CHAPTER II

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History without geography is largely incomplete and devoid of its vital substance for its loses focus in the absence of the concept of space. That is why history is regarded both as the history of mankind and the history of environment. It is difficult to separate the two. The history of humans and the history of environment mutually influence one another. Soil, rainfall, vegetation, climate and environment exercise considerable influence on the evolution of human cultures. In fact, the essence of human progress is the increasing emancipation of human beings from the clutches of nature or control of the vagaries of nature. In this regard technological progress helps human beings able to control this environment effectively. Naturally, it becomes necessary to appreciate and understand the geography, environment and physical regions that had a bearing on South Kanara History.

The district of South Kanara is situated on the Western coast of India, half way between Bombay and Cape Comorin (Kanya Kumari). From north to south, it is a long narrow strip of territory and from east to west, it is a broken low plateau which spreads from the Western Ghat to the Arabian Sea known in Kannada as Pashchima Samudra (Western Sea). The major part of its length lies along the sea coast. The area is intersected by many rivers and streams and presents varied and most picturesque scenery. Abundant vegetations, extensive forest, numerous groves of coconut palms along the coast and rice fields in every farmland, provide refreshing greenery to the prospect. It is a most densely inhabited tract.
The district under study is the Southern of the two coastal districts of the new Mysore State (Karnataka), which were known as South Kanara and North Kanara. The name Kanara is derived from the word ‘Kannada’ the name of the regional language of the state. It appears that the Portuguese, who on arrival in this part of India, found the common linguistic medium of the people to be Kannada, and accordingly called the area as ‘Kanara’- the sound and letter ‘d’ being not much in use in the Portuguese language. This name was applied to the whole coastal belt of Karnataka and was continued to be used as such by the British.\(^1\) When this ‘Kanara’ coast was divided into two parts in 1860 A.D. the Southern area was called South Kanara and the part lying to the north was termed North Kanara. In Kannada, they are known as *Dakshina Kannada Jille* and *Uttara Kannada Jille* respectively.

The area is alluded to as *Tulu-Nadu* (*Nadu* means a territorial unit) in Agananuru, a Tamil Sangam anthology of the early centuries of the Christian era.\(^2\) There is a reference to *tulu vishaya* in the Barakuru inscription \(^3\) of the period of Bankideva I of the Alupa dynasty. Lithic records of the Vijayanagara rule mention the region as *Tulu-rajya* and *Tulu desha* and parts of it as *Mangaluru-rajya* and *Barakuru rajya*.

**South Kanara as a Regional Entity:**

Language, geography, Parashurama legend and Topography have been the chief attributes to determine the regions significance as a separate regional entity.

**Language:**

Though Kannada has been in common use in the area - both as the official language (and as the ‘link language’ since time immemorial) the
native tongue of a large number of people in a major portion of the district is *Tulu* of the Dravidian family which is more akin to Kannada. *Tuluva* denotes the people who speak *tulu*. There are varying theories about the origin of the word *Tulu*. A version traces the origin to a legendary ruler called Rama Bhoja, who is supposed to have made many gifts like *Tula-dana, Tula-purusha*, etc, and since he gave these gifts his dynasty came to be known as the *tolar* line, and the region *Tulu*. This is rejected by B.A Saletore as unhistorical and untenable. Another view is that it is derived from the word *Tuluve* which means mild and meek denoting “the peaceful demeanor of people.” But K.V. Ramesh has pointed out that in the language as spoken today when this word qualifies certain fruits, it signifies the softness of the fruits, for instance *tuluve palakkayi* means ‘soft jack fruit’ and similarly *tuluve kukku* means ‘soft mango.’ So Ramesh holds the view that in the ancient days too the region must have been famous for its variety of soft fruits and might have therefore come to be called *Tulu nadu* out side its own bounds as a mark of distinction.

The renowned scholar Manjeshwara Govinda Pai opines that there could be some meaning in the derivation of the word from softness, if softness is taken as an attribute not of the people but of the soil of the regions. It is also said that the word *Tulu* may be connected with the original Dravidian term of *turu*, which means cattle, and that the *tuluvas* in ancient times were cattle breeders. P.Gururaj Bhat Suggests that the community of *Tuluvas* or *Turuvas* might have been called Tuluvas.

According to Saletore the word *Tuluva* might be traced to the Kannada verbal root *tulu* which means “to attack,” thereby signifying the nature of the ancient Tuluva people whose war- like activities in the early
period of the history might have secured for them that appellation. Ample evidence according to the same author can be gathered to establish their claims for martial activities in the past. He says that the whole trend of events from the early centuries of the Christian era down to the sixteenth century and especially the rise of an important principality which lasted for a long time, attest to the “war like nature” of the *tuluva* people in historical times. There is yet another theory which is also supported by Govinda Pai, which suggests that the derivation of the name from the word *Tulu* meaning to row or ply in water. The early maritime activities of the people of the area and the fact that they have been good seafarers, since a very long time, lend support to this view. Sediyapu Krishna Bhat however, opines that the word *Tulu* denotes water, therefore the name *Tulunadu* means a region which abounds in water.

**Geography:**

Geographically, the South Kanara region is separated from the rest of the South Indian Peninsula by the towering heights of the Western Ghats. It spreads from the Western Ghats to the Arabian sea on the west. The length of the coast – line which is almost straight, but broken at numerous points by rivers, rivulets, creeks and bays, is 140.8 Kilometers (76 nautical miles). The district lies between 12° 27' and 13° 58' north latitude, and 74° 35' and 75° 40’ east longitude. It is about 177 Kilometers (110 Miles) in length, about 80 Kilometers (50 miles) at its widest part. In several respects, it shares the geographical and economical characteristics of its contiguous districts of Coorg, Shimoga, Chikmagalur etc.

