The period of the Vijayanagar empire is regarded as a landmark in terms of the changes in the conception and organisation of the state. Scholars have tended to look upon the Chōla period as 'the golden age' of local self government while conversely characterising the Vijayanagar empire as a "warrior state" with powerful feudatories and officials who left no room for the functioning of local assemblies and more or less autonomous caste and professional organisations. However to view the Vijayanagar empire as a watershed in these terms would be create an artificial break in the process of social history. Local institutions continued well into the Sixteenth Century as some scholars have very effectively demonstrated.2

1 Burton Stein postulates that the emergence of Vijayanagar resulted in considerable changes in the local administration which was tightened by the appointment of bureaucratic officials. He uses the term "warrior-state" to characterise the nature of its rule. (discussed in various articles, for instance, Stein's article in John Parker (ed.) Merchants and Scholars, op.cit. Also in Frykenburg (ed.) Land Control and Social Structure, op.cit.) Prof. T.V. Mahalingam though he does not state it in such conclusive terms seems to hold the same idea for he says, "The real fact is that from about the Vijayanagar period in the history of South India, the Government which came to be organised partly on feudal and partly on military basis was not conducive to the active functioning of the village republics" (South Indian Polity, Madras 1967, P. 382).

2 Examples of the functioning of local assemblies are provided by T.V. Mahalingam himself (Social and Administrative Life under Vijayanagar, Pt.I, Madras, 1969, PP.212 to 215). But he, however, holds that, "the evolution of the Ayagār system and the appointment by the government of officers responsible to it for the administration of local areas sapped the
Nor did guilds go into decline or decadence as certain theorists have postulated. In fact instead of imposing a new officialdom at every level and totally disrupting the existing political and social order, what the Vijayanagar kings did was to attempt a rapprochement with the local elements and this was done through royal influence and patronage. Thus effective alliances were forged between the caste and sectarian leaders on the one hand and the ruling classes on the other. This chapter attempts a study of the continued existence and functioning of the weaver organisations as a part of the general functioning of the village assemblies, their interaction with other social groups especially as reflected in the Left-hand - Right-hand castes' schisms and conflicts and the extension of state patronage to them through the grant of privileges etc. as also their ritual status in society with emphasis on their role in the temples and their participation in the Srivaishnava movement.

3 In Chap. IV of this thesis, Burton Stein's arguments have been critically analysed.

4 The efforts taken by the Vijayanagar rulers to forge link with the local elements especially the temples and sectarian leaders is dealt with in a thought-provoking article by Arjun Appadorai, "Kings, sects, and Temples in South India," in Burton Stein (ed.) South Indian Temples (New Delhi, 1978) PP. 47-75.
It would be essential to study the nature of the Jyāgars system if the actual position of caste and local assemblies in the Vijayanagar period is to be properly understood. Jyāgars were village functionaries who were remunerated for their services to the village community either in terms of tax free lands\(^5\) (mānyam) or a share of the grain heap.\(^6\) The term mānyam itself means fee or remuneration. These functionaries were generally twelve in number.\(^7\) But this was not a rigid figure and the composition of the Jyāgars and their number in every village depended on the exigencies of that particular village. The Jyāgars usually included a watchman, a barber, astrologer, potter, washerman and possibly the smiths though not every village had a goldsmith. The weavers only rarely formed a part of the village functionaries.\(^8\) The chief of the village functionaries was the headman (Gaunda)\(^9\).

---

5 A record from Nakkarashalu in Hadugallu Taluq dated A.D. 1562 records that the Adhikari of Nagarhal granted mānya lands to Sēnabova (accountant) Tirumallāra, the Gaunda (headman) Talāri (watchman), Jyotίsa (astrologer) etc. (S.I.I., Vol.IX, (ii) No.676) E.C. XII, CR 2 also refers to mānya being granted to a Jyotίsa.


7 Ibid. A detailed reference to the Jyāgar system is also to be found in The Mackenzie Manuscripts Ms. 160. Sec.10. This is cited at some length in Further Sources of Vijayanagar History (Ed.) by W. Venkatsramanayya and K.A. Nilakanta Sastry (Madras, 1946) P.285

8 For reference to the position of weavers in the village community see Chap.III

9 A.R.E., 21 of 1910-11, E.C., XII, TM.54 etc.
The village headman was sometimes appointed by the representative of the king\textsuperscript{10} and sometimes by the collective village assembly itself.\textsuperscript{11} With regard to other officials, the only instances where the state is mentioned in connection with the appointment of local functionaries seem to be most often when a particular office was an object of dispute between two parties\textsuperscript{12}. An instance of the appointment of a village astrologer by the royal representative is available but from a much later period i.e., A.D. 1631\textsuperscript{13} by which time of course the entire conception of the functioning of village assemblies had become attenuated due to a variety of factors. But by and large it does appear as if the state put its stamp of approval on the choice of the village functionaries rather than actively appointing them\textsuperscript{14} except in the case of the headman whose position was important since he would be not only the

\textsuperscript{10} A.R.E., 16 C.P. of 1925-26, No.21 of 1910-11, E.C. Vol.XII, Tm. 54 etc.

\textsuperscript{11} M.A.R., 1928, P.48

\textsuperscript{12} E.C., Vol.VII, Ch.62 dated A.D. 1565 from Channagiri, Shimoga, for instance refers to a dispute between two local parties regarding the offices of Senabova, Jyōtisha and Pūrōhīta.

\textsuperscript{13} M.A.R. 1916 Para 105

\textsuperscript{14} B.A. Salōteme, Social and Political Life in the Vijayanagar Empire (A.D. 1346-1646), Vols.2 (Madras, 1934), P.342
village head but also the representative of the state in the village.  

Thus the āyagārś during the Vijayanagar period, functioned as village officials rather than the servants of the Government.  

Hence the theory of the decline of the village assemblies with the foundation of the "Vijayanagar Warrior state" would be true not so much of the heyday of the Vijayanagar empire but the late Sixteenth Century when it had ceased to be a powerful political factor.

As has been clarified, the continued existence and functioning of the powerful caste and craft organisations of the weavers rests on the continued functioning of the village assemblies and other local caste bodies in the Vijayanagar period. Numerous evidences of the continued activity of the weaver guilds right up to the Sixteenth Century is available from epigraphic and literary sources.

The reference to a grant at the Devāṅga Pallala-matam.

---

15 A.V. Venkataratnam, Local Government in the Vijayanagar Empire (Prasaranga, University of Mysore, 1972). P.30

16 Ibid P.37, Saletore's view that the Vijayanagar kings did not introduce measures by which the powers of the local bodies were curtailed, is quoted with approval by Venkataratnam. To quote Saletore "as promoters of the Purvada-Maryade (ancient constitutional usage) it was their endeavour to preserve the old order of things, and to allow the ancient officers to continue under the new government, although... they showed their discretion by placing over the local bodies, officers of the Central government". (Saletore, op.cit, I. P.342)

17 Burton-Stein's term referred to earlier. Also T.V. Mahalingam's book South Indian Polity, op.cit. P.382

18 This clarification is provided by Prof. T.V. Mahalingam himself, Ibid., P.9
(Devanga weaver's meeting place) in Kaspistalam (Pāpanāsam Taluq, Tanjore district) in A.D. 1542, shows the continued functioning of Devanga weavers' craft organisation.\(^{19}\) In A.D. 1554, the Kaikkōlās of Jambai (South Arcot dt.) made an agreement among themselves to contribute to the maintenance of a matam (corporate organisation or guild)\(^ {20}\) Similarly, in A.D. 1584 at Tirupati some activity (not specified) seems to have taken place at the Kaikkōla-mantam.\(^ {21}\) In fact joint donation by the Kaikkōla craft organisation to the Pāleśvarās-vāmin temple at Tiruppulivansam (Chingleput dt.) is referred to as late as A.D. 1679\(^ {22}\). The inscription records the provision made by the people of the Nādu and Desam of the Kaikkōlās for mid-day offering and worship to the deity. The reference to the Kaikkōlās of Nādu and Desam confirms the pattern of organisation of the Kaikkōlās as given in the Senguntar Prabhandha Tirattu and the Chōlar Purva Pattysam.\(^ {23}\)

