CHAPTER III

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

A historical study of seven Saivaite temples in Kongu Nadu played a multifaceted role in the social, political, economic and religious life of the people. The Kongu land comprised of various castes and communities based on the occupations. The people were efficient and had extensive internal as well as foreign contacts. So an analysis of the castes and communities, coins and taxes revealed through the inscriptions from the seven Saivaite temples of this region throw light on the customs, habits and practices as well as the economy of the people. The records from the seven Saivaite temples mentions about the different communities like Vettuvas, Brahmanas, Siva Brahmanas, Vellalas, Kaikolars, Puluvas and Devaradiyars which are discussed here in detail.

The Vettuvas

Among the tribal groups, the Vettuvas, the early one converted their tribal life into a settled life emerged as a dominating community. There are references to the Vettuvas in the ancient Sangam age who are supposed to have emerged from the pre-historic time itself. The proto Austroloid, Negroloid and Naga stock might have been their ancestors. Their
descendants were later known by various names such as *Vettuvar, Irular,* and *Villiak*. The Vettuva chiefs like *Kadiyanedu Vettuvan* of Kodiamalai and Kantira Kopperunalli were eulogized by a poet in Purananuru for their heroic deeds.

*Perunkatai* and *Hirahadagalli* copper plate of Sivamara (a 9th century A.D. Ganga King) provide information about *Krathas* who were Kongu Vettuvas. Sundarar in his *Tevaram* hymns refer to the Vettuvas as robbers. The Vettuvas were hunters and sometimes engaged in robbery. The Chola king Aditya I defeated and subdued them. It was because of his influence and encouragement a large number of Vellalas from settled in this region. From then onwards there was a constant conflict between Vettuvas and Vellalas. These two groups constituted the major population in this region. The Vettuvas in the plain region led agricultural activities. Later the newly emerged Vellalar community introduced some novel technical irrigation methods and the Vettuvas way of life had a drastic change. The Vettuva community had some social dignity and private property. They granted lands to the temples and they worked as the royal agents also. Then they came forward to assimilate the habits of the people like the Vellalas and the Brahmins. Later there was a gradual compromise, understanding and mutual exchange of customs and traditions took place between the Vettuvas and the Vellalas. The Vettuvas changed their mode of life from an unstable nomadic
life to that of a stable and settled life as agriculturists. The inscriptions call them as ‘Kaduvetti’ because they were involved in the conversion of forests into arable land. A number of villages in the North Kongu Nadu became inhabited by the Vettuva people in the 12th and the 13th century A.D. Since they were the natives of the Kongu Nadu they had affixed the prefix Kongu with their group name. The Kavala, Mavala and Puluva are the divisions of the Vettuvas. Some Vettuvas rose in rank and were treated on equal footing with royal personages and high posts were assigned to them.

Vellalas

The Vellalas figure in majority of the medieval inscriptions. They are referred to in the sense of community (or) as landholders. In the Chola inscriptions the Nattars or Nattavars seems to have been held in the sense of landholders. As landholders they became economically independent in the later Chola period and this resulted in the differentiation between Vellala and Brahmana community. They also administered the Nadu and the Ur on certain occasions.

In the inscriptions of the Kongu country Vellala names comes after the mention of the Nadu, Ur, Kulam (family name), Special name in an orderly manner. From among the family names mentioned in the inscriptions of the Kongu country especially from the seven Saivaite centres mention
may be made of the families such as *Mappulli Kulam, Padari kulam, Kannan Kulam* and *Kadai Kulam*\(^{13}\).

The inscriptions from the temple of Avinasi, Tirumuruganpundi and Tiruchchengodu speak of the Vellala community who has been involved in making liberal grants to the temples there\(^{14}\). These families are mentioned as *Padari Kulam, Mappullai Kulam, Kannan Kulam* and *Kadai Kulam*\(^{15}\). From among the Kongu Vellalar the Kadai Kulam is mentioned either by the later names or by the name of deities, for example, Vellalan Kadargalel Nakkan Araiyun Sundara Devan and Vellalan Sattandagalil Siriyun Devan\(^{16}\). Some scholars have described the *Kadai, the Satandai* and *Kannan* as family names which are mentioned in the later inscriptions the names as *Kulam* and *Kuttam*.

The earlier references to the family names among the Vellala community are known as *Padari*. A certain *Padari* of the Vellala community is mentioned as the donors in the inscriptions of Avinasi dated 1262 A.D, making a gift of 10 panams for maintaining the *sandhi lamp* to the deity Avinasialudaiya Nayanar. The donor is referred to by name Nallisaiyalan Parakkiraman of Palatoluva in Kuruppa Nadu\(^{17}\). Another inscription from the same place dated 1562 A.D. records the gift of 10 panam for maintaining a sandhi lamp to the deity Avinasialudaiya Nayanar by Palattolu Vellalar Padari Kulam, Nallisaiyalan Narakkiraman of Kuruppa Nadu\(^{18}\). The former
record has not referred to the group among the Vellalar, while the later inscriptions mention specifically the name of the Vellala group called Palattolu. The name Palattolu seems to refer to the place named after cattle-shed or milk shed which was included in Kuruppa Nadu. Another family known as Mappullai belongs to the Vellala community. This family was represented by Danapalan\textsuperscript{19} as evidenced by the record from Tirumuruganpundi dated in the $11^{\text{th}}$ and (1265 A.D.) and $12^{\text{th}}$ (1266 A.D.) years of the Kongu Chola king Vikrama Chola. They refer to the donation of 10 *achchu* for the supply of food offerings to Tirumuruganpundialudaiyar. This family hailed from Pallavidam (Palladam) included in Vayaraikkal Nadu. The Siva Brahmanas who had *kani* rights in the temple undertook to supply rice for the food offerings in the temple\textsuperscript{20}.

*Kannan* is another family name that belongs to the Vellala group. The member of this group hailed from Morur in Kilkarai Pundurai Nadu. The individual who belonged to the Kannan family called Tirumalaiyattappa Nalla Thambi Kangeyan is mentioned as the donor who constructed the pillars called sitakaragandankal close to the nritta mandapa of the Periyandavar shrine. This is referred to in the records from Tiruchchengodu dated 1599 A.D.\textsuperscript{21}. The structural additions made to the Ardhanariswarar shrine at Tiruchchengodu is testimony of the exquisite workmanship of the
dancing mandapa. It may be suggested from the name Sittakaragandan that the pillar was named after one of the kings of the late Vijayanagar period.

