CHAPTER VI

Local Government

Section I: Divisions of territory

We have already made a survey of the territorial divisions which were in vogue under the Chalukyas of Badami. In forming the various divisions there was no uniformity. Some divisions were small and some others were big. The reasons for this variation were not only political but difference in population and fertility also. Suppose the territory of a feudatory was annexed to an empire and though it was a small one, it would normally be formed into a separate division and would become a district by itself. Unlike this there may have been a large frontier—district and become a large division due to encroachment and policy of expansion. Similarly, if a region became excessively important, it would consist of larger number of villages in it. For instance, the Kanhetaka district (Vishaya) in Maharashtra had in 768 A.D. 4000 villages but subsequently came to comprise nearly 10,000 villages. However, Kingdoms like the Chalukyas of Badami or the Pallavas which were not as large as the Mauryan empire comprised of fewer types of territorial divisions. Such divisions were known as the Vishaya, or rastra representing the district.
A district would generally comprise towns and villages. The villages played a more important part in ancient Indian life than the towns and cities. They were the pivot of administration in India. Even when the kingdom expanded into a big empire there was no change in the village limits. Villages were the real centres of social life and formed the very basis of the country's economy. "They sustained the edifice of national culture, prosperity and administration".

Districts, towns and villages came under the purview of Local government. Local administration was not uncommon in ancient India. Ever since the Vedic times importance was attached to administration of local units. Such a system of local government was improved upon and made more systematic and efficient during the British administration of India and the Union government today in India has also continued giving prominence to local administration by local bodies. It will be apt here to cite the observation of Sir George Birdwood. Says he, "India has undergone more religious revolutions than any other country in the world, but the village communities remain in full municipal vigour all over the Peninsula. Scythian, Greek, Saracen, Afghan, Mongol and Maratha have come down from its mountains and Portuguese, Dutch, English, French and Dane up out of its seas and set up
their successive dominations in the land; but the religious
trades union villages (Sic) have remained as little a
Nestled by their coming and going as a rock by the rising
and falling of the tide".1

We have already pointed out that the Chalukya
dominions were divided into several vishayas for admini-
strative convenience. The vishayas consisted of towns and
villages. The number of villages in a division was
indicated by the numerical suffixes used in these times.
Though the significance of these figures is still a matter
of controversy we may conclude that the smaller number
stands for the number of villages in that unit and that
the bigger figures are not trustworthy. We may give
instances to illustrate smaller divisions—viz., Purgere
300; Kusukadu 70; Banavasi 12,000. Nayarakhavala 70;
Belvola 300 etc., which stood for the number of villages
comprising the unit. Bigger divisions like Gangavadi
76,000 and Maharasrakar 99,000 lead one to conclude that
the figures are unbelievable.

From a study of the Chalukya inscriptions we may state
that local government was continued on the ancient customs
and practices and that there was no violation of the same.
In order to recognise talents available in the local areas
and also to constitute the village as an effective unit of
social, economic and cultural life, the Chalukya kings did
adopt a policy of local administration.
The Vishaya of the Chalukya records generally corresponded with the district of the modern administration. A vishaya would normally consist of about thousand to two thousand villages. The head of a vishaya was known as Vishaya Pati. He had other officers to assist him in the administration of the district. These district officers have responsible for the up-keep of law and order in their districts. They also supervised collection of government taxes and revenues.

As far as the central government was concerned, the most important duty of a Vishaya Pati was maintenance of law and order. For this purpose they had a small military force under them. The dandanayaka whose name occurs in the inscriptions was the heads of military units stationed in the different places to function under the orders of the district officers. The officers of the police departments probably worked under the directions of the district officers. We do not have definite information to say that the other officers in-charge of commerce, industry and public works were subject to the immediate supervision of the Vishayapati, though working under the direct orders of the heads of their respective department at the centre. No information is also forthcoming regarding judicial functions of the Vishayapati.
Coming to the self-governing element in the district administration we may say that the Vishayapatni had a council of the leading men like the chief banker, the chief merchant, the chief artisan and the chief writer which had a large voice in district administration. This popular element became very common and effective after the Gupta period in ancient times. Whether the council looked after the administration of the headquarter of the district alone or of all the areas included in the district is not known. But we may conclude that the latter was more likely.

