colours of India'.<sup>7</sup> How Indian textiles passed into Roman vocabulary can be seen by the fact that as early as 200 B.C. the Romans used a Sanskrit word for cotton, that is Carbasina derived from the Sanskrit Karpasa.<sup>8</sup>

Indigenous literature also contains innumerable references to the flourishing condition of the weaving industry in the South. The ancient Tamil work Purananuru of the Sangam age makes several references to spinning being carried on by women.<sup>9</sup> It specifically mentions that this was the main livelihood of widows.<sup>10</sup> The Porunarruppada mentions "beautiful cotton cloth so fine that the eye cannot follow the course of yarn and cloth

---

6. Watts, Op.cit., pp. 43-46

7. John Irwin, 'Indian Textiles in Historical Perspective', Munro Wheeler (Ed.), Textiles and Ornaments of India, (New York)

8. Ibid.

9. Purananuru : 125, 326 quoted in N. Subramanian, 'Sangam Polity' (Madras, 1966), p. 228

10. Puran: 353 quoted by V. Raju, 'Pandai Tamil Nulgalil Adaiyal' in 'Senguntha Malai' (Erode 76)

bearing such designs as to make it look like the slough of the snake".<sup>11</sup> It also says that they wore silk cloth with its threads gathered in small knots at its ends.<sup>12</sup> The Silappadikaram refers to cloth being woven of silk thread, cotton thread and fibre.<sup>13</sup> Such long pieces of woven cloth were then cut up into small bits for purposes of sale. Hence cloth came to be called 'aruvai', 'tundu', 'tuni' or 'kurā'.<sup>14</sup> The Silappadikaram also refers to separate streets for the weavers showing the specialised nature of the profession. They are called 'Kārugar vīdi' (street) at one place and 'aruvai vīdi' at another place.<sup>15</sup> The Tamil text Manimekalai also refers to the street of the skilled and prosperous weavers of Madurai.<sup>16</sup> Dyeing was a widespread ancillary industry to weaving and the blue dye for the loin cloth was a favourite colour with the consumers.<sup>17</sup> <sup>In</sup> The fact, huge brick tub<sup>s</sup> used for dyeing cloth pertaining to the 1st and 2nd Centuries A.D. have been unearthed from Arikamedu and Uraiyur,<sup>18</sup> known to be an important weaving centre from the accounts of 'Periplus'.<sup>19</sup>

---

11. Puram : 383, Ibid.

12. Puram : 155, Ibid.

13. Silappadikaram, 16-17, Ibid.

14. N. Subramanian, Op. Cit., p. 229

15. 'Senguntha Malar', Op.Cit. Silappadikaram, 16-17

16. Manimekalai, Ibid.

17. N. Subramanian, Op.Cit. Puram: 274 refers to 'Nilakkachohai'.

18. A. Abdul Majid 'Nesaviyal', p.145, contained in 'Aiyukkoththu' (Ed.) K.P.Aravenan (in Tamil) Madras, 1973)



The Silappadikaram, apart from referring to weavers also refers to cloth merchants (aruval vanigar).<sup>20</sup> This is substantiated by an inscription from Alaganmalai which also refers to the 'aruval vanigar'.<sup>21</sup> An important poet of the Sangam age was known by the name 'aruval vanigar Elaveittanar', indicating that he must have been a cloth merchant of considerable prominence.<sup>22</sup> The merchants as well as the professional bodies must have been organised in guilds as indicated by a Brahmi inscription from Mangulam which refers to 'Nikana'<sup>23</sup> or guild.

In this dissertation, an attempt has been made to analyse the economic structure of the weaving communities of the Kanchipuram region. The trade in textiles by the merchant guilds has also been specially studied as constituting an essential aspect of the weaving industry. The economic structure of these weaving communities was closely related to their actual status in society. Therefore, the relationship of the weaver communities to state and society has also been analysed at some length. The dissertation has been divided into

- 
19. Uraiyur is referred to as 'Argaru' quoted in N. Subramanian, Op.Cit. p. 243
20. Silap. XIV: 207 cited in Ibid. p. 229
21. I. Mahadevan, 'Corpus of Tamil Brahmi Inscriptions' p.60 No.64 contained in R. Nagasamy (Ed.), Seminar on inscriptions (Madras, 1968).
22. Senguntha Malar, Op.cit.
23. I. Mahadevan, Op.Cit., p.60 No.43

two phases each consisting of two parts - the first phase from C.A.D. 700 to 1350 and the second phase from C.A.D. 1350 to 1700. Roughly, the first phase can be said to cover the period of the Pallavās and Chōlās. The Pāndya and Telegu-Chōda inscriptions have also been studied as a part of the first phase. The second phase, i.e., from C.A.D. 1350 to 1700 roughly coincides with the period of the Vijayanagar Empire. There is no particular sanctity about any of these dates, however, because the primary purpose of this thesis is an analysis of the general socio-economic structure of the weaver communities. Thus, if this periodisation has some connection with the usual divisions followed in political history, it is because the socio-economic condition was influenced to an extent by the political power structure. Therefore, even if terms like 'Chōla-Pāndya' or 'Vijayanagar' are used in the course of the dissertation, it should be understood that they are used more as a matter of convenience and to emphasise the period rather than the dynasty.

There are several reasons why the first phase was taken as ending at A.D. 1350 and the second phase was taken to cover the period from A.D. 1350 to 1700. The first phase marks the genesis of the weaver guilds and <sup>their</sup> ~~the~~ growth and development during the period of the

Chōlā Empire. But even this phase cannot be treated as one whole. For instance, the Kaikkōlas, the predominant weaving community of the Kāñchīpuram region functioned as soldiers and military Commanders in the Chōlā army from the 9th to 11th Centuries. It is only from the 12th-13th Century onwards that one hears of them in the capacity of weavers. Secondly, the Sāliyas, who were the predominant weaving community in Kāñchīpuram till the 11th Century, gradually yield way to the Kaikkōlas. The change from soldiering to weaving by the Kaikkōlas is best explained in terms of the collapse of the Chōlā Empire after Rājarāja III in the 13th Century and the consequent disbanding of the Chōlā army. As a result, the Kaikkōlas must have gone back to their traditional profession of weaving and they are mentioned solely in the capacity of weavers in the records of the Sambuvarāya Chieftains, the later Pāndyās and the Vijayanagar kings. On the other hand, the Sāliyas mentioned in many Chōlā inscriptions as 'Chōliya Sāliyas' <sup>23B</sup> lost the pre-eminent position they had enjoyed under Chōlā patronage and, though they continue to figure in some Sambuvarāya and Pāndya records, the Kaikkōlas had emerged as the predominant weaving community in the Kāñchīpuram region.

---

23B. A.R.E. 269 of 1913-14 from Chidambaram, South Arcot District.

While certain marginal changes in the position of the weaver communities took place between the 12th and 14th centuries, more fundamental and far-reaching changes in their socio-economic structure occurred only during the period of the Vijayanagar empire. This was, to some extent, due to the change in the political power structure and the creation of a centralised bureaucracy by the Vijayanagar kings. In the economic sphere, it was due to the rapid growth of urbanisation and trade and commerce as a result of which the textile industry flourished. The <sup>s</sup> <sup>i</sup> <sup>o</sup> <sup>p</sup> <sup>r</sup> <sup>o</sup> <sup>p</sup> <sup>e</sup> <sup>r</sup> <sup>t</sup> <sup>y</sup> of the textile industry has been attested by innumerable travellers in the Southern kingdoms from the 14th to 17th centuries. This dissertation concludes its study at 1700, and the year 1565 (the date of the battle of Talikōta) has deliberately been overlooked because, from the socio-economic view-point, it does not constitute any kind of a landmark. The major organisational and structural changes in the weaving industry and the textile trade took place not actually due to the Vijayanagar kings but with the entrenchment of the Portuguese and Dutch factors on the Southern coasts. The most crucial changes in the organisation of the weaving industry and the textile trade took place after the Vijayanagar kings had moved to Chandragiri and their political power was at an ebb. The next major change

occurred towards the close of the 17th Century when the English East India Company shifted its attention from Gujarat to Coromandel textiles. This, the second phase (1400-1700) can itself be studied in two phases. The indigenous growth of the textile industry under the Vijayanagar kings and the impact on the industry as a result of the coming of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English. This study concludes in 1700, which can be described as the competitive phase of the European companies in the textile industry and trade. This point is best illustrated by the comments of the contemporary Dutch and English factors. In 1630, the Dutch factors lamented that the cloth market was very tight and the weavers never bothered to make anything according to specifications because whatever they produced was immediately bought up by the <sup>English</sup> ~~English~~, the Danes and the Moors at any price.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in 1665, the English factors wrote : "Calicoes are so bought up by the Dutch etc. that we are forced to pray and pay for what we have and take it as a courtesy."<sup>25</sup> Towards the close of the

---

24. Dutch Diaries. 1630-34, cited in Chap.IV of this dissertation.

25. Foster (Ed.), The English Factories in India 1665-7, P.27, cited by A. Jan (Quiser in his article on "The brokers in Medieval India", The Indian Historical Review, Vol.I No.2, Sept. 1974.

17th Century, as the British gradually began establishing an exclusive monopoly over the textile industry, the position of the weavers began to change for the worse. Thus, this dissertation stops with the competitive phase of the textile industry.

The area of the study of the weaver communities in the dissertation has been described as the Kanchipuram region. Kanchipuram is famous as being one of the most ancient textile centres in India and it remains an important centre of silk and cotton weaving to this day. Whether under the Pallavas, Pandyas or the Vijayanagar kings, this region continued to flourish as a leading textile centre. Thus the history of the weaving communities of these regions is available more or less in a continuous stream. Secondly, Kanchipuram constituted the guild headquarters of both the Kaikkola and Saliya weavers. It was a trend-setter so far as the social set-up of these communities was concerned. For these reasons, the Kanchipuram region has been taken up for studies in this dissertation.

However, Kanchipuram does not merely mean the tiny modern <sup>Taluq</sup> ~~district~~ of Kanchipuram. It is taken to represent the wide extent of the Kanchipuram region as it was under the Pallavas. Thus the entire region surrounding

Kāñchīpuram is equally important for textiles centres and trade. It includes certain areas which are now a part of the North Arcot or South Arcot districts. It also includes areas like Mylapore, (the Meliapore of the European travellers), an important Chola port, Sadras (Chaturavāchagan-pattinam) and Pulicat (important parts during the Vijayanagar period) in the Thondaimandalam region and now a part of modern Madras. Thus, all these regions surrounding Kāñchīpuram form a part of the present study since the weaver communities of these areas are the same and their guild organisations and professional links stretch over this entire region. Further, in cases where there was paucity of inscriptional material on any aspect from this region, inscriptional material from other regions have been drawn upon to strengthen certain inferences. Occasionally, inscriptions from other regions of Tamil Nadu and of Andhra and Karnataka have also been used to show points of comparison and contrast between the weaver communities of the Kāñchīpuram region and those of other regions. Thus, when referring to the Saliyans in the Tamil country, an attempt is made to show their possible connection with the Salés of the Telegu country with whom they had many links.<sup>26</sup> But the use of inscriptions

---

26. See chap. II of this dissertation

outside the present area of study has been minimal and confined to specific aspects like textile trade. Thus, in the dissertation no effort has been made to attempt a detailed comparison of the economic standards of weavers in one region and another, to take up issues like the migration of the Saurashtrās or the Devangās or for analysis of similarities and dis-similarities of the organisation of the weaving industry in the various states. This dissertation has been confined to the weaver communities of the Kāñchīpuram region as a preliminary case study for a much wider thesis on the weaver communities of South India. It is <sup>a</sup>again because of the very limited scope of this dissertation that no attempt has been made to discuss any major issues. For instance, Prof. Burton Stein has raised quite a few questions which it would not be possible to discuss without reference to a much wider area. He puts forward the thesis that the merchant guilds which were very powerful in the period of the Chōlas declined from the 13th Century onwards. This theory is connected with his wider thesis regarding the nature of Chēlas State control.<sup>27</sup> Since, right from the period of

---

27. This has been discussed in various articles. For instance, in the article on 'Coromandel Trade in Medieval India', John Parker (Ed) 'Merchants and Scholar's Minneapolis, 1965) and in the article 'The State and Agrarian Order in Medieval South India', contained in Burton Stein (Ed), Essays on South India (New Delhi 1975).



the Gholas, the textile trade was almost exclusively in the hands of these merchant guilds, this question becomes very pertinent to the position of the weaving industry. On the basis of one region, it would not be possible to refute or agree with Prof. Burtonstein's thesis, though from the limited study attempted in this dissertation one gets the impression that fundamental changes in the pattern of merchant organisations came about, not in the 14th Century but rather in the 16th and 17th Centuries when the old type of merchant guilds tended to break-down and individual merchants or a joint-stock of merchants began to act as middlemen for the European Companies.<sup>28</sup>

As regards sources, both inscriptions and literary works have been extensively used in this dissertation. This might seem surprising in view of the fact that, while inscriptions are looked upon as irrefutable evidence, literary sources are regarded with suspicion and distrust as being highly unreliable. But while chronologically one may not be able to date literary sources and folk traditions with accuracy, it can be very useful as substantive evidence.<sup>29</sup> Inscriptions, in their scope are

---

28. This point has been taken up and discussed in some detail in Chap. IV of this dissertation.

29. For a discussion on the use of oral tradition and literature for historical reconstruction, see Satish Sabarwal's article in 'History and Society' Nihar Ranjan Ray Felicitation Volume 1977

limited in their information, accurate though they may be. Thus, one comes across a number of inscriptions referring to Arulnolideva Teriṅya Kaikkōlar, Samarakesari (Parantaka) Teriṅya Kaikkōlar, Rajaraja Teriṅya Kaikkōlar, etc. The inscriptions also mention Kaikkōlaperumpadaḷ and Kaikkōla Senapati.<sup>30</sup> This shows that the Kaikkōlas formed the personal bodyguard of the king and occupied important positions in the army. But this bare outline of fact becomes significant when taken together with the evidences in the Itti Eluvatu<sup>31</sup> and the Eluppeluvatu of the poet Ottakkuttar<sup>32</sup> in the 12th Century and the undated Pillai-Tamil of Gyana Prakasa Swamikal and Vira Narayana Vilayan. The Vira Narayana Vilayan refers to a Kaikkōla regiment of Vira-Narayana identified with Parantaka Chōla (907-955 A.D.) and a remarkable instance of their military prowess in the event called Vallanai Venrathu. It is significant that both the literary sources and the inscriptions refer to Kaikkōlas only as soldiers and not as weavers during the Chōla period. Similarly, with regard to the guild organisation of weavers

---

31. 144 of 1928-29; 278 of 1911 and 627 of 1909 of the Annual Report of South Indian Epigraphy (ARE) The inscriptions referring to the Teriṅya Kaikkōlar and Kaikkōla Senapati have been cited in detail in Chap. II.

31 and 32. Ottakkuttar Itti Eluvathu and Eluppeluvathu published with critical commentary by Thiru Murugavel in Senguntha Nithiran serialised in June-July 1970.

inscriptions refer to collective donation to temples by the weavers. Other inscriptions refer to Kaikkola Samaya (guild) Sēnapati. This information is substantiated by the Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam which gives a very interesting account of the guild organisation of the Kaikkōlas. It says that the Samaya Talapati (the same as Sēnapati or commander) was a very important official of the Kaikkōla guild. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam claims to be a copper plate inscription of Karikālā Chōlā's period but obviously belongs to a much later period. It ends with the impact of the Muslim invasions on the South which occurred in the 13-14th Centuries and hence the work cannot be dated earlier than that. Moreover, it is full of chronological absurdities (that the Chōla, Chēra, Pāndya kings emerged on earth in order to defeat Vikramaditya's successor Salivahana in the North) and mythologies (the work assigns a primary role to the Goddess of Kāñchīpuram). In spite of all these pitfalls the document gives very interesting information on the temple and special set-up including the "left-hand" - "right-hand" castes. To give another instance of the usefulness of this document, the inscription repeatedly says that a particular region was granted the privilege of Sangu and Dandu (Conch-shell and palanquin)

-----

33. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam said to be a copper plate inscription of Karikālā's period, found at Kanchipuram published by the Government of Madras, Oriental Series No. V

on the pattern established by Kāñchīpuram.<sup>34</sup> This shows that Kāñchīpuram must have been the trend-setter for the weaving communities of other regions. This conclusion is confirmed by the Chōlar Purva Pattayam which describes in detail the cases decided at Kāñchīpuram and how, if a particular case was not decided by the local head (Nāttanmaikkaran) of the guild, it was taken to the overall head at Kāñchīpuram (Talaimai Nāttan).<sup>35</sup> Thus, in all the instances where literary evidence has been used in this dissertation, it has been used as substantive evidence and not as primary evidence.

With reference to the weaving technology, the inscriptions are completely silent. The travellers accounts are also not of any help. Hence in this dissertation some reference has been made to the weaving technology on the basis of literary evidences. In fact, even 19th Century evidence has been quoted with regard to technology but purely as negative evidence to show that there could have been no significant change in technology over the centuries. The same primitive type of hand loom continued to be used for a long time.

---

34. ARE 473 of 1921-22, 422 of 1925 and 291 of 1928-29. This point has been dealt with in detail under Chap.V.

35. The Chōlar Purva Pattayam, PP. 187-88, 192 and 199.

The third category of sources used in this dissertation is the accounts of foreign travellers. The accounts of Ma-huan, Marco-Polo and Barbara Barbosa especially give plenty of information on the organisation of trade and the role of brokers, on the variety of textiles, the nature of the major ports, etc. With regard to the other aspects like social structure, the travellers accounts tend to be purely descriptive and not very reliable, though, even here, they are very useful as corroborative evidence.

---

## CHAPTER II

### The Weavers and the Economic Structure

C.A.D. 700-1350

Kāñchīpuram appears to have been an important centre of weaving from very early times. It was perhaps the most ancient textile centre in South India although historical evidence of its importance as a textile centre is available only from the 8th Century A.D. onwards. In fact, it seems to have continued as a flourishing centre even during the late 16th and 17th Centuries. Even to this day, many areas in the Chingleput district and especially Kāñchīpuram are the producers of some of the best varieties of silk and cotton cloth.

The emergence of Kāñchīpuram and the surrounding area as the principal region for textile weaving was due to several ecological and geographical factors. For instance, the references to place names like Tirupparuttikunram in the inscriptions are an indication of cotton being grown in this area. A survey of the present ecology

1. South Indian Inscriptions (SII) Vol.II, p.391 ff and Vol.IV No.366. Dr.L.A. Meenakshi in her book on Administration and Social Life Under the Pallavas (Madras 1938) says: "That little Jaina world epigraphically known both as Jina Kāñchi and Tirupparuttikunram seems to have acquired the latter name "The Beautiful Cotton Hill" because of the abundant cultivation of parutthi (or cotton) which was carried on there. As a corroboration of this belief, it is maintained that the image of Candraprabha is installed in the 2nd floor of the small temple at a height of 12 to 14 ft. from the floor in order that the parutti trees may not hide his presence".

of the region also shows that many areas in this district have the kind of black soil and climatic conditions suitable for the growing of cotton. Saidapet Taluq (formerly in the Chingleput district but now a part of Madras city), Chingleput Taluq, Madurantakam Taluq and more especially the villages of Ārni, Tiruvottūr, Uttaramerūr and Perunagar have the kind of red ferruginous loam soil best suited to cotton cultivation.<sup>2</sup> The availability of cotton explains why from very early times a number of flourishing weaving centres came up in this region. Another equally significant reason for their development was the availability of 'Sengodi' (*Plumbago Zeylanica*) a running plant whose root served as a powerful caustic, in the Kāñchīpuram region.<sup>3</sup> The third important factor in the growth of Kāñchīpuram and the surrounding regions as important centres of weaving and textiles was their proximity to the ports from where textiles could be shipped either to other parts of the country or sold in foreign lands. During the period of the Pallavas, the

---

2. <sup>Crode</sup> ~~Crode~~ (Ed.) Chingleput Manual, Topographical Survey, PP.68-109.

3. The Kāñchīkudi plates of Nandivarman II (730-795 A.D.) S.I.I., Vol.II, Pt.3, No.73. The botanical definition is based on Winslow's Dictionary as cited by the editor of the epigraphical report.

It is believed that the water of the river Paṭāru flowing through this region is particularly suited for dyeing.

major port on the Eastern Coast was Mamallapuram, superseded during the Chola period by Nagapattinam, though Mylapore (now a part of Madras city) must also have been a port of some importance. Even in the post-Chola period, while Mylapore continued to be an important port, other ports began to emerge in this region. Chedira-vachaganpattinam or Chaturangapattinam (Sedras) was a flourishing port in the 14th Century<sup>4</sup> and continued to be so in the 16th and 17th Centuries.<sup>5</sup> Sedras, Pulicat and Mylapore are referred to frequently in the factory records of the English East India Company as leading ports from where textiles and other goods were shipped to distant lands. All these factors contributed to the growth of several weaving centres in the Kanchipuram region. Proximity to the port and easy accessibility of cotton must have been vital considerations in a period when transport of bulk commodities could not have been an easy matter.

The Kanchipuram region seems to have been inhabited by two principal weaver communities - the Kakkolar and the Saliyar. The references to various

---

4. Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy (A.R.E.) 1933, No.170. The inscription is of Kampana Udaiyar's period.