*Kari* is another family name from the Vellala community that is mentioned in the record from Avinasi dated 1273 A.D., in the reigning period of Maravarman Kulasekara I. This Vellalan Kari by name Sattiaianayakkan of Arangur in Kilkarai Pundurai Nadu is said to have made a gift of *one achchu* for burning a *sandhi* lamp to the deity Avinasiyaludaiyar\textsuperscript{22}. From the availability of the inscriptions of the above king from Avinasi, it may be suggested that Kulasekara brought Kongu region under control around 1273 A.D.

From an inscription of the Kongu Pandya king Rajakesarivarman Vira Pandya dated in 9\textsuperscript{th} regnal year (1274 A.D.) from Avinasi, it is stated that a settlement was reached by the members of the Vellala community and members of *Puluva community* belonging to Vadaparisara Nadu\textsuperscript{23}. The settlements relates to the removal of two *Vellala* and two *Puluva* families from the village, without assigning any reason for this action. From among the signatories hailing from different village mention may be made of Vellalan Mukkanandandan from Nambiperur, Vellalan Kongu Koppillan and Vellalan Chokkan from Turavalur. The excommunicated four families were again accepted within a month which is attested by another record\textsuperscript{24}. 

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An interesting document now available in a palm leaf form preserved at the Museum of Kalaimagal School of Erode talks about the sale deed of some villages by Vira Vikkirama Soliyandak Gounder to other three individuals namely, Poynkak Gounder of Panagadai clan of Elumathur, Sellappakgounder of Andai clan from Maruthurai and Saravana Gounder of the same clan from Korranur.

When the Madurai region was ruled by Chokkalinga Nayakar (1710 to 1730 A.D.), the Kongu region comprising of Tirumuruganpundi, Avinasi and Mangalam was governed by Vira Vikkirama Soliyandak Gounder, a Vellala, as an agent. He had to pay 24,000 panam of gold as a tribute to Madurai king which was a long due. There was a crisis when the king strictly ordered to pay this amount within three days or he would be sentenced. During this period of emergency the above said three Gounders came to his rescue and paid 5000 Pon each and settled the tax due. As an act of gratitude the agent Vira Vikkirama Soliyandak Gounder sold the devasthanas of Tirumuruganpundi, Avinasi and the village of Tirumuruganpundi to the above said three Vellavas.

In this record, the chief Vira Vikkirama Soliyandak Gounder declared himself as Chitirameli Thalaivar. It is interesting to note that the agricultural body 'Chitirameli Periya Nadu' emerged as a winning force during 11-13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. in the northern and western districts of Tamil Nadu. K.V.
Subrahmanya Aiyer describes the body as a large provincial organisation. This body played a crucial role in the social history of Kongu Nadu. This tradition was followed up to the 18th century A.D. and is attested by this record.

**Brahmanas**

It is generally known from the early and medieval inscriptions of the Kongu region that the Brahmanas held the highest position and were the land owners or Kaniyalars. In the absence of any specific mention of the lands granted to Brahmanas as Aagaraparru or Kaniyalar, who controlled the lands or the involvement of the Brahmanas in the activities of the *Sabhai*, it may be construed that the Brahmanas were relegated to the background and therefore forbidden to enjoy the temple lands26.

Brahmanas happened to be either recipients of the grants or those who enjoyed the grant made by others and the nine inscriptions from Tiruchchengodu temple refer to the provision made for the feeding of the Brahmanas on several occasions. Inscriptions of Parantaka (dated 916 A.D.) and Raja Raja I (dated 995 A.D.) mention the provision made to meet the feeding expenses of the Brahmanas27. According to many records the women donors had come forward to deposit gold in order to feed the Brahmanas daily and on special occasions. The *Ganaperumakkal* represented the executive body, *Alunganam* which was constituted to supervise the activities
of the festivals in the temples conducted on specific occasions like the day of
the Nakshatra or Tidhi by feeding the Brahmanas$^{28}$.

The endowments made were deposited by the *Ganaperumakkal* and they also enjoyed the interest that accrued with it. The earliest mention of such an endowment is found mentioned in the record of Parantaka I dated in his 9th year (916 A.D.). An endowment of 20 *kalanju* of gold was deposited for feeding the Brahmanas on the day of Tiruvonam, with the *Tirvona Ganaperumakkal* at Tiruchchengodu by Arattan Nakkan's son on behalf of Manikantii Odaiyamandal who hails from Erode$^{29}$. The name ending with Nakkan suggests her association with *Devaradiyars* group. She belongs to the category of temple women whose contribution to the temple of the Brahmanas is known from several records.

A record of the 12th year of the same king refers to the endowments made by Ranamukka Naranan for feeding the Brahmanas in the temple on the day of his natal star Rohini in the month of Masi. This occasion had been chosen by the donor in order to acquire merit (Punya) by feeding the Brahmanas$^{30}$. Another inscription of the same date records a gift of 26 *kalanju* of gold by Uttaman Ganavadi, a member of the assembly known as *Sonattu Perumakkal* at Tiruchchengodu, for feeding the Brahmanas in the festival days in the month of Masi. It represents the members of the Perunguri Mahasabhai$^{31}$ which normally meets in the temple premises to
take decisions on various matters including the celebration of festivities and the welfare measures to the Brahmanas.

In the 26th year of Parantaka I (933 A.D.), Kadanpudi Manikkan in the name of his daughter, Mundonkon made an endowment of 5 kalanju of gold with the Tiruvadirai Ganaperumakkal to provide food for the Brahmanas on the day of Tiruvadirai. The name of the donor Kadanpudi Manikkan reminds of the chief of the Pudi family. An interesting record dated in the 13th year of Raja Raja I (998 A.D.) from Tiruchchengodu records an endowment of 20 kalanju of gold by Kasettangal, left in charge of Pannirandu Nattu Perumakkal of Tiruchchengodu by Kamakkanar, wife of Ilangoanadigal for feeding 20 Brahmanas on the days of Ekadasi. The gift was to be administered by Tiruvekadasi Gana Perumakkal who also happened to be the part of the assembly. Another record in the 16th year (1001 A.D.) mentions the gift made for feeding of Brahmanas on the occasion of the Svadi nakstra in the month of Purattasi. The Brahmanas were held responsible for maintaining the grant.

A record of Kongu Chola king, Vira Rajendra dated in his 17th regnal year (1223-24 A.D.) from Avinasi registers the provision of 100 achchu for the food offerings to the deity Avinasialudaiyar by a person from among the Pillais. A Brahmana named Sivallan is referred to as the protector of the grant. It may be concluded that the Brahmanas enjoyed the gift made by
chiefs and individuals. The Brahmanas had been taken care of by regulating the grants made by the individuals through the assembly or *Gana Perumakkal*. The involvement of the assembly shows the interest taken by them to protect the Brahmanas and their status. Therefore the relation between the higher groups and the Brahmana community was maintained with utmost care.

