CHAPTER 4

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Vijayanagara empire, as it has been pointed out in the previous chapter, was no longer an agricultural society, which tends to stick to age-old customs and traditions. The earlier Hoysala period in Karnataka was already on the threshold of social liberalism. The classical caste system was no longer rigid. The changing economic patterns of life had brought in momentous changes in the very structure of the society. Gone were the days of caste distinctions based on four varṇas, namely, Brāhmaṇa, Kshatriya, Vaiśya and Sūdra. The traditional structure of the society was merely governed by considerations of convenience. Infact, at no time such a rigid caste system had been practised, and castes were based on the hereditary professions. But that too had undergone a change.

By the 12th century itself there occurred a social upheaval in Karnataka with the birth of Vīraṣaivism. This neo-Ṣaivism as it could be called, stood for more liberalism in religious matters. Basava was a brāhmaṇ by birth and from his childhood was an ardent devotee of Lord Śiva. His period was one of fanatical
adherence to dogmas and ritualism of the vedic traditions, a period of social
gradations decided by caste, communities and sects, and gross inequality
between man and man. Basava went to Kūḍala Saṅgama, a holy place near the
confluence of the Kṛishṇa and the Mālaprabha, in search of spiritual guidance of
Īśānya Guru. The existing social evils agitated his mind. Here he maintained live
contacts with the learned men of various schools. Thereby, his vision widened,
horizon of knowledge expanded and devotion to God Śiva, called Saṅgamēsvara
- (Kūḍala Saṅgamadēva) - intensified. After staying their for a period of 12 years,
he went to Maṅgaḷavēdha, headquarters of Kalachuri Bijjala I. He accepted the
office of an accountant in the court of Bijjala I and rose to the position of the Chief
Treasury Officer. He now initiated a movement of religious and social reformation,
which consisted in treating all the devotees of Siva, irrespective of caste or
community or sect, as equal. Bijjala did not tolerate this movement. They parted
ways. Basava went to Kalyāṇa and Bijjala also followed after some years, after
asurping the Chālukya kingdom.

But Basava continued his social reform movement. The number of his
followers swelled day by day. The Vīraśaiva purāṇas profusely speak of his
founding a philosophical institute called the Anubhava-māṇṭapā. It was a great
assembly of learned men like Allama Prabhu, Channabasaṇṇa, the nephew of
Basavēśvara and a host of others who deliberated upon the subtleties intricacies
of religion, philosophy, mysticism and spiritual attainments. The Purāṇas say that
Basava brought about the marriage of Haralayya’s son, an untouchable, with the
daughter of Madhuvayya, a Brāhmaṇa. Bijjala did not approve of this. This lead
to the retaliation of the young followers of Basava who are said to have been
responsible for the death of Bijjala. Basava thereafter moved over to Kūḍala Saṅgama where he is supposed to have merged with God.¹

Modern scholars think that Virasaiva religion was not founded by Basavēśvara, but existed for over certain centuries ago and he only adopted, this religion, and he rejuvenated, and revitalised it. Whatever this might be; it is certain that with its coming Karnataka witnessed a change, in the shape of a unique socio-religious renaissance. For disseminating his thought, he, unlike most others, used the people’s language - Kannada - through which his teachings would reach every household, every individual and be a vehicle, a powerful medium for social reconstruction and revolution. He wrote epigrammatic verses called vachanas (sayings) which later became a model literary style, initiated even today.

The magnetism of Basava’s personality can be described to his sterling qualities like his bhakti and love and compassion for humanity. The royal treasurer (bhaṇḍāri), was metamorphosed into the lord of the treasure-house of devotion (bhakti-bhaṇḍāri). He did not subscribe to the idea that God existed in a temple’s, dark sanctum, sanctorum, but believed that God did live in one’s own heart. His bhakti is permeated by his emotional intensity, philosophical insights, and moving compassion. Says he:²

The tongue is filled with the nectar of Thy name, My eyes are filled with Thy image, My mind is filled with thoughts of Thee, My ears are filled with Thy fame, My Lord Kūḍāḷ Saṅgama I am a bee at your lotus feet fused in Thyself.

He did attain the highest state of spirituality not by renunciation of the world by flowing away from it but by which he accepted, not an active accep-
tance of family life. One cannot keep oneself away from women, riches or land. There were not the lures of illusion (māyā). Only there should be an automatic and self-imposed restraint. If one cannot, by restraint, rein in the mad horse of worldly life here, how can he attain the horse of the world hereafter, if there be on such world.¹

This mortal world is but the Makers' Mint; Those who earn merit here, earn also there and those who earn not here, earn neither horse
Oh ! Kūḍala Saṅgama Lord!

Countrary to the upanishadic emphasis on oneness of all humanity, the society of his day had hundreds of castes and creeds in addition to the fourfold division, each claiming superiority over the other. There was the most heinous practice of untouchability, a slur on human dignity. The whole system was deprecated by him. He protested against such selfish practices. There were only two classes, Bhakta and Bhavi, good and bad by nature. There were several sages who did not necessarily belong to the upper class.²

Sāṅkhya was a sweeper,
Agastya a hunter
Dūrvāsa a cobbler
Dadhīchi a locksmith
Kāśyapa a blacksmith
Kauṭilya a barber
So why should you, turn in ignorance of this, insist on caste.