Information is scanty on matters like the formation of the council—whether the members were elected or appointed. As far as the bankers and merchants were concerned they were chosen by the President of their guilds as their designation with the prefix 'Prathama' indicates. Other members of the council were perhaps persons belonging to different classes who had obtained a prominent position by virtue of their age, experience and character who were taken to the council by a general "consensus of opinion". As the district councils were dominated by urban interests there may have been only a few representatives from the rural areas.

District administration was well organised. The grants of land issued by the kings were maintained in a records office. The officer in-charge of this office kept accurate records of the dimensions and ownership of not only
cultivated but also the waste lands and also of house-sites in towns and villages. Some of the land-grant charters even bear the seals of the district administration. All transactions were conducted on methodical lines.

Section III: Administration of sub-divisions

In ancient times sub-divisions comprising a certain number of villages existed. These divisions came in between the district and the village and varied widely from age to age. Such divisions became very popular often the 8th Century A.D. A number of these divisions with groups of villages were known as Pathaka, Peta, Sthali or Bhukti in the different Provinces.

Under the Chalukyas of Badami many of the sub-divisions consisting of 200-400 villages were also sub-divisions of Vihayyas corresponding to modern Tezils. Therefore the subdivisions do not appear in distinct terms in their records.

Section IV: Administration of Towns

In ancient times administration of towns was carried on certain principles which now form the constitution of a municipal bodies. Although towns were not many in the Vedic period they came to prominence after the 3rd century
B.C. Most of them were autonomous to a large extent, being governed by their own councils. Nothing can be known as to how the councils were constituted. Probably experienced elders were taken as members on the council by a general consensus of opinion of the people. The council also had its chief officer who was called Sarvetha-chintaka in very early times. Under the Guptas he was called Purapala, an officer appointed by the central government. If the town was the headquarters of a district, the district officer discharged this duty. If the town was a fort it had another officer by name Kottipala who had under him military captains. As a general practice, the Purapalas themselves were military captains as is clear from a few inscriptions of a slightly later period. For instance, in 1140 ve, Vehadeva and Gataladeva were the joint protectors of Badami under the rule of Jagadekamalla. Both the above officers were dandanayakas or military captains. Sometimes the Purapala was also selected out of men of learning. So the office used to combine literary qualifications with military ability also.

The Purapala or Protector of the town was assisted by a non-official committee. All classes and interests were represented on the committee. Sometimes towns were divided into wards and each ward sent its own members to the committee. The members were known for their experience,
character and by age. Such members normally would be on the council at the rate of five members for every ward. It had an executive of its own for the quick disposal of business. The number of members on the executive committee varied according to the needs of each case. It was their function to supervise collection of taxes, investment and recovery of public funds and administration of trust funds etc. The committee had lower grade officers to assist the members in their work. However, the organization of the council became very systematic after the 9th century A.D. But it is significant here to point out that tour administration by committees was a successful method of administration even in the Vanrya period. Pataliputra, the Imperial Capital was administered by town committees. It consisted of a body of 30 members divided into five sub-committees, each committee had its specified functions, the details of which are clear from the Arthasastra.

During the period covered by this thesis and slightly in later times, towns were the most dominant centres of Corporate life. The representatives of the towns on the councils were called Nakharas. Their Assembly was known as Nakharas-samula. The term 'Nakara' is also similar to the term 'Nakara' occurring in the records of this period. Nakara, evidently queens Nagara. The Nagaras belonged to the vaisya community. We may cite here the description
of the abilities of the Sage, hailing from Hiriyar, Balagarur. "They were adept in judging all kinds of objects, took delight in making the gift of Gosahasra (thousand cows) and giving food, were well-versed in uplifting the poor and the destitute being an ocean of all virtues and good qualities and devoted to the feet of the gods Hari and Hara. They enjoyed the sullied fruits of Dharma, Artha and Karma, having increased their wealth by purchases and sales". Elsewhere the Nakharas are stated to have been 'born in one hundred and twenty vaisya families which were a source of felicitation to the navel of Brahma, the creator of the universe, from whom emanated the Vedas and the Vedangas'.

The above description clearly denotes that the members coopted to the council were men of learning and character and known for their age and experience.

In addition to the 'Nakharas' there were other commercial bodies functioning such as Numuridandas (that body which had a stick intertwined with three golden bracelets as its banner) and Ubhaya Manadesis (Merchants who carried on business transactions both in local and also in foreign markets). Inscriptions mention local representatives of these bodies. For instance Sagi Setti appearing in an inscription was a person occupying a high position among the business people. He was also called as Sethi-gatter indicating that he was a great business magnate. In some
other context he is also called "prithvi-setti" who was the sole authority in business, perhaps holding monopoly in certain lines of business as in modern times.

