CHAPTER TWO

The Occupational Caste Groups in Madras

The study of the occupational caste groups in Madras has become an important subject as most of the scholars who are working on the subject concentrate their attention on the merchant groups, despite the presence of many others caste groups. This chapter intends to study the occupational caste groups in Madras, their numbers, their functions and their economic and social position in the society. Although it is very hard to give the accurate numerical strength and their social and economic position, yet an attempt is made here to understand the various problems pertaining to the various caste groups including the merchant groups. However, the Brahmins are not included among the occupational caste groups, as they fall outside the purview of the left and right hand castes. Generally speaking, each caste group occupied different position and exercised different functions in society. However, the caste groups of Madras were seen to be practising different occupations as per the demand of the time. For instance, Paraiyans traditionally were the drummers but they also act as grave-digger, watchmen and scavenger.

Caste and their Numerical Strength

Abbe Carre, a French traveller, who visited Madras in the later half of seventeenth century (1672-1674), reported that there are large number of caste groups inhabiting the ‘black town’ of the city. They were Talliars, Malabaris (Tamil),\(^1\)

\(^1\) Strictly speaking, “Malabari” is a term used for ‘Malayalees’ emanating from the whole of Malabar, which was at that time a part of ‘Madras Presidency’; it is not representing any particular caste. However, it is quite possible that some Tamil speaking migrants in the Presidency who later settled down in the border areas of Palghat (Malabar District) must have secured job positions under the nomenclature “Malabaris (Tamil) and recorded in the Fort St.George.
Parians, Cheriperes, Patnavars, Tuacouas, Chettys, Comities, Pallis, Gavarais, goldsmiths, carpenters, blacksmith, etc.\(^2\) The *Dairy and Consultation* of Fort St. George had listed twenty-nine caste groups inside Madras for the collection of rents for the construction of the ‘Black Town’ walls and the outworks.\(^3\) These caste groups and their share of contribution are listed hereunder:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste Group</th>
<th>Share of Contribution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Chette caste</td>
<td>2000 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Moormem</td>
<td>300 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Quomitty caste</td>
<td>800 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Vellon Warr caste</td>
<td>200 pags</td>
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<td>5. Bellejee Warr caste</td>
<td>350 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Ganlewar caste alias Oylemen</td>
<td>400 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Gellawammee Warr caste alias shopkeeper of sugar and limes</td>
<td>100 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Aggamoodee Warr caste alias brickmakers &amp;c</td>
<td>400 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Comsala Warr caste alias goldsmith</td>
<td>500 pags</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Guzaratts</td>
<td>500 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Kiculla Warr caste alias weavers</td>
<td>20 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Chamom Warr caste alias coincoplyes (kanakpillai) accountants</td>
<td>300 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Polli Warr caste</td>
<td>18 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Sallawarr weaver</td>
<td>100 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Zoningeeewarr alias Chuliars</td>
<td>150 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Saccalawarr alias washermen</td>
<td>100 pags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Gullawarr caste alias shepherd</td>
<td>70 pags</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^3\) *Diary and Consultation*, 1706, p.55.
18. Chomboddee Warr caste alias fishermen ........................................ 10 pags
20. Mongele Warr caste alias barber ............................................. 20 pags
21. Vellambilla alias tonnapas caste ........................................... 50 pags
22. Connadu alias grass cutters .................................................... 25 pags
23. Jandru alias toddy people ....................................................... 180 pags
24. Wande Warr caste alias sampsons caste ................................... 100 pags
25. Sattigurree alias andee chittee .............................................. 200 pags
26. Comra Warr alias pot makers ................................................ 10 pags
27. Correala Warr alias muckquas ............................................... 100 pags
28. Braminys ................................................................................ 100 pags.
29. Pottanapwarr alias cattamaranmen ....................................... 40 pags

Thomas Bowrey also noticed that there were several occupational caste groups in Madras. They were Halankhore castes consisting of ‘sweepers’ and ‘scavangers’ and other lowest castes. He also noted that there are Gentues of barber caste, 4 Chetty caste, 5 Palanquin bearer, Coolies, 6 Conicopy (clerk), 7 Banians, 8 Weavers, Taylors (watchmen), Goldsmith, 9 Bricklayer, Masons, Smiths, and Fishermen. 10

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4 Bowrey, A Geographical accounts of Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669-1679, p.11.
5 Ibid., p.18.
6 Ibid., p.19.
7 Ibid., p.25.
8 Ibid., p.27.
9 Ibid., p.31.
10 Ibid., p.42.
John Fryer, an English traveller in the 17th century visited different parts of the country including Madras, Masulipatam and other places. He had reported the presence of several caste groups in Masulipatam, who were also been seen by him in Madras. He also noted several among the 'gentiles' (local people) who lived on the fringes of the town. Fryer had also mentioned of several 'tribes' inhabiting the town of Masulipatam who were distinguished by their occupation viz; Engravers, Refiners, Goldsmiths, carpenters, and many other labourers, boatmen, Palanquin bearers, and so on.

Francis Buchanan, who visited Madras in early 19th Century, also reported many castes such as blacksmiths, carpenters, coppersmiths, masons, silversmiths, beri merchants, weavers, oil makers, cultivator caste, tanners or shoemakers, calico printers, tailors, Gujaratis, shepherds, blanket weavers, potters, washermen, palanquin bearers, barbers, brick layers. Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, a French traveller, had also reported the presence of many castes of 'idolater' people in India. He also noticed the Halalkhores (lower caste of India). He also mentioned about 'Pauzecour' (Panchama) who belongs to Sriramagapatnam. Panchama is the general name for a class of artisans or menial labourers in Madras but it is possible that he might have confused with Panchgaur or panchaguda, a term which was applied for the northern Brahmin.

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12 Ibid., p.173.

13 Ibid., p.193.

14 The term 'Gujarati' represents the persons – mostly business people – migrated from Kutch, Saurashtra etc., the Gujarati speaking regions falling under the erstwhile Bombay Presidency.


However, he describes *Halalkhore as Panchama* constituting important caste groups in South India.

H.D. Love has compiled the role of various castes in Madras such as Madjustum, Brahmin, Pattnoolkar, Canakar, Vallaler, Reddy, Totier, Mahrasattas, Rakhawar, Toooolowar, Mussulmen, Lubbay, Rajahboots, Pumdauram, etc. They were sixty-nine in number. But they are not the occupational caste groups except the Reddys. However, Love also mentions the presence of 39 occupational caste groups belonging to the Left Hand groups such as County, Vullickar, Moochir, Tellangwar, Purria, Vullawar, Gundapodikar, Ahaumar, etc. Correspondingly, he also listed eleven caste groups belonging to the Right Hand groups such as Chitty, Pully, Chuckler, Kykulwar, etc.\(^{17}\) Similarly, J.Talboys Wheelers' study on Madras also talks about several caste groups inhabiting in the city of Madras such as painter castes, washermen, merchants, catamaranmen, coolies,\(^{18}\) boatmen, Laskars and fishermen.\(^{19}\) Therefore, from the accounts of all sources we come to know of the existence of 149 caste groups in Madras city alone.

The *Census Report of the Town of Madras, 1871* also gives a list of the nineteen ‘caste’ or ‘class’ in Madras along with their occupation:\(^{20}\)

1. Priesthood .................................Brahmins.

2. The Warrior caste...............................Rajpoots.

3. Merchants.........................................Chetties


\(^{19}\) Ibid., pp.249-250.

4. The Cultivators of later immigration........Vallalas.
5. Herdsmen...........................................Golla.
6. Artisans...........................................Kammalan.
7. Weavers...........................................Kaikalan.
8. Accountants .......................................Kanaccan
11. Cultivators of the earlier immigration......Vunneers
13. Washermen.......................................Sembadevan.
14. Fishermen.........................................Sembadevan
15. Palm cultivators .................................Shanan.
16. Lower races......................................Pariah.

On the broader classification of caste in Madras, the Report listed five groups: Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and Outcastes (or Pariahs). Sudras and Outcastes are the main constituents of the occupational caste groups. The Census recognized fourteen Sudra caste groups in Madras such as: 1). Kavarai, 2). Vallalar, 3). Idayan, 4). Kammalan, 5). Kaikolar, 6). Kusavan, 7). Kanaccan, 8). Satani, 9). Vunhian, 10). Ambattan, 11). Vunnan, 12). Sembadevan, 13). Shanan, 14). Other castes. The Census Report had also mentioned 195 caste groups and 657 occupations, which could not be true. Edgar Thurston had also noted the presence of more than 300

\[\text{\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p.80.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{22} ibid., p.9.}\]
castes and tribes, representing more than 40,000,000 individuals, spreading over an area exceeding 150,000 square miles in South India.\(^{23}\) However, he fails to point out the exact numbers of the occupational caste groups.

Despite the presence of such large numbers of occupational caste groups, almost all the subsequent writers on the subjects concentrated their works on some merchant groups particularly the Chettis and Comatis. For instance Sanjay SuBrahminyam\(^ {24}\) concentrates his works on the Chetty merchants such as Achyutappa Chetti, Chinna Chetti, etc. Again, Mattison Mines\(^ {25}\) concentrates primarily on the weaving caste and the caste disputes in Madras. Burton Stein\(^ {26}\) concentrated on the broader definition of the Left and the Right hand castes and the caste disputes between the two groups. On the same vein, Brenda Beck\(^ {27}\) had also focused on the Right and Left Hand Castes. Arjun Appadurai\(^ {28}\) had worked on the Left and Right Hand castes, and focused on the occupational caste groups as well. Kanakalatha Mukund’s work is also on the merchant caste groups\(^ {29}\). Vijaya Ramaswamy works on the weavers and artisan communities in South India, but did not specifically touch upon other groups\(^ {30}\).

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\(^{23}\) Thurston, *Caste and Tribes*, vol.I, p.xiii.


\(^{25}\) Mines, *The warrior Merchants* and his other work *Public face private Voices* talks especially of the weaver castes.

\(^{26}\) See Stein, *The Peasant and Society in South India*.

\(^{27}\) See Beck, "The Right-Left division of South Indian Society".

\(^{28}\) Appadurai, *Right and Left hand Caste in South India*.

\(^{29}\) See Mukund, "The Trading World of The Tamil Merchant".

\(^{30}\) See Ramaswamy, *Textiles and Weavers in Medieval South India*. 
Patrick Roche\textsuperscript{31} works on the caste issues in Madras; but his work is basically on the English Company's role in the shaping of caste institutions in the aftermath of the caste disputes which affected Madras. Susan N. Basu\textsuperscript{32} concentrates her works on the Brahmin Dubashs of Madras. Therefore, we find that none of the scholars has hitherto focused on the role of the various occupational caste groups in South India in general, and in Madras in particular. As such, our endeavours in this work will be to examine the position of occupational caste groups in Madras, their status, position, functions and various other activities in the shaping of Madras as a premier colonial port city.

**Positions and Functions of the Occupational Caste Groups**

Generally, each and every caste occupied different position and exercised different functions in society. However, the caste groups of Madras were seen to be practising different occupations as per the demand of the time. For instance, \textit{Paraiyans} traditionally were the drummers,\textsuperscript{33} but they also act as grave-diggers, watchmen and scavengers. They were also employed in the agricultural field as labourers.\textsuperscript{34} Again, the \textit{Paravas} were traditionally the fishermen,\textsuperscript{35} but they act also as headmen, dealers in cloth, pearl and chunk divers, sailors, packers of cloths, palanquin bearers, peons and

\textsuperscript{31} See Roche, "Caste and the British Merchant Government in Madras, 1639-1749".

\textsuperscript{32} Basu, "The Dubashs of Madras".

\textsuperscript{33} Thurston, \textit{Caste and Tribes}, vol.I, pp.77-78.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., p.115.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., p.140.
who wait about the persons of the chief.\textsuperscript{36} We also know that the Paravas gradually became richer as they started to take to trade and other commercial activities. Further, Fort St. George Gazette, 1906, also mentioned that \textit{Mucchis} work as leather-worker, making saddles and trunks, paintings, making toys and pen-making.\textsuperscript{37} The above examples clearly show that despite the prevalence of the notion of compartmentalized caste occupation, most of the caste groups, in practise, did not concentrate their activities on one's traditional occupation alone. Therefore, it would be pertinent here to bring into the various functions of the caste groups separately.

**The Chetti Caste**

The Chetti caste was very numerous in Madras and played a very pivotal role in its history. The Census Report of the town, 1901, recorded that “Chetti means trader, and is one of those titular or occupational term which are often loosely employed as caste name. The weavers, oil pressers and others used it as a title, and many more take it onto their name, to denote that trade is their occupation”.\textsuperscript{38} Henry Yule wrote that Chetti is a member of the trading caste in South India. Corresponding in every way to the Banian caste of Western and Northern India the “Chetti” was generally classified as a shopkeeper. Further, Chettis were a particular kind of merchant in Madras and were generally very rich.\textsuperscript{39}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.153.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., Vol.V, p.83.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., vol.II, p.92.

Abbe Carre also noticed that the Chettis were the most important merchants of all the merchants in Madras.\textsuperscript{40} Their trade in Madras was 15.7 percent, while that of other lower merchants like shepherd (Idaiyar) was just 8%, and of the Brahmin or Kshatriyas being just 3.2% and 4.9% respectively.\textsuperscript{41} The Chettis also contributed very generously towards the development of Madras. For instance, their contribution for the construction of the city walls, which was 2000 pagodas, shows that they were very wealthy and generous. Among the occupational caste groups, their contribution was very large.\textsuperscript{42} The Chettis were the Company’s Joint Stock merchants in Fort St. George. Some of the Chetti merchants and their shares with the Company are given below:\textsuperscript{43}

1. Eclore Pettee Chittee .............................................. 1 share
2. Ande Chittee ............................................................. 1/2 share
3. Passe Murte Naigue Chittee ...................................... 1/2 share
4. Cornapa Chittee ..................................................... 3 shares
5. Japa Chittee ............................................................ 3 shares
6. Pupalo Chittee ....................................................... 3 shares
7. Rujja Chittee ........................................................... 3 shares

In this way, several Chettis had shares in the joint-stock for mercantile investment held in collaborations with the English company. The Chetti merchants were offered contracts for the post of Chief undertakers and managers. They were

\textsuperscript{40} Fawcett, C., \textit{The travels of Abbe Carre in India and the Near East, 1672 to 1674}, Vol.II, AES, Madras, 1990, pp.593-596.

\textsuperscript{41} Census Report of the Town of Madras, 1871, p.92.

\textsuperscript{42} Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.55.

\textsuperscript{43} Diary and Consultation, 1696, p.143.
Cornapa Chettis, Japa Chettis, Ranga Chettis, Pedde Chettis, Parpantum Chettis and Rama Chettis. Among the Chettis in Madras, there were some wealthy merchants such as Beri Chettis, etc. They were wholesalers of varieties of goods. Malas Cheeti or Astrappa Chetti, Cinnanna Chetty, Balija Chetti, Timann Chetti were all prolific merchants of Madras. Sanjay SuBrahminyam and Kanaklatha Mukund have written extensively on the above mentioned merchants.

Socially, the Chettis occupied an honourable position in the local society. Nonetheless, Chettis had many subdivisions within themselves, such as Beri Chettis, Danagarattu Chettis, the Kusukkar Chettis and the Nattukottai Chettis. Apart from these division, they were also divided into 'Left and Right Hand castes', which was very prominent in South India. The Chetti merchants were placed in the Left Hand divisions. Similarly, Buchanan and Hobson-Jobson, also place them in Left Hand side. It is significant that Beri Chettis and Nakarathu Chettis were the leaders of the Left Hand side, while Buchanan points out that the Panchala group (a group of five

44 Ibid., p.68.
45 Arasaratnam, S., Merchants, Companies and Commerce in the Coromandel Coast, 1650-1740, OUP, Delhi, 1986, p.222.
46 Ibid., p.223.
47 Ibid., p.228.
48 Ibid., p.229.
49 Subrahminyam deals on the wealthy Chetties in his book “the Political Economy of Commerce” pp.300-314; whereas Kanaklatha Mukund also examined the same in her book “The trading world of the Tamil Merchant” in chapter V.
52 Buchanan, A Journey from Madras, pp.77-80.
53 Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce, p.253.
working sub-caste: blacksmith, carpenter, coppersmith, goldsmith and silver smith) had commanded the whole party. Therefore, it can be seen that the Chettis were one of the most influential social caste groups in Madras.

Politically, the Chettis were also very influential. For instance, Kelavi Chetti, Venkata Chetti, Sunkuroma Chetti and Karanappa Chetti were politically very powerful through their honorable position in the Company services. Owing to this influential position, they received several presents from others such as New Year gifts. In 1684 Chena Venkatadne, Timmana, Moodu Verona, Allingall Pilla, Taggpa Chetti, Rammapa, Narrand, Pedde Naigue, Vincate Puttee, Gunala Rangapa, the Mulla and Chene Tombe were said to have received gifts from others. The importance of these persons has also been attested by the popular saying of the time. It said:

*He who thinks before he acts is a Chetti,*

*But he who acts without thinking is a fool;*

*When the Chetti dies his affairs will become public;*

*She keeps house like a merchant women, i.e. economically;*

*Though ruined, a Chetti is a Chetti, as though torn silk is still silk;*

*The Chetti reduces the amount of advances to the weavers for the quantity of silk in the border of the cloth;*

*From his birth a Chetti is at enmity with agriculture.*

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54 Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras,* pp.77-80.


56 *Diary and Consultation, 1684,* p.1.

