The earliest religion about which anything can be said in relation to the Sirisi region is Buddhism. Here the antiquity of Buddhism goes back to the time of the great Maurya monarch Asoka. The Buddhist chronicles like Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa record about the attempt made by Asoka to propagate Buddhism both within and outside his empire. The Third Buddhist Council was held under his patronage in Pataliputra with Thera Moggaliputta as its president. After the conclusion of the Council, Buddhist missionaries were sent to different parts of the country and beyond. Among them Thera Mahadeva and Thera Rakkhita visited the Mahishamandala and Vanavasa respectively. The Vanavasa country visited by ‘Thera’ Rakkhita is identified with the country of Banavâsi. The relevant passage of the Mahavamsa giving this information is as follows:

“The Thera Rakkhita who had gone to Vanavâsa preached, floating in the air in the midst of the people, the ‘Anamtaggasamyutha’. The conversion of sixty thousand persons took place, thirtyseven thousand in number received the ‘pabbajja’ from him, five hundred
'Vihāras' were founded in the country.
Thus did the Thera establish the conqueror'\textsuperscript{1}.

The passage suggests that a large number of people were converted to the Buddhist religion and that Buddhism became well founded in the Vanavāsa Country.

According to the Mahāvaṃśa the Śrilankan king Dutṭāgāmini Abhaya (1st century A.D.), when he built a large Vihara in his capital invited delegates from different countries for its inauguration and among those who responded to this invitation by personal attendance were as many as 80,000 Thēras from Vanavāsa\textsuperscript{2}.

While some exaggeration cannot be ruled out in the passages of the Mahāvaṃśa, it would appear that Buddhism had considerable following among the people of the Vanavāsa country. Archaeologically speaking little in fact has been forthcoming to establish the presence of Buddhism from 3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C. to 1\textsuperscript{st} century A.D. here. Possibly it is only the spade of the archaeologist which can do this in course of time. But after the 1\textsuperscript{st} century A.D. Buddhist relics begin to occur more or less regularly though not in large numbers.

The earliest epigraphical reference in the region to the patronage to Buddhism by the royal circle is from Banavāsi. The record belongs to the reign of Vinhukada Chutukulānanda Sātakarni dated his 12\textsuperscript{th} regnal year\textsuperscript{3},
corresponding to c.257 A.D.4. It records the donation of a serpent stone slab (nāga), a tank (Tadaga) and a monastery (Vihāra) by Mahabhoji. (Nāgamūlaṇika), the mother of Yuvarāja Śivaskandanaṅgasri. The work was supervised by the minister (Amātya) Skandasvāti (Khaḍasati)

The Nāga stone was carved by Nataka, a disciple of Dāmoraka, a teacher of Sanjayanti(i.e. Vanavāsi). This short record reflects the nature of the activities of the Buddhist devotees in the Sirsi region. Obviously, excavating tanks, erecting Viharas and making donations of images particularly Nāga formed a part and parcel of such activities.

The Banavāsi kings were considerably inclined towards Buddhism as evidenced in the inscriptions at Nāgārjunakonda5. In an inscription of the time of the Ikshvāku king Ehavala Chantamūla dated 11th regnal year, (c.291 A.D.), Kodabalasiri, the daughter of Virapurashadatta and sister of Ehavala Chantamūla and the queen of ‘Mahārāja’ of Vanavāsa, is stated to have set up a Chaitya and a monastery at Vijapapuri. These were in charge of the preceptors of the Mahiśāsaka sect. It is possible that this queen of the anonymous. Banavāsi king would have patronised the Mahiśāsaka sect in the Banavāsi region also.

Another inscription from Nāgarjunakonda6 belonging to the reign of Virapurushadatta, the Ikshvāku king (c.270 A.D.), Suggests the activities of the preceptors of the Achantarāja school. The record states that the
preceptors belonging to this school had converted people in various countries including Vanavāsi.

Similarly a foot-print slab inscription of Nāgarjunakonda7 of the latter half of the Vibhajjavada school residing in the great monastery of Vijayapuri had many converts in several regions including Vanavāsa. The same inscription further says that they were well versed in fixing the meaning and the implication of the nine-fold teaching of Buddha and they knew by heart the traditions of the Buddhists. The nine-fold teachings are Sutta (sermons in prose), Geyya (sermons in prose and verse), Vavyākarna (explanation or commentary), Gātha (scriptures or stanzas), Udāna (pity saying), Itivultaka (short speeches of the Buddha), Jālaka (stories of Buddha’s former births), Adbuta-dhamma (stories of miracles), and Vēdalla (teachings of the form of question and answer)8. The Buddhist traditions mentioned here are identified as follows: 1. robes, 2. food, 3. bedding presented to them, 4. those who delight in meditation9. The activities of these sects of Buddhism in our region correspond to the period of the Chutu-Ānanda kings. Roughly to the same period may be ascribed some of the archaeological finds which positively attest the prevalence of Buddhism here. These include a couple of Buddha images found in Haigunda10 (Honnavar Taluk), an image of Bōdhisatva Maitreya from Banavāsi11, a lamp post with the depiction of Buddha and Kubja Yaksha from Togarse12 (Ankola taluk), the remains of the brick stupa in Kadagōdu13 and the inscribed pedestal of the Yakshi image.
form Banavasi. The last mentioned inscription states that the image was made by the stone-mason Gola’s disciple at the instance of Balamita. In the small scale excavations conducted in Banavasi an apsidal structure has been brought to light and some scholars have regarded this as an evidence of Buddhism. But since the apsidal plan itself is not a peculiarity of the Buddhist chaityas alone, it is difficult to accept this view. A stone image of Kartikēya has also been reported from this very excavation thereby suggesting the possibility of the apsidal structure having dedicated to the Hindu deity.

A few pot-shreds from Banavasi belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era bear the Triratna symbol stamped on them. Similarly the coins of the Chutu-Ānanda kings, particularly those of Sivalāṇanda, carry the Hill symbol on one side, and a tree surrounded by a railing on the other. It is possible that these stand for the Buddhist stūpa and the Bōdhi tree respectively.

Judging by the number of records dedicated to the various sects under the Kadambaś of Banavasi, one would be led to think that Buddhism did not make much progress under them. Only two records of Buddhist affiliation during this period are known, and one of these curiously belongs to the Kēkaya chief in the reign of Ravivarman. The Honnavar plate of Kēkaya Chitrasēna begins with an invocation to Buddha, who is described as endowed with infinite qualities, a haven of virtues, born in the family of
Suddhodana. It records a grant of land called Kanasapukkolli along with a
garden in Napitapalli to the Āryasangha, on the full moon day of Āsvāyuja
by the illustrious Chitrasena Mahakella of the Kēkaya family. It is known,
that the members of the Āryasangha had close associations with the
Aparamahāvanasailiya sect of Buddhism. In one of the Nāgarjunakonda
inscriptions19 the monk Ānanda belonging to Āryasangha, is stated to have
completed a great monument, which was accepted by the preceptors of the
Aparamahāvanasailiya sect. The same record also says that Ānanda
preached the Digha-mahājima-pancha-matrūkas and knew the nikayas by
heart20.

The Aparamahāvanasailiya sect was one of the sub-sects of the later
Mahāsāṅghikas. Minor differences of opinion concerning robes, the nature
and manner of food, worship etc, existed in the sub-sect21.

That the Āryasangha was strong in the coastal Karnataka about this
time is proved by another record discovered at Hiregutti in the Ankola taluk,
which belongs to the Bhōja king Asāṅkitavarman22 (c.525-545 A.D.). This
copper plate record also commences with the praise of lord Buddha. He is
described as one “whose feet are licked by the rays of the shining jewels in
the coronets of gods and demons and (who is a) reservoir of countless
virtues”. The purpose of the record was to register the gift of the village
Sundarika situated in the Dipaka Visahya for the enjoyment of the Buddhist
Vihāra. The gifted village was entrusted to the Āryasangha. The borders of
the donated village are also mentioned. The record ends with an exhortation to protect the Chaitya bestowed upon the Aryasangha. The stone image of the seated Buddha is now worshipped as Babbru in a temple in Babruwada in Karwar, may stylistically be ascribed to this period. It probably belonged to a chaitya established by the Bhôjas when the region was under their control.

It may be observed that it was essentially the Mahâyâna form Buddhism that prevailed in the region particularly the coastal track, but Hinâyâna was not unknown.

