CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters, an attempt has been made to bring out the details of the vicissitudes of Banavāsi in the history of Karnāṭaka. It is shown in the first chapter that Banavāsi has remained an important city and centre of culture for a longer time than has any other city in Karnāṭaka history. This situation seemingly arose from the fact that the place was strategically located in a thickly forested area surrounded by waters of the Varadā on three sides. Once it became an important city and was chosen as capital in early historical times, its prospects for continuity as a city of importance and a capital became well established. We have noted that at least as early as the time of Aśoka Maurya the Vanavāsa country with its capital obviously at Vanavāsi or Banavāsi, had drawn the attention of the political leaders of the times. With the decline of the Mauryas, the Sātavāhanas assumed the reins of sovereignty and what happened at Banavāsi under their rule and thereafter has been dealt with in the second chapter. However, it is important to note here that the works dealing with the history of the dynasties ruling over the region have not concentrated or focussed on Banavāsi itself as the theme though ample scope for such a study existed. This becomes clear from the various types of source material
at our disposal. Having defined the role of geography and the plan of the work, the facets of history and culture of Banavasi was discussed in different chapters under different heads.

As pointed out above, the second chapter attempts to delineate the political history of Banavasi. Although little could be said about the period of the Nandas and the Mauryas, the understanding of the period after the fall of the Mauryas becomes clear on account of the availability of the source material, particularly the epigraphical. The story is more or less clear with the advent of Gautamiputra Satakarni, though here and there, gaps do exist.

Apart from bringing together the various details of the history of Banavasi, we have tried to discuss in detail certain problems relating to the rule of certain kings and chronology. For instance, we have tried to show that during Gautamiputra Satakarni's reign, the Vanavasa kingdom was included in the Satavahana territory. The succession of kings of the Chūṭu-Ānanda dynasty as well as their chronology has also been considered at length. So far as the early Kadambas are concerned, their origin, chronology and genealogy have been discussed afresh. The achievements of each king have been dealt with in considerable detail. With the rise of the Chālukyas of Badami, the fortunes of the Kadambas declined and the early Kadamba
rule came to an end, when Pulikēśi II gave it a crushing blow and dislodged the Kadambas from power. The Chālukyas had recognised that the continuation of the Kadambas would be a thorn in their flesh and therefore entrusted the Ālupas, their trusted feudatories with the administration of the Banavāsi maṇḍala.

In the reign of Kīrtivarma II the Ālupas under Āluvarasa II shifted their allegiance to the Pallavas, and thereby they were deprived of their sway over the Kadamba Maṇḍala. This coincided with the emergence of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas as a viable power. Under them the administrators of Banavāsi Maṇḍala were frequently changed in order not to allow them to become strong. During the closing years of Rāṣṭrakūṭa rule, Banavāsi once again saw itself under the second generation of the Kadambas, though as feudatories commencing with Chaṭṭayadēva. This dynasty however had its headquarters at Hāṅgal and therefore, is known as the Kadambas of Hāṅgal. With the exception of the intermittent transfers during the early period of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa, the Kadamba kings of Hāṅgal were the masters of Vanavāsi Maṇḍala even until the period of the Yādavas of Devagiri.

The smooth functioning of the Government and the prosperity and well-being of the subjects depends to a great extent on the efficiency of the administrative machinery. Keeping this point in view, the development
of the administrative system was studied in Chapter III. The Study showed that the overall pattern of the administrative machinery remained more or less unaltered in the course of history and it was essentially based on the precepts laid down in the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya and the Dharmaśāstras. Although the king remained the supreme head of the administrative machinery and there was a hierarchy of ministers and administrators, still considerable freedom was exercised at the lowest level, namely the village. While the Banavasi region was directly under the Kadambas until their fall, with the rise of Chālukyas, the region was placed under the feudatories like the Āḷupas, Gaṅgas or some individual officials till the rise of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa. The Kadambas of Hāṅgal who became trusted feudatories of the Chālukyas of Kalyāṇa, established the dynastic rule in this region, though as subordinates, even here, we may note that they were transferred now and then in order not to become a challenge to the Chālukya monarch.