**THE FIVE-HUNDRED SVAMIS OF AYYAVOLE:**

In the Chalukya inscriptions of the period covered by this thesis, we come across the mention of an organisation known as 'The Five Hundred Svamis of Ayyavole'. It was the supreme organisation of several business interests to which were affiliated all the local associations of wakharas and other bodies. It had its branches all over Karnataka and neighbouring states and also outside India.

It is worthwhile here to enter into a detailed description of the council of five-hundred. We also find that this topic has been discussed at some length by Dr. H. V. Desai in his 'Jainism in South India'. The five-hundred Svamis of Ayyavole represented an outstanding commercial organisation in Karnataka. It directed and supervised the business activities in the entire country. The town of Ayyavole or modern Aihole in Bijapur district was its original headquarters. It was styled as 'five-Hundred Chiefs' which must have been derived from the number of members on the council at first instance.

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Later terms like Pattanasetti or Pattanasavami give the same meaning.
A mention of this 'Five-Hundred' is to be seen in the epithet 'Pancha āṣṭa - vīra - sāsana - labā-haṁsaka - gana-gana-lam-krit'. This occurring in their Prāsasti which means 'who were graced with many privileges obtained by virtue of the regulations of the Five Hundred heroic founders'.

Its members were also known as the 'Ayyāvalapura-Paranēswaraiyappakal'. They claimed to have come from Śrīchātra. But this is not tenable. Their central body was at Ayyāvala which was the seat of their Board of Directors consisting of a council of Five Hundred members.

This assembly was also called 'nāma desīya tisaiyirattu aināruvar' which means 'the Five Hundred of the thousand, in various directions in all countries'. So this organisation had its jurisdiction beyond its territorial limits and therefore it was necessary for it to have an executive committee of Five Hundred members. They were also called 'Vīra Banajas' in Kannada records, which means that they were an enterprising and bold group of traders. Says Dr. Barnett, 'These guilds were the Vīra Banajas, as they were called in Kanarese or vīra Valanjian, as they were styled in Tamil. The name signifies 'valiant merchants' and is therefore similar to our 'Gentleman Adventures' (East India Company)'.

According to an inscription from Madhānā (No. LIX. i.a. Vol. VIII) the council of 'Five hundred constituted the great body of chaturvādis of the excellent capital of Arya-pura which was founded by a collection of worthy people.'
From the characteristic description of its members it may be known that this organisation was equipped with defensive arrangements against eventualities. The organisation was supremely influential and had an elaborate machinery of affiliation and control. It had its branches in the extensive area of Karnataka but also in the territories of the Tamil, Telgu and other provinces. Its affiliations can be seen to have enrolled the Munusridandas, Nanadesie and other organisations. "Thirtysix bidu" was also one of its affiliated organisations.

The assembly had control over the craft organisations like 'Valanjiyar' and 'citr-mili'. Whenever necessary, they conducted several meetings where a large number of people met. "Thus a congregation consisting of all samajas (religious denominations) from the four and eight quarters and also districts, their followers comprised kriviras, Munaiyiras and confessed some privileges on the residents of the town". The guild possessed a strong sense of oneness of members and exercised considerable influence over administration. It made rules and regulations for business transactions. It also issued copper plate charter which had been evidently permitted by the central government. Its President and leaders influenced town administration to a great degree.

The Belam inscription of Vinayaditya makes reference to existence of guilds. It states,"...
two districts needed by the guild of the Dasas (an establish-
ment of a temple of a God of Valigame) and the
establishment of the temple of Amali and the establishment
of the temple of Vedavalli and Ravichanda of the people of
Alavalli and Sorkagamunda and Wolejaramaniya gamunda and
the people of Navalli and the Ganigas of Andagi and
Sindergamige of Wirilli. 21.

Another inscription from Pattadakal on the front or
north face of a pillar within the building itself in the
temple of Virupaksha says that the pillar was a votive
offering of a certain Puttusamanga and also mentions a
Mahamatanta named Mrue. 22. He appears to have issued some
edict regarding the pillar to the guild of
one-thousand-nine-hundred and sixty six.

