CHAPTER IV

Textile Centres, Production and Trade
Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries

The period of the Brahmani and the Vijayanagar empires in South India, witnessed a steady stream of travellers who described the political conditions and the economy and society of the times. They have left behind glowing accounts of the prosperity of the kingdoms and the flourishing trade in textiles and other commodities. References to the textile industry and trade have been made by Nicolo Conti, the Italian (A.D. 1414-19), Ma-huan, The Chinese traveller (A.D. 1451), and numerous Portuguese travellers - Vasco-de-gama (A.D. 1497-1538) Varthema (A.D. 1503-8) Barbosa (A.D. 1508-9) Tome-Piers (A.D.1512-15) Domingo Paes (A.D. 1520-22) Fernao Nuniz (A.D. 1535-37) and Caesar Fredrick (A.D. 1563-81). A few stray references are also to be found in the accounts of Razzaq, the Arab merchant (A.D. 1442-44) and of Nikitin the Russian (A.D. 1468-75) Their accounts constitute the main source of information for this period apart from marginal references in the inscriptions and literary works.

Certain changes can be perceived in the comparative position of the weaving communities. In Andhra and Karnataka, right from the Chōla to the Vijayanagar period, the same communities dominated like the Sāle, Jēdēra, Dēvānga, etc. but in the Tamil country the Kaikkōlās
gradually emerged as the leading weaving community displacing the Sāliyās mentioned in many inscriptions as 'Chōliya-Sāliya'. Thus from the foundation of the Vijayanagar empire onwards, there are innumerable references to the Kaikkōla weavers and only stray references to the Saliyan. It is likely that the Sāliyās migrated further down South because Barbosa refers to them as the dominant weaving community of Malabar region. He calls them Chāliens and says that though they belonged to the upper castes their social status was low since they had but little money and clothed only the lower classes.

As in the earlier period different professionals were assigned different streets in the city of Vijayanagar. The continuance of this practice is testified to by Abdur Razzaq. Reference to 'the street of the Kaikkōlar' comes from Madambakkam in the period of Deva Rāya (A.D. 1426). An extremely useful inscription from the period of Krishnadēva Rāya pertaining to remission of tax on loom is

1. A.R.E., 269 of 1913-14 from Chidambaram, South Arcot dt.
3. Ibid.
5. A.R.E., 140 of 1915-16 (Salem dt.)
located in the Kaikkōla street at Tiruchchengōdu, itself a very important weaving centre in the Salem dt. As in the earlier period, the weaver concentration was in the tirumadai vilāgam of the temples.

A variety of textiles were woven by the weavers and types of textiles were often named after the community engaged in weaving them. Thus brocaded silk is referred to as 'Devānga', in the Varnaratnakara of Jyotisvara Thakūra (fourteenth century) 'Devānga Chīra (i.e., cloth) is again mentioned in the Varnakas or stock lists of cloth compiled by the Gujarati writers of that period. Similarly different types of Jēdāra silk is mentioned in the Gurjararasavali - Jēdāra Mathau (silk with sheen) Jēdāra Dadimasara (pomegranate coloured), Jēdāra Bhatigatu (patterned silk) etc. The Varnaratnakara refers to

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6. A.R.E., 319 of 1911 (Chingleput dt.)
9. Vividavarnaka: 34, cited by Moti Chandra, "Costumes and Textiles in the Sultanate period, "J.J.T.H., No.6, 1961, p.27. Not only was cloth known by the caste of weavers which specialised in weaving them but sometimes the caste derived its name from its specialisation. Thus, the Saurāṣṭra weavers of South India (an immigrant community) came to be called Patṭunukkaran because of their specialisation in silk weaving.
10. Gurjararasavali: 34.1, 181.5, 35.1, etc. quoted from Moti Chandra, Ibid., p.27
vichitra\textsuperscript{11} or variegated silk which the \textit{Manasollasa}\textsuperscript{12}, an earlier text belonging to the twelfth century also mentions as an important textile variety. This corresponds to the chintz of the European records\textsuperscript{13} This is also taken to be the same as the Pintado of the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{14} The reference to muslins are again numerous. This was the chich-li-pu of Ma-huan which he says was produced in Coimbatore (Campamei) and made up into pieces 4ft 5 inches wide and 25 ft. long. He also refers to the production of flowered patterned goods, that is, chintz.\textsuperscript{15} The term 'Sella' also stands for muslin. During the period of Achyutadēva Mahārāya (A.D. 1529-42), 'the merchants of the 56 countries' assembling at Ōmalur (Salem dt.),

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Varnaratnakara : 28
  \item \textsuperscript{12} \textit{Manasollasa}, op.cit., pp.88-89
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Reference to the chintz of Masulipatnam or more especially Punicat, as an item of export trade, can be found in almost every traveller's account of the 16th - 17th centuries. For instance, see the account of Anthony Schorer in \textit{Relations of Golkonda} (ed.) W.H. Moreland (London, 1930), p.54. Punchas, His Pilgrims Vol.X, Robert Fitch, p.191, Caesar Fridrick, p.127, etc. Also William Foster, \textit{The English Factors in India}, 14 Vols. (Oxford 1906-27) Vol.II, p.164 and passim.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} John Irwin, "European Influence on the Indian Textile Industry", \textit{J.I.T.H.}, No.4, 1959, p.77
  \item \textsuperscript{15} George Philips, "Ma-huan's Account of Cochin, Calicut and Aden", \textit{The Jurnal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland}, 1891, p.345
\end{itemize}
collected a voluntary contribution on their items of trade like - *parutti* (raw cotton), *paṇju* (seedless cotton) *paṭṭunūl* (silk yarn) Salli Cavaram and Chichchilikaṭṭu.\(^{16}\) Salli stands for sella and Chichchili for chintz. Sella is the Salernpores of the factory records, a cloth roughly 16 yds in length\(^{17}\) which constituted a principal export item in the 17th century. The reference to Sella also comes from a 16th century inscription which says that the inhabitants of Balupuram (Dharmavaram, Ongole taluq, Guntur dt.) gave for the merit of Khan Ajam Khwaja Abdul Saheb (a local officer) a contribution of 1 *vam* (?) on Sella.\(^{18}\) The *Jimanavaraparidānavidī*\(^{19}\) refers to Sālura. This is the same as Sallālo, an inferior variety of muslin. A fifteenth century varnaka list refers to chīra\(^{20}\) This is again the same as the Chiḥlae of the factory records or the Chiḥ-li-pu of Ma-huan. Barbosa in his account refers to the export to Pegu of silk cloth from Pulicat called Patōla.\(^{21}\) Fernao Nuniz when describing the attire of king

\(^{16}\) S.l.i., Vol.VII, No.21


\(^{19}\) *Jimanavaraparidānavidī*, one of the Varnakas compiled in the 15th century : 181, cited in Moti Chandra, *op.cit.* p.36

\(^{20}\) Moti Chandra *op.cit.*, p.43. The reference to sale of Chira at the local fair (Santa) comes from Bhīmavaram, Cocanada, Godavari dt. in the 12th century. (S.l.I., Vol.V, No.65).

\(^{21}\) Barbosa, *op.cit.*, Book II, p.153. Also see Chap.II for reference to Patōla.
Achyuta Raya says that he wore a skirt, doubtlet and cap of fine Patōla. The Varnaratnākara also refers to cloth varieties named after the region of production. Thus textiles from Kāñchipuram were called Kāñchivani or Sachōpakachī that is gold embroidered cloth. The coarser variety was just called Kachi. (This is again another name for Kāñchipuram). It also refers to cloth called Chōlapatna, probably from Gangaikonda Cholapuram and to Tānchēra, that is silk produced in Tanjavūr. The term Molīa described in the Jīmānavaṃparīdānavīdī stands for Morees. In the description of Nāgapaṭṭinam given in the account of Tome Pires, reference is made to the "many cloths, printed as well as white ones called enrolados (?) which are thin as baftas (Bengal muslin) ballachos (i.e., Persian Parchah or linen) ... and the printed ones, many sorts of taffesiras of cotton thread (?) and Sarassa. Pires also says of Golkonda, "This kingdom

24. Ibid: 2 and 20. Reference to the fine textiles of Chōlapatna is also made in the Manasollása, op.cit. p.19
25. Ibid.
26. Moti Chandra, op.cit., p.32
of the Deccan produces .. calicoes, cloths in white and
countless colours and beatilhas (fine muslin was called
beatille from the Portuguese word beatilha or veiling.).
They make enough of these two things to furnish the world.
Of Calicut he says, "They make many kinds of silken cloths
here". Pires' point about the production of textiles is
substantiated by Pyrard who says that at Calicut were made
"very fine white cloth and diverse kinds of painted and
patterned tapestry. Fine textiles from all other parts
were also brought to Calicut in exchange for horses and other
items from Ormuz." Linschoten (A.D. 1583-91) in his
account says, "there is excellent fair linen of cotton
(Calico, chintzy etc.) made in Nagapatnam, St. Thomas
(San Thome) and Masulipatnam of all colours and woven with
diverse sorts of loom works (flowers) and figures, very
fine and cunningly wrought which is much worn in India
and better esteemed than silk for that it is higher priced."