**Siva Brahmanas**

Siva Brahmanas are referred to in the inscriptions of Avinasi, Tirumuruganpundi, Karur, Venjamankudalur etc. These Siva Brahmanas enjoyed special privileges in the temples of Kongu country. They are described as the one who had *kani* rights in the different temples like Tirumuruganpundi Mahadevar, Avinasiyaludaiyar and Tiruanilaialudaiyar, Venjamankudal etc. The term Kaniyalar refers to the people who had hereditary rights that they enjoyed with the reference to the privileges in the temples and by their heirs.

The earliest reference to the mention of Siva Brahmanas on whom the special privileges were conferred is recorded in the inscriptions of Parakesari Abhimana Cholan from Tirumuruganpundi dated his 12th year (1100 A.D.). The Siva Brahmana named Kasyapan Venkadan Bhavadasan Narayanan alias Abhimana Solabhattan had the kani rights of the temple of Tirumuruganpundi Mahadevar. A record from Avinasi dated in the 4th year
of Vira Chola Deva (1186 A.D. - 1187 A.D.) mentions the gift of tax amount was entrusted to the Siva Brahmana for the services like Tirumerpucchu to the deity Avinasiyandar\textsuperscript{38}. Another record from Karur mentions that the Siva Brahmanas resided along with the other professional groups in the Tirumadaivalagam at the temple of Tiruanilaialudaiyar at Karuvur, for whom the village was granted as Jivana Seshasa\textsuperscript{39} (life maintenance). A record from Avinasi dated in the 15\textsuperscript{th} year (1221 A.D. - 1222 A.D.) of Rajakesari Varman alias Vira Rajendra states that an undertaking was given by Sikaliyan of Kasyapa Gotra, a Siva Brahman who had a right in the temple to maintain 32 \textit{sandhi lamps} with the oil endowed during his grandfather's time. Apart from this he also had \textit{ten kalanju of gold} for Pattai Podi Choru, five ulakku of rice measured by Parakesari per day, one Kariyamudu, Ulakku Tayirramudu\textsuperscript{40} etc.

The Siva Brahmanas in the temple at Venjamankudalur in Venjamanadu, Virasolamandalam undertook to maintain a \textit{sandhi lamp} before the deity, for which gold was donated by Maruparamappallavaraivan, a Karadi Vettuvar\textsuperscript{41}. It is learnt from the record from Tirumuruganpundi dated during the 44\textsuperscript{th} year of Vira Rajendra (1250 A.D.) that Siva Brahmanas named Avinasikaliyan, Avinasi Sattarai Kappan and their sons Avinasi and Avinasi Murugan figured as donors of 24 anai achchu, sriyakki palanjalagai \textit{achchu} for maintaining the two perpetual lamps before \textit{Lord
Tirumuruganpundi Nayanar. These Siva Brahmanas belong to Kasyapa Gotra\textsuperscript{42}.

There is a similar instance in the 11\textsuperscript{th} year record of this scheme from the same place. The Siva Brahmanas who had \textit{kani} rights in the temple of Tirumuruganpundi Aludaiyar received a gift of 10 achchu from Solan Pariyan alias Danapalan belonging to Vellalan Mappuli of Pallavidam in Vayaraikal Nadu and undertook to supply rice daily, to meet the food offerings\textsuperscript{43}. Another Siva Brahmana mentioned in a records was Sattarai Kappan Tirupegimbam Udaiyan who have received the money and agreed to carry out the endowment. In the record of Vikrama Chola dated in his 12\textsuperscript{th} regnal year (1266 A.D.) from Tirumuruganpundi there is a mention of the receipt of the gift for offering the sandal paste to the deity\textsuperscript{44}.

Interestingly Sivan Pillai Nayan alias Ponnambalanambi and Ponna Pugali Vendan of the temple of Tirumuruganpundialudaiyar had hereditary \textit{kani} rights\textsuperscript{45}. Eventually they lost their \textit{kani} rights and king Konerimaikondan issued an order restoring the rights to the two Siva Brahmanas and granted 15 \textit{achchu}. A record from Karuvur dated in the 3\textsuperscript{rd} year of the king Konerimaikondan registers the conferment of certain privileges on temple officials namely the Siva Brahmanas, who had \textit{kani} rights in the temples and other professionals. A royal order was also issued granting 40 \textit{achchu} to the deity of the temple at Karuvur\textsuperscript{46}. Thus the Siva
Brahmanas had enjoyed the *kani* rights granted by the Kongu Cholas and were allowed to enjoy the same without any interruptions. Like the Brahmanas the Siva Brahmanas attached to the temple had their own say in the activity of the temple. The use of the term *kani* or *kani* rights became more frequent from the 11th century onwards. The Siva Brahmanas have been considered along with the other professional group, with the respect to the enjoyment of rights like Jivittakarar who were the holders of land given by royal authority for their sustenance. Like *Kaniyatchi* granted to the Brahmanas by the Cholas the *kani* rights have been conferred by the Kongu rulers on the Siva Brahmanas.

**Kaikkolas**

*Kaikkolas* were generally considered as weavers. Members of the weaver community served in the army of Terinjakaikolar. Their activities in the capacity of army men were more during the period of the medieval Cholas and during the Kongu Chola period. Apart from the royal family officers of high rank in the Kaikkolar army they also took initiative and were associated in temple functions. The Saliyars and the Kaikkolas are the two weaving communities who were normally engaged in the production of silk and cotton clothes for the purpose of inland and overseas trade.

