CHAPTER III

The Weavers, Society and State
Tenth to Fourteenth Centuries

The weaver communities formed a part of the overall social structure of the age and their status and function in any particular region at a point of time was determined not merely by the nature of their economic situation but also by the nature of the polity, the ethos of the society in general and the values of the various social groups comprising it in particular. Hence an understanding of the overall structure of the period under study is a necessary preliminary to locating the position of the weavers within this broad framework.

Little or very marginal attention has been paid to weavers in the traditional albeit scholarly studies on South India especially their role vis-a-vis other professional groups, the local assembly and the State. In fact the traditional theories make no attempt to provide the vital linkages between the theory of a centralised Chola state, the functioning of professional bodies and village assemblies and the various levels of interaction between social groups and the State and to knit the study of these processes into a cohesive methodological framework.¹ In contrast, the new

¹. Two outstanding examples are K.A. Nilakanta Sastry's "A History of South India," (Madras, 1955) and T.V. Mahalingam's South Indian Polity, (Madras, 1967)
and thought-provoking theory of the 'segmentary state'\(^2\) seeks to replace the traditional conceptions by a new model which is more pertinent since it seeks to integrate the various aspects of society - the status of social and professional groups like the weavers, their organisation and their relation to other units of society with the overall social and state structure.

The theory of the segmentary state provides an alternative to the traditional conception of Chola polity as centralised and bureaucratic.\(^3\) The theory first propounded by Aiden Southall in his study of the Alurs of Uganda\(^4\) has rapidly gained currency among scholars like Burton Stein and Richard Fox.\(^5\) Stated very succinctly

2. In the context of South India, the theory has been ably applied by Burton Stein and formulated in his book, *Peasant, State and Society in Medieval South India* (Oxford University Press, 1980) and in several earlier articles "The Segmentary State in South Indian History" in Richard Fox (ed.) *Realm and Region in Traditional India* (New Delhi, 1977). Also see Stein's article in the collection edited by Frykenburg, *Land Control and Social Structure*, op.cit. and his essay on 'The State and Agrarian Order in Medieval South India', in Stein edited *Essays on South India* (New Delhi, 1976).

3. Stein says that scholars like T.V. Mahalingam (*South Indian Polity, Madras*, 1967) and Nilakanta Sastry (*Cholas, Reprint, Madras*, 1975) have expressed such a view. It is true that N.K. Sastry has compared the Chola empire to the Byzantine empire and the local institutions to the autonomous townships of Roman Govt. (*Ibid.,* p.447 and 515) but Stein's characterisation of their theory seems somewhat naive and simplistic and certain ideas are emphasised in isolation from other facts mentioned by them. (For instance *Cholas*, p.461. ff)


this theory as put forward by Stein\textsuperscript{6} propounds the
existence of pockets of power called segmentary zones,
functioning virtually independent of the overall head
at the centre called the king except for the existence
of a peripheral foci of administration in each zone, the
structure of administration in each zone, the structure
of administration being pyramidal in each zone as well as
in its overall relationship with the centre. The segments
acknowledge the symbolic overlordship of the king and the
relationship between them is a tributary relationship.
This theory is based on certain crucial fundamentals.

(A) The existence of segments of power, i.e., "locality
social, economic and political systems" called Nadus \textsuperscript{7}
"predated the Cholas and endured long after their demise".
These were basically Brahmadeya (i.e., Brahmin) and later
non-Brahmadeya\textsuperscript{7(\textit{ur})} settlements. The units were "self-
regulating though not self-sufficient".\textsuperscript{7}

(B) There was no organised system of taxation and
the primary income of the state came from the seizure of
treasure and war-loot.

\textsuperscript{6} Stein in Fox (ed.) "The Segmentary State", \textit{op.cit.}
But I have in my summing up, not followed the order
of arguments as presented by Stein because while
part of his theory is stated as an elaboration of
Southall's theory, the substantive part of his
theory is stated as juxtaposition to the 'unitary'
theory of the Chola state.

\textsuperscript{7} Stein says that non-Brahmadeya settlements were
later developments. But his assumption seems
incorrect since non-Brahmadeya villages are said to
have existed from Pre-Chola times. I am grateful
to my guide Dr. R. Champakalakshmi for this
information.
(C) Since the utility of the fighting forces was purely predatory in nature, there was no strong centralised army and there were instead caste and guild armies.

(D) Functionaries with high titles mentioned in inscriptions implied not 'Central Bureaucrats' but rather clan or tribal leaders whose "rule credentials" indicated their status as very ancient and not dependent upon the Chola kings. The title 'Muvendavelar' is taken to be a case in point.

(E) The existence of "opposition which is complementary" among parts of the state as a whole as well as within any constituent segment. That is, the political system of the Cholas is described as composed of a multiplicity of political units - each a segment and within each segment internal divisions (ethnic and functional groups) which are capable of acting together as a unit vis-a-vis other units. The entire segments of the structure are integrated on the one hand, by royal patronage to Brahmins and temples and on the other by ceremonial and ritual acknowledgement of Chola kingship (for instance the formal Prasastis of the reigning king which precede the subject matter in every inscription).

8. The term used by Marxists to define the same feature is "Contradictions".

Perhaps the greatest problem in the acceptance of the theory of the segmentary state is the nature of the segments because of the complementary theory Prof. Stein has evolved elsewhere\textsuperscript{10} with regard to this aspect. The "segments" are described as "nuclear core regions", being economically self-sufficient pockets of culture often with a river as its nucleus and the dispersal of the surplus within the village itself except for what went out as tribute to the state in the form of taxes. The isolated tribal areas are said to act as a bridge and a buffer between the nuclear core regions. The weaknesses of this theory have been analysed briefly elsewhere in this thesis,\textsuperscript{11} and it has been stated here only to make it clear that though the idea of nuclear core regions seems to complement and strengthen the conception of segmentary zones, the former theory must be completely de-linked before the latter becomes even partially acceptable. Not only were the segments only 'self-regulating' and not self-sufficient units but the ties of economic and commercial inter­dependence\textsuperscript{12} linked the various units together.\textsuperscript{13} With

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10} See Burton Stein's article, 'Integration of The Agrarian System of South India' in Frykenburg (ed.) \textit{Land Control and Social Structure}, \textit{op.cit.}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} See Chap. IV of this thesis. Without any special theorisation the nuclear core regions have been located and analysed in a scholarly manner by Y. Subbarayalu, \textit{Political Geography of the Chola Country} (Madras, 1973).
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Linked the various units together
  \item \textsuperscript{13} With
\end{itemize}
this fundamental reservation, the theory of the segmentary state is a plausible model because it provides likely explanations for certain features peculiar to the Chōlā empire or dominant in this period like the Practice of having caste-based armies,\textsuperscript{14} under the Chōlās and the existence of enormously powerful village assemblies and communal guilds. The position and power of the weavers in medieval society has to be studied against this background since an understanding of the overall structure of state and society makes possible a sharper analysis of the data available on the weavers during this period.

The role of the weavers in contemporary society has to be studied not only with reference to the broad social framework but also in the context of their immediate surroundings, that is, their position within the village community. The pioneering historians of South Indian history have adopted with full approval the theory of 19th century British liberal historians and 20th century Indian nationalist historians regarding the existence of self-

\textsuperscript{12} The existence of powerful merchant guilds like the Ayyavole, the Peccamdrum, Nānādesis, etc. whose hegemony stretched over vast regions and involved trade in a variety of products including even salt, grain and oil, rules out the possibility of self-sufficiency and in fact emphasises close inter-dependence between the various regions. See S.I.I. Vol.VI, No.41, E.C., Vol.VII, Sk.118 etc. For other examples see Chaps. II and IV of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{13} Another important lacuna in the theory of the nuclear core region is that Prof. Stein does not anywhere try to define its geographical limits - whether it could range from a unit as small as a village, or a cluster of villages to the size of a town. This question is vital to the further point about the self-government of these units.
sufficient and self-governing "village republics".\textsuperscript{15} But it is extremely doubtful whether the Brahmadeya or Brahmin villages (called agrahārās) and the non-Brahmin villages (called Īr) were really self-sufficient.\textsuperscript{16} It is undeniable that service relationships and in fact even the sharing of the grain heap existed through services were more often paid in terms of a piece of land.\textsuperscript{17} The minimum number of professionals to be settled in a new village is referred to in the inscriptions and the absence of the weavers in most of these lists is significant. For instance, during the reign of Jātavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya I, a Brahmadeya village was founded in the Chidambaram Taluq and 200 vālīs of land apportioned among 121 Brahmins.

\textsuperscript{14} Burton Stein in Frykenburg (ed.) op.cit., p.186.

\textsuperscript{15} Two such leading opinions would be that of T.V. Mahalingam in his South Indian Polity, op.cit. p.342 and Passim and Nilakanta Sastry in his book the Cholas.

\textsuperscript{16} T.V. Mahalingam very correctly points out that agrahāra villages were not peopled exclusively by Brahmins because they also had need of the essential services including cultivators and artisans and similarly Brahmin priests may have been a part of the Īr (South Indian Polity, p.349). For Sudra professionals settled in a Brahmadeya village, see S.I.I., Vol,II, pp.527-28. The Tandantottam Plates of Nandavarman II.

\textsuperscript{17} S.I.I. Vol,II, Pt.2, No.66 of the period of Rājarāja from Tanjore.

\textsuperscript{18} A.R.E., 376 of 1954-55, Sundara Pāṇḍya, 13th century, Peruntalaiyur, Gōpichettipālayam Taluq, Coimbatore dt.
It also made provision for settling the Vellālar (agriculturists) and pieces of land were allotted to various professionals - the Vaidya (physician), Karnam (accountant), Tachchan (carpenter), Kollan (blacksmith) Uvāchchan (drummer), nāvidan (barber), Kumbāran (potter), padikappan (watchman) jati ambashtan (?), Purangali (?) and Vettiyan19 (the village servant). The settling of various professionals like carpenter, mason, priest, etc. is also referred to in the village of Ravulacheruvu in Dharmavaram20 (Anantapur dt.) Thus these units mentioned in the records could not have been self-sufficient since items like cloth and oil had to be brought in from outside. There are, however, a few records where the weavers seem to have constituted a part of the village community. Reference is made to the granting of a site to a community of weavers (samaya pattagarage) attached to the 400 Mahājanas (village assembly). There are also some references to the tax on authorised looms in a village.22 In the Kuram plates of Paramēsvaravarman I, looms are included among the property owned by the village in common.

21. E.I., XIII No.15, p.187
However, in the majority of the records the weavers do not seem to have constituted a part of the village community. Twelve professionals were considered essential in every village and in the later records they are referred to as the Ayagars but, however, the list of functionaries is not always the same. For instance, in some lists the potter is left out but the goldsmith and the astrologer are included. This is so in the Karnataka region. Along with the weavers the oilmen also seldom figure in the village community. Thus the concept of the so called self-sufficiency of the village units is not valid.