The earliest reference to the 'Guild of the Five
Hundred' about which later inscriptions speak of, is to be
found in an inscription of Bad-Khan in Aihole. 23. "The
members of the guild one for instance spoken of as Srimad-
Ayyavolay Sanyamurvar-svamigal i.e. the five hundred svamis
of the glorious (city of) Ayyavole in 1144, 54, of a
Western chalukya.

"The grant that was given by Banama Somayaji to
Five Hundred (who constituted) the great body of
chaturvedis of the excellent capital of Ayyapura which
arose from (was founded by) a collection of worthy people
was): A dharana (a coin equal to one-quarter of a honnu
or pagoda* at the ceremony of feeding a child with boiled rice and at the festival held when the first signs of life are perceived in the foetus at the ceremony of investiture with the sacred thread and at the rites performed when the religious student returns home after completing his studies; two gādyānas at marriage and at ceremony performed on the first sign of conception and at the celebration of an animal sacrifice; three gādyānas at the celebration of the *Chāturāṇya sacrifices' and five gādyānas at the celebration of the agnisthōma sacrifice. Such was the grant (to them and those shall be...

"Hail .... of the perpetual.... of the Five Hundred (who constituted) the great body of chaturvēdis of the excellent capital of Āyyāpura which arose from a collection of worthy people...."

It is interesting to note that the Guild of the Five Hundred at Aiho, 'the home of the famous guild of the five hundred, had a constitution in the 8th century. This constitution is similar to that of Süligera.

An inscription from Aiho assigned to the reign Ghalukya Vikramaditya II of A.D. 733-44 makes reference to its Mahājanas and the nagarās.

Another undated inscription from the same place refers to a gift by the five hundred mahājanas (also called chaturvēdis) the eight nagarās and the hundred and twenty
uralis to goddess Durga Bhagavati. It may be inferred from the contents of the second record that the mahājanas, the nagara and the ēru were in charge of administration of Aiholes.

The Hirisingi inscription mentions some guild of Mahanādu referring to "the various constituents of the merchant guild of Ayyavole 500."

Besides the famous guild of Aiholes, another town which had a self-governing local unit was Porigere or modern Lakshmeswar. The town assembly of porigere consisted of the Mahājanas, nagara and 18 prakritis or communities. Yuvaraja Vikramaditya granted a constitution to it in A.D. 725. This constitution was called 'Achāra vyavasthe or a manual of conduct. The assignment of work to the different organs of the local administration was as follows:

"The king's officers are to protect those of the houses that are untenanted, the king's gift, the king's proclamation, authoritative testimony of goodmen (?), constitutional usage, copper-plate edicts, continued enjoyment of the five dharmas....."

Then comes the section defining the duties of the town people. It begins with the mahājanas or brahmīn burgesses - this is the municipal constitution for the mahājanas, A tax that every occupied house shall pay
once every year* in the month of vaishāka to the governors
of the district; each several household for festival
expenses? the highest households paying ten panas the
highest intermediate seven panas, the lower five, the
lowest three; all previous usages viz., puttiga* fines for
theft and minor delinquencies (fines for) the ten offences,
likewise what is known as property or childless persons;
(all these) shall be paid into the guild there in the
month of kartika. A gutta* shall be paid for (?) to the
ruva in the month of maicha. Then after a reference,
[unfortunately, half only is visible to] the government of
pāndis and settis in the towns, we have the article on
the braziers— 'for the guild of braziers (every) occupied
house (shall pay) for festive expenses (?) the highest
households twenty panas, the intermediate 15, the lower 10,
the lowest five, total one tole;

Next to be mentioned are the oilmen;

Then the record refers to a supplementary endowment: "Also
the field granted to (?) are of the fortunate kuppama
the 300 households and the gāmunda of the province together
with the godigar (?) have granted..."27.

From the foregoing record, it is clear that the
śakshmeswar inscription is one of the earliest to mention
institutions of nagara, the mahajanēs and okkelu of
Karnātak.
The above inscription also mentions that a Kadagamuna gave gifts of land either by permission of the king or local bodies. The madagamuna and the 300 akkala or household of puligere and godyar gave a field to the area of the fortunate kuppam.

Section V: Administration of Villages

A village was the last but the most important link in local administration, as we have already stated that the village has been the pivot of administration in India. Particularly in an age when communications were slow and industrialisation underdeveloped, the village units were very important in the economy of a state. In the political field, kings in ancient times used to convene a meeting of village headmen to discuss important questions of administrative policy. There is no doubt that the villages were the real centres of social life and contributed their mite for national prosperity.