In the 12th and 13th century A.D., the Kaikkolas were referred making donations in the form of cash to the temples which enhanced the economic
status. This activity ultimately lifted their social status and mobility through the magnificent gifts to the temples. In the 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. there was an innovation in the social organization, particularly in the Kongu country which enable them to make endowments, besides their professional activities. There were two divisions called right hand and left hand (\textit{Valangai} and \textit{Idangai}). These are recorded in the inscriptions from 12\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D. In the late 14\textsuperscript{th} and 15\textsuperscript{th} centuries A.D. one can find the assignment of right hand status to Saliyars and left hand status to Kaikkolas, which indicates not only their official status but also their occupation. But the Kaikkolas ambitions were far and wide not only for their social privileges but also for their ritual and religious status\textsuperscript{48}. In that way their role in the temple at Tirumuruganpundi and Karur can be justified through the privileges in the ritualistic process. The weaver community acquired the position of social and economic importance and this is confirmed by reference to their involvement not only in the textile production and marketing but also in temple services, gift making process and in the administration and so on. With the increase of commerce and itinerancy, the demand for textile and cotton products increased and thereby they obtained special privileges\textsuperscript{49}. It is on account of this they tried to protect the temple besides being the head among the craftsman as seen in inscriptions in the Kongu region in Tirumuruganpundi, Karur etc.
The Kaikkolar and Saliya weavers of Terindakaikolar army men from the Kongu region were among the socio-economic groups who took interest in the commercial activities in this region. Like a corporate body the Kaikolas as army men not only offered protection through the arms to the goods they produced but also acted as protectors of the temple endowments. The Kaikolas were not only part-time weavers, but were also the soldiers. This important community was involved in the gift making process\textsuperscript{50}. References may be sited in the Tirumuruganpundi inscriptions. One of the inscriptions of Virarajendra Deva (Kongu Chola) dated in his 7\textsuperscript{th} year (1233 A.D.) registers a gift of 3 anai achchu, sriyakki palanjalagai achchu by Ettamballa Solagnigar, a Kaikkolar from Sevur in Vada Parisara Nadu for providing 50 pots of water for the sacred bath of Lord Tirumuruganpundinayanar\textsuperscript{51}. The gift amount of 3 achchu mentioned above were received by the gold smith Pariyan Sandan alias Senapatitattan, Viratattansoran and Neduvira Puman and undertook to carry out the endowment from out of the interest (Palisai) on the deposited amount of 3 achchu\textsuperscript{52}.

The army personal among the Kaikolas included Saliya Nagarattar, Vaniya Madigaiyar and Akkaisaliyar etc. These Kaikolas came from Mettalai Tanjavur alias Manaiyur Adikkiltalam. Such army men were Mutta Samakkattu alias Amatta Magandan Terinda Kaikolar, Samanta Senapati
and Maiya Samakkattu alias Vira Rajendra Terinda Kaikolar etc\textsuperscript{53}. The Kaikolas enjoyed the privileges like temple officials like the Siva Brahmanas, Andargal and Devaradiyars. These privileges were conferred by the ruling kings or the chiefs\textsuperscript{54}.

The other inscriptions of 11\textsuperscript{th} and 13\textsuperscript{th} centuries from Karur, Venjamankudalur, Avinasi and Tirumuruganpundi speak of the professional groups like \textit{Chettigal, Tavasiyar, Nimandakkarar, Uralmai, Araiyar, Pulappar, Ilamadattar, Vaniyar} and \textit{Akkasaliyar}\textsuperscript{55}. They all belong to the professional groups figuring in the inscriptions of Tiruvaigavur, Korkai etc. They had taken keen interest in the temple activities through the benefactions in temple for different purposes.

**Puluvas**

\textit{Cholanpurvapattayam} record refers to the \textit{Puluvas} who were mostly a sect of the \textit{Vettuvas}. The Puluvas settled in many parts of the Kongu region and were the ancient tribal people who were assimilated into other social folds during the Chola period\textsuperscript{56}. They maintained a transaction with the \textit{Vellalas}. An epigraph from Avinasi and Tirumuruganpundi refers to the transaction between the Vellala Nadu and Puluva Nadu. The same record reveals a relationship between two families of Vellakudi (Vellala) and Puluvankudi (Puluvas). The Puluvas sometimes joined with the Vellalas to
give offerings to the temple. They enjoyed some dignified responsibilities and they got lands for their services from the government.

In this way the tribal group was later on assimilated into the society. Like the Vellalas they obtained many rights, and the records mention about them as Puluva Vetkovan, Puluva Malaiyar, Puluva Nattan and Puluva Uron. This reveals that they had the Nadu assembly like Ur assembly of the Vellalas. Later on they mingled with the Vellalas and their traditions and methods became commonly imitated by the two communities. From the study of the social life of the people of this region one can conclude that the society was a tradition oriented and a custom ridden one. It is unique in itself. And though at time they were influenced by the outside people who settled either by conquest or by succession, their salient and individual traits were maintained in all spheres of life.

**Status of Women**

**Devaradiyars**

The term *Devaradiyars* is mentioned in the Chola inscriptions and in the inscriptions of the Kongu rulers. The term Devaradiyar means servants of God or devotee. In general this term is applied to temple women. A number of synonymous names have been used to indicate temple women.
Though the meaning remains the same, the functions and character vary from period to period and region to region. From the Chola inscriptions several terms with the related meaning such as Tevanarmakal, Patiyilar, Taliyilar and Emperumanadhiyal can be found\(^6\).

The term Devaradiyar has religious ethos associated with Tamil Bakthi movement. The Sanskrit term corresponding to Devaradiyar is Devadasi\(^6\). But in Sanskrit the expression dasi indicates a slave or a menial servant. The idea of the usage of the term dasi is taken with reference to the status and functions. It may be either of ordinary or religious significance. The concept of the use of the term Adiyal or Adiyar expounded with the word Devar, it is a direct implication to temple women\(^6\). It can be inferred from the inscriptions that these women received sufficient support from the temple or they were allowed to perform services in the temple. Therefore they cannot be misconstrued as Devadasi with a figurative meaning.

From the inscriptions of the Kongu region it is learnt that the Devaradiyars in one way or other involved in making donations to the temple indicating there by that they had right to perform the services like waving of the chammarar, showing the mirror (tirukanadi) etc.

Thus from the 11\(^{th}\) and 12\(^{th}\) centuries inscriptions mention about the devaradiyars who engaged in different transactions. It is learnt from one of
the inscriptions of Tiruchchengodu dated in the 9th year of Parantaka I (915 A.D.) that Arattan Nakkan son on behalf of Manikanti Odaiyamandal of Erode made a provision of 20 kalanju for feeding the Brahmanas in the temple. The term Nakkan seems to suggest the association with the Devaradiyar group. From among the temple servants besides the temple precinct at Tirumuruganpundi, Devaradiyars were included as the ones who received special privileges during the period of Parakesari Abimana Chola in 1100 A.D. The Devaradiyars had been entrusted with the work of rendering services like Tirumerpucchu to the deity. During the period of the Vira Chola (1186 A.D.) the services rendered by Devaradiyar seemed to have been optional. The services performed by them cannot be said to have been of menial order. But they received the remuneration in the form of taxes to perform as ritualistic functions.

From the inscriptions of the 3rd year of Virapandya Deva (1268 A.D.) from Tirumuruganpundi lands were purchased from Devaradiyars named Siriyan, Sivanukkiniyan and Andan of Karaiyan Adikkilttalam in Vada Parisara Nadu for providing food offering to the temple deity. This indicates that they patronized the temple in the medieval period.