The same type of dyes continued to be used such as
indigo, madder, kusumba and turmeric as were in use in the
earlier centuries. Lac from which red dye was made and
which was also used for the printing of other colours

31. (a) Ibid., p.78
   (b) The Voyage of Francos Pyrard of Laval (ed.)
32. Ibid. p.58
33. The account of J.H. Van Linschoten (2 vols.)
    Hakluyat Society (London, 1884), I.p.91
and designs on cloth, was imported from Pegu. Barbosa refers repeatedly to 'scarlet ingrain' dye or the Kermes grain which gave a fast red dye. This dye, however, had to be imported into Pulicat from Mecca through Jedda in the Middle East. The Chay root was also used for dyeing red and Methwold, writing in the 17th century calls it a monopoly item of the king. There are also numerous references by travellers to the Sappanwood or Brazil wood which yielded an inferior red dye. Thus Nicolo Conti says he saw them on the route from Chandragiri to San Thome and that they were also available in plenty in Malabar. Ibn Batuta also refers to them. The application of the dyes was by washing them in coloured water and the application of coloured designs by means of the printed block referred to in the Manasollasa must obviously have continued during this period.

Information on the type of loom in use during these centuries is rather scarce but it would not be unreasonable to assume that technology changed very little

34. Barbosa op.cit., Book II, p.153
35. Ibid., pp.77-78, 132, 162 and Passim
36. Ibid., pp. 132, 153 and Passim.
37. Methwold's Relations, in W.H. Moreland (ed.) op.cit. p.35
40. Manasollasa, op.cit., 18, p.89.
or not at all from what it was in the twelfth-thirteenth centuries. But one very important inscription from Tirupati dated A.D. 1538 gives some remarkable information about the extent of specialisation in different types of weaving. It records an agreement between the cloth and yarn merchants of virtually all regions of South India and states "... while we are assembling here... in the course of weaving by handlooms, one-third of the Sadisarakkūdam or achchukkattu (a square frame indicating the draw loom) should be drawn lengthwise and two-third of the cotton should be used in cross-wise weaving. This mode of weaving should be done only by the Muslims (and not by the Hindus). As a reward for their services (in this style of weaving) they are authorised to collect the income from the gifted lands for their weaving..." This inscription is remarkable not only for the extent of specialisation which it indicates but for the evidence of the merchants' control over the productive processes.

41. T.T., Vol.IV, No.112 of the period of Achyutaraya. The inscription is cited in detail with reference to the role of merchants in textile trade.

42. Ref. Chap.II, Portion on technology, supra. The existence of looms with jacquards for weaving patterned cloth as distinct from the ordinary looms is proved by the levying of achchutarī (i.e. on jacquard looms) which is different from the tari-irai (tax on the ordinary loom) - T.T., Vol.I, No.99 of the period of Tiruvēnkatānātha Yādavarāya (14th century). The inscription also refers to Parai-Tari, the meaning of which is not quite clear.
The other references to weaving technology are from stray evidences provided by proverbs and folk-traditions. Such information while they give some general idea about the method of weaving cannot be ascribed to any specific period.\(^{43}\) That the loom was operated with the feet is indicated by the proverb which says "If a dog gets a sore on its head, it never recovers from it and even so a weaver who gets a sore on his foot.\(^{44}\) 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 a monetary loss to him. Another proverb says, "The Chetti lost by partnership while the weaver came to grief by isolation.\(^{45}\) This makes it clear that weaving involved cooperative effort since it included processes like twisting and winding the threads, preparing the skins, etc.

One gradual development which is perceivable from the Late-Chōla period to the fifteenth - sixteenth centuries is the increasing specialisation in the weaving industry. Earlier, reference has been made to the tax on dyers\(^{46}\) and tailors\(^{47}\) but during the Vijayanagar period there are references to tax even on the carders\(^{48}\) showing that they constituted a separate professional group.

\(^{43}\) The chronological and spatial limitations of this sort of evidence is fully accepted and recognised and hence it is being presented tentatively and cautiously in view of the dearth of regular evidence. (The use of proverbs etc. as a source in historical research is discussed in Chapter I under methodology).

\(^{44}\) Thurston, \textit{op.cit.}, Vol.VI, p.276

\(^{45}\) \textit{Ibid.}
The development of certain factors during the period of the Vijayanagar and Brahmani kingdoms, leads to the inference that domestic demand for cloth, especially fine cotton, must have gone up. The process of urbanisation and the growth of the professional and artisan classes under State and temple patronage, which had slowed down with the decline of the Chōlas in the thirteenth century, now began to revive. This, combined with the creation of a new bureaucracy must have led to an increase in the demand for cloth. Of the lower classes it has been repeatedly stated by the travellers that they wore very scanty clothing because of the climate. Abdur Razzaq says, "The blacks of this country have the body nearly naked; they wear only bandages round the middle called lankoutah, which descend from the navel to above the knee. This costume is common to the king and to the beggar... As to the Mussalmans they dress themselves in magnificent apparel after the manner of the Arabs."49

However, 100 years later when describing the costumes of the upper classes, the nobility and the ladies, Paes and Nuniz exclaim on their elaborate apparel. Nuniz after describing


the rich attire of Achyutarāya, goes on to say, "The king never puts on any garment more than once". The king himself must have contributed, in no insignificant measure, to keep the looms working! He says the king wore a doublet with a skirt attached to them made of fine Pátola silk and a cap of rich brocade and neither was worn more than once. From Paes's description of the Ladies of Honour it can be seen that even women dressed in a similar fashion including the wearing of the cap. In describing the dresses of the horsemen and even the foot soldiers he says, "You will see among them dresses of such rich clothes that I did not know where they came from ... nor how many colours they had". Cloth was lavishly used in the decoration of fine buildings and Paes says, "Let no one fancy that these clothes are of wool, because there are none such in the country but they are of very fine cotton." While the prosperity of the

49. Abdur Razzaq's account in R.H. Major, op.cit., p.17. However, according to Marco Polo, the upper classes among both Hindus and Muslims wore fine muslins on account of the heat for which variety there was great demand (Marco Polo, op.cit., Book II, p.361).

50. Fernao Nuniz in Sewell, op.cit., p.363


52. Paes, Ibid, p.266. It is to be noted that the size of the army under the Vijayanagar Empire was considerable - For figures see Razzaq in Major, op.cit. p.22, Paes in Sewell, op.cit., p.279-80 and Nuniz, pp.326-27 etc.
kingdom and the lavish life-styles of the upper classes led to increased demand for fine cloth, the demand for the better varieties of textiles also came from a new section. The emergence of a new bureaucratic class, the Nayaks, Rayagars or the representatives of the people in the cities and townships, must have also increased the consumption of fine cloth. This increase in the domestic use of fine cloth can, however, only be surmised and cannot be stated in terms of the actual volume. Since there were no technological improvements, the demand on the home front as well as for the export market must have been met by the utilisation of the idle capacity of the looms or the setting up of new looms.

The popularity of the Pulicat textiles in Gujarat and in Malabar is evidenced by Barbosa. Pires refers to the Masulipatnam Calicoes and muslins in Goa and says that all goods were gathered there together for export to foreign markets. But the upper classes in Goa and Calicut also wore the Golkonda muslins. The Kondavidu inscription of Nandindla Gopa gives a list of

53. Paes, Ibid, p.254 ff. Apart from the Indian cotton the Persian satins and damasks (Khanqabs) and brocades of China were very popular with the nobility and Paes and Nuniz refer to the lavish use of the Mecca velvet in the construction of tents and the decoration of buildings (Ibid, p.264, ff.)


articles of inland trade. The list includes among other things dyes such as dammer and gallnuts, raw material like cotton, cotton-thread, etc. In another instance remission of customs on Sellapaṭṭu and Paṭṭāvali Paṭṭu is made to the Nānādēśīs by the official authorities at Kanchipuram (Chingleput dt.) in 1586 A.D. Both Sella and Patōla are products of North Coromandel and they were hence, obviously being imported into Kāṇchipuram.

The principal means of transport in inland trade was still the pack-horses, bullock carts, asses, head loads (talaikattu) and Kāṇchi-Kāvadi, i.e., a pole suspended over the shoulders with heavy sacks containing the commodities of sale at either end of the pole. The naming of head loads as well as the Kanchi-Kavadi in the inscription indicates the importance of itinerant merchants or peddlers in the sale and purchase of goods. Ma-huan, in his account of South India refers to the

58. S.I.I., Vol.XVI, No.52, from Srisailam, Nandikotkur Taluq, Kurnool dt. dated 1515 A.D.
59. Ma-huan's account, op.cit., p.342
Kolings of Cochin who carried on their business like peddlers do in China. These Kolings or Klings are the South Indian counter-parts of the Banjaras of the North.

The foreign trade in textiles was of perhaps greater importance than the internal trade. To Pyrard, writing around 1600, it appeared as if "everyone from the Cape of Good Hope to China, man and woman, is clothed from head to foot" in the products of the Indian looms. Without taking Pyrard too literally, it is clear that he was struck by the popularity of Indian textiles abroad.