5. R.H. Major 'India in the Fifteenth Century Reprint, New Delhi 1974), pp. XXiii and xxviii of the introduction.



types of taxes on weavers as early as the 8th Century<sup>6</sup> indicates the antiquity of Kāñchīpuram as a weaving centre and hence the presence of weavers as a sizeable part of the community. During the Chōla period, the Saliyans were apparently the most important weaving community in this region. The Madras Museum copper plates of Uttama Chōlā (A.D. 970-85) refer to two classes of Pattasālin residing in Kañchīpēdu or Kāñchīpuram. It also says that some Pattasālin weavers were appointed exclusively to provide cloth for the king and his household.<sup>7</sup> Further, there is a reference to Pottappichōlan, the Telegu Chōla king (13th Century)<sup>8</sup> levying taxes on merchants and Saliya weavers residing in certain specified streets of Madurāntakam (Chingleput district). In the 14th Century in the period of Rajanārāyana Sambuvarāyar, there is again a reference to the Saliyan weavers of Pulipparakkōyil (Madurāntakam Taluq and Chingleput district).<sup>9</sup>

---

6. The Kāñakkudi Plates of Mandivarman II (730-795 A.D.) S.I.I., Vol.II, pt. 3. No.73.

7. S.I.I., Vol. III, pt. 4 P.264. The Saliyans were in fact known as Soliya Saliyer as clear from the inscription from Chidambaram, S. Arcot district dated in the period of Maravarman Vira Pandya (A.R.E. 269 of 1913-14).

8. A.R.E. 607 of 1919  
 9. A.R.E., 218 of 1910. A connection seems very probable between the Pattusale and Padmasale weavers of the Andhra country and the Saliyan of the Tamil country. The Telegu inscriptions refer to them collectively as Salevaru - Corpus of Inscriptions in the Nizam's Dominions, Vol.II, No.26 and 30; S.I.I., Vol.III, pt.4 P.264.

The Kaikkōlas form the other weaver community of the Kāñchīpuram region although during the Chōla period they are referred to mostly as soldiers or military commanders. They emerged as the predominant weaving community only during the Vijayanagar period. They were also probably concentrated in maximum numbers in this area because Kāñchīpuram seems to have constituted the headquarters (Mahānādu) of the Kaikkōla guild since many of the Vijayanagar inscriptions clearly state that Kāñchīpuram set the norm for the privileges of weavers in the other parts of the country.<sup>10</sup> The earliest mention of Kaikkōlas as weavers in Tamil inscriptions occurs in the reign of Hoysala king Rāmanāthadēva in the 13th Century.<sup>11</sup> The Kaikkōlas as weavers are also known from late Pāndya inscriptions in the Chingleput district.<sup>12</sup> But during the Chōla period there is no inscription which directly relates the Kaikkōlas with the weaving profession. The majority of the Chōla inscriptions relate to Kaikkōlas as members of the army, i.e., the 'Kaikkōla-Perumpadai'<sup>13</sup> and 'Kaikkōla Sēnāpati'.<sup>14</sup> They are invariably referred to as

- 
10. A.R.E. 473 of 1921-22, A.R.E. 422 of 1925, etc. See Chap.V under Privileges. Y,Al(M7,75).A411=K<sup>DIS</sup> Loo 4-27
11. A.R.E. 152 of 1928-29. The reference to Kaikkōlas in connection with taxation in two inscriptions of Rajanārāyana Sambuvarāya - A.R.E. 218 of 1910 from Pulipparakkōyil (Madurantakam) and SII, Vol.VII No.855.
12. A.R.E. 57 of 1932-33, Tirukkachchīyūr, Chingleput Taluq. and dist.
13. A.R.E. 253 of 1907, Kumbakonam Taluq, Tiruvidaimarudūr, Tanjore dist.
14. S.I.I. Vol.VII No.451 from Ashchārpakkam, Madurantakam Taluq in Chingleput district.



TH-202

'Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar' (the chosen Kaikkōlas) with the name of the ruler added as a prefix. Thus there were - Samarakēsarī-Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar, Vikramasiṅga Teriṅṅa Kaikkōla<sup>15</sup> and Virasōla Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar<sup>16</sup> (all referring to Parāntaka I, A. D. 907-955), Arulmolideva Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar<sup>17</sup> and Rājarāja Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar<sup>18</sup> (both refer to Rājarāja I - <sup>A. D.</sup>985-1016). The 12th Century poet Ottakkūthar's Ītti Eluvattu is a panegyric on the bravery and prowess of arms of the Kaikkōla soldiers. The evidence that the Kaikkōlas served in the Chōla army is further strengthened by a late literary work of the community 'Vira Nārāyaṇa Vijayam'.<sup>19</sup> However, it is probable that even during the Chōla period the Kaikkōlas combined soldiering with weaving. Weaving must have been their occupation during peace times except for those Kaikkōlas employed permanently as bodyguards of the king. It is significant that the maximum number of inscriptions relating to the Teriṅṅa Kaikkōlar (Kaikkōla soldiers) comes from Tanjore - the seat of Chōla power. On the other hand, in the Chingleput district, while the Kaikkōlas are referred to in the Chōla period not many seem to have been employed in

- 
15. A.R.E. 278 of 1911. Tillaisthanam in Tanjore and  
 16. A.R.E. 228 of 1911 Kumbakonam, Tanjore Taluq & district.  
 17. A.R.E. 144 of 1927-28, Tiruppalanam, Tanjore Taluq & dist.  
 18. A.R.E. 627 of 1909 Koneri Rajapuram, Tanjore Taluq & dist.  
 19. Although this work cannot be chronologically dated, its events probably refer to the period of Parāntaka I (907-55) because Vira-Nārāyaṇa is one of the names of Parāntaka.

the army. Thus it is possible to infer that here they pursued the profession of weaving. The assumption that the Kaikkolas pursued weaving as a side occupation along with soldiering during the Chola period is substantiated by a later literary tradition contained in the Ādi-Divākaram of Divākaram Munivar which says "Senguntar, Padaiyar, Senāi Talaivar, Karugar, Kaikkōlar".<sup>20</sup>

The association between soldiering and weaving seems to have been common in other weaver communities also. <sup>As</sup> ~~It~~ early as the 5th Century, the Mandasor inscription dated A.D. 437<sup>21</sup> refers to a community of silk weavers from <sup>Saurashtra,</sup> who especially skilled in archery. The Togata weavers of the Andhra region (Nandavaram in Baganapalli, Karnool dist.) are said to have styled themselves Ēkāṅgavīras and fought for the Mahāmandalēswara of Parugallu.<sup>22</sup> Edgar Thurston in his account of the castes and tribes of South India says that the leader of the Salāpu caste of weavers was called Senāpati.<sup>23</sup> The headman of the Salāpu, that is Telegu weavers settled in the Vizāgapatnam region was also called

---

20. This evidence was orally conveyed to me by Kavīṅṅar Kandasami of Rasipuram.

21. The Mandasor Inscriptions of Malwa [J.F. Fleet, Gupta (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, III) Inscriptions No.18] cited by H.N. Randle, The Saurashtras of South India (Madurai, 1949) P.24

22. A.R.E. 5 and 7 of 1943-44

23. Edgar Thurston, Castes and Tribes of South India, 7 Vols. (Re-print, Delhi, 1975) Vol.VI, P.265

Sēnāpati.<sup>24</sup> Further, Atāvi, a caste of weavers identified by the 1901 census as the Tinnevely Sales and placed under the Kaikkōla caste in the 1891 census, are also said to be soldiers.<sup>25</sup>

Tamil scholars offer interesting explanations for the origin of the name 'Kaikkōlar'. The name is said to be the compound of the two terms Kait-Kol referring to the plying of the weavers' craft. Another explanation pertains to the peculiar hook like weapon which would never leave the grip of the warrior. This explanation also fits the name "Sengunthar" another caste name used by this community. Kuntam is interpreted as a short hook like weapon used by Virabahu, the mythical lieutenant of Lord Subramanya and His followers.<sup>26</sup> However, it is noteworthy that though in Kañchīpuram and elsewhere this community now goes by the name of Sengunthar there are very few early inscriptions which refer to them by that name.<sup>27</sup> There might be a possible connection between Sengunra-nādu, the region around Tiruvannamalai in the North Arcot district an area referred

24. Ibid. P.264

25. T.N. Subramaniam refers to the term 'Atāvi' meaning soldiers as well as weavers in The Glossary of South Indian Temple Inscriptions, Vol. III

26. The legend has been recounted in detail in the Sengunthar Prabhanda Tirattu - a Collection of historical literature on the community, edited by Sabāpati Mudaliyar (Mds. 1926).

27. An inscription in the Pridigangāvara temple at Neyyādipakkam in Kañchīpuram Taluq belonging to the period of Virarājendra Choladeva refers to Sengunra Kilan Nelvāi Nambinayakar making a donation of two nanda vilakku (S.I.I. Vol.VII No.425, A.R.E. 212 of 1901)

to frequently in inscriptions and the origin of the name  
of this community. Again, a very interesting inscription  
from Singaperumal Kōyil Village, in the Chingleput Taluq  
and district, registers the gift of land in Sengunra<sup>m</sup> by  
purchase from Sengunra-nātkar for two Sandi-lamps and  
food offerings to Narasinga-Vinnagarālvār by Ayyaran-nakkaṇ,  
a kūli-chohēvagaṇ.<sup>29</sup> The inscription belongs to the period  
of Chōla Rājarāja Rājakēsari I (985-1016).<sup>A.D.</sup> Both these  
inscriptions came from areas which were important centres  
of the Kaikkōlas and these seem to confirm the literary  
evidence that the Kaikkōlas were also called "Sengunthar"  
because it is possible that "Sengunra" became "Senguntha".<sup>30a</sup>  
As regards the name "Sāliya" it is possible that it has  
been derived from the sanskrit word "Shālika" meaning weaver.<sup>30b</sup>

With regard to the dwelling of the weavers, it  
is clear from inscriptions that they were invariably  
settled in the Tirumadaivilagam<sup>31</sup> of the temple or the  
temple town. During the period of Uttama Chōla, the

28. S.I.I., Vol.VIII No.124, No.148, etc.

29. A.R.E., 139 of 1956-57 of the period of Chola  
Rājakēsari.

30. I am grateful to Dr. Meenakshi, Prof. in Linguistics,  
(Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru  
University) for confirming that such a derivation is  
possible.

30b Vaman Shivaram Apte, "Sanskrit-English Dictionary"  
Ed. by Gode and Karve, Prasad, Prakashan, Poona.

31. T.N. Subramaniam defines 'Tirumadaivilagam' as quarters  
round a temple (The South Indian Temple Inscriptions,  
Glossary), but in A.R.E. 1921-22 Part II, it is  
translated as temple - square.

pattasalins were settled in the four quarters of Kañchīpēdu (Kañchīpūram) known as - Karuvēlanpatti, Karisāhapatti, Atimāmpatti and Eruvālichohēri.<sup>32</sup> In the Nājarājeswara temple of Tanjore, the Saliyattaru is referred to as being within the temple-town (uitalai) in contrast to the streets of other professionals which were Purambādi or outside.<sup>33</sup> A 13th Century inscription belonging to the period of Jatevarman Sundara Pāndya I (1231-64) records the sale of house sites to the weavers and dancing girls of the temple of Tirovalakkoṭṭiyudaiya Nayanar at Vittur, a hamlet of Madurantakan Taluq in Chingleput dist.<sup>34</sup>

The weavers produced various types of cloth for the requirements of the temple, the royal household and the common people. As regards the kinds of cloth produced, there is very little direct evidence. An inscription of Kulottunga Chola's period (1070-1122 A.D.) refers to Surrupudavai, niravadippudavai, paṇḍai-pudavai and men's apparel like udai and uttarīyan.<sup>35</sup> There is also reference to Vettipudavai in an inscription from Poygai near Virinohipūram.<sup>36</sup> An order of Ho Nājakasārīvarman Nājarājadeva (935-1018 A.D.) in the Tanjore temple assigns a share in the produce of certain lands to a number of professionals and 400 dancing women attached to the temple. The inscription refers to tailors

32. The Madras Museum Copper plates of Uttama Chola  
S.I.I. Vol. II, Pt. 4, p. 294

33. S.I.I. Vol. II, Pt. 5, No. 94

34. A.N.E. 334 of 1910. - A specific reference to Kaikkolateru (the street of Kaikkolai) is available from Madambakkam, Ponnéri Taluq, Chingleput dist. of the period of Devaraya II dated 1426 A.D. - A.N.E. 319 of 1911.

35. S.I.I. Vol. IV, No. 613 from Kañchīpūram, Kañchīpūram Taluq, and Chingleput dist.

36. S.I.I. Vol. I, Pt. 1 No. 64

(called Tayyan as well as Perundūnan) who were assigned one share each and refers to a separate category of jewel stitcher evidently one who stitched only costly garments.<sup>37</sup> It is interesting that as early as in the Silappadikāram the tailors of Madurai are called tunna-garar.<sup>38</sup>

With regard to the textile varieties produced by the weavers they seem to have been mainly muslins and chints. A reference to the different types of silks of the period of Vikrama Chōla (1118-35 A.D.) comes from Coimbatore.<sup>39</sup> The inscription refers to pachchaipattu, puliyūr pattu and pattavala pattu. Silks were apparently worn only by the higher classes because it gives the Idaiyar (shepherd) community the right to wear such clothes as a special privilege along with other privileges like covering their houses with plaster, etc. The Jivakachintāmani refers to vexpattu (pure white silk), pūmpattu (silk cloth with floral designs), pachchilai pattu (silk cloth with designs of leaves), konkalapattu, etc.<sup>40</sup> The Manasōllāsa of Somesvara, a 12th Century work refers to a particular

37. S.I.I., Vol.II, Pt. 2,3 No.66

38. Silap: 32, from T.N. Subramaniam Op.cit. P.229

39. S.I.I., Vol.V No.283. Coimbatore was an ancient and leading weaving centre and is referred in the Chinese traveller Ma-huan's account (as compiled from Magasthenes to Manu) (Madras 1959) pp.305-307.

40. K.K. Pillai, Social Conditions as reflected in the Jivakachintāmani, Journal of Indian History (J.I.H.) Golden Jubilee Vol. - 1973

41. Someswara - 'Manasōllāsa' Gaikwad Oriental Series, p.88



variety of cloth produced by the allikas. This was probably the "alleja" an important export variety in the 17th Century. It also refers to pattusūtra, variegated silk (vichitra), cloth with dots on it, etc.

The only references to the actual techniques involved in weaving comes from stray references in literature. A verse of Manikkavasagar says that the flights of his fancy were as rapid as the movement of the shuttle on the loom.<sup>42</sup> A 13th Century literary verse composed by Bhavanandi Munivar (said to be a contemporary of Kulōttunga III) compares the process of creative writing to the process of weaving. He refers to the yarn, the spindle, the warp and the woof and compares them to word, imagination etc. in the poetic process.<sup>43</sup> A very interesting folk song<sup>44</sup> sung by the Nainar as 'Kuttar', that is, minstrels belonging to the Kaikkōla community, refers to the process of weaving with different gods representing different parts of the loom. The Dēvas formed the thread which made the warp; Nārada became the woof; Vedamuni the treadle, Brahma the plank and Adisēsha transformed himself into the rope. The song indicates that only horizontal looms were in use. It is interesting that the practice of starching the woven cloth is referred to as early as in the

---

42. Adakkalappantu : 8. I am grateful to Dr. Meenakshi, (Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University) for locating this reference for me.

43. 'Nannul' A work on Tamil grammar, verse: 23

44. I am grateful to Pulavar. C. Raju of Erode for giving me the Tamil text of this folk song.

Sangam literature.<sup>45</sup> But folk tradition attributes the practice of starching the yarn before weaving to Tiruvalluvar a famous poet and weaver by profession.<sup>46</sup> With respect to the process of dyeing, vegetable dyes were mainly used. Indigo was a major dye. Reference has already been made earlier<sup>47</sup> to 'Sengodi' a powerful caustic used in the dyeing process, being grown in Kañchipuram. A Uttama Chōla inscription refers to a share of paddy being assigned to the vannattan (dyer) as a temple servant.<sup>48</sup>

There was brisk internal as well as external trade in textiles. Mamallapuram under the pallavas and Mylapore under the Chōlas served as the major ports and commercial centres. In internal trade, transport was mainly through pack-bullocks. In fact, cloth was taxed at so much per cart-load or so much per head load<sup>49</sup> which shows that these have been the common means of transport within the country. Another inscription refers to tax on 'puḍavai kattu' <sup>or</sup> bundles of female cloth.<sup>50</sup> South India seems, from a very

---

45. 'Madurai Kañchi': 721 cited by C. Balasubramaniam in the article "Pañtantamilagattil Neḡavu" (in Tamil) contained in Erode Weavers' Association Jubilee Souvenir, 1973.

46. I am indebted to Kavignar Kandasami for providing me with this oral evidence.

47. The Kaśakkudi Plates of Nandivarman II (8th Century).

48. S.I.I., Vol. III Pt. 4. PP.300-1 No.151

49. S.I.I., Vol.VIII No.442 from Piranmalai, Tiruppattur Taluq, Ramnad dist., Aḡatḡ Pāndya inscription.

50. S.I.I., Vol. VI No.41. Also Vol.VII No.21 and A.R.E. No.88 of 1914-15. Puḍavai need not necessarily mean female cloth since in those days it was used broadly to denote cloth of any kind.

early period, to have been a major exporter of textiles. The antiquity of Kāñchīpuram as a trade centre is established by the Chinese writer Pan Kua who comments on the trade and commodities of the city of Houang-tche (identified as Kāñchīpuram) as early as the 1st Century A.D.<sup>51</sup> The Roman historian Arrian described Indian trade as being carried on by the Arabs from Broach upto the Red Sea to Aduli and also spoke of extensive trade in the dyed sheets of Masulia or Masulipatnam.<sup>52</sup> The Periplus also refers to the export of muslin from Aragaru (Uraiyūr - now a port of Tiruchirapalli).<sup>53</sup> Pliny's famous lament regarding the drain of gold from Rome must be attributed to the fact that Indian cottons were purchased for their weight in gold.<sup>54</sup>

Hieun Tsang, the 7th Century Chinese traveller, makes repeated references to Kāñchīpuram. He coasted down to the Godavari and then turned inland towards 'Kantchi' the capital of the kingdom of Dravida on the lower Palaru, between Pondicherry and Madras.<sup>55</sup> The 9th Century Arab traveller Sulaiman, started from the Persian Gulf and

---

51. K.A. Nilakanta Shastry 'The Beginnings of Intercourse Between India and China' *Indian Historical Quarterly* Vol.14 June 1938, pp. 385-86 quoted by Burtonstein 'Coromandel trade in Medieval India' Parker (Ed.) 'Merchants and Scholars', p.49

52. N.S. Varadachari, op.cit. P.13

53. Foreign Notices Op.Cit., pp. 57-59

54. N.S. Varadachari, op.cit. P.14

55. R.H. Major 'India in the Fifteenth Century' (Reprint, New Delhi, 1974), *Introduction xxiii*

travelled to Cambay, then reaching Quilon which is to the north of Cape Comerin. From Koulam (Kollam), he travelled to the 'Sea of Schelabeth' supposed to be the Nicobar Islands.<sup>56</sup> After ten days sail they reached Beit-touma, the Church of Saint Thomas otherwise called Meliapur (Mylapore).<sup>57</sup> Sulaiman was obviously following the route taken usually by Arab merchants. From Mylapore he proceeded to other ports along the same coast like Kyrendy which is placed by M. Reinaud in the vicinity of Masulipatnam.<sup>58</sup> From there his route lay through the straits of Malacca which included Java, Sumatra and the coast of Arakkan. This then must have been the route taken by the ships carrying textiles from Coromandel. Another Arab traveller of the 13th Century Abdul Feda comments "The Coromandel is celebrated by the reports of travellers. It is from there that they export muslin which has passed into proverb for its fineness".<sup>59</sup> Chau Ja Kua, a Chinese traveller of the 13th Century also refers to Tien - Chu (the Coast of Madras) and the production of Poe-ti<sup>e</sup> (Muslin) there and says that they traded with Ta-tain (Bagdad) and Fu-nan (Cambodia). He also says that

56. Ibid. XXV

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid. XXVIII

59. Foreign Notices, op. cit. p.214

China imported cotton thread, silk thread, chintz and also coloured silks along with spices and other commodities.<sup>60</sup> The Venetian traveller Marco Polo, coming to India towards the close of the 13th Century (1271-94) praised the delicate buckrams and muslins of Mutfilli (Mottuppalli, Guntur dist.) saying "In sooth they look like the tissues of a spider's web. There is no king nor queen in the world but might be glad to wear them."<sup>61</sup> But of Mylapore, he says "tis a place where few traders go because there is very little merchandise to be got there.."

Textile trade was highly organized and was in the hands of the merchant guilds while within a limited area, that is in the immediate locality the weavers sold their own products, the marketing of textiles was largely in the hands of these organized traders. Inscriptions refer to Nanādāsīs,<sup>65</sup> Tisaiyirattu Ainnūrruvar,<sup>64</sup> Manigramattar,<sup>65</sup> Nagarattar,<sup>66</sup> Valanjayar,<sup>67</sup> Anjuvannattar,<sup>68</sup> and others.

---

60. Ibid. pp. 147-8

61. Journal of Oriental Research, Mds. 1934, pp.315-20 cited in Foreign Notices, P.174

62. Ibid. p.172. Apparently Mylapore as a port began to decline from the 13th Century onwards because Marco-Polo statement is confirmed by Barbosa in the 16th Century (Book II. P.126). However, the port revived in the late 16th Century due to the presence of the European Companies as attested to by Caesar Fredrick (His statement has been quoted in B.A. Saletore article, "Some Aspects of the Overseas Trade of Vijayanagar from the accounts of European travellers", B.C. Law Volume, (Calcutta, 1945), pp. 114-127.