However, the description of the Brahmadéya and Úr as self-governing units is more justified. The democratic nature of the village assembly and its effective functioning is testified to by a record from Chengam (Tiruvaññalai, North Arcot dt.). It says that the Nattavar of the Chengam

24. The Attavana Vyavahára Tantram, an ancient administrative manual (Mackenzie Manuscripts 15-6-8 Sec.10, pp.3-4) refers to the 12 functionaries constituting the Ayagars - Headman, accountant, carpenter, washerman, purohit, barber, shoe-maker, goldsmith, watchman, waterman, blacksmith and potter (For a parallel in the Maharashtra region, i.e., the watandars and Balutedars, see A.R. Kulkarni, "Village Life in the Deccan in the 17th Century (I.E.S.H.R., 1967). Prof. T.V. Mahalingam makes the dubious statement that the beginning of the Ayagar system in the Vijayanagar period meant the corrosion of the village assemblies (South Indian Polity, op.cit. p.382). But there hardly seems much difference between what Mahalingam calls the lowest hierarchy of state officials i.e., the ayagars and the composition of the village professionals in the 13th century (c.f. inscriptions already cited).

area and those of the surrounding area comprising the Mudalîs, (i.e., headmen or representatives) of the Chettîs, vanigar (petty traders), Siva-brahmanas, Porkoyil Kaikkolas, (the prefix porkoyil to the weaver caste is not clear) Manrâdis (shepherds), Vēdar (hunters) Bēnar (a caste of washermen) and Paraiyar (untouchables) assembled and after laying specific charges on the representatives of Karikāla Chōla (i.e., Aditya II) in the region - Perindaiyān, Arachanāyakan and Ammatālvān for combining with a local potentate Karuppukkaṭṭi nāyakan and causing internal dissension. The assembly ostricises them and condemns them as illegal usurpers of power. All those who helped them or abetted them in any way were also to be ostracised and in fact to be killed, though the latter statement seems more a violent expression of disapproval rather than an active decision to punish by death. The record is dated 1268 A.D. Interestingly one of the officials whom the village assembly ostracised i.e., Ammatālvān is mentioned in an inscription from Chengama itself in 1223 A.D. as having given a land as devadanam to the temple of Chengama Udaiyār. This record from Tiruvanmamalai is just one out of numerous instances of the village nattavar or professional heads


27. S.I.I., Vol.VII, No.120. However, since a gap of 45 years exists between the first and the second inscription this identification is by no means certain.
and big landlords coming together to make important decisions. It is also true that within each unit there is "opposition which is complementary". Within every village numerous communal and caste organisations existed. There are repeated references to the eighteen Panas (caste and craft organisations) which represented secondary contradictions within a particular set and these were subsumed under the leading contradiction of the Left-hand-Right-hand castes. However, even to talk of these two as clear cut categories would be too simplistic since the Left-hand-Right-hand divisions only represent a root-paradigm which assumed different forms in different regions under different situations. Thus in order to appreciate the precise nature of a "segmentary zone" at a particular period or point of time, for instance, the

28. 18 Panas is a conventional number and is used as early as the period of the Jatakas (Jat.VI, pp.1, 427), cited in R.L. Majumdar, Corporate Life in Ancient India (3rd edition, Calcutta, 1969). A detailed list of the 18 Panas is given in A.R.E., C.P.18 of 1917-18, Part II, pp.174-5 - Vyavaharikas, Pancalas, (Smiths) Kumbhālikas (potters) Tantuvājin (weavers), vastrapādhikās (cloth dyers), Tilaghatikās (oil-mongers), Kurantakās (shoe-makers?) Gō-rakshakās (cow-herds), etc. The 18 Panas are also referred to in the Karnataka region in the Hyderabad Archaeological series H.E.H. Vol.13, Nos.30 and 53 where they are called the 18 Samayas.

29. What Stein has defined as the basis of the left-hand-right-hand division, i.e., the contradiction between artisans and agriculturists (Stein in Fox (ed.) op.cit. p.36 and ff.) is just one possible variable. The fallacy of this argument can be seen by the fact that while the Saliyar (weavers) belonged to the right-hand, the Palliyan (predominantly agriculturists) were classified with the Idangali. Thus any hard and fast categorisation is impossible. Arjun Appadorai refers to the various facets of the root paradigm in his
composition of the assembly (sabha-ur or nagaram) and the dominance of a particular group or groups in its policy decisions, all these internal contradictions have to be taken into account plus their changeability and the possibility of the "over determination" of any one contradiction (due to internal or external pressures).

The implications of the economic position of the weavers in the social sphere can be seen by examining the following aspects (1) The nature and extent of weaver guild organisations (2) The size and nature of the donations made by the guilds to the temples, including temple service like the celebration of important festivals (3) The individual as well as collective ownership of land by weavers which in the medieval times was an important status symbol and (4) The conferring of economic and social privileges on the weavers in recognition of their importance.

The weavers were organised in guilds called Samaya, Sreni and Mata. The members of the weaver guild usually belonged to the weaver caste and heredity formed the thesis, Left-hand - Right-hand Castes in South Indian History (unpublished, Chicago, 1973). This point is further discussed later on in this Chapter.

30. This term is borrowed from Louis Althusser's methodology in For Marx. (London, 1969).

31. Though the term 'guild' has been used in this thesis, for the weaver organisation, it must be made clear that it is more as a matter of convenience because the South Indian guilds, though they were corporate bodies of artisans did not perform the economic functions usually performed by the medieval guilds in Europe and in England like the maintenance of uniform standards in products and prices etc. (Ref. for instance Postan (ed.) The Cambridge Economic History Vol. III on the functioning of medieval guilds in Europe).
an essential part of the professional guild. Thus there is reference to Samaya Pattagara\(^{32}\) (Pattagara stands for weavers, the Sāliya Samayangal\(^{33}\) and Seniya (sēni = sreni) Pattagara\(^{34}\). The weaver guilds had an excellent local and regional organisation and this was also true of some other prominent guilds of the time like those of the Banajigas or that of the Kammālar\(^{36}\) (also called Pancālar). The Kaikkōla guild of weavers is said to have been divided into four tīsai nādūs, 18 kilai nādūs, and 72 nādūs.\(^{37}\) The mahānādu was at Kanchipuram\(^{38}\) and the supreme head of the guild was called the Mahānattān (alternatively he was also called Senāpati in some guilds). Reference is made to the donation of 15 Kalaṇjitu of Pon (gold) for a perpetual lamp to a temple in Achcharapākkam by Pichchaiyādovan.

34. S.I.I., Vol.XX, No.11 from Lakshmiśvar, Shiratti Taluq, Dharwar dt.
35. S.I.I., Vol. VIII, No.442 from Pirānmalai (Tirupattūr Taluq, Rāmnāḍ dt.) refers to 18 Paṭṭinam, 32 Velārpuram, and 64 Kadikaitavalam. That exactly the same divisions existed in the Andhra region is proved from an inscription from Chittoor dt. (Bassinikonda) which refers to the 4 tīsai nādūs, 18 pattinam, 32 velārpuram and 64 Ghatika Sthāna of the Tisaiayirattu ahnhūrvar.
37. The guild organisation of the Kaikkōla has been discussed in the Sengunta Prabanda Tirattu (ed.) Sabapati Mudaliyar (Madras, 1926) op.cit.
Kidārandariyan who is described as the Kaikkōla Samaya Sēnāpati. The collective organisation of this guild at the regional level is shown by the epigraphic evidence from Coimbatore in which the Unmattur chief Vīra Nanjarāja Uddiyār is said to have granted the tax on cloth bazars (sulai tirai) to the Kaikkōḷās of Vadapārīśvara-nādu, Karuppu nādu, nalūr-parru, perūr-nādu, vīra sōla Valanādu and Oduvanga-nādu to the extent to which it was in force during the preceding two years. (The rates are not mentioned).

The Dēvāṅgās also had a strong organisation. They claim that they had their headquarters in four directions - Sakar (?) in Uttar Pradesh, Mudunur in Krishna district, Penugonda in Anantapur district, and Padaividu in North Arcot. These were further divided into talangal (?), Kattemanai (?) and Valanādu. The evidence that the guild was held together

38. Inscriptions from Tiruvennainallūr (A.R.E., 473 of 1921-22), Tirukkōyilūr (A.R.E., 291 of 1928-29) etc. show that the weavers of these areas secured their privileges only through representation to the Kańchipuram guild. This aspect has been discussed under privileges in this chapter.


40. South Indian Temple Inscriptions (ed.) T.N. Subramanyam (Madras, 1953), No.219 D-2949-21. It is not possible to date this inscription though it might pertain to the 13th-14th centuries. The regions can also not be identified.

41. Dēvāṅga Purāṇam by Palanisami Pulavar (Coimbatore, 1971) gives a comprehensive account of the history of the Dēvāṅgas and their territorial organisation. This information is based on ancient texts written on the community like the Dēvāṅga Purāṇam by Mambala Kavirayar (n.d.) and others.
by cohesive ties is demonstrated by the interesting fact that even today the Telegu, Kanerese (of Kongumandalam region) and Tamil speaking Ḍēvāṅgas (Madras region) look for their ultimate religious headship to the mutt on the Hemkuta hill near Pampavati temple at Hampi. 42

The weaver organisations had their own rules and code and any violation of the code was severely punished, usually resulting in the expulsion and ostricism of the offender. A very interesting instance of this is provided from Mattevāda (Warangal Taluq, and district) in the period of Kakatiya Ganapatidēva. The God Śaḷesvara was consecrated by the sāḷēs (weavers) who then pledged themselves to give a viśa in the form of Ciravada Gradavāna (a coin equivalent in value to the Varāhā or Pon) to last as long as the moon and the sun "any man who does not give this is a man who has pierced a tawny coloured cow by the side of the Ganges. He is outside the pale of the Samaya (guild) . . . a traitor to Siva." 43

This sort of punishment was also common to other corporate organisations like that of the Pancālās, 44 Chettis, 45 etc.

42. Ibid.

43. H.E.H. inscriptions, Vol.13, Nos.10 and 13. Another record (S.I.I., Vol.XX, No.11) from Lakshmēśvar, Shiratti Taluq, Dharwar dt., of the reign of Srivallabha (late 8th century or early 9th century A.D.) records a joint donation by the Sreni-Paṭṭagāra (Paṭṭagāra stands for weavers) and concludes that whoever destroys this will be guilty of killing a 1000 brown cows of Varanasi.