South Kanara, which is a long and narrow strip of territory, is bounded on the north by the North Kanara district, on the east by the
districts of Shimoga, Chikmagalur, Hassan and Coorg, on the south by the Kasaragod taluk, which is at present in Kerala State, and on the west by the Arabian Sea. In the north, particularly in Kundapur taluk, the Western Ghats are nowhere more than 40 Kilometers (25 miles) from the sea and at one point, there is an extent of only six miles (about 10 kms) of plain land and it is here that the northern boundary of this district and the southern boundary of the North Kanara district meet. 12

Parashurama Legend:

About the early dynasties that ruled in South Kanara till about the sixth century A.D. we have absolutely no record, and we must be satisfied only with legendary lore, and even of this we have very little. The most popular of the legends about the early history of South Kanara is that of Parashuram. 13 It is well known, but will bear repetition. Some thousands of years ago, it is said, a great Brahmin warrior and hero (we must remember that in those good old days the Brahmins know the use of the sword as well as that of the pen) named Parashuram (from Parashu, an axe, his favourite weapon) killed all the people of the Kshatriya or military clan 26 times over. Having obtained pardon for this crime through the prayers of fellow Brahmans, he granted them all the land in the world and went in search of an abode for himself. He solicited the mighty ocean to yield to him a small piece of ground to live upon and die in peace. The ocean in its large-heartedness consented to grant him as much land as he could hurl his battle-axe over. Parashuram threw his weapon from Gokarna westwards into the sea. The sea receded Nussara, a place north of Bombay, to Kanya Kumari, measuring about 800 miles in length and forty-five miles in breadth. He
then inhabited the land with all classes of people except Brahmins, who refused to settle there.

But the enterprising Parashuram rose to the occasion. Seeing several fishermen on the sea-shore, he cut their nets, and having made Brahminical strings out of them, tied them round their shoulders made them priests. Having converted the local population into Brahmins, Parashuram divided the lands among them in seven portions, Barat, Varat, Marat, Konkan, Haviga, Tuluva and Kerala, of which Tuluva and Haviga nearly correspond to the present South Kanara and North Kanara Districts respectively. After this he betook himself to a hill near Kanyakumari for prayer and meditation, directing the Brahmins that if they should at any time be in distress they should think of him. After a lapse of fifty years, in order to test the power of Parashuram, the Brahmins thought of him, and that very instant he appeared before them and inquired what distress they were labouring under. Finding that they wanted only to test his powers, he fell into a violent rage and cursed them, saying that they should eat coarse rice, dress only up to the waist and be miserable for ever. He then proceeded to Gokarna and governed the region for several years.

There is another curious legend about Parashuram in which a somewhat different version of the creation and the peopling of Western India below the Ghats is given. Parashuram, according to this legend, was the sixth avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, who came into this world in the form of a Brahmin, to restore to power the Brahmins who had been defeated in their wars with Kshatriyas and forced to retire to caves and forests. One day when Parashuram was proceeding to the west, he found himself on the top of the peak of the Sahyadari ranges, that overlooks the town of Chiplun, and
from there he shot an arrow westward and commanded the sea, then washing the foot of the Ghats, to retreat, which it did with all possible speed. The Brahmins thereupon occupied the new strip of country left behind by the sea, populated it with several people of low caste for cultivating the land, and then marched under the leadership of the redoubtable Parashuram against the Kshatiriyas, who were completely routed and subjugated. There are several other versions of Parashuram’s story which vary from one another in several finer details, but all of them, as well as the two mentioned above, point to the following conclusions:

1. That the tract of the country we are now inhabiting had been once under sea, which fact geologists believe to be true from a study of the fauna of the country, and especially the curious deposits of oyster-shells in several places at the foot of the Ghats, and that it was raised above water, not by the prowess of Parasuram, as the legendary lore of western India would have us believe, but by some volcanic eruption.

2. That this part of India, which had been undoubtedly occupied before the advent of the Aryans into the Deccan by Dravidian tribes speaking the Kanarese and Tulu and Malayalam languages, was subjugated by the Aryans. But this subjugation could have been but partial. Consisting as it did, the population of Southern India of well organized communities with powerful kingdoms and speaking highly developed languages, they offered such a strong resistance to the incursions of the Aryans that, the Aryan conquerors, while imparting much of their civilization and religion to the conquered races, had to incorporate themselves into their
society and to adopt their language. Classes according to rank and profession exist in every society and must have existed also among the Dravidians, but the influence of Aryan settlement among them was probably to crystallize these classes into castes with some of the distinctions and names prevailing among the Aryans. With the deep impression, therefore, of Aryan civilization and religion, which the Dravidians received from their conquerors, they yet retained their essential racial and linguistic characteristics. This fact is borne out by the small admixture of Sanskrit words in Kanarese, Tulu and other Dravidian languages, and by the peculiar Dravidian features still perceptible in the structure of the skulls and the physiognomy of Tulu and Kanarese-speaking Brahmins.

Topography:

The region presents a diversified aspect of strongly eroded profile and a characteristically undulating topography. Low, flat-topped hills, conjecturably once forming an ancient plateau, rise sharply away from the coast, this escaped sides descending into numerous broad well-cultivated valleys. Inland for thirty or forty miles the lowland region is a series of rounded hillocks separated by a network of smaller streams. In the neighbourhood of the Ghats, the topography is complicated as a result of transverse strains resulting from early convulsive up thrusts. In the outer sections of the arc, especially towards the south in the region west of Sampaji as far as Adur and Maduru, broken spars and low ridges extend westwards from the principle range; in the central section of the arc. The prevailing direction of this minor folds is almost due north and south, at an average elevation of slightly over a thousand feet, but broken through at
various places by the passage of the principal rivers across them. The Ghats proper rise in solid relief to over 3,000 feet above sea level. The highest peak of the district, belonging to the Kudre-Mukh group rises to 6,200 feet elevation; further south, overlooking Subramanya, is (Pushpagiri peak 5,667 feet) the upper slopes of which arc is Coorg. Forest wealth is abundant and it struck the attention of foreign travellers. The beautiful fauna and flora in the forest added grandeur to the whole region. The travellers, who visited the region, describe the Ghat ranges as rocky and rugged high and their ascent is like mounting to sky.  