63. A.R.E. 387 of 1926, Patnad, Guntur dt. Kakatiya period.

The word Manigrāman is actually interpreted to mean Vanigrāman or an association of merchants. An inscription of the period of Nandivarman III (846-69 A.D.) relating to the Manigrāmattar has been found as far as Siam.<sup>69</sup> The Ainnūrruvar or the Ayyavole<sup>66</sup> are said to be the most celebrated of the merchant guilds. They had their own prasasti (panśāśī) in which they are styled as the protectors of the Vira Balanājadharmā i.e., the law of the noble merchants. They operated in Chera, Chōla, Pāndya, Malaya, Magadha, Kausāla, Saurāshtra, Dhanushtra, Karumba, Kambhōja Gaulla, Lata, Barvvara, Parasa (Persia) and Nēpala.<sup>70</sup> In fact an inscription of the period of Kulōttunga I dated 1088 A.D. relating to the activities of the Tisaiyirattu-Ainnūrruvar has been found in Sumatra.<sup>71</sup> During the period of the late Pandyas (13th, 14th Centuries), the Tisaiyirattu-Ainnūrruvar are said to have exercised control over

---

64. A.R.E. 286 of 1964-65 Kulittalai Taluq, Trichi Dist. Also refers to Chitramēli guild.

65. Ibid.

66. A.R.E. 613 of 1926 from Madurai

67. A.R.E. 200 of 1937-38 - Vira Balanya of Ayyavole -

68. A.R.E. 78 of 1963-64 Vellore dist. Also refers to Nanadesis.

69. Cited in Burtonstein's article on Coromandel Trade op.cit., p. 50

70. M.A.R., Epigraphica Carnatica (Ed.) Lewis Rice 1886-190 Vol.7, Shikarpur Taluq No.118. A similar prasasti for the Nanadesis in A.R.E. 15 and 16 of 1917

71; Nilakanta Sastry 'Colās' (Madras 1975), p.596  
'Colās'

18 cities (Pattinam). This indicates that the entire trade in these areas, including the predominant textile trade must have been in their hands. Apart from this <sup>wider</sup> ~~inner~~ organization there were also merchant guilds called Nagaram which operated within specific localities.<sup>72</sup> From the inscriptional reference to the Nagaram of Manigrāman, it is possible to infer that Manigrāman was a predominant merchant settlement and hence named after them or was probably assigned to the merchant guild.<sup>73</sup>

The merchant guilds traded in all commodities including textiles and their control was all pervasive. The Chinese traveller Ma-huan's comment is very illuminating that "All trading transactions are carried on by the Chettys"<sup>74</sup> Referring to the Cabicut coast he says, "when a ship arrives from China, the king's overseer and a Chetty go on board and make an invoice of the goods and a day is fixed for valuing the cargo. On the day appointed, the silk goods more especially the Khinkis (?) are first inspected and valued. When decided on, all present join hands whereupon

72. S.I.I., Vol.VIII No.442 from Pirāmmalai (op.cit) Also refer to No.88 of 1914-15 Udaiyāmpalayam, Trichi dist. of the period of Jātavarman Vira Pāndya which alludes to merchants of the 18 sub-divisions of the 79 dists. Also # 342 of 1912 which refers to the 18 towns, 32 vēṭarpuram and 64 Shātika Sthāna of the Valanadu Tissaiyirattu Ainūrruvar.

73. In this context, ref. to A.R.E. 342 of 1912-<sup>13</sup> ~~43~~ part II para 25 from Chittoor of the period of Rajaraja I which says that the Ainūrruvar decided to convert Siravalli into Nānādisiṅga Dasemadi Erivirapattinam. (A merchant settlement or town guarded by troops or fighters).

74. Foreign Notices, Op.cit. P.305

75. Ibid. P.307

the broker says, "The price of your goods is now fixed and cannot in any way be altered."<sup>75</sup> This instance clearly shows brokers were employed in the textile trade especially when<sup>re</sup> it involved dealings with foreign merchants. Taragu was a constant item of taxation under the Cholas and Haaltzoh interprets this as brokerage fee.<sup>76</sup>

Not only did the merchant guilds trade in all general items including textiles but they also apparently had separate guilds for the more important commodities of trade like cloth. Thus the later Pāndya inscription already alluded to<sup>77</sup> concludes a lengthy statement on temple donation with the names of a number of prominent merchants and merchant guilds. Here the terms Jayangonda Chōlamandala Chīlai Chettis and Kongumandala Chīlai Chettis strike one as extremely significant. It proves that the cloth merchants had their own organisations in the various regions

75. Ibid. P.307

76. A.R.E. 309 of 1968-69, Trichnopoly dist.

77. S.I.I. Vol.VIII No.442 from Piranmalai, Tirupattur, Trichi dist. A parallel instance of such organisations for the sale of specific commodities is also available from the Andhra region where there is reference to Kuragayala beharulu and Nune beharulu, i.e., vegetable and oil merchants [Corpus of Inscriptions in the Nizam's Dominions, Vol.II, No.14 from Warrangal.] Even in the Tamil country, there is very frequent reference to the Kudirai Chettis (Horse dealers). A.R.E. 1936-37 P.47 and 196 of 1928-29.



and that they came together for general purposes. Not merely the sale of textiles but even the sale of raw cotton and cotton thread was apparently in the hands of these merchant guilds. A valuable inscription from Anantapur belonging to the period of the Telegu-Choda king Malladeva dated 1162 A.D. says that the Nānāśi merchants of the four dialects (Tamil, Telegu, Kanerese and Malayalam) of the Kubera lineage, consecrated the temple of Dēśivara. They made an endowment to it of a fixed fee on all the articles in which they traded such as musk, saffron, yak-tail, cus-cus, cotton and cotton thread, beads, tiger-skin, women's cloths (Pudavaikkattu), lead and tin. The donors are originally said to have belonged to Akkur in Rajarajavalanadu identified as a village near Mayavaram in Tanjore dist.<sup>78</sup>

The Madras Museum copper plates of Uttama Chōla which bestow high temple privileges on the Sāliya community of weavers also testify to the power of the Nagarattar in that area because the inscription specifically appoints the Nagarattar guild as the trustees in charge of the affairs of the Vishnu temple at Ūragam.<sup>79</sup> The entire inscription is in the end attested by the Nagarattar guild. The inscription is a further proof of the perfect and widespread organisation of the merchant guilds and the status accorded to them by the state.

---

78. A.R.E. Nos. 15 and 16 of 1917 Appendix <sup>C</sup> e.

79. S.I.I. Vol. III pt. 4 p.264

As seen from the Anantapur inscription, the Chettys of the four major regions of the South - Andhra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and the Malabar area, came together in a much bigger association welding them. Not only cloth or the finished products but even cotton and cotton-thread were marketed by these commercial guilds. Ma-huan's statement quoted elsewhere, emphasises the major role played by the guilds especially in foreign trade.<sup>80</sup> Every merchant guild was usually accompanied by a regiment<sup>m</sup> probably to combat the bandits who made transportation of goods unsafe. These are referred to as Senaiangadigal.<sup>81</sup>

Apart from these prosperous merchant guilds, even certain ordinary weavers rose to the rank of merchants during the Chōlā period. Since Kāñchīpuram was not only a major weaving Centre, but also a principal centre for the textile trade, any growth in cloth trade must have resulted in increased prosperity for some weavers and their el<sup>e</sup>vation to the rank of merchants. Thus an inscription from Chidambaram, South Arcot, belonging to the period of Kopperunjingadeva registers that the Saliya Chettys were

80. Foreign Notices, op.cit. pp.305-307

81. S.I.I. Vol.VII.No.855 Gidangil, Dindivanam Taluq, S. Arcot dist. The evidence regarding the existence of a special merchant force is further straghtened by the reference to the conversion of the village of Siravalli (Chittoor Dist.) into Nanadisiya Dasanadi Erivirapattinam by the ~~Ainarruvar~~ (i.e., the soldiers of the Nānādēsi guild) by the Ain<sup>r</sup>ruvar - A.R.E. 342 of 1912-13, Part II.

to be provided with houses on condition that they supplied the necessary cloth to the temple.<sup>82</sup> The use of the suffix 'Chetty' shows that these Saliya weavers must have been prosperous enough to function as merchants. Similarly, ins<sup>s</sup>criptional evidence pertaining to the period of Rājarāja I (985-1016 A.D.) from 'Little Kāñchīpuram' records a gift by Paramanandi Chetty/ son of Nakkampandai of the weaver caste belonging to Mylapore.<sup>83</sup> There are on the other hand evidences which show that the reverse process was also taking place by referring to merchants owning looms. Thus an inscription from Tirukkōyilūr Taluq, in South Arcot dist. mentions the fixing of taxes on looms owned by the weavers and merchants according to its size.<sup>84</sup>

All taxes relating to the weaving industry were paid to the state unless their proceeds had been specifically granted to the temple by the state. To cite just a few instances, an inscription found in the Jvaraharesvara temple in Kāñchīpuram registers the gift of the tax on looms (tari-irai) to the temple of Suravattaram-Udaiya-Nayanar by a Pallava Chief (probably Kadavaraya - 13th Century) during the reign of Vijaya Gandagopaladeva.<sup>85</sup> Kulottunga Chola Sambuvaraya (12-13th Century) is also said to have

---

82 A.R.E. 308 of 1913

83. A.R.E. 460 of 1919

84. A.R.E. 278 of 1936-37

85. A.R.E. 228 of 1910

donated the various proceeds of the village of Achcharapakam in Madurantakam taluq (Chingleput dist.) including the tax on merchants and the tax on looms as gift to the deity.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Rajanarayana Sambuvaryar (1345 A.D.) is said to have gifted the tax on looms within the four limits of the Tirumadaivilagam for worship in the temple of Tiruppulipagava Nayar<sup>ar</sup> in Pulipparakkoyil (Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.)<sup>87</sup> This suggests that even the tax levied on weavers within the Tirumadaivilagam went to the state unless it was specifically endowed to the temple.

A variety of taxes relating to the weaving industry have been mentioned in the inscriptions. The most frequently mentioned is *teri-irai*<sup>88</sup> (loom-tax) also called *terikkadamai*.<sup>89</sup> This was obviously in the nature of a capital tax. An inscription dated 1345 A.D. from Pulipparakkoyil in Madurantakam Taluq (Chingleput dist.) of the period of Rajanarayana Sambuvaryar refers to *Perikkadamai*<sup>90</sup> apart from the usual *Terikkadamai*, i.e., loom tax. The inscription says that the *perikkadamai* was levied from the *Salyar* and the *Kaikkolar*. This tax was then, in the nature of a professional tax. The 8th Century Velurpalayan grant refers to a tax called '*tarikkurai*'<sup>91</sup> which Dr. Menakshi has interpreted as

86. S.I.I., Vol.VII 454 and 455

87. A.R.E. 218 of 1910. Also 236 of 1910 dated 1339 A.D. from Pulipparakkoyil, Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.

88. This reference to '*teri-irai*' is made as early as the 8th century in the Kasakkudi plates of Chandivarman II (830-795 A.D.) S.I.I., Vol.II, Pt. 3, No.73. The reference to '*teri-irai*' is also found in the reign of Rajaraja (S.I.I., Vol.VIII No.89) as well as Kulottunga Chola (S.I.I., Vol.VII No. 125)

89. S.I.I., Vol.V, No.765 from Tenkasi (Tinnevely dist.) of the late Pandya period and of the period of Rajanarayana Sambuvaryar (14th century), from Pulipparakkoyil (Chingleput dist.) A.R.E. 218 of 1910

tax on cloth since kūrāi means cloth. The next category tarippudavai<sup>92</sup> mentioned in an inscription from Tirumukkudal village in Madurāntakam taluq (Chingleput dist.) of the period of Vira Rajendra Chōla (1063-9) was probably similar in nature to tarikkurai. Interpreting this tax, Sadāsiva Pandārattar says that annually one sari was collected as tax from the weavers.<sup>93</sup> But it is more likely that this was a general tax on cloth since Pudavai in that period was loosely used to denote cloth of any kind.<sup>94</sup> Another important tax on the weaving industry was Pañjupīlī, ilai, tax on cotton yarn.<sup>95</sup> The Kāsakkudi plates of Nandivarman II (8th Century A.D.) mentions the levying of two other categories of taxes- pattigai (i.e., share of the cloth) and Paḍan-gari (i.e., tax on cotton thread) in the Kāñchipuram Taluq.<sup>96</sup> It also refers to Puttagam interpreted by Hultzsch as the price of cloth but Dr. Meenakshi calls it a tax on the sellers of cloth.<sup>97</sup> An inscription of the period of Rajenārāyana Sambuvarāyar fixes the rate of vāsalvari (i.e., housetax) on the Kaikkōlar.<sup>98</sup> There are also references in the inscriptions to nūlayam and

---

90. A.R.E. 218 of 1910.

91. Dr. Meenakshi, op.cit. P.77

92. A.R.E. 182 of 1916 Part II, 119 'The tax 'tarippudavai' is referred to even early in the inscription of Rajendra I (1012-44 A.D.) (S.I.I. Vol. II, pt. 4, No.205)

93. Sadāsiva Pandārathār, 'Pirkāka Chōlargal (Annemalai Univ. 1974) P.524

94. In S.I.I. Vol. III Pt. 4, No.151 tarippudavai is interpreted as the cloth on each loom.

95. S.I.I. Vol. IV No.348

pattadai-nūlayam<sup>100</sup> i.e., the tax on cotton thread and silk-thread. The inscription from Tirukkalukkuṅṅam belonging to the 14th Century refers not only to pattadai nūlayam but also to Attai Sammadam, Per Sammadam, etc.<sup>101</sup> There are also references to Achchuttari and Paraiṭtari<sup>102</sup> which has been described as tax on a particular variety of loom but the precise nature of the tax cannot be definitely ascertained. Rājārāja III is said to have classified all taxes into 'nellāyam' (grain tax) and 'kāṣāyam' (money tax). Here tari-irai is listed under kāṣāyam. It is thus possible to conclude that in the Chola period the various taxes on the weaving industry were paid in terms of cash except where it involved payment in terms of a share of the cloth.

For the incidence of taxation on the weavers in the Kāñchīpuram region, evidence is very limited for the early period though there is sufficient information for the Vijayanagar period. The loom tax on the Kaikkōlar and

- 
96. S.I.I. Vol. II, Pt. 3, No.73  
 97. Dr. Meenakshi, op.cit. P.77  
 98. A.R.E. 276 of 1912  
 99. S.I.I. Vol. VII No.855  
 100. A.R.E. 170 of 1933. Also contained in Subramaniam (Ed.)  
S.I.I. Vol.I, No.465, D.3302  
 101. Ibid.  
 102. T.V. Mahalingam, 'Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar (Madras 1969), P.74, Inscription cited S.I.I. Vol. I, No.62

Sāliyar is said to have been fixed at 6 panams per year on the basis of an inscription of Jātavarman Sundara Pāndya (13th Century) from Tirukkachchiyūr (Chingleput Taluq and dist.)<sup>103</sup> This tax appears to be rather high considering that during the Vijayanagar period the standard rate seems to have been 3 panams though it was sometimes as low as 2 panams and sometimes as high as 5 panams.<sup>104</sup> It is interesting to note that the tax on weavers was always less in newly settled areas and in fact sometimes there was total tax remission for the first two years.<sup>105</sup>

---

103. A.R.E. 300 of 1909.

104. A table on the rates of taxation on looms in the Kāñchīpuram region under the Vijayanagar empire has been given in Chapter IV of this dissertation.

105. Thus an inscription from Manamadi village in Chingleput Taluq, remits the tax on looms of Kaikkōlas newly settled in the Southern side of the temple of Tirukkarapuramudaiya Nayinār for the first 3 years. (A.R.E. 228 of 1930-31)

CHAPTER III

The Weaver Organization, the State and Society  
C.A.D. 700 - 1350

The social condition of the weaver communities during this period can be gauged in terms of the donations made by them to temples, whether in the form of money or through gift of lands. The inscriptions further provide instances of weavers owning lands, then as now indicative of high social status. Not only do we get evidence of the extent of prosperity of the weavers but the titles used by them like 'chetty', 'mudali', 'nāyakar', 'pillai' and 'devar' also point to the high status enjoyed by them in contemporary society.

A most interesting feature of the social life of the Kaikkōla weavers or other professional communities like the Kammalar is that they always trace their origins to a mythological figure. Just as the Kammalar trace the emergence of the five classes of artisans to Viśvakarma,<sup>6</sup> so the Kaikkōlas trace

- 
1. A.R.E., 460 of 1919 from Little Kañchipuram, Chingleput dist. of the period of Rājarajadēva.
  2. A.R.E. 208 of 1922-23 from Tiruppulivanam, Kañchipuram taluq and Chingleput dist. of the period of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya (13th Century)
  3. A.R.E. 342, 343 and 344 of 1911 from Kālattur, Chingleput Taluq and dist. of the same period.
  4. S.I.I. Vol. VII, No.921 from Dindivanam (S. Arcot) of the period of Kulōttunga Chōla refers to donation of a lamp by Kaikkōla Paramban Vīrabadra Pillai.
  5. A.R.E. 92 of 1933-34 from Sirudāvur (Chingleput dist) of Maravarman Vira Pandya's period (13th Century) refers to Kannanumōyuda Pandya devar. The title 'rāyar' was given to the Kaikkōlas only during the Vijayanagar period.
  6. Thurston, op.cit., Vol. III P.142



their origin to <sup>a</sup>Vīrabāhu, the mythological lieutenant of Lord Kārtikeya<sup>7</sup>. The Chōlā king Mūsukunda<sup>8</sup> is said to have prayed to Lord Kārtikeya to send help against the innumerable enemies besetting his kingdom. In answer to this he sent Vīrabāhu and his lieutenants who came to be known as Senguntāmar because of the peculiar hook-like weapon they carried. A slight variation of the legend is that the Senguntāmar descended on earth in order to destroy the demon Padmasura and were created from nine beads of anklets worn by Parvati. Curiously, even now on the Surasamhāra day (the day of the killing of the demon), the Kaikkōlar (Senguntāmar) dress themselves up to represent the nine warriors. The military character of the Kaikkōlas is emphasised by a number of literary compositions on this community. The Vīra Nārāyaṇa Vijayam<sup>9</sup>, a work containing the legends of the community further testifies to the military prowess of the Senguntāmar and their spirit of sacrifice through the narrative called 'vāllānai verāṭtu'.

- 
7. The legend occurs for the first time in the Kandapurānam and is cited in all the community literature of the Kaikkōlas like 'Senguntāmar Prabanda Tirattu', 'Senguntāmar Kula Prakāśikai', etc.
  8. The King 'Mūsukunda Chōlān mentioned in many of the Kaikkōla legends cannot be historically identified. He, however, figures in the Chōlā geneology lists given in inscriptions and is depicted in some contemporary paintings (refer S. Ponnusamy 'The Tyagarajaswami temple at Tiruvarūr').
  9. Although undated the work deals with the events in the reign of Parantaka I one of whose names is Vīra Nārāyaṇa.

The work of the 12th Century poet Ottakkūttar, 'Ītti Eḷuvatu' constitutes, of course, the greatest tribute to the Sengunt̃har as military warriors. Ottakkūttar was the contemporary of the Chōla kings - Vikrama Chola (1118-35 A.D.), Kulōttunga II (1133-50 A.D.) and Rājarāja II (1146-73 A.D.). An 18th Century commentator on this work, Kachchi Piratāpanar says<sup>10</sup> that when the Sengunt̃har of Arur (said to be located near Chidambaram) asked Ottakkūttar to write a panygeric on their community, he is said to have remarked that this had already been done by Kachchiyappa Sivachāriyār in his Tamil version of the Kandapurānam. Ultimately he is said to have written the Ītti Eḷuvatu commemorating the death of hundred Sengunt̃ha soldiers.

Thus in all these works the Sengunt̃har or Kaikkōlar are referred to only as warriors and not as weavers. This information tallies with inscriptional evidences which in the Chōla period are predominantly about 'Kaikkōlaperumpadai'<sup>11</sup> (military force), the Kaikkōla Senāpati<sup>12</sup> (military commander), the Valperra

---

10. Cited by N.R. Murugavel in his commentary on the Ītti Eḷuvatu serialised in the Tamil weekly Sengunt̃ha Mithiran, 1970. However, the 18th Century commentator has not quoted the relevant verse in which Ottakkūttar is claimed to have made such a statement. Prof. Nilakanta Shastry gives the date of Kachchiyappa Sivachāriyār's Kandapurānam as 1625 A.D., i.e., four centuries later than the period ascribed to it by Kachchi Piratāpanar. (Nilakanta Shastry 'A History of South India' (Madras 1976, 4th edition, P.387)

11. A.R.E. 253 of 1907, Tiruvidaimarudūr, Kumbakōnam Taluq, Tanjore dist.

Kaikkōlar<sup>13</sup> or the munrukai-padaip-parkōyil Kaikkōlar<sup>14</sup>

Though weaving must also have been carried on side by side, there is no reference to this in literature, perhaps because weaving as a profession was considered inferior to soldiering. In this connection, the curious custom followed by the Kaikkōla youth to this day, is very striking. In a special function called the 'uram aruththar chadangu'<sup>15</sup> they are made to show their skill as warriors in keeping with their ancient tradition!

The Sāliyar, also have a legend relating to their origin which is said to be found in the Sthalapurānam of the Nallādai temple. They believe themselves to be the descendants of one Sāliya maharishi, a low caste man who did service for a saint called Viśākar. Through the grace of Viśākar Sāliya became a rishi. The Sāliyan weavers are said to be his descendants. They wear the sacred thread and engage Brahmin purohitas.<sup>16</sup>

- 
12. S.I.I. Vol.VII, No.451 from Aoharipakkam, Madurantakam taluq, Chingleput Dist.
  13. Nilakanta Shastry Chōlās (Madras, 1975 Report), P.454
  14. A.R.E. 353 of 1904 of the period of Kulottunga I (dated 1106 A.D.) (Kudumiyamalai in the Pudukkottah State) cited in "The Chōlās" P.457. Beyond the fact that it constituted a particular division of the army, this term cannot be clearly explained. The reference to Kaikkolas as weavers is available from the 13th Century onwards, e.g. A.R.E. 152 of 1928-29
  15. Information on this function of the Kaikkōla youth, was provided by Pulavar C. Raju of Erode.

The weaving communities had an excellent guild organisation called nata, samaya or nagaram. Thus there is reference to the Saliyanagarattom along with the Vyapari-nagarattom in one inscription.<sup>17</sup> But no inscription gives any details of their guild organisation. This can only be understood from literary works belonging to a later period.