There is almost a void in the history of Buddhism in the post-Kadamba phase in this region, but for some passing references by Huien Tsang, the Chinese traveler, in the early part of the 7th century A.D. He mentions a place called Komkaṇapura where one hundred Buddha Sanghas and more than ten thousand monks existed. Most scholars identify this Konkaṇapura with Banavâsi. There is no corroborating evidence to justify this identification. The very name suggests that it could be a city located in the Konkana track, i.e. the coastal area. The statement of Huien Tsang about the number of Sanghas and Buddhist monks is apparently an exaggeration and hearsay.

It is not until the 10th century A.D. that once again some feeble evidence in regard to the existence of Buddhism in the Sirsi region is traceable. In a place called Kadre near Mangalore, in Dakshina Kannada, a bronze image of Lôkëśvara and a few stone sculptures belonging to 10th century suggest the prevalence of Buddhism. Gururaj Bhatt has suggested
that this could really be an evidence of the Nātha sect, which itself was an offshoot of Vajrayāna Buddhism. In Banavasi and Balligāve there existed pockets of the followers of Vajrayana Buddhism in 11th-12th century A.D. This is proved by the images of Ṭārabhagavati, one in Balligave and another in Banavāsi, and of Bōdhisatva Padmapani in Balligāve.

From the time of the rise of Vijayanagar, Buddhism survived only in name and never had a popular backing. Paucity of evidence pertaining to Buddhism proves this. The followers of the Hindu faiths even began to get confused between Jainism and Buddhism, and sometimes described Jīna as a monk (Buddha) standing naked. This contemporary belief is also reflected in iconography, as for example in the Daśāvatara representation found in the Venkataramana temple near Hunasehonda in Sōnda belonging to 16th century where a nude Tīrthankara occupies the place of the ninth Avatāra, i.e. Buddha. This confusion could only be the result of the non-existence of Buddhism in the region about that period.

**JAINISM:**

The Jaina tradition says that the torch of Jainism, was carried into Karnataka during the time of Chandragupta Maurya. The Maurya emperor is believed to have accompanied the great Jaina ascetic Bhadrabhahu along with a train of followers towards the South when there was a great famine extending over twelve years in North India Chandragupta Maurya, according this tradition, breathed his last on the Chandragiri hill at Śravanabelagola a
great Jaina centre in Karnataka. Whether we believe this tradition or not, it is clear that Jainism did not progress much in Karnataka until the advent of the Kadambas and the Gangas on the scene.

It is from the time of Kadamba Kākusthavaran that Jainism began to grow popular particularly in places like Halasi, Dēvagiri etc. References are found in the Kadamba inscriptions to the Nirgranthas, Kurchakas, Śvētapatas and Yapanīyas side by side particularly at Halasi in the Belgaum district. It is noteworthy that whereas the Ganga records frequently refer to the Mulasangha the records of the Kadambas refer to the Yāpanīya Sangha. The Yāpanīya sangha is known for bringing together the Digambara and the Śvētāmbara sects of Jainism. By drawing some of its beliefs from both the sects, it recognised the role of women, which had far reaching consequences favouring a healthy growth of Jainism in the northern part of Karnataka. It is from this point of view that the early Kadamba inscriptions, particularly from Halasi, are significant. In one of the same records the Śvētapatas, Nirgranthas and Yapanīyas are together mentioned. No details are known about the Kurchakas.

Though it is indeed surprising that no epigraphical reference can be cited for the prevalence of Jainism in the Sirsi region as late as 11th century A.D., this negative evidence cannot be regarded as suggesting total absence of Jainism in the region. In Banavasi, recently a stone torso of a Jaina Tirthankara was discovered. Stylistically this sculpture might be placed in
the 5th or 6th century A.D. In that case, it is a sure indication of the presence of Jainism in the capital of the early Kadambas.

The Guḍnapur pillar inscription of the time of Kadamba Ravirama30 is an unusual record wherein a temple of god Kāma within the royal palace complex is mentioned and grants are recorded for the performance of everyday worship in the temple. However, it is a matter of controversy as to whether this Kāma is to be identified with the love god of the Hindus31 or Bāhubali of the Jainas32. The controversy emanates from the fact that Bāhubali is described in the Jaina literature both as Kāma and Manmatha. The same inscription interestingly has two references to goddess Padmāvathi, whose name recalls the famous Jaina Yakshi. Recently excavations have been conducted at the site of this inscription and a brick structure resembling a temple has been unearthed. An image of Pārśvanatha, Thīrthankara, stylistically of about 10th century A.D. has been recovered from the complex. Surface exploration around the mound also revealed the presence of Jaina sculptures in the vicinity. Put together these evidences would suggest that this locality had some Jaina establishment in the Medieval times. If we take this as a continuation of an earlier Jaina establishment here, the Kāmadēvālaya being of Bahubali may possibly be justified. However, it is not understandable why the record does not show the Chaitra festival (Vasantōtsava) as essential but regards it only as something meant for the enjoyment of the people rather than as an expression of devotion to God. It is
therefore very difficult to ascertain the identity of Kāma, even if only for this reason.

From the 12th century onwards Jainism faced great hardship in the plains of Karnataka owing to the rise of the ‘Militant Śaivism’. The pressure on the followers of Jainism by the rising tide of Virasaivism in the Northern part of Karnataka was so much that the Jainas had to move further westward and take shelter under minor principalities in the region. The chiefs of Biligi and Sōnda rendered great service to the cause of Jainism between 14th and 17th centuries A.D. Some of these families openly declared their affiliation to Jainism, though they did not overlook other religious sects. The region thus became a centre of activities for the Jainas in this period.

An inscription33 from Siddapura dated 1593 A.D. avers that Kallappa Bhūpala, the son of Mundanna Odeya, erected a basadi of Pārśvanātha Thīthankara at Aisūru. He gave 24 gadyanas from Bijjeyahalli village and made a grant of land worth 100 Khaṇḍugas of paddy. A grant of 63 gadyāṇas from the village of Haruguppa was also given for the daily rituals to be performed at the Eduvani Pārśvanātha basadi.

Chantappa Odeya I, the son of Narasirīhā, built the town of Biligi on the bank of the river Sōma. He constructed a great basadi and installed the image of Pārśva Tīrthankara therein and made for it a grant of 163 gadyāṇa from the lands in Nīrnahāḷḷi, Paragaḍde and Honkulī34. One of the earliest copper plate records from Mudabidre (1407 A.D.)35 belongs to the reign of
king Bhairava ruling from Aisuru. His son Abhinava Bhairavanāyaka made a land grant of Gommatapura at Haralibayalu village in Chikkamahalige-nādu, worth 36 Varāhas for the maintenance of daily rituals and offerings, and the perpetual lamp.

The Stone record from Sāgar dated 1473 A.D. belonging to a chief called Bhairava, son of Mundana of Aisūru, commences with an invocation to Pārśva Tirthankara. When king Bhairava was ruling over Haruguppe and Kabbayala-nādu, a Chaitya of Pārśva Tirthankara was got constructed by Parisvagaunda, the son of Mālakka Nāyakati, at Yiduvani for the happiness of the king and Pārśvagaunda. The record also states that king Bhairava left it lands of 282 hanavinakula for the performance of daily rituals, including milk-bath and amritapadi, for Pārśvatirthesvara. It also mentions Mrityunjaya Chakrapūja, Panchamritada Abhishekha and Siddha Chakrapūja. The same inscription records one more grant in 1474 A.D. King Bhairava made a land grant for the Neminatha Tirthankara at Maliyakhēda by the instruction of Sri-mad-Vadindra-Visalakirthi-Bhattaraka-svāmi. He granted the lands for repairing the Panchabasadi at Tālaguppa and for worship and other ceremonies there.

Abhinava-Kumāra-Bhairava, son of Bhairavēndra, established a two-storied basadi (eradu-neleya-basadi) and set up a Pārśva-Thirthankara at his kingdom and made for it a grant of 104 gadyānas from the Hokkulittige village. He also built a Manika Thirthakara basadi in memory of his queen.
Mallidévi and made for it a grant of 501 gadyanas from the Ittige village. He renovated the Panchabasadi of Tālaguppa and made for it a grant of 36 gadyāṇas. His son Laskhanabhapala built a basadi and gave 43 gadyāṇas. Timmarasa Odeya, son of Ghantanna Odeya, constructed the Trikuta Ratnaratraya Chaityalaya and granted it 101½ gadyanas. Another basadi was built in the name of his sister Timmāmbika. It enshrined Śāntiśvara Tīrthakara. A grant of 36 gadyanas from the village of Huvināmanī is also recorded. An inscription in Biligi refers to one Narasīṁha who renovated the basadi built earlier by his predecessor.