Village headmen: Administration of the village was carried under the supervision and direction of the village headman. In earlier times he was called as grama. The Arthasastra refers to his prominent role in village administration23. In different parts of the country he was called by different names. For instance grami in northern India, mununda in eastern Teesan, Irnakuta or
Pattalika in Maharashtra, gauṇḍa in Karnatak and mahattaka or mahattaka in ex-united provinces between 600-1200 A.D.

There used to be only one headman for each village. His office was hereditary. He was a non-Brahmana. He was the leader of the village milījā. He was an important officer in village administration in the sense that even rulers used to consult him while making grants. His order also received the ruler's approval, subsequently.

The most important functions of a village headman were: defence of the village, collection of government revenue, maintaining necessary records and carrying on the work of collection in consultation with the village council, carrying on correspondence with district authorities, supervising the work of village accountant and providing the link between the people of the village and the central government. He and the accountant were remunerated for their services by rent-free land and certain dues in kind.

**Village Assembly:**

Every village had a primary assembly to which all respectable householders were admitted as members. In Karnatak and also the adjoining areas the assembly consisted of all householders. Several inscriptions from Karnatak prove that the number of the Mahājanē (Great Men of the village) was very large, sometimes 200,
sometimes 400-500 and sometimes 1002\(^2\). All the members were invited by the beat of the drum for attending the meeting of the Assembly. This Assembly was known as Mahattamas in U.P., mahattaras in Maharashtra, mahajanars in Karnatak and Perumakkal in Tamil country. As this assembly had a large strength it was obliged to choose an executive body to carry on the administration of the village. It is these committees that were later formed into panchayats since the days of Lord Siyav and Panch and Sarpanchs in present day rural administration of Republican India.

Both the village headman and the accountant were guided in matters of administration by the village elders who formed members of the council.

In the Tamil country, the village councils were constituted in a methodical manner as gleaned from the inscriptions relating to chōla kings. The primary assembly of the villages was known as ur in the case of ordinary villages and sabha in the case of agrahara villages, mostly membered by learned Brāhmanās. Inscriptions give a detailed description of the constitution and functions of village assemblies or sabhās and their executive bodies consisted of learned persons. It will be apt here to make a passing reference to the working of the executive committees of the village assembly as detailed in the classic instance in inscriptions at Uttaramērū, a village
in Chingleput district of present Tamilnad (Madras). The government of this village was carried on by sub-committees of the sabha, each set up for a specific purpose. Membership was based on experience and high qualifications of the residents of the village. It is really a fact worth noticing that there were certain restraints placed on the candidates who proved unworthy of contesting the elections on grounds of dereliction of duties or not properly appropriating the public funds where they were in office etc. No government officer was included in the committees as members. Election of members to various committees was made by drawing lots. Caste consideration did not influence selection of members to the committees.

Division of the village council into sub-committees which prevailed in the Tamil country was not known in Karnata. Many of the inscriptions from Karnata indicate that the Greatmen of the village known as Mahajanäs used to run educational institutions, excavate canals and tanks, construct rest-houses, collect subscriptions for public purposes and act as trustees and bankers assuring the proper utilisation of trust funds allotted to their care. The Mahajanäs possibly might have their own smaller committees to help them in the discharge of functions, but inscriptions are silent on this point. It has been rightly observed by Dr. A. S. Astekar who says that "it would appear that the village mahajanäs of Karnatak used to make only informal arrangements for
the discharge of these various duties and responsibilities through their executive council, which is seen to consist sometimes of three and sometimes of five members. These members would have taken the help of other leading and influential citizens as demanded from the circumstances.

Broadly speaking, the village councils performed the following functions: Collection of land revenue, proposing remission of taxes during famines etc. to the central government, owning waste lands in villages, settling civil disputes in the villages by family elders, prescribing punishments to attenders, management of temples, transacting business as bankers, revising loans in times of famine and achieving progress of the entire village community by organising works of public utility. The councils also promoted cultural and intellectual progress of the village also.