This was a great step indeed. During the reign of Hoysaḷa Viṣṇuvardhana, almost at the same time, his contemporary Sri Rāmanujāchārya, a religious preceptor by his liberal views started the work of social reform to the
extent of allowing even the so-called outcastes temple entry though it might be on specified days in a year. He names them *Tirukulattār* - belonging to the holy family - making them children of God. He too was an exponent of *bhakti* - cult. Thus a ground had been cleared for breaking down the barriers of caste and creed. *Vīraśaivism* in fused vigour to this movement. Though this movement started in Karnataka, it had spread far and wide quietly including those areas of Rāyalaseema which is the subject-matter of our study. We know that Mallikarjuna Paṇḍitārādhya who hailed from Śrīśailam was a great admirer of Basavēśvara.

Inscriptions do not help us much in analysing this aspect. But we have a good number of literary evidences at our disposal. However, the *Srīvaṅgabelagōla* epigraph of Bukka I is the most authentic socio-religious evidence. It is described as an *Award* by the king over the rights and privileges of the *Vīraśaivites* in respect of their religious performances which assumed great importance at the time. The Jainas, a minority, were harassed by the Śrīvaishānavas who formed a majority. An appeal was made to the king who, in the presence of the representatives of the two communities and the general public who had assembled in his court, pronounced the verdict that the majority community should be responsible for safeguarding the privileges, rights and interests of the minority. This helped to establish goodwill among various communities, classes and sections of this empire.

The literary accounts may be compared with the travelogues. The latter give a description of the conditions as understood by them without a knowledge of the traditions and customs that were in vogue in this period. That the society
continued to be broadly classified into four classes is true. But the rigidity of the earlier centuries was gone. Even from literary sources we know that there were several classes of Brahmanas. Those living in agrahāras with land holdings were a learned lot. Tenali Rāmakṛishṇa in his Pāṇḍuraṅga-mahātmyam gives an account of such a brahmin household.6

Kīlāramunanumṇḍi pālinṭi kē tēra
bahudhānyamulu chēla baṃḍiyoraga
neḍa neḍa baṃḍliimadlu paḍugulu voḍama
gritāṛthalai yarthiṃchunarthulalara
basichārikākōṭi paṇipāṭu pāṭimpa
jūṭṭampu saṃḍaḍi neṭṭukonga
grāmameṃṭayu nija prābhavaṃbuna mana
satyanishṭhaku dannu sākshhigōra
nītya naimittakamulu nirṇidra buddhi
nāchariṃchuchu Haribhuktam ātmabhārya
bhakti niḍḍa bhakti gonu chunki muktigāni
niduravaṃṭiḍi rāṭivaṃṭidiyu gāḍu

An ideal brahmin’s lands yielded crops for harvest and the cows yielded pails of milk. Marriages, thread ceremonies were performed in his house regularly, obviously because he was a priest. The beggars had their needs satisfied and the villagers, consequently, had respected the brahmin as an embodiment of virtue and truth. Served by several attendants, his house thronged with kith and kin. Daily and propitiatory acts (karmas) were performed regularly and the guests were served with offerings as prasāda made to God Vishnu. Being learned, they spent time in teaching (adhyāpana). Being affluent,
they would not accept gifts. They did supply money to the needy, of course, at a stipulated interest.

Allasāni Peddana refers to this money in his *Manu Charitra* thus: *gikurim-chir ichchi puchchukunu chōṭulāvāra lākāku lōṅugā kappulīka.*

Yet another class of brahmins took to government service as accountants and administrators. In the coastal regions of Andhra, they were called *niyogis*; but in Rāyalaseema they are named *karanams*, etc, and there are very a few references to *niyogis*. N. Venkataramanayya refers to *niyogi* as a sub-caste which is not very orthodox. He depends upon a statement made by Rāmabhūpāla China Timma Rājachandra.

Venkataramanayya’s opinion that in the Telugu country they separated themselves from the other Brahmāṇas does not appear to be logical. The verse
quoted must have been done in a tone of slight ridicule. In fact, the brahmans, right from the beginning, have played prominent role in administration. In the Vijayanagara period too there were efficient administrators who held offices of governors of provinces, ministers and generals. Even at the lowest rung, the village accountant (the karanam) was a brahmin. Venkataramanayya himself cites a few brahmans as 'the most eminent men of the age', for their being honest, intelligent and industrious.10

Of course, not all the brahmans could be entirely righteous. In fact, this holds good for all ages for that matter, man being what he is. The rich because of their affluence and the poor because of their need stooped to any level in order to dominate and flourish and were dishonest to survive.

Barbosa11 speaks about these Brähmaṇas, as belonging to a class of priests officiating the rituals performed in households and also the temple priests who were worshippers in the temple. They did not eat fish or meat; were devoted only to one wife, and did not remarry after her death. They wore the sacred thread to indicate that they were Brähmaṇas. These enjoyed full freedom and were exempted from death sentence. They led a peaceful and quiet life. They were respected in the society. For their livelihood, they depended upon gifts made by kings and nobles and some of them have become rich by owning properties. Some of them served in such temples where by they earned huge income. They were fond of food, and ate as though they were born only to eat. Rice, ghee, sugar, vegetables and milk formed their basic diet.

Barbosa also refers to another class of Brahmans who too wore sacred
thread made of silk. He says that they tied an egg sized stone with this thread and left it hanging on their body. Possibly this is a reference to the Lingayat community who carried the *liṅga* on their body. The Liṅgāyats also wear (even now) such a sacred thread. Barbosa's account does not refer to such a kind of Brahmanas as described above.