The grant of a Cowle (Charter) to the weavers of Kanchipuram is registered in another undated late Vijaysanagar record from Kāliyāpettai (Chingleput dt.) which mentions Angālgu Krishnasappangāru, the agent of Kastūri Rangappa Nāyakar as the

\(^ {19}\) V. Rangacharya, Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency, op. cit., Vol.II, No.996 A

\(^ {20}\) A.R.E. 103 of 1906

\(^ {21}\) T.T., Vol.VI, Pt.I, No.6

\(^ {22}\) A.R.E., 351 of 1928-29

\(^ {23}\) The Kaikkōla guild was organised into 4 divisi Nādūs, (Desam) 18 Kīlai Nādūs and 72 nādūs. See Chap.III where the guild organisation is described in some detail.
founder of the village after the death of his master?24

A late Sixteenth Century record from Paṭṭamaḍai (hamlet of Sēramādevi, Tirunelvēli dt.) refers to temple donation by Sattam Tondan, one of the Nāttu-Sāliyar. It appears that the donor was a local head of the Saliya guild organisation.25 Contemporary literature also refers to the guilds. A reference to the guilds of weavers (weaver of ordinary cloth) and the weavers of silk cloth is found in the Amuktamālyada of Krishnadēvarāya?26

It has already been stated that the weaver organisations had their own code of conduct and that any violation of its code was severely punished. Not only did the weaver guilds have their own code of conduct and settle disputes arising within their guild, but they also arbitrated in temple disputes in the capacity of Sthānathārs. During the reign of Vīra Ṣayana Udaiyar, in the Muktisvara temple at Āttūr (Chingleput Taluq and dt.), a gift of land, free of taxes was resumed by the temple authorities and taxes were assessed thereon and as the tenants could not pay them, a meeting of the Kaikkōḷās and Kaikkōḷa-mudalīs was called.27 It appears that the Kaikkōḷās held a position of considerable importance in the temple and were hence asked to arbitrate to settle the issue. Similarly, during the period of Kumāra Kampaṇa Udaiyar (Fourteenth

24 A.R.E., 411 of 1933-34
25 A.R.E., 538 of 1916-17
26 Amuktamālyada, Canto IV, v.35
27 A.R.E., 298 of 1921-22. The inscription gives no clue as to the date nor is it possible to place Vīra Sayana Udaiyar though in the report he is listed as a ruler of Vijayanagar.
Century) in the Vadagiriśvara temple at Tirukkalukkunram (Chingleput dt.) a sum of 850 pon (gold) was found to be missing from the temple. The thief was captured and the Kaikkōlar, Kaikkōla-mudalīs and Ponnambalakūṭār arbitrated in the case, imposing heavy fines on the offender. An extremely interesting evidence of social legislation by the Devānga Weavers, and other professional castes comes from Honnavalli (Tiptur Taluq, Nūmūr dt. (Karnataka) in around 1600). The Devānga weavers along with the washermen, potters and a few other castes are stated to have made some regulations about women who "lapsed from marriage". This record shows the active functioning of not only the Devānga Weavers' organisation but also the continued functioning of similar professional and caste organisation as decision making bodies in local assemblies, evidence that once again belies the assumption that the power of local caste and professional bodies declined after the thirteenth century.

These are interesting evidences of the judicial powers enjoyed by the weavers outside their own guild organisation.

28 S.I.I., Vol.V, No.479
29 E.C. XII, Tp. 130
The size and nature of temple donations, was, throughout the medieval period, an index of the economic prosperity and social status of any community. Donations continued to be both individual\textsuperscript{30} as well as collective\textsuperscript{31} though instances of individual donations were rare. As has already been discussed during the Chōla and late Chōla period the donations to the temples seem to have been chiefly for the setting up of the perpetual lamps (Nandā-vilākkku) by the gifting of money or of sheep, cows to the temple.\textsuperscript{32} During the Vijayanagar period the form of donation was essentially in the nature of food offering (Prasādam) and large scale feeding of the disciples apart from grants of money and lands to the temple which continued throughout.

During the reign of Ariysana Udaiyār (Fourteenth Century) the Kaikkōlar living in the Tirumādaivilāgagam of Brahmapuriśvara temple at Perunagar (Chingleput dt.) are said to have made a collective gift (not specified) to the deity.\textsuperscript{33} In A.D. 1366 the Kaikkōlars of Madivala (Bangalore Taluq and dt.) attached to the"fine temple"(name not given) combined with the Mahājanās and the temple trustees in making a collective gift of paddy to Sri Rudra Mahēśvara of Chitramēli Perukalan-Dirukkasvanam residing in the temple Tamaraikkirai in Rējēndra Chōla Valanādu.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{30} A.R.E., 353 of 1911 from Chingleput, A.R.E., 221 of 1929-30 etc.
\textsuperscript{31} A.R.E., 366 of 1923, A.R.E., 318 of 1916-17, etc.
\textsuperscript{32} See Chap.III where donations by weavers in the Chōla and late Chōla period have been discussed at great length.
\textsuperscript{33} A.R.E., 366 of 1923
\textsuperscript{34} E.C. ,66, P.14
Similarly in A.D. 1425 (the reign of Dēvaśaya II) the Kaikkōlar of Vāluvūra (Wandiwash Taluq, North Arcot dt.) made a collective gift of money for a lamp to the temple of Tiruvayaniśuramudaiya Nāyanār.35 These records are a further proof of the fact that the weaver caste and craft organisations continued to flourish during the Vijayanagar period and cooperated in social matters. A record from Kāllidaikurichchi (Ambāsamudram, Tirunelvēli dt.) dated A.D. 159736 states that a contribution of 10 pāṇam per loom was levied by the Mudali Nāyanārs of village and similar contributions were levied by other village professionals for conducting festivals in the temple of Vändiyappar. In the Sixteenth Century at the Sīṭārāmaśvami temple in Dharmaśvaram (Ongōle, Guntūr dt.) the spinners made a collective contribution of 2 dha (?) on every ratam (i.e., spinning wheel) and the weavers 1 vam (?) on Sells (inferior, very low quality Muslin).37 Some records also refer to joint construction of temples by the weaver communities. Thus the Kaikkōlar of Ambāsamudram (Tirunelvēli dt.) constructed in A.D. 1507 a temple for Šrī Anniyadhīśuramudaiya Nāyanār and Bhūtalavīra Rama Pillaiyār and were in return granted the hereditary rights of receiving a garland and endowed with many incidental privileges.38

35 A.R.E., 63 of 1908
36 A.R.E., 318 of 1916-17
37 Rangacharya - Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency No.36?
38 A.R.E., 313 of 1916-17
There is one striking difference in the nature and size of donations between the Chōla and the Vijayanagar periods. While in the Chōla period nominal donations of money or sheep by individual weavers are innumerable, there are hardly any references to nominal individual donations in the Vijayanagar period. The only instances of individual donations which occur in the Vijayanagar period are major donations like the gift of land, setting up of deities or construction of temples and in every case the donation was reciprocated by high honours and privileges being conferred on the donor. In A.D. 1398, at the time of Virūpāksha I, Vēna-udaiyar, one of the Kaikkōla-Mudalīs of the temple of Tiruvannakkōyil-udaiya-Nāyanār is said to have made a gift of land in the hamlet of Uttāmasōlavilāgam to the deity. It is said that Uttāmasōlavilāgam was originally granted to the temple for worship and repairs by Vīra Kampaṇa Udaiyar (1377). It is thus possible to infer that the land was bought up by the Kaikkōla Mudali and subsequently a part of it gifted to the temple. The donor was apparently wealthy and powerful, for he was not only a land-owner but the title 'Mudali' enjoyed by him reflects his social status. At Ponnūr (Wandiwash, North Arcot dt.) in A.D. 1383, Magadarayar, a Kaikkola reconstructed with stone the Maha-mantapa of the temple of Parasariśvaram Udsaiya-Nāyanār in recognition of which he was given land