In a record of 12th century from Avinasi it is stated that an order issued in the name of Adichandeswara, gave direction to the Devaradiyars of the
temple namely Nagapasa Nangai, Nachchi, Aludaiya Nachchi, Valattal and Iraguttaraya Nangai were to render the service of Tiruvandikkappu. It is not known whether they received any remuneration for this service. But it is clear that the Devaradiyars enjoyed special privileges by way of ritualistic services and also it proves that responsibility was vested on them on account of the Chola affinities in the temple or on account of their professional skill. They used to make donations as evidenced from the record of Virarajendra dated from his 32nd year (1238 A.D.) from Tirumuruganpundi. A Devaradiyar named Viravukanni who resided at Kolumam endowed palanjalagai achchu to Tirumuruganpundialudaiyar for maintaining sandhi lamp which attests the view that they had connections with the temple in the locality. Though she hails from Kolumam she took active participation in the temple affairs due to the close relationship in the local temple. Thus it may be said that Devaradiyars were involved in the temple services function throughout the Chola period.

The inscriptions in the Kongu region show that relatively few temple women were engaged in temple service whether in ritualistic pattern or otherwise. As devotees the Devaradiyars established a cultural relationship and bondage with the temple. The temple women who established links with
the temple more and more, received due recognition. Therefore their identity became more firmly defined.

Social life during medieval period is traced out in this section of the chapter by the study of literature and inscriptions. Particular social groups like Vettuvas and Vellalas in Kongu country had their own self identity. Vettuvas were the hunting tribes whereas Vellalas were the agriculturists. Kongu Vellala had different clans namely Padari Kulam, Kannan Kulam, Kadai Kulam, Mappulli Kulam which have been traced out through inscriptive study. Brahmanas, Siva Brahmanas, Devaradiyars attached with temples were supported well by the donors and nobles, which is ascertained by the study of inscriptions.

**Economic Condition**

Study of the culture of any people will be incomplete without a study of their economy. Any government is considered prosperous in terms of its economy. The maintenance of public works, development of agriculture and protection of the people from external attacks are related to the economy of the nation. The inscriptions from the seven Saivaite temples mentions about the usage of coins, different kinds of taxes, revenue officers, guilds and trade transactions.
Agriculture as the Main Occupation

From the advent of the Imperial Cholas the economic condition of this region met with many changes. The introduction of new innovative measures and the improved irrigational facilities might have changed the face of the region. The Vellalas succeeded in converting the uncultivated lands into cultivable lands. The Kongu Cholas levied comparatively very low taxes in this region. Probably it induced the people to bring more lands under cultivation. The Kongu Cholas encouraged deforestation and also permitted some kind of land ownership to the natives.

Brahmadeya Lands

There are some epigraphical evidences from the early medieval South India pertaining to the Brahmadeyas. The Brahmans were encouraged to make peasant settlements. The Kongu Cholas also granted Brahmadeyas and it is learnt that Virachola III might have allowed the Brahmans to control Brahmadeyas and in this way they became the owners of the lands. As the Brahmans were allowed to possess those lands forever, it came to be known as Sarvamanya tenure.
**Devadana Lands**

Many of the villages of the North Kongu have their own temples. During the Kongu Chola period the devotees who included the king and his subjects donated lands to the temples and these temple lands came to be known as *Devadana* lands\(^7^4\). These lands were maintained by the temple authorities independently. A land from the donated pieces of lands was allotted to the servants as remuneration for their services in the temple and it was known as *Jivitanis*\(^7^5\). The temple authorities allowed the cultivator to continue his rights to cultivate for certain period and they became decision makers of these lands.

**Revenue Terms**

The inscriptions in the Kongu country furnish nearly 64 revenue terms. They have been collected in the region under the study during the period of Kongu rulers like Kongu Cholas, Kongu Pandyas and Hoysala rulers. An analysis of the tax terms reveal that most of the taxes have been collected between 12\(^{th}\) to 13\(^{th}\) centuries\(^7^6\). These 64 tax terms can be classified on the basis of groups based on prefix and suffixes. Except for the terms, namely *elavai* and *ugavai*\(^7^7\) appears 7 times, all other terms figures, once, twice or thrice. They have been levied from the lands. A few taxes are
not connected with the land tax. Most of the taxes were levied between 1178 A.D. and 1300 A.D.

The classification adopted here is based on the prefix and suffix terms of which mention may be made of *Vari, Erai, Kadamai, Ayam, Pattam, Kanam, Viniyogam, Dendam, Kurram* and *Sarigai* etc. The other terms like *Elavai, Ugavai, Manru Padu, Vendukol, Sumaisungam, Aratchi, Eluvana Mulaippana and Kanikkai Nallerudu* were also mentioned. Considering all the factors it may be suggested that the taxation during the period of the Kongu rulers gained a place of importance in the annals of history. Under each classification a few terms appears more than once and they appear only during the period of Kongu Chola and Kongu Pandyas.

**Irai**

Irai is a general term used to indicate the tax and figures in many Chola and Kongu Chola inscriptions. It has been suffixed to the following: 1.*Chekkirai* 2.*Erutirai* 3.*Kilirai* 4.*Melirai* 5.*Tariyirai*. The *irai* prefix is mentioned in the example called as Irai Puravu.

**1. Chekkirai**

It is a tax from oil mill in which term the prefix *Chekku* denotes the oil press. This term is related to oil industry wherein the tax has been collected
for the pressing of oil seeds. This has been calculated on the basis of the press used for each occasion to extract oil. Chekkirai is meant to indicate that oil pressers had been subjected to tax. This tax term has been mentioned in a record of Avinasi temple\textsuperscript{80}.

2. Eruttirai

The term Eruttirai is a tax was levied on tenants and agriculturists for ploughing the land and has been mentioned in one of the inscriptions from Tirumuruganpundi\textsuperscript{81}.

3. Kilirai and Melirai

These two tax terms are mentioned in an inscription from Avinasi. Kilirai is a term meant to indicate the minor taxes, while Melirai indicate the major taxes\textsuperscript{82}. These two terms are generally used to denote the tax assessment made on general occasion.

4. Tariyirai

Tariyirai is a tax term which means tax levied on looms\textsuperscript{83}. Weaving was an important profession that had been adopted by the people of the Kongu country. Kongu region being the land of the Kaikolas or weavers and therefore this profession received an impetus from the rulers\textsuperscript{84}.
There are synonymous terms for *Tariyirai* all denoting a tax, on loom. It may be interesting to notice a few terms like *Taripudavai* meaning tax collected in the form of cloth or a unit of pudavai manufactured in the loom. *Taritaragu* meaning the brokerage levied for each loom, *Tariakkam* meaning the cash levied for each loom, *Saligaitari* meaning the tax levied on Saliyars, the weavers and so on. Perhaps these terms indicated the type of looms that have been used by the weavers for the occasion on which tax has been levied.