According to an inscription from Achoharpakkam (Chingleput dist.) Pichchaidevan Kidarandaraiyan, a Kaikkola Samaya Senapati (commander) donated a sum of 15 Kalanjū of pon (gold) for a perpetual lamp. The inscription belongs to the period of Vira Pandya (14th Century).<sup>18</sup> Pichchaidevan is thus referred to as the Senapati of the Kaikkola guild. There is again a reference in the period of Vira Pandya to an agreement between certain persons who undertook to celebrate the festivals of the deity of the Muktiśvara temple in Kanchipuram on all the 9 days in the month of Purattasi for the 175 panams they received in addition to the 44 panams given by the Kaikkolas

- 
16. Thurston, op.cit., Vol.VI P.277. The Sālē weavers of the Telugu country also have a somewhat similar legend. They trace their origin to Bhavana Rishi who manufactured the thread from the fibre of the lotus which sprang from Vishnu's naval and made cloth for the Gods. (Ibid. P.267)
17. 268 of 1921 cited in Nilakanta Shastry, Chōlās, op.cit. P.503.
18. S.I.I. Vol.VII, No.451 (A.R.E. 237 of 1901)

who had been conducting these festivals formerly.<sup>19</sup> The inscription shows that the Kaikkōla guild must have been prosperous enough to conduct festivals on such a large scale, though the inscription does not explain why they gave up conducting it themselves.

Some idea of the weaver guild organisation can be obtained from later literary works and traditions. The members of the weaver guild usually belonged to the 'weaver' caste and heredity formed an essential part of the professional guild. The Kaikkōla guild was divided into 4 *disai nāḍus*, 18 *kilai nāḍus* and 78 *nāḍus*.<sup>20</sup> This information is provided by the various literary works of the community which give the details of all the 72 *nāḍus* and the 18 *kilai nāḍus*. The *disai nāḍus* were (a) *Śivapuram*, east of *Kāñchipuram*, where *Kamakshiamma* is said to have placed *Nandi* as a guide, (b) *Tondaipuram* where *Tondai Vinayakar* was stationed, (c) *Virinjipuram* to the west guarded by *Subrahmanya* and *Sholingapuram* to the south watched over by *Śiva*. The *Mahanadu* was at *Kāñchipuram* and

---

19. A.R.E. 281 of 1921 from *Attūr* (*Chingleput Taluq and dist.*)

20. The guild organisation has been discussed in detail in the *Senguntā Prabanda Tirattu* (Ed.) *Sabapati Mudaliyar* (Madras 1926). It is very interesting to note a similar sort of division among the merchant guilds also. For example, A.R.E. 88 of 1914-15 from *Udaiyarpalayam*, *Trichinopoly dist.*, of the period of *Jatavarman Vira Pandya* (13th Century) which alludes to merchants of the 18 subdivisions (*Kilai nāḍus*) of the 79 *dists.* (*nāḍus*).

the supreme head of the Kaikkōla guild was the Mahanāṭṭam.  
<sup>Two</sup>  
~~Two~~ very interesting documents give details of the working  
of the Kaikkōla guild. One is a very long copper plate  
inscription preserved in Kañchīpuram (chronology uncertain)  
which has been compiled as Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam,<sup>21</sup> in the  
Oriental Manuscripts series. The other is a long 18th or  
19th Century verse written by one Paramānanda Nāvalar  
called Sengunthar Tuṭil Vidu Tūtu.<sup>22</sup> The Tūtu refers to a  
meeting of the guild members and the Nāṭṭanmai Periyatakkarar,  
Kariyakkarar and Karnigar, that is the guild chief of the  
nādu, the secretary and the accountant respectively. It  
refers to the Kañchīpuram representatives<sup>ve</sup> as 'Talaimai Nāṭṭar'  
(the Chief of the Nāṭṭar, i.e., the guild representatives  
in the nādu). The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam refers to Karikāla  
Chōlan summoning the heads of Tondaimandalam and Shonapuri  
(Sholingapuram) to the Arunapurimandapam. A Nāṭṭanmaikkarar  
was appointed for every nādu and they were duly honoured by  
being given betel leaf, etc. They were told to settle  
disputes arising in their regions. If the crime was of a

---

21. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam has been published in the  
Madras Oriental Series. While the copper plate  
inscription claims to belong to the period of Karikāla  
Chōlā, the reference to the Muslim invasions shows that it  
couldnot have written earlier than the 13th Century.  
Its chronology has been discussed by K.A. Nilakanta  
Shastry in an article in the Journal of Oriental  
Research, Vol. IV

22. Tūtu-~~the~~ Tirattu ed. by Chandrasekharan, pub. in  
Oriental Manuscripts Series, No.58, Madras, 1957, P.50

major nature, then it should be settled before the heads of the Kāñchīpuram guild. Here, several officials are mentioned - The Talaimai nāttan (guild chief) followed by Samaya 'Talapati' or commander, the Karnigar (accountant) Samaya Sangathi, Samaya Ilāndari and nāttu chodilāndari. In case of very grave crimes or serious issues the four diśai nāttar should meet in the presence of the Kāñchīpuram guild and decide the matter. After this, betal leaf and a robe was to be given to the various members in the order above mentioned. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam goes on to say that in the temple the holy water and prasādam should first be given to the nāttanmaikkārar.<sup>23</sup> It also says that the devadāsīs<sup>24</sup> should be honoured by being presented with a sari (Kandangi chēlai) along with the betal leaf. The Senguntāmar Tugil-vidu-Tutū says that like Mariyādi Raman renounced for his judicious decisions the guild <sup>wisely</sup> ~~wisely~~ decided the Valangai-Idangai dispute over privileges.<sup>25</sup> The statement in the Pūrva Pattayam that the weaver guild had a sēnāpati who occupied an important position and was second only to the Talaimai nāttan is substantiated and strengthened by the reference in the inscription of Vira Pāndya to the

---

23. Cholar Pūrva Pattayam, op.cit.PP.187-88, also P.192, and P.199

24. Ibid. The Devdāsīs are referred to in many inscriptions as 'Kaikkōla-dēvaradiyār and seem to have had close kinship ties with the Kaikkōla caste. For example, A.R.E. 284 of 1910 from Tiruvenakkoyil (Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.) of the period of Jātavarman Sundara Pāndya (13th Century).

25. Tutu-Tirattu, op.cit., P.50

donation of 15 kalāṅju of pon (gold) by a Kaikkōla samaya-sēnāpati.<sup>26</sup> An interesting inscription from Spimushnam (South Arcot dt.) gives an idea as to how the Kaikkōla guild derived the requisite funds for its various activities. It pertains to the period of Sundara Pāndya in the thirteenth century and refers to an agreement among the members of the Kaikkōla community to make over certain taxes on looms to the temple of Tirunārāyaṇisvaramudiya Alagiya Nāyanār.<sup>27</sup> This appears to be not so much the regular tax on looms collected by the state as a contribution on each loom levied by the guild itself.

The weavers were not only organised in their own guilds but were part of a larger social division, that is - The Idangai-Valangai classification. Just as the varna system marks a horizontal division of Indian society, so the Idangai-Valangai classification marks a vertical division of South Indian society. This, however, excludes the upper castes, the Brahmins (The Kshathriyas as a social category are rarely to be found in the South) and is confined to the Vaiśyas and Sat-Sūdras.<sup>28</sup> The earliest reference to the Left-hand Right-hand classification comes from an

26. S.I.I., Vol.VII, No.451

27. A.R.E., 248 of 1915-16

28. The higher category of Sūdra professionals are referred to as Sat-sūdras.



inscription of Rajendra Chōla (1012-44 A.D.). It is said that the army of the king was divided into such categories. Vēdan, nāttamān, Malayamān and Paraiya are mentioned as Valangai and the Bēdar, Pallan, Chakkiliyan and Kaikkōlar are mentioned as Idangai.<sup>29</sup> The connection between the army in terms of these categories and the origin of the Idangai and Valangai is evident from the reference in the Chōlā period to Idangai and Valangai regiments as well as Mūnrukai Padainar<sup>30</sup> otherwise called Mūnram Padainar or Mūnrukai Mahāsēnai.<sup>31</sup> However, it is not very clear as to what the precise basis of such a classification was.

Another explanation of the origin of the Idangai and the Valangai is that the Vellālar (agriculturists' caste) and the Kammālar (artisan castes) clashed frequently over the question of privileges and that Kulōttunga III resolved the issue before the Goddess in Kāñchīpuram by determining the Vellālar to be Valangai and the Kammālar to be Idangai.<sup>32</sup>

29. A.R.E. 56 of 1912

30. A.R.E. 189 of 1895 from Seramadevi (Ambasamudram Taluq, Tinnevely dist.) Prof. K.K. Pillay believes that Valangai soldiers formed the traditional fighting castes of the soldiers while the Idangai comprised of new recruits. In this connection, he quotes the description of Valangai as 'Valangai Palam Padaigal' (S.I.I. Vol.II, P.9 of the introduction cited in "The Caste System in Tamil Nadu", Journal of Madras Univ., Vol.XLIX No.2 July 1977).

31. A.R.E., 120 of 1905 from Tiruvāṭisvaram in Tinnevely dist. of the period of Rajaraja I or Rajendra I (11th Century).

The Saliyan weavers have been classified as right hand the Kaikkolar as left hand. The Cholar Purva Pattayam says that Kattikala Cholan brought Valanjiya Chetty, the Kaikkola Kachchi Viran and the Kachchi Vira Vellalar to the Kongu country. Here he determined the Left-hand-Right-hand categories which were then supposed to have been incorporated in the Kañchipuram copper plate inscription (Cholar Purva Pattayam), by Kaikkola Kachchi Viran on the orders of the king. It goes on to say that in 56 'Deva Bhuvanam', the Valanjiyar were to be free of customs duties and they were to be given the title 'Chetty'. The Vellalar were given the task of agriculture and were to be called 'nadar'. The Kaikkolar were given the title 'mudali'. The Kammalar were called 'Visvabrahma Panjalar' and given the community name 'Asari'<sup>33</sup> (meaning craftsman). That the Kaikkolar belonged to the Left-hand is known from an inscription from Srimushnam (South Arcot) of the period of Sundara Pandya (13th Century which refers to the Kaikkola community "who successfully practised the Idanga creed."<sup>34</sup> A 14th century evidence from Parantakanadu

---

32. Srinivasa Chari "The Origin of the Left-hand and Right-hand Castes", Journal of Andhra Historical Research Society, Vol.IV, pts. 1 and 2, Oct. 1929, P.80.

33. Cholar Purva Pattayam, Op.cit. PP 208-9

34. A.R.E. 248 of 1915-16



evidences offered above it clearly emerges that the Kaikkōlas, or for that matter, any professional group not only had its own guild but was part of a broader social division (The Idangai-Valangai classification) and bound by its rules and regulations.

As stated in the beginning, the importance of the weaver guilds and the extent of their economic power can best be assessed in terms of the donations made by them to the temples either in the form of land, money or any other temple service. These donations were sometimes made collectively by the weaver guild and sometimes by individuals. It is significant that social privileges accrued to them as a result of these donations, helping them to improve their ritual status in society.

In the period of Vira Rajendra Chōlādēva (11th Century), a Kaikkōlan, Kaṇṇan Araṣu is said to have given 9 Kalāñju of pon (gold) for the ear-rings and 10 kalāñju of pon for the necklace of the Goddess Panaimulai-Nāchchiyār in the temple of Tiruppāsūr-Udaiya Nāyinār at Tirukkachchiyūr (Tiruvallūr taluq, Chingleput dist.)<sup>40</sup> During the period of Kulōttunga Chōla (12th Century) a weaver of Big Kāñchipuram is said to have made a gift of gold and a lamp stand for burning two twilight lamps in the temple.<sup>41</sup>

---

40. A.R.E. 108 of 1929-30

41. A.R.E. 54 of 1921-22

From little Kāñchīpuram there is evidence of donation of 32 cows, one bull and a lamp-stand by Paramanādi Chettī, son of Nekkamandal of the weaver caste in Mayilāpur during the reign of Rājarājadēva (12th Century).<sup>42</sup> The title 'Chetty' used by the weaver shows that he must have had enough capital to operate as a merchant. The region of Mayilāpur (now a part of Madras) ~~was~~<sup>was</sup> also, significantly enough an important textile production and trade centre. A Kaikkōlan of the period of Rājanārāyana Sambuvarāyar (13th century) is said to have made a gift of 15 cows for half a lamp to the temple of Tiruvalakkōyiludaiya-Nāyanār.<sup>43</sup> From Tiruppulivanam (Kāñchīpuram Taluq., Chingleput dist.) in the period of Jatavarman Sundara Pāndya (13th century) an inscription in the Vyāgrapurīśvara temple registers the gift of 32 cows and 1 bull by a Kaikkōla Mudali for a lamp.<sup>44</sup> Donations of this sort again reflect the prosperity of the weavers. The title 'mudali' affixed to the donor is significant of the social importance accorded to him. At Kalattūr during the period of Māravarman Sundara Pāndya<sup>45</sup> (13th Century, three Kaikkōla brothers - Kakkunāyakam,

---

42. A.R.E. 460 of 1919

43. A.R.E. 361 of 1911-12 from Thruvanakkoyil, Madurantakam Taluq., Chingleput dist.

44. A.R.E. 208 of 1922-23 - 'mudali' during the medieval period did not pertain to any caste but was an honour accorded to any prominent member of society, 'Mudali' meaning the first or the important.

45. A.R.E. 342, 343 and 344 of 1911-12 (Chingleput Taluq., and dist.)

Aludaināyakan and Maṭṭāṇḍai - are said to have made gifts of lands to the Murkudumisvara temple in their individual capacity. The suffix 'nāyaka' to the names of two of the brothers is noteworthy. The merchants in the Coḷamandalam who traded in the distant lands seem to have been known as 'Nayakar' and 'Mahanayakar'.<sup>46</sup> Thus the title 'nāyakar' attached to the names of two of the Kaikkōla brothers shows that they must have operated as merchants. In the period of Maravarman Vira Pāndyadevar (14th Century), Alagiya Sokkanār alias Kannanumvāda Pāndyadevar, a Kaikkōla of Madurai, made a gift of land as Tirunāmatukkāni to the temple of Vadugap-pillayar at Sirudāvūr.<sup>47</sup> It is interesting that a Kaikkōla of Madurai should have made such a big gift to a deity in the Chingleput region.

The fact that many of these grants were in the form of land shows that the Kaikkōlas must have owned considerable land. This impression is strengthened by direct reference to the purchase of land by the Kaikkōlas. During the period of Kulōttunga (1133-50 A.D.) the eminent members of the Srikarana Chaturvedi Mangalam (names of members mentioned) i.e., the villa~~se~~ Kavantandalam in Jaysongonda Chōlapuram sold 380 Kuli of land to Kaikkōlan Isānadevan and his brother.<sup>48</sup> During the period of Rājarāja dēva

---

46. Sadasiva Pandarattar Pirkāla Chōlargal (in Tamil) (Annamalai Univ., 1974) op.cit. P.577

47. A.R.E. 92 of 1933-34 (Chingleput Taluq and dist.)

48. S.I.I. Vol.VII, No.415 (Kañchīpuram Taluq, Chingleput Dist.)

(1146-75 A.D.) a weaver of Ravikulamānikkapperunderuvu in Kāñchīpuram reclaimed for cultivation <sup>of</sup> certain lands belonging to Tiruvūragatimīlerumar (?) and dug a small irrigation tank for 200 kāṅu and allowed the produce from the land to be utilised for providing offerings to the God.<sup>49</sup> A 13th Century inscription from Tiruvānakkōyil of the period of Rājanārāyana Sambuvarāya records that the residents of Kalattūr-parru gave Nāyanasēri <sup>ā</sup> alias Pundarikarattūr, a hamlet of Kalattūr to the Kaikkōla as a sarvaṁāya grant.<sup>50</sup> This inscription points to joint ownership in land and the gifting of a whole hamlet to a Kaikkōla shows that he must have rendered the residents of Kalattūr-parru a valuable service. Again, during the period of Māraverman Vīra Pāndya (14th Century) the temple authorities at Tirukkachchiyūr<sup>51</sup> are said to have sold the tenancy-right (Kāñi-vilai) of the village Punniyam, originally purchased as Tirunāmattukkāni from the assembly of Pulippakkam, to the Kaikkōlas and Kaikkōla-Mudalis of Tirukkachchiyūr, consequent on the relinquishment of tenancy by the previous cultivators. This information is of significance on several counts. It refers firstly to the purchase of tenancy rights from the assembly of Pulippakkam which means that a local body like the

---

49. A.R.E. 46 of 1921-22 (Sengalunirōdai, Big Kāñchīpuram, Chingleput dist.)

50. A.R.E. 362 of 1911 (Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.)

51. A.R.E. 57 of 1932-33 (Tirvaṭtur Taluq, Chingleput dist.)

assembly must have possessed joint control over that land. Secondly, it refers to the collective purchase by the Kaikkōlas of Tirukkachchiyūr (including the Kaikkōla Mudalis) of Kāni-vilai or tenancy right. All these evidences of Kaikkōlas owning large tracts of land in the Kāñchipuram region is striking in view of the theory advanced, that local landed proprietors tended to dominate the local assemblies and Councils.<sup>52</sup>

The growing social importance of the weavers, evidenced by their ownership of land and the numerous donations made by them to the temples, led to conferment of privileges by the State in recognition of their enhanced importance in society. These privileges are described in the literary works of the community and in other ancient works as well as in the inscriptions of the period. These privileges were not merely social for e.g. the conferment of Sangu and tandu (conch shell and the right to ride a palanquin), the right to whitewash their homes or have a double storay, to sport their own flags or even to wear certain types of clothes, but economic privileges were also conferred like the appointment of weavers as accountants, managers and trustees of temples, tax remission or reduction

---

52. This theory has been expounded by Prof. Burtonstein in various articles, for instance in the article on "The State and agrarian order" contained in Burtonstein (Ed.) Essays on South India, (Hawaii, 1976).



on looms etc. More important, these privileges took the form of temple service because the temples were then the centres of social and cultural life and were an important means of enhancing ritual status.

The Madras Museum Copper plates of Uttama Chōla provide ample evidence of the kind of economic privileges that were conferred on the weavers. The state seems to have accorded a very high place to the weavers' guilds, entrusting them with grave responsibilities. Uttama Chola Parakēsarivarman is said to have made a grant in his 16th year (985 A.D.) to the temple of Ūragam at Kachchipēdu for celebrating the "Sittirai-tiruvila" of the deity. For this purpose 200 Kalanju of pon (gold) was deposited with the residents, that is, the two classes of Pattusaliyans residing in the four weavers' quarters of the city - Karuvulanpatti, Kamsahap-patti, Attimnap-patti and Eruvalichchēri. This shows that the weaver guild was considered trustworthy enough to act as a bank. Some selected weavers were appointed as managers of the temple by Uttama Chōla. The task of writing the accounts of the temple at Ūragam was given to the weaver guild, the members of which had to do it by turns. The income of the God of the temple which consisted of (1) Kolnirai Kūli and (2) Kalalavu-Kūli collected at Kachchipēdu of the produce from lands purchased at Kachchipēdu and Tundunakkachchēri and (3) of interest (iḷ paddy and in money) accruing on investments by the temple was to be

apportioned for the several services in the main temple and the shrines and the residents of two of the weavers' quarters - Karuvilampatti and the Ātimsnap-patti were to be appointed to "supervise and carry out the apportionment". In return for these important services the weavers were to be exempted from the payment of taxes.<sup>53</sup> Instances of tax remission on weavers is also available from other regions. With regard to social privileges, an inscription from Tirukkachchiyūr of the period of Sambuvarāya Venrumankōnda, registers the conferment of honours like parivattam and Oḍukku on a Saliya who had made some grants to the temple.<sup>54</sup> The Senguntāmar Tugil Vidu Tūtū refers to the privileges granted to the community like having their own flag consisting of a cock and a tiger with an 'Itteṣ' (spear) in the middle. They had the right to ride an elephant and use a 'Muraṣu' or drum on all occasions.<sup>55</sup>

The Tugil vidu Tūtū also refers to an important temple service rendered by the community - that is, the celebration of the Śūrasamhāra day. Even to this day, this festival is celebrated with great fanfare by the members of this community. It also refers to the rights of the Palayan Śimai guild of the Kaikkōlar to distribute prasadam (food offering) and holy water in the temple, to erect the flag cloth, decorate the deity, etc.<sup>56</sup> The Chōlar Purva

---

53. S.I.I. Vol.III Pt. 4, P.264

54. A.R.E. 47 of 1932-33

55. Tugil-vidu-Tutu, op.cit, P.46

56. Ibid. P<sup>r</sup>.51-53 Stanzas 115-20 150-155

Pattayam substantiates this and gives details of the rewards given to them for the performance of services like the erection of flag cloth (dvijam) and 5 panams to the Koyil Kattalaikkārar, etc. It refers to the appointment of Samaya Mudali of the Kaikkōlar as the Kaniyalan<sup>57</sup> of several temples especially in Kāñchīpuram and says that Karikāla Cholan assigned him one-tenth of the total manya (income) of the temple as his share. Several inscriptions provide proof of Kani rights being given to the Kaikkōlas.<sup>58</sup>

An interesting aspect of temple-service by the Kaikkōlas is the association of their names with the Devaradiyal. For a long time the Kaikkōla families had a tradition of consecrating the first born girl in the family to the temple. It is said that the Devaradiyar were also called Patiyilar because they were not permitted to marry.<sup>59</sup> While the Kaikkōlas are said to belong to the Idangai (left-hand) the Devaradiyar belong to the Valangai (right-hand).<sup>60</sup> The Cholar Fūrva Pattayam when it refers to the order of importance in which the Kaikkōla guild members were to be honoured, says that the Devadasis were to be given one Kandangi Chelai ( a type of sari) as well as the

---

57. The precise sense in which the word Kaniyalan is used here is not clear. Prof. Rangacharya in his glossary to "The inscriptions of the Madras Presidency" defines Kaniyatchi as free and hereditary (landed) property. Prof. T.V. Mahalingam in his glossary in South Indian Polity also defines a Kaniyalan as landowner but in the present context it appears to mean a supervisor of temple lands.

traditional betel leaf. In fact the Dēvadāsīs are everywhere mentioned along with the Naṭṭar, Talapati and the other members of the guild.<sup>61</sup> The Chōlar Pūrva Pattavam substantiates the numerous inscriptional evidences on this point. Thus an inscription from Tāruvakkoyil (Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.) of the period of Jatavarman Sundara Pāndya (13th century) registers the sale of house sites to the Kaikkōlar and Devaradiyār of the temple.<sup>62</sup>

A sub-caste of the Kaikkōlas connected specially with temple service were the Ponnambalakkuthar<sup>63</sup> also called 'Nainār'. They were singers and bards attached to the temples and were sometimes wandering minstrels. The folk songs of the Kaikkōla community are all said to have been composed and sung by these 'Nainārs'.<sup>64</sup> The great 12th century poet of

58. Cholar Pūrva Pattavam, op.cit. PP.206-7

59. K.K. Pillay, op.cit. P.30

60. Ibid

61. Cholar Pūrva Pattavam, op.cit. P.200, P.207 and Passim

62. A.R.E. 284 of 1910. Another inscription from Kāñchīpūram (S.I.I. Vol.IV. No.346) says that the Sthanathar of the Anēkatangapadam temple gave land to the Kaikkōlar 'Vena Udaiyar and Anai withthamarayar as Kani for the Devaradiyār (from the suffix attached to the Kaikkōlar it is clear that it is a Vijayanagar inscription).