39 See Chap. III under donations
40 A.R.E., 353 of 1911
41 Ibid.
and privileges by the trustees of the temple.\textsuperscript{42} In another instance, from Kunnattūr (also in the Chingleput dt.) Naṟṟaṉṟeṉāṟa-Sōlakkuṟam, a Kaikkōḷa who had set up an image of Sokka-Nāyinār in the Tirunāgēśvara temple was given the privilege of Parivaṭṭam (i.e., the head-dress put for the God) and a site with the stipulation that he should pay 4 panama on every loom set up therein.\textsuperscript{43} The donor was again, clearly a man of considerable wealth since he seems to have owned several looms and probably employed workers under him. In 1506, at Mēḷachevāḷ (Tirunelvēḷi dt.), the Kaikkōḷan Kēṟalṉ Mēṟtāndan (shows the migratory pattern of the community and the presence of Kaikkōḷas in Keralā) reconsecrated the temple of Udaiyavāḷr which had been deserted during Muslim occupation. Presumably, as a recognition of his service he was made the accountant of the temple and given 4 nali of cooked rice every day from the prasādām (food offering deity.\textsuperscript{44} In an instance of individual donation from Aragāḷ (Salem dt.) during the period of Aṭṭhutarāyā (A.D. 1532) Kannan, a Kaikkōḷa of Kaliyūr who had instituted a car festival (Tēr Utsavam) in the temple, was granted a house, a loom, a piece of land and certain specific privileges in the temple by the temple trustees. These same privileges were also guaranteed to his descendants.\textsuperscript{45} As all these evidences of individual

\textsuperscript{42} A.R.E., 407 of 1928-29
\textsuperscript{43} A.R.E., 221 of 1929-30
\textsuperscript{44} A.R.E., 407 of 1928-29
\textsuperscript{45} A.R.E., 453 of 1913-14
donations prove, the donors in every instance enjoyed a lot of power as is clear from the size of the donation or temple service performed which invariably resulted in social and ritual privileges being conferred on the donor. This makes clear one very significant fact - that differentiation among the weavers was increasing. While a few wealthy weavers seem to have made major donations to temples, donations of nominal amounts by ordinary weavers were totally absent. Secondly, the evidence shows a shift in the form of donations from money for perpetual lamp and donation of sheep in the Chôla period to institution of festivals and disbursement of Prasādam in the Vijayanagar period. This can especially be perceived in the donations made to Tirupati 46 for instance, though there are a few earlier instances of donations being made in terms of food offering even in the Thirteenth Century. 47

The donations made by the weavers during the Vijayanagar period are once again to be contrasted with the donations made by other communities. The merchants were of course the largest donors though their donation was as usual essentially in the form of Mahaṃsi or contribution of the

46 For a discussion of the shift in the nature of donations from perpetual lamps to Prasādam, see Arjun Appadorai's article on 'Kings, Sects and temples in South India 1350-1700 A.D.' op.cit., pp 66-67, and ff. Also T.T. Introductory Report, P.129

profits on their items of trade. The Pancālas or Kammālar (i.e., the Smiths) are another community mentioned frequently in the records of this period in connection with donations to temples. The Smiths of Udayagiri, Nellōre, Koratūr, Gandavar-a-rām, Allūr, Kovūr and several other regions are said to have endowed to the deity Kamatēsvara of Dharamkōta the Palsyaν-Payindī of Amara-varam in the year 1490 A.D. This was probably a communal cess levied upon the members of the community. Elsewhere, the Smiths are said to have made a collective gift of land to an individual Buddhāsīne. Apart from the considerable size of the donation what is equally significant is the fact of corporate ownership in land.

Weavers continued to have connections with the land in the Vijayanagar period. In the Chōla period services to the temple were reciprocated by the grant of lands. In A.D. 1383 at Ponnūr (Wandiwash, North Arcot dt. Magadarāyar a Kaikkōla was given land with certain privileges by the temple in appreciation of his construction of a mandapam in the temple. In 1532 a weaver who instituted the car (ratha) festival at the Karivarsdarāja Perumāl temple in Aragal (Salem dt.) was given land, a loom and certain ritual privileges by the temple authorities.
There are also numerous references to weavers acquiring land as Kaniyāṭchi (i.e., free and hereditary property). Thus two Kaikkōlās, Kūttadundējvar and Puluginappērumal, the sons of Kalingarāyar were conferred land as Kāṇi in Kariyandal (Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, North Arcot dt.).\(^{53}\) In another record from the same area, the statement regarding confirmation of Kaniyāṭchi is followed by the remark that 15 Panams was the Chandēśvarsapperuvilai. Both these records appear to be straightforward instances of lease or purchase of land by the weavers.\(^{54}\) During the period of Bukkana Udaiyār 20 ma of land in the Tirumadsivilāgam, which had been lying waste since the days of Sambuvarāya was sold to the weavers for settlement.\(^{55}\) Two points in this record are noteworthy - that the land was cultivable waste land and that it was collectively purchased by the weaver community.

In A.D. 1426 the Kaikkōlās of Nērkunṟam (Tirukkoilūr, South Arcot dt.) are said to have been given the Kaniyāṭchi right of the village Vadagarsai-Tayanūr, in return for the amount of 30 panams given by them to the Uravar.\(^{56}\) This again appears to be another instance of purchase or lease of land by the Kaikkōlās rather than the conferment of land upon them. However, one inscription from Tirukkoilūr (Tiruchchendūr, Tirunelvelī dt.) is very ambiguous on this point. The record dating around the 1550's\(^{57}\) registers

\(^{53}\) A.R.E., 188 of 1963-64

\(^{54}\) A.R.E., 189 of 1963-64

\(^{55}\) A.R.E., 368 of 1923

\(^{56}\) A.R.E., 209 of 1934-35

an order of the king (The ruler of Travancore, Udayamar-tanda Varman) granting land belonging to the temple as Keniyatchi to Marttanpan, a Kaikkola. Perhaps, the king exercised some control over the temple land because it had originally been granted by him to the temple in A.D. 1531. Without any mention of Keniyatchi Collective purchase of house sites by the Kaikkola is referred to from Kanchipuram (Chingleput dt.) in A.D. 1364. The record states that with the sanction of Koppannangal, the executive officer of Kampana Udayar at Kanchipuram (reference to S.I.I. Vol.I, P.22), the authorities of the Rajasimhesvara temple at Kanchipuram sold some houses in the north row of the sannidhi street to the Kaikkolar and the Kaikkola mudalis against the payment of 150 panams made by them which was deposited in the treasury. It further states: "These houses and gardens attached to the house may be sold or mortgaged by them." In A.D. 1536, during the period of Achyutaraya, Namai Chetti is said to have constructed a mandapa in the Govindarajaswami temple in Tirupati (Chittoor dt., Andhra) on the land which he purchased from the Kaikkolar. The land was apparently held collectively by the Kaikkolar because no individual owner is mentioned. In another significant record from Puliyur dated A.D. 1563 (Sadasiva Raya), the Sthanathar of

58 Ibid.
60 T.T. Vol.IV Nos.140 and 258
61 A.R.E., 346 of 1923
the Brahmapuriśvara temple made an agreement that they would cultivate certain lands of the Kaikkōla-Mudalīs of Puliyūr and pay taxes on them to the temple treasury. Ownership of lands by the weavers is also indicated by the records which refer to donation of land by the weavers to the temple.

Thus in A.D. 1398, at the time of Virūpāksha I, Vēna-Udaiyār a Kaikkōla Mudali made a gift of all lands in the hamlet of Uttamasōla vilāgam to the temple of Tiruvanakōyil udaya Nāyanār. Another record dated 1404 A.D. refers to the purchase of land at Pulippākkam by the same Vēnauadaiyār. A similar gift of land was made by a Kaikkōla of Madurai in A.D. 1478. In yet another instance a gift was made by a section of the Kaikkōlaś of a share of their lands to another section for the services the latter had to render in the temple. A Sixteenth Century record from South Arcot mentions Kaikkōla tenant cultivators. The managers of the Ramalingēśvara temple and Kudama Nāyaka, the agent of Sūrappa Nāyaka issued an order to the Kaikkōlaś giving certain concessions in the cultivation rights of temple lands in Harangiyūr (Tirukkoyilūr, South Arcot dt.).