57 Thurston, *Caste and Tribes,* vol.II. p.95.
Therefore, the Chettis were thought to be one of the most influential, generous, and kindly towards the cultivators who did not practise agriculture, and most importantly, they were loved by others as their death usually become public affair, for the simple reason that Chettis are generally very charitable and a large estate is left upon their death – for distribution to the surviving members of the deceased family and a small portion for distribution to the needy public.

**Komati Caste**

Komati, a great trading caste of South India, also played a leading role in Madras.\(^{58}\) This occupational caste group had good contact with the local power magnates. Economically, they were also very powerful and wealthy. Socially, they were also one of the dominant caste groups in Madras. However, the Komatis were known by different names, which had different connotations. To some, Komati means ‘fox-minded,’\(^ {59}\) and for others, Komati consists “gomati”, meaning the possessor of cows;\(^ {60}\) yet another derivation is “Ku-mati” means “evil-minded.”\(^ {61}\) Nonetheless, the Komatis were big merchants, grocers, and money-lenders. In Madras, they were the principal vendors of all sorts of imported articles. The China Bazar in Madras was almost entirely maintained by them. Many Komatis were cloth merchants and Traivarnikas were almost entirely engaged in the glassware trade. In the Northern

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59 This is in reference to the cunningness of the Komatis in business/trade.

60 One of the ordained duties of the Vaishyas is the protection of the cows.

Circars, some Komatis earned a living as petty dealers in opium and ganja.\textsuperscript{62} There were very wealthy merchants belonging to the Komatis caste such as Tauna Trouvittee, Moolda, Valloore, Aundepau Modela, Pegue Chinniha, Ancilla Deoscitty, Mooraure Ramonsuloo, Maumbullum Chinaragga Vengana, Pocalla Rama Kisna, Gannavarum Ramados, Butsoogounda Rosoloo Parane Pooture Marchapa and others.\textsuperscript{63} Among the Komatis, Kasi Veeranna was the most influential and wealthiest. He was the chief merchant of the Company. Kasi Veeranna had even surpassed all his senior partners.\textsuperscript{64} Apart from this, the richness of the Komatis can also be seen from their contribution of 800 pagodas for the construction of the Black Town walls and outworks, only second to the Chettis.\textsuperscript{65}

As far as their occupations are concerned, they had many sub-division within themselves those specializing in the trade of a particular commodity were: Nune (oil); Nethi (ghi: clarified butter); Dudi (cotton); Uppu (salt); Gone (gunny-bag); Gantha (torn cloth).\textsuperscript{66} Socially, the Komati merchants were the part of Right hand caste.\textsuperscript{67} The Right hand division enjoyed more privileges than the Left hand caste groups. The Komati merchants were the leader of the Right hand caste groups.\textsuperscript{68} Moreover, they employed Brahmin (top on the varna or caste division) for the performance of their

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., p.343.
\textsuperscript{63} Diary and Consultation, 1708, p.7.
\textsuperscript{64} Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce, p.229.
\textsuperscript{65} Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.55.
\textsuperscript{66} Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol.III, p.311.
\textsuperscript{68} Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce, p.253.
ceremonial rites. This shows how they were so important in the society. However, the Komatis had two big division viz; Gavara and Kalinga. There were further divisions within the Gavara and Kalinga, the traditional concept of 'lower' and 'upper' caste did not permit them to intermarry.

At the political level, they were also very dominant. Francois Martin, director of the French Company in the Coromandel Coast, makes interesting point about Verona. He said that Verona “had influence among the officials of the region, and also at the royal court of Golkonda due to the frequent presents and services he rendered”. Major Kisna and Boochee, probably Komati merchants, had also a good relationship with the English officials at Madras in about 1706. Thus, their connections with political elements were very significant during our period of study.

Pertaining to their image and importance in the local society, we can also refer to some of the popular folklores of the region, which read:

A Brahmin will learn if he suffers, and a Komati will learn if he is ruined;
If I ask whether you have salt, you say that you have dhol (a kind of pulse);
Like the burning of Komatis house, which would mean a heavy loss.

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69 Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol III, p.310.
70 Ibid., p.310.
72 Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.3.
The Weaver Caste

Weaver community was one of the most important occupational caste groups in Madras, especially for the European Companies. However, weaving is the profession or occupation of several people belonging to different castes. For instance, Fort St. George records prove the involvement of several caste groups, such as the ‘Kiculla Warr caste’ (the Kaikolan weavers) and the ‘Sallawar’ weavers who belong to different castes.74 Even Podi caste is said to have involved in weaving profession.75 Thurston had also informed us that the ‘Pano’ caste also practises weaving.76 Buchanan had also recorded that the ‘Devanga’ caste were also a weaving community.77 K.K Pillay has given a description of caste of weaver called Kaikkolar. He points out about Kaikkolar as detailed below:

As early as the Sangam age we hear of the Kaikkolar, a caste of weavers. We hear of them in inscriptions and literature beginning from the period of the imperial Cholas. Ottakkuttan, the well-known Tamil poet, was a Kaikkola by caste and he has sung about the Kaikkolas. The kaikkolas came to be known as Mudalis; some of them bore to be known as Mudalis; some of them bore the suffix Nayanar. Some Kaikkolar were soldiers (valperra Kaikkolar). The Kaikkolar have been called Senguntar (red dagger). That indicates their military prowess and warlike traditions. But the name

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74 Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.55.
76 Ibid., vol.VI, p.72.
77 Buchanan, A Journey from Madras, vol.I pp.72-80
Kaikkolan is stated to have been derived from Kai (hand) and Kol (Shuttle). This suggests the traditional association of the caste with weaving.\(^{78}\)

The Kaikkolas as a community have been divided into 72 Nadus of Desams. Of these 44 formed the ‘Mel’ (western) and 24 “Kil” (eastern) Nadus.

Some of the Kaikkola women became dedicated to temples and they became dancers. It became the practise for every Kaikkola family to dedicate at least one girl to temple service. But the kaikkolan dancers were distinct from the Devadasis. However, in the post-Vijayanagar days there were intermarriages between Kaikkolars and Devadasis.

Curiously enough, the men of the kaikkolan caste belonged to the left hand group, but the Kaikkola dancer in the temple was considered to be a member of the right hand.

It is believed that the Nayakan kings of Madurai (eg. Tirumalai Nayakan) were dissatisfied with the ‘quality of cloth woven by the Kaikkolar (counterparts of Tamils) and that they invited Kaikkolas from the Telugu country and settled them in Madurai and farther South. Some of them are said to have come from maharashtra and Gujarat area. They have been known as Pattunulkarar (silk yarn weavers). They became richer and more influential than the Kaikkolar (Tamilians).

Therefore, there was a great mobility in the weaving occupation. However, traditionally, the Kaikolan belonged to the weaver caste, as one can see from the 1871 Census report.\(^{79}\) The weaver’s functions were to make cloths, and dye them.\(^{80}\) It was

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\(^{79}\) Census Report of 1871.

\(^{80}\) Buchanan, A Journey from Madras, Vol.1 pp.208-209.
supplied by weavers to the center.\textsuperscript{81} The spinning, weaving and the sale of cloth were the major economic activity and the entire population was geared to these enterprises.\textsuperscript{82}

Although, Mattisan Mines disagreed for generalities of weaver communities, he argued that their images were constructed wrongly while “The Kaikkolars have been organized for centuries into supra local organizations and have been both a source of wealth for states and at times, an independent power to reckon with. They maintained armies not only to protect their warehouses and caravans but also to plunder to agrarian sector”.\textsuperscript{83} But, it is true that common weaver's economic condition was not good, as cloths were also imported by Yale (Governor of Madras ) for the promotion of the commercial activities in Madras.\textsuperscript{84}

Socially, they were declared as the “Left-hand caste side” because Kaikkolans were unsure at what division they belonged to.\textsuperscript{85} Besides weaving, they also worked as agriculture laborers, tools workers, loom workers, cart-drivers and coolies.\textsuperscript{86} Kaikolan girls were made \textit{dasis} either by regular dedication to a Temple or by the headman tying the \textit{tali}.\textsuperscript{87} Yet, some rich weavers paid them by the piece.\textsuperscript{88} Kiakolan is divided into

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{81} Diary and Consultation, 1683, p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Arasaratnam, Merchants, Companies and Commerce, p.267.
\item \textsuperscript{83} Mines, The Warrior Merchants, p.ix.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Love, Vestiges of Old Madras, Vol.I, p.547.
\item \textsuperscript{85} Roche, “Caste and the British Government”, IESHR, 1975, p.213.
\item \textsuperscript{86} Census Report of 1871, p.81.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol.III, p.37.
\item \textsuperscript{88} Buchanan, A Journey from Madras, Vol.I p.213.
\end{itemize}
many sub-divisions such as, Shanian, Salin, Sedan, Devangular, Padmasali, Jendravan, Saluppam, Senniyam, Goniga, and Neyigi.\(^{89}\)

Politically, they were not as strong as the Komatis and the Chettis were. They had no good contact with the political powers of the region including the Europeans. Matisson points out that they were in a position to grab the power and were very beneficial to the State.\(^{90}\) Regarding their position in society, there were many wise saying such as:\(^{91}\)

1. *Narrate stories in villages where there are no Kaikolans.*
2. *Why should weavers have a Monkey?* (This has been suggested, as it implies that a monkey would only damage the work).
3. *If a dog gets a sore on its head, it never recovers from it and even so a weaver who get a sore on his foot.*\(^ {92}\)
4. *The Chetti lost by partnership while the weaver come to grief by isolation*\(^ {93}\)
5. *The capital of a weavers will not be sufficient to treat even an eye sore*\(^ {94}\)
6. *It is not the loom pit but the grave pit.*
7. *A Weaver who gets a sore on his foot never recovers from it.*\(^ {95}\)

\(^{89}\) Census Report of 1871, p.81  
\(^{91}\) Thurston, *Caste and Tribes*, vol.III, p.41.  
\(^{92}\) This signifies the importance of foot treadles in the loom.  
\(^{93}\) This indicates that weaving involved cooperative efforts since it included process like twisting, winding the threads and preparing the skeins.  
\(^{94}\) It signifies the economic condition of the caste.  
\(^{95}\) Ramaswamy, V., "Weavers folk traditions as a sources of History", *IESHR*, 1982, p.49.
Therefore, it is seen that the weavers were very hard working people who also enjoyed respect in the society as the saying does: “on examining the various occupations, weaving will be found to be the best”\textsuperscript{96}. However, their political and economic standings in the society are quite week as it happened to some occupational caste groups.

**Artisan Caste groups**

Leading artisan caste groups were also prominent in Madras, particularly the ‘Kammalan’ caste, which consists of a group of five. It is also called ‘Panchala’ because it is supposed to include only the five castes of ‘workers in gold, copper and brass, iron, wood and stone,’\textsuperscript{97} i.e. goldsmiths, coppersmiths, brasssmiths, blacksmiths, carpenters and masons respectively.\textsuperscript{98} These castes dominated the metal business in Madras. According to 1871 Census, they were in all 3,588 in numbers. Their percentage to the whole population was 15.7\%. The Blacksmiths were 1,120 in numbers, brass workers 238, and the coppersmiths 53.\textsuperscript{99}

The social composition of blacksmiths constituted a mixture of several caste groups, besides the hereditary blacksmiths. The blacksmiths carried bellows and anvil, hammer and tongs.\textsuperscript{100} These people also supplied wares to the numerous shipyards in

\textsuperscript{96}Thurston, *Caste and Tribes*, vol.III, p.41.

\textsuperscript{97}Census Report of 1871, p.80.


\textsuperscript{99}Census Report of 1871, p.93.

India in the 16th and 17th centuries, particularly in the port town of Narasapur. Thomas Bowrey had noticed blacksmiths in the region during his tour in the second half of seventeenth century. He said: “Many English merchants and others have yearly ships and vessels built here, beinge the only commodious port on this or the next adjoining thereto, visit Gingalee...the best iron upon the coast is for the most part vended here and reasonable rates, with the workmanship alsoe; any sort of iron work is here ingenuously performed by the Natives, as speeks, bolts, anchors, & c....very expert master builders, there are several here who have most of their dependencies upon the English, and indeed learnt theire art and trade from some of them, by diligently observeinge the ingenuitye of some that built ships and sloops here for the English East India Company and theire Agents, saw that they build very well...I must not forget their falseheartedness to our English builders”.

Abbe Carre had informed us of the prevalence of a unified social system among the Kammalan artisans. He noted especially among the goldsmith, blacksmiths and carpenters that “if one of them is offended or wronged, all the others shut the shops and abandon all their works”. Regarding their wages, we have no clear accounts from the available sources. However, we are told that in Tamil Nadu during the eighteenth century the blacksmith and carpenters received a special payment for the work they did when house for the community peasants were built. The blacksmiths belonged to the Left hand caste groups in Madras.

101 Ibid., pp.76-77.
103 Fawcett, The travels of Abbe Carre, p.96.
104 Tchicherov, India’s Changing Economic Structure, p.45.
Goldsmiths were also one of the prominent artisan castes in Madras. They made plate or jewels of silver or gold. Goldsmiths worked in the mint house where they made coins and other required gold products. They also received Tasheif. Jewelers formed a special group of small community of producers during our period of study. However, among Kammalan groups, goldsmiths were economical and socially better than the others.

Carpenter was also an important caste groups in Madras. In carpentry, there were many castes involved. Tacchan, a carpenter caste, a sub-division of Kammalans, was very prominent in Madras. Irchakkollan caste also acted as carpenter. Thus, carpenter occupation engaged many castes but Tacchan was a traditional caste. Socially, carpenter belongs to Left hand caste groups. In 1708 the carpenter caste chiefs were Nina Chief Carpenter, Quallandeepau, Lingapau and Grua Moortee. The carpenter caste also acted as well-wisher of Company servants, particularly W. Bridge; where they informed Bridges that some seaman could attack on in night; therefore, he should not visit. The Company also depended upon the carpenters for timberwork and for repairing the buildings. Seeing their importance, Company also tried to build

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105 Diary and Consultation, 1700, p.89.
106 Diary and Consultation, 1692, p.44.
107 Tchicherov, India's Changing Economic Structure, p.80.
110 Diary and Consultation, 1708, p.5.
111 Ibid., 1700, p.5.
112 Ibid., 1672-78, p.124.
a house for carpenters in the Fort. The Company also made a carpenter yard for carpenter. Company also paid them in advance. The Company also depended upon the carpenters for boat building. Therefore, they were employed by them.

From these facts, it can be said that carpenters were in good position, economically, socially and politically because they had good connection with the Company servants. Kal Tacchan was a sub-division of stone worker caste called the stone-masoners. The Kammalan castes were economically prosperous, which enhanced their social mobility among the more prosperous artisan groups.

The Kammalan caste was highly organized, and its organization has its most interesting features. Each of five divisions had its headman and chief executive officer. Arjun Appadorai and M. Arokiaswami points out that the Kammalans were a humble caste, but they were allowed to live only in certain parts of the village. They were not allowed to take residence in central parts of village, because artisan’s occupation was traditionally regarded as being lower than that of farmer. But this argument was not true in the case of Madras, because they were considered important groups by the English East India Company as mentioned before. Burton Stein also mentions that the artisans are very important caste groups in Madras. However, the

113 Ibid., p.3.
114 Ibid., 1705, p.110.
115 Ibid., 1702, p.93.
119 Cited in Tchicherov, India Changing Economic Structure, p.36.
120 Stein, Peasant, Sate and Society, p.248.
artisan castes had always maintained an animated fight for precedence in Hindu society.

Further, the Kammalans called themselves *Achari*, and claimed knowledge of the Vedas. Their own priests officiate at marriage, funerals and on other ceremonial occasions.

K.K. Pillay also says that an interesting community was that of the Kammalar or smith. There was a legend that they are a product of a mixed marriage. The kammalar call themselves Visvakarma (supposed to be descended from Visvakarma, the architect among Gods) and believe that they are even superior to Brahmins. They call themselves Acharis and they claim to have acquired knowledge of the Vedas. Most of the Kammalars were vegetarians. The Goldsmith's small workshop is called "Pattara" and they claim themselves as "Pattars" for the reason of working in "Pattara". Further, these goldsmiths who have to work in the sanctum and sanctorum of the temples observe vegetarianism to fall in line with Brahmin ‘Purohits’ (Priests).

In the Sangam age, the Kammalar were known as kammiyar and we find references to them in some of the Sangam classics. For example, the Kammalar are mentioned as goldsmiths in Narrinai: 94; 4, 313:2, 363:4, in Nedunalvadai 87 and Purannanuru 353: 1, as coppersmiths in Narrinai 153: 2. It may be noted that the Maduraikkanchi (521) speaks of them as weavers. Later, the Nanmanikkadigai (41:1) refers to them as goldsmiths, carpenters and image makers. From early times they have been the leading custodians and promoters of the fine arts like architecture, sculpture and iconography. In the Chola period, the Kammalar were not only goldsmiths and carpenters, but were also stone masons of high calibre. It is learnt from inscriptions at
Kasuvur and Perur that they were granted certain privileges by some Chola monarchs; but the name of the monarch is not known. The privileges were the blowing of two conches, the beating of drums, etc. Among other privileges granted were the constructions of houses with two storeys and with double doors, the right to decorate the front of their houses with garlands of water lilies and so on. The kammalars were well organized. The five divisions among them were goldsmiths (Tattan), brass-smiths (Kannan), Carpenter (Tachchan), stone mason (kal tachchan) and blacksmith (Kollan or Karuman). The goldsmiths do not intermarry with the kollan or Karuman; among the remainder of them there was free intermarriage. They wear the holy thread. From the age of the Imperial Cholas the Kammalars were members of the Left Hand caste. There are several stories regarding their origin and early position. However, conflicts between Kammalars and people of the Right hand castes were bitter. In Kanchipuram as well as in other towns of Tamil Nadu there were Right Hand and Left Hand temples, Mandapas and dancing girls. The Left hand people like the Kammalars, refrained from any association with the Right Hand counterparts. With the end of the 18th century violent ruptures between the Left Hand Castes like those of the Kammalars and the Right Hand Castes were common. Only a few typical castes are considered here. There were numerous sub divisions among each of them. Always legends were created speaking of the glorious origin of each of the castes. There has been a tendency on the part of all castes to hold aloft high traditions and an eagerness to ascend in social status.  