The whole of the Ghat region was covered with forest. The loftiness of the Sahyadri impressed Peter Mundy, an English traveller, who passed through the region in 1636 A.D. The general elevation of the plains is between 150 and 350 feet above sea-level, but afforested ridges mount to 1,000 feet and occasionally as high as 1,500 feet.

Coast line has a length of 180 miles. The Sahyadri ranges in some places (for example Bhatkal) approach very close to the sea; in others branches of rocky hills stretch from the Ghats towards the sea, occupying great part of the surface. The southern part of the coast line (the present South Kanara) is broken and its table land spreads from the foot of the Sahyadri and Kodagu to the sea. As a long strip of the country, the present South Kanara coast line is indented by numerous creeks and bays formed by the estuaries of rivers-low and sandy with broken and rugged rocks cropping up in places, but the region near the sea board is well planted with coconut trees. The whole region had many low lands as noticed by Duarte Barbosa in 1516. Poet Linganna in 1763 A.D. described these ranges as stupendous ranges of the celebrated mountain, tier above tier, called the Sahyadri, the supreme bliss, the basis of fertile lands and countries, the abode of
innumerable holy resorts (tirtha) and rivers of streams and rivulets of hills and forests. 20

The Ghats influenced the agrarian system in many ways. The constant rain in the region is mainly due to the existence of the Sahyadri ranges which check the rain bearing winds. The panoramic forest wealth in the Ghat regions stimulated by rainfall brought revenue to the Government. The grandeur of the forest and their wealth are recorded in the indigenous and foreign sources. The epigraphs dated 1545 A.D., 1593 A.D, 1730 A.D, from Mudigere, Bilge and Sringeri describe the panoramic scenes of forest and their income to the royal treasury. 21 Similarly, the above points have been substantiated by the accounts of foreign travellers. For instance, Barbosa says that the Ghat region was known for the growth of timber. 22 Della Valle, an Italian traveller in 1623 A.D. noticed the forests in the Ghats in the regions and acclaimed their grandeur as follows:

The ascent of the mountain is not so rough but rather easie and pleasant like other parts being thick with groves of trees of excessive greatness. Some of them were so straight that alone might serve for the mast of a ship. The mountain is so much watered with rivulets and fountains surface hills and valleys, all green and delightful to the eyes clothed with thick and high groves and many times with fruit trees. 23

Similarly, Fryer, an English traveller in 1675/6 A.D. observed that Ankola had a hilly woody mountain, an extraordinary height. Further, he remarks about the region that the country is enticing beautiful, woody, in the plains, up the country mountainous where grows pepper. 24

The entire coast line is picturesque with rocky islands and capes, stretches of palm-fringed sand beaches, low narrow-river mouths and rough
bluffs and headlands. The deep winding valleys, waving wooded hills and wild background of high peaks stretch behind the coast line. The coast line dotted with some ports namely, Karwar, Ankola, Mirjee, Kumta, Karnate, Baidur, Bhatkal, Basrur, Barkur, Mulki, Mangalore, Manjeswara, Kumbala and Kasaragod (the last three are in Kerala State) of intercontinental celebrity humming with life by movements of the hardy fisher folk and industrious traders. These ports became centers of trade of agricultural products. The soil of the coast line is red and gravelly on the high grounds, sandy near the sea, and in valleys well adapted for the cultivation of rice. Since time immemorial the coastal line has been the best developed area with a high degree of economic development and also high density of population.

Different types of rice, pepper, coconut, different varieties of sugar cane, were being cultivated on the river sides and arecanut and forest products have been reared in the interior and the Ghat regions. Regarding the fertility of the coastal region, Candrama, a poet from Karkala in 1648 A.D, opined that Tulu Desa (part of coastal region), situated on the shore of the sea, was adorned with green paddy fields, fruits, flowers and trees. According to the same poet the whole Tulunad was known for the cultivation of different grains. Similarly, we notice the description of green paddy fields, herbs, trees and flowers, tanks rivulets, rivers and dales around Mulki by Padmanabha in his work, Ramachandra Charitre, completed in 1751 A.D. The richness of Coastal region has always impressed foreigners. For instance, in 1663 A.D Baldaeus, the Dutch traveller observed Kanara was rich in rice and other products and had a healthy and strong people capable of any kind of work. In 1763 A.D. a
French Historian De La Tour was wonder struck with the natural beauty and agricultural potentiality of the region and he says *it was rich in all sorts of production and as having valuable extent of sea coast with a good number of sea ports.*

Western Ghats were and are of crucial importance for the agrarian economy and - as a consequence - for the economy as a whole, as they were the fulcrum around which turned that most important event - the monsoon.

From the early June to mid-September, the western seaboard receives extensive rain and it is in this period of three months that the coastal strip registers some 90% of its annual precipitation. This rainfall is, quite naturally more torrential on the western side of the Ghats (the coastal stripe) than on the flatland to the east of the chain, which falls in some measures in the rain shadow. This bout of rainfall, from roughly June to September is most important for the greater part of South India, not only because of its effect via direct precipitation, but because the flow at sources of the major peninsular rivers.

The region is subjected to south-west and south-east monsoons. There were instances of failure of monsoons, or heavy rains, both are adversely affecting agriculture. The South-west monsoon rains set in about the middle of May, fall heaviest, with squalls of wind, in July; and continue to the end of September, during which season all trade is interrupted. The south-east monsoon rain starts in the middle of October and ends in the month of November and December. The crops are usually watered by the rains, but streams are sometimes dammed up to preserve the water for late crops.