The export of Indian textiles abroad was mainly in two directions. From the Coromandel coast either from the port of Masulipatnam or San Thome (Mylapur) textiles were shipped to Achin, Priamam, etc. in Sumatra, to Bantam in Java and Malacca. Malacca was a principal entrepot of trade. Here were brought the printed cotton cloths of Pulicat and also Chinese silks, satins, brocades.

60. More usually called the Klings. They are referred to in the accounts of Ibn Batuta, Tome Pires, Peter Floris, etc. Their position is discussed in detail when studying the organisation of textile trade.


63. Ma-huan refers to them as Khinkis while the Persian brocades were called Khanqabs, the Gingham of the British traders.
demasks and Nankins. Barbosa referring to the coloured cotton (i.e., chintz) of Pulicat and Mylapur says that they were worth much money in Malacca, Pegu and Camatra (Sumatra). He also refers to the popularity of Masulipatnam Patolas in Pegu. Caesar Fredrick substantiates Barbosa's statement by saying that the only commodity of San Thome for which there was demand in Pegu was "the white cloth made of Bambast woven and painted, so that the more that kind of cloth is washed, the more lively they show their colours which is a rare thing... Also from San Thome they load a great store of red yarn, of Bambast dyed with a root which they called Saia (Chay) which colour will never wear out".

From Barbosa's account we further know that these textiles went right up to the Gulf of Siam, i.e., Patani, Singora, Tennasserim, Cambodia, etc. The Chettis also took to these places the Cambaya (Gujarat cloths), Mecca-velvets, scarlet in grain cloth (i.e., cloth dyed with the Kermes) which were, in the first place imported into Pulicat and then re-exported to these regions. From Malacca, the

64. Barbosa, *op. cit.*, Vol.II 172-3 ff. The re-export of Chinese silk was an ancient trade - See Introduction and Chapter II of this thesis.

65. Ibid. p.132

66. Ibid. p.153


ships went towards Ambam (Amboyna) on their way to the Moluccas or the spice islands. In their return trips from Malacca, Sumatra, Pegu and other regions of the Malay archipelago, they took lac, mace, cloves, pepper (produced in Sumatra), benzoin, brazilwood or Sapan, an inferior dye-wood. Barbosa refers to merchant settlements "Moorish and heathen" in as far as Tennaserim. In the countries of the Malay archipelago the patterned cloths of San Thome and Pulicat were in greater demand than the painted cloths of Masulipatnam inspite of the latter being artistically superior. Although the Masulipatnam muslins became the rage in England in the seventeenth century, in this period the demand in the Eastern markets was only for meticulous reproductions of cheap, stereotyped designs. The Pulicat Chintz which sold in these regions as Tape or Tape-sarasah were cheap and required little or no stitching since they were worn like serongs.

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69. Ibid. Scarlet in grain cloth as an import item into Pulicat along with Mecca velvet, Vermilion, etc. is mentioned in Vol.II, p.132 and the same items are mentioned as export commodities to Pegu etc. in p.153 of the same volume.

70. Ibid., p.198-9

71. Ibid., p.153 and wherever the trade with these regions is referred to.

72. Ibid., pp.198-9 ff.

73. For a discussion of the situation in the eastern markets c.f. Peter Floris, Voyage to the East Indies (London, 1934) Hakluyat series, p.27-28 and Passim. Also introduction by W.H. Moreland, XX.
The other trade lay in the direction of Ormuz, Aden, Arabia Felix and Africa. The ships went from Ormuz to Socattra and Aden from the kingdoms of the Deccan and the country of Narasinga through Goa, Calicut and Bhatkal. While cloth from Cambaya is repeatedly mentioned by the travellers, the beatilha (i.e., Masulipatnam muslin) and white cloth were exported from Calicut. Coromandel cloth and Malabar spices were exchanged for Persian horses, seed pearls, sulphur, musk, dried fruit and Tankas. From Aden the Southern kingdoms imported Arab horses which were far superior to those from Ormuz, also rose water, raisins and other dry fruits, opium and madder, dye-wood, scarlet-in-grain, Mecca velvets, damasks, etc. In return they sold much fine cloth especially the Golkonda beatilhas along with other Coromandel and Malabar products. Evidently the demand here unlike as in the Eastern markets was for the finer varieties of textiles.

Tome Pires explicitly states that there was no direct trade between the Coromandel coast and the Arab and African countries. The Calicoes, fine muslins

75. Beatilha is a Portuguese word meaning veiling and refers to Golkonda muslin.
76. Tome Pires, op. cit. p. 20, and Barbosa, Book I, p. 92 The value of a Tanka is a little more than one-eighth of a rupee.
77. Tome-Pires, p. 17 and Barbosa, p. 55
(mainly the Golkonda Beatilhas) and the rice and sugar of the Coromandel coast were collected at Goa and sent from there to Ormuz, Aden and the African coast. After Goa was taken over by the Portuguese, Vijayanagar exchanged its cloth and got its horses from Bhatkal. The balance of trade in the Red Sea commerce could not have been very much in favour of the Southern kingdoms because though they exported cloth, spices, etc. the import of horses apart from other items proved very costly. Thus Barbosa says that the Arab horses were priced at 500-600 cruzadoes and those of Ormuz cost around 200-300 cruzadoes. Barbosa also adds like Marco Polo, two centuries earlier that "horses do not thrive in this country (Vijayanagar) and live therein but a short time .. and (hence) bring in high prices by reason of the great need for them."

The drain on the Vijayanagar

79. Ibid.,
80. Barbosa, op.cit., Vol.I, p.65. The Cruzadoes struck by D'Albuquerque in 1510 worth 420 reis or £2.96 of English money. Thus the cost of an Arab horse would be around £250-£300. Marco Polo who wrote 2 centuries earlier also gives 500 Dinars (roughly £300) as the cost of an Arab horse (Book I, p.349).
81. Ibid, p.178, i.e., around 100-150 £.
82. Marco Polo op.cit., p.350. He says that the horses used to die due to mishandling and poor treatment and as a result of the king had to buy 2000 horses every year!
exchequer can be gauged by the fact that the Portuguese demanded and received 30,000 Cruzadoes for giving Vijayanagar the exclusive right to purchase the horses.\textsuperscript{84}

Again, while Golkonda muslins were popular, all the contemporary accounts indicate that the Gujarat textiles had a much greater demand and Bengal muslins were also purchased.\textsuperscript{85} Hence the share of Coromandel textiles could not have been very large. In the African kingdoms, according to the description of Barbosa, there could not have been much demand for ordinary let alone the finer varieties of Coromandel textiles.\textsuperscript{86} Certain finer varieties of textiles were in demand in Cofala (Sofala) and Barbosa describes how the natives, not knowing the art of dyeing, unravelled the Cambaya cloth and wove them again, interspersing them with their own white yarn.\textsuperscript{87} There might also have been some demand for Coromandel textiles in Abyssinia known alternatively as 'Arabia Felix' and called by the Portuguese the land of Prestor John, being the only Christian kingdom in Africa. Horses were exported to Vijayanagar and Golkonda from its principal port Macua and it is likely that some textiles were sold.

\textsuperscript{84} Heras, Studies in the Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagar (Madras, 1927) pp. 62-3
\textsuperscript{85} Barbosa of Ormuz, p.92 and of Aden p.56 ff.
\textsuperscript{86} Barbosa, \textit{Ibid}, Book I, Refer for instance to his description of the people of Mozambique, p.15
\textsuperscript{87} \textit{Ibid}, p.6
in return. But by and large the demand for textiles in these regions were limited and a considerable part of it was met by Gujarat.

Till 1500, that is, the coming of the Portuguese the entire trade of South India was in the hands of the 'Moores', a term which included the Arabs, Khurasanis and the Deccanis. Barbosa refers to their settlements in Malacca and even Siam and Tennaserim. Of the traders at Malacca he says "Many Moorish merchants reside in it, as also Gentiles, particularly Chettis, who are natives of Cholamandal (Coromandel) and they are all very rich and have many large ships which they call Jungos". (the Chinese Junks). Of the Paradēsīs (i.e., literally foreigners In this category Barbosa includes only the Arabs, Persians, Guzarates Curasanes and Daquanis but the Nānādesīya Chettīs must also be included as carriers of trade in these regions) he says: In the days of their prosperity in trade and navigation they built in the city keeled ships of a 1000 and 1200 bahār's burden. ten to fifteen of these ships sailed for the Red Sea, Aden and Mecca where they sold their goods at a profit, some to the merchants of Juda (Jeddah) who took them on thence in small vessels to Toro and thence to Cairo, Alexandria and Venica, whence they came to our own regions" (Spain, Portugal, etc.) But the Portuguese managed to elbow out the Chettīs and the Moores to a

89. Ibid, Book II, pp.172-3
90. Ibid, p.76 also p.58
considerable extent even if not completely. Writing around 1510 A.D., Barbosa after describing their prosperity says that they continued to thrive till the arrival of the Portuguese after which time they either left off trading or functioned in a totally dependent and subordinate capacity. Barbosa was hinting at the gradual change in their status from independent merchants to merchant middlemen for first the Portuguese and then their successor European Companies.