63. S.I.I., Vol.VIII No.752, S.I.I. Vol.IV. No.255, A.R.E. 295 of 1961-62

64. That the Kaikkōla caste contained a sub-sect who were mainly bards can be seen by the ancient, Tamil proverb. 'Sing poetry in the place where there are no Kaikkōlas meaning that if a Kaikkōla were already present there, the singer would be outshone. ( I am indebted to Prof. C. Balasubramaniam of Mds. Univ. for this information).

this community was called Ambalakkūthar and because he sang a particular verse in the manner desired by Vikrama Chōlan, he was renamed as 'Ottakkūttar'.<sup>65</sup> In the 'Sengunthar Tugil vidu Tūtū the Nainār Ponnambalaper are mentioned as past-masters in the art of magic and tantra and as singers of exceptional calibre who earned the applause of the gods.<sup>66</sup>

The economic power of the weavers as evidenced by their donations and instances of land ownership and the social privileges ~~also~~ conferred on them including temple service, brings to the forefront one overwhelming issue - whether the Śūdra status assigned to weavers and other upcoming economically vital professional classes was in keeping with their actual status in society. The great issue in the medieval period, whether it was the period of the later Chōlas or the Vijayanagar empire, was, to quote Burtenstein "whether a powerful and populous part of Hindu society was to enjoy a ritual rank commensurate with its ranking in other aspects of life. For the Śūdras appear to have exerted a profound influence upon medieval society, enjoying rank and social power which was far greater than that accorded to them by the legal and social texts of the period..."<sup>67</sup> He shows that this could be one of the

---

65. Prof. C. Balasubramanian, Ottakkūthar (in Tamil) P.86

66. Tugil vidu Tūtū, op.cit, verses 122-25

67. Burtenstein 'Social Mobility in the Caste System of India' (pp.78-95) James Silverburg (Ed.) "Social Mobility in the Caste System of India - A Symposium

primary reasons for the active participation of the Śūdra professionals in this period in religious activities and comments "In its textual aspects, devotional hymns and commentaries the bhakti movement (in the South) stands opposed to the restrictive structure of the Hindu society that is expressed in the legal and social texts of the age".<sup>68</sup>

The attempt to equate social and economic status with the ritual status was made by the weavers in several ways (a) the demand for social privileges (b) the ascribing of mythological origins and the claiming of Brahmanical status (c) Left-hand - Right-hand conflicts within the professional castes and (d) social protests. The weavers and the Kammalar as the leading Śūdra professionals in society participated in the Vira Saiva or Lingayat movements as well as the Sri Vaishnava or more specifically the Tengalai movement both of which began roughly between the 12th and the 13th Centuries. The Vira Saiva movement originated in the Kanerase country under the leadership Basavāsar settled in Kalyani in roughly the 12th Century. In fact according to Srinivasa Iyengar, the bifurcation of the Śūdra professionals into the Idangai-Vēlangai castes

---

68. Ibid. P. 81

around the 11th-12th Centuries was stimulated by the anti-brahmanical views of Bāṣava.<sup>69</sup> It is significant that the earliest inscriptions on the Idangai-Valangai castes also comes from the 11th-12th Centuries. Similarly, the Śūdra professionals among whom the weavers figured prominently, also participated in the Sri Vaishnava movements. However, such instances are multiplied and appear increasingly in the period of the Vijayanagar empire when such movements gained strength with the increasing importance of the professional classes.<sup>70</sup>

Though instances of caste 'exaltation' are numerous whether in the Chōlā period or the period of the Vijayanagar empire, instances of social protest are very rare. However, one inscription from Tiruvēnnainallūr<sup>71</sup> most probably of the period of Kulottunga III (13th Century) records an agreement written under the orders of Atala sundaraperumāl by the Kaikkōlas of Tiruvēnnainallūr on behalf of Tirupuvānāṁudaiya-Ilankeśavarādēva who seems to have lost his life in a quarrel, about the right of way in passing through a particular street on festive occasions, reciting devaram hymns. Apparently, their right was challenged on the ground that they were Śūdras.

---

69. Srinivasa Iyengar. "The origin of the Left-hand - Right-hand castes" The Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society Vol.IV, pt. 1 and 2 July and Oct. 1929.

70. The participation of the Śūdra professionals especially weavers in the Bhakti movement has been dealt with in detail in Chap. V of this dissertation.

71. A.R.E. 437 of 1921

Their stand was vindicated and special honours are said to have been conferred on the martyred Kaikkōla weaver.

Examples of temple service, donations, etc. provide an idea of the religious beliefs of the weaving communities. They were Śaivas as well as Vaishnavas though Śaivas were predominant.<sup>72</sup> Among the important deities worshipped by the Kaikkōla weavers was the worship of Pillaiyār or Vināyagar. The Kaikkōlas are said to have set up the image of Kunichoḥa Pillaiyār in the Tirumadaivitaḡam of the Brahmapurisvara temple at Perunagar (Chingleput Taluq and dist.)<sup>73</sup> Similarly, a Kaikkōlan is said to have made a gift of land to the image of Vadugap-pillaiyār in the Siva temple at Sirudavur (Madurantakam Taluq, Chingleput dist.) The inscription belongs to the period of Maravarman Vira Pandya (1333-1380 A.D.)<sup>74</sup> The Kaikkōlas also seem to have worshipped the Goddess amman in different forms. A Kaikkōla, Kaṅṅan Arasu is said to have made a gift of pon for ear-rings and necklace to the Goddess Panaimulai Nachchiyār at Virarāgava Perumal temple at Tirukkachchiyūr (Tiruvallur Taluq, Chingleput Dist.)

---

72. This can be deduced by the fact that most of the inscriptions pertaining to the Kaikkōla weavers especially regarding donations are to be found in the Siva temples. Thus in the Chingleput dist. alone out of the 76 inscriptions relating to Kaikkōlas found on temple walls 63 are in Śaiva temples and only 8 in Viṣṇu temples.

73. A.R.E. 347 of 1923.

74. A.R.E. 92 of 1933-34.



during the period of Vira Rājendra Chōla (1063-9 A.D.)<sup>75</sup>

The Cholar Pūrva Pattayam gives the names of the deities worshipped by the Kaikkōlas many of which find mention in the inscriptions. Thus it refers to 'Vira Senguntā Vināyagar', Kachchi Ekambara Kamākshiamman, Varadarāja Perumāl, Kachchalaī Kandha Perumāl and Karumari amman.<sup>76</sup>

The god of the Sāliyar community was called Satisvara.

There are references in the districts of Andhra regarding the setting up of the deity Satisvara by the Sāliyan weaver community.<sup>77</sup>

It appears from literary as well as inscriptional evidence that the weaving community of the Kaikkōlas indulged in the practice of human sacrifice. The Kaikkōlas and Kaikkōla Mudalis of the Dharmisvara temple at Manimangalam are said to have carried out a human sacrifice on the tirumadaivittagam of the temple during the period of Yadavaraya (4<sup>th</sup> Century).<sup>78</sup> The Cholar Pūrva Pattayam says that in Arunapuri very near Kāñchi the deity as usual

---

75. A.R.E. 108 of 1929-30

76. Cholar Pūrva Pattayam, P.199 (Inscription of Nellore dt.)

77. N.D.I., Vol.II, No.81 from Irukalemma temple and also A.R.E. 39 of 1957-58 (Mettewada, Warrangal Taluq, and dist.)

78. S.L.I. Vol.VI, No.258 - Manimangalam, Saidapet Taluq (formerly in Chingleput dist. but now a part of Madras).

demanded a human sacrifice but that Karikāla Chōlan resolved that henceforth human sacrifice was to be given up and only animal sacrifice was to be permitted.<sup>79</sup> The work elsewhere refers to the practice of human sacrifice in Tiruvannamalai as well as Madurai and how the practice was ultimately given up.<sup>80</sup>

---

79. Chōlar Pūrva Pattavan, PP 188-9

80. Ibid. P.201

## CHAPTER IV

### The Weavers and the Economic Structure

C.A.D. 1350 - 1700

The period of the Vijayanagar Empire witnessed a steady stream of visitors to the kingdom who wrote glowing accounts of the prosperity of the kingdom and its flourishing trade especially in textiles. The reference to the textile trade on the Coromandel coast has been made by Abdur Razaak in the 15th Century Barbosa and Caesar de 'Federici in the 16th Century and a number of others. We also know from political treatises like the Amuktamalavadi that active patronage was extended to all foreign merchants and traders to establish trade contacts.<sup>1</sup> The emergence of a new bureaucratic class - The Nayaks, the palaygars or the representatives of the Vijayanagar empire in the villages and township must also have generated demand especially for the finer varieties of textiles.

Barbosa referring to the merchants of Malakka says that there were many Arab as well as Hindu traders, principally the chettys from the Coromandel coast. He goes on to say, "They are all very rich and have many large ships which they call jungos (junks). They deal in all sorts of goods in different parts." Barbosa remarks that

---

1. Saraswati, "Political Maxims of Krishnadeva Raya", JIH, Vol.IV, pt.3, P.77

the gentile traders (i.e. the Chettys) arrive at Malakka in ships of two masts from China and other places. He refers to the sale in silks, satins, brocades, damasks etc. which could possibly have been items for re-export, imported in the first place from China. Barbosa refers to the many stuffs from Pulicat of coloured cotton (the reference is to Chintz) and says "they were worth much money in Malacca, Pegu, Camatra and the kingdom of Guzarate and Malabar."<sup>2</sup> This shows that Pulicat not only exported Chintz and other varieties of cloth abroad but also exported them within the country to regions like Gujarat. Castanheda, the Portuguese traveller writing in the early part of the 16th century, also remarks on the Hindu merchants from Pulicat, at Malacca. He says, "These are very rich; They are the greatest merchants of the world at this period; They evaluate their wealth only by bohars of gold. There are some possessing 60 quintals (i.e., 100 kg.) of gold. They do not regard as rich the merchant who in a single day, does not buy 3 or 4 ships charged with merchandises of great value and make them reload the ships and pay them their proper value."<sup>3</sup> The following account gives an idea of the immensity of the volume of trade. Scherer not only refers to the painted

---

2. Barbosa Duarte "Travels" M.L. Dames, (tr. and ed.), London, 1918 Vol.II P.132

3. Foreign Notices, op.cit. P.307, Bahar - A weight used in trade transactions equivalent to 400 avoirdupois.

(Pintado or Chintz) cloth of Pulicat, very popular in the spice island but also says that the best type of chay root (for making red dye) and other leaves for making various dyes was obtained here.<sup>4</sup> In the 17th Century, the trade in textiles at Pulicat is referred to in the factory records of the East India Company and also by the European travellers. Thus, in a letter from Fort St. George dated 1622,<sup>5</sup> the employment of intermediaries in dealing with the local weavers of Pulicat is officially justified. Again, Tavernier who visited India in the 1640's refers to St. Thome (Mylapore or Meliapore) as a small maritime town on the Coromandel coast. He says, "its trade was considerable, especially in cottons and many artisans and merchants dwelt there,"<sup>6</sup>. Thevenot in the account of his travels (1666-67), while referring to the Dutch trade at Ahmedabad, says that their schites (Chintz) are nothing near so fine as those of Masulipatnam and St. Thomas.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, when talking of Masulipatnam, he says, "There is good trading there in Schites because, besides those that are made there, a great many are brought from St. Thomas, which are much finer, and of better colour than those of the other parts of India."<sup>8</sup>

---

4. Moreland (Ed.) Relations of Golkonda. Schorer's Account

5. Foster John, Factory Records 1622-23 P.164

6. Tavernier 'Travels in India' ed. by V. Ball, Reprint Delhi 1977, P.177

7. Thevenot's Indian Travels from 'Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carre' ed. by Sen, Indian Records Series, 1949

8. Ibid , 146

Evidence for the flourishing condition of the textile industry during the Vijayanagar period till the coming of the European companies, is available through inscriptions from the Kāñchīpuram region. Weavers continued to have their own quarters. An inscription from Madambakkam of the period of Devarāya dated <sup>1426</sup>1429<sup>9</sup> A.D. says that the house-sites of the Sthanathar being lost to them, fresh sites were provided for in the street of the Kaikkōlar. The writings of travellers, especially Abdur Razaak corroborates that different professionals were assigned different streets. The continued strength and importance of the weavers in the Chingleput region is attested to in the inscriptions. An inscription of the period of Achyutadeva Maharaja from Kalīpattai in the 15th Century<sup>10</sup> refers to the Kaikkōla weaving community of Tirumalīśai in the Saidapet Taluq. Another inscription<sup>11</sup> registers the Cowle or Charter given to the weavers of Kāñchīpuram by Arigalgu Krishnappangaru the agent of Kasturi Rangappa-Nayakkar. As in the Chōla period, the weaver concentration seems to have been in the Tirumadaivilāgam of the temples.<sup>12</sup>

It is not possible to discern any changes in the technology of weaving between 10-12th Century and the period of the Vijayanagar Empire. Literary evidence of the

---

9. A.R.E. 319 of 1911

10. A.R.E. 23 of 1911

11. A.R.E. 411 of 1923-24. The inscription is not dated but appears to belong to the 16th Century.

12. A.R.E. 30 of 1932-33

13th-14th centuries refers to horizontal loom weaving being done by using five threads and refers to the other processes involved.<sup>13</sup> Even in the north only horizontal looms were normally used.<sup>14</sup> However, unlike as in the north, there is no evidence for the south that the crank handle was used in spinning.<sup>15</sup> That the loom in South India was operated with the feet is made clear by the ancient proverb which says "If <sup>a</sup> dog gets a sore on its head, it never recovers from it, and even so a weaver who gets a sore on his foot."<sup>16</sup> Thus when plying shuttles in the weaving process, the weavers always use their feet in shifting the warp by treading on a press and hence a sore on his foot would mean monetary loss to him. Another ancient proverb says, "The chetty lost by partnership while the weaver came to grief by isolation".<sup>17</sup> This makes it clear that weaving involved co-operative effort since it included process<sup>es</sup> like twisting and untwisting threads, preparing skeins, etc. The technology of weaving remained unchanged over centuries. This can be demonstrated in an indirect manner by referring to the accounts of weaving in the 19th and 20th centuries. For instance, Stuart in the manual of the North Arcot Dt.,<sup>18</sup> published

---

13. Given under weaving technology in Chap. II.

14. I. Habib. "Notes on the Indian Textile Industry in the 17th Century" (29th International Conference of Orientalists, Paris) P.3

15. Ibid. P.10

16. Quoted in Thurston, Op.cit. P.276

towards the close of the 19th century describes the process of weaving which refers to weaving on a horizontal loom, pressing of the pedal with the feet and hand warping. A. Chatterton, in the beginning of the 20th century, comments with reference to the steps taken to promote handloom weaving "We have demonstrated that the output of the fly shuttle is fully double that of the native handloom and it is in consequence slowly making its way into the weaving centres of south India."<sup>19</sup> This statement is extremely interesting and has been used here as a negative evidence to prove that no technological change in weaving, of major import, could have occurred between the 12th and the 19th centuries. Even to this day in Salem, carpet weaving is done on the traditional lines, the yarn stretched on the ground and the shuttle being moved by hand.

A gradual change is perceptible in textile varieties between the Chōla-Pāndya periods and the period of the Vijayanagar Empire, especially after the establishment of the European Companies on the Coromandel coast. The foreign market was essentially for Chintz, broadcloth, calico and fine muslin. Thus, the production of these varieties increased. However, all these varieties must

17. Ibid.

18. Stuart, Manual of the N. Arcot Dt., Madras, 1895

19. Cited in Thurston, Op.cit. Vol.VI P.271



have been produced in the earlier period also, that is the 14th-16th centuries. We are able to identify some of these by comparing the textile varieties given in literary sources and inscriptions with the varieties mentioned in the factory records.

An inscription from Kāñchipuram belonging to the period of the Venkatapatirāya dated 1586 A.D. refers to the remission of customs on cloth like Sallāpattu and Pattavali Pattu.<sup>20</sup> The importance of silk weaving in the Chingleput area is attested to by the inscription from Tirukkalukunram which refers to Pattāḍai Nulayam or tax on silk thread.<sup>21</sup> Another inscription registering the donation to the temple of certain specified imposts on merchandise refers to Muthupparvai and Pudaveipparvai.<sup>22</sup> The variety of cloth called 'Sella' or Salempores, about 16 yds in length was in the 17th Century, a principal export item not only to England but also figured in the spice trade.<sup>23</sup> The inferior variety of 'Sella' called Ohihlis or Sallalus was also produced. This variety

---

20. South Indian Temple Inscription (Ed) Subramaniam Vol.I. P.436, No.446

21. A.R.E. 63 of 1909 of the period of Bhupati Raya (14th Century)

22. A.R.E. 173 of 1933. The terms have not been explained.

23. Irwin, John "Indian Textile Trade in the 17th century Coromandel Coast", Part II. Journal of Indian Textile History, Pt. 2 1956. Cloth was a principal item of barter in the triangular trade carried on by the Arabs and then by the Portugese and the Dutch and taken over by the English in which cloth was sold in the spice islands and the spices were then sold in Europe.

called 'Sella' is obviously the same as the Sallappattu mentioned in the inscription from Kāñchīpuram. Since this is referred to in the inscriptions in the context of donation by the Nānādēsi merchants, it is to be inferred that even during the Vijayanagar period it was an export item. For the nānādēsis were the major trading guild involved in the export trade. It is not very easy to identify the second variety used in the inscription but the term 'Pattavali' perhaps became the 'Patōla' variety of the seventeenth century.

Contemporary literature also refers to a number of textile varieties produced in the Chingleput region. Jyotivara Thakkura, a 14th century writer, gives a list of cloths produced in India in his Varnaratnākara. He refers to Kāñchivāni,<sup>24</sup> obviously a type of cloth produced in Kāñchīpuram. He also refers to Vichitra,<sup>25</sup> 'variegated silk' which would correspond to the Chintz of the later period. He also refers to Chēlapatna,<sup>26</sup> apparently cloth produced on the Coromandel coast and to Tanchera,<sup>27</sup> interpreted as a variety produced in Tanjore. He again refers to 'Kachi',<sup>28</sup> under the heading of plain cotton cloth, which appears to be a coarser variety produced in

---

24. Moti Chandra, "Costumes and Textiles in the Sultanate period", JITH No.6, 1961 P.21

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid. P.23

Kanchipuram. The Gujarati traders of the 14th-15th centuries are said to have compiled Varnakās or stock lists of cloth. The most striking of these is the vividha varnaka and the 'Jīmanānavaraparidhānavidi'. Here there is a reference to Sachōpakachi<sup>29</sup> interpreted as the gold embroidery of Kanchi. For the 17th century, Foster gives the varieties of cloth produced on the Coromandel coast as follows: From a letter written by Hugo Frayne to Nicholas Downton dated 1619: "Cloths, as our men used to call them or by the Dutch Kletghees being linen or the same stuff calicoe cloth is made... for which the Anboyneses do give cloves in barter. Tooria, Baffata, Keykem, Sallalo (Sallāpattu?) Pattala (Pattāvali Pattu?) Sarassa, Tzier (same as tzinde silk cloths with red stripes). More<sup>as</sup>, Tanknyla (white cloth with red stripes)."<sup>30</sup> The letter further specifies Sallalo as blue and black, Sarassa as starched and painted and Toorya as Coarse cotton.<sup>31</sup> The variety called Morees also finds a reference in Sanskrit Literature as Molia<sup>32</sup> a category of staple cotton cloth. The variety 'Sarasa'<sup>4</sup> is also referred to by Tome Pires as being woven at Nagapattinam.

---

29. Ibid. P.33

30. Moti Chandra, Op.cit. P.21

31. Foster, Letters Received by the East India Co. from its servants in the East (London 1896) Vol.I.P.70 cited in "Some Aspects of the overseas trade of Vijayanagar from the Accounts of European Travellers" by B.A. Sabtore-B.C. Law Vol. PP 114-127

32. Ibid., P.125

There is reference to cloth variegated by different colours, that is various coloured stripes with white lines in-between, <sup>called</sup> the Pannohavarnapadi in the Ratnakara.<sup>33</sup> With regard to the kind of dyes used, Barbosa refers to indigo and to Myrobalan a kind of dried fruit used as dye and also as a mordant (connecting substance).<sup>34</sup> Schorer, the 16th century traveller, while describing the painted cloth, refers to the chay red that is madder producing a red dye and to other types of dyes.<sup>35</sup> The Varnaratnakara refers to (Parijata) probably <sup>B</sup>/silk having the coral shade extracted from this flower.<sup>36</sup> Flowers were often used to extract dyes; For example, the Kusumba flower from which yellow and red dyes were made.<sup>37</sup> Indigo or neelum as it was called was obtained from the Avari plant.