Besides feeding the major river systems, the monsoon also feeds a very large number of minor rivers that flow westward from the Western
Ghats into the Arabian Sea, intersecting the coastal plain at frequent intervals. These rivers, water the rich paddy farm lands of South Kanara, besides forming numerous estuaries along the length of the coast. Of these, the two most important are those of Mirjan in the north, and of Kundapur further south. In the latter estuary, as many as four rivers void their waters. The small river systems performed the useful function of arteries in the transport network of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, transporting, for instance, the pepper grown in the uplands of South Kanara to the ports in small vessels.

**Rivers and Streams:**

South Kanara has a good number of rivers, rivulets, lakes and streams. The rivers in the region are flowing towards west and are heavily dependent upon the monsoons. These rivers influenced the agrarian system of the region. The rulers of South Kanara especially the Vijayanagara officers of the region and the Nayakas of Keladi utilized water resources for intensive cultivation by constructing dams. Further, these rivers facilitated inland traffic of agricultural products. They were very extensively used for bringing produces to the coast ports and towns. And great facilities for traffic up and down portions of the coast are also afforded by the backwaters or salt water lagoons, which are formed by sand spits thrown up by the meeting of the river and littoral currents, and often find their way into the sea, two rivers frequently making their exit by one opening. The six principal rivers of South Kanara are the Netravati, the Gurupura River, the Gangoli River or Gurget, the Chandragiri or Payaswani, the Sitanadi and Suvarnanadi.
Major Rivers and Ports of South Kanara
When the force of the South-west monsoon is at its height, some of the larger rivers become swollen by the heavy rains and overflow their banks, inundating the surrounding region. These floods do not last long, and within a short time the rivers retire to their usual channels. Occasionally crops sustain some damage, but the floods are seldom destructive to life and property and the deposit of fertilizing silt made by them is highly beneficial.

The prominent west-flowing rivers are as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Rivers</th>
<th>Alternative name</th>
<th>Place of Joining Arabian Sea</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Kehta</td>
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<td>Shutivanti</td>
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<td>Gangoli (Ganguli)</td>
<td>The Gangoli</td>
<td>Pancha Gangavali</td>
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<td>Chakra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sita</td>
<td>The Mabukal</td>
<td>Hangarcutta</td>
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<td>Suvarna</td>
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<td>Sambhavi</td>
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<td>Netravati</td>
<td>The Netravati</td>
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<td>Kumaradhara</td>
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<td>Mangalore</td>
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<td>Gurupura</td>
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<td>Mangalore</td>
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These rivers, their origin, the direction of their flows and their Sacredness are mentioned in the Portuguese records. Besides the above rivers, there are a large number of small rivers between the regions of Gangoli and the Payaswini and the volume of the water is very gruel at times with current. The striking features of these rivers are that they receive heavy assured rainfall during south-west Monsoon. Their mouths are salty studded by a number of small islands known as *Kudrus*, rising a few feet above the surface of the water and that two rivers frequently making exit by making one opening. These rivers very often change their directions of flow, which resulted in considerable damages to the crops. Such loses are known in the records as *Hole Harida Nashta*. When the rivers changed their directions of flow, fertile land was formed in coastal region known as *Kajjiana* or *Gajani*.

The Sundry Rivers of salt-water lake in South Kanara has always had impact on the agrarian system. The foreign travellers, who passed through Coastal Karnataka, noticed the cultivation of coconut, paddy and vegetables and other crops on the mouth of the river banks and the cultivation of aracanut, sugar cane and pepper in interior of these rivers. They also noticed the utilization of these river water for the cultivation of second crop by constructing dams. Besides this information, the travellers referred to the structure of these rivers too.

The principal river in the southern part of the district is the Netravati, which originates, slightly east of Kudre - Mukh and flows nearly due south.
as far as Uppinangady, where it joins the Kumaradhara and continues westwards to the sea at Mangalore. Its main tributaries in the upper reaches are the *Neriya-hole* and *Shisila-hole*, both typical Ghat torrents in the monsoon. The *Kumaradhara* with its main tributaries *Gundia hole*, *Kallaje hole* and *Kombar hole*, drains a very large area extending over practically the whole of Uppinangady and Puttur Ranges. The surplus drain-off therefore, from a total length of 50 miles of Ghats and not less than 750 square miles of region possessing one of the heaviest rainfalls in the whole drains into the confluence of Uppinangady. The importance of forest conservancy over the head-waters of this (not inconsiderable attachment basin with its extreme gradients in the upper reaches) cannot be overestimated. Uppinangadi, at 100 feet elevation, is only 20 to 30 miles from the source of these streams.

Beyond Uppinangadi, the river approaches more nearly the base line of erosion; enormous quantities of suspended manure are carried down during the rains which tend to silt up at the mouth as flood-pressure abates. It is recorded that about 150 years ago, Portuguese vessels of considerable draught were able to navigate safely as far as Panemangalur on the Netravati River, say 15 miles upstream. This would now be impossible. However, from Bantwal the river is navigable to boats of a capacity of about three tons, and as it approaches Mangalore, the channel assumes wider proportions and is studded by a number of small islands called *Kudru*, rising a few feet above the surface of the water. These islets are exceedingly fertile and rice and sugar cane cultivation is extensively carried on in them.

A large number of river-courses, unaffordable except at certain places during the dry season, which converge near the western limits of the forest
massifs in the three northern ranges, render communication usually difficult at all times, especially from north to south, and add materially to the coast of opening up an undeveloped interior.

The river Netravati is one of the prominent rivers in coastal Karnataka and its impact on the agrarian activities are noticed by the foreign travellers. For instance, in 1516 Barbosa remarked about this river as follows:

Great and very Fair River, which discharges its waters into the sea, and here hard by the coast, towards the south, is very great town (Mangalore) - where many ships take cargoes of black rice to sell in the land of Malabar. The said river is very pleasant and beautiful, full of groves of coconut palms... 

In 1623 Pietro Della Valle noticed the same river as salt water bay round and large on its joining sea. Further the same traveller says about the river as it runs from North and other from south formed two rivers before its entrance to sea.