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Pertaining to Kammalans, there were several folktales ascribed to them, which are given below:

1. *The Gold smith knows what ornaments are of fine gold, i.e. knows who are the rich men of a place.*
2. *Goldsmith puts inferior gold into the refining pot.*
3. *The Gold smith will steal a quarter of the gold of even his own mother.*
4. *When the blacksmith sees that the iron is soft, he will raise himself to the stroke.*
5. *A blacksmith shop and the place in which donkeys all themselves are alike.*
6. *What has a dog to do in a blacksmith shop? Said a man who attempts to do work he is not fit for.*
7. *What if the carpenter's wife has become a widow? (This would seem to refer to the former practise of widow remarriage).*
8. *The carpenters want (wood) too long, and the blacksmith wants (Iron) too short,* (that is, a carpenter can easily shorten a piece of wood with saw blade and chisel, and a blacksmith can easily hammer out a piece of iron).\(^\text{122}\)

The above mentioned popular sayings show their strong economic, social and political status in local society. Accordingly, Goldsmiths' position was elevated while that of the Carpenter and Blacksmith status were weak.

\(^{122}\) Thurston, *Caste and Tribes*, vol. ...., pp.122-125.
Roundel boys or Umbrella Bearer

According to Hobson-Jobson Dictionary that in old English, Roundel was applied to a variety of circular objects, as a mat under a dish, a target and probably this was the origin of the india. This was an obsolete word for an umbrella, formerly in use in Anglo-India. In spite of the circumstances that the word was sometimes found in the form of Arundel. In that form, it appears, the word had been employed for the conical hand guard on a lance, as it mentioned in Bluteau’s great port Dictionary.123 Arundela or Arandella was a guard for the right hand, in the form of a funnel. It was fixed to the thick part of the lance or mace borne by men at arms. The Licentiate Covarrubias, who piques himself on finding Etymologies for every kind of word, derived Arandella from Arundel, a city of the kingdom of England. Covarrubias points out that this word was also applied to a kind of smooth color worn by women form its resemblance to the other thing.124 Even now roundels, usually white, are held for the idols of God during processions on festive occasions. It would be carried by a person holding it up with one hand usually a foot or more above his master’s head directing the centre thereof as opposite to the sun.125 It was on occasions called as Arundel also.126 According to Bowrey “They are very light but of exceedinge stiffnesse, being for the most part made of Rhinoceros hide, very decently painted and guilded with what flowers they best

123 Col.Henry Yule and A.C.Burnell, Hobson-Jobson Dictionary, A glossary of Anglo-India words or phrases and of Kindred terms Etymological, Historical Geographical and Discursive, First Published 1886 and fourth reprint, 2002, Rupa and Company, New Delhi, p.770.


125 R.C. Temple(Ed), Thomas Bowrey, A Geographical Account of the Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, New Delhi, 1993 (First published in 1905), p.85.

126 See the account of John Fryer in Travels in India in The Seventeenth Century(henceforth account), New Delhi, 1993(first published 1873), p.435.
admire”. In foreign travellers accounts the word Roundels mostly occur while referring to the Coromandel Coast. B. Rama Chandra Reddy & Dr S. Babu also point out that another name was Kittysol. It was a combination of two Portuguese words ‘quitta’ and ‘sol’ that means bar and sun respectively. So kittysol means a sun protector. It was made of paper and bamboo imported especially from China. It seems that they were imported from China to India to the Malabar Coast first, where they were used extensively and from there it spread to the other areas. Even in later part of the nineteenth century kittysols were exported to other parts of the world from Chinese port of Macao. Though most of them came from China or made up of paper and bamboo imported from China, gradually the Indian variant made of scarlet cloth came into existence. For making a new kittysol for a governor the material that was used were broad cloth scarlet, gurrah for lining, silk, tassels, bamboo, thread etc. that cost 10 pagodas 34 fanams and 60 casus. Like that of roundel, kittysol was also carried by a

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133 Under the extraordinary expenditure of Benyon, the governor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad cloth, scarlet 1 ½ yards</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-21-00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurras for lining Fa 13-40; silk, 4 seer pags.4, tassels pags.2-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>6-31-40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo 5 fans; thread 4 fans, oil 1fan 20 ca; cooly 8 fans</td>
<td></td>
<td>0-18-20</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

P- F -C

10-34-6
person above his master’s head. Bowrey says that it was carried 3 or 4 feet above a man’s head like roundel.\textsuperscript{134} Kittysols were used mostly on the Malabar and Coromandel coasts in the seventeenth century A.D.

B. Rama Chandra Reddy & Dr S. Babu also point out that another name of Umbrella was sombrero. Though the word sombrero was used for a broad brimmed hat in England, the word was used for a great sunshade in the seventeenth century India. Yule and Burne opined that “It was a summer head called in the Bombay arsenal for a great umbrella”.\textsuperscript{135}

B. Rama Chandra Reddy & Dr S. Babu also point out that there were Chatta and sayuban were name of umbrella.\textsuperscript{136}

**Role of Roundel boys or Umbrella Boys**

The bearers of roundel, ‘kittysol’ and sombrero were often called as roundel boy or roundeler, kittysol boy and sombrero boy respectively. Tavernier refers to hautboys in the service of Shahjahan,\textsuperscript{137} who were also the bearers of sunshades. Often they were employed from underprivileged castes of India in the seventeenth century South India. In Madras presidency most of them belonged to the so called pariar caste often living


\textsuperscript{137} William Crooke (ed) *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier* translated by V.Ball, Delhi, 2000, see footnote no. 1, p.80.
in the places marked for them\textsuperscript{138} their pay was very meager and insufficient to maintain themselves and their families. In 1750 a roundel boy was getting 24 \textit{fanams}, \textsuperscript{139} whereas by 1770 the hire charges of the boy slightly improved and he was getting one pagoda per month.\textsuperscript{140}

\textbf{Policy of the English Company towards the Roundell Boys}

The English company played a very significant role in the lives of umbrella bearers. As we stated earlier that the English company heavily employed the underprivileged castes like pariah caste and other lower castes in the company. B.Ramchandra reddy opined that The English East India Company obtained permission from the British Crown to trade with East Indies. From the first decade of seventeenth century the British made efforts to get trade concessions from the Indian rulers and to establish factories in important trading ports of India. For this purpose embassies were sent to India. One such was that of the royal embassy sent by King James I to negotiate a treaty with Moghul emperor Jahangir in 1615. Reddy quotes from the Bernard Cohn books about The English ambassador Sir Thomas Roe and pointed out that it was instructed by his ruler “to be careful of the preservation of our honour and dignity”.\textsuperscript{141} These instructions were truly followed by the East India Company employees also. So they tried to maintain equality with the royal potent of India. At the


\textsuperscript{141} Quoted in Bernard. S. Cohn, \textit{Colonialism and its forms of Knowledge}, New Delhi, 1977, p.112.
same time they constantly symbolized their aloofness in their dress and demeanor from their Indian superiors, equals and inferiors. In due course of time they opened their factories in a phased manner at Surat, Bombay, Madras, Machilipatnam and Calcutta and began their trading activities.

The English company made some rule for the their Indentured labourers including for Roundell boys, which are the following:

1. The young men allowed in the fort with the peons and the roundels boys.
2. That some pecuniary mulct or fine be imposed or deducted out of their wages for misdemeanours.
3. Absence from public prayers without reasonable excuse to be allowed.
4. Going out of the factory without leave.
5. Not attending the writing office and dispatching their appointments
6. Being found in the drunken, Swearing, fighting, playing unlawful games.
7. Being out of their chambers after 10 clock at night.
8. Going to punch or rack houses without leave and warrantable occasion.
9. Drubbing any of the companies peons or servants.

Streynsham Master, governor of Madras, made the rules for the umbrella bearers. He was about to visit Masulipatam and, therefore, he was very careful about the ceremonial activities and dignity and importance of the office. The umbrella was an important symbol of the dignity and respect. Therefore, he made the rule that "The carrying of umbrellas of state by the Company’s servants in the Fort St.George, and the

142 Ibid., p.111.
143 Diary and consultation book, 1672-1678, p.82.
wearing of arms by foreigners without special licence was prohibited. Among the regulations laid down for the military and civil officers we find: That except by the members of the councell, those that have formerly been in that quality, chiefs of factorys, commanders of the shipps out of England, and chaplaine, rundells shall not be wore by any man in this towne (Madras) without governour's permission; and by no women below the degree of Factors wives and Ensignes wives, except by such as the governour shall permit. This last clause to be put up at Fort gate for publike view.¹⁴⁴

Streynsham Master, governor of Madras, ordered servants for the company in which roundell boys were there. The following were the servants:

1. 8 Rajpoot peons
2. 10 gentues
3. 11 pallankeen boyes
4. 1 Drumer
5. 2 trumpeters
6. 2 Horners
7. 4 Dutyes
8. 2 flag men
9. 1 Quittasal fellow
10. 2 Roundell
11. 1 Arrow Fellow
12. 1 Cook

Umbrella as Dignity Symbol

Umbrella is a symbol of dignity in the Indian traditional society. It has been used by the state as mark of respect for the host as well themselves. Umbrella is also by common men which was different from the state umbrella and others. B. Rama Chandra Reddy & Dr S. Babu points out that "The sunshade is not just an article of covering the head and body from the glare of the sun in India. It also symbolized authority. It is the custom in India to uncover the head and to take off one’s dirty shoes when entering the space of a superior. The same was strictly followed by whoever entering the temple since everybody considers God as Supreme Being. In the seventeenth century, the British came to India as merchants and traders. Soon they obtained permission from the local rulers to construct their factories for the purpose of trade, where they lived without any let or hindrance. In their fortified settlements they behaved as if they were the rulers. The British imitated the oriental rulers in their day to day life especially in times of their public appearance whereas they maintained their exclusiveness in their clothing. Wherever they had authority, they confined themselves to separate quarters often calling the white town (British Residency), where the Indians were not allowed to stay. In that way they maintained their racial superiority and exclusiveness in the seventeenth century. They also monopolized the royal prerogatives and one such was the use of roundel on their heads. In their imitation of the rajas they also gifted and allowed only a few influential Indians of their realm to use the symbol of prestige and following their superiority of the colour, they restricted their use of roundel to the black town. It seems that some sort of discontentment prevailed against the steps taken by the Company regarding the use of roundel.
Thus the sunshades, which were originally meant for protecting people from sun and rain, slowly became a part of prerogative of the privileged sections of the Indian society and later the British, even before their political authority was firmly established here.\textsuperscript{145} He also points out that in a temperate or tropical monsoon climate like India, it is necessary to cover one's head from scorching heat of the sun during summer days. Otherwise there is every possibility of the sun stroke which was fatal even in these days. Indians used various methods to protect themselves from the sun. The much used turbans may not be useful in times of rain. So, due to the local availability of material and external influences, different types of umbrellas came into use in different pockets of Indian subcontinent. But slowly some varieties of umbrellas were made as the exclusive privilege of dominant sections of the society that included the kings, sages and gods in their public gaze. One such was the roundel, which was used in the Coromandel Coast.

\textbf{Cobblers Caste}

Abbe Dubois informed us about the cobblers castes. He says that the Chucklers, or cobblers, were also considered inferior to the Pariahs all over the Peninsula, and, as a matter of fact, they (cobblers) show that they were of a lower grade by their more debased ideas, their greater ignorance and brutality. They were also much more addicted to drinking and debauchery. Their orgies take place principally in the late evening, and their villages resound, far into the night, with the yells and quarrels

which result from their state of intoxication. Nothing will persuade them to work as long as they have anything to drink; they only return to their labour when they have absolutely no further means of satisfying their ruling passion. Thus they spent their time in alternate bouts of work and drunkenness. The women of this wretched class did not allow their husbands to outshine them in any vice, and were quite as much addicted to drunkenness as the men. Their modesty and general behaviour may, therefore, be easily imagined. The very Pariahs refuse to have anything to do with the Chucklers, and did not admit them to any of their feasts.\textsuperscript{146}

The Moochis, or tanners, though better educated and more refined than any of the preceding classes, were the lowest in the social strata. The other Sudras never allow them (cobblers) to join in their feasts; indeed, they would hardly condescend to give them a drop of water to drink. This feeling of repulsion was caused by the defilement which ensues from their constantly handling the skins of dead animals and eating of careasses.

As a rule, the mechanical and the liberal arts, such as music, painting, and sculpture, were placed on very much the same level, and those who followed these professions, which were left entirely to the lower castes of the Sudras, were looked down upon with equal disfavour\textsuperscript{147}.

As far as he knew, only the Moochis took up painting as a profession. Instrumental music, and particularly that of wind instruments, was left exclusively, as


\textsuperscript{147} Those who follow these liberal arts are treated with more respect in these days. At all events, they are not looked down upon with disfavour. There are now many Brahmins in Southern India who are professional musicians, though they play on certain instruments only. - E.D.
he have already mentioned, to the barbers and Pariahs. The little progress that was made in these arts was no doubt due to the small amount of encouragement which they received. As for painting, one never sees anything but daubs. The Hindus were quite satisfied if their artists could draw designs of striking figures painted in the most vivid colours. Our best engravings, if they were uncoloured, or our finest miniatures or landscapes, are quite valueless in their eyes. K.K.Pillay also informs us as follows:

The Chakkiliyar form one of the lower castes. There is no mention of them in early Tamil literature. They seem to have come from the Telugu and Kannada regions. Though they are now Tamil speaking people, their earlier mother tongue was Telugu or Kannada. Perhaps they came to Tamil nadu in the wake of the Vijayanagar invaders.

They are workers on leather. It is their duty to remove the dead cattle from villages. In return the Chakkiliyar have to supply leather for agricultural purposes.

In the Madurai District a distinguishing feature is that the men of the “Chakkiliya” caste belong to the right hand caste while their women belong to the left.

**Bricklayers**

Bricklayers were also a part of kammalans but their role in Madras was very important. In Madras, ‘Agamoosee’ or ‘Agamudian’ members were the bricklayers.

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148 Classes superior to the barbers and Pariahs also play wind instruments at the present time. – E.D.

149 Ibid, p.63-64.

Badaga caste (originating from Nilgiri District) also acted as bricklayers. Bricklayers' function was to construct buildings, repair walls of bricks, plaster, buttresses, and pillars, and measuring the land to build the building or wall. Brickmaker's wages were different. Sometimes, Bricklayers were paid 500 pagodas, and at other times 300 pagodas. It is said that wages depend upon the number of bricks laid and the quantum of the whole work. Nallana was the chief bricklayer in Madras. Bricklayers also contributed 400 pagodas towards the construction of the Black Town walls. This contribution was quite big as compared to their socio-economic status in the society, when many other castes were seen to be higher than them. Seeing their position and contribution, it can be said that they, though belonged to the lower strata of society, had made considerable degree of uplift and contributed towards economic progress.

**Pallers Caste**

Pallers were to be found all over the Peninsula; there were in certain provinces other classes composed of individuals who equal and even surpass them in state of depravity of mind and observance of customs, and in the contempt in which they were

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151 Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.55.
153 Diary and Consultation, 1672-78, p.124.
154 Ibid., p.3.
155 Ibid., 1705, p.110.
156 Ibid., 1683, p.32.
157 Ibid., p.119.
158 Ibid., 1672-78, p.124.
159 Ibid., 1706, p.55.
invariably held. The caste of Pallers, who were only found in Madurai and in the neighbourhood of Cape Comorin (Kanya Kumari/ Nagercoil). The Pallers considered themselves superior to the Pariahs, inasmuch as they did not eat the flesh of the cow; but the Pariahs, in turn, look down upon them as altogether their inferiors, because they were the scum of the Left-hand faction, whilst they themselves were the mainstay of the Right-hand.

These two classes of degraded beings could not ever agree, and wherever they were found in fairly equal numbers, the disputes and quarrels amongst them were interminable. They lead the same sort of life, enjoy an equal share of public opprobrium, and both were obliged to live far apart from all other classes of the inhabitants.\(^{160}\)

**Puliah Caste**

Amongst the forests on the Malabar coast there lived a tribe which, incredible as it might seem, surpasses the two of which he had just spoken in degradation and squalid misery. They were called Puliahs, and were looked down upon as below the level of the beasts which shared this wild country with them. They were not even allowed to build them-selves huts to protect themselves from the inclemencies of the weather and the vagaries of nature. A sort of lean-to, supported by four bamboo poles and open at the sides, serves as a shelter for some of them, and keeps off the rain, though it did not screen them from the wind. Most of them, however, make for themselves what might

be called nests in the branches of the thickest-foliaged trees, where they perch like birds of prey for the greater part of the twenty-four hours. They were not even allowed to walk peacefully along the highroads. If they saw anyone coming towards them, they were bound to utter a certain cry or hooting to signify their despicable presence and to go a long way round in diversion so as to avoid passing the upper-caste passerby. A hundred paces was the very nearest they may approach any one of a different caste. If a Nair, who always carries arms, meets one of these unhappy people on the road, he was entitled to stab him on the spot\textsuperscript{161}. The Puliahs live an absolutely savage life, and had no communication whatsoever with the rest of the world and, for that matter, remain unprotected.\textsuperscript{162}

**Palanquin Bearers**

The portrayal of pre-modern period comes alive with flesh and blood in the vivid description of the great travellers. Apart from being a mine of historical information they spill out minute details on interesting events and persons as first person eyewitnesses. The mode of transport is one such area of absorbing interest. Palanquins were a much preferred, convenient and fast mode of travel. Their varieties and quality of craftsmanship do speak volumes about the associated economic and social components. They were inseparably intertwined with the life style of the age.