Neither inscriptions nor travellers' Accounts provide much information about the prices of cloth during this period. Barbosa in his account refers to 'chihli', a kind of cloth produced at Kampa-mel (modern Coimbatore) and

---

33. Moti Chandra, op.cit. P.21

34. Barbosa Book I, PP 188-89

35. Moreland, Golkunda Relations in the 16th Century Schorer's Account, (London, 1930)

36. Moti Chandra, Op.cit. P.21

37. Edwin Holder, 'Monograph on Dyes and Dyeing in the Madras Presidency' Mds, 1896

near abouts costing 8 to 10 gold pieces.<sup>38</sup> This could be the same 'Chihlis which was an export variety even during the period of the East India Company.<sup>39</sup> This was apparently high quality Muslin and is also referred to in a varnaka list assignable to the 15th-16th centuries as 'Chira'.<sup>40</sup>

Sadaravāsagan-Pattinam or Sadras seems to have constituted the principal port of the <sup>Kāñchīpuram</sup> ~~Chingleput~~ area during the Vijayanagar period. Reference to sale of cloth and trade in cloth from Sadras comes from a Tirukkalukunṛam inscription of the period of Vira Bokkana Udaiyār dated 1376 A.D.<sup>41</sup> Sadras is also referred to as a centre of cloth trade in another inscription from the same area of the period of Kampana Udaiyār.<sup>42</sup> The reference to <sup>San</sup> ~~Sen~~ Thome or Mylapore as a principal port comes from the accounts of Tavernier, Caesar Fredrick and others. Caesar Frederick while referring to Sen Thome as one of the fairest ports in the Indies, also says that it was a dangerous port and the Indian sailors loaded and unloaded

- 
38. Barbosa, Op.cit. II P.132  
 39. Irwin, John, Op.cit. P.45  
 40. Moti Chandra, Op.cit. P.43  
 41. A.R.E. No.173 of 1933  
 42. A.R.E. No.170 of 1933

merchandise in a most marvellous manner.<sup>43</sup> The anonymous author of the life of St. Francis Xavier tells us that ~~San~~ San Thome traded with Pegu and Malacca (spice bearing islands) in coloured cloths.<sup>44</sup> Barbosa refers to the presence of the merchants from San Thome and Pulicat at Malacca carrying plenty of the painted cloth of Pulicat apart from other goods.<sup>45</sup> Tavernier in the 17th century referring to San Thome or Mylapore as a small Maritime town says that it had considerable trade especially in textiles.<sup>46</sup> Sadras and San Thome continued as important ports or textile trade centres right down to the period of the European companies, of which frequent mention is made in the East India Company factory records.<sup>47</sup>

The evidence of foreign merchants regarding the trade in textiles has already been referred to. The direction of trade has also been pointed out. The travellers' Accounts referred to the export of painted textiles from Pulicat to Pegu, Malacca<sup>48</sup> and the East Indies.<sup>49</sup>

---

43. Cited in Saletore Op.cit. P.123

44. Ibid.

45. Barbosa Op.cit. Vol. III P.132

46. Tavernier, Travels, translated by Ball Book I. P.177

47. Foster - Factory Records, Op.cit. Passim

48. Barbosa Op.cit. P.132 and Schorer Op.cit. ~~2~~

49. Foster Op. cit. I PP 69-70 cited in Saletore P.123

Coromandel cloth was also exported to Mozambique and Abyssinia.<sup>50</sup>  
 The Company records show that the textiles of Pulicat and San  
 Thome were in demand at Achin,<sup>51</sup> Amboyna,<sup>52</sup> Sumatra,<sup>53</sup> Siam<sup>54</sup>  
 and Japan.<sup>55</sup> In return, India seems to have got mainly gold,  
 silver and precious stones except for the import of brimstones  
 from Sumatra, sealing wax from Siam and a few other items,<sup>56</sup>  
 With the Arabs, of course, the Chief item of import was horses  
 in exchange for cloth.

There is no evidence on the total volume of textile  
 trade and some idea can be gleaned only from the company  
 records. Thus for the period prior to the establishment of  
 the European Companies, the travellers indicate only the  
 extensive nature of the trade but do not quantify it. But  
 indirect evidence from the travellers' suggests that the  
 trade must have increased since the Chola-Pandya periods.  
 With regard to Mylapore or San Thome for instance, Marco Polo  
 (14th Century) calls it "a little town having no great  
 population, it's a place where few traders go because there is  
 very little merchandise to be got there."<sup>57</sup> Even Barbosa

---

50. Tavernier Op.cit. II P.5

51. Foster Op.cit. I. P.136 cited in Saletore P.124

52. Foster I P.70 cited in Saletore P.125

53. Ibid P.74 cited in Saletore P.124

54. Foster V P.269 cited in Saletore P.126

55. Ibid. P.56 cited in Saletore P.127

56. Saletore Op.cit. P.126

57. Nilakanta Shastry. Foreign Notices, Op.cit. P.172

(1508-9) nearly two centuries later, calls Mylapore a deserted seaport.<sup>58</sup> But according to Caesar Frederick writing in 1565, San Thome or Mylapore was one of the fairest ports in all that part of the Indies.<sup>59</sup> It is clear from this that Mylapore from being a small maritime town of no importance, rose to become one of the most important ports of the Vijayanagar Empire.

The importance of the Coromandel ports from the 16th Century onwards can be accounted for by the presence of certain factors. The Vijayanagar kings and specially Krishnadeva Raya extended great patronage to commerce and trade. In his Amuktamalyada, he says "A king should improve the harbours of his country and so encourage its commerce that horses, elephants, precious gems, sandalwood, pearls and other articles are freely imported into his country".<sup>60</sup> Customs duty was not high and Abdur Razak says that at Calicut duty was collected at the rate of 2½%.<sup>61</sup> The Vijayanagar kings themselves with their lavish style of living and their courtiers, created demand for the finer variety of textiles. Paes for instance makes a very

58. Barbosa Op.cit. Book II P. 126

59. Cited in Salstare, Op. cit. P.123

60. Cited by T.V. Mahalingam, Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar (Mds. 1975) P.164 (Second Edition)

61. Ibid P.165



interesting statement when, after describing the costly and elaborate dress worn by Achyuta Raya, he goes on to say, "The King Achyuta never puts on any garment more than once".<sup>62</sup> The king himself must have contributed in no insignificant measure, to keep the looms working! Secondly, the new bureaucracy which was such a necessary appendage of the Vijayanagar rule must also have resulted in increased production of fine cloth. The establishment of the European Companies was, however, the most significant factory apart from figuring in the triangular spice trade of first the Portugese and then the Dutch, Indian Calico, Chintz and muslin also became very popular in England and France. In fact, the popularity of Indian textiles abroad was instrumental in the proclamation of 1700 which forbade the importation of Indian Calico into England except for purposes of re-export.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the 16th - 17th Centuries, when the King of Vijayanagar moved from Anegondi to Chandragiri, was a period of European competition with the weavers in a fairly good bargaining position. The evidence for this is provided for in the lament of the Dutch that the cloth market was tight and the weavers never bothered to make anything according to specifications

---

62. Sewell, Robert 'A Forgotten Empire' (India 1962)

63. Irwin, John Op.cit. P.33

because whatever they produced was immediately bought up by the English, the Danes and the Moors at any price.<sup>64</sup>

Changes can also be perceived in the organisation of textile trade. During the 14th-15th Centuries and to some extent the early 16th century trade was in the hands of merchant guilds although instances are not wanting of weavers selling their own products at local fairs. But during the late 16th and 17th centuries, the prominence of 'merchant middlemen' (individual families in the Tamil country and joint-stock groups in the Telugu country) increased.

Two important inscriptions from the Chingleput area show that the trade in textiles was still in the hands of the merchant guilds. An inscription from Kañchīpuram of the period of Venkatapatideva Mahara<sup>y</sup>a dated 1586 A.D.<sup>65</sup> registers remission of customs duties by the agent of Achyutappayya Nayaka and the authorities of the Ekambaranatha and Kamakshi amman temples, on the articles like Sallapattu, Pattav<sup>ā</sup>li Pattu etc. brought by the Nan<sup>ā</sup>desis. The remission of duties on the articles of these merchants can be treated as an economic privilege and is indicative of their continued importance. Another

---

64. Dutch Diaries 1630-34 Journal of the Bombay Historical Research Society 1928 P.185 cited in Sherwani History of the Qutb Shahi Dynasty, Delhi, 1974.

65. S.P.I. Vol.I. P.436 No.446

inscription from Tirukalukkuram registers an agreement made by the Ūraver, the paradēsis and the Nanādēsis, of Sadaravāsagan-Pattinam (Sadras) binding themselves to pay to the temple every month specified rates of imports on all articles of merchandise and among other commodities, Pudavai (sari) is also mentioned.<sup>66</sup> The continued existence of the Ayyavōle and the Nanādēsis is evidenced from various inscriptions even outside the Chingleput area. For instance, an inscription dated (1531 A. D) from Animala refers to the trade in cotton and yarn by the Vira Balan̄jiga of the Ayyavōle guild.<sup>67</sup> An inscription from Anantapur dated 1538 A.D. records the granting of tolls (sungam) by the Ayyavōle.<sup>68</sup> But the trade in textiles, cotton and yarn was not entirely in the hands of cloth merchants. The weavers also sold their cloth. One inscription from Tirukkalukkuram of the period of Kampana Udaiyar says that a consolidated tax of 70 panams was charged from the Kaikkōla weavers on the cloths taken to Sadaravāsagan-pattinam (Sadras) for sale and on the commodities brought back by them.<sup>69</sup> A Belur inscription of the 14th Century<sup>70</sup> (dated 1382 A.D.) gives a list of twenty-seven towns which had fairs and in this list along with Udayagiri,

---

66. A.R.E. 173 of 1933

67. A.R.E. 200 of 1937-38, Kamalapuram Taluq, Cuddapah dist.

68. A.R.E. 70 of 1912, Para 56

69. A.R.E. 170 of 1933

70. E.C. (Epigraphica Carnataca) Vol.V BL.75

Adoni etc., Mulavayi, Kānchi, Paḍevidu and Chadurenga-Pattana<sup>71</sup> are also listed as towns which held fairs.

Reading this inscription in connection with the inscription from Tirukkalukunram it is possible to conclude that the weavers brought their cloths for sale to Sadras on a major occasion like the local fair. Two other inscriptions, one from <sup>Tirukkalukunram</sup>~~Tirukkalukunram~~ (Chingleput dist.) itself of the period of Bhūpati Raya<sup>71</sup> and the other from Vilichohai Kulattur (Chingleput dist.) of the period of Ariyappa Kavundar<sup>72</sup> classify the Kaikkōla weavers themselves as 'Kāṣayavargattar' Pala Pattadaiyur, i.e. the merchant community. Textile trade and weaving was at its most prosperous in the Kānchipuram region and it is not unlikely that the weavers made enough profit to emerge as merchants themselves.<sup>73</sup> In this context another inscription from the Chingleput dist. is extremely interesting. This inscription from Kunnattur of the period of Harihara<sup>74</sup> states that Narpattennayira Sōlakumaran who had set up an image in the temple was given the privilege of parivattam and a site with the stipulation that he should pay 4 panams on every loom set up therein! The nature of

---

71. A.R.E. 63 of 1909

72. A.R.E. 16 of 1935

73. A similar instance has been given in the reign of Rājarajadēva of Perumanadi Chetty of the weaver caste in Mylapore- Refer under Chap. I.

74. A.R.E. 221 of 1929-30

the donation suggests the prosperity of weaver and the subsequent stipulation in the inscription makes it clear that this weaver had emerged as a kind of master weaver, employing craftsmen under him. The operation of several looms at a single site suggests a very interesting development and proves the existence of master weavers much before the coming of the European Companies.

The existence of brokers before the coming of the European traders can also be proved through inscriptional references as well as the evidence of travellers' Accounts. Taragu Kasu<sup>75</sup> repeatedly referred to in the inscriptions pertains to brokerage fee. Mañuan in his account gives a very clear idea of the role played by the broker in trade transactions.<sup>76</sup> Varthema<sup>77</sup> again says, "The merchants have this custom when they wish to sell or to purchase their merchandise... They always sell by the hands of the cortor or of the Lella, that is, of the broker. He goes on to describe the transaction through the broker in detail."<sup>78</sup> During the period of the British and Dutch Companies, these brokers came to be called 'Dubash' meaning bi-lingual. It however appears from the nature of the evidences that the brokers figured only in foreign trade.

---

75. A.R.E. 308 of 1963-64 dated 1569 A.D. from Tinnevely dt.

76. Mañuan 'Foreign Notices' P.307 quoted in detail in Chap.I.

77. Varthema 'Travels' cited in Mahalingam Administration and Social Life under Vijayanagar P. 151

78. In this context, the following terms 'Kuraittaragu Avam' (S.I.I. XVII, 452), i.e., brokerage fee on textile trade is striking and revealing. The term is used as early as the 13th Century (Period of Rajendra Chóla III).

Ma-huan, for instance makes this very clear. Thus the change that came with the European Companies probably lies in the extensive use of merchant middlemen for the trade in textiles within the country.<sup>79</sup> Since the trade of the British, for instance, involved the export of textiles to London and re-export to Africa, Turkey, etc. or export to Europe, a wide variety of preferences and tastes was involved.<sup>80</sup> Since only particular types of textiles were saleable in a particular market, these varieties were commissioned from the weavers. The usual procedure was for the Company's agents to issue brokers with musters of the goods and instructions as to the maximum price to be paid. These musters were stamped with the Company's seal and given to the weavers with their advances.<sup>81</sup> A second problem was the shortage of liquid capital in the hands of the Companies. The Dutch initially transacted business directly with the weaver because they had more liquid capital at their disposal,<sup>82</sup> while the English borrowed heavily from the local merchants.<sup>83</sup> But later, both companies resorted to the formation of a 'Joint-stock' of merchant middlemen.<sup>84</sup> Justifying such a system the

79. Ma-huan Op.cit. P.305 and 307

80. Irwin John "Social Relations in the Textile Trade of the 17th Century, Indian Studies East and Present, 1960 Vol.I No.2 P.380

81. Ibid P.383

82. Furber, Holden, 'The Jan Company at work' He discusses the initial policy of the Dutch and the subsequent change over to the thread and money system.

Pulicat factors said in 1621<sup>85</sup> that the only effective <sup>s</sup> ~~means~~ of getting the goods on time from the weavers was through the employment of intermediaries and agents to advance the money or material and collect the cloth. This has been described as the putting out system or the 'thread and money' system. The evidence for the existence of the putting out system in the 17th Century comes not only from the Company records but also from inscriptional evidence. A 17th Century copper plate inscription describes Lord Shiva as a master weaver borrowing the capital from Kubera Chetty (Kubera is considered the God of riches), employing the Devas as His assistants and using the thread provided by the women of the household.<sup>86</sup>

The relationship between the weavers and the merchants, throughout the period of the Vijayanagar Empire, that is, from the 14th to the 17th Century was one of cooperation as well as conflict. An inscription from Magaral in Kanchipuram of the period of Devaraya

83. Foster, Factory records, Vol.II P.154 refers to borrowing of money from the merchant Uttamamoda. Social Relations, I.S.P.P.

84. Irwin, op.cit. P.383

85. Foster, op.cit. 1622-23 P.164

86. The text of the inscription is unpublished but it has been cited in an article in a Tamil fortnightly Journal 'Chenjoli' Ed. by Cholai Irachan, article 'Iraivan Mechchiya Kaittari by Thurai Prakasa Swamigal 5th April 1969

records the provision for daily offerings and the joint conducting of festivals in the temple of Tirumāgaraludaiya Nayanar by the weavers and merchants from rates raised among themselves.<sup>87</sup> In another inscription the Kaikkōla weavers refer to the Banajiga merchants (~~weavers refer to the Banajiga merchants~~) as their spiritual gurus.<sup>88</sup> But instances of conflict are not wanting and this is specially true of the period after the establishment of the European Companies. An inscription of the period of Venkatapati Rāya register a temple dispute between the Kaikkōlas and the merchants of Vanavanmadevi (Chingleput). Dalavay Senjama-Nayaka the agent of the king decided the case in favour of the Kaikkōlas.<sup>89</sup> This inscription is dated 1601 A.D. In the late 17th Century, the weavers of the town of Dacheron and Tegnapatnam fought the association of local merchants who supplied fabrics to European traders so as to do away with the middlemen who infringed upon the economic interests of the artisans.<sup>90</sup>

Some evidence is available for the incidence of taxation on weavers in the Vijayanagar period. In the following page an effort has been made to tabulate the information on taxation on weavers especially concerning looms.

---

87. A.R.E. 148 of 1923.

88. A.R.E. 253 of 1907 of the period of Rajendra Chōla I (1012-44 A.D.)

89. A.R.E. 218 of 1930-34

90. T. Ray Chowdhry 'Jan Company in Coromandel', Hague 1962 P.64



King	Year	Place Name	Taluq	Nature of Tax	Rate of Taxation(Annual)	A.R.E. No.
Bukka	1376	Tirukkalukuram	Chingleput	Rates of imposts on sale of cloth on all articles of merchandise constituting donation by merchants	8/20	on sale of each head load 173 of 1933
Hariharaya (1377-1404) Kempna Udaya <sup>v</sup> 15th Century beginning		Kunnattur	Chingleput	Tax on loom per year	4	panams 221 of 1929-30
		Tirukkalukunram	"	Unconsolidated tax on Kaikkolas	70	panams 170 of 1933
Viruppana Udaiyar(Virupakshai)	1404-5	Vayalur	Kanchipuram	Tax on loom per year	3	panams 364 of 1908
Bukka II	1404-5	Pulipparkkoyil	Madurantakam	On loom per year	3	panams 293 of 1910
				On Kaikkola professionals	2	panams
Vijay Raya I	1418		Madurantakam	Remission of Vassalvari On cloth	6 40	panams panams 294 of 1910
Deva Raya II	1436	Nerumbur	Chingleput	Pattalai Nulayan (silk thread)	2	panams 272 of 1912
Virupaksha II (1465-85)		Tiruppulivanam	Kanchipuram <del>Chingleput</del>	On each loom	5	panams 201 of 1923
Saluvanarasima	1484	Tirukachiyar	Tiruvaltur	On each loom $\frac{1}{4}$ panam per month =	3	panams 318 of 1909-10
Sadasiva Raya	1561	Pillalpalayan	Big Kanchipuram	On each loom	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	panams 88 of 1921-22

The figures are confined to the Kanchipuram region and pertain to the Vijayanagar period only. Inscriptions make it evident that taxation was annual. The one isolated instance of monthly tax comes from the reign of Saluva Narasimha. The basic scheme of taxation does not seem to have been very different from the earlier period. The most frequent reference is to the tax on looms called Tari-Irai or Tari-Kadamai in the inscriptions. There is also reference to Per-Kadamai or Professional tax. One inscription refers to Paruttivari but does not give the rate.<sup>91</sup> The inscriptions refer to Pattadai Nulayam (silk thread) and tax on ordinary thread as apart from silk thread was called Nulayam. Cloth was also taxed. The Kaikkolas also paid Vasalvari and this also pertains to their profession since weaving was done at home. On the basis of the data provided, it is possible to conclude that the loom tax varied very little over a period of two centuries. On an average it remained more or less constant at 3 panams per loom per year. The only time this tax seems to have gone up to 5½ panams was under Sadasivaraya. Does an increased loom tax indicate prosperity or the reverse? The reign of Krishnadeva Raya marked the height of the Vijayanagar Empire and even under him the loom tax was steady at 3 panams.<sup>92</sup> Thus, the period of Sadasiva Raya

---

91. A.R.E. 117 of 1897 (S.I.I. VI No.71) cited in Mahalingam Op.cit. Part I p.55 F.N.

92. A.R.E. 409 of 1913

must have begun to mark a recession in the prosperity of the Empire rather than otherwise. Taking an other tax Pattāḍai Nūlayam, i.e., the tax on silk thread, it was 2 panams in 1436 and nearly a century later in the reign of Krishnadevaraya it was 1½ panams.<sup>93</sup> From such evidences, it is possible to conclude that the rates of taxation on weavers during the Vijayanagar period was fairly steady. Inscriptional evidence also suggests that taxation was imposed collectively on the entire weaving community and not collected individually. Secondly a consolidated rate was levied rather than a variety of cesses. An inscription from Srimashnam (South Arcot dt.) refers to 20 panams being collected from the Kaikkōlas living in the Tirumadaivilagam of the temple.<sup>94</sup> Another inscription from Tellāru (North Arcot dt.) records that 32 panams were collected from the weavers of Tellāru.<sup>95</sup> The inscription from Tirukkalukunram shows that taxation was not only collective but made into a consolidated tax probably in order to render collection easier. Nearly a hundred years later, that is in the 16th Century another record from Kalattūr dist.<sup>96</sup> registers an adai-ōlai given to the Kasayavargaam-palapattāḍaiyār of Velichōrai and Kalattūr, fixing the rate of consolidated taxes to be levied on the Kaikkōlas in lieu of the several kinds of assessments

---

93. A.R.E. 364 of 1912

94. A.R.E. 252 of 1916-17

95. A.R.E. 62 of 1934-35

96. A.R.E. 16 of 1934-35

(Consolidated Tax)

hitherto collected. Though Kattukkuttagai does not seem to have been the fixed method of assessment, the general evidence does not suggest that tax assessment had anything to do with sale or profit made on cloth.