44. E.C. Vol.IV, Gl.34 in South Kanara dt. dated A.D.1372.

45. T.T., Vol.IV, No.112 of the period of Achyutaraya—The inscription has been cited in detail in Chap.IV as an instance of the extent of control of the merchant guilds over the weavers.
The above inscription is interesting in that it also
gives evidence of the guild territorial organisation. It
states that Malli-Chetti and Vanni-Chetti appear to have
been the overall heads of the caste organisations in
these regions and the suffix 'Chetti' is a testimony to
their prosperity and proof that they carried on trade.
Apart from social ostracism, the weaver guild in certain
cases also imposed heavy fines on the offenders. For
instance during the period of Rājarājadēva (I) in 1005 A.D.
the assembly (Urār) of Vanapalli including the Kaikkōlās
imposed on 3 members of the Teriṇja Kaikkōla Paḍai, a fine
of 35 Ponkāśu for stealing from the local temple of lord
Somēśkvara.46

Very interesting details of the working of the
Kaikkōla-organisation are given in a long copper plate
inscription called The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam47 preserved
in Kaṅchipuram. Though technically an inscription this
record by the nature of its evidence and style is to be
treated rather as a literary source. The document refers

47. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattayam (ed.) T. Chāndrasekharan,
Govt. of Madras, Oriental Series, No.V. While the
copper plate inscription claims to belong to the
period of Karikala Chola, the reference to the Muslim
invasions shows that it cannot have been written
earlier than the 13th century and it pertains most
probably to the reign of Kolottunga III. Its chronology
has been effectively proved by Arockiaswami in his
article "The Chōlan Pūrva Pattayam : Its Historical
Value", J.I.H., Vol.XXXII, 1954 pp.5-10. As already
said, though this is a C.P., I have chosen to treat it
more as literary evidence because of its excessive
length and mythological allusions.
to the settling of the weavers (Kaikkōlan), agriculturists (vellālan) and artisans (kammālan) in the Kongu country by Karikāla Chōla (actually Kulottunga III). The king is said to have summoned the heads of the weavers of Tongaimandalam and Shōnapuri (Shōlingapuram) to the Arunāpurimandapam. A Nattānmaikkārar (headman) was appointed for every nadu and they were duly honoured by being given betel-leaf (a mark of status). They were told to settle disputes arising in their regions. If the crime was of a major nature, then it should be settled before the head of the Kaṇchipuram guild. Here several officials are mentioned - the Talaimai Nattān (the overall head) followed by Samaya Talapati (i.e., guild commander) the Kārṇigār (accountant), Samaya Sangati (?) Samaya Ilandāri(?). The record goes on to say that in the temple Tīrtam (holy water) and Prasādam (food offering) should first be given to the Nattānmaikkārar (headman).48 The weaver organisations seem to have derived the requisite funds for their various activities like collective charity to temples etc. by the levying of a voluntary contribution from its members. In Srimushnam49 (South Arcot dt.) during the period of Sundara Pāṇḍya in the 13th century, the members of the local Kaikkōla community made an agreement among themselves to make over certain taxes on looms to the temple of TirunārāyaniŚvaram udaiya-Nāyinār. This appears to be not so much the regular

49. A.R.E., 248 of 1915-16
tax on looms collected by the state, as contribution on each loom levied by the organisation itself.

The weavers made individual\textsuperscript{50} as well as joint donations\textsuperscript{51} to temples during this period. The size and nature of the donations made to temples is an important index of the social status and the economic prosperity of the weavers. These donations can be classified into the following categories -

(a) In terms of money for perpetual lamp or food offering to the temple.

(b) In terms of sheep for perpetual lamp. (\textit{Nanda Vilakku}).

(c) In terms of land (Tirunamattukkani, Devadāna, etc.)

(d) In terms of temple-service, setting up of deities and celebration of festivals, etc.

(e) In terms of a proportionate share of the woven cloth or on the sale of cloth or contribution in terms of paddy by the weavers.

(f) In terms of money as crime-expiation (udirapatti).

The donations made in terms of money were either for the burning of a perpetual lamp (\textit{nanda-vilakku}) or for food offerings to the deity (Prasādam). During the reign of Rajarajadeva, a weaver of Tiruvalakkoyil, a hamlet of

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{A.R.E.}, 108 of 1929-30, 92 of 1933-34, etc.

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{A.R.E.}, 281 of 1921 from Chingleput dt. refers to the joint contribution of 44 \textit{panams} made by the Kaikkōlas for the celebration of a festival.
Ponvilainda Kalattur (Wandiwash Taluq, North Arcot dt.) made a gift of Pon for a twilight lamp in the temple.52 The term used for weaver is Kaikkōlar. The donation for lamp is specified as 5 Kalanju in a record of the period of Vira Rajendra from Piramiyam, (Dharapuram, Coimbatore dt.) stating that the gift was made by Kalikādinda Solamārayan of the Perumal-Kaikkōlar.54 In the same period a Kaikkōla-sēnāpati of Annūr (Avinasi Taluq, Coimbatore dt.) made a gift of 1½ Kalanju for a lamp.55 In the 12th century in the Salem district a weaver made a gift of 1 Palanjattagai achchu56 for a lamp.57 Elsewhere a gift of 10 Varāham is mentioned.59 Money was donated not only for twilight lamps but also for food offerings to the deity. A donation of 20

52. A.R.E., 129 of 1923-24. Pon is sometimes equated with the Kalanju and sometimes stated to be half of it.

53. The average weight of the Kalanju in the Chola period was roughly 70 grains of gold. This is more than the weight of the Gadayana or Pagoda of the Vijayanagar period (15th-16th centuries) which steadily averaged around 58 grains of gold.

54. A.R.E., 186 of 1920

55. A.R.E., 514 of 1922

56. This is also referred to as just achchu (A.R.E., 590 of 1922-23 also from Coimbatore of the same period) or as ānai-achchu (S.I.I., Vol.V, No.226 from Perur in the same dt. of the period of Vikrama Chōla). Ānai achchu could have been double the ordinary achchu possibly like the double Pagoda. The weight of an ordinary achchu averaged around 50 grains.

57. A.R.E., 655 of 1922-3

58. The Varāham is more or less similar to the Pagoda or Gadayana.

Panams for this purpose was offered by Sokkan Pugalivendan alias Naṟṟpatṭenṉāyira-mārāyān, a Kaikkōla of Koduvayil (Idigarai, Coimbatore dt.) during the reign of Hoysala Viṭa Ballāladēva. During the period of Kongu-Chōla king Viṟarājendra deva a donation of 24 achchu for food offerings to the Idangaināyaka was made by certain Kaikkōḷas and senapatis of Annūr (Avinasi Taluq, Coimbatore dt.).

General donations in terms of money were also made to the temples by the weavers without specifying the nature of the offering. An epigraphical record of the period of Rājēndra Chōla (i.e., the 11th century) from Udaiyārkudi (Chidambaram Taluq, South Arcot dt.) refers to the gift of an umbrella containing 19,908 pearls surmounted by gold ornaments weighing 25½ Kalanju (!) presented collectively by the Kaikkolar. This donation by any standard seems colossal. A gift of 450 Varāha panam was made by the Sāliyas of Vikramapandipuram (Tirupati) to the temple during the period of Vijaya Ganda Gōpāладēva (mid-thirteenth century). When the

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60. The value of Panam usually ranged between 10-16 Panams to a Pagoda.
61. A.R.E., 6 of 1923-24
62. A.R.E., 590 of 1922-23
63. A.R.E., 613 of 1920-21
64. T.T. Vol.I, Nos.70 and 71
donation was made by the **Samasta Praja** (entire population) of a village the contribution of the weavers was levied either from the guild as in Mellaceruvu, Nalgonda district, (16 Cinna or roughly 2 Panams, 1 Cinna being equivalent to 1/8 of a Panam) or from each weaver's dwelling (annas = 2 per house) as in Kokkireni, Krishna dt. However, in Mānikyavalli (Begawade Taluq, Bijapur dt.) in a donation to the local temple made by the **Samasta Praja** the weavers (Sāliya Samayangalum) and the tailors' guild (Kottali Samayangalum) made their contribution at 5 visas (1 visa is equal to one single grain of gold or 1/16 of a panam) per head. From the size of the donations made by the weavers, some idea can be gained of their standard of living. The collective contribution made by the weavers seems quite moderate in most cases but individual contributions in some instances seem to have been rather large. For instance, apart from the individual donations for nanda-vilakku, one record from Tiruvallur (Tirukkachchiyūr, Chingleput dt.) of the period of Vira Rajendra Chola, i.e., the 11th century, says that a Kaikkōla Kaṇṭan Arasu made a gift of 9 Kalañju of Pon for the ear rings and 10 Kalañju of Pon for the necklace of Panaimulai Nachchiyār in the temple of Tiruppasūr-udaiya-Nāyinār. Such donations are to be contrasted with the annual income

68. A.R.E., 108 of 1930
of some of the lower functionaries of society. For instance, two later-Chola inscriptions (probably the thirteenth century) from Tiruvorriyur (South Arcot dt.) state that the Brahmans who recited Vedas in the temple were paid 10 nālis of rice plus 1½ Kalaṇjius of gold per annum,\(^69\) while the person who supplied drinking water at a public place was paid 2 Kāṣu per annum and a daily wage of 1 kuruni of rice.\(^70\) Seen from this standard of comparison the size of the donations by some of the weavers does seem rather large. From the inscriptions it is clear that individual donations by the weavers ranged from 1½ to 5 Kalaṇji to 10 Varāhās. Only two other social groups seem to have equalled and often excelled the weaver organisations in the size of their donations. These are the merchant guilds like the Ayyavole\(^71\) and the agriculturists caste, the Vellālas.\(^72\) There are a few instances of the Kammālan or the Pancālar making donations in terms of money\(^73\) but not very many. On the strength

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70. *A.R.E.*, 154 of 1912

71. *A.R.E.*, 267 of 1910. An individual merchant from Tiruvorriyur (Chingleput dt.) gave 30 Kalaṇjius of gold, a huge sum, to the Varaha Perumal temple at Tiruvadandai. The Ayyavole donations to temples has been referred to in Chap. II and Chap IV of this thesis.


73. *A.R.E.*, 365 of 1954-55 refers to a donation by a goldsmith of one Kalaṇju to the temple in Muduturai (Avinasi, Coimbatore dt.).
of these evidence it is possible to locate the position of the weavers in the economic hierarchy next to the landed gentry with the merchants figuring as the wealthiest group though not necessarily the socially dominant one.

Offerings to the temple in the form of momentary payments (or sometimes in the form of other services) was also made as crime expiation (Udirapatti). A fight between a Kaikkōla, Kujiramallam of the Adigan Paluvēṭṭaraiyar regiment and a vellala kilavan (the term kilavan means landlord) Nōmban, is referred to in an early undated record of Kō-Rajakeśari (probably the 9th or 10th century) from Kīlappalur.74 (Udaiyarpālayam Taluq, Tiruchirāpalli dt.). In the fight the vellālan was killed and the Kaikkōla as crime expiation made an offering of 90 sheep for a perpetual lamp to the local temple. An instance of Udirapatti being given in the form of land to the temple comes from Tirupattur (same Taluq, Ramanāṭhapuram dt.) in the period of Jātavarman Srī Vallabha (14th century). It is stated that the Kaikkōlās of the Tirumadaivilagam of the temple gave a land as Tirunamattukkāṇi75 to the temple in connection with the death of the wife of a certain Sundara Pāndya Bhaṭṭan in the temple by poison.76

75. Land grant made to the temple for carrying on daily worship or for the celebration of festivals was called Tirunamattukkāṇi.
76. A.R.E., 172 of 1935-6. A.R.E., 635 of 1916-17 also refers to Udirapatti but it is not dated.
Donations in terms of sheep or cows, most often for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp was a common feature in the Chōla period, though one rarely comes across this form of donation in the Vijayanagar period. It is interesting that 90 sheep was the number usually given for one perpetual lamp and sometimes very specifically 32 cows and 1 bull. Since these same figures are mentioned in all inscriptions, they appear to be the standard equivalent for maintaining a perpetual lamp in all regions.