The financial resources of the village councils in order to carry out the enormous responsibilities lay in the following: central government's permission to utilise a certain percentage (10 to 15%) of the village revenues for works of public utility and village defence. Fines imposed by village courts on offenders, imposition of necessity, grants by central government to undertake costly projects etc.
On the whole, we may conclude that the village assemblies followed a systematic procedure and conducted their meetings on democratic principles, determined constitution for their own functioning, had a harmonious relationship with the central government without the latter's undue interference, held periodical auditing and inspection of accounts. The central government exercised only a general supervision and control over the village assemblies. It left the initiative to the village councils which had large powers. The councils looked to security of village by effective defensive measures, collected the taxes of the central government and levied their own, settled village disputes, organised works of public utility and recreation, functioned as trustees and bankers, raised public loans to provide famine-relief measures, managed schools, colleges, poor houses, temples and supervised activities of the people. Thus, they played an important role in defending the interests of villages and in promoting their national, moral and intellectual progress.

Let us now make a survey of how the two types of village councils - the Mahājanās and the Agrahārās - functioned in the dominions of the Chālukyas.

Inscriptions of the Chālukya kings afford information regarding the existence and functioning of the
Wahājanās and also the Agraharās. We may take up a description of these village assemblies one by one. As far as the qualifications for membership on the Wahājanās were concerned, the Lakkundi inscription mentions that they were to be good and respectable householders known for their character and incalculable merit, skilled in arts and attained fame for generosity.

The Lakshmēśwar pillar inscription of Yuvarāja Vikramāditya states that he granted a constitution to the burgesses of Pōrigere (Puligere). The object of this inscription is to record the mutual obligations and rights of royal authorities (represented by the crown prince Vikramāditya) and of the Wahājanās and burgesses of the town Lakshmēśwar (Puligere). Besides the Wahājanās and the burgesses the record also states that this social constitution was given to the eighteen prakritiś of the town. We have discussed the significance of the term 'Prakriti' already (Chapter II). It is worthwhile to note here that the inscription throws light on the relations of the central government with the local assembly at Puligere which proves that the assembly was indispensable to the kingdom and how it had reposed considerable in the central government.

We may mention below an analysis of the above inscription to bring out the importance of the arrangements carried out by the central government in the municipal administration of the town. They are:
(1) The charter specifies the position of the royal officers and their relations with the Municipality (lines 8-10). The relevant portion of the record reads thus: "The king's officers are to protect those of the houses that are untenanted". Further the inscription states that the king issued a proclamation that on the authoritative testimony of goodmen (respectable householders) the constitutional usage, copper plate groups were restored and that they could continue to enjoy their estates and lead the lives of the five dharmas to which they were previously accustomed. The five dharmas included the traditional four ones and life of children as the fitter one.

(2) The inscription further defines the several duties the town people (line 10) were required to pay. Such duties were levied on the basis of a classification of the people into the highest, intermediate and lower and stipulates the month during which the duties had to be paid. Every occupied house was to pay a sum of money in the month of Vaishaka to the district officers. Similarly each householder had to pay a share towards meeting expenses of festivals. The relevant portion of the record which is cited already (Chapter V) reads thus: "The highest householders (Paying) ten Panas, the intermediate householders, seven Panas, the lower five, the lowest three."
Further the inscription mentions that all previous usages were restored. For instance Fītīga (perhaps a tax on births payable in kind) was revived. Fines and certain imposts (e.g. for childless property) were to be paid to the guild in the month of Kartika. 

(3) Finally the inscription refers to certain payments to be made to the guild of orasiers to meet expenses of festivals which have been cited under Chapter V. The last portion of the record is significant in this connection. It states that an endowment of field was granted to one Kupparma and the Gāmunda of the province together with the godigar. Evidently the gāmunda mentioned in the inscription was the headman. What actually is the meaning of the term 'godigar' is uncertain.

We have already stated that the Mahājanas were assisted by the village headman. He was designated in Kānātaka as 'gāmunda'. He was to receive directions from the Mahājanas and carry out their orders. However, he had also the status to render his advice to the mahājanas. In this connection we may cite the Adur inscription which mentions that a certain gāmunda whose name is lost saw to the construction of a Jīnalaya and got a dānāśāla also attached to it to the maintenance of which a gift of 25 nīvantanas of land was made by the king. Probably the gāmunda, referred to, was Dharma gāmunda.
whose grandson, Sripala was a disciple of Prabhāchandra who set up the stone tablet recording the above gift. Prabhāchandra’s teacher was Vinayandī who had been placed in charge of the sanctuary for conducting worship etc. by Dharma Gamunda.