5. *Irai Puravu*

The tax *Irai Puravu* is probably a term that is used to indicate the tax levied on lands. It may not be wrong to suggest that the tax levied on the people who engaged in agriculture. Here the prefix *Irai* indicates the general term for tax, while the term *Puravu* denotes probably the outsiders. This tax term often occurred in the inscriptions of the temples from Karur, Tirumuruganpundi, Avinasi and Venjamankudalur.

6. *Vari*

*Vari* is the common term denoting the tax. This is mostly used in the Chola inscriptions of the 12th centuries. The term *Vari* has been suffix to many tax terms like *Achchuvvari, Idayarvari, Inavari, Cilvari, Nadarravari,*
Peruvari, Ponvari etc. Vari is also found as suffix to the terms like Palavari and Puduvari. The term Aniyiduvan Vari seems to indicate a tax on the ani (army group or a group of persons of army profession or community). This may also be interpreted as a tax for the formation of the army in the palace or outside. These tax terms can be seen in one of the record of Venjamankudalur.

7. Nattavari

The tax term Natavari indicates the tax collected for the settlement or the habitation in an Ur (village). This was collected for the maintenance of the settlement area. Nattavari is referred to in the 12th and 13th century inscriptions from Venjamankudalur.

8. Tiruchchulavari

The Tiruchchulavari was the tax collected on the land at the time of survey, when the stone with Tiruchula mark was set up to demarcate the boundary of the land. Such boundary stones are referred to as Tiruchchulakal.

9. Kadamai

Kadamai is another term comparable with Irai to indicate the land use. There were number of tax terms with Kadamai as suffix like Kasi Kadamai,
Perkadamai, Peralkadamai, Ethakadamai, Chekku Kadamai etc\textsuperscript{95}. The term Kadamai has been suffixed in the inscriptions of the regional study in the case of tax terms like Erkadamai and prefix to the term Kadamai Varagam. Both were used in the 12\textsuperscript{th} century. Importance has been given to the term Kadamai in the Kongu region. The term Erkadamai refers to the dues levied on individual cultivation or agricultural laborers for each plough(Er). A similar term called Peralkadamai\textsuperscript{96} found in the Chola inscriptions indicates the dues levied on land owners or cultivators.

10. Ayam

The term Ayam has been suffixed with the taxes namely Sirrayam meaning minor taxes and Upayam indicating the tax levied on the salt or production of salt\textsuperscript{97}. Sirrayam seems to be an equivalent term for Andarayam indicating the local tax. Another term called Cilantharayam is known from the inscriptions also means the same probably indicating the miscellaneous tax\textsuperscript{98}. The term Sirrayam has been used during Vira Rajendra’s rule in Tirumuruganpundi where as the term Upayam was used in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century inscriptions from Venjamankudalur\textsuperscript{99}.  


11. Pattam

Pattam is a term indicates a levy on profession. This term has been suffixed to a number of tax terms like Tattarap-pattam, Ulaipattam, Chekkiraip-pattam, Kiliraip-pattam, Parip-pattam and Munpattam\textsuperscript{100} and so on. The term Tattarappattam indicates tax levied on goldsmiths. This term is frequently mentioned in Chola and Kongu Chola inscriptions. The Tattans belonged to the Kammalar community and their frequent reference in the Chola inscriptions indicates the numerical strength of this community. The tax term Tadipoli Pattam is not clear. It appears probably for the first time in the inscriptions of the Kongu rulers\textsuperscript{101}. It may be suggested that the tax levied probably for the maintenance of Poli meaning Vali that exists between the lands which is called as Tadi.

12. Kanam

Kanam is suffix to several taxes like Kurakanam, Punjey Pari Kanam, Narpasu Kanam and Kudikanam\textsuperscript{102}. It may be interrupted as a gift paid in the form of cash. Kanam also represents a gold coin. Kasu Kanam was a coin that was payable by the potters or kusavas\textsuperscript{103}. The term Punjey Parai Kanam refers to the levy collected in the form of coin or cash on the punjey lands\textsuperscript{104}. The tax term Narpasu kanam relates to the tax levied in the form of coins on cattle keepers who used to maintain the cattle\textsuperscript{105}. The tax term
Kudikanam cites the tax levied on the Kudi or the agriculturist or peasants\textsuperscript{106}.

13. Viniyogam

Viniyogam has been grouped under the term \textit{Kudimai} by Appadorai in his work on economic conditions. It also means expenditure. It is a suffix to the tax term, Nattu Viniyogam mentioned in one of the inscription of Venjamankudalur\textsuperscript{107}. The taxes paid by the village called \textit{Vasal Viniyogam} are referred to in the 13\textsuperscript{th} century inscriptions from Venjamankudalur\textsuperscript{108}. The term \textit{Tiruvasal Viniyogam} denotes levies on account of the expenses for the people who rendered services as gate keepers\textsuperscript{109}.

14. Danda Kurram or Kurra Dandam

These two tax terms are one and the same and are related to judicial fines. Specifically speaking \textit{Danda Kurram} or the \textit{Kura Dandam} indicates the fines levied on those who have committed crime\textsuperscript{110}. Dandam was imposed on the person who had failed to maintain the lamp in the temple on appointed days. The fine was imposed only the court of justice. Inscriptions belonging to the reigning period of Vira Rajendra (13\textsuperscript{th} century) from Tirumuruganpundi, Avinasi and Venjamankudalur; inscriptions from Avinasi belonging to the period of Vira Ballala speak of the term Danda Kuram\textsuperscript{111}. Kurra Dandam figures in the inscriptions of Jatavarman Sundara
Pandya from Venjamankudalur\textsuperscript{112}. Both these terms refer to the money levied through individual or group towards the crime committed. Sometimes the amount collected through these taxes was exempted and endowed as \textit{Iraiyili} (tax free) to the temple to meet different expenditures.

\textbf{15. Sarigai}

The tax term Sarigai Vari indicates the toll levied on the commodities transported on the highways\textsuperscript{113}. It was usually associated with horses (i.e.) Kudirai Sarigai. It was sungam or a tax collected for the transportation of goods. This particular tax is normally imposed on traders and merchants, who transported the materials from one place to another. The term Sarigai figured in the inscriptions of Vira Rajendra and Vira Vallala from Avinasi\textsuperscript{114}. The term Sumai Sungam also figured in the inscriptions of Vira Rajendra from Tirumuruganpundi and the inscription of Vira Pandya from Avinasi\textsuperscript{115}. This tax indicates the toll (\textit{sungam}) collected on cart loads or head loads. \textit{Taragu Sungam} was levied on the merchandise brought into the locality from outside\textsuperscript{116}. It was normally levied in the toll gates set up in the border between the two regions or the states.