Another form of donation was in the nature of a voluntary contribution levied on their profession. This could be in terms of a proportionate share of the cloth woven or on the sale of cloth or merely a fixed contribution on each loom. In the 8th century A.D., the Srēni-Paṭṭagāra (literally meaning guild or corporation of weavers) of Lakshmēśvar (Shiratti Taluq, Dharwar dt.) made a donation in the form of a proportionate quantity of goods turned out by the weavers, i.e., 1 length on every 40 lengths of silk cloth (Sampu) woven. In A.D. 1139, a corporation of


tailors seem to have made a similar donation on almost all the items used by them like the ball of thread, saffron (red dye) cloth etc.\textsuperscript{80} Another similar record in the same period comes from Shikarpur in Shimoga dt.\textsuperscript{81} The Sāliya Samayangalum (i.e., the Saliya guild since samayam and srēnē mean the same) of Puli (Parasagad Taluq, Belgaum dt.) gave a fraction of their profit from every household, "on every gold piece earned", to the God Andhasura.\textsuperscript{82} The record pertains to the period of the Kālāchuri king and is dated A.D. 1224. At Mattewāda, Warangal district in A.D. 1228, during the reign of Kākatiya king Ganapatideva, the Sālēs after consecrating the image of Sālīśvara resolved to contribute 1 viṣamū per Gadayāna (1 viśa = 1/256 of a Gadayāna) on the sarees sold by the weavers.\textsuperscript{83} A fixed contribution on each loom of the weavers as donation to the temple is mentioned from Srimushnam (Chidambaram Taluq, South Arcot dt.) of the reign of Jātavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya in A.D. 1310.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{80} E.C., Vol.V, Bl.No.236  
\textsuperscript{81} E.C., Vol.VII, SR. 112  
\textsuperscript{82} E.I., Vol.XVIII, No.22,E, p.196. The suffix 'asura' is extremely interesting and shows that the caste must have worshipped a demon perhaps to ward off evil effects or that he had been absorbed into the orthodox religious pantheon through a system of assimilation.  
\textsuperscript{83} H.E.H., Vol.13, No.10  
\textsuperscript{84} A.R.E., 248 of 1915-16
The building of temples and shrines, the consecration of deities (made of silver or brass), and the celebration of specific festivals in the temples by the weavers are a reflection not only of their economic prosperity but also of their ritual status. In fact often the consecration of an image by a donor would be followed by special privileges being bestowed on him.\(^8\)\(^5\) Araiyan Geyavitankan of the Tayatonga-Teriṇja-Kaikkōlar community constructed in the period of Chōla Parākōsāri (Rājarāja I ?) at Kattumannār Kōyil (Chidambaram Taluq, South Arcot district) three shrines dedicated to Kuttar (i.e., Natarāja) Ganapati, and Pichchar.\(^8\)\(^6\) He gave along with this a gift of 10 kaśu for clothes for Kutta Perumān.

In the thirteenth century during the period of Māravarman Sundara Pāṇḍya, the trustees of the Arikeśvaram-udaiya-Nāyanār temple at Giriyambāpuram (Tirunelveli district), the Abimāna-bhūshana teriṇja Kaikkōlar, granted 100 kalams of paddy from the Devadāna lands to the temple of Aramvalartisvaram-udaiya-Nayanar built at Kīlur-Kaderri by Kuttan Selvan, a Kaikkōla.\(^8\)\(^7\) There are numerous

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85. A.R.E., 452 of 1913-14. A Kaikkōla of Kalaiyūr (Salem dt.) instituted a car festival and he and his descendants were granted the privilege of a house, a loom, lands and some ritual privileges in the temple.

86. A.R.E., 555 of 1920-21

87. A.R.E., 467 of 1916. The Kuttar formed a sub-sector of the Kaikkōlar. For instance, see A.R.E., 295 of 1961-2 which refers to Kaikkōlan Ponnambalan Kuttan. The Kuttar were specifically attached to the temples. Also see pp. 49-50 of this chapter.
instances of weavers consecrating images in the temples. At the Nāgeśvara temple in Kumbakonam (Tanjore district) in A.D. 990 (the period of Rājarāja I) Dēvan Kuppan of the Vīrasālakaterinja-Kaikkōlar set up a silver image of Tirukilkottalu-Paramasvami and also made a cash endowment to provide for offerings and worship.88 During the same period at the Umā-Mahēśvaraswāmi temple at Konēri Rājapuram, (Tanjore dt.), Nakkan (probably dancer). Nallattādigal of the Rājarāja-terinja-Kaikkōlar, made a gift of a silver image of the God and a copper image of Chandūsvara.89 The image of Tombar-Malai, the God of the Sāliyas was set up by the wife of Sāliya Nāyaka90 (merchant) in the reign of Vikrama Chōla (eleventh century) at Perukalandai.91 (Polḷāchchi Taluq, Coimbatore district). An image of Āludaiya Pillaiyar was set up by a Kaikkōla weaver at the temple of Āludaiyān in Sirringūr (South Arcot district) in

88. S.I.I., XIII, No.108

89. A.R.E., 627 of 1909. However these two specific instances cannot be taken into account while assessing the economic status of the weavers because these two donations are obviously made by the Kaikkōlas in their capacity as soldiers and not as weavers.

90. 'Nāyakar' was the title given to big merchants. See Sadasiva Pandarattar, Pirkāla Chōlargal (in Tamil) Annamalai Univ., 1974, p.577.

91. A.R.E., 187 of 1927
the period of Kulöttunga Chōla. From the Andhra region in the reign of Kaikyatiya Ganapatidēva (A.D. 1223) comes the evidence of the consecration of the deities Saleśvara, Ganapatīśvara, and Sakalēśvara at Ellamma Bazar (Mattewada, Warangal Taluq and dt.) by the Saliya jana lu of the entire surrounding regions meeting at the headquarters (mātiya-sthala) and gifting to the deity one visamu (per Gadayana (1/256 of a Gadayana which roughly averaged at 58 grains of gold) on the sarees sold by the weavers.

Another category of temple service as a form of donation, was the undertaking of the celebration of specific festivals by the weavers. During the reign of Kulottunga Chola (A.D. 1221) the Kaikkōḷas of Tiruchchanur (near Tirupati in Andhra) accepted the donation of 6 Pattī of land by Pokkaran (treasurer) Pāndiyadaraiyan and agreed to conduct the Panguni festival of Aḻagiya Perumāl. A record of the period of Ranganātha Yadavarayar (accession 1336-7 A.D.) also from Tiruchchanur refers to the joint conduct of some festival (not specified) at the Alamēlumangamma temple by the Kaikkōḷar and the emperumān adiyār. At the Mukhtīśvaram temple in Kaṭchipuram

92. S.I.I., Vol.XII, 418 of 1909
93. H.E.H., Vol.13, Nos. 10 and 13
94. T.T., Vol.I, No.34
96. The association between the Kaikkōḷa weaving caste and the emperumān adiyār or temple dancers was a long standing one since it was the practice to dedicate the eldest daughter in every Kaikkōḷa household to the temple. T.T., Vol.III, No.395 registers a donation by the dancer Sali who is stated to be the daughter of a Kaikkola of Tirupati. The record pertains to the period of Krishnadēva Rāja.
(Chingleput dt.) during the period of Vīra Pāṇḍya (fourteenth century) an agreement was reached between certain persons to celebrate the festival of the deity on all the 9 days in the month of Puratţasi (Navarātri or Duṣsera) for the 175 Panams they received in addition to the 44 Panams given by the Kaikkōlās who had been conducting these festivals formerly. The records show that the weavers must have been prosperous enough to conduct festivals on such a large scale, though it does not explain why they later gave up conducting it themselves.

Temple donations on a lesser scale involved the construction of windows, door-posts and steps in the temples or specifically the construction of pillars, etc. Temple service was also sometimes in the form of the donation of certain specific articles of worship. A record of the period of Kulottunga III refers to the donation of a bugle, (naraikkalam) by Avaniyarāyan, a weaver of Vellāḷūr (Avinasi Taluq, Coimbatore dt.).

97. A.R.E., 281 of 1921-22
98. The reference to the setting up of windows, door-posts and steps collectively by the Kaikkōla-perumpadai comes from the reign of Rājarāja I (late 10th century) - A.R.E., 253 of 1907. Reference to the gift of door post and pillars by Senittan, a weaver, comes from Perukalandai (Pollāchchi Taluq, Coimbatore dt.) of the period of Vikrama Chōla deva in the 11th century - A.R.E., 172 of 1927 - Construction of pillars in the temple of God Salesvaram by the Sāliya weavers comes from Nellore in Nellore dt - Inscriptions of the Nellore District (ed.) Butterworth and Venugopalachetty, No.81, p.851. Construction of a flight of steps by the weavers is referred to from Tiruchchirapalli dt. in the late 12th century, A.R.E., 400 of 1924-25
records from Tiruvenpainallūr (Tirukkōyilūr Taluq, South Arcot dt.) refer to the donation of Kalasappanai (vessel for the sacred bath of the God) by Nallārkunallaṅ Kūttan in the Oppilamaṇīśvara temple100 and of a temple bell, incense-brazier, chain lamp and an 'ārati' plate (i.e., for waving lamp before deity) by Tirumalai Alagiyan alias Vīragal Vīrapallavaraiyan, a Kaikkōla Mudali to the Kripapurīśvara temple.101 Both records pertain to the period of Pallava Kopperunjingadeva, dated in the early thirteenth century.

Examples of donations and temple service as also a few other stray records provide an idea of the religious beliefs of the weaving communities. They were Śāvites as well as Vaishnavites though Saivites were predominant.102 The Kaikkōlas worshipped Siva, Parvati, PIllyār103 and Kārtikēya called Murugan. During the period of Rājarāja I,

100. S.I.I.I., Vol.XII, Pt. I, No.45
102. One indication is that most of the inscriptions pertaining to the Kaikkōla weavers especially regarding donations are to be found in the Siva temples. Thus in the Chingleput dt. alone, out of the 76 inscriptions relating to the Kaikkōlas found on the walls of the main temples 63 are in Siva temples and only 8 in Vishnu temples. The Saivite affiliation of the Dēvāṅga and Jēdāra weavers in the Kanerese area can be perceived by their large participation in the Vīra Saiva movement. This aspect is dealt with in detail towards the end of this chapter.

103. The son of Sivā alluded to by foreign travellers as the elephant God.
a Kaikkōla constructed\textsuperscript{a} shrine at Kattumannar Koyil (Chidambaram, South Arcot dt.) to Natarāja (the dancing Siva) and Pillaiyar.\textsuperscript{104} Reference to the setting up of the images of Siva and Parati with Pillaiyar in between by a Kaikkōla, comes from Papanasam (Tanjore dt.) of the period of Jātavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya.\textsuperscript{105} Pillaiyar was a favourite deity and references are found regarding donations to Kunčcha Pillaiyar,\textsuperscript{106} Vadugap-Pillaiyar,\textsuperscript{107} Tirukkalvali-Pillaiyar,\textsuperscript{108} Sengunta Viṇāyagar\textsuperscript{109} and Ganapati\textsuperscript{110} (another name for Pillaiyar). Reference to the worship of Murugan is numerous because the Kaikkōla weavers trace their descent from Viṇabāhu, the divine lieutenant of Kārtikeya or Murugan. Even to this day they celebrate the Sūra Samhāra festival and the birth of the 9 Kaikkōla warriors from Parvati's pearl anklet is enacted by them.\textsuperscript{111} Kamākshiamman

\textsuperscript{a} Kaikkōla

\textsuperscript{104} A.R.E., 555 of 1920-21

\textsuperscript{105} A.R.E., 126 of 1927-8

\textsuperscript{106} A.R.E., 347 of 1923

\textsuperscript{107} A.R.E., 92 of 1933-34

\textsuperscript{108} A.R.E., 6 of 1923

\textsuperscript{109} Chōlar Purva Pattayam, p.199

\textsuperscript{110} S.I.I., Vol.V, No.417

\textsuperscript{111} See reference to Kachchalai Kanda Perumāl in the Chōlam Purva Pattayam, op.cit, p.99. Also references to the celebration of Sūra Samhāra festival, Ibid., Passim.
of Kāñchipuram is the caste deity of the Kaikkōlas and reference to the worship of amman is to be found in inscriptions and literature.\textsuperscript{112} The God of Sale weavers was called Sālēśvara. There are references from Andhra to the setting up of the deity Sālēśvara by the Sāle and donations to the shrine.\textsuperscript{113} Like the Kaikkōla weavers they also worshipped Gānapatī\textsuperscript{114} (Pillaiyar). The Sāliya weavers of the Tamil country seem to have worshipped a peculiar deity called Tombar-malai.\textsuperscript{115} The physical attributes of this deity are not given.