Fryer opined that the entrance of the river was 8 feet fathom above and water navigable on all sides. The river Netravati, according to Hamilton, is running from the mountain Ghats and proceedings from the great rains and dews, pouring to them rushed towards the sea from the North, South and East and all joining together near Mangalore. The rivers lay 25 or 30 leagues up in the country and are islands. Further, the same traveller says, the fields in and near Mangalore yielded two crops of corn in the plains, and the higher lands produce pepper, betel-nut etc.

The mouth of the same river, according to Buchanan:

Was fine body salt water separated from the sea and beach of sand. The town Bantavala is situated on the bank of the river passing Arcola, which is named Netravati. The tide of the river flows no higher than Arcola, but canoes carry 100
Morays, or about 130 bushels of rice can at all seasons ascend five or six cosses above Nagar. The channel is very wide and full of rocks, which in dry season form many islands among which the river winds with a gentle current. In the rainy season, canoes can ascend six "cosses" farther than they could do at present. There are two branches of the river which join five cosses above Nagar. The northern branch is the largest and comes from the same place that give rise to the Tunga and Bhadra rivers. Because of the flow of the Netravati, the region between Bantavala and Mangalore was best quantity of land. "Much the land is well watered by springs or rivulets that it produces constant successive crops and grains. In the interior, dam constructed to the river, Bombilu (tributary of the Netravati)."

The Buchanan's Journey also furnishes the structure of the rivers and their impact on the agrarian set up of the region.

Similarly, the rivers namely Manjeshwara, Kumbala and Chandhragiri, flowing in the Kasargod Taluk in the erstwhile South Kanara district of the former Madras Presidency, presently in Kasargod district of Kerala state, had impact on the agrarian system of the region. The mouths of these rivers structure form the ports namely Manjeshwara, Kumbala and Kasaragod, where the agricultural products such as rice, pepper and coconuts were exported to the places like Gujarat and Arabia. Rice and coconuts produced in the region were in demand in the port of Bombay. The brisk trade of black rice in the port of Kumbala was mainly due to the river. Kumbala River was suited for the cultivation of bad black rice, which the Malbares come here to purchase. Paddy and coconuts were grown on the banks of the same river as known to us from the accounts of Della Valle and the Portuguese records.
Regarding river structure and its importance in the agrarian system of that region, Buchanan says,

*The River (Kumbala) of considerable width: yet at low water it is shallow—the plantations of coconut were rather more numerous. The rice grounds are more neatly cultivated; the water for the second crop is conducted to them with great care. Near the sea, Sugar cane is cultivated. The town Kumbala is situated on salt water lake which is separated from the sea by spit of sand.*

The Chandragiri has great historical importance. It separates the Tuluva and the Malayala regions. The river water (interior region) was used for the cultivation of rice. It was *intermixed with rising land, a few plots of rice ground, surrounded by palm gardens and the houses of the Nairs. At low water the river is shallow, but very wide.* This river has two tributaries, the Chandragiri and the Payasvini. The former originates in the Sampajinad of Kodagu. Then, it flows to North and South widening itself and forming small Island which are usually flooded during the monsoon. The river winds round Kasaragod town in the form of letter U before it enters the sea. The left arm expands into a long stretch of back water where the port of Kasargod lies. The river is 65 miles long from its source. The Chandragiri river is navigable for about 10 miles from its mouth.

All these rivers differ, from those in South Malabar in having a more rapid fall and less completely eroded beds. Shallows and rapids are numerous. Their courses are completely straight, with minor bends. The red clay deposits used in the Mangalore tile industry excepted, alluvial stretches are rare; stream banks rise with moderate or setup gradient for some distance above the river - beds in most of the upper stretches.
The principal rivers in the northern part of South Kanara are the Gurupura, the Gangoli, the Sitanadi and the Swarananadi. The Sitanadi has its source on the Ghats beyond Someshwar, the upper reaches of which are clothed with heavily wooded forests of Someshwar reserve; it flows in a north-westerly direction as far as the confluence with its tributary in Someshwar reserve, then runs in a more or less westerly direction till it finds the Arabian sea co jointly with the Swarananadi near Hangarakatta, about eight miles to the north of Udupi town. An extensive backwater is formed here. Sitanadi is navigable upto Kokkarane, eleven miles from the coast, and the Swarananadi up to Baje about 12 miles from the coast, from both of which places the merchandise from the interior and from above the Ghat is taken down by boats to be exported from the port of Hangarakatte.

The Swarananadi has its origin in the north - east of Kudremukh in Andar reserved forest, and runs in a north - westerly direction till it joins to sea near Hangarakatta. It is navigable upto Baje, a distance of 12 miles from the coast.

The Gangoli or gurget is the name of a combination of streams of importance but of no great size, that form a broad estuary with an interesting landscape to the north of Kundapur town, entering the sea near Gangoli port. The streams composing it are the Kolluru, Haladi and Chakranadi. Although the course of these streams is very short owing to the narrow sea board near Kundapur, the volume of water brought drown in the monsoon is considerable. The Kolluru River starts from the Ghats to the north of Dhulli and flows in a South - westerly direction, skirting the coast for about eight or nine miles before meeting the Chakranadi at Hakladi. It is navigable to a distance of 12 miles from its mouth. The Chakranadi, which forms the
boundary between the Kundapur and Shankaranarayana Forest Ranges, emerges from the Ghats to the south-east of Kodashadri and flows through some of the important reserved forests in a westerly direction till it meets the Kolluru River, three miles from Kundapur. It is navigable up to Wandse, twelve miles from its entrance to the backwater. The timber from Madibare and the adjoining reserved forests as well as fuel from the reserves around Wandse are boated to Gangolli port along this river. The Haladi River rising in the Western Ghats near Amashebail runs in a westerly direction till it meets the Kubjanadi, and eventually joins the estuary. Its importance from the forest point of view is great owing to facilities afforded for the cheap transport of timber and fuel from the reserves of Shankaranarayana Forest Range to Kundapur depot. The tidal influence is felt as far as Haladi, about 17 miles from the mouth of the river, and it is generally navigable up to that place, sometimes even during the dry season.