The economic prosperity of the weavers, evidenced by their ownership of land and the numerous donations made by them to the temples led to the conferment of economic and

62 A.R.E., 353 of 1911, Madambakkam, Chingleput dt.
63 A.R.E., 356 of 1911 Tiruvanakkoil (Chingleput dt.)
64 A.R.E., 8 of 1909 Appendix C from Madurai.
social privileges by the state in recognition of their enhanced importance in society. To this was added ritual recognition by the temples. Economic privileges took the form of appointment as temple-managers or trustees, accountants and treasurers of the temple, etc. As temple trustees they even seem to have had considerable right over the sale and purchase of temple house sites and land. In A.D. 1410, during the period of Bhūpati Udaiyār, the Sthānathār and Kaikkōlar of Valuvūr (Wandiwash, North Arcot dt.) purchased land for the Brahmapurīśvara temple at Valuvūr.67 At Tiruppārkadal (Walajapet, North Arcot dt.) in A.D. 1469, the period of Kampaṇa Udaiyār the Mahārudrar, Śrī Mahēśvaras and Kaikkōla-Mudalis who were the trustees of the Tiruppārkadal-Udaiya-Nāysnār are said to have sold a number of houses belonging to the temple for meeting the expense of taking deity in procession.68 In another instance, from Devakīpuram (Ārni) in the same dt. the Kaikkōla-Mudalis as trustees of the temple made a gift of land and a house in the temple dēvadāna to an individual in A.D. 1523.69 In A.D. 1533 in the same region the Kaikkōla-Mudalis acting as trustees of the Brihsadamba temple granted the right of supervision of temple lands to an individual.70 The more

---

67 A.R.E., 62 of 1908-9  
68 S.I.I., Vol. XVII, No. 758  
69 A.R.E., 365 of 1912  
70 A.R.E., 356 of 1912
affluent members of the weaver community not only functioned as temple trustees but also as temple managers and also held responsible position of accountants in several temples especially in the Tirunelveli area (a highly productive cotton tract). The appointment of a weaver as the headman (Pidaran) of a village comes from Elavannasur (Tirukkoyilur, South Arcot dt.) in A.D. 1555. Vengappayan, the Pradhanani of Surappa Nāyaka is said to have made the Kaikkōla-Mudali, Gangarayan the Pidaran of the village and he was also allowed to own a tax free loom.

Tax reduction or tax exemptions on the weavers were sometimes in the nature of an economic privilege being conferred on them. For instance, the Kaikkōlas of Tirukkalukkunram (Chingleput dt.) were exempted from a number of taxes like Karpura Kānikekāi, Adhikāra Chōdi, Pattādisi-nūlāyam (tax on silk thread) Attai-Sammadam etc., while during the reign of Saluva Narasimha, the Kaikkōlas of Kunnattūr were exempt from all taxes.

---

70 A.R.E., 356 of 1912
71 A.R.E., 482 of 1909 from Solapuram, Kovilpatti, Tirunelveli dt.
72 A.R.E., 602-3 and 606 of 1916-17 from the same dt. appoints Kersalān Mārtāndan as the accountant of the temple he renovated. Another instance of the appointment of weaver as accountants comes from the same dt. in Kalligaikuruchchi, Ambāsamudram in A.D. 1525. A.R.E. 320 of 1916-17, At Giriysambāpuram (same dt.) in A.D. 1566 the same man, Kaikkōlan Pēraippān was put in charge of the accounts of 3 temples - A.R.E., 473 of 1916-17.

73 A.R.E., 486 of 1937-38
74 A.R.E., 170 of 1933.
In another interesting instance from Velpamadugu, (Gooty Taluq, Anantapur dt.) in A.D. 1526 during the reign of Krishnadēvarāya it was decreed that at Velpamadugu the rate of tax was to be 3 Panams per loom and if 10 looms were kept by one single family, only 9 were to be taxed.\(^7\)\(^5\) This is clearly an instance of an economic privilege being conferred on a wealthy master weaver. But tax exemption was not always indicative of an economic privilege. Very often it was granted in new settlements and served as an inducement to attract weavers,\(^7\)\(^6\) or constituted tax reduction in the face of economic protests\(^7\)\(^7\) by the weavers.

Social privileges essentially meant the conferment of Sangu and Tandu or Dandu (the right to blow the conch shell and the right to ride the palanquin on all important occasions). It could also mean the right to whitewash their homes or have a double story, to sport their own flags or even to wear certain types of clothes. Among the Kaikkōla caste of weavers, the Kaikkōlās of Kanchipuram were apparently the first to secure the privileges of the use of Sangu and Tandu on all good and bad occasions because all inscriptions from other regions state that the weavers in these areas obtained these privileges on the pattern of the

---

75. S.I.I., Vol. IX, Pt. 2, No. 516 - Tax exemption as a privilege was also enjoyed by the Pancalās (No. 1521-52, 340 of 1926) and in a greater degree by the barbers in the Andhra country where they were frequently exempted from tax and also had privileges conferred on them in the Vijayanagar period.

76. A.R.E., 429 of 1925-26 from South Arcot of the period of Devaraya

77. A.R.E., 356 of 1923
weavers in Kañchipuram or that the head of the guild at Kañchipuram by the name of Aramalatta-Ṇāyanār accorded them these privileges. Thus the Kaikkōla weavers of Tiruṇaiśalūr, Tiruṭtalūr Tirukkoyilūr and Brahmadēsa (all in South Arcot dt.) are said to have got similar privileges on the model of the Kaikkōla of Kañchipuram as per the decision taken by the Aramvalatta Ṇāyanār in consultation with Kongurśyar and Kachchirśyar.

Another Professional caste that held privileges equal to the weavers was that of the Smiths. A record of the reign of Harihararāya (A.D. 1336-57) refers to the conferring of social privileges on the Smiths. A record from Amarśvati dated A.D. 1437 says that they were entitled to the various royal insignias, like leather musical instrument, golden musical instrument, Sangu and taud, Garudādvaja, i.e., banner etc. The almost equal social importance enjoyed

78 A.R.E., 473 of 1921-22 of the period of Mallikarjuna dated A.D. 1485
79 A.R.E., 422 of 1925 of the same period.
80 A.R.E., 291 of 1928-29
81 A.R.E., 162 of 1918-19
82 The exact status of Aramvalatta Ṇāyinar is not very clear. It appears that Kachchirśyar was the head of the Kañchipuram guild and Aramvalatta Ṇāyinar was the overall head.
84 A.R.E., 804 of 1917.
by the Smiths as well as the weavers was perhaps one reason for such frequent conflict and rivalry between these two groups.86

Ritual privileges were an even more important aspect of social acceptance and recognition for the professional castes including the weavers. At Kunnattūr (Chingleput dt.) during the period of Hariharāya (end of Fourteenth Century), a weaver Nārpatteṇṇaya Solakumāran who had set up the image of a deity in the temple was given a weaving site and also Parivattam (head dress of the God). In A.D. 1433 during the reign of Devaśāya Mahāśāya 87, a Kaikkola-Kulandai Andar Amarakōnār was given the Tirumukhakāni (supervision of temple lands?) at the temple of Tiruvagnīśvaram-udsya-Mahādeva in Tiruvakkīśvara Madam (Wandiwash, North Arcot dt.). It is said that Aramvalartta-Nachchiyarmishta Kandamānīkkam, the temple dancer and sister of the Kaikkola personally interviewed king Devarāya on behalf of the temple and procured a copper plate grant from him, making the Sarva-mānāya gift of the village. In return for her services, the temple conferred some privilege on her brother and granted her one Padakkku of grain every day and 2 nānmams per month. This record shows the continued association between


the Kaikkōlar and the Devaradiyār and incidentally confirms the very interesting observation made by Domingo Paes that the Devaradiyār or temple dancers were the only women to have direct access to the king. In 1506, A.D. when the Kaikkōlar of Ambāsamudram constructed a temple for Bhūtalavīra Rāma Pillayār they were given the hereditary right of receiving a garland from the temple. Elsewhere, a weaver in return for his donation is given the privilege of a share in the temple Prasādam (food offering) while these are ritual privileges conferred in recognition of a donation or service, in certain temples the weavers held a position of such importance that they themselves determined the ritual ranking of others. Thus at the Ādipurīśvara temple at Tiruvorriyūr (Chingleput Taluq, Chingleput District - now in Madras), it was the Kaikkōlas themselves who along with the Nāttār and the temple trustees, re-examined the old dispute about the order of precedence and temple duties of the Ishtabattaliyār, Devaradiyār and the Padiyilār. In A.D. 1368 during the reign of Kaṁṣaṇa Udaiyār certain disputes about ritual precedence were determined by them and