The worship of amman or the mother goddess was popular among all weaver castes. As already stated, the caste deity of the Kaikkōlas was Kāmākshiamman. Chandēśvari was the caste deity of the Togata weavers who styled themselves Ekkāngavīras (Vīra-Saiva?) according to a record from Nandavaram (Baganapalli, Kurnool dt.)\textsuperscript{116} Chandēśvaramma was the caste deity of the Ďeṅvāṅga weavers and in A.D. 1231 they are said to have been granted some important privileges in the presence of the goddess.\textsuperscript{117}

\textsuperscript{112} Choḷar Purva Paṭṭavam, p.199
\textsuperscript{113} N.D.I, Vol.II, No.81 from Irukalamma Temple. Also A.R.E. 39 of 1957-58 (Mattewada, Warrangal Taluk and dt.)
\textsuperscript{114} H.E.H., No.13, inscriptions 10 and 13
\textsuperscript{115} A.R.E., 187 of 1927
\textsuperscript{116} A.R.E., Nos.5 and 7 of 1943-44
\textsuperscript{117} A.R.E. 34 of 1957-58
Frequent references to the worship of Chandesvaramma is also to be found in the community literature of the Devangas. The worship of the mother goddess or amman by the weaver castes and in fact by many of the Sudra castes is interesting. Amman worship seems to have acquired an independent or dominant status in contrast to the orthodox Saivite and Vaishnavite worship.

It appears from literary as well as inscriptive evidence of this period that the Kaikkola weavers indulged in the practice of human sacrifice. The Kaikkolar and Kaikkola Mudalils of the Dharmisvara temple at Manimangalam are said to have carried out a human sacrifice at the Tirumadaivilagam of the temple during the period of Yadavaraya (fourteenth century). The Cholar Purva Pattayam says that in Arunapuri, very near Kanchi, the deity

118. Refer Devanga Puranam, op.cit., See invocation to Chandesvari amman and Passim.

119. Burton Stein in his article on "Temples in the Tamil Country 1300-1750 A.D.", (Stein ed. South Indian Temples, New Delhi, 1978, p.25 and Passim) has commented on the remarkable growth of the amman temples during this period and the position of amman as the tutelary of powerful Sudra groups like the Vellalas. The position with regard to amman is also true of Murugan. To this day in South India both amman and Murugan are the most powerful and popular deities among the non-Brahmanical sections.

120. S.I.I., Vol.VI, No.258 Manimangalam, Saidapet Taluq, (formerly in Chingleput dt. but now a part of Madras).
as usual demanded a human sacrifice but that Karikāla Chōlar (Kulōttunga III) resolved that henceforth human sacrifice was to be given up and only animal sacrifice was to be permitted.\textsuperscript{121} The work elsewhere refers to the practice of human sacrifice in Tiruvanppāmalai and how the practice was ultimately given up (i.e., by the thirteenth century).\textsuperscript{122}

Land ownership was in the medieval times an important symbol of one's social status and in this context the donation of land by weavers assumes great significance. Land donation by weavers continued to be a form of endowment from the late-Chōla till the late-Vijayanagar period. The area of land is sometimes specified thus making it possible to have an idea of the extent of landed power acquired by the weavers. At Allūr in Tiruchchirāpalli, during the reign of Chōla Kopparākēsari (early Chōla, possibly ninth or tenth century), one of the Sundaranāyanār Kōyil Kaikkōlar made a gift of 10 ma of land\textsuperscript{123} (i.e., \( \frac{1}{2} \) vēli). During the reign of Uttama Chōla (tenth century) in Udaiyārkudi (Chidambaram Taluq, South A root) Kali-kārṇali, a member of the Karikāla Chōla teriūja Kaikkōlar made a gift of \( \frac{1}{2} \) vēli and 1 ma of land to the temple of Tirumullūr-udaiya-Nāyanār at Mullūr for the playing of music during Sribali

\textsuperscript{121} Chōlen Pūrva Pattayam, op.cit., pp.188-9
\textsuperscript{122} Ibid. p.201
\textsuperscript{123} S.I.I., Vol VIII, No.685. In Tiruchchi 20 ma made 1 vēli and 1 vēli = 6.6 acres (T.V. Mahalingam, Administration and Social Life Under Vijayanagar, op.cit., p.168) Therefore 10 ma would be a donation of 3.3 acres!
In the same period at Kanchipuram (Chingleput district) the Nagarattar (merchant guild) are said to have sold 300 kulis of land to Achchan Senachchan of the 'Muttuvālpera' Kaikkōlar regiment who donated it to the temple of Terkkirunda Nakkar for food offerings to the Pillaiyar shrine within. In the reign of KulasekharadevaI, two Kaikkōlas belonging to Madurai gave 2 vēli of land for burning lamps in the Nelliyappar temple in Tirunelveli. The practice of gifting lands to temple was prevalent among the more prosperous communities like the Pančalār and of course, the Veḷḷālar. One does not come across land donations in the case of communities like potters, drummers etc. though small amounts of money are said to have been given to temples. But the maximum in terms of area can be said to have been made only by the merchants or by the merchant guilds who sometimes donated whole villages to the temple.

125. Mutuvālpera refers to a special distinction given to this Kaikkōla regiment perhaps because of their skill in swordsmanship. The term also occurs in S.I.I., Vol.XIX, No.18, etc.
The majority of lands gifted to the temple were in the form of Tirunāmattukkāni or Đēvādana. Any village or land gifted to the temple was called Đēvādana and when this grant was made for carrying on daily worship or the celebration of festivals it was called Tirunāmattukkāni. In one instance from Dharwar (Karnataka) the weaver community figures in a joint donation of land by the assembly to the temple. The record dated A.D.1062 of the period of the Western Chalukya king Somēśvara, from Mulgund in Gadag Taluq, says that a gift of land was made for the feeding of ascetics in the mata of the Nagarēśvara temple by the Chettis, Gammundās, the 120 mahājanās, the Saliya 50 and the Teliga (Teliki) 1000. Sometimes the donation by the weavers was made not in the form of land but in the form of paddy. Thus one Kumaran Martāndan, a Kaikkōla of the Inanappirānkkōyil in Kalladakkurichchi (Ambasamudram Taluq, Tirunelveli dt.), made a gift of paddy.

131. A.R.E., 172 of 1935-36 from Tiruppattur (Ramanathapuram) of the twelfth century, A.R.E, 92 of 1933-34 of the 14th century from Siruvādur (Chingleput) etc.

132. S.I.I., Vol. VIII, No.685, Also A.R.E., 232 of 1924-25 The land was obviously not tax free because in the latter inscription the Kaikkōla donees undertake to pay the tax on the land amounting to 120 pañāms in monthly instalments.

133. The custom of having a particular number attached to their names was quite common among many communities like the Banajigas who are referred to as the 'ainurtruvu' or '500' and the Teliki 1000. Similarly, the Saliya weavers of the Andhra and Karnataka regions are referred to as the '50'. The significance of these numbers is, however, not clear.

for maintaining a kartigai lamp.  

He is also said to have given three groves of trees for other services in the temple. A similar gift of paddy by a Kaikkōla called Annaparipāla Tondaimānār is made from Pullūr in Tiruvandanai Taluq, Rāmanāthapuram district in the thirteenth century.  

In 1323 A.D. during the reign of Pratāparudradēva, the Sāle weavers of Mattewada (Warangal) consecrated the image of Sālēśvara and decided to contribute one addegu (?) of grain per loom.  

The size of the donations in terms of land made by the weavers are indicative of their rights of land-ownership. A particular done of the period of Vīra Rājēndra Chōla (11th century) from Neyyādipākkam is called Sengunra Kilān Nelvāy Nambi Nāyakar. The term Kilān stands for a landowner. Even by merely studying the inscriptions which relate the weavers with the land, it can be seen that ownership rights could be acquired (a) by purchase or (b) by the reclamation of waste land. During the period of Kulōttunga Chōla (A.D. 1133-50), the eminent members of the Srikarana Chaturvēdi Mangalām (names of members mentioned), i.e., the village Kavantadalam in Jayangonda Chōlapuram sold 380 kuli of land to Kaikkōlan

135. A.R.E., 316 of 1916-17  
136. A.R.E., 596 of 1926-27  
Isanadévan and his brother.¹³⁹ In another instance, in the reign of Māravarman Vīra Pāṇḍya (fourteenth century) the temple authorities at Tirukkachchiyūr (Chingleput dt.) sold the Kāni-vilai¹⁴⁰ of the village Punniyam, originally purchased as Tirunamattukkāni from the assembly of Pulipākkam, to the Kaikkōlas and Kaikkōla-mudalis of Tirukkachchiyūr, consequent on the relinquishment of the right by the previous cultivators.¹⁴¹ It is interesting that both the records cited above indicate the vesting of joint ownership of land in the village assembly as also individual purchase of land as in the first case. In the second record the land is collectively purchased by the Kaikkōlas and the Kaikkōla-Mudalis.¹⁴²

During the reign of Rājarājadēva (A.D. 1146-73) a weaver of Ravikulamānikkapperunderuvu in Kānchipuram reclaimed certain lands for cultivation belonging to Tiruvūragatimēlerumar. (i.e., the assembly) and dug a small irrigation tank for 200 kasu and donated the produce from the land for offerings to the deity.¹⁴³ In the Madurai


¹⁴⁰. It is not very clear as to the sense in which Kāni-vilai is being used here. Kani by itself means landed estate and vilai means price but it is ambiguous as to whether ownership rights or supervisory rights are being referred to.

¹⁴¹. A.R.E., 57 of 1932-33

¹⁴². The term 'Mudali' did not denote any caste in the medieval period as it does now but was basically a title indicative of a high status most often given to military chieftains.

¹⁴³. A.R.E., 46 of 1921-22, Sengalunirodai, Big Kānchipuram Chingleput dt.
district during the period of Vīra Pandya, the Sthānathār (managers) of the Vaniśuramudaiya Nāyinār Koyil gave as Kāni-vilai to the Kaikkōla Mādevar Alagiya Chokkanār, the land in Kilpidakaimattur because the heavily forested waste land had been turned into arable land by his efforts.