The tax term \textit{Tattoli} figures in the inscriptions of the 13\textsuperscript{th} century from Venjamankudalur. It indicates a tax levied on drummers who rendered services in the temple. It is synonymous to the tax levied on \textit{Uvachars}\textsuperscript{117}.  

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The term *Vettimuta-al* figures in the inscription of the Hoysala king Vira Ballala dated 1232 A.D. This record from Avinasi mentions that the income from this tax was utilized to meet different expenditures to the deity Avinasialudaiyar. The tax term *Vetti* indicates the free labour employed for the public works. This term refers to a type of unremunerated services rendered by the landholders. Services rendered to the government were considered to be a form of revenue. Instead of collecting payments through tax, the individual was asked to render services for public works by the government. Normally services of this nature were supervised by the local authorities and were utilized for the maintenance of irrigational activities, guarding temples and villages, etc. *Mutt-al* is a tax term which means a continuous free labour.

Apart from the tax terms mentioned above, there are several other tax terms that figure in the inscriptions which are shown as a consolidated table in Appendix.

**Revenue Officers**

In the Kongu country the placement of revenue officers is in accordance with the hierarchy followed in the Chola administration. The term *Variyedu* indicates the act of recording revenue accounts and the term *Variyilar* indicates the officer who collected the revenue so as to make
entries in the register. The *Variyilar* officers supervised the entire procedure of making entries on palm leaves. The collection of revenue was maintained by the Kongu Chola officers as per the norms laid down by the tax department. In this way the taxes were collected in the temples of Tirumuruganpundi, Venjamankudalur, Karur and Avinasi etc which have been properly recorded by the revenue officers and utilized for specific purposes in the temples concerned.

In one of the records dated in the 4\textsuperscript{th} year (1210 A.D.) of Vira Rajendra from Karur, it is stated that the order of the king was executed by the officers like *Tirumandira Olainayagam, Viriyilidu, Udankuttam, Vidaiyil-adhikari* and *Variyilar*\textsuperscript{119}. It is also mentioned that the income from the taxes was provided to the deity Tiruannilai Mahadeva of Karuvur. It amounted to 303 ½ of *kalanju*, 1/20\textsuperscript{th} *manjadi* of gold, 3531 *kalam* of paddy and one *tuni* of paddy; which has been mentioned in the revenue register and declared as tax free\textsuperscript{120}.

**Coins**

Coins are indispensable aids and service materials for historical studies. It expresses the art and architecture of that age. It reveals the major achievements of the rulers and the glory of the age\textsuperscript{121}. The economic prosperity of any nation can be defined from the circulation of coins. The
coins found in the inscriptions of the seven temples serve as the basic source to exhibit the economic role. The coins of later Cholas, Pandyas, Vijayanagar kings, Mysore rulers, unearthed Roman coins, and coins belonging to the period of the Kongu Cholas were also mentioned in the inscriptions of their respective periods. References to Kalanju, Achchu, Palanjalagai, Sriyakki, Anaiachu, Sriyakki Palanjalagai, Panam and Pon are commonly found in the inscriptions122.

Achchu

The term achchu is evidently a reference to dye coated coins. The term also stands for the gold coins123. C.M.Ramachandra Chettiar has equated these coins with reference to the number of camps for which each of them was paid as being achchu kalanju = 8 Varagams124. The term achchu has been mentioned in the inscriptions of Avinasi and Tirumuruganpundi. The coins had been used for different purposes like food offerings, maintaining a sandhi lamp by different group of people like merchants, Pillai and Vellalan125.

Anai Achchu

The coin Anai Achchu bearing the figure of an elephant was mostly circulated in the Kongu country. Some coins had the figure of an elephant on
one side and scroll device on the reverse. These coins are supposed to have been issued by the Gangas of Talakkadu. Then they came into use in Kerala\textsuperscript{126}. Some historians believe that these coins were introduced by the most powerful rulers of the Konattar dynasty and it probably spread over the north Kerala Kingdom of Mahodayapuram\textsuperscript{127}. These types of coins were in vogue in Tirumuruganpundi which were used for the sacred bath of the deity.

**Palanjalagai**

*Palanjalagai* was a coin noted in many inscriptions. *Palam* means old. The coins which were issued during the previous rulers but were in circulation during that time might have been named as Palanjalagai. It was almost equal in value with *kalanju*\textsuperscript{128}. Palanjalagai Achchu was found in the inscriptions of Avinasi and Tirumuruganpundi which were used mainly for the purpose of maintenance of sandhi lamps and food offerings in the temples.

**Sriyakki**

There are some references about the coin *Sriyakki*. The Kongu Cholas issued the coins in the name of Sriyakki. It was also known as *Sri Iyakki*. 
These types of coins are cited in the inscriptions of Tirumuruganpundi for the food offerings\textsuperscript{129}.

**Kalanju**

The word *Kalanju* is mentioned in the early inscriptions of the Kongu Cholas. Sometimes the term kalanju was treated as gold weight and sometimes as coins. As a weight the value of kalanju changed in the Chola period. Anyhow the records indicate that kalanju was a coin of standard gold weighing nearly 60 grains\textsuperscript{130}. In the temples of Tiruchchengodu, Avinasi, Karur, Venjamankudalur and Tirumuruganpundi kalanju of gold was offered for feeding of the Brahmanas and for maintaining sandhi lamps, food offerings etc\textsuperscript{131}. From the records it is evident that kalanju was used as a measure to weigh the gold which was donated. During the later period the use of kalanju declined. From these inscriptions the coins are of great value to study the political achievements, economic prosperity and religious sentiments.

**Traders Army**

The flourished internal trade and the wide spread commercial contact abroad forced the Kongu country to have a separate army for its safety and sovereignty. The commodities and the life could be protected by such an
army from strangers and the highway robbers. Such an army for protecting commerce existed in the Tamil country by the traders. From the inscriptions of the seven temples it can be found that various types of armed forces were maintained by the traders.

In an inscription from Tirumuruganpundi during the reign period of Jatavarman Sundara Pandya (1275 A.D.) there is a mention of Adikkiltalam, Anuvantondan-tirukkalam. In Tamil literature the term talam has the meaning of cantonment. There is a scope for treating the Adikkiltalam as cantonment of the trader’s army. In the Kongu country Adikkiltalam had enjoyed political importance. Sometimes they helped the King to collect the taxes from other authorities like Nadu, assembly and the temple. At times they took up the responsibility of executing the king’s orders with regard to land grants. In the Kongu country Dharapuram had served as a famous Adikilthalam for a long period.