---

88 For an account of the relationship between the Kaikkōlas and the Devaradiyār or the temple dancers see Chapter III.
89 The account of Domingo Paes in Sewell, op.cit. PP.234, 259
90 A.R.E., 313 of 1916-17
91 A.R.E., 602, 603 and 606 of 1916-17
92 See Chap.III under ritual ranking for the details of dispute
93 A.R.E., 208 of 1912-13
at the beginning of the Fifteenth Century\(^94\), in the reign of Hariharāya, the final decision over the dispute was given. That the Kaikkōḷās should have arbitrated in an issue of such importance, is a significant proof of their ritual status in that temple. At Kānchipuram the Kaikkōḷās as in the Chōla period held positions of ritual significance. Kōpana, the minister of Kampāṉa-Udaiyār (Fourteenth Century), gave the Kaikkōḷās and Kaikkōḷa-Mudalīs of the Kailāsanātha temple in Kānchipuram, the right to mortgage and sell their honours - their precedence (Mudalmai) in the receipt of the betal-nut honour (adaiippam) their service to the deity (Tevar-Atimai) and their proper place in temple ranking. (Atsiyyu)\(^95\) The Kaikkolas also held a position of equal importance at Tirupati. In A.D. 1337, the task of conducting the celebration of an important festival (not specified) at the Alamulumangamma's temple at Tirugchānūr was vested in the Kaikkōḷās and the emperumān adiyār,\(^96\) i.e., temple dancers. The Kaikkōḷās figure as the temple servants in innumerable inscriptions from Tirupati and as such they were entitled not only to remuneration but also a share in the prasādam. The remuneration to the Kaikkōḷar between 1400-1500 A.D. ranged from

\(^94\) A.R.E., 196 Appendix B - 1912-13
\(^95\) S.I.I., Vol. I, P.22
\(^96\) T.T., Vol.I, No.108
1 Panam per service to 3 Panams per major service. To this was added a share of the Prasadam. Their role in the Tirupati temple was enhanced when, in the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries the Tamil or Prabhandic school of Vaishnavism began to gravitate towards Tirupati while the phasys or orthodox school became concentrated at Varsadarsaja temple in Kanchipuram.

It is noteworthy that the Sāliyar, the dominant weaving community under the Chōlās, hardly figure in the records of the Viṣyṣṭāgar period. Whether it is with reference to the weaving profession or the acquisition of social and ritual honours it is only the Kaikkōḷās who find mention. This makes it quite clear that by the Viṣyṣṭāgar period the Kaikkōḷās had replaced the Sāliyan as the dominant weaving community in the Tamil Nadu region. In the Andhra-Karnataka regions, however, the Sāle and the Dēvāṅgas continue to find mention though the references to Dēvāṅgas are more numerous from 1500 onwards. Around the close of the Sixteenth Century the Dēvāṅga weavers along with some other professional castes seem to have affected a social legislation regarding women "who lapsed from marriage" at Honnavalli. (Tiptur Taluq, Tumkur dt.)

97 The wages of temple servants are given in several inscriptions pertaining to the Tirumalai-Tirupati temples. T.T. Vol.II, No.135, T.T. Vol.III, No.105, No.29, T.T. Vol.IV No.3 etc. There is not much difference in the wages paid to the temple personnel which ranged between 1 to 5 panama but the Sthanathar were paid higher.


99 This aspect is analysed at some length in the last pages of this chapter.

100 E.C., Vol.XII, Tp.130
From the evidence on the various privileges conferred on the weavers, especially the Kaikkōlas, it becomes very clear that there was an upward movement among them for the social privileges accorded to them like Sangu, Dandū etc. are more numerous in the Vijayanagar period than in the Chola period. It is essential to note that this upward mobility was not an isolated phenomenon among just one narrow section of South Indian society but comprised several of the influential professional groups - the tanner, the oilmen and more especially the Kammālar or Pancālar i.e., the groups of five smiths. All these groups aspired for social and ritual recognition and this is reflected in their large-scale participation in the Vīra-Saiva or Lingāyat movement and in the Tengalai Vaishnavite movement. It is also reflected in an equal degree in the Right-hand - Left-hand ferment in society, in their acts of cooperation as well as in their in conflicts and schisms.

During the period of the Vijayanagar empire further dimensions were added to the Idangai-Valangai classification. Sociologists have tended to describe the categorisation as a root-paradigm which had varied applications at different points of time in different regions. It is quite clear that in the Vijayanagar period, the left-hand - right-hand divisions had nothing to do with the army since the Muslim invasions and the rise of the Sangama dynasty had resulted in the disbanding of the Chola army. In the Fourteenth Century
the categorisation is said to be based on economic grounds. According to Abba Dubois\textsuperscript{101} the classification was based on the struggle for precedence between the followers of the old established handicrafts and innovators who came from outside. Thus, it is held that in the Kanchipuram area, the Sāliyan, the predominant weaving community under the Chōlas were classified as Valangai while the Kaikkōḷas whose professional importance arose only during the Vijayanagar period are classified as Idangai. But this explanation is not feasible because even as soldiers in the Chōla regiment, the Kaikkōḷas were still classified as Idangai. Another explanation is that the division of society into Idangai and Valangai represented the struggle between landed, stable, agricultural groups on the one hand and the rapidly increasing, mobile urban and artisan groups on the other.\textsuperscript{102} Burton Stein has advanced the theory that in South India, the peasants held the balance of power and describes the Vellālar-Brahmin alliance as against the


\textsuperscript{102} This opinion is expressed among others by Lewis Rice; \textit{Mysore Gazetteer \textit{op.Cit} P.52-3 off.} Also see Hamilton Buchanan's \textit{A Journey from Madras through the countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar} III Vols. (London, 1807)
artisan classes, the Vellālar representing the Valangai and the artisans the Idangai. This seems to be partially substantiated by a record from Vriddachalam (South of the Vellālar) dated A.D.1429 which registers a compact agreed upon by the Valangai and Idangai castes that they would inflict corporal punishment on those who helped the tax collectors of the king and the Brahmin landholders in the Collection of taxes by coercion. In another record the 98 Valangai and the 98 Idangai are said to have entered into an agreement to defend themselves against the pressure exerted on them by the oil pressers and against the Brahmin and the Vellālar landlords who were backed by the government officials. But on the basis of a few inscriptions it would be incorrect to describe the Idangai-Valangai classification as based on the social contradiction between the Vellālar and the artisans. Firstly though the Vellālar figure as Valangai in certain areas, notably Tondaimandalam, quite often they do not figure in this classification at all. Secondly, even if the Vellālar are considered as Valangai, other agricultural castes like the Pallis were included in the Idangai category. Nor would it be true to say that all the artisan classes belonged to the Idangai as the Padmassale (weavers), Rangāre (dyers) and Kumbars (Potters) figure as

104 A.R.E., 59 of 1913-14
105 A.R.E., 246 and 254 of 1928-29, Report, Para 79
Valangai in the Karnataka region.\textsuperscript{106}

The most plausible explanation is that the Idangai-Valangai schisms during the Vijayanagar period was due to the desire for higher status on the part of the lower castes, comprising of all the Sudra castes and the attempts by the higher category of non-Brahmins (sometimes referred to as the Sat-Sudras) to preserve their status achieved by them through the process of sanskritisation, by assiduously keeping others out. A certain extent of social mobility is always present in any society but there is no doubt that the upward movement of the professional castes, the clamour for privileges among them and the resultant conflicts were much more intense and violent during the Vijayanagar period than during the Chola period. But following the analogy implicit in the terms, the Left-hand - Right-hand constitutes a vertical division of the human body, just as the caste system is supposed to symbolise a horizontal division of the human body "Since what is divided is a single and complete human body, the metaphor expresses conflicts as well as underlying unity".\textsuperscript{107} Thus the issue of the Idangai-Valangai castes has to be studied from different facets. The position of the weavers within the major Idangai-Valangai contradiction\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{106} For this and other points mentioned above, see list of Idangai-Valangai castes given in Lewis Rice's Gazeteer \textit{op.cit.} or in Srinivasa Chari, \textit{op.cit}

\textsuperscript{107} Arjun Appadorai, \textit{Left-Hand - Right-hand castes in South Indian History, op.cit}, Introduction.