Apart from ownership rights obtained through purchase or reclamation, there was another category of rights in land bestowed on the weavers. This was the gift of land made by the temple or the village assembly to them for services rendered. There is one reference from Tirukkoilyilūr (South Arcot district) of the period of Kulōttunga Chōla (twelfth century) which records a grant of 1000 kuli of land in addition to the 2000 kuli of land the Kaikkōlas (of Trivikrama Perumāl Temple) already held, by the temple authorities for their maintenance. In Tiruvoṇṭiyūr (in Chingleput dt.) in the eleventh century, 2000 kuli comprised 1 vēll (i.e., roughly 6.6 acres). Since the same measure must have continued to prevail in the district in the twelfth century also, it appears that


145. That this way of acquiring proprietary rights was in fact a general practice in those days is proved by several inscriptions from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka E.C. V, Bl.175 (1186 A.D.) etc. Quite often the reward was in the form of tax concession for the first 3 years or more. E.C. III, Sr.148 (10th century)

146. A.R.E., 347 of 1921-22

147. S.I.I., Vol.III, No.64
the Kaikkoläś were given for their maintenance (perhaps this did not denote ownership rights), nearly 10 acres of land! In another example from the period of Räjanäräyana Sambuvaräya (thirteenth century) the residents of Kalattür-Parçu (Tiruvänakkoyil, Maduräntakam, Chingleput district) gave Näräyanaśeri alias Pundarikanallür, a hamlet, to a Kaikköla as Sarvamänjya (tax free) grant. 148 This again not only indicates joint ownership in land but the fact that the Kaikkola must have rendered the residents of Kalattür-Parçu a valuable service for them to gift a whole hamlet.

There are several instances of weavilag holding tenancy rights in land. The residents of Vikramapuram 'a weaver colony' in Tiruvënñainallür (Tirukkoyilur, South Arcot) were assigned 500 kuli land for 25 pañam (payment for obtaining tenancy rights) for the rearing of a flower garden for the deity. 149 In return they were also to be supplied with sustenance, clothes etc. The record belongs to the period of Jätavarman Vïra Pändya. In the fourteenth century in the period of Jätavarman Sundara Pändya at Tirukkalakkudi in Tiruppattür taluq (Ramanathapuram dt.) the temple authorities leased out some land to a Kaikköla, Uyyavandan Pandiyan alias Sundara Pändya Narasingadëvan and fixed the mēlvaram (the share of the landlord) to be paid by him to the temple. 150 Here the Kaikköla was

149. A.R.E., 430 of 1921-22
150. A.R.E., 66 of 1915-16
clearly being given tenancy rights. There are, however, instances where the nature of the land rights held by the weavers are not so clearly defined. Thus a record from Tiruchžanūr dated A.D. 1221 in the Alamelumangamma temple (Tirupati)\(^1\) states that the Kaikkōlar of the place accepted the 6 Paṭṭi (?) of land "which was levelled and made suitable for cultivation "through the investment of his own money" by Polkkaran (treasurer) Pandiyadaraiyan,\(^1\) son of Āndār, and agreed to conduct the Panguni festival of Ṭālagiya Perumal. It is likely that the Kaikkōla weavers had merely been entrusted with the grant and had the responsibility of supervision over the celebration of the Panguni festival. It is also possible that the Kaikkōlas were given tenancy rights over the land and the name of the donor suggests that he might have belonged to this weaver community himself.\(^1\)

The weavers seem to have invested the profits from their profession not only in land but sometimes in straightforward ways. In the reign of Rājarāja I (eleventh century) the sabha of Tiruvaduturai (Tiruchchirapalli dt.) is stated to have secured a loan from a Kaikkōla on the strength of a

\(^{151}\) **T.T.**, Vol. I, No.34

\(^{152}\) It is interesting that Pandiyadaraiyan was a staunch Śaivite and held the management of the Siva temple of Tiruppaladiśvara-udaiya-Nāyaṉār in Tiruchžanūr. - **T.T.**, Vol.I, No.34

\(^{153}\) See for instance the name Kaikkola Pallavaraiyan in **S.I.I.**, Vol.XII, Pt.I, Nos.122 and 150 from Tiruvennaimallūr, Tirukkoyilūr, Tanjore dt. Also **S.I.I.**, Vol.V, No.581 from Tanjavūr proper which refers to Kaikkōlan Mallavaraiyan etc.
promissory note. At a later date the entire property of
the Kaikkōla seems to have been confiscated (rājaśvam)
by the State and the State demanded the repayment of the
old loan from the Sabhā. 154 In another instance from
Agani (Tanjavūr dt.) Ariyanāyaka-Mudali seems to have
mortgaged 12 velis of land for 100 varāhan to a Kaikkōla
residing at Chintādripēṭ. 155 Sometimes the prosperous
weavers while not directly indulging in money-lending
themselves would donate a large sum of money to the temple
out of the interest on which, certain services to the
temple would be performed. Thus here it is the temple
which will give loans out of the donor's deposit. 156

The size and nature of the donations made by the
weavers, in the form of cash, land or other services to
the temple, as well as the evidence of their land-ownership
and money lending activities proves that certain weavers
were, economically, in a fairly prosperous position. The
situation of the weavers was one manifestation of the
upward movement fermenting in the contemporary society
among the professional classes like the Kammālan (i.e., the
group of five - the smiths), the Tēlikīs and most important,
the merchant communities. The great issue in the medieval

154. A.R.E., 105 of 1925
155. A.R.E., C.P. 37 of 1945-46. The inscription is not
dated though it might pertain to the 15th, 16th centuries.
156. S.I.I., XIII, No. 109 from Kumbakōnam (Tanjore dt.) of
the period of Rājarāja I, Also S.I.I., Vol. XII 418 of
1909 - from South Arcot dt. The amount is mentioned as
200 kāsu, quite a large deposit.
period was, to quote Burton Stein, "Whether a powerful and populous part of Hindu society was to enjoy a ritual rank commensurate with its ranking in other aspects of life. For the Südras appear to have exerted a profound influence upon medieval society, enjoying rank and social power which was for greater than that accorded to them by the legal and social texts of the period."157

To state that economic power invariably led to social elevation, either by tacit or open consent on the part of society, would be to reiterate a truism. What is interesting, however, is the ways by which an economically prosperous group sought to achieve this social elevation and ritual recognition. In Hindu society this process has been referred to as 'Sanskritisation'158 and in Muslim societies as 'Islamisation'.159 These two terms, however, constitute a root paradigm in the sense that they subsume any number of variables. In fact sanskritisation could mean Brahmanisation and sometimes its exact opposite.


For instance in the case of most castes sanskritisation meant a slavish imitation of brahmanical practices like the weaving of holy thread¹⁶⁰ and the adoption of gotras.¹⁶¹ But in the case of the Lingāyats it led to conflict with brahmanism and on outright spurning of brahmanical practices.¹⁶² For instance, while the Brahmins cremated their dead, the Lingāyats buried theirs in a sitting posture¹⁶³ and some orthodox Lingayats even adopted the practice of burying the widows alive in their husband's grave.¹⁶⁴ Thus the process of sanskritisation in a very broad sense could take numerous form - (A) 'Caste exaltation' either by imitating brahmanism or by adopting completely contrary practices or (B) by 'Caste negation' and social protests. The effort to bolster their economic and social status was made by the weavers in several ways

(a) The demand for economic, social and ritual privileges,

160. A.R.E., 34 of 1957-58

161. T.T., Vol.I, Nos.70, 71, 72. The point about the weaving of sacred thread and adoption of Gotras by the lower castes is dealt with in greater detail in the last portion of this chapter.

162. M.N. Srinivas, op. cit., p.43 has himself given the Lingayats as a leading example of sanskritisation and has in fact pointed out that the more orthodox Lingayats did not eat food touched or cooked by the Brahmins but he has, however, neither clearly defined nor emphasised. This reverse process of sanskritisation.


(b) the ascribing of mythological origins and the claiming of brahmanical or supra-brahmanical status, (c) participation in the Idangai-Valangai conflicts and schisms and (d) social protests and participation in the Vira Saiva movement.

The privileges granted to the weavers can be classified as (1) Economic (2) Social and (3) Ritual privileges. The Madras Museum Copper plates of Uttama Chola (tenth century) provide ample evidence of the kind of economic privileges that were conferred on the weavers. The state seems to have accorded a very high place to the weavers' organisations entrusting them with grave responsibilities. Uttama Chōla Parākēśarivarman made a grant in his 16th year165 (A.D. 985) to the temple of Īragam at Kachchipēdu for celebrating the 'Sittirai-tiruvilā' of the deity. For this purpose 200 Kalaṅju of Pon (gold) was deposited with the residents, i.e., the two classes of Paṭṭusāliyans residing in the four weavers' quarters of the city - Karuvūlanpaṭṭi, Kamsaha-paṭṭi, Atimana-paṭṭi and Eruvalichcheri. This shows that the weaver organisations were considered reliable enough to be entrusted with money deposits. Some selected weavers were appointed as managers of the temple by Uttama Chōla. The task of writing the accounts of the temple at Īragam was given to the weaver organisation, the members of which

had to do it by turns. The income of the God which consisted of (1) Kolomrai Kuli and (2) Kolalavu Kuli\footnote{166} collected at Kachchipedu, of the produce from the lands at Kachchipedu and Tundanakkachchéri and (3) of interest (in paddy and money) accruing on investments by the temple were to be apportioned for the several services in the main temple and the shrines and the residents of two of the weavers' quarters - Karuvulanpatit and Atimana-patit were to be appointed to 'supervise and carry out the apportionment'. In return for performing these important services, the weavers were to be exempted from the payment of taxes.

The importance of the Saliya weavers under the Chōlas is proved by the fact that they are referred to as the 'Chōliya Saliya'. During the period of Maravarman Vīra Pāṇḍya the Saliyas of Chidambaram (South Arcot) were granted 4 vēli and 6 mā of land to construct their own exclusive quarters and were expected to supply 4 new cloths every year to the goddess Sivakāmasundari on the day of the Tiruppudiyidu for Pariṇāṣṭam and 5 other small cloths for the shrine of Tirugyanasambandar.\footnote{167} Since this order was passed by Solakōn who is referred to as a 'Mudali',\footnote{168} and not by the temple, the land granted must have belonged directly to the king. There are also

\footnote{166. Both Kolomrai kuli and Kolalavu kuli are explained in the Sanskrit portion of the museum plates as tolls on articles measured by weight and by capacity - A.N.K. Sastry, Chōlas, \textit{op.cit.}, p.530}

\footnote{167. \textit{S.I.I.}, Vol.XII, No.154}

\footnote{168. In this inscription 'Mudali' is used in the sense of a state official}
references to privileges being conferred on the Kaikkōlas during this period. In the ninth or early tenth century there is reference to a donation being entrusted to a Kaikkōman, Ilangidaiyan, who is given the title 'Pīdaran' (i.e., headman) at Tiruvottūr (Cheyyar Taluq, North Arcot dt.). Privilege also sometimes took the form of tax exemption as in the Uttama Chōla record. But the position of the weavers was not always high in all regions. In A.D. 1370, i.e., in the period of Kampana Udaiyār, the Kaikkōlas of Hattalikōte (Chamarajanagar Taluq, Mysore dt.) obtained a charter from the Mahāmandalēśvara by which fines imposed on them for annoyance, theft, adultery, etc. were remitted and they were permitted to pay the customary tax of Gadayana on their cows which were to be allowed to graze freely. This record of the fourteenth century proves that the weavers in that region in the earlier period were subject to severe treatment.