Barbosa appears to have written his account sometime 'shortly after 1520. A.D, while Nuniz composed his account sometime in 1536-37 A.D., Says Nuniz:

And in this kingdom of Bsnagar there is a class of Brahmanas who the most part of them never kill or eat, any living thing and these were the best that were amongst them. They are honest men given to merchandise, very acute and of much talent, very good at accounts, lean men and by the duties they undertake the kingdom is carried on.

Now, this statement does not in any way refer to the 'gluttonous Brahmanas' of Barbosa. From the way they are described they certainly belonged to the merchant class - the Vaiśyas, who were also eligible to wear the sacred thread. Interestingly, enough, the Vaiśyas, specially of the Nagarta community, called themselves as Nagarta Brahmanas. Though not trained in the vedic lore or other fields of knowledge, they were excellent traders and, as Nuniz says, the economy of the kingdom was carried on by them.

In view of this, the statements made in Telugu works, have to be
examined. It is true that temples provided service opportunities for a remuneration. But, it is the chief priest and those equal to him rank that received gifts from kings and nobles as stated by Barbosa. The others formed the bulk of attendants and helpers, who supplied sandal paste, flowers, waving lamps to the chief priest. In terms of academic qualifications, they too were well versed in Āgamasāstras, like the Pāñchāratna and Vaikhānasa which laid down rules for the conduct of worship. But they had no chances of promotion to higher positions and for years they had to subsist on what ever little they got. They were entitled for shares in the food offered to the God which they duly distributed among the lay devotees for some return. This enabled them to make both ends meet and support their family. This also made them go out to other households for officiating in the rituals which provided them with some monetary income in the form of fees (dakshina). It is to such a class of priests that the Telugu works refer to in a tone of veiled ridicule. This perhaps held good for big temples, like those in the capital at Hampi, and the other religious centres like those at Tirupati, Śrīśailam, in the Rāyalaseema region and its peripheral regions like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In the rural areas these 'minor priests' enjoyed greater benefits and were looked upon with respect.

Because of their academic accomplishments and administrative skill, many Brahmanas occupied important posts, like governors, chieftains, etc. and they were also employed as accountants, treasury officers, superintendents and even clerks. This would clearly indicate that the brahmins were not exclusively confined to priesthood, but also took up several jobs in the administrative fields. Paes says: 15
"These Brahmanas are like friars with us, and they count them as holy men - I speak of the Brahman priests and the lettered men of the pagodas - because although the king has many Brahmanas, they are officers of the town and cities and belong to the government of them; others are merchants, and others live by their own property and cultivation, and the fruits which grow in their inherited grounds. Those who have charge of the temples are learned men, and eat nothing which suffers death, neither flesh nor fish, nor anything which makes ...... red, for they say that it is blood ...... There are many in this country who call themselves Brahmanas, but they lead a life very different from those of whom I have spoken, for these last men are man to whom the king says much honour and he holds them in great favour."

The last sentence obviously refers to the other two caste people, the Kshatriyas and the Vaiśyas.

One interesting point to be noted here is that there were very few Kshatriyas. The epigraphs do not refer to that caste. The fact that the Brahmanas had also become ministers, generals and high officials in this period would indicate that the kshatriyas did not form a numerical majority. Some of the chiefs tried to associate themselves with the Kshatriya ruling families of the north. But in the period of our study, even in the north there were not too many.

The Vaisyas, of course, were the merchant class. They formed the backbone of the State economy. They engaged themselves in inland and overseas trade. This latter had by now developed enormously. It is known that the Arabs and the Portugese now in India with the sole object of trade in the beginning with a covert desire to rule by annexing these areas. We find that the Brahmanas and later the Sultans of the Deccan had entrenched themselves as
political powers and the Arab traders found powerful rivals in the Portuguese. Internally, the Vaiśyas moved from place to place with their merchandise. They paid quite a good sum of money towards customs which swelled the royal exchequer. They also patronised culture and art. We have the glaring instance of the settis of Lēpākshi who not only built the temples but renovated a good deal of them. They gave munificent grants to the temples of Tirupati and Śrīśailam.

It is surprising that based on the account of the travellers Venkataramanayya accepts the existence of six classes of Brahmanas including 'eaters'. It is strange that such a classification is accepted by others too although there is no justification for such distinctions. We have stated above how some of the Brahmanas had been accepting invitations for dinners on specific occasions. But this was only a part of their ritualistic duties. It also stated that the Brahmanas enjoyed extra judicial powers. But we are not clear as what sort of powers they enjoyed. This is obviously a conclusion based upon what Barbosa wrote "All these men hold the greatest liberties and privileges, and are not liable to death for anything whatever they do".

The Seṭṭis are referred to as kōmatiś in a few inscriptions, besides literature. For example, the Māchanūru epigraph (Cuddapah District) of Sadāśiiva dated 1553 A.D. registers a gift of money by the kōmati, golla and tambullā communities to God Mūlasthāna Paramēśvara of agrahara Maṟṭhanūru. Another record of Achyuturāya dated 1542 A.D. records a gift of certain income from grāmakaṭnam, magga-sthāvarālu and kōmati - siddhāyam (i.e. fixed tax from kōmatiś) and other levies from the village Chidipirāla and Chapili for
lighting a perpetual lamp to God Aghastyēśvara. It may be noted here that perhaps it is the same epigraph published by P.V. Parabrahmasastry wherein, the summary portion Kömaṭi- gadyāṇa is mentioned; but in the text as such it is read as rāmaḍi- siddhāyaṃ (line 7), Perhaps the text as printed is not very clear about the terminology of the taxes. In Āmuktamālyada it is stated that the money accumulated was invested by them with the Kömaṭi; and if he declined to give them as much interest as they asked for, they would strongly complain against him in the local court.