\textsuperscript{161} No native was nowadays allowed to carry arms without a licence. But even now the Puliahs were forbidden to approach a person of higher caste. They always stand at a distance of 20 to 30 yards. The higher caste person meeting a ‘Puliah’ on the way is considered ill-omen and the former is apprehensive of the negative consequences in his mission.

\textsuperscript{162} Ibid, pp.60-61.
Dr. B. Rama Chandra Reddy points out those interesting facts like the associated privileges and artefacts clearly vindicate the esteemed position of the wealthy class and the prevalent class distinctions of the period. It is commonplace to identify caste and class distinctions with wealth causing vertical cleavage in the society. Their extended influence percolated even sundry details of life. The usage of palanquin was not an exception to this general rule. Its original, stressing, rigid rules laid down for its usage at the beginning, were later diluted and these privileges were extended to others just below the monarchical segment. The life-style of the palanquin bearers is of much more importance and heart rending. Their hard labour, meagre wages, personal traits and problems of irretrievable debts and their dire consequences run like a melodrama in human history. Their lighter side shines with their indulgence in merry-making and their high sense of creativity in folklore. Their philosophical frame of mind to reconcile to their hard destiny is astounding. Their songs, which serve as elixir to aesthetic ears, echo deep undertones of tragedy and helplessness. Even a desultory study of palanquin and its bearers takes us to the rims of tragic intensity and total resignation of themselves in the face of colonial modernisation. Their wounds and woes get multiplied all of a sudden and even a prosaic survey of the assorted details jolt the reading hearts and minds together. They, too, become panic, dumb and tongue-tied by their sudden swollen pressure of the poverty of the bearers. Their journey is indeed long, tedious and tiresome.\textsuperscript{163}

\textsuperscript{163} Dr. B. Rama Chandra Reddy and Dr. R. Natarajan, \textit{Palanquin Bearers of South India}, Indian Historical Studies, Vol. III, Issue.2, April 2007, pp. 91-103. Chief Editor, T. Sundararaj, Department of History, St. Joseph’s College (Autonomous), Tiruchirapalli, Tamil Nadu.
Palanquin bearers were another major occupational caste group in Madras. Palanquin bearer means a box-lifter for travelling with a pole projecting before and behind which was borne on the shoulders of four and six men. Thevenot described that it was a kind of coach with four feet, having on each side of the ballista, four or five inches high. A backstage was like a child cradle. That machine hang by long poles of bamboo by means of two frames nailed to the feet of the coach. Suppose if a ‘warm’ woman (rich woman) was travelling in that it was covered with velvet. If afraid of rain, the whole palanquin was covered with waxed cloth. In the bottom of the Palanquin, there was mat for seating which moved easily themselves by means of some straps of silk that were fastened inside the bamboo. Every one decorated Palanquin according to their wealth. Some covered with plates of silver and some had only painted with flowers.

Peter Mundy points out that a Palanquin was a sitting box, which was carried on men’s shoulders. Six or eight men required at one time. It was used by wealthy men and women. Palanquin was very comfortable to lie. Mundy says that Palanquin was carried by low castes, called Kahar. They traveled 25 or 30 miles in a day with ½ quintals on their shoulder. Thevenot also noted that four men were required to carry a Palanquin because each of the ends of the bamboo rested upon the shoulder of the

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165 Sen, Surendarnath (ed.), *Indian Travels of Thevenots and Careri*, 1949, p.76.
168 Ibid., p.xxx.
two men and when the journey was long, then some colleagues to take their turn to give relief to the exhausted/tired palanquin bearers in alternation.\footnote{Sen, Indian Travels of Thevenots and Careri, p.76.}

There was no specified community of palanquin bearers. It is difficult to give a concrete status of the palanquin bearers in the society since references to them are just incidental. Ravani and Kharvar, two sub-castes of Kahar in Bihar, Duliya of Bengal and Mahars of Maharashtra were engaged in this profession.

The pompous, splendid and glittering side of the palanquin had a dark tale of woe to divulge about the life of the bearers. The palanquin bearers were called as boyees in South India, which gradually became ‘boys’ in the European pronunciation. The European travellers are not unanimous about the number of bearers who carried the palanquin. Pietra Della Valla says: “It was carried upon the shoulders of two men before and two behind; if the person be light or the way short, two men only bear it, one before and one behind”.\footnote{Edward Grey (Ed). The Travels of Pietro Della Valla in India—From old English Translation of 1664 by G. Havers, (Henceforth Pietro Della Valla travels) New Delhi, 1991 (First published in 1892), vol.1, p.183.}

Thevenot also says that it requires four men to carry a palanquin, because each end of Pambou (bamboo) rests upon the shoulders of two men.\footnote{Surendranath Sen (ed), Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carerie, New Delhi, 1947, P.76.} Bowrey also concurred with these two travellers.\footnote{R.C. Temple (ed), Thomas Bowrey, A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669 to 1679 (Henceforth Bowrey’s Account), New Delhi, 1993 (First published in 1905), P.87.} Tavernier who made extensive travels in the present day South India says “three men, utmost, place themselves at each of these (poles) ends and carry the Palankeen on their shoulders, one on the right and
the other on the left". Thus two to four or six people used to carry the palanquin. Double the numbers of boyees i.e. eight or twelve were employed to carry the palanquin, when the traveller wanted to traverse the distance faster or cover a long distance. So, one batch could relive the other from time to time. They relayed while marching with such adroitness that the change went unnoticed by the traveller. Thus, they would carry the palanquin at a speed of 13 to 14 leagues per day according to Tavernier. He also says that four leagues correspond to one *gos*. A *gos* was equal to 8 to 10 miles in South India. Hence the palanquin travels at a speed of 30 to 35 miles per day and 40 miles per day according to Bowrey.

Elijah Hoole, a missionary, who landed in India in the beginning of the 18th century, described extensively about Palanquin bearers. He points out those four men were required for the carrying of Palanquin. The four men were relieved about every ten minutes by four others. Those who were not actually carrying were running before or behind. The whole party talked, laughed and sings while carrying the Palanquin. They usually move around five miles an hour. The Europeans often dislike this method of travelling but was often indispensable as India was extensive and there was no good road to travel by other means. There were vast jungles and very few bridges. For the local people such occupation was regarded another avenue for employment. The Palanquin bearers were, in fact, very cheerful in the performance during the journey as

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175 R.C. Temple (ed), Thomas Bowrey, *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal 1669 to 1679* (Henceforth Bowrey’s Account), New Delhi, 1993 (First published in 1905), P.87.
Hoole observed. He also said that though they run tired and thirsty through the forty miles stretch during the night they were fully prepared to proceed their journey on the succeeding evening. Six men took his palanquin at the Mission door in Madras, with the intention of performing a journey of six hundred miles. Hoole said that they are ready to travel with him even to Kasi or Benaras. 176

About their nature and social status, Hoole noted that the Palanquin bearer quarreled rarely with the people of the villages through which they passed. Unfortunately, in the end of a stage, they often disputed violently among themselves about various trifles and when they were excited, their language and gesticulations were most vulgar and deprecatory. For instance, he narrated the story about a Danish missionary, who was travelling in a Palanquin. At the end, they quarrelled violently. The Danish missionary understood that they were struggling for money and wanted to kill him. By thinking this, he offered money and his gold watch so that they would spare his life and conduct him safely on his journey. At this gesture they greeted at him very much to his astonishment and led him safely to his destination. 177

Elijah Hoole also noted their caste division within. He reported that their caste did not allow them to eat with each other. During the voyages, one person entrusted with carrying their pots for preparing their meals, which consisted chiefly of rice. 178

The Palanquin bearers were classified into three categories, which were ‘gentoos’,


177 Ibid., p.47.

178 Ibid., p.48.
‘Malabars’ and ‘Pariahs’. The ‘Gentoo’ boys were employed in most of the families. They did any sort of jobs. There was nothing, which had subjected Europeans to more imposition than their religion. The ‘Gentoo’ Palanquin boys were mostly employed in the northern settlements. The same work was done by the Malabars and Pariahs in Madras.

Bearers sang different tunes while carrying the palanquin. They used to sing or hum and others joined to beat the monotony of trekking. They were meant to relieve them of their pain and exhaustion and to rejuvenate their energies. One of the palanquin bearers told his master Falkland “we sing because it lightens the burden and shortens the road, we forget the distance, always improvise the songs according to the circumstances of the road, the weather, the weight, travellers or animals we meet, or people or things we all know about at a distance”. Sarojini Naidu, the Indian Cuckoo, was inspired by their songs and made it as the first poem in her famous book the Golden Threshold. It is worth remembering that she was born and brought up in Hyderabad. The palanquin bearers of Telugu region probably inspired her. The poem runs as follows:

Softly, O softly, we bear her along,
She hangs like a star in the dew of our song,
She springs like a beam on the brow of the tide,
She falls like a tear from the eye of a bride,

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180 Ibid., p.328.
Lightly, O lightly, we glide and sing

We bear her along like a pearl on a string.\(^{182}\)

However, there were complaints that their incessant talking and singing to break the monotony disturbed the sleep of travellers.

The affluent sections of the people, generally, had slaves who were used as bearers without payment. If the palanquin user had no slaves, he was supposed to hire men to carry him. The hiring rates of their labour varied.

Tavernier says that "you pay each of them only 4 rupees a month inclusive, but for pay upto 5 rupees when the journey is long and when they are required to travel for more than sixty days".\(^{183}\) For almost the same period Thevenot says that "they have porters at a very easy rate, for they have but nine or ten livres (an old unit of French currency, equivalent to a pound of silver – prevailing from Mid-16\(^{th}\) C) a piece by the month and are obliged to diet themselves".\(^{184}\) Charles Lockyer, who travelled through Madras around the first decade of 18\(^{th}\) century, says that "their hire was if they (bearers) go not far from the town is three pence a day each, but they are paid more on long journeys".\(^{185}\) The Madras Dialogues states in 1750 that according to Company’s order one had to pay five Pagodas a month for the palanquin boy.\(^{186}\)

\(^{182}\) This is the second stanza of her song entitled “Palanquin bearers” which she wrote during her stay in Hyderabad. See the complete version of the poem in Sarojini Naidu, *The Golden Threshold*, New York, 2004 in www/globusz.com/ebooks/the golden threshold.

\(^{183}\) William Crooke (ed), V. Ball (tr), *Travels in India by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier*, (Henceforth Tavernier’s Account), Delhi, 2000, Vol. I, pp. 38.

\(^{184}\) Surendranath Sen (ed), *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Carerie*, New Delhi, 1947, P.76.


\(^{186}\) Ibid,vol,ii, pp.329-335.
missionary who travelled from Calcutta to Madras in 1836-37, gives another curious calculation”. The expenses with the post-bearers (of palanquin) is one shilling per mile which though dear for the traveller is extremely small sum to be divided among fourteen men”.

Concerning their wages, the Company paid five pagodas a month. The master of the Palanquin bearers was paid one fanam monthly. Love said that Gentoos worked in set of eight, Malabar in set of seven and Pariah in set of six. Their wages were ranging from 1 ¾ to 1 ¼ pagodas per month for each man. English East India Company did provide houses during difficult times to their inhabitants including Palanquin boys. On the whole Palanquin bearers were not in good conditions socially, economically and politically. All the above descriptions about their remuneration clearly reveal that the amount they were getting for their sweat and toil was very low compared to the contemporary standards.

Dancing Girls or Dev Dasi

The courtesans or dancing-girls attached to each temple take their place in the second rank; they were called devadasi (servants or slaves of the gods), but the public called them by the more vulgar name of prostitutes. And, in fact, they were bound by

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189 Ibid., Vol.III, p.15.
190 Ibid., p.328.
191 Diary and Consultation, 1696, p.144.
their profession to grant their favours, if such they be, to anybody demanding them in
return for ready money. It appeared that at first they were reserved exclusively for the
enjoyment of the Brahmins. And these lewd women, who made a public traffic of their
charms, were consecrated in a special manner to the worship of the divinities of India.
Every temple of any importance has in its service a band of eight, twelve, or more.
Their official duties consist in dancing and singing within the temple twice a day,
morning and evening, and also at all public ceremonies. The first they executed with
sufficient grace, although their attitudes were lascivious and their gestures indecorous.
As regards their singing, it was almost always confined to obscene verses describing
some licentious episode in the history of their gods. Their duties, however, were not
confined to religious ceremonies. Ordinary politeness (and this was one of the
characteristic features of Hindu morality) required that when persons of any distinction
make formal visits to each other they must be accompanied by a certain number of
these courtesans. To dispense with them would show a want of respect towards the
persons visited, whether the visit was one of duty or of politeness\textsuperscript{192}.

These women were also present at marriages and other solemn family meetings.
All the time which they had to spare in the intervals of the various ceremonies was
devoted to infinitely more shameful practices; and it was not an uncommon thing to see
even the periphery of the sacred temples converted into mere brothels. They were
brought up in this shameful licentiousness from infancy, and were recruited from
various castes, some among them belonging to respectable families. It was not unusual

\textsuperscript{192} Dubois, A.J. Abbe, Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies, translated from the author's later
French Ms and edited with notes, corrections and biography by Henry K. Beauchamp, Low Price
for pregnant women, with the object of obtaining a safe delivery, to make a vow, with
the consent of their husbands, to devote the child that they carried in their womb, if it
should turn out a girl, to the temple service. They were far from thinking that this
infamous vow offends in any way the laws of decency, or is contrary to the duties of
motherhood. In fact, no shame whatever was attached to parents whose daughters adopt
this contemptible career.\textsuperscript{193}

The courtesans were the only women in India who enjoyed the privilege of
learning to read, to dance, and to sing. A well-bred and respectable woman would, for
this reason, blush to acquire any one of these accomplishments.\textsuperscript{194}

The devadasis received a fixed salary for the religious duties which they
performed; but as the amount was small they supplemented it by selling their favours in
as profitable a manner as possible. In the attainment of this object they were probably
more skilful than similar women in other countries. They employed all the resources
and artifices of coquetry. Perfumes, elegant costumes, coiffures best suited to set off the
beauty of their hair, which they entwine with sweet-scented flowers; a profusion of
jewels worn with much taste on different parts of the body; graceful and voluptuous
attitude: such were the snares with which these sirens allure the Hindus, who, it must be
confessed, rarely display in such cases the prudence and constancy of an Ulysses.\textsuperscript{195}

Nevertheless, to the discredit of Europeans it must be confessed that the quiet
seductions which Hindu prostitutes knew how to exercise with so much skilled faculties
resemble in no way the disgraceful methods of the wretched beings who gave

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, p.585.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, p.586.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, p.586.
themselves up to a similar profession in Europe, and whose indecent behaviour, cynical
impudence, obscene and filthy words of invitation and solicitation were enough to
make any sensible man who was not utterly depraved shrink from them with horror. Of
all the women in India it was the courtesans, and especially those attached to the
temples, who were the most decently clothed. Indeed they were particularly careful not
to expose any part of the body. He did not deny, however, that this was merely a
refinement of seduction. Experience had no doubt taught them that for a woman to
display her charms damps sensual ardour instead of exciting it, and that the imagination
was more easily captivated than the eye. 196

God forbid, however, that any one should believe him to wish to say a word in
defence of the comparative modesty and reserve of the dancing-girls of India! Actions
could only be judged by their motives; and certainly, if these Indian women were more
reserved in public than their sisters in other countries which called themselves more
civilized, the credit was due not to their innate modesty but to national prejudice. In
fact, however loose the Hindus might be in their morals, they strictly maintained an
outward appearance of decency, and attached great importance to the observance of
strict decorum in public. The most shameless prostitute would never dare to stop a man
in the streets; and she, in her turn, would indignantly repulse any man who ventured to
take any indecent liberty with her. The man who behaved familiarly with one of these
women in public would be censured and despised by everybody who witnessed the
scandal; was it the same among ourselves? 197

197 Ibid, p.587.
After the dancing-girls came the players of musical instruments attached to the service of the temples. Every pagoda of any importance always had a more or less numerous band of them. They, as well as the dancing-girls, were obliged to attend the temple twice a day, and to fill it with discordant sounds. Their presence at all feasts and ceremonies was likewise obligatory. Moreover, they could not be dispensed with during the great family feasts and ceremonies. The Hindu taste for music was so marked that there was not a single gathering, however small, which had not some musicians at its head. 198

Those who were regularly attached to a pagoda receive a fixed salary. The instruments on which they played were for the most part clarionets and trumpets; they had also cymbals and several kinds of small drums as percussion instruments. The sounds produced by these instruments were far from pleasing, and might even appear hideous to European ears. The Hindus recognized a kind of harmony, however, in two parts: they have always a bass and a high counter-tenor or alto. The latter was produced by a wind instrument in the form of a tube widened at its base, the sounds of which had some resemblance to those of the bagpipe. 199

The vocal part was executed by a second band of musicians, who took turns with the dancing-girls in singing hymns in honour of the gods. Sometimes the Brahmins and other worshippers form the chorus, or sing separately sacred poems of their own composition or, in most cases, those songs of devotional nature composed by

199 Ibid, o.588.
Saint Tyagaraja and other celebrated Musicians (e.g. Tanjore quartlets, Maharaj Swati Tirunal etc.).

The nattuva, or conductor, was the most remarkable of all the musicians. In beating time he tapped with his fingers on a narrow drum. As he beats, his head, shoulders, arms, thighs, and, in fact, all the parts of his body perform successive movements; and, simultaneously, he utters inarticulate cries, thus animating the musicians both by voice and gesture. At times, one would think he was agitated by violent convulsions.\textsuperscript{200}

The whole musical repertoire of the Hindus was reduced to thirty-six airs, which were called ragas; but most of the musicians hardly know half of them.