A further inference can be drawn from the table which, however, is bound to be conditional and tentative. The remarkably steady rate of taxation would seem to suggest a fairly constant level of prices. In a flourishing economy this must have meant a fairly high standard of living for the weavers. The tax on looms averaged at 3 panams not only in the Kāñchipuram region but in the other regions of the empire. In Salem, for instance, during the reign of Krishnadeva Rāya 3 panams is mentioned.<sup>97</sup> For Tiruvaigavur (Tanjore dt.) the rate of Kaikkōla weavers is given as 4 panams.<sup>98</sup> This inscription also provides the rates of taxation on other professional groups. The capital tax on other professionals appears to range between 5 on the Kammalan, 4 on the barber and washerman, etc. The highest seems to be 20 panams levied from each Chief oil monger.<sup>99</sup> For some inexplicable reason, perhaps a peculiarity of the Tanjore region, the sāliya weavers were taxed at 9 panams. The lowest rate of tax was levied from the Paraiyās amounting to just  $\frac{1}{2}$  panam.<sup>100</sup> Elsewhere, the loom of the

---

97. A.R.E. 409 of 1913 A.

98. A.R.E. 59 of 1914-15

99. Ibid.

100. Ibid.

Paraiyā is said to have been taxed at  $\frac{1}{4}$  Panam.<sup>101</sup> If the Paraiyā is treated as the lowest member of society and if the rate of taxation is treated as being one-sixth of a man's income, it must still mean that he must have been able to sustain himself on 3 panams. Compared to the paraiyā, the weaver seems to have been in a comfortable position. Many of the European travellers like Nikitin, Vasco-de-gama and Paes attested to the Cheapness of commodities. Vasco-de-gama says of Calicut that corn was abundant and "a very fine shirt, which in Portugal fetches 300 reis was worth here only 2 fanas or 30 reis."<sup>102</sup> This was later than Sadasiva Raya's period when the weavers paid a loom tax of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  panams.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, when it was felt by the weavers that the prices were unduly high, they protested through their guilds and thus compelled the state to bring down the prices. That economic protest was a very effective instrument in the hands of a weavers is proved by several instances. Harhara II for instance was faced with strike by the weavers of the Agastyēsvara temple in Olakkūr who successfully paralysed all temple activity.<sup>104</sup> They subsequently had to be reconciled. The rate of taxation during the reign of Virupakṣa (1465-85) Udaiyār was rather high, i.e., 5 panams per loom and as a result there were

---

101. A.R.E. 91 of 1918

102. Cited in Mahalingam Op.cit. Part II P.178

103. Ref. Table

104. A.R.E. 354 of 1909

repeated strikes and enmass desertion by the weavers.<sup>105</sup> Taxes again had to be reduced. The Valangai and Idangai organisations also united in face of oppressive taxation and determined the tax rates as testified by the inscription from Srimushnam.<sup>106</sup> In its turn, the state tried to be as benevolent as possible towards the weavers and other professionals. In an inscription found at the Kaikkōla street in Tiruchchangōdu of the period of Krishnadēva Rāya<sup>107</sup> an agent of Tipparasā Udaiyār, the governor of Mulavay, appears to have founded a colony called Samasamudram. The inscription says that the professionals (Rāsavargam, such as ~~Settlers~~<sup>Chettys</sup> merchants and Kaikkōla Mudalis) were exempted from paying any assessment for the first 2 years but were required to pay 3 panams, from subsequent years. Similarly, the inscription from Mānamādi in Chingleput<sup>108</sup> fixes the rate of taxes to be paid by the Kaikkōlas and the <sup>S</sup>miths settling in the new street on the Southern side of the temple of Tirukkara-puramudaiya Nayinar after granting remission on looms for the first 3 years. The inscriptions clearly proved that concessions were granted to weavers being settled in a new area and tax remission was offered as a kind of incentive.

---

105. A.R.E. 201 of 1923.

106. A.R.E. 59 of 1914-15

107. A.R.E. 140 of 1915-16

108. A.R.E. 228 of 1930-31

CHAPTER V

The Weavers, the State and Society

C.A.D. 1350-1700

There was no major change in the social standards or status of the weavers under the Vijayanagar empire. The prosperity of the weavers led to further upgrading in society. This was the natural consequence of a flourishing textile trade. Their position began to change only in the 17th Century when the merchant middlemen and the brokers gradually began to emerge as the dominant factors in the textile trade.

As in the Chola period, the weaver guild organisations continued to function effectively even in this period. Donations to temples, in most cases continued to be made collectively. Thus an instance is available from Perunagar in the period of Ariyana Udaiyar (Harihara I. 14th Century) of the Kaikkolas living in the Tirumadaivilagam of the Brahmapurisvara temple making a gift of land to the deity.<sup>1</sup> Another instance from Tiruppulivanam during the post-Vijayanagar period<sup>2</sup> (The inscription is dated 1679 and Sri-ranga III who was virtually the last ruler of Vijayanagar died in 1672 A.D.) is about the provision made by the people of the nadu and dēsam of the Kaikkola guild for mid-day offerings and worship to the God Paṭṭeśvarasvamin. The

---

1. A.R.E. 366 of 1923 (Chingleput dist.)

2. A.R.E. 356 of 1923 (Chingleput dist.)

reference to the Kaikkōlas of nadu and dēsam confirms the pattern of organisation of the Kaikkōla guild as given in the Sengunt̄ar Prabandha Tirattu and the Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam. An inscription from Kaliyapēttai<sup>3</sup> belonging to the late Vijayanagar period also confirms the continued existence of the weaver guilds. It registers a cowle (charter) given to the weavers of Kāñchīpuram by Angālgū Krishnappangaru, the agent of Kastūri Rangappa Nāyakar and the founder of the village after his master. Similar evidences of the weaver guild organisations are available from other regions like North Arcot, South Arcot, Madurai and Sālem districts. Thus, in the Coimbatore district, the Unmattūr Chief Vīra Nanjarāja Udaiyār<sup>4</sup> is said to have granted the tax on bazars (Sulai-t̄irai) to the Kaikkōlas of Vadaparīśvara-nādu, Karuppu-nādu, natur-parru, perūr-nādu, vīra / solā valēnādu and Oduvanga Nādu to the extent to which it was in force during the preceding two years. (The rates are not mentioned.) This evidence is an indication not only of the guild organisation of the Kaikkōlas but the extent of economic privileges granted to them.

---

3. A.R.E. 411 of 1933-34. (Chingleput dist.)

4. South Indian Temple Inscriptions, No. 219 D-2949-21.

It is not possible to date this inscription or identify the regions referred. The inscription also does not refer to the rate of the bazar tax. (Sulai tirai).



It has already been stated that the guild had its own code of conduct and that any violation of its code was severely punished, though no direct evidence is available for how exactly the code operated in the weaver guilds. However, an instance is available from the Tottiyān<sup>5</sup> community and as the code of conduct must have, broadly speaking, been similar for all professional guilds, the procedures of the Kaikkōla guild must have been along the same lines. The Tottiyāns<sup>6</sup> (shepherds) of Puliyūr are said to have taken a joint decision in A.D. 1369 that whosoever did not pay a particular contribution was to be an outcaste "from the nadu, the assembly, Paṅcālālam, the parai and the 18 nādus". In A.D. 1372, the Vira Paṅcālās of Terakanāmbi seem to have made an almost identical statement<sup>7</sup>. Not only did the weaver guilds have their own code of conduct and settle disputes arising within their guild, but they also arbitrated in temple disputes probably in the capacity as Sthānathār or trustees. Thus it is stated that during the period of Vira Sayana Udaiyār in the Muktiśvara temple at Attūr (Chingleput taluq and dist.) a gift of land,

- 
5. Telugu cultivators according to H.A. Stuart, 1891 Madras Census Report quoted with approval by Thurston, op.cit., Vol.VII P.185
  6. E.C. IX. Ht 103(a) cited in T.V. Mahalingam Administration and Social life under Vijaynagar (Mds.1975, 2nd edition) P.29
  7. E.C. IV. G.u. 34 (South Kanara)

free of taxes was resumed by the temple authorities and taxes were assessed thereon and as the tenants could not pay them, a meeting of the Kaikkōlas and Kaikkōla Mudalīs was called.<sup>8</sup> It appears that the Kaikkōla guild held a position of considerable importance in the temple and were hence asked to arbitrate to settle the issue. Similarly, during the period of Kumāra Kampana Udaiyār (14th Century) in the Vadagiriśvara temple at Tirukkalukkumaram a sum of 850 pon (gold) was found to be missing from the temple. The thief was captured and the Kaikkōlar, Kaikkōla Mudalīs and Ponnambalakkūtar arbitrated in the case imposing heavy fines on the offender.<sup>9</sup> These inscriptions offer interesting evidences of the judicial powers enjoyed by the weavers outside their own guild organisation.

A high social status was necessarily a concomitant of economic prosperity and the prosperity of the weavers during ~~these~~<sup>this</sup> period is attested to by the numerous grants to the temples made by them in their individual or collective capacity. During the reign of Ariyana Udaiyār (14th Century)

8. A.R.E. 298 of 1921-22. The inscription gives no clue as to the date nor is it possible to place Vira Savana Udaiyār though in the report he is listed as a ruler of Vijayanagar.

9. S.I.I. Vol.V No.479 (Chingleput Taluq and dist.)

the Kaikkōla community living in the tirumadaivilāgam of the Brahmaṇḍisvara temple at Perunagar (Chingleput taluq and dist.), are said to have made a collective donation to the deity.<sup>10</sup> In 1398 A.D. at the time of Virupaksha I, Vēnaudaiyār one of the Kaikkōla Mudaliś of the temple of Tiruvānakkōyil-udaiya-nāyanār is said to have made a gift of land in the hamlet of Uttamasolavitaḡam to the deity.<sup>11</sup> It is said that Uttamasōlavitaḡam was originally granted to the temple for worship and repairs by Vira Kampana Udaiyār (1377 A.D.). It is thus possible to infer that the land was brought up by the Kaikkōla-Mudaliś and subsequently a part of it was gifted to the temple. It is yet another testimony to Kaikkōlas functioning as land-owners.

Perhaps as a result of their donations of money and land to the temples, the Kaikkōlas seem to have enjoyed a fairly high social standing. Two important references to the ritual ranking of the professional classes come from the Dharmisvara and Rājagōpāla-perumal temples in Saīdapet (formerly in Chingleput dist. and now a part of Madras). The social order seems to have been determined by the assembly of 540 members, the three temple managers (Sthānathar) and the official - Mallunāyakar. In

---

10. A.R.E. 366 of 1923 (Chingleput Taluq, Chingleput dist.)

11. A.R.E. 353 of 1911 (Madambakkam Taluq, Chingleput dist.)

Dharmēśvara temple, for the 'Tiruppalli eluohchi' (waking up ceremony) of the God Dharmēśvara-udaiya-Nayanār, the state officials were to have the first position, followed by the Sthānathar and the assembly members, the Vēllalar, the Kaikkōlar and the Devaradiyar. While the Vēllalar the dominant agricultural caste are placed above the Kaikkōlas, the oil-mongers and other professional groups are listed only after the Kaikkōlas.<sup>12</sup> In the Rājagōpala-Perumā temple, the same order is followed and here the barber community is also listed and placed after the oil-mongers.<sup>13</sup> But in the Adipurīśvara temple at Tiruvōrriyūr<sup>14</sup> (Chidambaram Taluq, South Arcot dist.) it was the Kaikkōlas themselves who along with the Nattar and the temple trustees, determined the order of precedence in the temple. From these evidences it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that the weavers occupied an important position among the professional classes in society and <sup>this</sup> ~~their~~ feature can be explained only in terms of the flourishing state of the textile industry catering to an expanding market.

In recognition of their social importance, the weavers were accorded several privileges as was also the case during the Chōla period. The Kaikkōlas of Kānchipuram

---

12. S.I.I. Vol.VI No.257

13. S.I.I. Vol. VI No.252

14. A.R.E. 196 of 1912

were apparently the first to secure the privileges of the use of Sangu and Dandu or Tandu (Conch and Palanquin) on all good and bad occasions because all inscriptions from other regions state that the weavers in these areas obtained these privileges on the pattern of the weavers in Kāñchīpuram or that the head of the guild at Kāñchīpuram by the name of Armalatta-Nāyanār accorded them these privileges. An inscription from Tiruveññainallūr (South Arcot dist.) of the period of Mallikārjuna dated 1485<sup>15</sup> states that the Kaikkōlas of Vēdudilēmbatturājya were granted in the time of Aramvalatta Nāyanār the privilege of using Sangu or Dandu as their insignia on the model of the Kaikkōlas of Kāñchīpuram who were enjoying these privileges. During the same period, the Kaikkōlas of Tiruttatūr, in the South Arcot dist.) were given a royal charter entitling them to the privileges of sanga and dandu in response to their representation to Armalatta-Nāyanār at Kāñchīpuram.<sup>16</sup> From Tirukkōyilūr in the same district it is stated that Armalatta-Nāyanār made his decision in consultation with Kengarāyar, Kengarāyar and Kachchirāyar.<sup>17</sup> The Kaikkōlas of Brahmadesam (again in South Arcot dist.) are said to have got similar privileges on the model of the Kaikkōlas of

---

15. A.R.E. 473 of 1921-22

16. A.R.E. 422 of 1925

17. A.R.E. 291 of 1928-29. The exact status of Armalatta Nāyanār is not very clear. It appears that Kachchirāyar was the head of the Kāñchīpuram guild and Armalatta-Nāyanār was the overall head.

Kāñchīpuram.<sup>18</sup> These numerous evidences prove that the Kaikkōlas had a wide-spread as well as close-knit guild organisation in the various regions where they were dominant. It also emerges very clearly that Kāñchīpuram was the centre of the social organisation of the Kaikkōlas and constituted the ultimate authority in deciding cases within the caste as well as conferring privileges on the guilds of other regions.

Besides these social privileges, the weavers also enjoyed certain economic privileges, notably tax exemption. The Kaikkōlar living in Tirukkalukkunram (Chingleput Taluq and district) secured the exemption of certain taxes like Karpūra Kanikkai, Adikāra Chōdi (jōdi?) Pattāḍai Nūlayam, attai Sannadam, Per-Sannadam, Tarikkadamai etc. instead of which the weavers were ~~also~~ to pay a consolidated tax of 70 panams per annum.<sup>19</sup> As in the Chola period, they also enjoyed more positive economic privileges like being

18. A.R.E. 162 of 1918-19

19. A.R.E. 170 of 1933. Not ~~at~~ all the taxes listed above can be accurately identified. Apart from the taxes on the weaving industry which have been discussed before, 'attai-Sannadam has been defined as annual contribution or presents (i.e., from the Kaikkōla community) in The South Indian Temple Inscriptions, Glossary ed. by Subramaniam. Adikarapēru was probably dues paid for providing food and residence to officers (Mahalingam, South Indian Polity - Glossary). The meaning of Karpūra Kanikkai is not clear.

appointed managers or treasurers of the temple. Instances of this are available from the Tinnevely dist.<sup>20</sup> It has been argued that it was essential for the Telugu warriors who established the Vijayanagar empire to form links with native elements in order to strengthen their rule. The temple was, of course, one important means and the other was the establishment of friendly ties with the leading professional groups.<sup>21</sup> An inscription from the Rājasinhavarmēśvara shrine in the Kailāsanātha temple in Kāñchīpuram of the period of Kampana Udaiyar II dated 1364 A.D.<sup>22</sup> testifies to the restoration of temple worship by the orders of Kōpanna, his Minister-General. It describes Kōpanna's order to the temple authorities, ratifying the sale of temple property to the Kaikkōlas and Kaikkōla Mudalis with the right to mortgage and sell this property. They were also free to mortgage and sell their 'honors' as well. Their precedence (mudalmai) in the receipt of the betal nut honor (attaippan), their service to the deity (tēvar Atimai) and their proper place in temple ranking (ataivu). Perhaps by such measures, the state was trying to win the loyalty and cooperation of the weaving community, the leading professional group in the kingdom.

---

20. A.R.E. 482 of 1909 dated 1573 A.D. & 467 of 1916-17 dated 1566 A.D.

21. This forms the theme of Arjun Appadorai's article "Kings, Sects and temples in South India" (1350-1700 A.D.) in Burtonstein (Ed.) South Indian Temples, (Delhi, 1978)

22. S.I.I. Vol. I. P.22 cited in Arjun Appadorai, P.56

During the period of the Vijayanagar empire further dimensions were added to the Idangai-Valangai classification. Sociologists have tended to describe this categorisation as a root-paradigm which had a varied application at different points of time in different regions. It is quite clear that in the Vijaynagar period, the Left-hand - Right-hand divisions had nothing to do with the army since the Muslim invasions and the rise of the Sangama dynasty had resulted in the disbanding of the Chola army. In the 14th century the categorisation is said to be based on economic grounds. According to Abbe Dubois the classification was based on the struggle for precedence between the followers of the old established handicrafts and innovators who came from outside and catered to the interests of the market.<sup>23</sup> Thus, it is held that in the Kanchipuram area, the Saliyans, the predominant weaving community under the Cholas were classified as Valangai while the Kaikkolas whose professional importance arose only during the Vijaynagar period are classified as Idangai. But this explanation is not feasible because even as soldiers in the Chola regiment, the Kaikkolas were still classified

---

23. Cited in Hayavadana Rao. Mysore Gazetteer Vol.I. The various theories regarding the Idangai-Valangai classification has been discussed in - K. Srinivasa Chari 'The origin of the Left-hand - Right-hand castes', Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society Vol.IV, Pt. 1 and 2 July and Oct. 1929. The classifications have also been discussed by Arjun Appadorai in his dissertation on 'Right and Left-hand Castes in South India', Univ. of Chicago, May 75. (unpublished)



as Idangai. Another explanation is that the division of society into Idangai and Valangai represented the struggle between landed, stable, agricultural groups on the one hand and the rapidly increasing, mobile, urban and artisan groups on the other. Burstonstein has advanced the theory that in South India the peasants held the balance of power and describes the Vellalar-Brahmin alliance as against the artisan classes, the Vellalar representing the Valangai and the artisans the Idangai. But so far as the Valangai-Idangai classification is concerned, the Vellalar figure as Valangai in certain areas but quite often do not figure in <sup>the</sup> ~~their~~ classification at all. Secondly, even if the Vellalar are considered as Valangai, other agricultural castes like the Pallis were included in the Idangai category; nor would it be true to say that all the artisan classes belonged to the Idangai.

The most plausible explanation is that the Idangai-Valangai classification during the Vijayanagar period was due to the desire for higher status on the part of the lower castes and the attempts by the Sat-Sūdrās (the higher category of non-Brahmins) to preserve their new gained status. Thus it was amongst the lower castes themselves that constant attempts were made to gain a higher status and also to prevent others from doing the same. In this context,

the statement<sup>of</sup> John Fryer is very interesting: "But the most insolent were the artificers, as the engravers, refiners, goldsmiths, carpenters and the like who behaved themselves not only disrespectfully to their superiors but tyrannically to those of a viler rank as the husbandmen and labourers..."<sup>24</sup> This was the driving force behind the categorisation and conflicts<sup>which</sup> arose over issues like the ritual ranking in temples, the allocation of symbols and honours etc. To quote Abbe Dubois, "Perhaps the sole cause of the conflict is the right to wear slippers or to ride through the streets in a palanquin (dandu) or on horseback during marriage festivals. Sometimes, it is the privilege of being escorted on certain occasions by armed retainers, sometimes that of having a trumpet sounded in front of the procession, or being accompanied by native musicians at public ceremonies. Perhaps, it is simply the particular kind of musical instrument suitable to such occasions that is in dispute, or it may be the right of carrying flags of certain colours or devices during these ceremonies."<sup>25</sup> Each professional caste that had obtained the use of symbols assiduously sought to keep the others out,

---

24. Cited in W.R. Cornish, Madras Census Report, 1871, Pt.I P.151

25. Hayavadana Rao, op.cit. Vol. I

resulting in prolonged conflicts. In fact, one Valangai-Idangai dispute during the period of Ariyana Udaiyār (dated 1383 A.D.) is said to have lasted for over four years.<sup>26</sup>

But mere conflict does not fully characterize the Idangai-Valangai relations. There was also considerable co-operation, on the one hand between the members of the Idangai community and on the other hand between the Valangai and Idangai communities. The weavers functioned not only through their guild but were necessarily bound by the broader framework of the Idangai community. Thus in 1399 A.D. the Idangai community of Tiruppukkuli made a sarvamānya gift of  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the Idangaivari for maintaining a lamp in the temple and the Kaikkōlas are specifically stated to be Idangai.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, <sup>in</sup> 1435 A.D., the village of Tirumangalam in Sengattukkōttom was given as Sarvamanya to meet the expenses incurred for the blowing of trumpets by the Idangaiyar on the occasion of the Tiruppuram festival in the shrine of the Goddess Kamākshiamman in Kāñchīpuraṁ (Kamākshiamman is the special deity of the Kaikkōlas.)<sup>28</sup> In 1457 A.D., during the reign of Mallikārjuna certain dues like Idangaivari and Jāti-Kānikkai collected from the residents of

---

26. A.R.E. 422 of 1905

27. A.R.E. 217 of 1916 (Kāñchīpuraṁ Taluq and dist.)

28. A.R.E. 308 of 1954-55

Tirupparambūr and its hamlets by the Idangai-nāttavar and Vanniyaṛ were assigned as Sarvamānya for lighting a lamp to the Goddess Kāmakshiamman in the same temple mentioned above.<sup>29</sup> But another inscription also of the period of Mallikārjuna but from Sriperumbudūr (Chingleput dist) gives a different idea regarding the tax Idangaivari. This inscription records the remission of the Idangai taxes on a new settlement of the Kaikkōlas in the village by Mahamandalēsvara / Saluva Narasimha and the scene communication of this order to the Kaikkōlas through the officers of the king.<sup>30</sup>

These two inscriptions from the period of Mallikārjuna raise a very interesting question - whether Idangaivari was a tax collected by the Idangaināthar as a community levy or ~~whether it was tax collected by the Idangaināthar as a community levy or~~ whether it was tax collected by the government for the treasury. It is possible that it was a tax collected by the government but usually given to the Idangai community to be utilised for its benefit.