The entry of the Portuguese into South India began with the landing of Vasco-de-gama at Calicut in A.D. 1498. The Portuguese viceroy at Goa d’Almeida decided to establish trade links with Vijayanagar for the first time in A.D. 1505. Within a few years the Portuguese held Diu, Daman and Cochin on the Malabar Coast and Nagapattam and San Thome (Mylapur) on the Coromandel coast. They established themselves in the Indies partly by war (like the wrestling of Goa from Bijapur) and mostly by friendly commerce with the native powers like Vijayanagar and Golkonda. The alliances with the Indian kingdoms were partly political and partly commercial. The manoeuvrings of the Portuguese can be seen at every turn in the course of the struggle between the Southern kingdoms. In 1511 in response to an embassy sent by Krishnadeva Rāya, Albuquerque promised to sell the horses to Vijayanagar

91. Bahar - A weight used in trade transactions equivalent to 400 avoirdupois - Hobson-Jobson.
92. Barbosa, op.cit., Vol.II, p.77
in preference to Bijapur but in A.D. 1514 rejected these terms on the ground that such monopolistic privilege would destroy trade. A classic example of a political-commercial treaty is the one signed with Sadāsiva Raya in A.D. 1547. By this both parties obliged themselves to be friends of friends and enemies of enemies, each of the other. Monopoly of the purchase of Arabian and Persian horses was given to Vijayanagar in return for an annual sum of Rs.30,000 cruzadoes and on the condition that transportation would be at the expense of Vijayanagar. The king of Vijayanagar promised to grant to Portugal the exclusive right to purchase the products of his empire. Of textiles it was said, "All the cloths of the kingdom of Vijayanagar will not be brought over to the ports of Adil Shah, but either to Ankola or Onör (Honavar), and in the same way the Governors will bind the Portuguese merchants to go there to purchase them and to exchange them for copper, coral, vermilion, mercury, China silks and all other kinds of goods and he, the king of Vijayanagar will order his merchants to purchase them." The last clause says that the king of Vijayanagar should not permit any Moorish ship to stop in his ports and if any came they should be captured and handed over to the Portuguese.

The Portuguese established their trade monopoly by forbidding the ships of other natives to sail on certain


94. Ibid.
reserved routes. In the second place, they claimed exclusive right to trade in certain commodities like pepper, saltpetre, etc. Thirdly, no Asiatic vessel could ply to any port, or carry any cargo, until fees had been paid and a pass (Cartaz) obtained.95 Even Akbar, the great Mughal, tacitly acknowledged the superiority of the Portuguese by getting the passes which had to be renewed annually. The pass system was one of the most important causes of the decline of Portuguese power in the seventeenth century and while it earned them a lot of ill-will96 it failed to stop effectively the Hindu or the 'Moorish' traders. Thus the clause in the Portuguese ordinance exempting from passes the native rulers with whom they had treaties, was used by the native merchants, with the connivance of corrupt Portuguese officials to continue their lucrative trade without much permanent damage.97 The Portuguese also


96. Refer to the incident of the Capture of the Surat ship 'Rahimi' which held a pass and carried a huge cargo in which the queen mother had also invested, in A.D. 1613 by the Portuguese. As a consequence, Jahangir and his Deccan allies declared an all out ware against them - *The Voyage of Nicholas Douton* (Ed.) William Foster, Hakluyt Society (London, 1939) introduction LXXXII.

97. Pyrard Laval, op.cit. p.204. See also W.H. Moreland, *From Akbar to Aurangzeb*, (London, 1923, Reprint, New Delhi, 1972, p.8)
attempted to have total monopoly over the spice trade or the triangular trade in which Coromandel textiles were sold in the lands of the Malay archipelago mainly Malacca and the spices from Amboyna and the Moluccas sold in Europe.\textsuperscript{98} The Dutch acted as the principal distributors for the spices. The position of the Portuguese in the commercial world seemed very secure because of the papal bull which divided world trade between Spain and Portugal. But the Portuguese power in India began to decline decisively from 1580 onwards when Portugal came under the Spanish crown and the Dutch carrying trade in the triangular commerce came to an end. Towards the close of the sixteenth century the Dutch started their independent commercial activity and had emerged as an important power in South India by the seventeenth century.

The success of the Portuguese and subsequently the Dutch and the English in capturing the Coromandel trade, can to some extent be understood by the attitude of the native kingdoms towards trade. This is best reflected in the \textit{Amuktamaly\=ada} of Krishnadeva R\=aya (A.D. 1509-29) in which he says: "A king should improve the harbours of his country and so encourage its commerce that horses, elephants, precious gems, sandalwood and other

\textsuperscript{98} The take over of the triangular trade from the 'Moors' by the Portuguese is referred to by Barbosa, \textit{op.cit.} Vol.II, p.77 and \textit{Passim}. The dispatch of Coromandel textiles to the Malaccas by the Portuguese is referred to by many travellers. For instance, Caesar Fredrick in \textit{Purchas, op.cit.}, Vol.X, p.109, etc.
articles are freely imported into his country. He should arrange that the foreign sailors who land in his country on account of storms, illness and exhaustion are looked after. Make the merchants of distant foreign lands attached to yourself by providing them with daily audience presents and allowing decent profits. That such a policy was in fact adhered to is vouchsafed for by Abdur Razzaq, Barbosa and others. Barbosa in his account says, "As soon as any of these merchants reached the city the king assigned him a Nayre to keep his accounts and look after his affairs and a broker to arrange for him to obtain such goods as he had need of."

The evidence regarding the volume of textile trade during the period of the Vijayanagar empire, till the end of the sixteenth century is very slender and very scattered and some idea of the volume can be gleaned only from the factory records of the seventeenth century. Thus for the period prior to the establishment of the European Companies, the travellers only indicate the extensive nature of the textile trade but do not always quantify it. However, a rough attempt is being made here to quantify the volume of trade in textiles during this period. According to

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100. Abdur Razzaq, an account of his travels in R.H. Major (ed.) India in the Fifteenth Century, op.cit., p.14

Tome Pires (A.D. 1512-15) a Portuguese resident at Malacca four ships sailed from the smaller ports of Southern Coromandel, each ship carrying in cargo between 12,000 to 15,000 cruzadoes in 'coarse kling cloth'. In addition, one or two large ships left Pulicat, Coromandel's 'Most important port' carrying between 80,000 to 90,000 cruzadoes in cloth. If in a year of heavy trade, two large ships did actually sail from Pulicat, then the total shipments from Coromandel to Malacca may have reached a total of 240,000 cruzadoes. At early seventeenth century prices of cloth in Pulicat this total in cruzadoes would represent something under five million yards of cloth.

Some of the travellers have made a passing reference to the price of cloth but the information is so varying and disparate that no cogent picture emerges out of it.

102. It appears that the entire group of Coromandel merchants were referred to as Klings by Pires. Reference to the Klings are also to be found in the accounts of many other travellers. A detailed discussion of them can be found under merchant organisation later on in this chapter.


104. The records in the Dutch Koloniel Archief give the price of a yard of cloth in early 17th century Pulicat as .05 cruzadoes. Therefore, 240,000 cruzadoes would mean 4.8 million yards of cloth approximately. This price is quoted in Joseph Brennig, The Textile Trade of Seventeenth Century Northern Coromandel (Unpublished thesis) microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A.
Ma-huan\textsuperscript{105} writing in the beginning of the fifteenth
century (A.D. 1409) says that the price of cloth produced
at Coimbatore (Cam-pa-mei) called Chih-li-pu (Chibli, i.e.,
muslin) measuring 4 feet 5 inches in width and 25 feet in
length was 8 to 10 gold pieces per piece. He also says
that raw silk dyed several shades of colours and then
woven into flowered patterned goods, each piece being
4-5 ft. wide and 10-13 ft. long sold for 100 gold pieces.\textsuperscript{106}
It is quite possible that he is referring to inferior
muslin in the first instance and to the costliest variety
of silk in the second but by any standards the prices of
the export varieties seem to have been high. Vasco-da-gama
who arrived in India about the beginning of the sixteenth
century says that at Calicut a fine shirt was worth only
2 fanams (30 \textit{reis}) which in Portugal fetched 300 \textit{reis}.\textsuperscript{107}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{105} Ma-huan, \textit{op.cit.}, p.345. The reference seems to be
to the \textit{Panem} rather than the \textit{Varaha} or \textit{Pagoda}
because the value of a \textit{Pagoda} was 7s 6d and this
would make the cost about £4 per piece which is
impossible. Hence the reference must be to the
\textit{Panem} which was valued at about 6d at this time.
Thus the cost of a piece of Chihli cloth must have
been around 5 shillings which is not very cheap.
The costly silk by the same standards must have
cost over £2 per piece which is quite high.

\item \textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, p.345

\item \textsuperscript{107} Vasco da gama, \textit{The First Voyage}, p.132 cited in
T.V. Mahalingam, \textit{Administration and Social Life
Under Vijayanagar}, \textit{op.cit.}, p.178
\end{itemize}
Since 1£ would roughly be equivalent to 400 reis,\(^{108}\)
300 reis would be around 15 shillings and 30 reis would
be 1 Shilling 6 pence. Vasco-da-gama evidence indicates
two things - first the fact that he was citing the price
of the export variety of textiles and two, the enormous
profits accruing from foreign trade in cloth. It appears
clear from both the evidences - Ma-huan and Vasco-da-gama-
that they were describing the situation at the ports and
citing the prices of the export varieties of cloth which
certainly must have been very high compared to the price
of coarse cloth worn by the common people.