Hindu music, whether vocal or instrumental, may be pleasing to the natives, but I did not think it could give the slightest pleasure to anyone else; however, little sensitive be his ear. Hindu musicians learned to play and sing methodically; they keep excellent time; and they had, as we have, a variety of keys. In spite of all this, however, their songs have always appeared to me uninspiring and monotonous, while from their instruments He has never heard anything but harsh, high, and ear-splitting sounds.\textsuperscript{201}
The reasons are not far to seek – cultural barriers inability to understand the language and grasp the meanings of words; and not accustomed to hearing Indian classical music and witnessing rendition of dance performance.

On the days of procession the car was adorned with coloured calicoes, costly cloths, green foliage, garlands of flowers, etc. The idol, clothed in the richest apparel

\textsuperscript{200} Ibid, p.588.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid, p.589.
and adorned with its most precious jewels, was placed in the middle of the car, beneath an elegant canopy. Thick cables were attached to the car, and sometimes more than a thousand persons as devotees were harnessed to it voluntarily. A party of dancing-girls were seated on the car and surround the idol. Some of them fan the idol with fans made of peacocks feathers; others wave yak tails gracefully from side to side. Many other persons were also mounted on the car for the purpose of directing its movements and inciting the multitude that drags it to continued efforts. All this was done in the midst of tremendous tumult and confusion. In the crowd following the procession – both men and women – were indiscriminately mixed up, and liberties might be taken without entailing any consequences for they are all in a state of devotion and there is no room for any cynical thought or vicious action in such a religious ceremony.

The procession advances slowly. From time to time, a halt was made, during which a most frightful uproar of shouts and cries and whistlings was kept up. The courtesans, who were present in large numbers on these solemn occasions, performed obscene dances; while, as long as the procession continues, the drums, trumpets, and all sorts of musical instruments gave forth their discordant sounds. On one side sham combatants armed with naked sabres were to be seen fencing with one another; on another side, one saw men dancing in groups and beating time with small sticks; and somewhere else people are seen wrestling. 202

Watchmen

Watchmen were also an occupational caste group, whose real role was very important in Madras. The *Taliar* caste people functioned as watchman traditionally in the region. The word ‘Taliar’ was derived from ‘talai’, which means ‘head’, a chief watchmen. 203 The Talajari or Chief watchman was a kind of policeman who was generally known as the ‘talari’. Watchmen had other duties also, that is, to follow on the track of stolen cattle, to act as a guard over persons, and to serve process and detrain goods. 204 H.D. Love also points out that ‘Talliar’ means watchmen and they act as watch and guard. 205

Watchmen were appointed in the city of Madras for preventing robberies and other disorders in the city, 206 from the time of the first settlement. 207 Abbe Carre noted that Talliars are a caste of bandits who lurked in the mountains and woods during the day and ravaged the countryside at night. 208 The Talliars were living like savages, cut off from all connection with the towns. 209 Not only in Madras, but also, all over India, these watchmen were not generally respected and did not have good reputation. 210 The English East India Company employed them and gave them importance but politically, socially and economically they were weak.

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203 Yule, Hobson-Jobson, pp.718-719.
204 Thurston, *Caste and Tribes*, vol. II, p2.
208 Ibid., vol.II, p.583.
209 Ibid., p.589.
210 Ibid., p.583.
The Chief Watchman: THE PEDDA NAIGUE.

A native functionary of some importance in Madras was the Pedda naigue, chief of the talliars of watchmen, who were the earliest form of police. His duty was to maintain a fixed establishment of peons, and to be responsible for the preservation of order in the Black town and pettahs. He could arrest brawlers and confine them, pending their appearance at the choultry Court. In the event of the commission of robbery, he was bound to compensate the sufferers. His office, like that of the Town conicopy, was hereditary. It had doubtlessly existed in the village of Madraspatam from time immemorial, and was recognized by the British from their first settlement. The earliest reference to the Pedda Antigua in the records occurs in the Painters and Weavers; declaration of 1654,211 where mention is made of 'Peddy Naigues house, and his free grounds in the village, and Duties on the fishermen of Madraspatam.' This village was the Potters' Hamlet of Comerpetta, afterwards called Pedda Naick Petta, in which land was assigned to the Chief Watchman as remuneration for the performance of his duties. He was also entitled to petty dues, paid in kind, on grain and fuel brought in from the country, and on fish caught in the roadstead and river. The following cowle given by Agent Chamber in 1659 was produced to the Council and recorded in 1686.212

"The Worshipfull Thomas Chamber his cowle given to Pedda Naigue.

Whereas formerly you watched our Towne with 20 Peons, and having not sufficient maintenance allowed to content you, for 2 or 3 Yeares you left that

211 O.C., No. 2542 of 1654.
212 Diary and Consultation, 1686, p.
Employment, Saying also that 20, Peons, the Town being greater than formerly, were not sufficient to watch it; wherefore we made this agreement with you as followeth, vizt.

'That moorte Nagues Son, Timmapa, Shall build a house and dwell in the towne, and watch the Said Town with 50 Peons, and for the said service you shall be allowed the following duties, Vizt.-

'That you shall have 18 paddy fields given you rent free... [Then are enumerated petty dues on provisions, &c.]

'Also that the 50 Peons aforesaid shall be employed about the Town, as he that hath the charge of the Choutree shall think fitting. And if any man shall be delivered by us into your Custody, and shall make his escape, that you shall pay debt the person escaped owed. Also, that if we should go abroad at any time to take our pleasure, you shall procure 100 or 150 Peons to accompany us. And if occasion shall require 150 or 200 Peons, your Timmapa, with the Said peons, shall go upon what employment we shall send him, and also allow them 4 dayes batty, but if we should detain them longer, then we are to give them batty. Also, that if any house is robbed, you shall make satisfaction for what is lost. And if any Merchant or Inhabitant of this town shall run away, and any of your people, having knowledge thereof, shall conceal it, then you are to bring that party run away again, and correct him that knew of his departure. This being the Cowle given you by us, you being peaceably and quietly to take your duties aforesaid, and to do the Company what Service you are able”.

Sir William Langhorn has also passed order in favour of the Chief Watchman.

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213 Batty, ‘Batta,’ from Hind. Bhata, an extra allowance.
"In Paddy Bancksall the former allowance was –Custome for the Gentu pagoda, for every heape of paddy, one measure: for Pedda Naigue the watchman, on every great ox-load of paddy, ¼ measure; for small ox-load ½ measure...

'The allowance of sea fish was: for every great nett. 5 fish to the Honble catch with a hooke, one fish for the company, and one for Pedda Naigue, the watchman'. 214

Washermen

Washermen were also another leading occupational caste group in Madras. They were known as ‘dhobi’, a term derived from ‘dhoba,’ which in Sanskrit, ‘dhav’, means to wash. 215 They followed no other profession but of washing. 216 According to Census Report of 1871, washermen were called as Sembadivan and also Vunnan. 217 Buchanan says that ‘Agasa’ were washermen, 218 while Fort St. George records referred to them as ‘Saccala warr’. 219

As to the washermen, their business was much the same here as everywhere else, except for the extreme filthiness of the rags that are entrusted to them to be cleaned.

Those engaged in these two occupations were in such a dependent position that they dared not refuse to work for anyone who choosed to employ them. They were paid

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217 Census of 1871 p.82.
219 Diary and Consultation, 1706, p.55.
in kind at harvest time by each inhabitant of their village. No doubt the contempt in which they were held by men of other castes, who looked down upon them as menials, was due partly to this state of subjection, and also to the uncleanness of the things which they were compelled to handle.²²⁰

However, washerman was extremely important for the Company. The English Company decided that between 'gentu town' or the 'black town' and the 'potters town,' there was a river which was extremely useful for the Company's washermen who daily wash, dry their calicoes. Not only this, the Company also ordered that "Justice of the Choultry should clear as much as possible of the ground or sand on the North side of river on either side of Mr.Edward Henry's house and garden, from the houses and gardens that might be useful for the washers".²²¹ In a sort of protest, the washermen opposed to make contract with the East India Company and forced the latter to provide a proper space for washing.

The washermen also were given money in advance for curing the Company's cloth.²²² But the washermen complained for being paid low prices while they washed lots of cloths. They also complained to the Company to increase the number of washermen as they are not able to wash them all. The Company brought washermen from other parts of the country. The Company noted: "we shall extremely want washers to cure the cloth, for their encouragement we have settled the following prices viz:"²²³


²²¹ Diary and Consultation, 1672-78, p.76.

²²² Ibid., 1706, p.3.

²²³ Diary and Consultation, 1700, pp.85-86.
1. Long cloth ..................................... Pags : l : Fan corge.
2. Long cloth Midling ........................ Pags:1:4 Fan corge.
3. Long cloth Fine .............................. Pags,1:10 Fan corge.
5. Salampores Midling ........................ pags : 16 Fan corge.
6. Moorees fine ................................. Pags : 12 Fan corge.
7. Moorees Ordinary .......................... Pags :10 Fan corge.
8. succatnums ................................... Pags :23 Fan corge.
12. Ditto ...50 ................................................. Pags : 25 fan corge.

The above facts show that washermen were in a position to bargain with the Company. Despite this good relationship, the washermen made serious complaints against their chief washerman Narso. The allegation was that, he was a cheat who did not give their wages, and abused them. Therefore, the Company ordered that Roggiah, Saugie and Coopah would be three chief washermen and that head in the General Book be changed from Narso to Roggiah, Saugie and Coopah as chief washermen.224

The following folktales can be attributable to the Washermen in South India:225

1. *Get a new washerman, and old barber.*

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224 Ibid., 1693, p.15.
225
2. *The washerman knows the defects of the village* (i.e. he learns a good deal about the private affairs of the various families when receiving and delivering the cloths).

3. *When a washerman gets sick, his sickness must leave him at the stone.* (The stone referred to here is a large stone, on which the washerman cleans cloths, and the proverb denotes that, whatsoever sick a washerman may be, his work must be done).

Seeing the above facts, it could be said that they were in bargaining position at least with the English East India Company. Their social position was not good; as Buchanan says, they were not allowed to sit and eat with the other persons from the higher castes. They were highly divided within and not permitted to inter-marry. The washermen were not respected and belonged to the most ignorant caste.\(^\text{226}\) Thus, they were socially ignored caste. Economically, they were not so dominant, but during the East India Company’s time, they improved their status.

**Barbers or Hair Dresser**

Ambattan was the name of the barber, through the ages. He was also known as Navidan (In later times he came to be known as Pariyari, Kudimagan and Panditan. The barber in due course became a musician; particularly a player on the pipe. Quite often he was a medicine man, having a knowledge of the Ayurveda system of medicine. The Ambattan women have been for ages the midwives in the Tamil country. There was a legend that the Ambattans are the descendants of the offspring of a Vaisya woman by a Brahmin. It was interesting to find that Manu has accorded a curiously

high position to the Ambattan. According to him, Brahmins may eat food prepared by a barber; within the precincts of a temple of Jagannath was a barber. There were both Saivites and Vaishnavites among Ambattans; but the majority are saivites. The vaishnavites were always vegetarians and teetotallers. However, the vaishnavites and saivites among the Ambattans intermarry. Widow remarriage was prohibited among the Ambattans.

The Ambattans belong to the Right Hand group of castes and do not eat with the komatis and kammalans or food given by the komatis or kammalans, both of whom belong to the left. However, they have no objection to shave komatis or kammalans. 227

The barbers business was to trim the beard, shave the head, pare the nails on hands and feet, and clean the ears of all the inhabitants of his areas. Most of the barbers shave the under arm of their customers privately. In several of the southern provinces the inhabitants had all the hair on different parts of their bodies shaved off, with the exception of the eye-brows; and this custom was always observed by Brahmins on marriage days and other solemn occasions. The barbers were also the surgeons of the country. Whatever be the nature of the operation that they were called upon to perform, their razor was their only instrument, if it was a question of amputation; or a sort of stiletto, which they used for paring nails, if they have to open an abscess, or the like. They were also the only accredited fiddlers; and they shared with the Pariahs the exclusive right of playing wind instruments, as will be seen presently. 228


Painters

Another important occupational caste group was that of the Painter, who drew patterns and painted them on calicoes. In the English factory were dyed mostly blue cloths, having above 300 jars set in the ground for that work. Also, the painters made many of their best painting here in the 17th century. The Portuguese applied the term “Pintado” to any cloth with a spotted or other designs. Paintings, chintz, on which the coloured design was imprinted by hand with wooden blocks or traced by hand and painters were chintz designers and stampers.

The caste composition of the Painter was disputed. Abbe Carre referred to them as the Palli caste. The English Factory records speak of a dispute between the painters and Pallis. The Records of Fort St. George also indicated that “Painter castes” and “Palli Caste” were different, because they had different signs and symbols. For Thurston Pallis were mainly agriculturist castes, but they were not confined to this occupation. They were engaged in a variety of occupations such as merchants, cultivators, painters (printers), lascars, sweetmeat vendors, flower vendors,

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229 Yule, Hobson-Jobson, p.139.


234 Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol. VI, p.6.
fitters, sawyers, oil-pressers, gardeners, polishers, bricklayers and masons.\textsuperscript{235} Hence, Abbe ‘Carre’ did not understand them correctly, as Pallis were also involved in paintings. However, painters also painted ships, clay goods,\textsuperscript{236} and their wages depended on the nature of work done by them (fine or rough).\textsuperscript{237}

The Painter castes played a significant role in developing Madras as they tried to collect capital for Fort St. George.\textsuperscript{238} Socially, the painter caste (Pallis) belonged to the left hand section.\textsuperscript{239} Among the Pallis, there was also one section who were the beggars, called \textit{nokkan}.\textsuperscript{240} Thus, Pallis (painters) were economically, socially and politically one of the most servile groups in Madras.

\textbf{Coolies and Peons}

The caste of Coolies was also an occupational caste group in Madras. Coolly means hired labourers, or burden carrier. In upper India, the term had been frequently used for the lower class of labourers who carried earth brick as distinguished from the digger. The word appeared to have been same as gentle. The name \textit{kuli} of a race or castes in western India meant savagery. The application of the word would mean a slave, captured and made a bonded servant in South India. There is a word ‘kuli’ in

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{235} Ibid., p.17.
\item \textsuperscript{236} \textit{Diary and Consultation}, 1703, p.14.
\item \textsuperscript{237} Ibid., p.22.
\item \textsuperscript{238} Ibid., 1686, p.5.
\item \textsuperscript{239} Ibid., p.16.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Ibid., p.17.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Tamil and Canarese in commonly used, signifying ‘hire’ or wages.\textsuperscript{241} The term ‘Cooly’ also denoted the kahar who were Palanquin bearers in North India. They traveled 25 or 30 miles a day. During carrying, they run.\textsuperscript{242} Coolies were the most subjected caste group in India. They were servile labourers who earned their living by a meagre wages. They are Hindus, ancient inhabitants of the country, and had a reverence for the cow. They did not make distinction of meats and drinks. They did not eat meat at all.\textsuperscript{243} Collies were also hired by other countries.\textsuperscript{244} Company also fixed their wages to hire laborers and chief cooly.\textsuperscript{245}

The Rates for coolly hire and the Dustoory out of the same are given below:

To MetchelePatan (Machilipattam) each coolly 1: Pags; Dustoory 2: Fans

To Golcondah (Golconda) each colly 1 ½ Pags : Dustoory 3; Fans.

To Soundy each colly ¼ Pags; Dustoory 1 ½ Fans.

To Nelloor (Nellore) each colly; 14:Fans : Dustoory 3/4Fans.

To Carrenda each colly 19: Fans Dustoory 1 Fans.

To Ramapatam each colly 18: Fans: Dustoory1: Fans.

To Oudcore each coolly 13: Fans: Dustoory ¼; Fans.

To Armagon each cooly 8:Fans: Dustoory3/8;Fans.

To Policat (Pulicat) each coolly 3: Fans : Dustoory ¼ ;Fans.

To Trevilore Battee and 3: Fans; Dustoorry ¼ : Fans.

\textsuperscript{241} Yule, \textit{Hobson-Jobson}, p.250.


\textsuperscript{244} \textit{EFI, 1665-1667}, p.91.

\textsuperscript{245} \textit{Diary and Consultation, 1680}, p.42
To Congee Voraum each colly 5: Fans: Dustoory 3/8 fans

To Veloor (Vellore) each coolly 18: Fans: Dustoory 1; Fans

To Chengy (Chengalput) each coolly 16: Fans: Dustoory 1; Fans

To Tripitee (Tirupati) each coolly 18: Fans: Dustoory 1; Fans.

To Trincumber each coolly 18: Fans: Dustoory 1; Fans.

To Porto Novo each coolly 12: Fans: Dustoory 2/3 Fans.

To puddicherree (Pondicherry) each coolly 12: Fans: Dustoory 2/3 Fans.

To Sadrasspatam each coolly 4 Fans: Dustoory 1/4 Fans.