An inscription of Mudabidre dated 1546 A.D. belongs to king Virappodeya who made certain grants of lands in the village Chikamalige Kudginabailu to the Tribhuvana Chūdamani basadi at Bidare. Gifts by the chief of a silver cup and of money to provide for the rice offering to god Chandranātha in the same basadi in the name of Viramma, wife of his uncle, Timmarasa, are also recorded. Other grants included a gift of money for the milk-bath of the deity in the name of Timmappa, son of Ghantōdeya. The Biligi inscription says that Kaliugā Dharmaputra granted 36 gadyanas and to Parśva Tīrthakara and Chandraprabha Tīrthakara. The last mentioned was enshrined by his sister Timmambike, so that the deity could be offered the Shodasha-pūja(sixteen types of worship)
Another inscription in Biligi, dated 1580 A.D. mentions the construction of the Ratnatraya basadi by Rangarājappa Odeya, of the Mantapa, Chandraśāla etc, and installation of the images of Nemīśvara, Parsvanātha and Vardhamana by Ghanṭendra, son of Rangapparāja, on the advice of Bhaṭṭa Akalanka in 1581 A.D. It records also the grants of 443 varahas, 1 hana and 3 visa derived from the incomes of nine villages viz. Nerilamani, Balugani, Ondāne in Ayavattaligeya-nādu and Chikkamahaligeya-nādu, and land yielding 300 Khanduga of paddy and other gifts made for worship with rites like amritapadi, haludhare (milk-bath), alankāradīp and perpetual lamps, betel leaves and betel-nut, daily rituals of tribali, observance of Kārtika, Srutapanchami, Yugaḍi, Jivadayashtami, and Dīpāvali. Hindu sects under the chiefs of Nagire, Haduvalli and Biligi, and Ramādēvi, queen of Ghanṭendra, constructed a Ghandakuti basti for Sāntīśvara and Ghanṭendra granted it 12 Varahas income from Magadabayalu in Kumbarakuli village in Ayavattaligeya-nādu.

Just as he patronised the Brahmanical religions, Arasappa Nāyaka II of Sōnda patronized Jainism at his capital. A copper plate inscription of the Jaina matha in Sōnda delineates the lineage of the Jaina pontiff Akalanka as follows:

Belonging to the lineage of Charukirti Pandita of Mūla Sangha was Vijayakirti. He was worshipped by Saluvendra, king of Śāṅgitapura.(i.e. Haduvalli) Akalanka belonging to this lineage was the disciple of
Vijayavimala-kīrti. The record is dated 1578 A.D. and mentions Akalankadēva as Rāyarājaguru, Mandalāchārya, Ballālarāya jīvarakshapālaka, Designa agraganyā etc., while stating that Arasappa II was his disciple. However, the record is incomplete. There are three copper-plate inscriptions44 issued by Arasappa Nāyaka II mentioning the donations he made to the Jaina monasteries at Mudabidre. He is known to have gone on a pilgrimage to Shravanabelagola45. This king gave his daughter Viramma to the Biligi king Ghanṭendra II who was a disciple of Akalankadēva and his disciple Bhaṭṭakalankadēva. Arasappa Nāyaka came under the influence of these great teachers and got them a monastery constructed at Sōnda. The inscriptions of Biligi46 and Kalgudibena at Sōnda47 reveal that the Jain matha, formerly was patronised by Haduvalli chiefs, moved to Sōnda via Biligi in the time of Arasappa Nāyaka II.

The Jaina matha at Sōnda is known as Akalankamatha even today. The pontiffs of the matha right from the time of Akalanka selected the locality called Kallagudībēna in Sonda for setting up their tombs (samādhīs). The earliest of these belongs to Akalankadēva, the teacher of the famous Kannada grammarian Bhaṭṭakalanka, who composed an epitaph found on it and erected a mantapa48. The tomb of Baṭṭakalanka is also located here along with a mantapa and an epitaph49. There are certain later tombs some of which bear inscriptions50. It is curious to note that Jaina inscriptions after Arasappa Nāyaka II, are not found in Sōnda.
it suggests the possibility of the existence of a centre located at Sare, the identity of which is yet to be established. The names of the Brahmanas, occurring in various Kadamba grants, with a Śaiva affinity go on to suggest the possibility of the presence of Vaidic Sauvas in various parts of the Kadamba kingdom.

The Bhoja records contain scanty direct references to the Śaiva sect. However the names like Sarvatantrādhikrita Amaraśvara, Śivapuraka (palace), etc, are curious. Bhoja Asāṅkitavarman used the title parama-Mahēśvara, suggesting that he was a great devotee of Śiva. Similarly, the name of king Kapalivarman is also interesting since it recalls the Kāpālika Śāivas.

Actually there is an epigraphical gap in the Sirsi region from the end of the Kadambas to the advent of the Chālukyas of Kalyāna from the point of view the history of Śaivism. It is only in the reign of the Kalyāna Chālukya King Bhuvanaikamalla Sōmēśvara II that we again come across activities of the devotees of Śiva. However, it may be noted here that some of the large Śiva-lingas enshrined in various temples in Banavāsi might have well belonged to the period of the Chālukyas of Bādami, when the Ālūpas were governing over the Banavāsi-Mandala. The Madhukēśvara temple can be ascribed to the latter half of the Chālukya period on stylistic grounds.

The Chippagi inscription of 1072 A.D belonging to the reign of Bhuvanaikamalla Sōmēśvara II and his subordinate Mahamandalēśvara
Tailapadēva of the Hāngal Kadaṁba family records the construction of a tank and a Śaiva temple called Jakkēśvar by Gaundas.

Lands were granted for its maintenance. The next inscription is from Aggere (Siddapur taluk) dated 1095-96 A.D. in the reign of Chālukya Vikramaditya VI. It is stated in the inscription that Kuppagāvunda, his wife Nāgiyabbe and their son Jakkagāvunda built a Śiva temple and donated wetlands, garden and cleared forest land (Kumri). In 1121 A.D. another temple was built for god Isvara in Induru and land grants made to it by Tantrapāla Kālayya in the reign of Mahamandalēśvara Tailapadēva of the Kadaṁba family of Hāngal. In the reign of the same feudatory chief, a linga was installed in the Chandēśvara temple at Orili (Mundgod taluk) by Munda-gamunda, the son of Chanda-gavunda, who was administering the village Orili in Hosanādu. It is possible that the god was named Chandēśvara after the name of Chanda-gavunda, the father of Munda-gavunda. Another inscription of 12th century A.D. from Gunjavatti (in Mundgod taluk) records of a gift to god Mallēśvara for worship and offering by Tailagāvunda of the place and aruvattokkalu. The gifts were entrusted to Śivasakti Pandita the disciple of the āchārya of god Svayambhudēva of agrahāra Kundagola. As the name itself suggests the priest seems to have been a Lakula-Saiva.

A curious inscription is found on a pillar in the pillared mantap of the Madhukēśvara temple at Banavāsi. It is a short quadrilingual inscription.
in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada in characters of about the latter part of 12th century. It mentions the visit of a Šaiva devotee Vibuthi Gaurayya, born in Rajapallī near Orangal (Warangal) in Andhra Pradesh, a disciple of Śri Panditarādhya and a resident of Śrīśailam. The inscription is accompanied by a portrait sculpture of the person in Anjalimudra with a Śivalinga on his head. Similar inscriptions have been reported from Gundala, Pālampet, Hanumakonda, Parkal, Ghanapura, Musalimudrugu, Panem etc., in Andhra Pradesh. It indicates that god Madhukēśvara of Banavāsi was famous as far east as Śrīśailam about this time.

In the early phase of the Vijayanagara rule in the Sirsi region we find very few mentions of Šaivism. The inscriptions from Banavāsi dated about 1368 A.D. and belonging to the reign of the same king furnish as some useful information. The first of these registers a grant of money made by Nāgarasa, son of Prabhu Śivadēva of Rattakula, to Rikkidēva Vodeya, the pupil of Lakulisadēvaradēva Odeya for the benefit of god Viresvara installed by him near the Madhukēśvara temple, when mahapradhāni Mādhavanka was governing Banavāsi-12000. Another inscription states that at the instance of Nadavura Avubalanatha, son of Charindarasa and several Gaudas and Prajas (subjects) assembled at Banavāsi to donate a piece of land to Bikkideva Ayya, the pupil of Lakulisadēva Ayya for the benefit of the temple of Gopināthadēva. It is clear that the Bikkidēva of these two records is identical. Similarly, Lakulisadēvaradēva, Lakulisadēva and Lakulīśvaradēva
are also identical. The interesting aspect of the record is two fold. 1. It shows that the Lakula Śaivas were playing a dominant role in Banavāsi and the Madhukēśvara temple complex was in their hold. 2. It reflects on the nature of the Lakulaśaivism of those times in which both the forms, Śiva as well as Vishnu, as Gōpinātha, were regarded by them.