However, they were mostly referred to as seṭṭi-patṭanāsvāmis in the Pulivendla epigraph.23 That the Vaisyas held an honourable position in the royal court is clear from the fact that for the import of horses and other necessary products for defence and offence the kings depended greatly on these merchants who, in a sense, controlled the royal treasury. We have seen that they had their own guilds, which, in the earlier centuries, were referred to as Ayyāvaḷe 500. They controlled the trade of the empire. But they had to face stiff opposition from the Portuguese on the one hand and the Arab merchants on the other. The former, however, were more accommodative since the Arabs had been favouring the Sultans more.

It appears, however, that within themselves there was competition and to gain the goodwill of the kings they had to make presents of horses. Nuniz refers to this and says that the merchants would not get audience at all unless they made 'a present of piece of goods or a horse of the best he sought'. There were middlemen too officers who dealt with such duties (of purchase) and they would 'do nothing without some profit to themselves'.24
The Śūdras formed the fourth class and being tillers of soil (either of their own or taken on lease), they formed the backbone of agriculture. The reddis of the Rāyalaseema belonged to this category. The Kammas, Velamas and the Balijas, too were Sudras of higher order. But the Kammas and Velamas who, owned land, mostly joined military services and their lands were cultivated by the tenants. The reddis are referred to as kāpus in the Pulivendla epigraph noted above. The Bukkapṭanam epigraph of Achyutarāya, the reddis and karanas who received lands, were exempted from payment of taxes (sarvanārya). In 1569 A.D., Venkata nāyaniṅgāru made a grant of land in Tāḍūru to Bhōgaya, with the permission of the reddis of Tāḍūru and Koṇḍreḍḍi of Tāḍugōtu etc. The Nandalūru epigraph registers a gift of income from taxes to the vidvān-mahājānas as also to God Chokkanātha of Neladalūru, by the reddis of Lambaka and other places. The Cheruvu Belagallu record speaks of the sthāvara-suṅka paid by the Balija community. But the Balijas, Kammas and Velamas are very sparsely referred to in the records. But kāpu (Kāmpu) agricultural community, finds mention in several records. The reddis were also village chiefs, responsible for the safety of the village. They were chiefs of the village assemblies which sat in judgement over petty offences committed in the village.

Next in order came the vipra vinōdins and vīra mushṭis. vipravinōdins, as the term itself connotes, were those that pleased the people by their tricks of jugglery. They were vipras or brahmans. A number of records specially of the 16th century refer to this class of people. They are stated to be originally vipras themselves; but due to demoralisation they fell in the scale of social order and were no longer Brāhmaṇas, but Sudras. According to Krishna Sastri it has
been also interpreted that these people exhibited their jugglery only to the *vipras*, obviously in the houses of the latter and collected a *pannu* (tax) from them. Venkataramanayya refers to a story that was in circulation according to which, in course of a disputation between the Brāhmaṇas and Jainas, the former were helped by the *vipravīnōdin*, through their act of jugglery, to establish their point over the Jainas. Thereafter, it was stipulated that the members of this community could collect an annual tax - *vipravīnōdi pannu* - from the Brāhmiṅ households.30 Any how, whether they were originally Brāhmaṇas or not, in the period under review they were not classed along with the Brāhmaṇas and were virtually *Śūdras*. This speaks of the social mobility, upward or downward.

The inscriptions from the region under study indicate that they belonged to the Kāśyapa-gōtra. The Śūdras were not associated with *gotras* and this would further indicate that these were originally Brāhmaṇas, now demoralised and degraded to the status of *Śūdras*. These *vipravīnōdins* not only collected the stipulated tax from the people, but also made gifts to temples for the performance of special worship therein.

We have for example the Medidinne epigraph of Tuḷūva Sadāśiva dated 1554 A.D., wherein Parvatayya and Anantayya of that community made a gift of the income from *vipravīnōdi-varttana* for the *daśara mahōtsavas* of Gods, Chennakēśava and Hanuman of Mēdigudidinne surnamed Kṛishṇarāyasamudra.31 It mentions, Anantayya, son of Vallabhayya of Kāśyapa- gōtra and Chennayya, son of Sūrayya of Vaśisṭhagōtra, Apastambha-sūtra and Yajus-śākha. The gift was made for the merit of all the members of the *vipravīnōdi* family. We come across the names of several members of this family. 1) Peda Govindayya, Nalla
Govindasa, son of Veṅgapa and Chinna Vallabhayya, son of Vallabhayya - all of Kāśyapa-gotra; 2) Pina Gōvindayya, grandson of Peda Gōvindayya of kāśyapagotra and Atharvaṇa-śākha, 3) Pina Kēśavayya, grandson of Peda kēśavayya, Vallabhayya, son of Kuṇṭi (lame) Govindayya, Parvatayya, son of Kūṇayya, Madhavaya, son of Basavayya, Gōvindayya, son of Nalla Vallabhayya, Nattarayya, son of Kunappa; 4) Anantayya and Parvatayya, sons of Vallabhayya of Kāśyapa-gōtra, Kātyāyana- sūtra and Sukla Yajus śākha, Chāṅgalamarri Parvatayya, son of Vallabhayya, Parvatayya, 5) Anantayya and Nallārayya, sons of Vallabhaya and grandson of Mallayya whose family hailed from Gobburikoṇḍa, 6) Chāṅgalamarri Parvatayya, son of Vallabhayya and grandson of Mallayya of Kāśyapa-gōtra and Kātyāyana-sūtra. In fact, the genealogy of some of these families may be worked out. For example, mallayya had Vallabhayya as his son. This latter had Parvatayya, Anantayya and Nallārayya as sons.