\textsuperscript{108} This is what Burton Stein has described as "Opposition which is complementary". - See B. Stein's article in Richard Fox (ed) \textit{Realm and Region in India} 1977 New Delhi, PP 35-36 and
has to be studied in terms of: (a) the elements of cooperation and conflict within the *Idangai* and the *Valangai* categories separately, (b) the elements of conflict between certain elements of the *Idangai* and *Valangai* categories and (c) instances of cooperation among the *Idangai* and *Valangai* categories in opposition to other elements like for instance the landlords or the tax officials. The last aspect of course would make the *Valangai-Idangai* categories themselves part of a broader contradiction within society.\(^{109}\)

To take up the first proposition, i.e., the position of the *Kaikkola* weavers\(^{110}\) as a part of the large communal organisation of the *Idangai* castes, the weavers were bound not only by the rules of their own caste and craft organisation but by the broader code of the *Idangai* category. Thus in A.D.1399 the *Idangai* community of Tiruppukkuli made a *sarvamanya* gift of the *Idangaivarj* for maintaining a lamp in the temple and in their record the *Kaikkolar* are specifically stated to be *Idangai*.\(^{111}\) A record from Chandragiri (Chittoor dt. Andhra) states that the *Idangai* community of the region met in the *Idangaināysaka mandapa* and made a *sarvamanya* gift of a village to their deity.\(^{112}\)

---

109 The existence of various contradictions within a particular functional zone has been discussed at some length at the beginning of Chapter III of this thesis.

110 Only the *Kaikkola* weavers are specifically mentioned because some weaver castes like the *Sāliyan* of the Tamil country and the Padmassale of the Andhra-Karnataka regions belonged to the *Valangai*.

111 *A.R.E.*, 217 of 1916 (Kaśchipuram Taluq and dt.)

112 *A.R.E.*, 24 of 1944-45
Similarly, in 1434 A.D., the village of Tirumangalam in Sengatthukottam was given as Sarvamānya to meet the expense incurred for the blowing of trumpets by the Īdangaiyar on the occasion of the Tirupparam festival in the shrine of the Goddess Kāmākṣhīmman in Kaṇchipuram.113 (Kāmākṣhīmman is the special deity of the Kaikkōḷās). In A.D. 1457, during the reign of Mallikarjuna, certain dues like Īdangai vari and Jāti kanikkai collected from the residents of Tirupparambur and its hamlets by the Īdangai-nāttavar and Vanniyar were assigned as Sarvamānysam for lighting a lamp to the Goddess Kāmākṣhīmman in the same temple mentioned above.114 But another record, also of the period of Mallikārjuna, gives a different idea regarding the tax Īdangaivari. This records the remission of the Īdangai taxes on a new settlement of the Kaikkōḷās by Mahāmandalesvara Śaiva Nārāsiṃha and the communication of this order to the Kaikkōḷās through the officers of the king.115

These records raise a question - whether Īdangaivari was a tax collected by the Īdangai-nāttar as a community levy or whether it was a tax collected by the government for the treasury. It is possible that it was a tax collected by the government but usually given to the Īdangai community to be utilised for its benefit.

In spite of these instances of cooperation among the left-hand castes, there are also examples of conflict between two or more of the elements constituting the Idangai category. The origin of the conflict was always over privileges. In A.D. 1503 during the reign of Saluva Narasimha, Ambikāmakkilavan Aramvalarta Nayanār (of Kanchipuram) agent of Narasa Nayaks bestowed on the weavers of Tribhuvanamadepārṟṟu, Naduvukarsipārṟṟu and Nenmalipārṟṟu, (Tiruvandarkōyil, Pondicherry State) certain privileges like the use of Sangu and tandu on all good and bad occasions "as the weavers of the country situated on the bank of the Peṇṇai river (Tondaimandalaṃ) were privileged to have. The record significantly adds that those who objected to this right should undergo the punishment fixed for it as per the record at Seliyanganallūr. More explicit evidence of the conflict over privileges comes from Vṛiddāchalam (South Arcot dt.) during the reign of Srīrangal (A.D. 1572-85). The record registers an agreement entered into by the Vāsal-Mudalīs of Kongarēyar, Nāyiṇar Kachchirēyar, the Nāṭṭavar of Idaiyaru (the Idangal heads) denying the privilege of using Pāvāsai, parivattam, etc. to the artisans (Kammālur) i.e., the smiths as enjoyed by the Kāikkolas of Padaividu, Senji and Tiruvannāmalai.

116 A.R.E., 363 of 1917-18
117 A.R.E., 293 of 1928-29
The conflict over privileges at another level, was between the Idangai and Valangai castes. Conflicts usually arose over issues such as the ritual ranking in temples, the allocation of symbols and honours etc. To quote Abbe Dubois "Perhaps the sole cause of the conflict is the right to wear slippers or to ride through the streets in a palanquin (dandu) or on horse back during marriage festivals. Sometimes, it is the privilege of being escorted on certain occasions by armed retainers, sometimes that of having a trumpet sounded in front of the procession, or being accompanied by native musicians at public ceremonies. Perhaps, it is simply the particular kind of musical instrument suitable to such occasions that is in dispute, or it may be the right of carrying flags of certain colours or of certain devices during these ceremonies".118 During the reign of Vijaya Bhūpatī Rāya at Tiruvānnāmalai on order stated that all distinction between the Idangai and Valangai were to be obliterated and that in future the Kaikkālar of the Idangai were to enjoy all the privileges such as Sāngu, Tandu, Āsāi (right to ride elephant) Chāmaram (the fans) etc enjoyed by the Valangai in the region.119 One Valangai-Idangai conflict in South Arcot during the reign of Ariyana Udaiyār lasted over four years though its origin is shrouded in mystery.120 At Malsyampāṭṭu in North Arcot dt.,

120 A.R.E., 422 of 1905.
one such conflict led to loss of lives on both sides.\textsuperscript{121} In a rare instance at Tiruppukkuli in Chingleput in A.D. 1399, the \textit{Idangai} community made a collective gift to the deity with a special stipulation by the Kaikkol\textsubscript{ar} that the Sank\text{\textae}ti Samayakk\textae{rar} may not interfere. This is one of the few instances where opposition was directed against the Brahmins\textsuperscript{122}. More often the \textit{Idangai-Valangai} disputes over privileges place between professional castes among the Sudras having a somewhat similar status in society.

A significant case in point are two records pertaining to the periods of Achyutar\textae{ya} (dated A.D. 1540) and Sad\textae{siva R\textae{ya} (A.D. 1542-76. The record is not dated) from Tiruvamatt\textae{ur} (Villupuram, South Arcot dt.). The first record states that the \textit{Ilaivanigar} (that is the betel-leaf merchants (they must have belonged to the Valangai like all the merchant communities) had erased an inscription on the wall of the Tiruk\textae{k\textae{m}\textae{i\textae{sava} temple relating to certain social honours and privileges being enjoyed by the Kaikk\textae{lar}. As a protest the Kaikkol\textae{ss and the Dev\textae{ngas} left the village. The matter was enquired into and the issue decided in favour of the Kaikkol\textae{ss so that a fresh copy of the} inscription was made, based on the copper plate kept in Ka\textae{\textchupuram.\textsuperscript{123}}}

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{A.R.E.}, 185 of 1921
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{A.R.E.}, 217 of 1916. For details on the Sank\textae{ti Brahmins see Thurston, \textit{op cit} Vol.I, Two other examples of \textit{Idangai-Valangai} opposition to Brahmins occur in \textit{A.R.E.} 246 and 254 of 1928-29 though here the issue was not privileges but tax oppression.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{A.R.E.}, 201 of 1936-37.
period of Sadāsiva Rāya says that in the time of Sūrappa Nāyaka the Ilaivāṇigaṅgar agreed to accord the same privileges and rights to the Kaikkōḷās which they had enjoyed earlier before the inscription granting them the privileges were effaced by a group of the Ilaivāṇigaṅgar. The order was now re-engraved on the temple walls. The record is also significant on several grounds. They show that the weaver castes acted in solidarity in certain altercations over privileges and probably the spirit of cooperation between the Kaikkōḷār and the Devāṅgas was also enhanced by the fact that they both belonged to the Idangai community. Secondly the Kanchipuram copper plate preserved at Kanchipuram is stated to be the ultimate authority for the bestowal of privileges on the Kaikkōḷās. It substantiates the point that the headquarters of the Kaikkōḷā community was at Kanchipuram. The Valangai-Idangai conflicts continued right into the Seventeenth-Eighteenth Centuries and was in fact exploited by the Dutch and the British to gain control over the textile industry and trade.