The Biligi Chiefs also extended patronage to Śaivism to a considerable extent though they were Jainas to begin with. However, they seem to have embraced Vīraśaivism some time in the latter half of the 16th century AD. About which a separate discussion follows. Gōkarna continued to enjoy the attention of the rulers as is indicated by an inscription of 1685 A.D. belonging to Sōmaśēkara Nāyaka I. This record mentions an endowment of money of 45 varāhas to be derived from several sources for the observance of ēkādaśi, panchavarsā, Śivarātri mahapūja etc, in the temple of God Mahābala of Gōkarna. In 1769 A.D. two records of Sōmaśēkara Nāyaka III register a gift of land in the village Śiruvalige and the appropriation of its revenue for the worship of god Gangadharēśvara at Siddapura and for the festival at the temple.

The personal religious inclination of the Chiefs of Sōnda in the early phase of their reign is not clear. Thus, inscriptions recording donations to the Svarnavalli matha, the Vādirāja matha and the Jaina matha are all found belonging to Arasappa Nāyaka II. According to a legend connected with Vādiraja, Arasappa Nāyaka II was under the influence of a Vīraśaiva pontiff
before Vādirāja defeated that pontiff. However, the Maratha Bakkairs would have us believe that from the time of Raghunātha Nāyaka the Sonda chiefs became converts to Vīrāsaivism⁶⁹. This chief was a great devotee of god Madhukēśvara of Banavāsi and donated a stone couch for the Vasantōtsava festival in the temple⁷⁰. He also built a Śiva temple at Kāśi in memory of his mother Ammajī Chennamma⁷¹.

From the above survey, the following points would emerge in respect of Śaivism in the region. At the beginning it was the Vedic form of Śaivism, which dominated the scene with the Brāhmanas as its perpetuators. But in course of time other Śaiva sects also appeared on the scene. The non-vedic Śaiva sects like Lakulīśa, Pasūpata appear to have had such impact in the region that references to their activities are found at Bhāvikēri of Bukka's time⁷².

VĪRĀŚAIIVISM:

Attempts were made to bring about socio-religious reformation in the 12th century A.D. by Basaveśvara, whose activities were centred in Kalyāna, the then capital of the Kaḷachūris. According to the tradition, it resulted in the assassination of Kaḷachūrī Bijjala and was followed by a flight of the followers of Basaveśvara's new revolutionary movement. They were pursued by the army of the Kaḷachūris in vain. These leaders migrated to Ulavi in the Joida taluk of Uttara Kannada district, which is even today a sacred Vīraśaiva place of pilgrimage. Thus, the Sīrsi region was associated
with the Vīraśaiva movement right from its inception. But it had to wait for quite some time to receive popular backing in the region.

Though Vīraśaivism made its entry into the Kanara region in the 15th century itself at Kōteśvara in Dakshina Kannada, its activities assumed acceleration only from the latter half of the 16th century A.D. From the time Narasimha III of the Biligi principality atleast the Vira Śaiva inclination of these chiefs becomes apparent. Narasimha’s father was named Vīrappa and mother Vīrāmbika. The last mentioned lady is known to have constructed a Virūpaksha temple along with gōpura prākara matha etc. at Biligi on the bank of the river Sōma. Her son Narasimha III made grants of money and paddy land, so that merit might accrue to his deceased father. The facts that the name of the deceased was Vīrappa Odeya and that a Śiva temple was constructed in his name along with a matha suggest the possibility of their Vīraśaiva inclinations.

A number of such mathas were founded and grants made for their maintenance by the Biligi chiefs. Thus in 1643 A.D. in the reign of Ghaṭendra Odeya IV lands were granted in Sirugalale in Chikkabilalahalī and Horakodu Hirikaiyasthala yielding a revenue of 104 Varāhas by the chief to Panchavamanige Basavalingadēva who was the disciple of Śāntabasavarāja of Kadu matha. The chief is described as a Śivabhakta (devotee of Śiva) and the donations were made for the up keep of the Mahattina matha at Siddapura. The matha itself was probably erected by Dévanaṇa Nāyaka as informed by
another record dated 1665 A.D. In that year Šivappa Nāyaka of Biligi gave lands in the village Chikkabailahalli and Hosuru for services to be conducted in the matha. Two years later the same chiefs made over certain wet lands, gardens, etc., in Heggarahalli (Sorab taluk) yielding 131 Varāhas to Sivachara Somappadēva for hereditary enjoyment. This Sōnippa was a Vīraśaiva pontiff. Ghante Ammāji, the wife of Keladi Bhadrayya and the daughter of Ghanṭēndra III of Biligi, made over Najur and Aramduru in the Biligi division yielding 500 varahas to the Mahattina matha of Pinnaragudi Virūpakshadēva in 1665 A.D. This Virūpakshadēva is stated to have been an expert in dharma-Śastras.

Šivappa Nāyaka II granted the Nirudi village for the god of Kolurudēva, the pontiff of Mahamahattina matha and the disciple of Hīreguru Šāntadeva of Hulugenhalli Charanti in order that the pontiff may establish a matha in that village.

His successor Sōmashekhara Nāyak-I was a disciple of Basavaprabhudēva of Aladi matha who in turn was one of Šāntadeva. A land worth 12 varahas in Kakanakulli was granted in 1678 A.D. by the chief for constructing a matha on the bank of the Śaravati.

As the inscription informs, this was a matha of the Jangama tradition. Sōmasēkhara-NāyakII was a follower of Vīraśaivism. The Vamśāvali informs us as such and in addition states that the '16 danas' had been given to the Jangamas by this chief. His wife Chennamallammāji gave them some
localities in Chennamallambapura in 1710 A.D.82 with the desire that her predecessor might attain Śiva. The lands were made over to Basavalingadeva, the disciple of Mahattadeva belonging to the Uppinahalli matha. He is described as Śivachara-Sampannarāda dēvapratvi mahamahattigolāda charamurti etc. Somasekhara II and his wife also donated the Punjayalli locality in Chikkabailahalli to Mallikarjunadeva, the son of Mallappadēva of the Mahamahattina matha in Sasinahalli. In 1716 A.D. Virabhadra, the successor of Sōmaśēkhara-Nāyaka II renovated the Vīraśaiva temple at Aisuru83. The last Biligi chief Sōmaśēkhara III granted certain lands and tolls for the car-festival of the temple of Gangādhārēśvara of Siddapura in 1769 A.D.84.

The chief of Sōnda, Arasappa Nāyaka II is known to have donated land and money for the maintenance of the Nirasi matha at Sōnda,85 while another of his record opens with an invocation to Guru-linga86. It was only from the time of Raghunatha Nāyaka that the impact of Vīraśaivism on the Sōnda chiefs became stronger. Sadāśivaraya of Sōnda was a devout Vīraśaiva and he has left behind a number of works in which he calls himself the disciple of the Vīraśaiva guru Maleya Nandīśa87. He set up a number of lingas in the names of himself and his brothers and predecessors at Sahasralinga88. He also constructed the Trilokamantapa in the Madhukēśvara temple at Banavāśi89, which bears a sculptural depiction of Vīraśaiva Śivaśaranas. He also set up the Mukhamantapa of the Pārvati temple besides
the temple of Madhukēśvara. Some of the verses composed by him are inscribed on the pillars of the Sadāśiva temple. Sadāśiva Nāyaka III built the Basavalingēśvara temple at Banavāsi in memory of his father.

The interesting point to be noted here is that Vīraśaivism in the Uttar Kannada District flourished mainly in the Sirsi region only. Its advent in the region was probably fostered by the matrimonial alliance of the Keḍadi Chiefs and the Biligi Chiefs at first and between the Biligi Chiefs and the Sonda Chiefs later. Thus, the Vīrāsaiva mathas enjoyed prosperity in the vicinity of the capitals of these two chieftains. Its prosperity certainly affected the prospects of Jainism. But the prosperity of the Vīrāsaiva mathas and their impact in the region also declined with the fall of the Chieftains of Biligi and Sonda. Even today Vīrāsaivism has a lesser following in Sirsi region than the Vaidic Śaivism.