Another community worthy of note was that of Vīramuṣṭis. This term is explained as referring to devotees of Śiva ‘applied to a class of village servants who are professionals of the village and performed the duties of the smṛitti, artisan, carpenter, potter and barber’. But Venkataramanayya interprets it differently. According to him Vīramuṣṭi-pānna was equivalent to gaṇāchāra-tere paid to the jaṅgamās, the Lingāyat priests. They were attached to some one or other of the Śaiva mathas and regarded themselves as the disciples of the head of that maṭha to whom they paid a part of the dues collected by them from the faithful. This is a more acceptable interpretation. The Peddamuḍiyam inscription refers to Chinna Basavayya, son of Basavayya, the Vīramuṣṭi of
Ratnagiri, a disciple of Bhikshavritti-ayya of Srisaila. It states that income derived from taxes like *jumju, narasam, motupalaka* etc., payable to the *Vīrāmusṭiḥs* by the *tammalas* and other communities was made over to God Sōmēśvara of Brāhma[ma]nuḍiyam *alias* Trilōchanāpuram. Another epigraph from Timmare虖-dhipalle\(^42\) refers to Vīra Sivagra Bhikshāvrittī-ayya whose disciples were three *ganāchāris* of *vīramuṣṭhi* community. The Chidipirāla epigraph of 1550 A.D.\(^43\) refers to the *varttana* to be paid to the *Vīramuṣṭhi* community which was gifted to God Agaṣṭyēśvara, by Vīra Siva-siddha Bhikshapatayya.

Pāṇchāḷas were artisans - blacksmiths, goldsmiths, braziers, carpenters and idol makers. In the social hierarchy they claimed a higher position. The Kanagānīpalle epigraph of Achyutarāya dated 1533. A.D\(^44\) states that Isvarayya, the agent of Vākiti Timmappa-nāyaka exempted the artisan-class (*panchānam- vāru*) - may be read as *paṇchānamuvaru* from payment of all taxes in the 32 villages as of old, in order to rehabilitate them in their former places from which they had migrated to Kundirpi-sīma and Pākāla sīma when such of those taxes had been imposed upon them by Timmappa-nāyaka. Their argument seems to be that if barbers were exempted from *mangalp annu*, why should they, in the higher social order, be made to pay the heavy taxes imposed on them? Much earlier in the period of Devarāya (1417 A.D) they had been granted remission of all taxes as *sarvānanya*.\(^45\) There is an interesting epigraph at Bēḷūr (Karnataka), during the reign of Sadaśiva.\(^46\) There was a dispute between the *halaru* and *paṇchāḷas* about the boundary of the locality of the *paṇchāḷas* in the *sthāna* (the temple complex?) of God Chennigarāya at Bēḷūru. This was now demarcated and in their locality the *paṇchāḷas* were to build their houses, celebrate marriages
and other ceremonies as prescribed by their community leaders and enjoy certain privileges during the festivals celebrated at Vidyanagara. It is clear that this community fought for social status, and for certain rights and privileges.

Then came the barbers, Kōṇḍoja and Timmōja who were among the foremost who appealed to Sadāśīva, through Rāmarāya, and got remission from the payment of mangalipannu. Many suggestions have been put forward for the proximity of barbers. Krishna Sastry thinks that the skill of shaving the chin of the ruler and of Rāmarāya must have impressed them. Many suggestions have been put forward for the proximity of barbers. Krishna Sastry thinks that the skill of shaving the chin of the ruler and of Rāmarāya must have impressed them.47 Saletore puts forward the theory that these barbers might have helped the ruler in putting down the power of the kurubas.48 But, these arguments seem to be unconvincing. There are a good number of inscriptions in Rayalaseema recording remission of mangalipannu.48 Of these, No.168 of S.I.I., XVI, dated 1547 A.D. states that Aliya Rāmarāya having exempted the tax on barbers in Karnataka country, mahāmaṇḍalāśwarā Timmayadēva-mahārāju of Nandyāla did the same for the whole of Ghanḍikōṭa-sima and also remitted the barbers’ tax payable by Timmōju on the village Puttūru, Rāvalapalle and Dumpalagatu belonging to the Indranātha temple. Prominent among these barbers, was Kōṇḍōju, son of Timmōju, who appears to have been in the service of Sadāśīva and Rāmarāya. This Kōṇḍōju appears to have belonged to Kandana vēlu (Kurnool).