The chief coolies were Pundula Grua and Woundda Nasso and their wages were 20 pangs per month.246 Emaun colly was also a chief Cooley. He had a good relation with Nawab Zulfikar.247 Emaun colly is also said to have good relations with the chief Dubashes of Madras.248 He had certain privileges in Madras.249 Despite his relation with Nabob and Dubash, there were several complaints against him that he used several people unkindly. He could not proceed his business according to peons.250 However, Emaun Cooly was granted freedom from rent in Madras. This grant was given by the Prince.251 There were also important coolies such as, Issa cooly252 and Rasasa cooly whose role was also important.253 The chief coolies were trying to

246 Diary and Consultation, 1680, p.42.

247 Ibid., 1696, p.28.

248 Ibid., 1694, p.11.

249 Ibid., p.15.

250 Ibid., p.117.

251 Ibid., 1692, p.5.

252 Ibid., 1694, p.18.

253 Ibid., p.29.
develop the Madras city, when Fort St. George was in developing stage.\textsuperscript{254} Except some Coolies, like the Emaun colly, the condition of the coolies were deplorable politically, socially and economically.

The role of Peon was also certainly important in Madras at least for English East India Company as an occupational caste group. The job description of a Peon is "a footman, an armed messenger, an orderly\textsuperscript{255} a foot soldier,\textsuperscript{256} labourer\textsuperscript{257} and one who acts as a watchman.\textsuperscript{258} The English Company appointed Talliers and peons to watch persons, arrest them if found guilty and carry them to the next guard where the officer of the guard shall examine and if he did not provide satisfactory answers he was finally carried to Justice of peace. If any person shall oppose, abuse or fight even at night, he shall be arrested and should undergo the same process.\textsuperscript{259}

The appointment of peons as watchmen to the city was important as there were many reports of robberies and burglaries committed both within the walls and in the black towns and of other social disorders.\textsuperscript{260} Peon's employment was based on the city's extension and security. Formerly, peons were only 20, but later on they were increased to 50 peons,\textsuperscript{261} but for the delivering of paddy or rice, peons were employed

\textsuperscript{254} Ibid., 1686, p.5.
\textsuperscript{255} Yule, *Hobson-Jobson*, p.528.
\textsuperscript{257} *Diary and Consultation*, 1683, p.74.
\textsuperscript{258} Ibid., 1701, p.109.
\textsuperscript{259} Ibid., 1693, p.147.
\textsuperscript{260} Ibid., p.146.
\textsuperscript{261} Ibid., 1686, p.97.
largely, and sometime could be 150 or 120 peons.\textsuperscript{262} Peons also received prizes as a soldier and guard.\textsuperscript{263} They were categorized as servants and on the basis of occupation for which they were employed. Streynsham Master employed 12 peons as servants.\textsuperscript{264} Peons were also employed as Pattamars (a foot messenger). Despite their hard work, peon's wages were only 1 pagoda per day.\textsuperscript{265} Conclusively, they were not powerful caste socially, politically and economically.

**The Fishermen**

Mallah, Tiyar, etc.) traditionally associated with water-based occupations such as fishing, river faring, water-based transportation, desilting wells, singhara (water-chestnut) farming, and so on. This occupational affinity, combined with a common geographical niche on the fringes of agrarian societies, has resulted in shared histories and pasts, and more recently, for political reasons, in the assumption of an overarching Mallah identity, submerging regional and caste differences. The term 'Nishad', a term which dates back to Vedic times and has its origins in classical Sanskrit texts, is used by informants interchangeably with Mallah.\textsuperscript{266}

\textsuperscript{262} Ibid., p.98.
\textsuperscript{263} Ibid., 1692, p.8.
\textsuperscript{265} Love, *Vestiges*, III, p.15.
\textsuperscript{266} Smita Tewari Jassal, Caste and the colonial state: Mallahs in the census, *Contributions to Indian Sociology 2001*; 35; 319.
**Lamp-Bearers**

The English company has created a new occupation in the company that was the ‘Lamp-Bearer’. Those who carried the lamp which provided light to the company’s officials, worker or general people, were called Lamp-Bearers. H. D. Love provided the information that The English company fixed at lamps the following places which were supposed to have been carried by lamp-bearers. He informs us as follows; 267

‘The number of Lamps to be fixed in the following streets:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Street</th>
<th>Lamps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Middle Gate (Street)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choultry Gate (Street)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Alley</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York Street</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloucester Street</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King’s Street</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. George’s Street</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Square, out and inside</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For the Parade</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church, Company’s Godown</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sea Gate and Lines</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Street</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. James’s Street</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

267 Ibid, p.15.

268 King’s street. Probably an alternative name for Palace Street.

269 St. George’s street. The Street leading from the parade to the west gate.

270 St. James’s street. The Committee lost sight of the name origin of James street.
St. Thomas’s Street ----------------------------------------------16 Lamps.
Under the South Curtain ---------------------------------------7 Lamps.
Hanover Square\textsuperscript{271} ---------------------------------16 Lamps.
Portuguese Square and Passage----------------------------------10 Lamps.
Church Row\textsuperscript{272} ---------------------------------10 Lamps.
From Mr. Stratton’s House to Mr. Adams’ House\textsuperscript{273}------3 Lamps.
Total Number of Lamps ----------- 22 7

\textbf{Pariah Caste}

Another important occupational caste group in Madras was a ‘Pariah’ caste. They played a very significant role. ‘Pariah’ means a hereditary drum beater. It is derived from ‘tam’. Pariah means ‘drum’. The term ‘Pariah’ had been extended to include all the lowest caste members who in the city of Madras numbered one-fifth of the population.\textsuperscript{274} A Pariah who was servant and whose office was hereditary, inherited their profession from father to son.

The contemporary writings are full of derogatory and deprecatory language against the Pariahs. For instance Bowrey puts that: “The Pariahs are the vilest caste of all”. “Buy me...as slave boy...let him not be of Pariah, but a good caste”.\textsuperscript{275} H.Kotani, a great scholar of inscription in South India, pointed out that above Paraiyas are, in

\textsuperscript{271} Hanover Square. A residential square in the south west angle.
\textsuperscript{272} Church Row. A crossway by St. Mary’s connecting St. Thomas Street with Charles Street.
\textsuperscript{273} George Stratton, a member of council, and Reynold Adams, master Attendant.
\textsuperscript{274} Yule, \textit{Hobson-Jobson}, p.680.
\textsuperscript{275} Bowrey, \textit{A Geographical Accounts}, p.41.
ascending order, watchman, washerman, barber, potter, goldsmith, carpenter, blacksmith, oilmerchant, weaver, merchant and others. While below Pariahs, in descending order, are soldiers (sarvakkarar) and toddy tapper (Ilampunjai) and cobbler (chucklers) only. Apart from these, pariahs were not admitted in the temple. Even they were not allowed to take water from public well. This confirmed what Yule said that “low caste Hindoos in their own land, to all ordinary apprehension, slovenly, dirty, ungraceful, generally unacceptable in person and surrounding. Yet offensive as is the low caste Indians, were I estate-owner or colonial governor, I had rather see the lowest Pariah of the low, then a single trim, smooth-faced, smooth-wayed, clever. High caste Hindoo on my land or in my colony”.

Generally Pariahs were the lowest categories in society. Despite that, Pariahs were the parts of the Right Hand categories. Generally, Right hand caste according to norms had more privileges than the Left hand caste. However, the Pariah castes were much below even to Left Hand castes, as H.Kotani points out. Then how did Pariahs secure a place in Right Hand Caste? However, all the primary sources support that Pariahs were in Right Hand caste. The researcher is constrained to point out the fact that neither H.Kotani nor any other celebrated author/authority has laid down conclusively why and how the ‘Pariah’ caste people are categorized into the Right

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277 Yule, Hobson-Jobson, p.680.
278 Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol. VI, p.78.
279 Yule, Hobson-Jobson, p.171.
Hand caste. However, there is no gain saying the fact that the Pariahs were fighting in caste war with fierce daggedness.

Though Pariahs were traditionally the drum beaters, they were servants, the grave diggers, watchmen, scavengers, and palanquin bearers, who were largely employed by the Europeans. Palanquin Pariahs' wages were ranging from 1 ¼ to 1 ¾ pagodas. Economically, Pariahs were not in a good position to feed their family.

K.K. Pillay says that one of the most downtrodden castes in Tamil Nadu is that of the Paraiyar. There has been a doubt whether they were known by the same name in the Sangam age. No doubt, there is a mention of paraiyan in the Purananuru: 335:7, from which context it is seen that he belonged to the caste of drummers. On the other hand, there is a view that the Paraiyan was known as Pulaiyan in the Sangam age. Reference to Pulaiyan are found in the Purananuru: 217:1 and 562: 39, as well as in the Kalittogai 68:18. In these contexts he is not only associated with drumming but also with several menial kinds of work. It seems that the genesis of the word Paraiyan is traceable to drumming; but that as a comprehensive term denoting the large scheduled class of the present, it came to be adopted only much later. The view that Pulaiya denoted the Paraiyan also seems acceptable. It may be noted that at present the Paraiyans are found throughout the Tamil country whereas the Puliayans denote a particular scheduled caste in Kerala. In Kerala “Paraiyans” correspond to “Thetis”

282 Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol. VI, p.115.
283 Love, Vestiges, III, p.115.
who used to carry right soil on their head; while the “Pulayans”, who, too belong to the untouchable community were mostly engaged in farm work and other menial jobs.

In the inscription of Raja Raja-I, this caste has been mentioned under the name ‘Paraiyan’. In recent times several subsects have arisen among the Paraiyar, like Samban, Sangidian, Soliyan, konga, Morasu, Kilakkattai, Katti and Valangmattu.

There is a belief not only among the Paraiyar, but among other was well that they occupied in the past a much higher position than at present. Some of the privileges which they enjoyed for long seem to have been gained from the people of the higher castes. The lower but important village officers like Tallayari, Totti and Vettiyan have been generally held by the Paraiyar. 287

According to a legend, the Paraiyans trace their descent to a Brahmin, who was cursed by Siva to be considered a Pariah for concealing a part of the meat intended to be offered to Lord Siva in order to be given to his wife. Paraiyas wear a sacred thread in the course of their marriages and funerals; perhaps this is in pursuance of their legendary association with the Brahmin priest. It is notable that the Brahmins belonged to the Right hand caste.

In early times the Paraiyas were drummers and labourers. They served as grave-diggers, watchmen and scavengers. But some Paraiyas took to weaving, and a large number of them became agricultural labourers and domestic servants. The Valluvar act as the priests of the Paraiyar. The Valluvar considered themselves to be of a caste superior to that of the Paraiyar; they did not eat or intermarry with the paraiyar.

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The Paraiyar were usually Saivas; but they were in fact demon worshippers. They worshipped not only several village gods and goddesses but they offered prayers to ghosts and goblins. In the period after 16th century many Paraiyar were converted to Christianity.

Polygamy is in vogue among the Paraiyar. Besides the legally wedded wife, the Paraiyan invariably had another woman who also served as the woman of the house-in-charge of household. This led to frequent bickerings within the family. However, apart from this restricted bigamy, polygamy as such, is not adopted among the Paraiyar. Widow remarriage is common; though there is no formal ceremony in all cases. 288

Abbe J.A Dubois has written extensively on Pariah caste. He documented each and every gesture and very lowest place in the society. He says that the immense number of classes of which the Sudra caste was composed, that was impossible to give precedence to any one class in particular; the natives themselves not being agreed on that point, and the social scale varying in different parts of the country. There were certain classes, however, who, owing to the depth of degradation into which they have fallen, were looked down upon as almost another race of beings, altogether outside the pale of society; and they were perfectly ready to acknowledge their own comparative inferiority. The best known and most numerous of these castes was the Parayer, as that was called in Tamil, the word from which the European name Pariah is derived 289.

The particulars which he was about to give of that class will form most striking contrasts with those he shall relate subsequently about the Brahmins, and will serve to

288 Ibid, p.63-64.

289 Parayen means one that beats the drum (parai).
demonstrate a point to which he shall often refer, namely, how incapable the Hindus were of showing any moderation in their caste customs and observances. Their contempt and aversion for these social outcastes were as extreme, on the one hand, as were the respect and veneration which they pay, on the other, to those whom their superstitions had invested with god-like attributes. Throughout the whole of India the Pariahs were looked down upon as slaves by other castes, and were treated with great harshness. Hardly anywhere were they allowed cultivating the soil for their own benefit, but were obliged to hire themselves out to the other castes, which in return for a minimum wage exact the hardest tasks from them. 290

Furthermore, their masters might beat them at pleasure; the poor wretches having no right either to complain or to obtain redress for that or any other ill-treatment their masters might mete out to, or punishment imposed on them. In fact, these Pariahs were the born slaves of India; and had he to choose between the two sad fates of being a slave in one of our colonies or a Pariah here; he should unhesitatingly prefer the former. 291

However, notwithstanding the miserable condition of these wretched Pariahs, they were never heard to murmur, or to complain of their low status in life. Still less do they ever dream of trying to improve their lot, by combining together, and forcing the other classes to treat them with that common respect which one man owes to another. The idea that he was born to be in subjection to the other castes was so ingrained in his mind that it never occurs to the Pariah to think that his fate was anything but


291 Ibid, p. 49.
irrevocable. Nothing will ever persuade him that men were all made of the same clay, or that he had the right to insist upon better treatment than that which was meted out to him.²⁹²

In this connection, it is pertinent to point out that in the event of caste conflicts occurred during the English East India Company's role (in the 17ᵗʰ and the 18ᵗʰ centuries), the Pariahs were the most quarrelsome amongst all others to the pitch of disgusting violence – which reflected the extremity of their frustration stemming from their status as social outcastes and belonging to the lowest strata of society.

They lived in hopeless poverty, and the greater number lack sufficient means to procure even the coarsest clothing. They went about almost naked, or at best clothed in the most hideous rags.²⁹³

They lived from hand to mouth the whole year round, and rarely know one day how they will procure food for the next. When they happen to have any money, they invariably spend it at once, and made it a point of doing no work as long as they have anything left to live on.²⁹⁴

In a few districts they were allowed to cultivate the soil on their own account, but in such cases they were almost always the poorest of their class because of their marginalized farm-holding. Pariahs who hired themselves out as labourers earn, at any rate, enough to live on; and their food, though often of the coarsest description, was sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger. But those who were their own masters, and

²⁹² The Editor informs us that The Christian missionaries in India have done and were doing much to elevate the condition and character of this class. In madras city there were now Pariah associations, and also a journal specially representing Pariah interests.

²⁹³ Ibid, p.50.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, p.50.
cultivate land for themselves, were so indolent and careless that their harvests, even in the most favourable seasons, were only sufficient to feed them for half the year.\textsuperscript{295} 

The contempt and aversion with which the other castes and particularly the Brahmins – regarded these unfortunate people were carried to such an excess that in many places their presence, or even their footprints, were considered sufficient to defile the whole neighbourhood. They were forbidden to cross a street in which Brahmins are living.

Should they be so ill-advised as to do so, the latter would have the right, not to strike them directly, because they could not do so without defilement, or even touch them with the end of a long stick, but to order them to be severely beaten up by other people of lower caste. A pariah who had the audacity to enter a Brahmins’ house might possibly be murdered on the spot. A revolting crime of this sort had been actually perpetrated in States under the rule of native princes without a voice being raised in expostulation\textsuperscript{296}.

Anyone who has been touched, whether inadvertently or purposely, by a Pariah was defiled by that single act, and might hold no communication with any person whatsoever until he had been purified by bathing, or by other ceremonies more or less important according to the status and customs of his caste. It would be contamination to eat with any members of this class; to touch food prepared by them, or even to drink water which they have drawn; to use an earthen vessel which they have held in their

\textsuperscript{295} Ibid, p.50.