**VAISHNAVISM:**

The first positive evidence of the prevalence of Vaishnavism more properly of Bhagavatism in the Deccan is traceable in the Nānāghat cave inscription of the Satavahana queen Nāgamūlānīka in the 2nd century B.C. Slowly it assumed importance among the people of Maharashtra, Andhra and Karnataka. By about the end of 2nd century A.D. inscriptions opening with an invocation to Vasudeva, the deity par excellence of the Bhagavathas, begin to appear. In the Sirsi region one of the earliest evidence of Vaishnavism is in the form of a two-armed Vishnu image found at Kontapala.
in Honnavar taluk, stylistically datable to 3rd century A.D. It can be aptly described as a representation of Manushavasudeva. The image may be ascribed to the reign of the Chuṭu-Ānandas. Some of the names of the Chuṭu-Ānanda kings are curious from the point of view of different Hindu sects. Thus, one of the kings was named Vinhukada, i.e. Vishnu-Skanda, while another bore the name Vishnu-rudra-Śivalananda. Whatever their significance, there is no doubt that these names do indicate familiarity with the name of the Vedic god Vishnu.

The inscriptions of the early Kadambas clearly show that Vaishnavism assumed considerable popularity and received royal patronage. Specific mention may be made here of a stone pillar record from Banavāsi of the reign of Mrigēśavarma. It commences with a Sanskrit invocation to god Vishnu and the inscribed pillar itself once stood probably in front of a Vishnu temple.

Apart from this a number of Narasimha images of an early date are reported in the Sirsi region of Uttara Kannada District by A. Sundara. For instance in Banavāsi (c. 5th century A.D.), Kodasigas in Siddara in the Karwar taluk (5th - 6th century A.D.), Bengane in the Ankola taluk (c. 5th century A.D.), Kosangi in Balkuru of the Honnavar taluk (c. 5th century A.D.). These images are of an early form of Narasimha, possibly corresponding to the Girija Narasimha of the texts. One more image of Vishnu, datable approximately to 5th - 6th century A.D. stylistically, has also been reported.
from Mugudur in the Siddapur taluk100. These seem to correspond to the Mādhava form of Vishnu.

The activities of the Vishnu worshippers in the vicinity of Sōnda may be traced to the first half of the 13th century A.D. as revealed by an inscription of the time of Kadaṁba Tribhuvanamalla101 discovered at Sahasralinga. It says that the image of Keśava was installed by the pontiff Rajendrabhārati, a disciple of Prakaśatīrtha, probably belonging to the smārtha tradition of the Śankarāchārya matha. But it is only with the advent of the chiefs of Sōnda that Vishnu worships of both the Smārtha and Mādhva traditions assumed importance in Sōnda.

Arasappa Nāyaka II is known to have shifted the monastery belonging to the Śankara matha from Sahasralinga to Svarnavalli because the former place was infested with robbers who frequently stole away the property of the matha. He constructed a temple of god Lakṣmī-narasimha at Svarnavalli on the premises of which the matha was set up. The pontiff of the matha at that time was Chandrashekhara Sarasvati102. An inscription dated 1674 A.D.103 found in the matha attests this. In the reign of Savāyi Rāmchandra, when Sarvajna Sarasvati was the pontiff of the Svarnavalli matha a vedic sacrifice was performed there for the benefit of the king. The Svarnavalli ‘matha’ has since continued to play a prominent role particularly for the Haiga Brahmans. The matha is regarded as a branch of the Śringeri matha.
In the 16\textsuperscript{th} century the Mādhvas were benefited by an unusually great personality in their pontiff Vādiraja, who carried the torch of Mādhvaism into the Sōnda region. Gifted with scholarship in logic and philosophy and a poet of no mean caliber both in Sanskrit and Kannada, Vādiraja established a Mādhva matha at Sōnda, which came to flourish at the premises of the temple of god Trivikrama. The temple itself was constructed by Vādirajatirtha in 1583 A.D. and the inscription nearby the temple proclaims that it enshrined god Trivikrama brought from Kāśi. He also set up a complex around a pond called Dhavalaganga on the model of the temples in Udupi. A number of grants were given to this establishment by Arasappa Nāyaka II. Vādirāja’s grand-disciple Vēdanidhitirtha set up a stone dvajastamba infront of the Trivikrama temple. The image of god Trivikrama in the temple represents one of the twenty-four forms of Vishnu. The Vādiraja matha has continued to be a place of pilgrimage for the Mādhva Vaishnavas.

An inscription in the Madhukēśvara temple complex at Banavāsi refers to the construction of a Vishnu temple for god Narasimha by Arasādēvi, the daughter of Arasappa Nāyaka II. The newly installed image was a replacement of the older one. Several grants were also given for the worship and offerings of this deity.

Among the Mādhvas there was another branch called the Vyasarayamatha tracing succession from the Uttarādi-matha. It is known as the Kundapura Vyāsaraya matha. A copper-plate inscription of
Rāmachandra Nāyak, the son of Arasappa Nāyaka, informs of the construction of the Lakshminarayana temple and authorising Hayagrivatirtha, the disciple of Raghupatiṣṭhīrtha who was a pontiff belonging to the Kundapura Vyāsaraya matha to look after the worship.

The chiefs of Sōnda in the reign of Raghunātha Nāyaka became inclined towards Viṣṇaviṣm. Accordingly, hardly any reference is found about the royal patronage to Vaishnavism after Raghunātha Nāyaka. This does not mean that the Vaishnava establishments here were neglected. The fact that even today these continue to flourish only implies that there was no interference from the side of the Chiefs in the administration of the mathas. On the whole it may be stated that royal patronage to Vaishnavism was at its peak under the rulers of the Sōnda viz. Arasappa Nāyaka II and Rāmachandra Nāyaka I. The temples of Hunasehonda Venkataramana and Muttinakere Venkataramana probably also belong to their reign.

GANEŚA CULT:

The cult of Ganesā has a considerable following in the Kanara region particularly along the Coastal region. The centres of Ganesā worship like Gōkarna, Idaguji and Anegudde are well known and there are several other places like Sirsi, Siddapur, Nāvīlgar, Mundagesar, Lambapura, Goli and Ganeshgudi with Ganesh temples. The cult remains popular in the region and it seems to be quite ancient. In India the stone image of Ganesā found in Gōkarna is perhaps the earliest, followed by others like those in
Idagunji\textsuperscript{109}, etc. A detailed stylistic study of the Ganeså image of Gôkarna and Idagunji has been made by A. Sundara\textsuperscript{110} and he has dated them to 1\textsuperscript{st}-2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D. and 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd} century A.D. respectively. The Ganeså image in Gôkarna with its elephant like characteristics and with only two arms, carrying a radish in the right hand and a goblet shaped modaka-patra in the left and a ghanta-sara in yajnopavita fashion has to be dated to as far back as 3\textsuperscript{rd} century A.D. if not earlier. The Idagunji Maha Ganapathi icon with similar features has in addition a lotus on the head and its stylistic features seem to be slightly of a later date, perhaps 4\textsuperscript{th}-5\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The above two are in the standing posture. The earliest epigraphical record mentioning donation to these deities belongs to the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. The only instance of an inscription referring to an installation of god Vinayaka is found in Siddapur, dated 1561 A.D.\textsuperscript{111} in the reign of the Biligi chief Ghanêndra Odeya II. It records the construction of the temple of Vighnesvara and Chandraśala and Chhatra by the queen of Ghanêndra II. Jaṭṭamma the queen mother made gifts of lands to several Brahmanas and the temple. Because of a paucity of epigraphical evidence it becomes difficult to understand the development of the cult in the region. Ganēśa is a commonly found proper name of the people in the region. Gôkarna is an early Śaiva centre. Probably the cult of Ganēśa developed from this Śaiva centre and gave rise to subsidiary centers in the region.
DEVI CULT:

The earliest epigraphical evidence in respect of the Devi cult in the region belongs to 15th century A.D. Sculptures of Durga, Mahishamardhini and Saptamatrikas, particularly Chāmundi (Ouraguppa, Siddapur taluk) from about 17th century onwards indicate that it had a considerable following. The Mundolli inscription of 1446 A.D. in the reign of Vijayanagara king Devaraya furnishes information regarding the rituals associated with the Durga worship. Acharyasa Odeya Mahapradhana, ruling over the Tulu rājya from Barakur, is stated in the inscription to have made a grant of 12 honnus of gold to Purushottama Bhatta son of Vāmana Upādhyāya of Tigala Nāgamane, a resident of Mundavalligrama. The grant was made as a charity, for the prosperity of king Devarāya on the occasion of his auspicious bath (mangala-majjana). The grants so given were for the purpose of reciting the Devimahatmya stotra in the Durga temple in the Chaturmāsya of every year.