The dommari, golla, kuruba were all communities in the lower rung. Dommaris were acrobats. The difference between them and the vipravinōdins seems to be that while the latter performed jugglery, etc., perhaps before select audiences of the members of the royal household, officials, Brahmanas and people of higher status, the farmer gave public performances and collected
unstipulated fees from them. Inscriptions speak of 24 families of these dommaris, names of some of whom are also found. The Pushpagiri epigraph of 1519 A.D., states that Rājapayya, son of Rāmachandra Tirumalarāya, Dēvarāju, Sāluva Tipparāju, Gaṅgarāju, Bhūpathirāju, Kāki Bhīmarāju, Talagaḍa Timmarāju and others made a grant of dommaripannu collected from the kāmpus to God Channakēśava. Obviously, members of the other communities were to pay fixed amounts collected as dommaripannu to these people. The record from Tondur dated 1545 A.D., refers to dommar, Kāki Padmarāju. The latter record appears to have been related to Kāki Bhīmarāju mentioned above. The Vallūru epigraph names miśaragandari Pronna-reḍḍi, Tipparāju, Turukāṇyam Basavarāju and Voḍapōti-nāyudu as dommaris. Basavarāju, son of Peddarāju, made a grant of income from dommaripannu to God Narasiṅganātha of Mōṭakaṭ-la for the merit of the 24 families of dommaris. An interesting name of the dommar figures in the Kōkaṭam inscription of a latter period, of Veṅkaṭapati, dated 1559 A.D. The dommar is herein called Sāluvapakshi, son of Peda Sāluvapakshi.

Some more communities, of a lower rung, may now be mentioned. Of them the tammāḍi is of prominence. He is the priest of Śaiva temples in villages. He was himself a Śaiva, but might not have been equated with a Brahmana priest. In Karnataka we have similar priests called guravas (or goravas) who were also priests in less prominent Śaiva temples in villages which were not agraharas. The Pāṇem epigraph registers a gift of the village Būḍidapādu to the tammādi (plural: tammāḷu) of the temple of Pānikēśvara. Peddamudiyam inscription of 1551 A.D., speaks of the tammālas who, along with others, made
a gift of income from taxes to God Sōmēśvarādeva. The Māchanūru record registers a grant of money by the tamballa and other communities to God Mūlasthāna Paramēśvara.\textsuperscript{57}

This last record refers to the gollas who were cowherds. They are described as gōpalakas in Dūlamvāripalle inscription of 1376 A.D.\textsuperscript{58} Interestingly enough, it is said therein that they, Dēsiya and Nāgaiah, were subordinates of prince Bhāskara Bhavadūra, son of Bukka I. They, with their sons (Viti)-nāyaka and Dēsiya, are said to have excavated the tank to the west of the village Kūchipalli. Gaṇḍikōṭa epigraph speaks of the washermen community of that place who were exempted from payment of profession tax.\textsuperscript{59} Epigraphs mention other communities also like the besta (fisherman) who were permitted to have their own settlements (constructing houses) in the newly laid street at Kammadurgam.\textsuperscript{60} We have the upparas meaning brick-layers. It also means salt maker (uppaliga) who was also a fisherman.\textsuperscript{61} They were to pay professional (?) tax, the uppina siddhāyam.\textsuperscript{62} We are not sure whether pipers and drummers (dōlunāgasvarālavāru) are to be reckoned as a community. The kadūru record refers to a gift of land made to them.\textsuperscript{63} Normally, the barbers were proficient in this art. Mangala Aṅkōju received a gift of land for such service rendered by him before God Tiruvengalanātha of Gumuḍūru. It is, likewise, doubtful if naṭṭuva actor could be classified as belonging to a separate community. Naṭṭuva Nāgayya, son of Chāgaya, who was a famous actor, received a gift of land. It also refers to the wife (patni), who was the daughter of naṭṭuva Timmayya of Pōtavara. As on today there might have been families of such artists.

Last to be considered here are the so called out castes, called mālas and
A dispute arose among the malas, madigas and raitus and the merchant community, assembled in the mukha- mantapa of the Narasimha temple at Kadiri enquired into the dispute. It was decided that the tax to be collected from the malas was to be exempted from payment. The madigas were to erect pillars for the marriage-pandal, perhaps as a part of their duty. The record is damaged and hence details are not clear. These two communities came under a fifth caste - the chanḍāla. Māla is also referred to as holeya in Karnataka and pariahs. These formed a group of agricultural labourers. They also took to weaving and spinning. But, they were a disgruntled lot since they were not given due recognition for their services. Some of them appear to have taken to highway robbery also. The madigas were artisans in the sense that they took to shoe-making as a legitimate trade. They also supplied leather-buckets, ropes etc. to the cultivator.

Usually the sūdra caste migrated to other regions where they could find work. They were the enterprising people in clearing the forests, reclaiming the lands and founding the new villages. Some forest lands were also being given to the tribals living in the forest. The non-agricultural classes who owned extensive estates appointed tenants from Sūdra castes. There was exploitation of the tenants and the labourers by the feudal classes. The cultivators had to toil hard.

Labour was one of the means of agricultural production in Rāyalaseema. There were two classes of labourers and serfs. The serfs who worked throughout the day and night on the farms were tied to the land. The condition of life of hired labourers was better than that of these people. They did not even
have freedom. They were transferable along with the land when sold. They were forced to be serfs in order to clear off the debts of their landlord. According to Vijnānāśwara, if a slave rescued his master from imminent danger he should be allowed to have the share of a son. Any how their condition was not so precarious as stated by Buchanan and other western travellers who visited south India a little later in the medieval period. The bonded labour had been in existence in Rayalaseema as recently as 1975 when the state government passed emancipation act.

This study would clearly show that the traditional caste system was not strictly adhered to. We have seen in the beginning of the chapter how the Rāmanuja and Basava movements of social reform had slowly penetrated into the society and the earlier rigidity was slowly vanishing. There was more of social mobility. Further, as a result of the movement there was social awakening. Those, who belonged to the lower strata, slowly started claiming higher status - such instances have been already cited.