Of the ports during the medieval period, Abdur
Razzaq says that the king of Vijayanagar had 300 ports in
his dominion, each of which was equal to Calicut!\(^{109}\) The
statement is obviously an exaggeration because it is
doubtful if there could have been 300 ports for the whole
of South India but it does definitely indicate the
flourishing condition of trade. For the textile trade
the Coromandel coast is far more important than the
Malabar coast although there are specific instances of
cloth being brought from the Coromandel region to the
western coast for trade with Ormuz and Aden. Thus Tome
Pires says that the merchandise of Golconda and Vijayanagar
were collected at Goa and the traders from East Africa,

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109. Abdur Razzaq, op.cit., p.19
Aden andOrmuz purchased the Calicoes (from Pulicat) the beatilhas (fine muslin from Golconda) and rice from Goa. Similarly, the horses were sent from here to the kingdom of the Deccan and of Narasinga. Similarly in the agreement between Sadasivaraya and the Portuguese it is stipulated that the Portuguese will collect the textiles of the Vijayanagar Empire from the ports of Honavar and Bhatkal (the Karnataka coast) and Vijayanagar would get its horses etc. from the same port. This was after Goa became a Portuguese possession. On the Coromandel coast the most important port at this time was Pulicat. Masulipatnam seems to have gone down in importance during the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries because none of the travellers of this period, either Razzaq, Nicolo Conti or later Barbosa or Pires refers specifically to Masulipatnam as an important port. But Robert Fitch, however, coming after the firm entrenchment of the Portuguese in India, says ships arrived at Masulipatnam from Pegu and Sumatra

111. Ibid., p.58 and Barbosa op.cit., Book I, p.178. When Vasco-da-gama came to India, the ruler was Saluva Narasimha. His confused use of the name of the king as being the name of the kingdom has, however, been followed by the subsequent Portuguese travellers who refer to 'Vijayanagar' as 'Narasinga'.
112. Heras, op.cit., pp.62-3
113. Tome Pires, op.cit., p.58
laden with goods. The reason for the neglect of this port prior to the Portuguese could be the constant state of war that existed in this region between the Bahmani and Vijayanagar kingdoms at first and later between Golconda and Vijayanagar. Pulicat may have gained in importance as being far removed from the storm centre.

In the Madras region Pulicat had greater importance than San Thome (Mylapūr). San Thome which as Mylapūr was very important under the Late Chōlas seems to have been a virtually deserted port by the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries. Thus Marco-Polo (early fourteenth century) called it "a little town having no great population, 'tis a place where few traders go because there is very little merchandise to be got there". Even Barbosa (A.D.1508-9) nearly two centuries later calls Mylapūr a deserted sea-port. But according to Caesar Fredrick writing in 1565, San Thome was "one of the fairest ports in all that part of the Indies" and he refers to the export of Chintz on a large scale from here to Pegu and Malacca. He also comments on the dangers of loading and unloading in so deep a harbour and the skill with which this was done by means of special barques. This revival of San Thome

115. Marco Polo, op. cit.
116. Barbosa, op. cit., Book 11, p.126
can obviously be linked to the establishment of the Portuguese factors there. But the position of the port changed again with the establishment of the Dutch at Pulicat and the gradual capturing of the textile market by them. Of Pulicat Barbosa says that it had many Moorish as well as heathen (Hindu) traders and was "a very fair sea-haven". He refers to the production and export of an abundance of printed cotton cloths from here to Malacca, Pegu, Sumatra and also Gujarat and Malabar. Tome Pires cites Pulicat as one of the leading ports on the Eastern coast. The reference to Chaturavāchagāna-paṭṭinam (the Sadras of the Europeans) as the principal port of the Kaṇchipuram region comes from the Vijayanagar period. Reference to the sale of cloth and export trade in textiles at Sadras comes from Tirukkaḷukkunṟam of the period of Kampaṉa Udaṉar (early 14th century). It is again referred to as an important port for textile trade in another inscription from the same region of the period of Vira-Bokkana Udaṉar dated 1376 A.D. This

118. The decline of San Thome due to Dutch competition is dealt with in Chap. IV.
120. Barbosa, Ibid.
121. Tome Pires, op.cit., Book II, p.271
122. A.R.E., 170 of 1933
123. A.R.E., 173 of 1933
inscription also refers to a particular type of cess on the sale of sarees.  

Among the other ports on the Coromandel coast Nagore and Nagapattinam are important. Tome Pires (A.D. 1614) in his list of the ports of the Coromandel coast refers to Nagore as a leading port. This was a port a few miles away from Nagapattinam. Caesar Fredrick, writing in the later part of the sixteenth century also says that Nagapattinam was "a country of small trade." So apparently in the sixteenth century Nagore served as the port for the textiles produced in the Tanjavur region and nearabouts. But once the Portuguese set up their factory at Nagapattinam in the early seventeenth century, it became an active port. Among the other ports on the Coromandel coast, Pires in his comprehensive list includes Guddalore, Pondicherry, Tranquebar (Teragampadi), Karikal and Adiramapattinam. He also refers to Tirumullaivasal (near Madras).

124. Prof. T.V. Mahalingam has referred to this cess as custom duty and states that 10% was levied on the sale of cloth and two-fifth of a panam on every bundle of cloth (Pudavai Kattu) - Administration and social Life Under Vijayanagar (Madras, 1975) Part II, p.165. But from the tone of the inscription, it seems to suggest a voluntary contribution on the proceeds of the sales to the family deity by the several merchants (Nanadesis). In fact this kind of donation is found in many inscriptions.

125. Tome Pires, op.cit., Book II, p.271


A fair idea of the customs duties charged at these Southern parts can be gleaned from the travellers accounts. Abdur Razzaq says that a duty of 2½ per cent was collected at Calicut.129 Writing around 1560's Ceasar Fredrick says that the customs at Cochin amounted to 4 per cent. But the increasing influx of European Companies must have enhanced the rates, for the king of Cochin specifies that charges on foreigners would be 8 per cent.131 Robert Fitch (A.D. 1583-9) referring to the charge at Goa after Portuguese take over says it was 8 per cent.132 Horses were the costliest item of import in the sixteenth century and on them the customs dues was between 5 per cent and 7 per cent.133 The charges in the Southern ports are to be contrasted with the rates prevailing elsewhere. Thus both Abdur Razzaq134 and

128. Tome Pires, op.cit., Book II, p.271
129. Elliot, History of India as told by its own Historians, Vol.IV, p.98
130. Purchas, His Pilgrims, op.cit., Vol.X, p.103
131. Ibid.
132. Robert Fitch in Ibid., p.169. For substantiation of the point that custom duties increased with the coming of the Companies refer to the account of Peter Floris in the 17th century where he says that they had to pay 5 per cent as duty and 7 per cent as Chappadalali (i.e., brokerage plus stamp duty), i.e., a total of 12 per cent - An Account of the Travels of Peter Floris (ed.) W.H. Moreland, Hak. series, (London, 1934), p.27
Nikitin\(^{135}\) say that the customs duty at Ormuz was 10 per cent which was "very high". Tome Pires says that at Pegu the duty was 11 per cent.\(^{137}\) At Malacca 6 per cent was the official charge but to this must be added presents to the Shah-bandar,\(^{138}\) Lasamane,\(^{139}\) Tumungo\(^{140}\) and even to the Bemdara.\(^{141}\)

During the fourteenth-fifteenth centuries and to some extent the early sixteenth century, textile trade continued to be in the hands of the indigenous merchant guilds although instances are not wanting of weavers selling their own products and local fairs. Details of

135. The Account of Athanasins Nikitin in R.H. Major(ed.) India in the Fifteenth Century, op.cit., p.19
136. Ibid.
138. Ibid. Vol.II, p.270. Pires has used the term Shahbandar to denote its original meaning, as a man appointed by the merchants of the different regions as their agent at a port to present them to the state official, to fix up the warehouse and help dispatch their merchandise, etc. (Ibid., p.265). But later on Shahbandar came to mean the king's official at the port. Refer to Moreland's introduction to The Account of Peter Floris, op.cit., for a description of the evolution of this office.
139. Lasmane is described as the admiral or Chief of all the fleet at sea.
140. The Chief Magistrate.
141. The Bemdara was the highest official of the Malaccan kingdom.
the role of merchant guilds in the textile trade of the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries is available from inscriptive evidence relating to all parts of South India. The privileges of the Ayyavole guild are referred to in a record from Anantapur district dated A.D. 1451. The merchants of the 56 countries are referred to in the sixteenth century in Coimbatore. In Salem during the period of Achyuta Raya (A.D. 1529-42) the same guild made a 'maganmai' or voluntary contribution to the deity on items like cotton, cotton yarn, sarees, chintz and Sella cloth among various other items. In A.D. 1531 in Ambalā in Cuddappah district the Vīra Balanjiya (also referred to as Banajiga or Valanjiyar) of Ayyavole levied a 'maganmai' for donation to the temple on items like cotton, yarn, cloth, etc. The most significant epigraphic evidence showing the continued hold of the indigenous merchant guilds over textile organisation and trade comes from Tirupati in A.D. 1538, i.e., the period of Achyuta Raya. It registers an agreement between the cloth and