Social privileges consisted of Sāngu and tandu (the right to blow the conch shell on all important occasions and the right to ride a palanquin) as well as the right to one's own flag and symbol. At Chintāmani

171. The presence of Kaikkōlar, a weaver caste of Tamil Nadu, in the Nysore dt. is interesting and shows the mobility of the weaving castes.
172. E.C., Vol.IV, Ch.97. The reference to Kaikkōla weavers as cattle owners is a significant piece of evidence.
(Andhra) in A.D. 1231, the 10,000 Dēvāngās\(^{173}\) in the presence of God Rāmāyādēva and goddess Chandēśvari are said to have been granted by the king the Panchavamne biruda (i.e., all the privileges above mentioned) and also the right to the yajnopavīta (sacred thread worn by the brahmins).\(^{174}\) In the period of Sambuvara Venūmankonda honours like Parivaṭṭam (or Parisaṭṭam, i.e., head-dress of the god) and Oṭukku (probably charge of temple store house) were conferred on a Sāliya of Tirukkachchiyūr (Tiruvālūr Taluq, Chingleput dt.) who had made some donation to the Kachchapēśvara temple.\(^{175}\) Another instance of the conferring of Parisaṭṭam and Oṭukku by the temple comes from Anbil\(^{176}\) (Tiruchchirāpalli dt.) in which the donor Achchiraman Kulōṭṭungra Pallavariyan, a Kaikkōla-mudali is said to have gifted for food offering to the temple a huge piece of land (area not mentioned) as Tirunamattukkāni. The Kaikkōlas or more specially the Kaikkōla-Mudalis (i.e., the more prosperous and influential members of this community) figure as temple trustees in some regions during this period. The Chōlar Pūrva Pattāyam\(^{177}\) which

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173. The reference to Dēvāngā 10,000 is again parallel to the Sālige 50 or the Tēliki 1000, i.e., the association of a number with a caste.

174. A.R.E., 34 of 1957-58

175. A.R.E., 47 of 1932-33


177: Chōlar Pūrva Pattāyam, op.cit. pp.206-7
pertains to the thirteenth century refers to their appointment as Kaniyālan at several temples especially in Kanchipuram and also in the Kongu country and states that their income consisted of 1/10 of the total manya (revenue) of the temple, quite a large cut. During the reign of Sambuvarāya in A.D. 1359, the Kaikkōlās in their capacity as trustees consulted with the Mahēśvarās and reached a settlement about some disputed lands in Tirukkoilūr (same taluq, South Arcot dt.) on which taxes had not been paid. 179

An idea of the status of the weavers in the ritual hierarchy maintained in temples comes from the period of Yadavarāya (fourteenth century). In the Dharmīśvara and Rājagopāla temples in Manimangalam (Saidapet Taluq in Chingleput dt.) the assembly consisting of 540 members plus the Sthānathār (temple managers), Adhikāriyār (officials) and Mallunāyakar determined the order of ritual precedence for the 'Tirupalli Eluchchi', i.e., the waking up ceremony of the God. The state officials were to have first position

178. The precise sense in which the word Kaniyālan is used here is not clear. Rangacharya in his glossary in The Inscriptions of the Madras Presidency (op. cit.) defines Kaniyatchi as free and hereditary landed property. Prof. T.V. Mahalingam in his glossary in the South Indian Polity (Madras, 1967) also defines Kaniyālan as landowner but in the present context it seems rather to mean a supervisor of temple lands.

179. A.R.E., 396 of 1909
180. S.I.I., Vol.VI, No.257
181. S.I.I., Vol.VI, No.252
followed by the Sthānathār, the assembly heads, the Vellālar, the Kaikkōlar, the Devaradiyāl, Malaiyantāngal(?) Talaikāriyan (Secretary ?) Eņnaivāniyar (oil merchants) Agambadiyār (Shepherds) and Nāvidar (barbers.) It is noteworthy that while the Vellālar, the dominant agricultural caste are placed above the Kaikkōlas, the oil-mongers and other professional groups are listed only after them. While in Manimangalam the Kaikkōlas figure in the orders of precedence, at Tiruvorriyūr in Chingleput district, they seem to have held a higher status because it was they as temple trustees who determined the ritual status here.182

In A.D. 1265 during the reign of Rājanārāyana Sambuvarāya, the Mahēśvaras, Sthānathār, Nāttār, Vīraśōla Aṇukkar183 and Kaikkōlar of the Adipurīśvara temple settled the order of precedence and the nature of temple services to be performed by the Padiyilār,184 Devaradiyār and Istabaṭṭalīyar. It is to be noted that all the three terms refer to dancing girls who also performed at this time various services in the temple.

182. A.R.E., 196 of 1912

183. The term Aṇukkar means one in attendance and also means one who is close to the person in authority.

184. Padiyilār literally means 'without husbands' and they were so called because they were not permitted to marry. See K.K. Pillay, The Caste System in Tamil Nadu, Journal of Madras University, Vol.XXIX, No.2, July, 1977, p.30.
An interesting aspect of temple service by the Kaikkōḷas is the association of their names with the Devaradiyāl. For a long time the Kaikkōḷa families had a tradition of consecrating the first girl born in the family to the temple. But while the Kaikkōḷas are said to belong to the Idangai (left-hand caste) the Devaradiyār belong to the Valangai (right-hand caste). The Chōlar Pūrva Paṭṭavam, when it refers to the order of importance in which the Kaikkōḷa guild members were to be honoured, says that the Dēvadāsis were to be given one 'kandangi chelai' (a type of sari) as well as the traditional betal leaf. In fact, the dēvadāsis are everywhere mentioned along with the Naṭṭar, Talapati and the other members of the Kaikkōḷa organisation.  

Epigraphical evidence of the association of Kaikkōḷa-Devaradiyār are numerous. Thus an inscription from Tiruvanakkōyl (Madurāṃtakam Taluq, Chingleput dt.) of the period of Jātavarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (thirteenth century) registers the sale of house sites to the Kaikkōḷar and Devaradiyār of the temple.

A sub-sect of the Kaikkōḷas connected specially with temple service were the Ponnambala-Kūttar also called Nainār. These were the temple ministrals and all the folk

185. Chōlar Pūrva Paṭṭavam, op.cit. pp.206-7
186. Ibid., p.200, 207 and Passim.
songs of the Kaikkōla community were composed and sung by these 'Nainār'. The great twelfth century poet of this community was called Ambalakūttar and because he sang a particular verse in the manner desired by Vikrama Chōla he was renamed as 'Ottakūttar'.\(^1\) A thirteenth century record from Tirumānakkal (Pāpanāsam, Tanjore district) records the setting up of images in the temple by a Kaikkōlan-Karunākaran Kokkakūttan. A fourteenth century record from Sangrāmanallūr says that a pillar in the Tandavēśvara shrine of the Cholēśvara temple was the gift of Kaikkōlan Pemmān Ponnambala kūttar.\(^1\) In the Senguntar Tugil Vidu Tūtū,\(^1\) the Nainār Ponnambalapēr are mentioned as past masters in the art of magic and tantra and as singers of exceptional ability who earned the applause of the gods.\(^1\)

It appears from the pattern of evidence regarding the grant to weavers that in the 10th and 11th centuries the weavers enjoyed considerable state patronage, as evidenced for instance by the Madras Museum Copper plates of Uttama Chōla.\(^1\) But the actual evidence for the grant of social and economic privileges between the 12th and the

\(^1\) C. Balasubramaniam, *Ottakūttar* (in Tamil) n.d., p. 26

\(^1\) *A.R.E.,* 295 of 1961-62

\(^1\) *Senguntar Tugil Vidu Tūtū* in T. Chandrasekharan (ed.) *Tūtū Tirattu*, pub. in *Oriental Manuscripts Series No. 58* (Madras, 1957).

\(^1\) *Ibid*, verses 122-125

\(^1\) *S.I.I.,* Vol. III, pt. 4, p. 264
fourteenth centuries is very limited and in certain regions their status was decidedly low as shown by the inscription from Hattalikott. In contrast, the evidence for the grant of concrete social privileges (Sangu, tanu, etc.) is abundant in the Vijayanagar period. Thus there appears to have been definite improvement in the social status of the weavers in the heyday of the Vijayanagar empire.

While the acquisition of privileges was one tangible form of moving up in the caste hierarchy, ritual sanction was sought to be achieved by such means as claiming mythological origins and aspiring to a brahmanical or supra-brahmanical status. It must be said that the tendency to claim mythological origins was present not only among the weaver castes but among other professional castes as well. The Kaikkola weavers claimed their descent from Virabahu, the divine lieutenant of Lord Kartikāya. The Dēvāṅgas traced their origin from Mānu and Devāla Munivar, the son of Siva and also claimed brahmanical status.

193. E.C., Vol. IV, Ch.97
195. For instance, the Kammālan (the Pāncalās of Karnataka and the Panchanamuvaru of Andhra) trace their origin from Viṣvakarma, the divine architect. His five sons—Manu, Maya, Tvaṣtri, Silpi, and Viṣvajna, the progenitors of the 5 artisan groups (A.R.E. 665 of 1910, Pt.II, para 60). Telikis (oilmen) have a similar legend of their origin which is related in Manuvamsa Purāṇam (Ms.D,160 of the Catalogue of Telegu manuscripts in Mackenzie collection, Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras). The Telikis claim to be Kshathriyas from the North and descendants of Manu.
196. The legend regarding the origin of the Kaikkōḷās is to be found in the Sengunta Prabanda Tirattu, op.cit.
Their attitude is best expressed in the verse of Sambalinga Murthy, a priest of the Devanga weavers:

"Manu was born in the brahmin caste
He was surely a brahmin in the womb
There is no sudraism in this caste
Devânga had the form of Brahma".

The Sâliyar, also have a legend which is said to be found in the Sthalapuranam of the Nallandai temple (Tanjore district). They believe themselves to be descendents of 'Sâliya' a low caste man who did service for a saint called Visakar and became a rishi by his grace. The Sâliya wear the sacred thread and engage brahmin prohits. Several references to Vishnu gotra, Atrêya gotra and Kâsyapa gotra among the Sâliya Srîvaishnavâs of the Tirumalai temple is to be found in the records of Vijaya Gandagopaladêva (mid thirteenth century). The Telegu Sâlês trace their origin to Bhavana rishi who manufactured the thread from Vishnu's navel and made cloth for the gods.

None of these legends can be dated accurately and one can only state in a broad way that they might have grown any time between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries.

The mainpoint of interest lies in the motive behind these

197. Devânga Purânam, op.cit., pp.1-7
199. Ibid, Vol. VI, p.277
200. T.T., Vol.I, Nos. 70, 71 and 72
201. Thurston, op.cit., Vol.VI, p.503
mythologies rather than in their authenticity and in their aspirations they are reminiscent of the Suryavamshi and Chandravamshi origins of the Rajputs. Certain records refer to the evolution of a new caste, the Ayōgavaṣas, a result of the upward movement on the part of the weavers. These are stated to be the offspring of brahmins married to Vaisya women (anulōma). An other record quotes a sanskrit verse which says that an ayōgava is born of the union between a Kṣhathriya woman and a Vaisya (i.e., Pratilōma). They undertook to supply cloth for upanayana and other domestic ceremonies, for dvijapatrās to temples (i.e., flag cloth) etc. In A.D. 1128, 20 families of ayōgavaṣa are stated to have settled down in Tirukkaṇāpuram (Coimbatore district) and secured the protection of the assembly and the Śrī-Vaishnavās of that area.