The river Valley of the Panch-Gangavali was fertile and its banks were covered with paddy fields, sugar canes ‘palmetoes’ and coconut gardens as known from Della Valle’s account. About this river, he observes is great, on its northern bank stands a little village named Gulvan (Gujjadi) near which the river makes a little island by boat forded over the other streams to the far side. According to one of the Portuguese records, dated 1630 A.D. the same river’s mouth area (Ganguli) was covered with green paddy fields, coconut trees. The Portuguese after securing that region were expected to raise 2999 bales of rice and 1500 Khandis of pepper.

The same river and its structure enabled the people of Basur to cultivate rice in many places. The whole river Valley was suited for two crops per year. Because of the river structure people were able to export
large quantity of rice as known from the account of 1718. About the same river, Buchanan's observations are worthy of noticing. He says the river, or rather lake, at Kundapur has only one opening into the sea. It is very extensive. Five fresh water rivers come from the hills, and meeting the tide in this lake intersect the whole level ground, and form a number of islands. Further he also observes I have not seen a more beautiful country than this. The study of the inscriptions and Kadatas reveals that the Pancha Gangavali often changed its course of flow and in the rainy season the river flood damaged the crops extensively.

The Ghats proper are broken by these passes through which road communications are maintained between the territory of Mysore and South Kanara. The Agumbe pass, above Someshwara, connects the ports of Kundapur, Hangarakattta, Malpe and Mangalore with Shimoga and other places in Mysore region. The Hosangadi Ghat has direct communication with the Haladi river at Haladi whence river communication upto Gangoli port is maintained. The Kolluru Ghat road communicates with the ports of Baindur and Gangoli. All three Ghat roads are fit for motor traffic.

The Sambhavi river in Mulki region encompassing Carnate (Karnad) very often changed its course of flow. A group of islands was noticed by the Portuguese account of 1580 A.D. on its mouth. These islands were fertile and well cultivated. The study of the foreign accounts and their maps reveals that the major portion of the area in the present town Mulki was under water. Most of the cultivated lands in that place at present are Gajani (sea receded area or the change of the course of the river flowing). The present river structure, which came into existence in the last decade of the seventeenth century, enabled to form a small place on its mouth. It was surrounded by water. The Keladi rulers collected substantial amount of
custom duty from here. It had a fort constructed by the Keladi Nayaka. Since custom duty was collected from here, it was called Mulki. According to the treaty of Portuguese and Keladi Basavappa in 1705, the former got right to collect the custom duty from the place. Its hinterlands produced large quantity of rice. Consequently, Mulki became famous for exporting rice.

The Sancada Hole near Bhatkal is a small rapid stream, which waters a very beautiful valley, surrounded on every side by hills. It was suited for good cultivation. Buchanan observes that the valley was in an excellant state of cultivation. Dams were constructed against the river for the cultivation of rice. On the banks of the river there were many coconut gardens. These, says Buchanan in the best condition of any that I have seen in Kanara.

The river Edamavany and Angaru, flow the region between Kirimanjeswar and Baindur, were most considerable fordable respectively. The latter’s channel in many places shut up and converted into place for making salt.

The river Mabucullu (sita) was very wide and it descends from the Ghats. Buchanan observes that:

in the rainy season bring down a great body of fresh water; but were the road crosses, it is at this season quite salt. The tide goes up from the sea about three cosses and canoes in the rainy season can ascend six cosses from the mouth. The banks of the river are well planted with coconut trees.

Regarding the river Suvarna, Buchanan observes very wide but shallow. Its source is from a lake or tank near Carculla; but it owes its magnitude entirely to the water of the sea. Near the Suvarna are many plantations of coconut palms, and also some rice grounds.
The above historical survey of the structure of these rivers reveals that these rivers changed their course of flow and these influenced the agrarian system. These rivers very often, served as highways for the transportation of agricultural products from the coast to the foot hills of the Ghats. The mouths of these rivers were suited for ports where sea-faring activities were in full swing.

**Historical Background of the Region:**

A large number of ruling families, big and small ruled different parts of South Kanara from the third to middle of the fourteenth centuries. The Alupas were the most powerful chiefs worthy of noticing. Alupa rule extended not only to the present South Kanara but also southern portion of North Kanara and the vast territorial division called *Kadamba mandala*. When they were closely associated with the major powers of Karnataka, they extended their rule even to the upghat regions. The Alupa kingdom known as *Alvakheda* was known to the Greeks who called the region as *Olekhoira*. To begin with, they have been the subordinaters of the Kadambas which is evident from fifth century Halmidi epigraph which refers Alupagana. It indicates subordinate status of the Alupas under Kadambas. When the supremacy of Kadambas suppressed by Badami Chalukyas during the second half of the sixth century, the Alupas acknowledged overlordship of Chalukyas. However, they did not face too much interference from their imperial powers in this region.

In the second decade of the eleventh century (1010 A.D - 1020 A.D.) the Cholas occupied South Kanara region and it was liberated by the Alupa ruler Bankideva I. In 1333 A.D the Hoysala ruler Vira Ballala III invaded the Alupa kingdom and occupied part of the Tulu country. In 1345 A.D.
major portion of coastal Karnataka became part of the fast expanding Vijayanagara Empire. It is curious to note that between 1345 A.D. and 1348 A.D. the region was actually under the sway of three mutually unrelated powers those of the weakened Alupas, the Hoysalas and the resurgent Vijayanagara power. 60

The extension of Vijayanagara rule in South Kanara can be seen in two stages. The first stage from 1345 A.D. to 1375 A.D. its rule covered the region from the rivers Gangoli in the north and Payaswini in the south. In the second stage, that is from 1372 A.D to 1472 A.D. the entire Coastal Karnataka including the Gove rajya was under the sway of the Vijayanagara. After 1472 A.D. the Vijayanagara rulers lost the northern portion of the present North Kanara to the Bahmani Sultans and then to the Adilshahis of Bijapur.