One more factor to be considered here is the arrival of foreign people like the Muslims and the Christians. They came as traders but many of them stayed behind. The native rulers had been fighting battles against the Sultans. They found that it would be a clever diplomacy if they offered such of those aliens that had found their home in the Hindu kingdom were treated on par with the Hindus. Dēvarāya II constructed a mosque for their worship and kept a copy of the Quoran on the throne in order to woo the Muslims. Rāmarāya became much more intimate with them. Whatever might have been the result in the ultimate analysis, it is certain that the ordinary Muslims mingled freely with the Hindus.
On the social plane, we do not have instances of any rift between the two communities.

Inscriptions, in general, do not describe the glorious period of Vijayanagara, its wealth, social life of the people. Here the accounts of the travellers and also literary works come in handy. Says Paes:  

The king has twelve lawful wives of whom there are three principal ones, the sons of these three being heirs of the kingdom, but not those of others ..... Each one of these wives has her house to herself with her maidens and women of the chamber, and women guards and all other women servants, necessary ....... They told us that each of these queens has a large sum of money and treasure and personal ornaments, namely armlets, bracelets, seeds (sealed ?) pearls, pearls and diamonds and that in great quantity and they also say that each of them has sixty maiden adorned as richly as could possible be with many jewels ...... within, with these maidens, they say that there are twelve thousand women, for you must know that there are women who handle sword and shield, and others who wrestle and others who blow trumpets and others pipes and other instruments which are different from ours.  

This is with reference to Kṛishṇarāya. Nuniz, on the other hand, says of Achyutarāya that king had 500 wives and as many less or more as he wanted. On his death, all of them immolated themselves. While on journey, he used to take 25 or 30 of his favourite ones. The palanquin of the principal wife had been tasselled with large and heavy seed pearls, the pole itself ornamented with gold. Those of other wives are decorated only with silken.  

Certain interesting points emerge from these accounts. First and foremost is that the king had abundant wealth to lead such luxurious lives. It also
speaks of women of the royal household who too were provided with ornaments, though not as luxurious as the queens used to wear. They acted as guards, soldiers, wrestlers, trumpeters, pipers, etc. Krishnaraya is stated to have 12000 such women which obviously is an exaggeration. The question arises whether these women in the harem 'owned' all those ornaments, or were given to them to wear at the time of service. It is difficult to imagine that they owned them. Krishnaraya fought numerous battles successfully and 'looted' the riches of the conquered. It is true that every time he returned from a conquest, he made very liberal grants of ornaments, gold, diamond to a number of temples of renown, like the ones at Tirupati, Kālahasti, Simhachalam, Śrīśailam, Kanchipuram, Śrīrañgam, Kumbhakonam etc. Yet, a lot remained and was distributed obviously among his queens who literally rolled in riches.

Whatever may be the argument about the maidens 'owning' such treasures, the fact remains that to serve their masters they had to be educated not only in three R's but also in martial arts and fine arts since their first duty was to protect and to entertain the women of royal harem. Describing the Dasara festivities, Paes speaks of courtesans and bayaderes (dancing girls of the temple and palace) who kept dancing in front of the temple and idol for long hours. Continuing the narrative he refers to 25 or 30 'female door keepers with canes in their hands and whips on their shoulders ....... many women playing many trumpets and drums and pipes ...... and viols.72

The Venetian, Nicolo de Conti who visited Vijayanagara during the period of Dēvarāya II states that the country was richer than the other regions of India. People here live in spacious and well equipped houses. The rich merchants use
dining tables and eat from silver plates while the common men sit on mats. People have long hair which they tie into a knot behind the head. Generally, both men and women and, of course, the commoners use two pieces of cloth one covering the body below the navel and the other worn on top. This is due to the heat of the country. For the same reason they also wore sandals.\textsuperscript{73}

This brings us to an examination of some conditions of womenfolk at large. We have spoken of maids attached to the harem. We have stated that they were acquainted with three 'R's. Generally, from the viewpoint of literacy at least the women had become more literate. We have Hanumavva (Aramaneya Ōduva Hanumavva) of the palace who purchased a plot of land and gifted it to God Mallikarjuna of Śrīśailam.\textsuperscript{74} Yet some of the systems that were in vogue appeared to be heinous.

The Sati system was one of them. One of the earliest examples of Sati in Vijayanagara times is recorded in an epigraph A.D. 1354. In the reign of Hariappa Odeyar, Mala Gowḍa went to svarga and his wife chennakka performed Sahagamana and also went to svarga.\textsuperscript{75} In 1376 A.D. during the reign of Bukkaraya Bechigauda went to svarga, when his junior wife Muḍḍi Goundi performed sahagamana and both obtained mukti.\textsuperscript{76} Nunka Gouda died in A.D. 1383 and his queen (arasi) Dēmāyi entered the fire.\textsuperscript{77} In the reign of Harihara II, in A.D. 1386, a Mahāsatikal or stone commemorating the great sati, records the death of Bommakka, wife of Malyandur Bedabira who died fighting in a battle.\textsuperscript{78} On the death of match-lockman Devaya Nayaka bitten by a snake in A.D. 1388, his wife Muḍḍana Kēti became a great sati and went to vaikunta.\textsuperscript{79}
An inscription dated 1405-6 informs us that Gangasani the daughter of Bayiri setti of Pamidi, did agnipravesa at Penukonda on the death of her husband Rāmadēva Nāyaka. In praise of her, Tippa Nāyaka set up a vīrakai (hero-hand) at Vanavolu.