It was the same desire for an enhanced social status among the professional classes that was the cause of most of the conflicts and schism between and within the left-hand (Iḻangai) and right-hand (valangai) groups. Just as the varna system marks a horizontal division of Indian society, so the Iḻangai-Valangai classification marks a vertical division of South Indian society. This, however, excludes the upper castes, the Brahmins, (the Kṣhathriyas

202. A.R.E., 208 of 1919 from Pondicherry
203. A.R.E., 508 of 1922 from Tirukkaṇāpuram in Coimbatore dt.
204. Ibid.
205. A.R.E., 208 of 1919
as a social category are rarely to be found in the South) and was confined to the Vaisyas and Sudras. Each professional group claimed for itself social recognition and privileges and in this attempt it was challenged by rival caste groups. A professional caste which had registered its higher status by the obtaining of flags and symbols assiduously sought to prevent others from obtaining the same, thus leading to conflicts. These conflicts took place within the framework of the Idangai-Valangai categories. But it is noteworthy that during the Chōla period they occur essentially as military divisions or as broad communal divisions, as one more contradiction within the social unit, apart from the professional organisations of each caste etc. The aspect of upward movement among professional castes and intense social conflict among them came about only in the Vijayanagar period.

The earliest reference to the Idangai-Valangai classification comes from the period of Rājendra Chōla. It is said that the army of the king was divided into these categories. Vēdan, Naṭṭamān, Malayamān and Paraiya are mentioned as Valangai and the Bēdar, Pāḷan, Chakkiliyan and Kaikkōlar are mentioned as Idangai. The connection between the army in terms of these categories,

206. c.f. the reference to Stein's theory on the segmentary state in the earlier part of this chapter.

207. A.R.E., 56 of 1912
and the origin of the Idangai and Valangai is evident from the references in the Chōla period to Idangai Valangai regiments as well as Mūnrukai Paḍaiyinar also called Mūnrukai Maḥāsēnai. However, it is not very clear as to what the precise basis of such a classification was. Another explanation of the origin of the Idangai and Valangai is that the Vellālar (The agriculturist caste) and the Kammālar (artisan castes) clashed frequently over the question of privileges and that Kuloṭṭunga III, resolved the issue before the goddess in Kaṇchipuram by determining the Vellālar to be Valangai and the Kammālar to be Idangai. The Chōlar Pūrva Paṭṭyam says that Karikāla Chōla (actually Kuloṭṭunga III) brought Valanjiya Chetti, the Kaikkōla Kachchi Vīran and the Kachchi Vīra Vellālan to the Kongu country and here determined the left-hand - right-hand categories and the duties and privileges of the various castes. There were said to be 98 castes in each category. In A.D. 1329-30 at Parāntakanādu (Tiruvaigavūr Taluq, Tanjore district) the 98 Valangai and the 98 Idangai castes are said to have met and fixed the rates of the various taxes to be paid to the State.

208. A.R.E., 189 of 1895 from Seramādevi (Tirunelvelī dt.)
209. A.R.E., 120 of 1905 from Tiruvatīsvaram (Tirunelvelī dt.) of the 11th century.
211. Chōlar Pūrva Paṭṭyam, op. cit., pp.208-9
Almost the entire mass of evidence regulating to the Idangai-Valangai categories comes from the Tamil country. The Sāliya weavers have been classified as right-hand and the Kaikkōla as left-hand. That the Kaikkōlas belonged to the left-hand is known from a record from Srimushnam (South Arcot) of the period of Sundara Pāndya (thirteenth century) which refers to the Kaikkōla community who successfully practised the Idangai creed. In fact the Kaikkōla weavers apart from worshipping their community deity, i.e., Kāmākshi amman also worshipped the god of all the Idangai Castes, i.e., Idangainayaka. Thus in the period of Vīra Rājendra Chōla (eleventh century) the Kaikkōlar and Sēnāpati of Annūr (Avināsi Taluq, Coimbatore dt.) are said to have made a donation of 24 achchu of pon (gold) to the Idangai Nayaka. The State levied a tax on the left-hand - right-hand castes called 'Valangai-Idangai Maganmai' and a reference to the tax is found in Tiruvengādu (Tanjore dt.) in the period of Vīra Rājendra (eleventh century). The same record also refers to Idangai-vari. A record from Kāṇchipuram refers to the assigning of Idangai-vari and Jāti Kaṅikkai collected by the Idangai-nāṭṭavar to the local deity. Thus Idangai-vari as

213. A.R.E., 248 of 1915-16
214. A.R.E., 570 of 1922-3
216. Ibid.
217. A.R.E., 315 of 1954-55
indicated in the other epigraphic records seems to be a tax levied by the state while Jāti Kannikkai or Valangai-Iddangai maganmai (maganmai itself means contribution), could have been a levy collected by the community for its general fund. However, even in the case of the state tax it appears that the Iddangai nāṭṭār were deputised to collect it. 218

Instances of the Balagai (valangai) and Yedagai (Iddangai) are far fewer in the Andhra-Karnataka regions though some epigraphical evidence is found of their existence. Thus Iddangai-vari is said to have been collected from the Pallīs and other Iddangai classes at Pādi (Chandragiri, Chittoor dt.) 219 At Kayivīra in Pekkundra in A.D. 1362, the Balagai and Yedagai classes cooperated in establishing a fair in the place. 220 Of the weaver castes of these regions, the Padmasāle and the Sēṇiyar are classified as Balagai while the Dēvānga come under the Yedagai. 221 But by and large it appears that the intensity of schisms and conflicts between the left-hand and the right-hand categories was confined to the Tamil country though one cannot make out the reason for this.

218. Ibid.
219. A.R.E., 215 of 1910
220. E.C., Vol.X, Ct. 95
221. A list of the Balagai, Yedagai groupings in the Karnataka region is to be found in B. Lewis Rice, Mysore Gazetteer (London, 1897) Vol.II, pp.222-4
In all these instances, i.e., their clamour for social privileges, their creation of mythological origins and the left-hand - right-hand conflicts, the Sudra professionals tried to overcome social and ritual barriers through exaltation of their own caste and the assumption of brahmanical status. These are, of course, the usual manifestations of the process of sanskritization. But there are rare instances of social protest on the one hand and the assumption of supra brahmanical status and even caste negation on the other. In the thirteenth century during the reign of Kulōṭṭunga III at Tiruvelḷainallur,222 (South Arcot district), a Kaikkōla weaver was martyred while fighting for their right to sing the 'Tēvāram' (Saivite religious song) in the streets on festive occasions. His stand was apparently vindicated and special honours conferred on the martyred Kaikkōla weaver. A piece of literary evidence provides an instance of social protest and caste negation in the early fourteenth century. The Saiva saint Uṟṟāpati Sivāchāriyār was the Rājaguru and an orthodox brahmin. He was, however, converted by Maraigyaṇa Sambandar, the Sudra saint. As a result both part-took of the Kanji or rice starch from the Kaikkōla weavers though ritual orthodoxy did not permit a brahmin to do so. Because of

222. A.R.E., 437 of 1921
this action, the brahmins of Chidambaram ex-communicated
the Rajaguru and he was not permitted to come for the flag
hoisting on the festival day. In fact, traditionally the
flag cloth was supposed to be supplied by the Kaikkola.
The brahmins were unable to perform the ceremony till they
had apologised to Gyana Sambandar and Umapati Sivachariyar
and accepted the Kaikkola weavers' gift of the flag cloth.223

The Vira Saiva or Lingayat movement constitutes a
striking instance of caste negation and later, the
assumptions of a supra-brahmanical status and caste
exaltation. The weavers and the Kammalar as the leading
Sudra professionals in society participated in large
numbers in the Vira-Saiva movement as well as the Sri-
Vaishnava or more specifically the Tengalai movement both
of which began roughly in the twelfth - thirteenth centuries.
The Vira-Saiva movement originated in the Kanerese country
under the leadership of Basava settled in Kalyani in the
twelfth century. The Lingayat movement emerged in opposition
to orthodox brahminism and Basava is described as an axe
to the root of the tree of caste.224 Unlike the brahmanical
castes, the Lingayats buried their dead, practised widow
re-marriage and did not observe any ceremonial pollution.

224. R.N. Nandi "Origins of the Vira Saiva Movement",
The Indian Historical Review, Vol.II, No.I, July 1975,
p.32. A readable translation of Vira Saiva religious
poetry is to be found in A.K. Ramanujam (ed.)
The main followers of Bāsava were the Banajigās (of Ayyavōle etc.) and other trading groups, shoe-makers, tanners, tailors, weavers and even some untouchables. The weavers in the textile production and trade centres like Bijapur, Belgaum and Dharwar were mostly Lingāyats. Jēdāra Dāsimayya the famous Sudra saint who was a contemporary and follower of Bāsava was a weaver by caste. An inscription from Allūr (Kōd Taluq, Dharwar district) is placed below three groups of sculptures and the first one depicts Jēdara Dāsimayya offering cloth to God. This incident is narrated in the Vachanās of Bāsava as Dāsimayya receiving the loom of inexhaustible treasure from God for his gift of cloth. Interestingly, the other sculpture depicts Siriyāla-Chetti who is said to have offered the cooked flesh of his son to Siva who came to him as a mendicant and the third sculpture is that of a potter Gumda before whom Siva is depicted as dancing. All these scenes are narrated in the Vīra Saiva Vachanās and their narrations are close to that of the sixty-three Nāyanārs of the Periya Purānam (twelfth century A.D.). Another famous Lingāyat saint was Sankara Dāsimayya who was a tailor by caste. Although in its origin, the Vīra Saiva movement like the Tengalai movement began as a protest against orthodox brahminism, it soon began to

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225. R.N. Nandi, _op.cit._, p.44
226. _E.C._ Vol.XXIX, No.19
develop social exclusiveness based on the privilege of birth and cleanliness of profession much along the lines of brahmanical caste system. Thus the untouchables among the Vira-Saivites could neither invest themselves with the sacred lingam nor perform the eight sacraments. In fact, even the concept of physical pollution was revived. Secondly, the movement gave up notions of caste negation and reverted to efforts at caste-exaltation. The Lingayats claimed superiority to all social groups and did not inter-dine or inter-mingle with them. As has been pointed out earlier in discussing the concept of sanskritisation, probably even the peculiar practice of burying their dead in a sitting posture was adopted in order to appear distinctive. Abdur Razzaq, in the course of his travels in the South refers to the Djogis, "said to be a caste of Hindus, who are commonly weavers. The people of the caste do not burn but bury their dead and the women are sometimes buried alive with their husband's corpse".

The Tengalai movement in Sri Vaishnavism also brought within its fold many of the low-sūdra professional castes. In the beginning, i.e., in the twelfth-thirteenth

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centuries, it did hold the idea of caste negation: "if we descend below the four castes and come to the Chandâlas who, however, lacking in virtue are true worshippers of Vishnu, their servants' servants are my masters and their feet are mine to worship".²²⁹ (Ramanuja). But eventually the Tengalai Vaishnavites comprising mostly of Sûdras also began to aim at covertly enhancing their status and establishing their superiority over the Vaḍagalai or orthodox Vaishnavites. However, these developments took place only during the period of the Vijayanagar empire when the movement gained strength especially under the leadership of Aḷagiya Manavâla.

²²⁹. Burton Stein in Silverberg (ed.) op. cit., p.83