We may now proceed to describe the functions and importance of ‘agraharas’ under the Badami Chalukyas as far as the local administrative set up was concerned. Chalukya inscriptions mention that the city of Vatapī or Badami was under the direct control of the body called ‘Mahāchatur Vidya Samudaya’ which composed of 2,000 members. By the term ‘Chaturvidya’ it is meant to denote the four vedas. According to some writers it denotes 14 vedas which included the four vedas, six Angas, Dharmasāstra, Meemasa, Tarka and the Purānas. According to the Badami inscription the agraḥāra was said to have specialised in ‘Chaturdasa vidya’ as the epithet ‘Chaturdasa vidya palakshita’ signifies.

Though the Rastrakūta inscriptions mention the names of ordinary chaturvidya samudayas or Assemblies of Chaturvediṣu and Trividya samudayas or Assemblies of Trivediṣu, the one that is mentioned in the Badami inscription was a very rare and enlightened council. It was called Mahāchaturvidya samudaya or the Great Assemblies of chaturvediṣu. Undoubtedly Badami had a distinct honour
of being honourably a chaturdasa vidyasthana but the seat of chaturvidya samudaya also. This council continued to hold the same status of honour during the Rastrakuta period.

The councils of vedic scholars mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs were designated in course of time as agrahāra villages or assemblies of village elders. They exercised control over the villages in which they were situated in matters concerning the utilisation of rural resources. They also imposed regulations regarding the distribution of spoils or booty of a raid whenever the king returned after a victorious campaign. In this connection we may note that the Śadāmi Pillar inscription in the Jambulinga temple records that the two thousand members of the mahachaturvidya samudaya of the victorious city of Vatāpi remitted the spoils of the cobbler of the place in favour of Nidiyanara who perhaps represented the cobbler. If we get information about the distribution of spoils of private individuals we may safely conclude that the assemblies scrutinised the spoils of a war or military campaign, as well, and distributed them in the most appropriate manner.

During the period covered by this thesis and in subsequent years, the agraharāras played a very dominant role in raising the social, educational and cultural standards. "They constituted centres of learning and seats of higher education, fostered in more or less religious
environments which afforded suitable opportunities for the development of character of the pupils coming into constant personal contacts with the teachers. They played a conspicuous part in the social organisation of the country. They constituted well organised local units enjoying a measure of autonomy in their own sphere, on the basis of the extent and number of families living in the area. Each agrahāra was under the management of its representatives who were designated as Mahājanas, the significance of whom has been described already.

An earliest inscription (Balligāme inscription) mentions the term 'Praja' as administering a village. Both the Mahājanas and the Praja solved local problems.

We have so far seen how village administration under the Chalukyas of Badami was carried on on the generally accepted principles of the age. That village administration was shared by the three systematically constituted bodies in their respective spheres of action may be conclusively gathered from an inscription of a slightly later period. It is stated in the Mundalli inscription of Devaraya that the gift was to be maintained by the Nādu, Nakara and Grāma. Here the Nādu represented the Assembly.
During and after a slightly later period, the elected or nominated head of the Mahājana came to be called Ṛṣodāya. He was the local administrative head of a non-agrāhāra village also. Another word found in inscriptions and converging the same meaning of the term Ṛṣodāya is 'Prabhu' or chief or head. Another expression Gaudā found in inscriptions of later period was an equivalent of Ṛṣodāya or Prabhu.
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30. State in Anc. India
31. I.A. Vol. viii; 106.
32. Altekar: Rastrakutas and their times.
33. Kar. Inses. 7; 7.
34. Ibid; 7.
35. Ibid; 7.
37. Ibid
38. Corpus of Inscriptions from Kannada districts of Hyderabad State.
38(a) Kukanur Thirty formed Part of Belvola 307, a bigger division. It was a major agrahara town having an assembly of one thousand Mahajanas. (A corpus of Inses. from Kar. Uts. of Hyd. State, 25).

(b) Another instance of an effective and useful body - the Mahajanas was 'one thousand Mahajana' of Lokkigundi. Lokkigundi was a great and opulent brahminical agrahara which was administered by the one thousand Mahajanas (P. N. Dharma: Jainism in south India, 141).
(c) The name of a Chairman of a Mahajana is found in an epigraph relating to three Hundred Mahajanas of Medimba. He was one Chadiraja; (Ibid, 217).


40. Ibid; page 59.