One of the most prominent places associated with the Devi worship, probably of folk origin in the Sirsi region, is the Mārikamba temple at Sirsi. Its date is controversial. It may belong to c.16th-17th century A.D.

Another cult of folk origin is the Nāga-puja or snake worship. The belief that childlessness is due to the curse of snakes seems to be at the root of snake worship. The installation of a Nāga image is supposed to rid one of such a curse. Such Nāga stones are commonly found on platforms under the
Asvattha trees or in separate shrines or temples. The Banavasi Nāga inscription of the Chuṭu princes, though of a Buddhist origin, seems to have some connection with this folk tradition of Nāga worship. At many places in the region, Nagabanās or Naga gardens are maintained and they command the veneration of the common people. Sanctity is attached to such places and the cutting of trees or plants in that locality is prohibited. The reference to Tigala-nagamane in the Mundolli inscription of 1446 A.D. is interesting from this point of view. Other popular cults include the worship of hero-stones and Sati stones.

SOCIAL CONDITION:

Inscriptions being crucial sources for the ancient history of the region and their number in relation to the period covered in this work being comparatively small, it is difficult to draw an exact picture revealing a complete cross section of the society. For the early period, the problem is still more difficult because of the meager number and nature of the epigraphic records. Thus the inscriptions with a few exceptions, are all Brahmana donations and cannot be expected to throw much light on a cross section of the society.

The beginning of the impact of the Aryan culture in the region must be quite ancient and its vigour must have been stepped up from the time of Asoka when the first attempts to propagate Buddhism in the region were made. During the Sātavāhana period the internal and external trade
network having become well established and economic prosperity having assumed unprecedented proportions, migrations, movements and inter-regional contracts must have become more regular and telling. Prakrit came to be used as the language of contemporary inscription and the language of interaction between the peoples of wider geographical areas. The language of the people of this region, basically of a Dravidian origin, exhibits this trend of the cultural impact from the North via Deccan. The Vadagaon-Madhavapur Prakrit inscription\textsuperscript{116} of Brahmmana Somayasa is a plain case in instance which says that person belonging to Saketa (i.e. Ayodhya) came all the way to Karnataka where he passed away. This inscription belongs to about the close of the 1\textsuperscript{st} century A.D. The reference in the Mahabharata to the Vanavasa country as among the regions conquered by the great hero Arjuna may possibly be viewed from this very perspective of the movements and contacts of people between widely separated areas during the pre-Christian era and after. There is a tradition that Mayūraśarma, the Brahmmana founder – king of the Kadamba dynasty, brought a large number of Brahmans from Ahichchhatra, whom he settled here to perpetuate Brahmaminism\textsuperscript{117}.

The first epigraphical document revealing the existence of a Brahmmana settlement in the region comes from Malavalli in the Shimoga district\textsuperscript{118}. This record belongs to the reign of Vinhukada Chuṭukulānanda Sātakarni and records the grant of the village Sahalatavi free from all taxes as a Brahmmana endowment to Kondamana of Kaundinya-gōtra for the
gratification of the god Malapalideva. The grant was renewed in the reign probably of Kadamba Mayuravarma to a descendant of Kondamâna namely Siri Nagadatta with the addition of some more villages in the vicinity. The record shows that already by the time of the Chutu rule the Brahmana families had been well entrenched at least in pockets of the Malenâd region and were attracting the attention of the ruling class. The Kadambas expressly claimed to be Brahmanas as known from the Tâlagunda inscription\textsuperscript{119}. This inscription also states that god Pranavëśvara here had been earlier worshipped by kings like Satakarni, obviously an allusion to Gautamiputra Satakarni of Satavahana family. Both these inscriptions also suggest the fact that such Brahmana settlements came up around places of worship with a prominent Śaiva or Vaishnava deity. The Banavâsi pillar inscription of Mrigëśavarma\textsuperscript{120} indicates the presence of a Vishnu temple there. Similarly in the Kuntagani plates of Ravivarman\textsuperscript{121} a grant of land to Bhavasvami of Dhaumya-gôтра, well versed in the Vedas, is recorded and the land is called Karpatesvara, thereby hinting the possible presence of a Śaiva temple there.

In the Sirsi plates\textsuperscript{122} of the same king, a land grant is registered to the Mahadeva temple at Sare built by the royal physician Nilakantha-desamatya, along with grants for Aryasvâmi and Pasupata of Kaśyapa and Bharadvaja-gotra respectively. A similar grant is also recorded in the Kampli inscription of Ajavar\textsuperscript{123}.
The Bhoja records reveal such names as Govindasvami\textsuperscript{124}, Madhvaraya\textsuperscript{125}, Dharmaraya\textsuperscript{126} and plates like Sivapuraka\textsuperscript{127} which may again be taken to indicate the prominence of the theistic sects among the Brahmans. Likewise, king Asankitavarman is described as a great devotee of Siva\textsuperscript{128}.

There are very few references to Agraharas in the region. In 1395 A.D. during the time of Devaraya of Vijayanagara the Agrahara, Lakshmipura, at the village Kalkuni\textsuperscript{129} was established and it is recorded. The Agraharas and Brahmapuris were centers, which perpetuated Brahmanical culture and religion. Since the Brahmana class was held in high esteem it could exert considerable influence on the rulers and chiefs who in turn were almost compelled to safeguard the interest of the Brahmancial order. It is very interesting to note that even a Virasaiva chief like Sadāśivarāya of the Sōnda family expresses his respects to the Brahmans and the followers of Varnasrama-dharma in his Svaravachanagalu. Brahmans from far off places like Kāśi were invited to perform vedic sacrifices as evidenced in the inscription of the Sonda Chief Savayi Ramachandra in Svarnavalli-matha at Sōnda\textsuperscript{130}.

There are many sub-castes in the Brahmana community. These divisions were mainly due to philosophical doctrines such as Dvaita and Advaita and the tradition of the mathas they belonged to such as the Madhva and Shankara.
The Havyaka Brahmanas of this region were brought by Arasappanāyaka to occupy the waste land near the present day Sōnda after he defeated the Jaina Palegars of the area. These Havyakas are followers of the Advaita doctrine and belong to the Svarnavalli Matha.

Madhva Brahmanas are followers of the Dvaita doctrine, the philosophy propagated by Sri Madhvacharya the Madhva Brahmanas of this region belong to the Vadiraja Matha and the Vyasaraya matha.

Gauda Sārasvata Brahmanas are mainly merchants. Their original place was Goa. Due to the conversion policy of the Portuguese the Gauda Sārasvata Brahmanas fled from their land and settled in Sōnda and other region of the Kanara District. They are followers of the Dvaita Doctrine and belonged to the Partagali matha.

A document from the kadatas of the Śringeri matha dated 1629 A.D. is a letter of Gauda Sārasvata Brahamananas requesting the Jagadguru of Śringeri to tell them whether they have the authority of Asrama dharma or not.

Daivajña Brahmanas are goldsmiths by profession. They have also their original place in Goa. They belong to the Vadiraja matha at Sonda.

The Kshatriya class comprised the warriors, which included some administrators, commanders of the army and the soldiers. The rulers strove hard to maintain harmony among the subjects, to maintain prosperity and happiness in the kingdom and to co-ordinate administration. They were entitled for the knowledge of Vedas, Vedangas, Itihasas, Purnas,
Dharmasastra, Arthasastra etc. The early Kadamba kings are described in their inscriptions as masters of all these subjects. The ruling class acted hand in hand with the Brahamana class in maintaining the Brahamanical social order, though they did take interest in the welfare of other religious sects as Jainism and Buddhism. Tanks like the ones at Gudnapur and Talagunda were caused to be constructed by them obviously for aiding the agriculture. It is interesting to note that in the early Kadamba period the warrior class included followers of non-Brahamaical creeds too like Srutakirti, a Jaina, but was the General of Yuvaraja Kākusthavarma. Generals and warriors were amply rewarded for their heroic deeds by the kings or their subordinates as illustrated by the Halmidi inscription of the same Kadamba Kākusthavarma. According to this inscription Vija-arasa, who defeated the Pallavas in a battle between the Kaikēya-Pallavas and the Kadambas, in alliance with the Sendrakas and Banas, was granted the village Halmadi and Mulavalli as balgalchu.

A document from the Kadatas of Śringeri matha speaks about the existence of a sect called Kumara Kšatriya. They gave a memorandum to the Jagadguru of Śringeri requesting him to accept them as the followers of the matha.