As stated earlier, the Idangai-Valangai is a vertical division of the human body just as the caste system is supposed to be a horizontal division of the human body and since what is divided is a single and complete human body the metaphor expresses conflict as well as underlying unity.

124 A.R.E., 41 of 1922-23
125 See Chap.VII for detailed illustrations of this point.
126 A.R.E., 103 of 1906.
Throughout the Vijaysnagar period one comes across various examples of cooperation among the Idangai and Valangai especially against oppressive taxation. A record from Jambai (S. Arcot dt.) after referring to the 98 Valangai and 98 Idangai groups states that the weavers made a voluntary contribution for the construction of a matam (guild meeting place) for their community. In another record, the 98 sects of the Valangai and 98 sects of the Idangai are said to have met at Korkai (Mayavaram, Tanjore dt.) during the reign of Devarāya II (A.D. 1427) and declared "they did not tax us according to the yield of the crop but levied the taxes... unjustly... We were about to run away. Then we realised that because we of the whole country (Mandalam) were not united in a body, we are unjustly dealt with. Hereafter we shall but pay what is just". They go on to fix the rates of taxes on different sections. Two records dated A.D. 1429 from Elavanasur and Vridhachalam (South Arcot dt.) give in detail the agreement among the Idangai and Valangai to resist unjust taxation and to socially ostracise those who violated this agreement. This is followed by a detailed list of taxes to be paid by the various professional castes.

126 A.R.E., 216 of 1917-18. Some of the specified rates are quoted in Chap.IV under taxation.
128 A.R.E., 92 of 1918, Para 68.
130 Other instances of left-hand - right hand unity are to be found in the inscriptions of the period - A.R.E., 355 of 1950-51 etc.
That there was no logical basis for the division of castes into Idangai and Valsngai is proved by a peculiar circumstance. While the Kaikkolás were Idangai their close associates, the dēvaradiyār were Valsngai.131 Similarly, while the men of the Chakkiliya and Palli castes belonged to the left-hand, the women of their caste were classified as right-hand.132

The clamour for privileges, the claiming of mythological origins and the Idangai-Valsngai schisms and conflicts represent only particular dimensions of a complex social situation in which an attempt at upward mobility and sanskritisation was taking place not only among the weaver castes but also among other leading professional castes like the Kamālar or the Pancālar, (the smiths) the Telikis (oil-pressers) etc. The cause for this is to found in the renewed vigour of the urbanisation process,133 the growth in exports and the state patronage to crafts as evidenced by the

131 K.K. Pillay's article, op.cit. P.30
132 Ibid, P.42
133 For the growth of urban centres and its links with the Bhakti movement see R.N. Nandi's article on the 'Origins of the Vira-Saiva movement' I.H.R., Vol.II, No.I, July 1975 Also see Burton Stein's article on 'Social Mobility and Medieval South Indian Hindu Sects', in Silverburg (ed) Social Mobility in the Caste System of India (Hague,1968) P.78 and Passim. Stein's attributing the importance of the Sūdras to the existence of large contingents of caste armies in the Vijayanagar period is not so correct since most of the caste armies were disbanded after Rājarāja Chōla III.
Amuktamālyada. Thus a situation had developed where certain professional castes "exerted a profound influence upon medieval society, enjoying a rank and social power which was far greater than that accorded to them by the legal and social texts of the period." These castes sought ritual recognition not only by exalting their own caste and acquiring social privileges but by large-scale participation in the Lingayat or Vīra-Saivaite, and the Tengalai-Vaishnavite movements. "In fact certain Southern school Brahmins (Tengalai Śrīvaishnavās) can be identified as former sudras from their manners and customs."

The largely non-dvīja composition of Tengalai Vaishnavism can be seen by the number of sectarian leaders in it who belonged to the Śūdra caste. The movement which began in the post-Raṅga period had Śrīrangam and Tirupati as its nuclei in the Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries while the Bhasya or the orthodox sanskrit school of Vaishnavism shifted its centre from Tirupati to Varadarāja-Perumāl temple at Kanchipuram. The first Jīyar at Śrīrangam Kuranārāyana and later Pillai Lōcācārya and Alagiya Manavāla strengthened the Tengalai movement, i.e., the Prabhandic or Tamil school of Vaishnavism, by offering discipleships to the Śūdra servants of the temple. There were several non-Brahmin disciples of

---

134 Amuktamālyada : Canto IV, V.35 T.V.M.I. P.230
135 Stein's article in Silverburg (ed) op.cit P.81
136 The participation of lower castes in the Vīra Saivaite movement has been dealt with in detail in Chap.III of this thesis.
Rāmānuja like Pillai Uranga villi Dāsar who was a Malla by caste\textsuperscript{138} (professional wrestlers) or Pettina Perumāl.\textsuperscript{139} Rāmānuja Dāsar another disciple was a sculptor belonging to the Kammālan caste\textsuperscript{140} while Nambi Eru Tiruvadaiya Dāsar was a shānār (toddy tapper).\textsuperscript{141} It is even believed that Kandaṣai Rāmānuja Dāsar, the non-Dvija (i.e., Īḍra) Vaishnavite saint of the Fifteenth Century who held a position of great importance and patronage at Srīrangam and Tirupati was a brother of Sāluva Narasimha.\textsuperscript{142} Though this relationship may or may not be true, it is a fact that Sāluva Narasimha extended maximum patronage to these two temples.\textsuperscript{143}

The Kaikkōla weavers held a position of considerable importance at Srīrangam. The Kōyil Kaṇakkan was a vēllālar while the ritual of offering a coconut to the deity was done by the Kaikkōlas.\textsuperscript{144} Śūdra functionaries called Sattāda Mudalīs (i.e., holy men who do not wear the sacred thread) performed important ritual functions at both Srīrangam and Tirupati.\textsuperscript{145} The Kaikkōlas are mentioned as important

\begin{itemize}
\item 138 N. Jagadeesan: History of Sri Vaishnavism in the Tamil Country (Post Ramanuja) (Madurai, 1977), P.86.
\item 139 Ibid, P.91.
\item 140 Ibid, P.92.
\item 141 Ibid.
\item 142 Ibid, PP.94-95.
\item 143 This aspect is discussed by Stein in Silverbeurg (ed) \textit{op.cit} PP. 88-89. Also Arjun Appadorai's article in Stein (ed) South Indian Temples, \textit{op.cit}, P.59.
\item 144 Burton Stein in Silverberg (ed) \textit{op.cit.}, P.87.
\item 145 T.T., Vol.II, Nos.23, 31 and 50 etc.
\end{itemize}
functionaries of the Tirupati temple along with the Kammālar on Pancālar (i.e., the smiths) in a record dated A.D. 1544.146 The Kaikkōla weavers were in charge of the Mātangi and Pērantālu Vēsham. In the Mātangi Vēsham a Kaikkōla worked himself into a state of divine intoxication and then a metal wire was passed through the middle of his tongue without causing any harm.147 In the Pērantālu Vēsham, a Kaikkōla dressed up as a female and rode around the town on a horse, distributing the Prasādam, Kuṁkum, saffron paste and flowers.148 In view of the fact that in Tirupati, during the Vijaysnagar period the emphasis seems to have shifted from mere grants or burning of perpetual lamps to food offerings the distribution of Prasādam had a crucial significance149 and it is noteworthy that this important task was given to the Kaikkōla caste. Tengalai-Vaishnavism also had a large following among the Padmasale caste of weavers of Andhra-Karnataka region. Their guru were the Tāṭchāryar.150 The Saurāshtra or Paṭṭunulkāran weavers who virtually replaced the Kaikkōla as the dominant weaver community of Tamil Nadu in the Seventeenth Century were predominantly Vaishnavites151 and right upto the Nineteenth Century were involved in