It is to be remembered that the Vijayanagara rule was more effective in central portions of Coastal Karnataka than the Tulu speaking region. This status continued till 1552 A.D. After that year till 1610 A.D. its rule was nominal. 61

The Vijayanagara rule in South Kanara ushered in a new form of political setup. First the political isolation of the region ended. Under the same rulers the entire region was brought under the control and it continued till 1472 A.D. This region comprised the rajyas of Gove, Honnavar, Barkuru, Mangaluru, Haive, Tulu and Konkana. Besides, the region included the rule of number of feudatory, hereditary, and tributary chiefs. The chiefs namely the Bangas of Bangadi, the Chautas of Puttige and Ullala, the Savantas, the Bhairarasa Odeyars of Kalasa Karkala, the Tolaharas of Suralu, the Honnekambali chiefs of Hosangadi, the Saluvas of Gerusoppa
South Kanara under the Vijayanagara Empire
and Sangitapura and host of minor chiefs were actively involved in day
today administration of the region. Further, the inscriptions of the period
reveal many instances of co-operation as well as conflict between them and
the imperial officers on the one hand and between themselves on the other.

In the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D, the Portuguese
commenced their predatory activities in the ports of Kasaragod, Kumbala,
Manjeshwara, Mangaluru, Barkuru, Basruru, Bhatkal, Honnavar, Kumta,
Mirjan and Ankola and they succeeded in securing trade monopoly of the
region from the imperial authority in 1546 A.D. 

Ikkeri Nayakas predominance in South Kanara region could be seen
from 1554 A.D to 1763 A.D. Between the years 1554 A.D. and 1610 A.D
the Keladi Nayakas subdued the Tulu chiefs, and appointed the governors in
the Barkuru – Mangaluru – Tulurajya but nominally acknowledged the
overlordship of the Vijayanagara Emperors. However, between the years
1610 A.D and 1763 A.D the Tulunadu witnessed the ascendancy of the
Keladi authority. They exterminated the principalities of the Saluvas of
Gerusoppe and Bhatkal, reduced the Tolahas and the Honnekambalis,
crushed the might’s of the recalcitrant chiefs namely, the Bhairarasa of
Kalasa-Karkala, the Bangas, the Chautas, the Samantas, the chief of
Kumbalas and broke the powers of Ballalas and Heggades etc. The northern
portion of Tulunadu was brought under the effective rule of the Nayakas,
whereas in the Mangalore and Kasaragod region, they allowed the local
chiefs to rule over their hereditary principalities. But the Nayakas exercised
effective supervision over the activities of these chiefs. The menacing
activities of the Portuguese in South Kanara were curbed and the Malayalis
incursions in the southern portions of South Kanara were effectively tackled
and the boundary of the South Kanara pushed up to the madai (Cannanore district of Kerala State). But the Nayakas exhibited utter incompetence in checking the Maratha raids on the ports in the region under study. For the next thirty six years it remained under the Mysore rule till the British finally annexed it in 1799 A.D.

**Administrative Divisions:**

The Alupas ruled the area from an early period of the Christian era to the end of the fourteenth century A.D. The Alupa kingdom was divided into divisions called *nadu* and the region around Baindur in Kundapur taluk was known as Bayindura *nadu*, while the region around Mangalore was called Magaluru-*nadu*. For a short period, the region was under the suzerainty of the Hoysalas, after which, from about the middle of the fourteenth Century A.D. to the end of the sixteenth Century A.D. the district formed a part of the Vijayanagara Empire.

Under the Vijayanagara rule the region was divided into two administrative units called Barkuru-*rajya* and Mangaluru-*rajya*, with Barkuru in the present Udupi taluk and Mangaluru for their respective headquarters. The two *rajyas* were generally placed under the charge of two governors. Sometimes there was a single governor for both the *rajyas*. The region was further sub divided into smaller administrative units known as the *nadus*. There are reference in Vijayanagara inscriptions to *Paduvakona*-*nadu*, *Bayindura*-*nadu*, *Udayanagara*-*nadu*, *Titigadiya*-*nadu*, *Kadaba*-*nadu*, *Narvatta*- *nadu*, *Haru*-*nadu*, *Mungai*-*nadu*, *Vandala*-*Keya*-*nadu*, *Kantarada*-*nadu*, *Kabu*-*nadu*, *Khande*-*nadu*, *Bandapalli*-*nadu*. 66
Under the Vijayanagara rule, the administration of South Kanara was extended and seems to be perfected politically. Various administrative units such as Desa, Rajya, Mandala, Nadu, Magani, Grama, Uru, Chavadi etc appeared in the records of the Vijayanagara. In the Tulu speaking region a peculiar unit known as guttu emerged under the same rule. Some of the officers were appointed by the imperial government and the rest of the administrators of the units were hereditary. The imperial government often exercised its control over the officers of the Rajyas and they were often transferred from one rajya to another rajya. Sometimes, the officer of one rajya empowered the right to look after more than one rajyas. In the rest of the officers' case, their activities were watched.