As stated before, the Idangai-Vālangai is a vertical division of the human body just as the caste system is supposed to be a horizontal division of the human body.

29. A.R.E. 315 of 1954-55

30. A.R.E. 207 of 1929-30

31. Arjun Appadorai, 'Left-hand - Right-hand castes in the history of South India, Op.cit. introduction.

"Since what is divided is a single and complete human body the metaphor expresses conflict as well as underlying unity".<sup>31</sup> An instance of the Idangai and Valangai castes of Tirukkoyilūr (South Arcot dt) combining to resist oppressive taxation is available from the 14th Century.<sup>32</sup> Again, in the 14th Century in 1326 A.D., the 98 Valangai and 98 Idangai castes of Tiruvaigavūr (Tanjore dist.) met together and determined the rates of taxation on land and on professional classes like the Kaikkōlar and the Sāliyar.<sup>33</sup>

That there was no logic or orderly basis for the division of castes into Idangai and Valangai is proved by a peculiar circumstance. As has already been stated, while the Kaikkōlas were Idangai, their close associates the Devaradiyar were Valangai.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, while the men of the Chakkiliya and Palli castes belong to the Left-hand the women of their castes <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ classified as right-hand.<sup>35</sup>

The aspiration of the weaver communities as also other upcoming professional groups like the Kammālas reflected itself not only in the Idangai-Valangai conflicts, the claim for social honours and the ascribing of mythological origins but also through participation in

---

31. (Please see previous page)

32. A.R.E. 490 of 1937-38

33. A.R.E. 59 of 1914-15

34. K.K. Pillay, op.cit. P.30

35. Ibid. P. 42

religious movements which had their origins in the 12th-13th centuries but gained momentum only during the period of the Vijaynagar empire. In the context of social upgrading of the professional castes, W.R. Cornish who has edited the 1871 census has made an interesting observation. He makes the pertinent comment that the battle for privileges and a higher caste did not result in 'caste negation' but rather in 'caste exaltation'.<sup>36</sup> The claim of the weavers to divine origin was motivated by the same reason which prompted the Rajputs in the North to claim to be Suryavamshis and Chandravamshis. The Kaikkola weavers ascribed their origin to Virabahu, the mythological lieutenant of Kartikeya.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the Devanga weavers of the Andhra-Karnataka region claimed descent from Manu and Narada. The Devangas also laid claim to Brahmanical status and wore the holy thread.<sup>38</sup> Thus what was happening among the weaver communities and other professionals like the Kammalas in medieval South India was to some extent the reverse of the Bhakti movement in the North. The leaders of the Bhakti movement in the North during the 13th -15th centuries not only belonged to the artisan communities but claimed equality

---

36. W.R. Cornish, Madras Census Report, 1871, P.151

37. The legend can be found in the 'Senguntha Prabhanda Tirattu and has been cited in detail in Chap.III of this dissertation.

38. Edgar Thurston, op.cit. Vol. II. P.156

with the upper castes by a total rejection of caste.<sup>39</sup>

But in the South, the participation of the lower castes in the religious movements seems to have operated in a different manner. However, Tēngalāi Vaiṣṇavism in its beginning stages did offer instances of caste negation; "If we descend below the four castes and come to the Chandalas, who, however, lacking in virtue, are true worshippers of ... Vishnu, their servants' servants are my masters and their feet are mine to worship." (Ramanuja)<sup>40</sup>

But the Śūdras professionals were involved in these movements not through the rejection of caste but basically by covertly enhancing their ritual rank. This was the driving force behind all the religious movements of the Medieval period - the Lingāyat movement, the Vira-Śaiva or Kālamukha movement and the Vadagalai-Tēngalāi split in Vaiṣṇavism. The Lingāyats, for instance, claimed a status superior to other religious groups and adopted the peculiar practice of burying their dead in a sitting posture, probably in order to appear distinctive. Abdur Razak in the course of his travels in the South refers to

---

39. The nature of participation of the professional and artisan classes in the Bhakti movement in Northern India has been discussed at some length by Prof. Irfan Habib in his article "The Historical background of the Monotheistic Movements of the 15th-17th Centuries", Seminar on Ideas - Medieval India, Univ. of Delhi, 1965

40. Quoted in Burtonstein's article in Silverburg (ed.) op.cit. P.83

the Dyogis,<sup>41</sup> said to be "a caste of Hindus, who are commonly weavers. The people of the caste do not burn but bury their dead and the women are sometimes buried alive with their husband's corpse". In the context of religion as a means to enhancement of social status, two inscriptions from Nandavaram in Baganapalli Taluq (Mysore) are of special significance. It concerns a body of religious enthusiasts styled Ekāṅgavīras who belonged to the Togata community of weavers. They are said to be devotees of the Goddess Chandēśvaramma and their number is specified as three hundred and sixty. The first inscription describes the honours and privileges conferred upon this body by the Pontiff, Vira Sāntabhikshavritti at Srisaillam.<sup>42</sup> The second inscription states that the 360 Ekāṅgavīras, invoking the aid of Chandēśvari, helped the Mahāmandalēśvara of Panugallu against an enemy and the Chief showed his appreciation by conferring titles on them.<sup>43</sup> Here, is a concrete instance of a weaving caste securing social honours and political privileges under a religious banner.

The Tengalai movement in Vaishnavism brought within its fold many of the low Śudra professional castes. This

---

41 R.H. Major 'India in the Fifteenth Century, Op.cit. P.17

42. A.R.E. 5 of 1943-44

43. A.R.E. 7 of 1943-44. Part II. Para 41



movement which began after Ramañuja i.e., during the 12th - 13th centuries had its nucleus at Srirangam and Tirupati. This was the Prabhandic or Tamil school as opposed to the Bhāṣya or Sanskrit school, the orthodox Vaishnavite sect which gradually shifted its centre from Tirupati to the Varadarāja-Perumāḷ temple at Kañchīpuram in the course of the 14th - 15th centuries. The first Jiyar at Srirangam Kuraṇārāyaṇa and later Alagiya Manavāla in the 15th century enhanced their power by offering discipleships to the Śūdra servants of the temple.<sup>44</sup> At Srirangam, the Koyil/Kanakken was a Vellālar and the ritual of offering a coconut to the deity was done by the Kaikkōlas. An important ritual role was granted to a category of Śūdra functionaries called Sattademudalis (holy men who do not wear the sacred thread)<sup>45</sup>.

Tirupati in the 15th century came under the influence of Śāluva Narasimha. He publicly established his patronage of the Śūdra worshippers in the temple. He allocated the donor's share of the prasadam to the 'Ramanujakūṭam' (free feeding house for Sri Vaishnavas, essentially non-Brahmans).<sup>46</sup> This was managed by Ramanuja Iyengar for the benefit of his Śūdra disciples. Important

---

44. Arjun Appadorai "Kings, Sects and Temples in South India", Op.cit. P.59

45. Burtonstein in Silverburg (ed) Op.cit., P.87

46. Arjun Appadorai 'Kings, Sects and Temples in South India' Op.cit. P.67

ritual roles and temple honours were conferred on the 'Sūdra professionals.<sup>47</sup> The Kaikkōla weavers were in charge of the Mātangi and Perantālu vēsham. In the Mātangi Vēsham a Kaikkōla worked himself into a state of divine intoxication and then a metal wire was passed through the middle of his tongue without causing any harm. In the Perantālu Vēsham, a Kaikkōla dressed up as a female and rode around the town on a horse, distributing the Prasadam - Kumkum, saffron paste and flowers.<sup>48</sup> In view of the fact that in Tirupati, during the Vijayanagar period, the emphasis had shifted from mere grants or burning of perpetual lamps to food offerings, the redistribution of prasadam had a crucial significance and it is noteworthy that this important task was given to the Kaikkōla caste.<sup>49</sup>

Kāñchīpuram had become the stronghold of the orthodox school of Vaishnavism and hence here the influence of 'Sūdra professionals like the weavers was not as great as at Srirangam and Tirupati. But, even here it was not negligible. For instance, the Kaikkōla community of the Jaganātha Perumāḷ temple in Tirumālīsai of the period of Achyuta Rāya is mentioned in an inscription.<sup>50</sup> At the

---

47. Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam Epigraphical Series, (TTS.) Vol. II, Nos. 23, 31 and 50

48. Thurston Op.cit. Vol. III P.42

49. The point regarding the nature of the shift in the offerings to temples is discussed by Arjun Appadorai "Kings, Sects and Temples in South India, Op.cit. P.66

50. A.R.E. 23 of 1911

Rājagōpala Perumāḷ temple in Manimangalam in Saidapet,<sup>51</sup> the order of precedence in the temple is given. The Vellalar are placed next to the temple Sthanathar or managers, followed by the Agambadiyār, the Kaikkōlar, the Ennaivanīyar (oil mongers) Navider (barbers) etc. They also enjoyed considerable importance in the Śaiva temples. Kōpanna, the minister of Kampana Udaiyār, is said to have given the Kaikkōlar and the Kaikkōla mudalis of the Kailāsanātha temple the right to sell or mortgage their honours like precedence in the receipt of the betal-nut honour (ataippam) their service of the deity (tevar atimai) etc.<sup>52</sup> The Kaikkōlas obviously enjoyed these ritual privileges in this temple. As has already been mentioned the Kaikkōlas had a predominant role to play on the occasion of the Śura Samhāra day. But the weavers seem to have enjoyed the maximum honours and ritual privileges in the Amman temples. In this context the temple statistics worked out by Burtonstein becomes very interesting. He shows that between 1300 and 1750<sup>A.D.</sup> there was a definite increase in the number of Amman temples. He cites the section on Śūdras in the Baramahal records which makes it clear that the religious activity of the Śūdra castes, both agricultural and artisan, pertained to clan and place tutelaries,

---

51. S.I.I. Vol. VI No.252

52. S.I.I. Vol. I. P.120

mainly Goddesses called "Amman".<sup>53</sup> He quotes the 1961 census and also through other sources of information arrives at the conclusion that the priests in these 'Amman' shrines were mostly /Sūdra priests called Pandārams recruited largely from the Vellala and Palli castes.<sup>54</sup> At Kāñchīpuram, the ratha festival in honour of Kāmakshīamman was arranged by the Kaikkōlas. Thurston giving a descriptive account of the festival, says that some of the car pullers had two cords drawn through their flesh, about 12 inches apart.<sup>55</sup> Burtonstein, studying the operation of the Bhakti movement as evidenced in the Tirupati and Srirangam temples, comes to the conclusion that the /Sūdra professionals actually enjoyed a status in society and economy that was not at all in accordance with their traditional ritual ranking. The whole mass of inscriptional evidences goes to prove this point.

One can conclude that the period of the Vijaynagar Empire did not witness any major change in the social status of the weavers since the Chōla period. But while in the Chōla period, the Sāliyan or the /Sōliya Sāliyans, as they were sometimes called, were the main weaving

---

53. Burtonstein 'Temples in the Tamil Country 1300-1750 in Burtonstein (Ed.) 'South Indian Temples' PP.27-28

54. Ibid P.32

55. Thurston Op.cit. Vol. III P.42

community of the Kāñchīpuram region, the Kaikkōlas had definitely secured predominance in the region during the period of the Vijayanagar Empire. While inscriptional evidence indicates that <sup>as</sup>weavers the Kaikkōlas occupied a high place in society, to the members of the community it seems to have denoted a fall in social status as compared to their previous profession, i.e., soldiering. Perhaps, that is why in all the legends and literature of the Chōla period and especially in Ottakkūttar's Itti Eluvathu the Kaikkōlas are mentioned as soldiers and generals but never as weavers. The community itself has a specific legend to explain why it changed from soldiering to weaving.<sup>56</sup> The legend is that Virabāhu, (the mythological ancestor of the Kaikkōla community), the divine lieutenant of Lord Muruga refused to go to the aid of <sup>the</sup>earthly king Musumuga Chōlan (not historically identified). The God cursed them that they were not fit for soldiering but only fit to weave cloth in the Kongu country. From these literary evidences, it is possible to conclude that, while the inscriptional references to the Kaikkōlas do not show any marked change in their social status between

---

56. This legend which cannot be historically dated was orally told to me by Kaviṅṅar N. Kandasami of Rāsipuram.

the Chōla and Vijayanagar periods, the community itself seems to have considered the switchover from soldiering to full-time weaving as a social degradation. It is interesting that even to this day, the community prefers to be known as 'Sengunt<sup>h</sup>ar' the name under which Ottakkū<sup>h</sup>ar eulogised them for their military achievements rather than as 'Kaikkō<sup>l</sup>ar, which they consider a purely professional name.

\* \* \*

## Select Bibliography

### Primary Sources

#### Inscriptions

1. Annual Reports of South Indian Epigraphy, Madras, 1905-1968
2. South Indian Inscriptions
3. Mysore Archaeological Series, Epigraphica Carnatica, edited by Lewis Rice, 12 Vols.
4. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, II, Gupta Inscriptions, edited by J.F. Fleet (Calcutta, 1888)
5. A Topographical list of the Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency, edited by V. Rengacharya, Vols 1-3, Madras 1919
6. Corpus of Inscriptions in the Nizam's dominions
7. Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam Inscriptions
8. South Indian Temple Inscriptions edited by T.N. Subramaniam, Vols. 1-3
9. I. Mahadevan, 'Corpus of Tamil-Brahmi Inscriptions' contained in R. Nagasamy (ed.) Seminar on Inscriptions (Madras, 1968)

#### Travellers Accounts, Census Reports and Gazetteers

10. Barbosa, Duarte, An Account of the countries bordering on the Indian Ocean and their Inhabitants, translated by Longworth Dames, 2 Vols. (London, 1918)
11. Carreri, Travels in India edited by S.N. Sen, Indian Records Series, (National Archives of India, 1949).

12. Major, R.H., India in the Fifteenth Century  
(Reprint, New Delhi, 1974)
13. Moreland, W.H., Relations of Golkonda - The  
Accounts of Anthony Schorer,  
W. Methwold and one anonymous account,  
(Hakluyat Society, London, 1930)
14. Nuniz, Fernao, The account of his travells has been  
translated by Sewell, Robert, in "The  
Forgotten Empire" (Indian Edition,  
New Delhi, 1962)
15. Sastry, Nilakanta, Foreign Notices of South India  
from Megasthenes to Ma-huan (Madras, 1940)
16. Tavernier, Travels in India, translated by V. Ball,  
2 vols. (Reprint, New Delhi, 1977)
17. Thevenot, Travels in India, edited by S.N. Sen, Indian  
Records Series (National Archives of India,  
1949)
18. Wheeler, Talboys, Early Travels in India, (Reprint,  
New Delhi, 1975)
19. Paes, Domingo, This account has also been translated  
by Sewell, Robert, in The Forgotten Empire  
(Indian Edition, New Delhi, 1962)
20. 1871 Madras Census Report, edited by W.R. Cornish
21. 1891 Madras Census Report, edited by H.A. Stuart
22. Chingleput District Manual, edited by C.S. Crole, 1879
23. Manual of the North Arcot district, edited by Stuart,  
1895



Literary Sources

24. Cholar Purva Pattavam (in Tamil), Published by the Government of Madras, Oriental Series, No.V
25. Itte Eluvatu, (in Tamil) edited with critical commentary by Thiru Murugavel in Senguntha Mithiram, serialised in June-July, 1970
26. Manasollasa (in Sanskrit) The author is the Chalukyan king Someshwar. Published with an introduction in the Gaekwad Oriental Series
27. Senguntha Prabhanda Tirattu, (in Tamil) - A collection of medieval poetic literature pertaining to the Kaikkola Community edited by Sabapati Mudaliyar (Madras, 1926).
28. Tutu-k-Tirattu (in Tamil) Edited by T. Chandrasekharan, published by the Government of Madras, Oriental Series, No.58

Secondary SourcesBooks and Articles in Tamil

1. Chettiar, Ramachandra - Kongu Nattu Varalaru
2. Pandarattar, Sadasiva - Erkala Cholargal, 3 Vols. (Annamalai Univ., 1974)
3. Aravanan, K.P., (Ed.) Aivukkottu (Madras, 1973)

4. Balasubramaniam, C. "Palantamilagattil Nesavu",  
contained in Erode Weavers Association.  
Silver Jubilee Souvenir (Erode, 1973)
5. Majid, Abdul, A. "Nesavalar Samudāyam" contained in  
Erode Weavers Association - Silver  
Jubilee Souvenir, (Erode, 1973)
6. Raju, V. Pandai Tamil Nulgalil Adaigal" contained  
in Senguntha Malar (Erode, 1976)
7. Thurai Prakasa Swamigal, "Iraivan Machchiya Kaittari"  
contained in the Journal Chenjoli (April,  
1969)

Secondary Source - Books in English

8. Appadorai, A. Economic Conditions of Southern India  
(1000 - 1500 A.D.) (Madras, 1936)
9. Appadorai, Arjun Right and Left Hand Castes in South India  
(Unpublished thesis, Chicago, May, 1973)
10. B.C. Law Commemoration Volume
11. Birdwood, C.M. George, The Industrial Arts of Indian  
(London, 1880)
12. Burtonstein (Ed.) Essays on South India (New York 1971)
13. Burtonstein (Ed.) South Indian Temples (New Delhi, 1978)
14. Chicherov, Indian Economic Development in the  
16th-18th Centuries (Moscow 1971)
15. Foster. W. (Ed.) The English Factories in India
16. Furber, Holden, The Jan Company at work

17. Holder, Edwin, Monograph on Dyes and Dyeing in the Madras Presidency (Madras, 1896)
18. Mahalingam, T.V., Kanchipuram in Early South Indian History (Madras, 1907)
19. Mahalingam, T.V., South Indian Polity (Madras, 1967)
20. Mahalingam, T.V., Administration and Social Life Under Vijaynagar Part I. (Madras, 1969)
21. Mahalingam T.V., Administration and Social Life Under Vijaynagar, Part II (Madras, 1975)
22. Meenakshi, L., Administration and Social Life Under the Pallavas (Madras, 1938)
23. Parker, John, Merchants and Scholars (Minneapolis, 1955)
24. Pillay, K.K. The Caste System in Tamil Nadu, Anne Beasant Memorial Lectures (Madras, 1977)
25. Raychoudhry, Tapan, The Jan Company in Coromandel (The Hague, 1962)
26. Sewell, Robert, A Forgotten Empire (Delhi, 1962)
27. Sherwani, Abbas, Ahmad, History of The Qutb Shahi Dynasty, (Delhi, 1974)
28. Shastry, Nilakanta - Colas, (Madras, 1975, Second Edition, Reprint)

29. Shastry, Nilakanta, A History of South India, (Madras, 1976, Fourth Edition)
30. Silverburg, (Ed.) Social Mobility in the Caste System of India - A symposium (Mouton, The Hague, 1968)
31. Subramaniam, N, Sangam Polity (Madras, 1966)
32. Thurston, Edgar, Monograph on the Cotton Industry in the Madras Presidency (Madras, 1906)
33. Thurston, Edgar, Castes and Tribes of South India, 7 Vols. (Reprint, New Delhi, 1975)
34. Varadachari, N.S. and Pundam Baker, Hand Spinning and Weaving (Sabarnati, 1926)
35. Venkataratnam, A.V., Local Government in the Vijaynagar Empire, (Mysore, 1972)
36. Watts, Dictionary of Commercial Products
37. Wheeler, Munro (Ed.) Textiles and Ornaments of India (New York)

Articles

1. Appadorai, Arjun, Kings, Sects and Temples in South India (1350-1700 A.D.) in Burtonstein (Ed.) South Indian Temples (New Delhi, 1978)
2. Burtonstein, 'Coromandel Trade in Medieval India' in Parker, John, (Ed.), Merchants and Scholars (Minneapolis, 1965)
3. Burtonstein, 'Social Mobility and Medieval South Indian Hindu Sects', contained in Silverburg, James (Ed.) Social Mobility in the Caste System of India (The Hague, 1968)
4. Burtonstein, 'The State and Agrarian order in Medieval South India' in Burtonstein, (Ed.) Essays on South India (New Delhi, 1975)
5. Burtonstein, 'Temples in Tamil Country( (1300-1750) in Burtonstein (Ed.) South Indian Temples (New Delhi, 1978)
6. Irwin, John, 'Indian Textile Trade in the Seventeenth Century' - The Coromandel Coast', Journal of Indian Textile History, Pt. 2, 1956)
7. Irwin, John, 'Social Relations in the Textile Trade of the Seventeenth Century', Indian Studies Past and Present, 1960, Vol.I, No.2 .

8. Irwin, John, 'Indian Textiles in Historical Perspective' in Wheeler, Munro (Ed.) Textiles and Ornaments of India (New York)
9. Moti Chandra, Costumes and Textiles in the Sultanate period, Journal of Indian Textile History, 1961, No.6
10. Pillay, K.K., 'Social conditions as reflected in the Jivakachintamani, Journal of Indian History, Golden Jubilee Volume, 1973
11. Qaisar, Jan, A, 'The Brokers in Medieval India' in The Indian Historical Review, Vol.I. No.2 1974
12. Saletore, B.A. 'Some Aspects of the Overseas Trade of Vijaynagar from the Accounts of European Travellers, B.C. Law Commemoration Volume (Calcutta, 1945)
13. Saraswati, 'Political Maxims of Krishnadeva Raya, Journal of Indian History, Vol.IV, Pt.III
14. Srinivasa Iyengar, 'The Origins of the Left-hand - Right-Hand Castes, Journal of the Andhra Historical Research Society, Vol.IV, Pt.I and II July and October 1929.

Abbreviations

A.R.E.	Annual Report of Epigraphy
S.I.I.	South Indian Inscriptions
J.I.H.	Journal of Indian History
J.I.T.H.	Journal of Indian Textile History
M.E.R.	Mysore Epigraphical Report
S.T.I.	South Indian Temple Inscriptions
E.C.	Epigraphia Carnatica
T.T.I.	Tirumalai-Tirupati Devasthanam <i>Inscriptions</i>
I.S.P.P.	Indian Studies Past and Present

\* \* \*