146 T.T., Vol.III, No.396, 397
148 Ibid.
149 Arjun Appodorsai, op.cit., P.66. The point regarding the shift in the nature of offerings to temples during the Vijaysnagar period has also been discussed under donations.
150 F. Buchanan (Hamilton), op.cit, Vol.I, PP.256-257.
litigation in law courts claiming Dvija (i.e., Brahmins) status.\textsuperscript{152} The large scale incorporation of Sudras professionals in the Vaishnavite movement can be seen by the creation of 'Rāmānujakūtam'\textsuperscript{153} (free feeding house) by Sāluva Narasimhas. This was mainly managed by the Sudra disciples of Rāmānuja. Although Kāśchipuram was gradually becoming a stronghold of Vaḍagals (orthodox) Vaishnavism, even here non-Dvijas continued to hold a position of importance in certain temples. They also continued to play an important part on the occasion of Sūra Saṃhāras.\textsuperscript{154} Professional classes like the Palli and the Kammasalan performed equally significant ritual roles.\textsuperscript{155}

The rising social importance of Sudra professionals and their quest for ritual recognition is also reflected in the proliferation of Amman temples between 1300 and 1750.

\textsuperscript{152} The social position of the Paṭṭunulkārsan is dealt with in detail in Chapter VII of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{153} Arjun Appadorai, \textit{op.cit.} P.67

\textsuperscript{154} The association of Kakkōlas with the Sūra Saṃhāras festival is dealt with in Chap.III.

\textsuperscript{155} The Pallis, another community of inferior origin have an annual ceremony in the Parthaśarathī temple, Triplicane. At Śrīperumbūdūr (Chingleput dt.) they have the privilege of accompanying the image for having once sheltered the idol during a Muslim raid. They are also allowed to draw the cars of the idols at Kāśchipuram (Chingleput dt.), Kumbakōnām (Thanjavur dt.) and Sṛivillipūttrū (Rammūd dt.) (N.Jagadeesan, \textit{op.cit.}, P.314) An inscription from Udayagiri (Nellore) of the 16th century states that one Kōnetayya Devas Mahārāja, a chief of Udayagiri, performed a car(ratha) festival of the deity Rāghunātha māyakalu and prescribed the ceremonies to be followed. According to this when the deity in the car passes through the streets with the dancing girls in the car, a member of the Penchanamuvāru wearing a head cloth and another loosely wrapped around the waist and having only a sandalmark on the forehead & not chewing a betel should go around in front of the car with a chisel, a nail and a sickle in his hands. (N.D.T. VolII. No.20).
In this context, the temple statistics worked out by Stein become very interesting. He cites the section on Sūdras in the Baramahal records which makes it clear that the religious activity of the Sūdra castes, both agricultural and artisan, pertained to clan and place tutelaries, mainly Goddesses called "Amman". He quotes the 1961 Census and also through other sources of information arrives at the conclusion that the priests in these 'Amman' shrines were mostly Sūdra priests called 'Pandārama' recruited from the Vellāls and Palli castes. At Kanchipuram, the ratha(car) festival in honour of Kāmākshiamman was arranged by the Kaikkōlās. Thurston giving a descriptive account of the festival says that some of the car pullers had two cords drawn through their flesh, about 12 inches apart.

In conclusion, certain very significant points emerge from the mass of evidence presented. Society during the period of the Vijayanagar empire was in a state of flux. This was because of renewal of urbanisation and temple activity under the patronage of the Vijayanagar kings and the overall prosperity of the empire. As a result there was an upward movement on the part of most of the Sūdra professional groups like the Smiths, the weavers and the oil-pressers. But the economic power and social privileges gained by the weavers

156 Burton Stein "Temples in the Tamil Country, 1300-1500" in Stein (ed) South Indian Temples, (Delhi, 1978) PP.27-28
157 Thurston, op.cit., Vol.III P.42
158 Ibid.
and other leading professionals was hardly in accordance with the low place allotted to them in the ritual hierarchy. In medieval South India, the battle against caste took the form not of caste negation but of caste exaltation. Like the Rajputs in the North claiming to be Suryasamshis and Chandrasamshis, the Kaikkōla weavers ascribed their origin to Vīrōdhīnu, the mythological lieutenant of Lord Kārtikēya.159 Similarly, the Devāṅga weavers of the Andhra-Karnataks region claimed descent from Manu and Nārada. They also laid claim to the Brahmanical status and wore the holy thread.160 Thus what was happening among the weaver communities and other professionals like the Kammālās in Medieval South India was to some extent the reverse of the Bhakti movement in the north. The leaders of the Bhakti movement in the North during the Thirteenth-Fifteenth Centuries like Kabir (a weaver), Dadu (a cotton carder), Nāmdev (a calico painter), Ramdas (a barber) and Nānāk (a petty grocer), all belonged to the artisan community. They spearheaded the movement for equality with the upper castes not by seeking mythological origins or claiming ritual privileges but by a total negation of caste.161 Ramanand, the teacher of Kabir said "Let no man ask a man's caste or with whom he eats. If he shows love to Hari, he is Hari's son". Kabir himself rejects caste in several of his

159 Śeṅgarā Prabhandha Tirattu, op. cit.
160 The Devāṅga Purāṇam, op. cit.
161 The nature of participation of the professional and artisan classes in the Bhakti movement in Northern India has been discussed at some length by Prof. Irfan Habib in his article "The Historical background of the monotheistic movements of the 15th-17th Centuries." Seminar on ideas - Medieval India, Univ. of Delhi, 1965 (Mimeo)
devotional verses "It is needless to ask of a sant, the caste to which he belongs. For, the priest, the warrior, the tradesmen, all the 36 castes alike are searching for God. The barber has sought God, the washerman and the carpenter. Even Rāsiḍa was a seeker after God." In an even more thought-provoking verse, Kabir after proclaiming his weaving profession says, "of the earth and the sky the Lord hath made a loom. And the sun and the moon, the warp and the woof... And I, the weaver, realised the Lord within my own home. Sayeth Kabir, when the loom breaks, then the thread merges in the thread of the world. They who wear dhoties of 3½ yards and 3 fold sacred cords, And display rosaries on their necks... They are the chests of Banaras, not the saints of the world." The verses of Nānak and Dadu express similar sentiments. Thus the process of Sanskritisation born out of an instinct for caste exaltation and the assumption of a Brahmanical or supra-brahminical status is totally absent in the North. Unlike the Lingāyats or the Tengalsai Vaishnavites most of the leaders of the Bhakti movement in the North reject the entire idea of caste. But in the South while Basava the Vīra-Saivite saint and

162 *Hundred Poems of Kabir* tr. by Rabindranath Tagore (ed) by Evelyn Underhill (London, 1970) P.41


164 He is described as an axe to the root of the tree of caste in the *Bās欢喜purāṇa*.
Rāmānuja, the Vaishnavite leader expressed ideas of caste negation, their followers adopted techniques of caste exaltation. The Lingāyats claimed superiority over Brahmins and to emphasise the point adopted peculiar practices like the burial of their dead in a sitting posture, while the Tengalai Vaishnavites contended with the Vadagalai for caste superiority and ritual recognition.

165 He says "If we descend below the four castes and come to the Chandalas who, however, lacking in virtue are true worshippers of ... Vishnu, their servants are my masters and their feet are mine to worship."

166 Referred to by the Arab traveller Abdur Razaq. See Chap.III for a detailed discussion of the Lingāyats movement.