The Rāma Kšatriya sect that prevailed there according to the general belief, were followers of the Svarnavalli matha.
Regarding the Vaiśyas, it is interesting to note that there is not a reference to this Vaiśya community in any of the sources of the Sōnda principality. The kingdom of Sōnda flourished mainly on trade and commerce with the Europeans and so this remains a matter for investigation.

Śudras are mainly farmers and craftsmen. Shivaji Mallammāji Samarōtsava mentions the caste Nādavaru. The people of this caste are mainly farmers and considered in the Sunra Varna. But there are sayings such as Jainaru Keṭṭu Nādavarāḍaru and Jainara sottu Nādavarīge.

Apart from all these castes, Shivaji Mallammāji Samarōtsava mentions the Lingayata jāti i.e. Viraśaiva community also. Mostly at a later period when the Viraśaiva religion became the religion of royal families this new caste acquired importance among the people.

**PROFESSIONALS:**

**Goldsmiths:**

Goldsmithy was one of the professions of the people in the region. Daivajña Brahmānas mentioned here were goldsmiths by profession. They are even now pursuing their inherited profession.

**Sculptors:**

There are references to Sculptors in the inscription found in the Sirsi region. An inscription from Panchalinga village mentions the sculptor of the temple there as the Tammoja of Sonnavalli. Sonnavalli mentioned in this epigraph is probably Svarnavalli.[137]
An inscription near the Jaina matha at Sonda mentions one Senabova Timmarasa as the scribe of the epigraph. He belongs to Kausika gōtra and Apasthamba Sūtra\textsuperscript{138}. The hero stone epigraph set up at Hulekal mentions one Badada Bamma as its scribe. Bada mentioned here is mostly the name of the village to which the sculptor belonged. Now this village is in the Kumta taluk. Another inscription from Panchalinga refers to one Tēpoja a sculptor as the lipikar of the epigraph\textsuperscript{139}.

The inscriptions on the Dhavajasthambha in front of the Trivikrama temple at Sonda mentions one Mudukeya as the sculptor. It ends with the sentence \textit{Mudukeya madida kamba}. Another noteworthy point here is the mention that one Sēnabova Timmarasa belonging to Kausika gotra, Āpasthamba Sūtra was a scribe of the Yajurveda toor. The name and the details of the family given may indicate that this Senabova Timmarasa mostly belonged to the Brahmana community.

\textit{Food:}

The food of the people consisted of preparations made out of various grains, vegetables, milk products, fruits and the like. Some inscriptions refer to rice. There are also references to the jack-fruit tree\textsuperscript{140}. Even today in the Malanad region and the coastal belt of Karnataka, rice happens to be the staple food of the people. To some extent in the coastal area rāgi is also used and it is consumed in a gruel form. The antiquity of rāgi in Karnataka goes back to protohistoric times and it is no wonder if it was consumed
particularly by agriculturists and poorer sections of the people in the Sirsi region. There are references in the Mānasollāsa of Somesvara III, the Kalyāna Chālukya king, to tasty dishes enjoyed by the king and his followers, such as rice with curds mixed with pepper, ginger and cardomom and dishes like laddukas, khir and saline preparations of root and fruits. Even iddalige prepared out of rice and black-gram (Udad Dal) is also mentioned by him.  

Apart from vegetarian food, some sections of the society must have also been having the non-vegetarian. An Asōkan inscription refers to a reduction in the number of animals slaughtered in the royal kitchen for food. He mentions deer and peacock among the animals killed for food. Thus, the Ksatriya class may have been consuming non-vegetarian food from quite early times. In the coastal area, fish must have been another important item of food. A separate community of fishermen existed here. Some sections of the Brahananas also are known to consume fish.  

The hunters ('hedas') hunted varieties of wild animals some of which provided meat for consumption such as rabbits, wild pigs and other animals. Birds too formed an article of food.

**Costumes:**

The sculptors of various periods have given us an idea of the manner in which people dressed. The Sātavahana sculptures found in Sannati and a few fragmentary sculptures discovered in the Sirsi region, as well as various hero-stones and sati stones found scattered in the Banavāsi and Sōnda region
furnish a general idea of the costumes. Men usually wore a lower garment tightly around the waist. Sometimes an over garment was also tied around the waist and tucked in on one side. The upper part of the body was usually left bare. Women also dressed more or less the same way. Sculptures of divinities belonging to various sects suggest that the pattern of dressing remained more or less the same with minor alterations. Some of the terracotta figures belonging to the early historical period depict *Yakshas* with a peculiar crown. It's possible that similar crowns or caps were used by people too. Men and women alike tied their hair in various forms of buns. Men usually, by the female head of the early historical period recently discovered at Banavasi. Ear ornaments of different type were worn by men and women. Other types of ornaments include varieties of necklaces, anklets, wristlets, armlets etc. These were worn by both men and women. Sometimes women covered their fore arm completely with bangles. Showing the culture of the medieval period, we find depictions of varieties of *Makutas* (crown) necklaces, *Vijayantiharas, Stanaharas, Udarabandhas*, Wristlets, *Mekhalas* etc. There were beautiful hair-dress ornaments too.

Depictions on the hero stones show the heroes fighting with swords, bows and arrow etc. They kept the dagger tied to their waist, bank obviously sheathed shields of various kinds are also noticed. Some of them were circular, some square or rectangular and some even shaped as animals like the wild bear. A recently discovered herostone in Banavasi shows one such.
Some of the costumes mentioned in the contemporary literary works and epigraphs may also be noted here. Red lac (Yavaka) was used for decorating the feet of ladies. Anjanabindus were put on the face for beautifying it. Eyes were also decorated with Anjana. Toe-nails were painted with the alaktaka dye by ladies as marked in one of the copper plate inscriptions. Hand mirrors, usually made of brass were common.

Amusements:

It is difficult to delineate the various type of amusements. And pastimes only on the basis of epigraphical records, because such records pertain only to royal classes. While describing the character of kings, sometimes, references are made to their hobbies. For instance, in the Devagiri plates of Mrigeśavarma, the king is described as well trained in many sports, particularly riding elephants and horses and wielding weapons of war. Similarly, Devagiri plates of Devavarman mention that he was an expert in the science of horses, music and archery. Similar words are spoken of Vishnuvarma in the Banahalli plates of Krishnavarma II. We need not however think that these were the only sports and amusements of royalty. Discourses and listening to interesting episodes drawn from Puranas, Itihasas, epis, dramas, etc., must have played an important role in their day-to-day life. Dancing and music by courtesans and staging of plays, were a regular feature at mathas and agraharas.
Musical instruments like the flute\textsuperscript{151}, drum\textsuperscript{152}, mridangam, pipe, vina, lyre etc., are occasionally referred to in the inscriptions and literature. Varieties of musical instruments are found depicted in the Badami Chalukya, Rashtrakuta, the later Chalukya and Hoysala sculptures. Painting is another pastime referred to in the Mānasōllāsa of Somesvara III. Dice-play depictions are found both in the Badami Chalukya and Rashtrakuta sculptures. Swimming was also a common form of amusement. Cock-fight, ram-fight, bull-fight etc., were common too\textsuperscript{153}.

Certain festivals were celebrated for the enjoyment of the public. The Gundnapur inscription furnishes important information in this respect. It states that in the season of spring, the festival of Manmatha was performed. In case it was not possible to celebrate the festival in Madhumasa, it could be celebrated in Vaisakha or whenever it was convenient. The festival was meant for the prosperity, happiness and enjoyment of the people. The king was also to participate in the procession though it was not compulsory\textsuperscript{154}.