143. A.R.E., 216 of 1963-64 from Vijayamangalam
144. S.I.I., Vol.VII, No.21 from Omalur
145. A.R.E., 200 of 1937-38
146. T.T., Vol. IV, No.112
yarn merchants of Tondaimandalam, Puramanḍalam and Ulmandalam (the last two terms refer to foreign and native merchants because 'pura' means outside or foreign and 'ul' means within or indigenous) and the lease-holders of certain areas, essentially port-towns like Vidhura-paṭṭinam and Nagadha-paṭṭinam ('Pattinam' refers to a port-town). The merchants specify a particular type of cross-wise weaving on a special loom with jaquard and say that this kind of weaving should be done only by the Muslims and for this purpose the Muslim weavers are allotted the income from certain lands. A fine of 12 gold Varāhās (around 48 rupees in terms of the sixteenth century rupee) was to be imposed on any weaver violating this rule (!) Finally, the inscription concludes that this order is to be communicated "to every Hindu Village and Muslim dwelling, every cloth merchant and agent (broker) for strict observance and application in Tirupati, Kāñchipuram and other parts of the South". The inscription is invaluable for it proves clearly - (a) the continued existence of specialised and powerful merchant guilds like that of the cloth and yarn merchants cited above, in the sixteenth century; (b) the wide territorial extent of the merchant guilds and (c) the putting-out system existing before the establishment of the European Companies in India. The relations between the merchants and weavers apparently did not merely stop with the system of advances but extended
to control over even the technique of production and the exact type of weaving the weavers had to do. 147

The remission of customs duties on the Nanadesī merchants is referred to in the period of Venkatapatidēva Maharaya (A.D. 1586) from Kanchipuram (Chingleput dt.). Among the articles brought in by the Nanadesi merchants are mentioned - Sallapaṭṭu (i.e., Sella) and Paṭṭavalī paṭṭu (p.e., Patōla). All these inscriptions prove that in the sixteenth century textile trade continued to be in the hands of merchant guilds and in fact the Ayyavōle guild and its connection with the textile industry continued till late seventeenth century. 149

A merchant group which is not referred to in any late-Chōla record but finds repeated mention in all the travellers accounts from the fifteenth century onwards is that of the Klings. The earliest reference to them is in the account of Ma-huan 150 (A.D. 1451 A.D.). He refers to five classes of people in the kingdom of Cochin - the Brahmins, the Muhammedans, the Chettis who were the wealthy class, the Kolings (i.e., Klings) whom he refers to as commission agents and the Mukuas (in whom are supposed

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147. Certain aspects of this inscription have been referred to separately under weaving technology.
149. S.I.I., No.315 from Narayanavanam in Puttoor division of the Chittoor dt. dated A.D. 1620. Also A.R.E., C.P., 18 of 1917-18 from Lepakshi, Hindapur Taluq, Anantapur dt. (i.e., the kingdom of Golkonda) dated A.D. 1680
150. Ma-huan, op.cit., p.342
to be included all the lower classes and untouchables). Ma-huan also adds that the merchants (the reference is clearly to the Klings, an itinary community) of this country carry on their business like peddlers do in China. Ibn Batuta refers to another community 'Suli' (Choolia) which is also mentioned by the travellers along with the Klings. He refers to them as the natives of Quilon and Cochin and says that they possessed considerable wealth, enough to purchase a ship load of cargo or send a vessel filled with cargo. Tome Pires (A.D. 1510-15) refers to the 'Klings' as the merchants of the Coromandel coast and says that they were the largest and most powerful trading community in Malacca. "There are also the great Kling merchants with trade on a large scale and many junks. This is the nation which brings the most honour to Malacca. These have the bulk of the trade in their hands". In fact he even refers to Coromandel cloth as 'Kling cloth'. It is clear from the accounts of Pires and Castenhada that the


153. Ibid., p.255. The word 'nation' refers to the 'Kling merchants of Coromandel.'

154. Ibid, p.272

155. K.A. Nilakanta Sastry, Foreign Notices of South India (From Magarthenes to Ma-huan), (Madras, 1939), p.307. Castanhada a Portuguese traveller who visited India between A.D. 1528-38 refers to Klings as Quelins and says they came from Kalinga.
Klings functioned as independent merchants. But when Peter Floris refers to them in the seventeenth century it is again in the sense in which Ma-huan refers to them, i.e., as itinerant merchants and probably agents of big merchants. Thus he says that at Patani (in the Malay archipelagu) in small boats 8 to 10 tsulias (Choolias) and Calynders (i.e., Klings), arrived, each one bringing a corge of diverse sorts "running with this through all the countrye giving the goods so cheape that it is to be admired at, only to receive a copan for to buy rice for their bellies.. 156 This description shows the fall in their status with the coming of the companies.

In the light of the evidence presented so far regarding merchant organisations in relation to textile trade, it would be relevant here to take up for critical analysis the theory presented by Burton Stein. Stein has postulated the thesis that the independent local assemblies as well as powerful merchant guilds acknowledging only the symbolic overlordship of the Chōla kings declined and died out with the establishment of a centralised

156. A Corge was a bundle containing 20 pieces of cloth. The Account of Peter Floris, op.cit., p.70 Fn. A Copan would roughly be equal to 7 d.
bureaucracy under the Vijayanagar kings. His theory assumes: (a) A very close link, in fact a partnership between the Sūdra peasantry who according to him dominated the assemblies of the 'nuclear core regions' and the merchant guilds with the latter in a 'subordinate role'. These assemblies were made up of 'those who produced many of the commodities sold and consumed the largest part of the goods brought'; (b) That by the fourteenth century the village assemblies as well as the merchant guilds disappeared; (c) the characterisation of the Vijayanagar empire as a warrior kingdom with the local governments under their powerful military subordinates, the Nayaks.

157. Burton Stein 'Coromandel Trade in Medieval India' in John Parkar (ed.) Merchants and Scholars, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1965. This point regarding the decline of merchant guilds which is mentioned very briefly here is further elaborated in his article on 'Integration of the Agrarian System of South India', in Robert Eric Frykenburg (ed.) Land Control and Social Structure in Indian History (Madison, Milwunke, 1969). However, the somewhat simplistic conclusions arrived at by Stein in these earlier articles have been greatly modified by him in his most recent published work, Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India. (Delhi, 1980). Here his essential arguments are far more sophisticated and he concedes that merchant guilds continued to flourish under the Vijayanagar empire because of the renewed process of urbanisation and that the landed elements forged links with the merchant guilds - see pp.282, 252 and Passim.
The factual basis for the first assumption is drawn entirely from the Chintramēli guild. In fact, the merchant guilds by virtue of their economic power also acquired considerable land and far from being subordinate to the local elements, even tended to dominate the village assemblies. Moreover, the demand for the products of the merchants came not merely from the local agrarian groups but was much more widespread. Nothing but very brisk internal and foreign trade can account for the wide geographical extent of the merchant guilds and the commodity-production practised by them, for instance, the repeated references to the Kudirai-Chettis, (Horse merchants) Chilai-Chettis (cloth merchants) etc.

158. There are innumerable instances of land donation to temple and land ownership by merchants. The areas referred to are the fertile wet lands (S.I.I., Vol.VI, No.1172, S.I.I., Vol.V, No.812, S.I.I., Vol.X, No.161, etc.) An extremely significant inscription from Peddaganjam (Baptala Taluq, Guntur dt.) of A.D. 1270 refers to the donation of an entire village along with the customs duties, taxes, etc. to the temple deity (S.I.I., Vol.X, No.427) That they also had some control over the village castes in some places is shown by the fact that all general contributions of the village communities were made under their leadership (E.I., XVIII, No.22E, etc.)

159. E.C. VII, Sk.118 from Balagami, Shimoga dt. etc.


161. S.I.I., Vol.VII No.442 from Piranmalai (Ramnad dt.) etc.
Burton-Stein, however, dismisses their activity as "a certain amount of trade carried out by the itinerant merchant associations like the Ayyavole body in which a few necessities such as salt and iron and a diverse collection of luxury items were exchanged."\(^{162}\) The statement that the merchant guilds disappeared with the end of the Chola empire is not borne out by the actual evidence available. As Prof. Stein himself points out the most powerful of these guilds, the Ayyavole, continued to function till the seventeenth century.\(^{163}\) There are also innumerable instances of other merchant guilds continuing to function effectively during the Vijayanagar period.\(^{164}\) But the most striking proof that 'commodity merchants' guilds had a tight hold over the weavers and their products is demonstrated by the inscription from Tirupati dated A.D. 1531 in which the cloth and yarn merchants of a number of regions determined the type of weaving to be done by the Hindu and Muslim weavers. Thus, to conclude, Stein's thesis on the decline of the merchant

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162. Burtonstein in Frykenburg (Ed.) op.cit., p.187
163. *A.R.E.* C.P. 18 of 1917-18 dated A.D. 1680
164. *S.I.I.*, Vol.VII No.21, *A.R.E.*, 200 of 1937-38, etc. dated 1529 and 1531 respectively. These are just select inscriptions which refer to merchant guilds in connection with the textile trade. But the general inscriptions relating to the functioning of the merchant guilds in the 15th - 16th centuries are too innumerable to be listed here.
guilds, does not seem tenable in the face of such overwhelming evidence to the contrary. 165

However, in spite of the existence of merchant guilds it is clear that the trade in textiles was not entirely in their hands as already stated. The system of weavers selling their own merchandise in their immediate locality or in the country fairs, continued in the fourteenth century at Tirukkalukkenāram (Chingleput), a consolidated tax of 70 panams was charged on the Kaikkōla weavers on the cloth taken by them to Sadaravasaganpaṭṭinām (Sadras) for sale and on the commodities brought back by them on the orders of Kampana Udaiyar. 166 A Belūr inscription of the fourteenth century (A.D. 1382) gives a list of the 27 towns which held fairs and the list includes Udayagiri, Adōni, Kaṇchi...