Erivirapattanam, a cantonment of highway guard’s settlement also existed in order to protect the traders and their commodities from the highway robbers. (In Tamil the word Eri means route). Hence, Erivirapattanam can be concluded to have been located in the highways. In Perunthokai there are references to skirmishes between the highway robbers and highway guards. Sundarar’s hymns speak about the theft of his goods by
the highway robbers. The Sangam literature mentions *Arakaikalvar*, the highway robbers from the Sangam age onwards. Hence, the traders were forced to have separate arms for their protection, for commercial purposes and to help the rulers in times of need.

**Guild System**

Guild system is an important organisation for the occupational groups and it played a vital role in the economic, social and cultural life of the people. So it is necessary to highlight its active role in the cultural life of the Kongu country. It acted as a network among the various groups and strengthened its relations with the ruling authorities. The guild did a lot for the betterment of the society.

Guild system played a vital role in the life of the people and needs a special study. Guilds were an association of people created for mutual aid or for the pursuance of a common interest. In the medieval period these associations were formed by craftsmen or merchants. The organisation of particular professionals existed even in the Sangam period. Castes and occupations might have been the criteria for membership. Sometimes the labourers belonging to the same caste or other were members of the guild when they practiced the same kind of work. The workers of the same line formed the professional castes. Kongu inscriptions offer many examples of
merchant communities and guilds. The overall contribution of these guilds to the development of Kongu Nadu cannot be underestimated\textsuperscript{134}.

They had their own importance from the ancient time onwards. The inscriptions and Tamil literature mentions about the different types of guilds. The epigraphs from Tiruchchengodu refer to \textit{Tiruvona Ganapperumakkal, Sonattupperumakkal, Tiruvadirai Ganapperumakkal, Duvadasi Ganapperumakkal, Pannirandu Nattu Perumakkal, Ganapperumakkal and Tiruvekadasi Ganapperumakkal}. \textit{Tiruvona Ganapperumakkal} was an executive body. The numerical strength of which is not known. This particular body is similar to \textit{Alunganam}, which might have been the representative of the executive members of the Ur. In the present record the \textit{Tiruvona Ganapperumakkal}\textsuperscript{135} had been constituted to supervise the activities of the festivals that are conducted on the day of the Nakshtra Tiruvonam in the temple\textsuperscript{136}.

\textit{Sonattupperumakkal} means the \textit{Perumakkal} of Sonadu or Chola Nadu. It represented the members of the \textit{Perunguri Mahasabhai}, which normally met in the temple premises to take decisions on various matters. The term \textit{Perunguri Perumakkal} that occurs in the Tamil inscriptions indicates the members of the Mahasabha\textsuperscript{137}.

The Tiruvadirai Ganapperumakkal represents a body which takes care of conducting the Tiruvadirai (Arudra) festival in the temple by feeding the
Brahmanas on that occasion. It is a monthly celebration falling on the day of Arudra Nakshtra\textsuperscript{138}. \textit{Duvadasi Ganaperummakkal} represented the members who executed the grant for the special purposes on the days of Duvadasi-tithi. They had taken the responsibility of carrying the endowment by feeding the Brahmanas. \textit{Pannirandu Nattu Perumakkal} represented the members who executed the grant - 12 kalanju of gold deposited with the assembly for maintaining a lamp\textsuperscript{139}.

**Ayyapolil**

Another merchant group was \textit{Ayyapolil}. The organisation extended almost throughout Southern India and consisted of 500 members. The guild of \textit{Ayyavole} occupies a prominent place in the record of the period. There is a reference to a merchant from Ayyapolil in one of the inscriptions from Tirumuruganpundi, which states that, a merchant by name \textit{Pugalivendan} from Vadaparisara Nadu registers a gift of \textit{10 Sriyakki Palanjalagai Achchu} deposited in the treasury of the temple of Tirumuruganpundi Udayar\textsuperscript{140}.

**Trade**

The nature of communication and transport determine the character of trade and progress. The region consisted of a number of rivers like Noyyal, Bhavani and some of their tributaries. Trade transactions were carried out from one place to another by transportation on rivers. Foot path and trunk
roads like Kongu Peruvazhi, Viranarayana Peruvazhi, Erralurar Nadanda Peruvazhi\textsuperscript{141} and the cultivation of paddy, pulses, pepper, cotton, sandal and the mentioning of tanks and dams, the establishment of Ur, Sabai\textsuperscript{142} paved the way for the development of trade with the neighbouring states and foreign countries.

The mentioning of Adikiltalam\textsuperscript{143} in one of the inscriptions of Tirumuruganpundy attest the fact that when the traders travelled on the highway, they used to stay at Adikitalam. A merchant from Aihole\textsuperscript{144}(Ayyapolil) granted some charitable endowments to the temple at Tirumuruganpundy. Moreover the traders were honourably respected in the society. An inscription form Avinasi during the 29\textsuperscript{th} regnal year of Virarajendradeva describes a merchant called Marudanmudali as Vaniga Chakravarti\textsuperscript{145}, meaning Merchant Prince. Thus the traders themselves had hierarchies of their own and commercial guilds were allowed to have their organisation and army which extended their helping hands to the society and the government.

The medieval records state that there was a settlement of the Chinese for commercial purposes. The records also mention that a well known merchant guild, Nanadesigal Tisaiyirathu Ainnurruvar comprising of popular traders from many countries. The traders from China came and settled in Vijayamangalam and Avinasi. At Vijayamangalam there was a
settlement named Seenapuram. It was considered to be fashionable and prestigious to use the Chinese silk and other goods like Chinese umbrella by the people of this region\textsuperscript{146}. Cotton was exported as a substantial commodity. Kongu region was famous for horses. So it is assumed horses were exported to Arabian countries.

Thus it is evident that the Kongu region attained significance due to its economic development during the time of Kongu Cholas. Their liberal policies towards the natives and the immigrants brought the maximum of lands for agricultural purposes. The irrigational facilities provided to the agrarian people encouraged them to convert large area of this region to fertile lands and this brought sufficient income by way of taxation.

The agricultural expansion helped the traders to enhance both internal and external trade. The taxes were levied and collected without any major defaults. Various types of coins were in circulation. The well defined economic structure paved the way for the emergence of urbanization. The people of this region were aware of the different aspects of economic life. Other rulers who followed in succession continued the distinctive economic activities. All kinds of artisans, traders and agriculturists led a harmonious and peaceful life under the able administration of the Kongu rulers.
CHAPTER III

References


37. *Ibid*.


41. *A.R.E*, No.147 of 1905.


49. *Ibid*.


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62. Ibid., p.57.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.


133. Tevaram, Verse - 1.
136. Ibid.
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143. A.R.E, No. 98 of 1915.
145. Arokiasami, M., op. cit., p. 278.