\textsuperscript{296} Even to this day a Pariah was not allowed to pass a Brahmin street in a village, though nobody can prevent, or prevents, his approaching or passing by a Brahmin’s house in towns. The Pariahs, on the contrary, will not allow a Brahmin to pass through their parcherries (collections of Pariah huts), as they firmly believe that it will lead to their ruin.
hands; to set foot inside one of their houses, or to allow them to enter houses other than
their own. Each of these acts would contaminate the person affected by it, and before
being readmitted to his own caste such a person would have to go through many
exacting and expensive formalities. Should it be proved that anyone had any connexion
with a Pariah woman he would be treated with even greater severity. Nevertheless, the
disgust which these Pariahs inspire was not so intense in some parts of the country as in
others. The feeling was most strongly developed in the Southern and Western districts
of the Peninsula; in the North it was less apparent. In the northern part of Mysore the
other classes of Sudras allow Pariahs to approach them, and even permit them to enter
that part of the house which was used for cattle. Indeed, in some places custom was so
far relaxed that a Pariah may venture to put his head and one foot, but one foot only,
inside the room occupied by the master of the house. It was said that still further north
the difference between this and other Sudra castes gradually diminishes, until at last it
disappears altogether.\textsuperscript{297}

The origin of this degraded class could be traced to a very early period, so it
was mentioned in the most ancient Puranas. The Pariahs were most probably
composed, in the first instance, of all the disreputable individuals of different classes of
society, who, on account of various offences, had forfeited their right to associate with
respectable men. They formed a class apart, and having nothing to fear and less to lose,
they gave themselves up, without restraint, to their natural tendencies towards vice and
excess, in which they continue to live even at the present day.\textsuperscript{298}

\textsuperscript{297} Ibid, pp.51-52.
\textsuperscript{298} Ibid, p.52.
In very early days, however, the separation between Pariahs and the other castes did not appear to have been so marked as at present. Though relegated to the lowest grade in the social strata, they were not then placed absolutely outside and beyond it, the line of demarcation between them and the Sudras being almost imperceptible. Indeed, they were even to this day considered to be the direct descendants of the better class of agricultural labourers. The Tamil Vellalers and the Okkala-makkalu-kanarey (Tulu/Canarese) did not disdain to call them their children. But one thing was quite certain, that if these classes share a common origin with the Pariahs and acknowledge the same, their actions by no means corroborate their words, and their treatment of the Pariahs leaves much to be desired.299

Europeans were obliged to have Pariahs for their servants because no native of any other caste would condescend to do such menial work as was exacted by their masters. For instance, it would be very difficult to find amongst the Sudras anyone who would demean himself by blacking or greasing boots and shoes, emptying and cleansing chamber utensils, brushing and arranging hair etc.; and certainly no one could be found who, for any consideration whatever, would consent to cook food for them, as this would necessitate touching beef, which was constantly to be seen on the tables of Europeans, who thereby show an open disregard for the feelings and prejudices of the people amongst whom they live. Foreigners were, therefore, obliged to have recourse to Pariahs to perform this important domestic service. If the kind of food which they did not scruple to eat lowers Europeans in the eyes of the superstitious native, much more were they lowered by the social status of the people by whom they are served. For it

299 Ibid., p52.
was a fact recognized by all Hindus that none but a Pariah would dare to eat food prepared by Pariahs. \(^{300}\)

It was undeniable that this want of consideration on the part of Europeans – or rather the necessity to which they were reduced of employing Pariahs as servants – renders them most obnoxious to other classes of natives, and greatly diminishes the general respect for the white man. It being impossible to procure servants of a better caste, foreigners have, of necessity, to put up with members of this inferior class, who were dishonest, incapable of any attachment to their masters, and unworthy of confidence. Sudras who become servants of Europeans were almost invariably vicious and unprincipled, as devoid of all feeling of honour as they were wanting in resource; in fact, they were the scum of their class and of society at large. No respectable or self-respecting Sudra would ever consent to enter a service where he would be in danger of being mistaken for a Pariah, or would have to consort with Pariahs. Amongst other reasons which contribute largely to the dislike that natives of a better class entertain for domestic service under Europeans, was the feeling that their masters keep them at such a great distance, and were generally haughty and even cruel in their demeanour towards them. But, above all things, they dread being kicked by a European, not because this particular form of ill-treatment was physically more painful than any other, but because they have a horror of being defiled by contact with anything so unclean as a leather boot or shoe. Pariahs, accustomed from their childhood to slavery, put up patiently with

\(^{300}\) Ibid, p52-53.
affronts of this kind which other natives, who have more pride and self-respect, were unable to endure.\textsuperscript{301}

Under other circumstances, it should be remarked, domestic service in India was by no means regarded as degrading. The servant had his meals with his master, the maid with her mistress, and both go through life on an almost equal footing. The conduct of Europeans being in this respect so totally different, natives who had any sense of decency or self-respect feel the greatest repugnance to only the very dregs of the population who undertake the work.\textsuperscript{302}

One was bound to confess that the evil reputation which was borne by this class was in many respects well deserved, by reason of the low conduct and habits of its members. A great many of these unfortunate people bind themselves for life, with their wives and children, to the ryots, or agricultural classes, who set them to the hardest labour and treat them with the greatest harshness. The village scavengers, who were obliged to clean out the public latrines, to sweep the streets, and to remove all rubbish, invariably belong to this class. These men, known in the South by the name of “totis”, were, however, generally somewhat more humanely treated than the other Pariahs, because, in addition to the dirty work above mentioned, they were employed in letting the water into the tanks and channels for irrigating the rice fields; and on this account they were treated with some consideration by the rest of the villagers. Amongst the Pariahs who were not agricultural slaves there were some who groom and feed the horses of private individuals, or those used in the army; some were in charge of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[301] Ibid, p.53.
\item[302] Ibid, p.54.
\end{footnotes}
elephants; others tend cattle; others were messengers and carriers; while others, again,
do ordinary manual work. Pariahs had been allowed to enlist in the European and
Native armies, and some of them had risen to high rank, for, in point of courage and
bravery, they were in no way inferior to any other caste. Yet their bringing up puts
them at a great disadvantage in acquiring other qualifications necessary for the making
of a good soldier, for they were induced with difficulty to conform to military
discipline, and are absolutely deficient in all sense of honour.\footnote{303}

Pariahs, being thus convinced that they had nothing to lose or gain in the esteem
of public, abandon themselves without shame or restraint to vice of all kinds, and the
greatest lawlessness prevails amongst them for which they did not feel the least shame.
One might almost say that, in the matter of vice, they outstrip all others in brutality, as
the Brahmins did in malice. Their habits of uncleanness were disgusting. Their huts, a
mass of filth and alive with insects and vermin, were, if possible, even more loathsome
than their persons. Their harsh and forbidding features clearly reveal their character, but
even these were an insufficient indication of the coarseness of their minds and manners.
They were much addicted to drinking, a vice peculiarly abhorrent to other Hindus.
They intoxicate themselves usually with the juice of the palmtree, called toddy, which
they drink after it has fermented, and it was then more spirituous. In spite of its horrible
stench they imbibe it as if the nauseous liquid were nectar. Drunken quarrels were of
frequent occurrence amongst them, and their wives often suffer, as the unhappy
creatures being nearly beaten to death, even when in a state of pregnancy. It was to this

\footnote{303 The editors informs us that The Abbe was too sweeping in many of his statements about Pariahs. For
instance, in these days at any rate, the Pariah Sepoys in the Madras army were extremely well
disciplined, especially the corps of Sappers.}
brutality and violence of their husbands that he attribute the frequent abortions to which Pariah wives were subject, and which were much more common amongst them than amongst women of any other caste.\(^{304}\)

What chiefly disgusts other natives was the revolting nature of the food which the Pariahs eat. Attracted by the smell, they will collect in crowds round any carrion, and contend for the spoil with dogs, jackals, crows, and other carnivorous animals. They then divide the semiputrid flesh, and carry it away to their huts, where they devour it, often without rice or anything else to disguise the flavor. That the animal should have died of disease was of no consequence to them, and they sometimes secretly poison cows or buffaloes that they may subsequently feast on the foul, putrefying remains. The carcasses of animals that died in a village belong by right to the "toti" or scavenger, who sells the flesh at a very low price to the other Pariahs in the neighbourhood. When it was impossible to consume in one day the stock of meat thus obtained, they dried the remainder in the sun, and keep it in their huts until they run short of other food. There are few Pariah houses where one does not see festoons of these horrible fragments hanging up; and though the Pariahs themselves do not seem to be affected by the smell, travellers passing near their villages quickly perceive it and can tell at once the caste of the people living there. This horrible food is, no doubt, the cause of the greater part of the contagious diseases which decimate them, and from which their neighbours were free.\(^{305}\)

\(^{304}\) Ibid, p.55.

\(^{305}\) Ibid, p.55-56.
Was that to be wondered at, after what has just been stated, that other castes should hold this in abhorrence? Can they be blamed for refusing to hold any communication with such savages, or for obliging them to keep themselves aloof and to live in separate hamlets? It is true that with regard to these Pariahs the other Hindus are apt to carry their views to excess; but as we have already pointed out, and shall often have to point out again, the natural instinct of the natives of India seems to run to extremes in all cases.

The condition of the Pariahs, which was not really slavery as it was known amongst us, resembles to a certain extent that of the serfs of France and other countries of Northern Europe in olden times. This state of bondage was at its worst along the coast of Malabar, as were several other customs peculiar to the country\textsuperscript{306}. The reason was that Malabar, owing to its position, has generally escaped the invasions and revolutions which have so often devastated the rest of India, and has thus managed to preserve unaltered many ancient institutions, which in other parts have fallen into disuse.\textsuperscript{307}

Of these the two most remarkable were proprietary rights and slavery. These two systems were apparently inseparable one from the other; and, indeed, one may well say, no land without board. All the Pariahs born in the country were serfs for life, from father to son, and were part and parcel of the land on which they are born. The landowner could sell them along with the soil, and could dispose of them when and how he pleases. This proprietary right and this system of serfdom have existed from the

\textsuperscript{306} Things in this respect have, of course, changed a great deal for the better since the writings of Abbe – E.D.

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid, p.56.
remotest times, and exist still amongst the Nairs, the Coorgs, and the Tulus, the three aboriginal tribes of the Malabar coast. This was, he believed, the only province in India where proprietary right has been preserved intact until the present day. Everywhere else the soil belongs to the ruler, and the cultivator was merely his tenant. The lands which he tills were given to him or taken away from him according to the will of the Government for the time being. On the Malabar coast, however, the lands belong to those who have inherited them from their forefathers, and these in their turn possess the right of handing them down to their descendants. Here the lands may be alienated, sold, given away, or disposed of according to the will of the owners. In a word, the jus utendi et abutendi, which was the basis of proprietary right, belongs entirely to them. Every landed proprietor in that country possesses a community of Pariahs to cultivate his fields, who were actually his slaves and form an integral part of his property. All children born of these Pariahs are serfs by birth, just as their parents were; and their master has the right, if he choose, to sell or dispose of parents and children in any way that he pleases. If one of these Pariahs escapes and takes service under another master, his real master can recover him anywhere as his own property. If a proprietor happens to possess more slaves than he requires for cultivating his land, he sells some to other landlords who are less fortunate than himself. It was by no means uncommon to see a debtor, who was unable to pay his debts in hard cash, satisfy his creditors by handing over to them a number of his Pariah slaves. The price of these was not exorbitant. A male still young enough to work will fetch three rupees and a hundred seers of rice, which was about the value of a bullock.\footnote{Ibid, p.57.}

Evidently, the owners of the land — the
immovable property – to which the slaves are attached considered these slave workers in the farm as movable assets, which could be liquidated into cash in the event of any exigency, for discharging the debts of the owners.

But the landed proprietors did not usually sell their slaves except in cases of great emergency; and even then they could only sell them within the borders of their own country. In no case have they a right to export them for sale to foreigners.

Each land-owner in the province of Malabar lived in a house that was isolated in the middle of his estate. Here he dwelled surrounded by his community of Pariah serfs, who were always remarkably meek and submissive to him. Some land-owners possess over a hundred of them. They treated them usually in the most humane manner. They gave them only such work as their age or strength permits; feed them on the same rice that they themselves eat; give them in marriage when they come of age; and every year provide them with clothing, four or five yards of cloth for the women and a coarse woollen blanket for the men. 309

In Malabar it was only the Pariahs who were thus condemned to perpetual slavery; but then there were no free men amongst them. All were born slaves from generation to generation. They had not even a right to buy their own freedom; and if they wish to secure their independence they could only do so by escaping secretly from the country. All the same, he has not heard that they often resort to this extremity. From father to son they were accustomed to this state of servitude; they were kindly treated by their masters; they ate the same food as they did; they were never forced to do tasks beyond their strength and capability; and thus they have no notion of what freedom or

309 Ibid, p.58.
independence means, and are happily resigned to their lot. They looked up to their master as their father, and considered themselves belonging to his family. As a matter of fact, their physical condition, which was the only thing that appeals to their senses, was much better than that of their brethren who were free. At any rate, the Pariah slave of Malabar was certain of a living, the supreme requirement of nature, whereas the free Pariah of other provinces lives for half his time in actual want of the meanest subsistence, and was often exposed to death from starvation.310

It was indeed a piteous sight, the abject and half-starved condition in which this wretched caste, the most numerous of all, drags out its existence. It was true that amongst Pariahs it was an invariable rule, almost a point of honour, to spend everything they earned and to take no thought for the morrow. The majority of them, men and women, were never clothed in anything but old rags. But in order to obtain a true idea of their abject misery one must live amongst them, as he had been obliged to do. About half of my various congregations consisted of Pariah Christians. Wherever he went he was constantly called in to administer the last consolations of religion to people of this class. On reaching the hut to which his duty led him, he was often obliged to creep in on my hands and knees, so low was the entrance door to the wretched hovel. When once inside, he could only partially avoid the sickening smell by holding to my nose a handkerchief soaked in the strongest vinegar. He would find there a mere skeleton,

310 The editors informs us that The slaves spoken of here are not Pariahs but Cherumars, who claim to be somewhat superior in rank to the Pariahs. From 1692 the East India Company steadily endeavoured to emancipate the Cherumars. In 1843 an Emancipation Act was passed, but it was explained to the Cherumars that it was their interest, as well as their duty, to remain with their masters if treated kindly. Sections 370, 371, etc of the Indian Penal Code, writes Mr. Logan in his Malabar manual, which came into force on Jan. 1, 1862, dealt the real final blow at slavery in India.

Researcher's Concurrence: After conducting necessary investigations, the Researcher – the author of this thesis concurs with the contention and opinion of the Editors.
perhaps lying on the bare ground, though more often crouching on a rotten piece of matting, with a stone or a block of wood as a pillow. The miserable creature would have for clothing a rag tied round the loins, and for covering a coarse and tattered blanket that left half the body naked. He would seat me on the ground by his side, and the first words I heard would be: Father, he was dying of cold and hunger; he would spend a quarter of an hour or so by him, and at last left that sad spectacle with his heart torn asunder by the sadness and despondency of it all, and my body covered in every part with insects and vermin. Yet, after all, this was the least inconvenience that he suffered, for he could rid myself of them by changing my clothes and taking a hot bath. The only thing that really afflicted him was having to stand face to face with such a spectacle of utter misery and all its attendant horrors, and possessing no means of affording any save, the most inadequate remedies.

Some folktales pertaining to Pariahs are given below: 312

1. Though 70 years of age, a Pariah will only do what he is compelled.

2. Pariah talks in half-talk, (a reference to Paariah vulgarism of speech).

3. If a Pariah boils rice, will it not reach gods? (That is gods will notice all pity, even that of Pariah).

4. The drum is beaten at wedding, and also at funeral. (Say according to the Reverend H. Jensen, of a double dealing unreliable person, who is a ready for good as well as evil).

311 Ibid, p.60.
312 Thurston, Caste and Tribes, vol. VI, pp.117-118.
5. You may believe a Pariah, even in ten ways; you cannot believe Brahmin.

(The only saying in favour of the Pariah).

These sayings also confirm their social, political, economical and cultural position which also played a pivotal role in construction of consciousness.

**Valluvas Caste**

There was one class amongst the Pariahs which ruled all the rest of the caste. The caste was the Valluvas\(^{313}\), who were called the Brahmins of the Pariahs in mockery. They kept themselves quite distinct from the others, and only intermarry in their own class. They considered themselves as the gurus, or spiritual advisers, of the rest. It was they who presided at all the marriages and other religious ceremonies of the Pariahs. They predicted all the absurdities mentioned in the Hindu almanac, such as lucky and unlucky days, favourable or unfavourable moments for beginning a fresh undertaking, and other prophecies of a like nature. But they were forbidden to meddle with anything pertaining to astronomy, such as the foretelling of eclipses, changes of the moon, etc., this is the exclusive prerogative of the Brahmins.\(^{314}\)

H.D. Love documented various dialogue of the occupational caste groups with The English Company officials. He informed us that A curious book was published at Halle in 1750, consisting of a series of dialogues bearing on the mode of life of Europeans and natives in Madras. Originally written in Telugu, probably between 1740 and 1745, and in connexion with the Danish Mission, which employed workers, like

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\(^{313}\) These are sometimes physicians and astrologers. – E.D.

Schultze and Fabricius, who were graduates of Halle, it was translated into both German and English. The English translation is not very competently made, and the manners described appear to be those of a social grade removed from the highest. The dialogues, however, contain some useful information, and a few extracts are accordingly given. The full title of the work was; 315

The Large and Renowned Town of the English Nation in the East–Indies upon the Coast of coromandel, MADRAS or Fort St. George, representing the Genius, the Manners, the Carriage, the Behaviour, and the very Character of the Natives; likewise their Trade and Housekeeping; the Product of the country and Usefulness of the gardens, by Way of Thirty familiar Dialogues. Written originally in the Waruga316 or Genton Language, but afterwards translated into the English Tongue for the Benefit of some curious Readers by B.S. At Hall in Saxony, printed for the Orphan-House, MDCCL.

THE FIRST DIALOGUE. Between one Gentleman that has been a good While ago in the country, and the other that came newly hither, meeting one another...

Charles. What is the Name of your Ship?

Jack. Our Ships name is called King George.

C. who is your Captain?

J. The Commander on our Board is Townlord...

J. How many Houses are in the black Town?

Ch. Sir, In the black Town are eight thousand seven hundred Houses.


316 Waruga, Vadugu or Telugu.
J. But how many Houses are in the white Town?

Ch. Sfir, In the white Town are eighty-five Houses.

J. How many Streets are in the black Town?

Ch. Together with the Lanes there are three hundred sixty six Streets...

'THE SECOND DIALOGUE. The same two gentlemen take a Walk abroad, and view everywhere the Town...

Charles. Through what Gate shall we pass?

Jack. We will go through the bridge-Gate

Ch. When we go through the Bridge-Gate, we shall see in the first Place the Charity-School, Further the Company-garden, and afterwards we shall come to the new Powder-House.

J. We have passed over two stone-Bridge, are there some Bridges more?

Ch. Yes, there are two more; one You will see when we go to Ekkimore castle, and the other upon the Road to Trepplekane... (Triplicane)

THE THIRD DIALOGUE. The Master talks with his Tupas about procuring of Pallaquin...

Master. How many Pallaquin-boys Must I keep?

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317 The Charity School. Was situated near the west end of the Island Bridge, so that it would be in full view from the water gate. As the school was pulled down in 1746, the dialogues must have been written at an earlier date.