In the fourth chapter a discussion on the various facets of the society of the region has been attempted. The social pattern was almost strictly in accordance with the prescription of the Smṛitis. The four fold classification of the society was an established feature. The Brāhmaṇas undoubtedly enjoyed a higher status in the society and being leaders in education played a dominant role in preserving the structure of the society. The
women of higher classes of the society enjoyed a consider-derably respectable position and there were poetesses and administrators. They were also behind the prosperity of the religious sects like Buddhism and Jainism.

Religion, language and literature form the theme of the fifth chapter. The examination of the evidences at our disposal has made it amply clear that various religious sects flourished in this region with considerable royal support. Before Aśoka sent Thera Rakkhita for establishing the religion of the Buddha in Vanavās kingdom, there must have existed other cults of folk religion such as the worship of the Nāgas etc. and undoubtedly these cults with their beliefs and rituals must have continued down to recent times, sometimes making an impact on the higher religious practices. However, but for their survival in the beliefs of the people to-day, little evidence of earlier times is available. The religion of the Buddha found considerable patronage in this region in the early phase. But after the accession of the Kadambas its prominence seems to have slowly diminished until only a few pockets remained here and there. On the other hand Jainism found considerable royal support under the Kadambas, particularly from the time of Śāntivarma. It retained its position through the early Chālukya and the Rāṣṭrakūṭa periods and was a dominant religion during the later Chālukya and the Yādava periods. Śaivism was a religion with deeper roots in the people at large. Its
antiquity in the region is not only proved by epigraphical evidences, but also by the occurrence of lingas of early times in Banavasi, Ankola, Talagunda and elsewhere. Among the puranic religions, it was undoubtedly the most dominant. The evidence of the Kadamba inscriptions demonstrates that the Pasupata Saivas had already risen to prominence during that period. The followers of this religion were responsible for erection of several temples during the early Chalukya and post-Chalukya period. One of the later centres of Saivism in the region was Balligave where the Kalamukhas were prominent. In the last part of the period studied here a seemingly important member of socio-religious reform movement namely Vibhutigaurayya visited Banavasi, probably as a part of his programme for awakening the people in the ideas of religious reformation. Vaishnavism, which is also a religion of antiquity, influenced the region from quite early times. The references in the Sattavahana records and later ones make this point clear. One of the kings of the Chulu-Ananda dynasty participated in the erection of a temple of God Ashthabhuja in Nagarjunakoṭa about the middle of the 3rd century A.D. The Halmidi inscription of the time of Kākusthavarma and the Banavasi pillar inscription of Mrigesavarman as well as the inscriptions of Triparvata branch of Kadambas demonstrate the importance of Vaishnavism in the region during the Kadamba period. The development of Vaishnavism in the Banavasi region was
in conformity with the developments of that region elsewhere in Karnataka.

The discussions on language and literature also form a part of this chapter. In the earlier period, Prakrit was given a place of importance for royal records. From the Kadamba period we notice the regular use of Sanskrit as official language. The first occurrence of Kannada in the inscriptions is in the Halmidi inscription of Kakusthavarma. This only goes to show that though Kannada was already extant at least from the time of the Satavahanas, its use in the royal circles particularly for recording grants was not favoured by the early rulers. In any case the thrust of the local language was too much to be ignored and from the time of the Chalukyas of Vatapi it came to be used prominently.

The literary works of the poets have not come down to us in good numbers. For the early period a few examples of brief compositions are available in the form of inscriptions. The Tālaṇgunda inscription of Kākusthavarma composed by poet Kubja and the Aihole prāśasti of Pulikeśi II, composed by poet Ravikirti are good examples of Sanskritā Kāvyā compositions respectively of the Kadamba and the early Chāluksya period. Attempts to compose works in the regional language must go back to a considerably early period because in about 8th century A.D. a small Kannada inscription in tripādi composed by Kāppe Arabhaṭṭa is found at Bādāmi. The poet of Kavirājamārga
mentions that his work is in new Kannada thereby indicating that in the literary circles, Kannada had age-old traditions, some of the usages of which had already become transformed owing to gradual development. The Banavasi region proved to be a great source of inspiration for nature-loving literateurs like Pampa, the author of Vikramârjuna-Vijaya. The inscriptions of 10th-14th centuries in the region amply demonstrate the poetic abilities of the people of the region.