165. Stein in his earlier essays - 'The Segmented State' in Fox (ed.) op.cit., and the Integration of the Agrarian System of South India' in Frykenburg (ed.) has also categorically described Vijayanagar as a warrior state which began a phase of more centralised control leading to the dissolution of the local assemblies which had functioned so effectively under the Chōlas. This conclusion is again untenable because while a bureaucracy was undoubtedly created as a supra-local authority, the general policy was not really to suppress or control but rather to forge stronger links with the local elements through a systematic system of patronage to temples, etc. (Soo Arjun Appadorai, 'Kings, Sects, and Temples in South India', (1350-1700 A.D.) in Stein (ed.) South Indian Temples, Delhi, 1978) Stein himself has recognised the validity of this argument in his latest book, op.cit., p.367 and Passim.

166. A.R.E. 170 of 1933
Padaividu, Sadras, etc. The weavers have themselves been given the title of 'Chetti' in some records. The title 'Chetti' affixed to the names of weavers shows they must have gradually risen to the rank of merchants. Again, the Kaikola weavers are referred to as one of the 'Kasayavargattar Pala Patdadayar' (merchant communities) in a sixteenth century record from Vilichai Kulattur (Chingleput district).

The rise of individual weavers to the status of merchants is indicative of a very significant development - a growing differentiation in the ranks of the weavers. This is clearly proved by a fourteenth century record from Kunnattur (Chingleput dt.) of the period of Harihara Raya which states that one 'Narpattennayira' - Solakumaran 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 the gift, i.e., the setting up of an image which is a very expensive form of donation, suggests the prosperity of the weaver.

167. E.C., Vol.V, Bl.75. The other towns which held fairs are - Vijayanagari, Hastinavati, Dorasamudra, Gooty, Penugonda, Chandragiri, Mavay, Mangalaru, Barakuru, Honnavuru, Chandravura, Araga, Chandragutti, Annigere, Huligere, Nidugallu, Chimatanakallu, Tariakullu, Anavidda-sari, Kalkeya, Telakalambi and Singapattana.


169. A.R.E., 221 of 1929-30. The term 'Narpatennayira' itself represents a merchant guild.
The subsequent stipulation indicates that this weaver had emerged as a kind of master-weaver employing artisans under him. It is significant that the inscription points to the operation of several looms at a single weaving site. The existence of master-weavers is also proved by an inscription from Velpamedugu (Gooty Taluq, Anantapur dt.) dated A.D. 1526 of the period of Krishnadēva Maharāya. It says that Lingarāsa of Dhārāsura (a local official) issued orders to Chettis, senabovas (?) and local and foreign merchants residing in Velpamedugu, fixing the rate of taxes in the new bazar street. While no taxes were to be levied for the first 3 years from subsequent years 3 panams were to be levied on a loom and if 10 looms were kept by a single family, only 9 were to be taxed. A detailed survey of the annual produce of the kingdom of Alamkōnda (the reference says it was opposite the bank of Tungabhadra on which the capital Vijayanagar city was situated) gives the different sets of rates on looms meant for weaving cloth of different colours and on looms on which only white cloth could be woven. Here it gives the looms of Gurivi Chetti as 65, those of Kunigiri Lingi Chetti as 100 (!) and those of Viraya as 16. The

170. The earliest reference to a weaving-site is to be found in a 11th century inscription from Obalapura, Challakere Taluq in Chittaldooorg dt. E.C., Vol.XI, Cl.21.

information pertains to the period of Vīra Narasimharāya, i.e., the last decade of the 15th century. In the instances mentioned above at least two of the master-weavers were merchants and the concentration of a large number of looms in very few hands is extremely interesting. In the seventeenth century as also in the subsequent period, the master-weavers had an important dual role to play. On the one hand they served as the East India Company's instrument for the exploitation of the weavers and yet, on the other hand, their interests were ultimately bound up with that of the weavers. Hence when the competition of British textiles threatened their very existence, they lined up with the weavers.\textsuperscript{173}

Another important group in the organisation of textile trade were the brokers or middlemen. The reference to brokers in the textile trade comes as early as the thirteenth century "Taraagau Kāsu" repeatedly referred to in the inscription.\textsuperscript{174} pertains to brokerage fee. Did the broker function in an independent commercial network or was he a part of the bureaucratic set up?

\textsuperscript{172} K.A. Nilakanta Sastry and N. Venkataramanayya (Ed.) Further Sources of Vijayanagar History, 3 Vols. (Madras, 1946) Vol.III, Chap.29. From the Attavenatantram, part of the Mackenzie Manuscripts, 15-6-8, Sec.10.

\textsuperscript{173} The position of the master-weavers in the 17th century and their dual role in textile organisation is discussed under Chap. VI.
Ma-huan in his account clearly refers to two categories of persons both of whom participated in the export trade in textiles. Thus he says, "Chettis are merchants who are called in when anything is to be sold and who are retained by the king to conduct his trading transactions ashore and afloat." Describing a transaction in detail he says that when a ship arrived from China, the king's overseer with a Chetti went on board and made an invoice of the goods and a day was settled for valuing the cargo. On the day appointed, the silk goods, more especially the Khinkis were first inspected and valued, which when decided on, all joined their hands, whereupon the Weinaki (broker) said: "the price of your goods is now fixed and cannot in anyway be altered." Thus Ma-huan is referring to the official valuer as well as to the broker. Barbosa writing in the sixteenth century says that when any foreign merchant came to the city the king assigned him a Nayre (Nayar - a caste in Malabar) to serve him, a clerk and a broker to arrange for him to obtain such goods as he had need of. Barbosa appears to be referring to the broker as part of the bureaucratic set up. But Varthema (A.D. 1503-8) and Caesar Fredrick (A.D. 1563-81) both give very similar descriptions of the participation of brokers in commercial transactions and their evidence


175. Khinkis or the Persian Khanqabs are heavy embroidered silks.
points to the operation of brokers in an independent capacity. Varthema says that when the merchants wished
to sell or purchase anything they always did it through
the hands of the Cortor or the Lella, i.e., the broker.
The buyers and sellers agreed upon a figure by silently
touching fingers under a sheet of cloth. 178 Caesar
Fredrick describes the same details and says that the
reasons for such a silent and secretive transaction was
that they did not want to disclose the price to the other
merchants who eagerly came to watch the proceedings. 179

Some evidence is available for the incidence of
taxation on weavers in the period from the fourteenth to
the sixteenth centuries. In the following pages an effort
has been made to tabulate the information on taxation on
weavers especially concerning looms. The majority of the
information comes from the Tamil region and the
inscriptions or evidences from Andhra and Karnataka
regions help substantiate the findings arrived at by