Similarly, the Halasi plates of Ravivarma refer to the festival of jinendra which was to last for eight days every year from the full moon days of the kartika month\textsuperscript{155}

Folk performances like the Yakshagana are a common feature of the Kanara District from early times. However, for want of evidence their antiquity cannot be fixed. Considering the fact that the themes for such folk dramas are drawn from the epics and Puranas, one may state that they must

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have had a considerably ancient origin. Talamaddale is another feature of the region in which dialogues are spoken interspersed with singing assisted by tāla and the drum called Maddale. A Vijayanagar inscription mentions Talamaddale. However, it is found in the Bellary district.156

Position of women:

Right from the early times, women enjoyed an honourable place in the society. They had education in fine arts like music, dance and painting in addition to their general training. The women belonging to the Brahmana and Ksatriya communities in particular enjoyed a high status. Although examples are few and far between, the available ones do suggest of the contribution made by women to learning and administration. One of the excellent cases in evidence is that of Vijjika who was a great Sanskrit poetess and playwright. A work entitled Kaumudimahotsava has been ascribed to her. But unfortunately it has come down to us only in fragments. Medieval writers have passed in fragments of her writing discussing their literary value. In one of her poems she has described herself Karnata Sarasvati. She was the daughter-in-law of the Chalukya king Pulakesi II. An inscription referring to Vijjika as an administrator has also been found. That women also played an important role in administration is indicated by a number of inscriptions. More important among them is the instance of the Hangal Kadamba queen Akkadevi who is regarded as one of the great women administrators of Karnataka. She ruled over a number of administrative
divisions, such as Banavasi-12000, Kisukadu-70, Bagadage-70, Toragale-60, Masyavadi-14, etc., for nearly 50 years. One of her epithets viz. *Ranabhiravi* suggests that she took active part in battles. She was a paternal aunt of Chalukya monarch Somesvara I. Likewise Maialadevi the queen of Jayakesi II of the Kadambas of Goa, lived a glorious life associating herself with her husband in matters of office in the reign of the Kadamba king Permadideva.

The role of women in promoting religious activities is most striking throughout the period. For instance, in the Banavasi Nāga inscription, we come to know of the erection of a *Vihara*, a tank and a Naga image obviously of Buddhist affiliation, by Šivakhada Nagasiri, a Chutu queen. Numerous instances can be cited from Nāgarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh in which women of royal families and others too made donations for the cause of the Buddhist religion. Lokamahādevī and Trilokyamahādēvi, the queens of Vikramaditya II (733-44 A.D.) erected two Siva temples in Paṭṭadkal in memory of the three conquests of their husband over Kanchi and named the temples after themselves as Lokēśvara and Trailokēśvara. In course of time, women became more inclined towards Jainism. They also patronized Jain poets who wrote Jaina *Puranas*. Queen Akkādevi patronized all religions equally. She is described as practicing religious observances prescribed by Jaina, Buddha, Ananta as also Rudra.
Common women enjoyed singing and dancing. The *devadāsis* were specialized particularly in this kind of activity. Dance was regarded as a fine art which entertained all Classes of people.

Evidence does not suggest the prevalence of child marriage. Girls were married only after they had attained puberty. In the royal circles the *Svayamvara* system was in vogue, to a considerable extent. It is narrated by Hemachandra in his work Dyasrāya that Mayanaladevi the daughter of Jayakesi I of the Goa Kadambas fell in love with the Chalukya Karna of Gujarat and went to the latter’s capital to marry him\(^1\). Inter-caste marriage does not seem to have been practiced.

The region ruled by the Kadambas and the Nāyakas of Sōnda mainly, is replete with *Sati* stones. This indicates that the custom of *Sati* or the burning of the widow with the dead body of her husband was practiced particularly by the warrior class. Epigraphical evidence for this practice is furnished by a record in the Sorab taluk, which states that when Ravivarman the Kadamba king died, one of his queens obtained *mukti*\(^1\). The practice of *sati* was probably voluntary and not forced upon the widow. There is no evidence of widow remarriages.

In relation to the *Sati* death of royal ladies, a certain other peculiar custom seems to have been prevalent in early Karnataka. An inscription of the Sātavahana king Vaishtiputra Pulumavi, discovered in Banavāsi, states that it was the memorial slab (*Chayapathara*) of the queen\(^1\). A similar
instance has come to light recently belonging from the times of the Kadambas of Banavasi. The inscription which comes from Kelagundi states that while king Ravivarman was ruling the country, his senior queen named Mallige passed away and the Padugal (memorial stone) was erected. This shows that erecting memorial stones sometimes inscribed was a prevalent custom in early Karnataka.

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1. Mahāvamsa: Ch.XII.p.82
2. Vasantakumar Taltaje: Karnataka Adalit Bhaudha Samskriti. (Kannada). p. 54
4. Supra. Pp. 28-34
6. Ibid., No 185.
8. Ibid. p. 419, Foot note no.4.
9. Ibid. Foot note no.5.
11. :- "Some Note-worthy Antiquities from Banavasi Area' QJMS. Vol.LXX, pp.164-170


14. :-"Banavasiya Kelavu Apurva Prāchina Śilpagalu", Karnataka Bharati Vol. XXI/ 3-4 pp. 149-50

15. Ibid.p.151.


17. Bhat Raghunath H.R. : Karnataka Sasana Kale (Kannada) Mysore, 1977 p.120


20. Ibid.


22. EI. Vol. XXIII, pp.70-75.


We return again to the narrative of the pilgrims travels as says in the record. From the Dravids country, we read, he went north into
a jungle infested by troops of murderous highway men, passing in
isolated city and a small town, and after a journey of above 2000li
he reached the kung kin (kan) napulo country. He described this
country as being above 5000li and its capital above 30li in circuit.
It had more than 100 Buddhist monasteries and above 10,000
Brethren who were students of both “Vehicles” close to the capital
was a large monastery with above 300 Brethrens, all of great
distinction. In the temple of monastery was a tiara of prince
Sarvarthasiddha (i.e. the prince who afterwards became Goutama
Buddha) which was nearly two feet high adorned with gems and
enclosed in a case. ; on festival days it was exhibited and
worshipped, and it could emit a bright light. In the temple of
another monastery near the capital was a sandal wood image of
Maitreya made by the arhat Sronavimsatikoti. To the north of the
capital was a wood of tala trees, above 30li in circuit, had sat and
walked for exercise, and near this was the top over the relics of
Sronavimsatikoti. Near the capital on the east side was a tope
which had associations with the Buddha’s preaching; to the south
west of the capital were an Asoka tope at the spot where
Sronavimsatikoti made miraculous exhibitions and had many
converts, and beside the tope the remains of a monastery built by
that arhat.
29. Shetty S.R.: *Banavasi Through the Ages*, Jaipur, p. 201
32. Ibid.
33. Uppangala Ramabhatta: *Kannada Vaiyakarana Bhattakalanka*, Text, 4-7, pp.79-80
34. Ibid.
35. Dr. K.G. Vasantha: Madhva of Mulki, was kind enough to supply me the transcript of this unpublished inscription for which my thanks are due to him.
36. *EC*. Vol. VIII. Sg.60.
37. Uppangala Ramabhatta: *Kannada Vaiyakarana Bhattakalanka*, Text. 12-16, pp. 80-81
38. Ibid. Text 18-19, p. 81
39. Ibid. Text-20 p. 81.
40. ARSIE.: 1940-41, No. 2.

41. Uppangala Ramabhatta: Kannada Vaiyakarana Bhattakalanaka,
Text. 20-23, pp. 82-83.

42. Ibid. Text 29-65, pp. 71-75


44. Ibid. Vol. VI, pp.13-26


46. Uppangala Ramabhatta: Kannada Vaiyakarana Bhattakalanka,
pp.67-89.


49. Ibid., pp. 297-98.


No. 177.


53. Ibid. No. 4.

54. Ibid. No.21.


63. *Ibid*, No. 64.
75. *MAR*, 1927, No.104.
79. EC. Vol. VIII, No.70.
84. *ARSIE*.1939-40, Nos. 12 and 14


101. ARSIE.1939-40, No.17.

102. Hedge P.R.: Sonda: A cultural Study (an unpublished M. Phil dissertation, Karnataka University), Dharwad, p. 95.

103. EI.Vol.XXXII. pp. 79-81.

104. ARSIE,1939-40, No.75.

105. Hedge P.R.: Sonda: A cultural Study (unpublished M. Phil dissertation, Karnataka University,)Dharwad. P.102

106. SII.Vol. XX. No.241.


109. Ibid.

110. Ibid.

111. KI. Vol. I No.73, pp. 272-277.


115. *Mahavamsa*, Ch. XII, p.82.


119. *CKI*. No.4.


123. *Ibid*. No. 44.


132. *CKI*. No.4
133. Ibid. No.23.
134. Ibid. No.4.
135. CKI. No.3.
136. Ibid. No.5.
137. ARSIE.1939-40, Bk. No. 28.
138. ARSIE.1939-40, Bk. No. 73.
139. ARSIE.1939-40, Bk. No. 39.
140. CKI. No. 23.
145. CKI. No.9.
146. Ibid. No. 37.
147. Ibid. No. 40.
149. EI. Vol. XIII. p. 33.
150. Ibid. p. 57.
151. EC, Vol. V. No.18.
152. Ibid.

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159. Lalitha N. *op.cit*, p. 409.

160. *Ibid*.


163. *CKI*. No. 27.


165. *CKI*. No. 28.