For a place which has enjoyed a status of importance, that too as a capital, for over many centuries, one would expect rich contributions to the cultural heritage through visual art-remains. With this in view a separate study of the art heritage of Banavasi is taken up and an account is provided in the sixth chapter. It is surprising that for an important phase of art history commencing from the Sâtavâhanas to the end of the early Kadambas the wealth of the remains so far known is not very encouraging. Recently a few sculptures, one of them inscribed, were encountered in the bed of the river Varadā, owing to human activities. There is little doubt that these sandstone sculptures belong to an early phase of art history. The significance of this discovery is a clear pointer to the fact that Banavasi's art and architectural wealth of the early period lies buried underground. The only solution to the problem is large-scale excavations of the magnitude of the world heritage sites such as
Hampi, Vikramaśilā etc. Only then can we hope to appreciate the early art of Banavāsi.

The recently discovered sculptures referred to above are only fragmentary but they speak volumes about the achievements of Banavāsi in the field of plastic art. The Nāga image of the Chūṭu age is perhaps closer to low relief sculptures of the style encountered at such sites as Sannati and Nāgarjunakonda but the head of a female figure almost of life size is really a masterpiece of about the same period with hardly any parallels elsewhere. The miniature sculptures of the Yakshas etc. are also important indicators of the artistic achievements of the Banavāsi sculptural art.

In the field of the architecture we are as yet not aware of any original contribution from Banavāsi. The excavations have revealed apsidal or rectangular structures of bricks which compare favourably with the Sātavāhana structures encountered elsewhere. Here again only large-scale excavation can contribute to enlarge our knowledge. The picture of the art activity of the early Kadamba period is still bleak, although one would anticipate a large number of remains of that period. As in the case of earlier structures and art remains, possibly the remains of the Banavāsi Kadamba period may also have been buried underground. The inscription of Mrīgēśavarman at Banavāsi which is a masterpiece of calligraphy
obviously indicates that the pillar on which it is
inscribed once formed a member of a temple of Vishnu.
This pillar itself was found buried considerably deep
in the ground. Another site also rich in Kadamba remains
is Guḍāṇāpur which is still awaiting the spade of the
archaeologist.

The large-scale application of stone for architec-
tural purposes in Banavasi probably commenced only from
the time of the Chālukyas of Vatāpi. After the Chālukyas
wrested power from the Kadambas they placed the province
under the Āḷupas. It would seem, as we have tried to
demonstrate elsewhere that the original temple of Madhu-
kēśvara in stone was erected under the patronage of
the Āḷupas. Certain art motifs, pillar shapes, capitals,
etc. as well as the use of sandstone blocks show clearly
that the style is linked to the one found in the region
around Bāḍāmi, the capital of the Chālukyas. Whether
the śikhara of this temple represents the original śikhara is debatable but if it is original it is also an
interesting point to note that it is very close to the
ey early temples of Mukhalīṅgam in Andhra Pradesh.

The period of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas witnessed frequent
changes in the administration of Banavasi country. As
such we can't expect large scale art-activity in the
absence of continuous patronage. The picture however
changes with the advent of the feudatory Kadamba family
of Chaṭṭayya. Large scale renovations and additions to
the Madhukesvara temple were made under the patronage of this feudatory family. The varieties of pillars, the delicately carved sculptures, many of which are now found in the Sculpture Gallery, the beautiful entrance gateways on the east and north of the temple, are all excellent specimens of art of the period of the later Kadambas. That this healthy tradition was continued even in the post-Kadamba period under the patronage of the Vijayanagara kings or their officers is testified to by the fact that a number of temples of various faiths particularly Śaiva were erected at Banavasi during that period. Even the chiefs of Sondā contributed to the art heritage of Banavasi by contributing the excellently carved Trailokamanṭapa, the stone cot, the images of Dikpālas etc. However, these remains of the Vijayanagara and post-Vijayanagara period fall outside the purview of our study.

The resumé of the study presented above brings to the fore certain important things to be considered in the future course of research. The first thing is that large-scale excavations of the site should be taken up as early as possible to save the remains buried underground from human activity or natural destruction. It is only then that we can hope to make out a clear picture of the political and cultural aspects of early Banavasi. Secondly, each of the topics dealt with in various chapters of this work may be further studied exhaustively so that a clearer picture and more minute details of the facets of Banavasi cultural heritage can be brought to the fore in greater fullness.