## Rates of Taxation on the Handloom Industry

*(Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuries)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name of Place</th>
<th>Taluk</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Nature of Tax</th>
<th>Rate of Taxation (annual)</th>
<th>Tax in terms of Rupees (Approx.)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. of 1905</td>
<td>Kampa Na Udaiyar</td>
<td>Vijaynagar</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>Tirukkalukkunram</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Consolidated tax (Kalkkalkunram) on the Kallkolas</td>
<td>70 panams*</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>If 2½ panams is taken to be the average charge per loom, then 70 panams constituted the tax on 24 weavers in the Tirukkalukkunram area which was an important weaving centre.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R. 224 of 1929-31</td>
<td>Harsha Raya</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>30th</td>
<td>Kunatpur</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom tax (Tari-Iral)</td>
<td>4 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 293 of 1910</td>
<td>Bukka II</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th beginning</td>
<td>Pulipparkkoyil</td>
<td>Maduranthakam</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom tax on Kallkolas</td>
<td>2 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 356 of 1508</td>
<td>Virupa Udaiyar (Virupa kaha I)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th beginning</td>
<td>Vayalur</td>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>3 *</td>
<td>3/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 284 of 1520</td>
<td>Viraya Raya I</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th beginning</td>
<td>Pulipparkkoyil</td>
<td>Maduranthakam</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Remission of House tax (Vasal veri) on Kallkolas</td>
<td>6 *</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 58 of 1514-15</td>
<td>Devaraya II</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Tiruvaligur</td>
<td>Papanasam</td>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>Loom tax on each Kallkolas weaver with one working loom</td>
<td>4 *</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>These rates were fixed by the assembled residents of Parantakanadu, the Valangal 98 and the Idangal 98 sects. This was necessitated by the ruin of the economy of the country by the Kallkolas (Vasal veri?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 272 of 1512</td>
<td>Devaraya II</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>On silk thread (Pattadai Mulagan)</td>
<td>2 *</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 252 of 1507-17</td>
<td>Mallikarjuna</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Chidambaram</td>
<td>South Arcot</td>
<td>Loom tax collected from Kallkolas (on how many living in Tirumalai weavers?)</td>
<td>20 *</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Since on an average the loom tax was 4 panams per individual this would mean 50 panams were levied on 8 weavers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 552 of 1523</td>
<td>Virupa Udaiyar (Virupaksha II)</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>Tirupuliviam</td>
<td>Kanchipuram</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Consolidated tax on each loom</td>
<td>5 *</td>
<td>1½</td>
<td>The weavers of Tirupuliviam had deserted owing to their inability to pay the previous tax. Hence the tax was revised to 5 panams with the assurance that no other tax would be collected from weavers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>King</th>
<th>Dynasty</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Name of Place</th>
<th>Taluq</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Nature of tax</th>
<th>Rate of taxation</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 516</td>
<td>Saluva Narasimha</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>Tirukkachchiyur</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Chingleput</td>
<td>Loom tax (monthly)</td>
<td>3 panams p.m. 5 &quot; annual</td>
<td>This and the following evidence are the only instances of monthly tax on looms.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.I.I, Vol XVII</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1488-91</td>
<td>Tiruvukkarai</td>
<td>Viluppuram South Arcot</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom for weaving; patterned cloth</td>
<td>$ Raka p.m. 6 &quot; annual</td>
<td>The Ruka of the Andhra country is the same as the panam of the Tamil country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.R. 6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1515</td>
<td>Alankonda</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom for weaving; white (plain cloth)</td>
<td>$ Raka p.m. 3 &quot; annual</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 62</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1500-01</td>
<td>Tellaru Wandiwash North Arcot</td>
<td>Consolidated tax on the kaikholas of Tellaru a devadasa village</td>
<td>32 panams</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 247 of 1915</td>
<td>Vira Narasimha</td>
<td>1504</td>
<td>Srirumudun</td>
<td>Chidambaram South Arcot</td>
<td>Loom tax on each kaikholas weaver</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>Desertion of weavers due to heavy taxation. Therefore, tax reduced to 3 panams.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 409 of 1913</td>
<td>Krishnaswamy Raya</td>
<td>1513</td>
<td>Arangal Attur Salem</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>An interesting instance of merchant owning looms and apparently operated by weavers working under them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.R. 41</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1525</td>
<td>Kotakonda</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>1/2 varaha</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E., S.I.I. Vol.X, Pt.2 No.516</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1526</td>
<td>Velupadige Gooty Anantapur</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 140 of 1915-16</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1509-27</td>
<td>Tiruchchendu Tiruchchendu Salem</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>3 &quot;</td>
<td>To encourage rehabilitation of deserted village, all taxes reduced to 3 panams.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.R. 6</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>Devakipuram Arni North Arcot</td>
<td>Tax on silk thread (Pattadai kuleyam)</td>
<td>14 panams 1/6</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 564</td>
<td>Achyuta Raya</td>
<td>1532</td>
<td>Devakipuram Arni North Arcot</td>
<td>Tax on silk thread (Pattadai Kuleyam)</td>
<td>14 panams 1/6</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.R.E. 2</td>
<td>Sadasiva Raya</td>
<td>1561</td>
<td>Pillai Palayam Kanchipuram Chingleput</td>
<td>Loom tax</td>
<td>5½ panams 1/6</td>
<td>1/6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
studying the figures available steadily over a period of time from the Tamil country. The inscriptions make it clear that taxation was annual. The only isolated instances of monthly tax comes from the reign of Śāluva 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 loom tax called Tari-irai or Tari-kadamaiy in the Tamil country and Magzada-hana\(^{180}\) or Maggadere in the Andhra and Karnataka regions. There is also reference to Pēr-kadamaiy or profession tax. This is variously referred to on the different communities as Kaikkōla-kadamaiy,\(^{181}\)Sēniya-tari, Sāliya-tari,\(^{183}\) etc. The inscriptions refer to tax on ordinary thread (Nūlayam) as also tax on silk thread (Pattādai Nūlayam). The sale of cloth was also taxed, assessment being based on a percentage of the profits obtained by sale of cloth. The weavers also paid vāsalvari or house tax. A new tax connected with the weaving profession mentioned for the first time in the sixteenth century is the tax on carders\(^{184}\) (Piṇja Siddhayam), the

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183. Ibid.
184. E.C., Vol.XI, Mk.1
evidence for which comes from Devasamudra Hobli, Malakalamuru taluq, Chittaldroog dt. of the period of Sambuvaraya dated A.D. 1557. Evidence shows that the tax was made collectively and not individually. Further, the preference was to levy a consolidated tax rather than a variety of cesses. At Srimushnam 20 panams were being collected from the Kaikkolás living in the Tirumadaiyilagam of the temple. Evidence from Tirukkalukkunram and Kulattur of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries respectively, show that taxation was not only collective but made into a consolidated tax probably in order to render collection easier. As in the Chola period, evidence for the fifteenth - sixteenth centuries shows that the tax on looms was collected by the State and that in fact assessment and collection of all professional taxes on the communities was the duty and prerogative of the State officials and did not have anything to do with the temple except when it was specifically assigned to the temple by the orders of the king's official, i.e., Mahapradhani, as in the instance from Tirukkoiyilur (South Arcot) in A.D. 1445.

On the basis of the evidence provided, it is possible to conclude that the loom tax (which virtually

186. A.R.E., 170 of 1933
188. A.R.E., 265 of 1934-35
constituted the consolidated tax on the weavers) varied very little over a period of two centuries. On an average, it seems to have remained constant at 3 or 4 panams per loom per year. It seems to have gone upto 5½ - 6 - 6½ panams only after the period of Krishnadeva Raya, i.e., after the 1530's. Even during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya there seem to have been attempts to increase the tax rate but this had to be revised to the old rate of 3 panams due to protests and desertions by the weavers. In fact, whenever it was felt by the weavers that the taxes were unduly high, they protested through their organisations and compelled the state to bring down the taxes. That economic protest was a very effective instrument in the hands of the weavers is proved by several instances. Harihara II, for instance, was faced with a strike by the weavers of the Agamtēśvara temple in Olakkur who successfully paralysed all temple activity. They subsequently had to be reconciled. The rate of taxation during the reign of Virupana, Udaiyār (A.D.1465-85) was rather high, i.e., 5 panams and as a result, there were repeated strikes and en masse desertions by the weavers. The Valangai and Idangai organisation also united in the face of oppressive taxation and determined the tax-rates as testified by the inscription from Srimushnam.

190. A.R.E., 201 of 1923
The attitude of the state in general was to interfere as little as possible with the local structure and to adopt a favourable attitude towards the protests of the weavers. The benevolent attitude of the state is reflected in numerous charters and edicts. All newly settled areas were exempted from the payment of tax for the first two or three years. Thus an inscription from Tiruchchepoondu (an important weaving centre of the Salem district) of the period of Krishnadha Raya refers to the founding of a new village called Samasamudram by Sama Nayanar, agent of Triyambaka Udaiyar who was governing Mulavay. The Kaikkolaas, Cheittis and other professionals (rasavargam) were exempted from payment for the first two years but were to pay 3 panams from subsequent years. Tax exemptions were also made in the event of natural disasters, invasions and plunder of the countryside etc. Thus Devaraya II reduced the tax on looms in Srimushnam (South Arcot district) because the inhabitants had suffered under exorbitant taxation and

193. A.R.E., 628 of 1920; Also A.R.E., 208 of 1934-35 from Nerkunram, Tirukkoyilur, South Arcot dt., A.R.E., 228 of 1930-31 from Manamadi in Chingleput dt., etc.
plunder under 'the rule of the Kannadigas'\textsuperscript{194} (Hoysalas?)

An Arabic inscription in the fort of Adoni (the kingdom of Bijapur) of the period of Ali Adil Shah dated A.D.1574 says that the weavers and the grocers of that area were to be exempted from tax for a period of 12 years because political disturbance in the area and change of government had disrupted the economy.\textsuperscript{195} The attitude of the State towards the weavers and other professional classes is also reflected in the innumerable charters of protection and assurance (\textit{Nambikkai Pattavam}) granted by the State to the weavers and other artisans.\textsuperscript{196}

\textsuperscript{194}. \textit{A.R.E.}, 247 of 1916, \textit{A.R.E.}, 59 of 1914-15 from Tiruvaigavur (Tanjavur dt.) refers to the reduction of all taxes by the Idangai and Valangai classes due to the same reasons.

\textsuperscript{195}. \textit{A.R.E.}, 1 of 1915-16 Appendix D, pt. II, pp.152-3. An inscription of the period of Sriranga IV (A.D. 1756) from Amritaluru (Guntur dt.) grants exemption from tax to merchants and weavers on a similar ground for a period of 3 years - \textit{S.I.I.}, VCL.XVI, No.334