Besides these officers, the Vijayanagara inscriptions record the associations such as Kolabalis, Ballalu, Yelames, Settikaras, etc. They had privileges of being present in the courts of provincial governors. At the same time, we come across local assemblies such as Uru, Sasiravaru, Praje, Parivara, Jannis etc in the Vijayanagara inscriptions found in South Kanara. In the local administration Gramani, Madhyastha, Tentral and Karna (Village Accountant) had their role. Generally, the interference of Vijayanagara rulers in the activities of these local officers was very minimum. Responsible outsiders (Horaginavaru) were included as witness to the recorded grants to individuals or corporate body. This is a rare phenomenon of the administration of the Vijayanagara in this region. Gradual monetization commenced in the region under the Vijayanagara rule and this can be substantiated by the amount of circulation of coins of various denominations. Kate Gadyana, Ardha Kati Gadyana, Bahira Gadyana (appear to denote foreign coin) Sannapratapa (a small gadyana), Dodda
Varaha (higher denomination of Varaha) and Ghatti Varaha (Denoting a Varaha with high percentage of gold content) are peculiar types of coins we notice in the inscriptions of the Vijayanagara rule. Barakuru and Mangaluru had mints from which coins were minted and issued. Systematization of tax structure was one of the achievements of the Vijayanagara rule in South Kanara. Along with land tax known as Siddhaya the rulers seems to have levied a number of taxes as known from the study of inscriptions in the region constantly refer to the Bijavari, or Bijavari Khanduga (amount of seed required to sow rice land in old accounts), which was the basis for the fixation of land revenue. The non-agrarian taxation formed a substantial part of the state revenue. The mentions of Honna Teruge and Suvanadaya in a few inscriptions indicate that the taxes in some cases were collected in the form of gold coins. The privileged position of the religious institutions in the tax structure was continued and strengthened. These religious institutions and the Brahmans absorbed substantial portions of the state revenue. The mention of Mukandaya in the records of the Vijayanagara rulers also indicates that the land tax was collected in three installments. It seems that improved means of keeping revenue account was in vogue. The revenue department was known as Attavani. It was under powerful rulers the taxes were collected by issuing ordinances. On the whole the tax structure in the region was heavy, but the rulers tried to redress the grievances. It also led to the expansion of agrarian institution as well as the rise of new commercial towns through out the region.

The administration of justice in the region under the Vijayanagara was conducted in traditional manner in maintaining the dignity of status of the emperor. The local customs and usages were honored and to a great extent
implemented in the administration of justice. This led to the consolidation of
the customs and usage of the land. The nature of punishment was determined
by the status of one's own caste.

The Nayakas of Keladi rearranged the administrative set up in South
Kanara and thus contributed emergence of communities and classes. Some
of the administrative divisions prevailed during the Vijayanagara period
such as Mahanadu, nadu and kapana seem to have lost their significance
and they were replaced by administrative divisions such as Sime, Hobali,
Magani. Sthala Senabova, Niyogi, Chinna Bhandari (treasurer) Hobali
Karnika, Aashtana Varthaka (Court Merchant), parupatyadara etc., were
new officers who emerged in South Kanara during the Ikkeri Nayaka rule as
evident from the inscriptions belonging to the reigns of Nayakas.

The revenue structure of the Keladi nayakas was more refined than
that of the previous rulers namely the Vijayanagara. It seems that 'Sistu' of
Sivappa Nayaka as explained by B.L.Rice was not in operation in South
Kanara. The higher revenue structure of the Nayakas led to discontents
among the peasants. The Nayakas are known in South Kanara as builders of
forts from Bekal in Kasargod to Kumta. They encouraged non Tuluvas to
settle on the outskirts of these forts.

The political activities of Haider and Tippu Sulthan in South Kanara
had repercussions on political and social set up and the European trading
companies. The English reactions resulted in wars in South Kanara and the
latter was transferred into the battle ground. Haider and Tipu destroyed the
old feudal groups and brought South Kanara on the orbit of history of India.
Tipu's administrative innovations were forcibly implemented by his officers,
but had serious effects on the socio-economic setup in the area. Certain
communities, castes and religions gained prominence on account of the nature of their rule. The ports in South Kanara region widened their sea trade. In coinage system Tipu made innovations. He introduced large number of new denomination of coins in all metals.

The administration of the region of the South Kanara was transferred to the Keladi rulers by the Vijayanagara emperor around 1554. A.D. and it was under the sway of the Keladi Nayakas for about two centuries with the capture of the Bednur by Haider Ali in 1736 A.D. The region of South Kanara also passed on to his hands and after him in to the possession of Tippu Sultan. It was annexed by the British in 1799. A.D. On the fall of Srirangapatna under the British, both South and North Kanara formed one District in the Madras Presidency for some time. They were however, bifurcated in 1860 and constituted into two separate district as south Kanara and North Kanara. In 1862, North Kanara (excluding Kundapur Taluk which was joined to South Kanara) was transferred to the Bombay Presidency, while South Kanara was retained in the Madras presidency itself and it remained so up to its integration (excluding the Kasaragod Taluk) with the new Mysore state on 1st November 1956 as a result of the reorganization of states. The Kasaragod Taluk became a part of Kerala.

In 1895, the area of South Kanara district was 3,902 Sq. miles and it included also a small group of island in the Indian ocean known as the Anjindiva island. In 1896, there were only five Taluks in South Kanara District, namely, Mangalore, Kundapur, Udupi, Kasargod and Uppinangady. A new Taluk, with Moodabidri as the head quarters and called after that place, was formed in 1910. A.D. However, for administrative reasons, the Moodabidri taluk was abolished two years later and a new taluk called the
Karkal Taluk was formed with effect from 1st July 1912. A.D. In 1927 the taluk of Uppinangady was renamed as Puttur and it’s head quarters was also located there. For the purpose of revenue administration, the district was divided into three divisions namely, Mangalore, Kundapura and Puttur. The Kundapura division comprised the three northern taluks of Kundapur, Udupi, Karkal and was headed by an Indian Civil Service officer designated as Head Assistant Collector while the Puttur taluk comprising the taluks of Puttur and Kasaragod was under the charge of Deputy Collector. The Mangalore taluk which constituted a division by itself was under the charge of the head quarters Deputy Collector.
Notes and references:

6. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
51. *ARSIE*, 1939, AP A No. 1.
55. *Ibid*, p. 277.
65. *Ibid*.
67. *Ibid*.