318 The Company garden was the Company's New Garden in Peddanaikpetta, on the site of the present General Hospital.

319 The new Powder House, built in 1738 in the north-west part of the Island.

320 Two stone Bridges. Island Bridge. And Garden House Bridge.

321 Two more, Egmore Bridge and Triplicane bridge.

322 Tupas, Dubash.
Tupas. Sir, You must keep six Pallaquem-Boys.

M. What is their Wages a Month?

T. Sir, According to the Company's Order You must pay five pagodas a Month.

M. What is the Wages for the Roundell-Boy (Bearer of the Umbrella)?

T. Sir, The Wages for the Bearer of the Boon-Grace is twenty four Fannams...

'THE FOURTH DIALOGUE. Between a Master and his Tupas about a Banket...

Tupas. Is there no Occasion for a little Pork?

Master. No, we eat that almost every Day...

T. What do you please, Sir, to drink during the Dinner-time?

M. What Liquor is there is the Cellar?

T. There is beer four Bottles, Claret-wine twelve Bottles, and Madera one hundred Bottles.

M. When shall the dinner be ready?

T. As it is customary, at twelve a clock all will be ready

'THE SIXTH DIALOGUE. The Master talks with the Cook.

Master. What is the Best sort of Water Here?

Cook. Sir, We have two Sorts of water here. Some People drink the mountain Water

M. Of both Which is best?

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323 Boon-grace, bongrace, a Sunshade. The term was often applied to a projecting bonnet or broad-brimmed hat.

324 Banket, banquet.

325 Mountain Water could scarcely have been fetched from St. Thomas Mount, and if it were, the cost of transport would be more than double that for water from the 'Padrys-garden,' which appears to have been near the company's Garden. The best drinking-water was brought from wells in the north-west of pedanaikpetta, and it may have been called 'mountain water' on account of its cool and sparkling character.
C. The mountain Water is surely better; but one Pot cost four Duddas.\textsuperscript{326}

M. What cost an Pot water out de Padrys-garden?

C. Every Pot cost two Duddas.

M. Very well! But must we buy it once a month, or must we buy it every Day?

C. We don’t want to buy it every Day, but it is far better to buy it once a Month.

M. How will that be?

C. We keep somewhere on Purpose an earthen large Vessel, and when we fill that up with twenty Pots of Water, it will be enough for a Month...


Mistress. You! Are you the Washer-woman?

Laundress. Yes, Madam...

M. Take heed not to lend out my Cloths to any Body upon Pawn.

L. Madam, I never shall do such a Thing.

M. But I have heard that some People among you put out the Linen upon Interest.

L. Madam, Let it be saydas it will; I assure You Your Cloths will never be lent out to any Body; but gentlemen’s Linen will meet with such an Accident\textsuperscript{327} as to be lent away some Times to this Country- Portugese People...

‘THE FIFTEENTH DIALOGUE. The Master talkes with the Cook and order what he desires to eat every Day in the Week...’

The menu, described at great length, is here reduced to tabular form:-

\textsuperscript{326} Duddas, doodoes, copper coins of ten cash.

\textsuperscript{327} Accidents of this nature are not unknown at the present day.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Bread, butter, cheese, coffee.</td>
<td>Two ducks, one ‘Goods.’</td>
<td>Remains of dinner, dried fish roasted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Bread, butter, cheese, ‘Bambou-Rice Broth’.</td>
<td>Hare, venison, ‘Sallet’.</td>
<td>Remains of dinner, Saugou-Broth(^{329})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Bread, butter, cheese, rice-broth.</td>
<td>Fowls boiled and ‘roast Cabbage’.</td>
<td>Remains of dinner, rice-pudding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Bread, butter, cheese, ‘Tea-water.’</td>
<td>Roast kid (or shoulder of mutton).</td>
<td>Remains of dinner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Bread, butter, cheese, coffee.</td>
<td>Veal, partridge, pigeons.</td>
<td>Remains of dinner, eggs, plantaincakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Being informed that on Saturday morning café noir will be provided, the master says, ‘or what reason shall I not drink milk?’ His servant replies, ‘Because You bath yourself on this Morning, and having washed all over your Head, it is observed not to

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\(^{328}\) Sallet, salad.

\(^{329}\) Saugou, sago.
be wholesome then to drink Milk.' It is inferred that, the climate notwithstanding, a
certain degree of restraint was exercised in regard to the tub.

'THE EIGHTEENTH DIALOGUE. The Master talkes with the DUBASH about
the ordinary Sort of Coins in this country...

Master. Sell these Six dollars, and bring me fifteen Pagodas, three Rupees, Thirty
   Fannams; for four Fannams, Douddas; and for two Fannams, Kash.

Muttu, Sfir, Here it lies all accounted...

Mas. In what Town are these Pagodas stamped?

Mu. They are coined in Nagapatnam, Pullicatty (Pulicat), Shenshe, Arkatt (Arcot),
   Aarany (Army) Seerootanapple (Tiruchirappally), Tanshour (Tanjavur),
   Tranquerbar and at Fort St. George.

Mas. Among so many different Sorts of Pagodas which are the best?

Mu. The best are those which they mint at Nagapatanam and pullicatty.

Mas. What is the mark upon the Pagodas?

Mu. Upon the Pagodas and Fannams in the Figure of Wankkadesern.

Mas. Who is this Wankkadesern? It is a Wife or Man?

Mu. Wankkadesern is the Idol of the Gentou-People.

Mas. For what do they print the Shape thereof upon the Pagodas and Fannams?

Mu. Sir, Indeed I don't know; About this matter I must ask the Bramanes.

Mas. Well! Ask' em, and tell me afterwards. But what is the writ upon the Rupees?

330 Shenshe, Gingee.

331 Aarany, Arnee.

332 Seerootanapple, Trichinopoly.

333 Wankkadesern, Venkatesan-e.e., Vishnu.
Mu. Sir, they are some Persian Characters.

Mas. Where do they stamp the Rupees?

Mu. Sir, One Pagodas Price is thirty-six Fannams, but some Times is the Agio\textsuperscript{334} two Douddas, Some Times three, and some times four Douddas, and thus further

Mas. But How many Duddas makes one Fannam?

Mu. Sir, one Fanna, makes eight Douddas.

'THE SIX AND TWENTIETH DIALOGUE. A Suit at Law in the Maiors (Mayor’s) Court between a Demandant and his Debtor....'

Rangappa the Complainant states that his father lent money to the Defendant Arumugam. Rangappa, whose father is now dead, holds the receipt, which Arumugam repudiates as a forgery, denying the debt. After much prevarication by the principals and their witnesses, the Judges order Arumugam to repeat the following oath. Arumugam breaks down at the word ‘Cows,’ and acknowledges the debt:-

'The Oath: Almighty God in Heaven, If I have taken Money upon Usury of Rengappens Fathers Hands, and do now denie this , thou wilt certainly kill all my Cows, cut them in little Slices, and make me and my wife and my Children to eat them without Salt or any other Spices till we die.'

'THE SEVEN AND TWENTIETH DIALOGUE. The master takes a Walk on foot in the Suburbs of the black Town, and talkes on the Way with his Boy about the Burying of this country- People...

\textsuperscript{334} Agio, money-Changer's commission; from it. agio , convenience.
Master. I see some School-boys sitting on the Ground, which seem to write Characters with their Fingers into the Sand, and besides these, I observe other School-Boys which endeavor to write upon black wooden-Table with a Stone-Pin.

Boy. Sir, all the School Boys that write upon black-wooden-Tables with a Stone-Pin are Gentou-boy; but those who sit on the Ground and write with their fingers in the Sand are Malabari-Boys.

M. How many Schools are in this Town?

B. Sir, I believe there are ninety five heathen-schools...

M. You Boy! What does this great many Folks? Is there any Wedding-Feast?

B. Sir, It is snot a Wedding-Feast, but the Obsequies made in Order to interr a dead Body.

M. What are they doing with the Corps? Will they lay it under the ground, or will they burn it with Fire to Ashes?

B. Sir, The Gentou-People use to burn their Corps.

M. What signifies this great Pomp? For What is the Fire-Work? Why do they keep along the Musicians?

B. It is but show their Greatness?

M. Whose Burial is this?

B. Sir, This Man was one of the company's black Merchants.

M. How! They do fire nine great Guns for him ?

B. Sir, such great a Honour the Lords will show to us .

M. I never have seen before in my Life such a tumultuous Procession: Their horrible Sound, the Gingle of their Musicians , the Cracking of short guns, the Noise of
the Fire-Arms, the Clapping the flapping of their Engine, which makes a dismal and tedious Tintamar; all this seems to be able to awake the dead Body again.

B. Sir, The Man that is dead hears nothing of all their Noise...

'THE EIGHT AND TWENTIEHT DIALOGUE. Two Sea-faring Brothers do encounter one with the other at unawares on the Sea-shore to Madras.

John. What sort of Wine have You here in this Country?

Peter. We have several Sorts of Wine, and, as I think the same is cheap enough.

J. Pray, Tell me the Names of these Wines.

P. that I may do without any great Trouble. In the first Place You must know that we have four and more sorts of French-Wine; likewise so many Sorts of wine from the cape of good Hope. Further there is to be had white-wine, red-wine claret-Wine, Rhenish-wine, Moselle-Wine, Spanish-Wine or Sack, Malaga-wine, Canar-wine, Muscadel-wine, malmsey-Wine, Madera-Wine, Palma-Wine and Persia-Wine.

J. I wonder at the large specification of so many Sorts of wine; but which is the best in this Country?

P. Dear Brother John, They are all together very good; but the madera-Wine gives the best Taste when drunken with Water.

J. What, good brother Peter, is this to say: Drink with Water? I don't understand what you mean.

P. Very well, I'll tell you presently the Meaning thereof. If any Body is dry and calls for Drink, he fills the Glass up with three Parts of Water and one Part of Madera-wine, and then it is very savoury to quench the thirst....
John is surprised that no wine is made in the country, and is informed that grapes cannot be grown on account of the destruction wrought by squirrels:-

‘P. In this country we have almost every Year a small Number of Clusters of Grapes as the greatest Rarity....

J. Where about is then to be found this rarity of Grapes very year?

P. Very near, and that is a Place about two English Miles distant of from fort St. George, namely at Mailepout...

J. Who is the Gentlemans that contrives such a pleasing Play?

P. The Landlord is a Portuguese which did plant such a little Vineyard some years ago, keeping therein two or three Dozen vines; but as soon as the Grapes being to ripen, casting up a sweet Smell, he is forced at the Number of Clusters of Grapes to procure so many leathern Bags in order to keep off the Biting of the Squirrels that flock together to feed upon [them]...

J. Don't You make Use of Beer in this Country?

P. Yes, We have small Beer and strong Beer, all which is brought hither from England and Germany....

J. Pray, What costes one Pipe or hogshead of English Beer?

P. I have payed for one Pipe thirty Rixdollars. But we buy rather whole Chest with Beer filled up in Quart Bottles, which does keep far better in this hot Country....

‘THE NINE AND TWENTIETH DIALOGUE. The two brothers, Peter and John, are discoursing about food and the Kind of Victuals in the East Indies....

John. What is it that You do commonly eat with Meat?
Peter. We do eat Bread, Wheaten-Bread, White-Bread and Fine-manched-Bread, but Rice only as often as we have a Mind thereto...

J. What sort of Meat is to be had here?

P. We have Goose, Fowls, Capon, Ducks, Pigeons, Teals, Woodcocks, Snipe and many Sorts of little Birds. Besides this we don’t want Mutton and Pork, Venison too, as Hares, Stage, Roe and Boar. Likewise we meet now and then with Beef and Veal.

J. But what Provision is here for Fish?

P. The Best Fishes we may wish for are here to be and in abundance; but I can’t tell their Names except one and another Sort, as cod-fish, Whiting, Eel dolphin and the like. Further, we have Oysters, Crab, Cray-Fish and Shrimp.

J. Pray, Sir, have You here also Herbs and Roots?

P. Yes, We have Turneps, Carrots, Cabbage, Cucumbers, Melons, Colewort, parsley, Onion, Salled, Sparaggrass, Beans, French Beans and Peas.

J. Pray what Fruits have you here?

P. We have Abundance thereof, although their Shape and Tast entirely differs from theose of Europa. For You will find here fig-trees, Dates, Oranges, Lemon, Googaves, Mangoes, Plantains or Pisangs, and Pomegranates, etc.

J. You have Milk, Butter and Cheese in Plenty?

P. Yes, But the Cheese which they do shape here and at Bengall don’t come in any Comparison with our Cheese or that of Holland. For they are as dry as a Flint and without any Taste and Smell...’
Proceedings of the Board of Police wanted the occupational caste groups for their service.

'The want of a sufficient and reasonable Supply of all kinds of Provisions in the Markets appears to be the first and most considerable need and more especially in the Article of Fish, none or very little being at any Time procurable till very late in the Evening, and that very dear. Which Grievance appears the harder, as this is a Sea Port Town, and it is well known that the road abounds with a greatest Plenty of Fish, much more than is sufficient for the Consumption of all the Inhabitants, were they not debarred from the Benefit of it by some Impediments ...' (P.Sun., Vol. xvi., 10th April 1770.)

Before proceeding with the questions of provisions and servants, the Board invited the inhabitants to meet at the Admiralty, and elect a standing committee of five persons to assist them. The Committee consisted of Messrs. Nicholas Morse, John Hollond, Stephen Briggs, George Smith, and John De Fries. The following rates and rules for servants were proposed by the Committee, and adopted:-

Proceedings of the Board of Police.

'Regulations ... concerning the Hire of Servants and other Hire Men.

Butler, per Month----------1 ½ Pags. To 3 pags.

Second Dubash----------1 " to 1 ½ ?

Cooks ------------------------1 page. to 2 pages.

Peons ------------------------1 ??  

335 Nicholas Morse survived until 1772; John Hollond was a civil servant dating from 1760; Stephen Briggs was senior Presidency Surgeon; and George Smith and John De Fries were free merchants.
Compradores\textsuperscript{336} \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 ? \\
Roundell Boys \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 ? \hspace{1em} \ldots \\
Palankeen boys \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 ? \hspace{1em} \ldots \\
Horsekeeper \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 ? \hspace{1em} 1 ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 2 \hspace{1em} pags. \\
Boy \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 20 \hspace{1em} fan. \hspace{1em} To \hspace{1em} 30 \hspace{1em} fan \\
Grass cutter \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 30 \hspace{1em} Fan. \hspace{1em} To \hspace{1em} 30 \hspace{1em} fan \\
Washerman \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 15 \hspace{1em} ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 2 \frac{1}{2} \hspace{1em} pags. \\
Ironing Man \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 12 \hspace{1em} ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 1 \frac{1}{2} ? \\
Shaving Barber \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 6? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 20 \hspace{1em} Fan. \\
Hair Dresser \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 12 ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 21 \hspace{1em} Pag. \\
Water Woman \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 12 ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 21 \hspace{1em} Fan. \\
Toties\textsuperscript{337} \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 6 ? \hspace{1em} to \hspace{1em} 12 \hspace{1em} Fan \\

Women. \\
The Head Servant, or those who can do Needle Work \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 \frac{1}{2} \hspace{1em} pags. \\
Common House Servants (with half a measure of Rice) \\
Per day, together with usual allowance of \\
Curry cash) \hspace{1em} \ldots \hspace{1em} 1 \hspace{1em} page.

\textsuperscript{336} Compradore, from port. Comprador, purchaser, a servant who went to market and kept accounts. \\
\textsuperscript{337} Toty, a sweeper. "Conicopilla" means an accounts clerk/ general clerk.
'The Masters of Palanquin Bearers and the other Tribes or Castes of Pariah Servants shall pay one Fanam monthly for each Servant to the Heads of the respective Castes, who, in Consideration thereof, shall be answerable for their forthcoming, for any Money advanced them not exceeding two Months Wages agreeable to these Regulations and for their Clothing; and out of the above Allowance the Heads of the Castes shall each employ a conicopilla, who shall keep a register of all such persons employed. And in case any Inhabitant shall refuse to pay the same, he shall not be entitled to any of the Benefits pointed out by these Regulations.

'Any person wanting a Pariah Servant of whatever denomination shall apply to the Head of the Caste, who shall provide the servant required .

'Any Servant desirous of quitting his Service shall give a Month’s warning, and in like manner any Master having to dismiss a Servant shall give a month’s warning or a Month’s Wages, except when a Servant hath just Cause of complaint against his Master, or the Master against his Servant, in which Cases, on Application to the Magistrate, the servant will of course receive his immediate Discharge or Dismission, with such further Redress or Chastisement as the Nature of the Case shall require…’

(P. Sun., vol. xvi., 18th).

Other Occupational Castes

Several other castes who played also an important role in Madras, are: cooks, purchasers, a servant who went to market and keep the accounts; horse keeper boy.

338 Boys mean slave, a servant as Henry Yule understands them. See Hobson-Jobson.
grass cutters, shaving barber, hair dresser, water women and totties (sweepers). Oil makers who used two oxen in their mills for producing oils, boatmen or catamaranmen, who usually appear in coastal areas for fishing or employed by European for business, fishermen, scavengers, potters, flagmen (bearer of European flag), kite sellers, chupdar, (bearer of silver staff) rundelleers (umberalla bearers), dutymen (lamp-cleaners), arramen (pike men ), sukymen (water-carrier), grasscutters, gardeners and other occupational castes.

339 HD Love understands. See Vestiges, III, p.15.
340 Buchanan, A Journey from Madras, I, p.80.
341 Hoole, Madras, Mysore and the South India, p.30.
Map 2: Madras in Early 18th Century