Manavāne Mādiga in A.D. 1429 went to svarga and his wife also went to svarga for performing sati. An inscribed mahāsatikal, or also known as mastikal dated A.D. 1430 found at Aruna vānahalli, Mālavalli taluka, states that a woman named malabbe, wife of Prabha Gavuḍa, went to the world of Gods.

The incidents cited above underscore the fact that sati was prevalent. It is generally considered that sati was notorious in north and north Western India alone. Conveniently forgotten for three long centuries, in the south the Vijayanagara monarchy supported the practice, even though there was no threat of enemy ravishing the chastity of their women. The other glaring fact is that though a number of women played a prominent role in various fields, in various fields their is no change in the status of women in respect of sati which was considered to be part and parcel of complete womanhood. Nuniz gives a fairly detailed account of sati. According to him:

The women have the custom of burning themselves when, their husbands die and hold it an honour to do so. When, therefore, their husbands die, they mourn with their relations and those of their husbands, but they hold that the wife who weeps beyond measure has no desire to go in search of her husband; and the mourning finished, their relations speak to them not to dishonour their generation.

It is interesting to note that such a system was not in vogue to such a degree in the previous centuries.
Another aspect associated with women is the dowry system. An epigraph from Nandavaram in Kurnool district records a resolution of *vidvān-mahājanas* of that place. On the occasion when their *agrahāra* was restored to them and they were reinstated in it, by *mahāmandalēśvara* Rāmarāju Tirumalarājayyadēva-mahārāja. Accordingly, they agreed to take to the study of the *vēdas* and *Sāstras* and would abstain from levying dowries for marriages of girls (*kanyā-śulka*) in their community. Yet another record from the same place of the reign of Sadasiva seems to prohibit taking or giving dowry among the *vidvān-mahājanas* at the time of marriage. Sometimes lands were alienated to the bride-groom’s party towards what is called in the record *stṛdāṇa*. The *Māṅgāḍu* epigraph in Tamil Nadu (Chingleput district) registers an agreement among the residents of that village that lands should not be given to outsiders on this account. In Karnataka, more so in the Sivamogga district, this practice had become rampant. They even sold lands as in the case of Viṭṭappa, son of Achappa, who had to sell kandavalli village, besides other lands for the sake of marriage. For a similar reason Bommiyakkaheggaditi’s son had to sell land to the *sthānika* Bovaṇṇa-āyya, son of Dēvappanṇa-āyya, a temple priest. More strict than the Nandavaram record referred to above is the one that refers to such a *kanyā-śulka* practice in vogue among the Brahmanas in Padaiṉiv ā region, where, to prevent such an evil practice, an agreement was entered into, in the presence of God Gōpinātha of Aṅkapushkariṇi, among Brahmanas of the region, be they Kannadigas, Telungas, Tamiras etc., of all *gōtras*, *sutras* and *śākhas*. According to this, marriages were to be performed only through *kanyādāna* and those that gave or received gold for this purpose were to be punished by the king and excommunicated by the community.
Even with regard to the system, it is truly said that "the payment of dowry to the bridegrooms parents was an obligation, especially in the upper caste families. In the lower castes it was the other way round." Women were neither free nor inclined to choose their husbands. Polygamy was the rule and hence the element of love could not be the basis for marriage. Allasāni Peddana, the noted poet, explains the reasons in the following maxim. It is not possible that one man should love several women, and several women, one man. I believe he has no love for them, nor they for him." 

Venkataramanayya Further says. "Indeed, it was a rare fortune for a woman especially of the higher classes to secure a husband who would concentrate his affection entirely upon her. Under these circumstances, conjugal life could not have been very happy. The literature echoes the agonising crisis of women writhing with pain caused by the cruel treatment of men."

Regarding the dress and jewellery of both men and womenfolk the accounts we have from the foreign travellers and from literature, are mostly confined to the royalty, nobility and the upper strata of the society. The commonalty has not been a subject of description or discussion. Says Paes :

The king sits, dressed in white clothes all covered with (embroidery of) golden roses and wearing his jewels - he wears a quantity of these white garments and I always saw him so dressed - and around him stand his pages, with betel, and his sword, and the other things which are his insignia of state.

Nuniz almost concurs :

The king never put on any garment more than once, and when he takes
it off he at once delivers it to certain officers who have charge of this duty, and they render account, and these garments are never given to any one. This is considered to show great state. His clothes are silk cloths (pachōlis) of very fine material and worked with gold, which are worth each one ten pardaos; and they wear at times bajuris of the same sort, which are like shirts with a skirt, and on the head they wear caps of brocade which they call culaes (Telugu: Kullāyi) and one of these is worth some twenty cruzados. When he lifts it from his head he never again puts it on.

But this account would lose its weight unless a detailed study of literature and also an examination of sculptures are made. Hence, we have not taken this under our purview.

The other important aspect of the Vijayanagara period was the corruption and bribery which have set in the society. But most of the inscriptions do not talk about this. However, a few inscriptions and local records contain interesting details about the crimes prevalent among the tax-collectors and the other officers and people who were entrusted with the task of administering justice in the provincial courts.

To collect the taxes on lands, villages, merchandise and on different professions of the people, the state had appointed officials who are referred to in the inscriptions as suñkaris, suñkaravāru or suñkadavāru, manigandilu, manihagāndilu 94 and Hasanidyagāndilu.95 Sometimes out of greed and for personal reasons, the tax-collectors exacted the taxes from the people without the knowledge of the government. During the time of Krishṇadēvarāya, the
sūṅkaravārıṇa \textit{exacted} the taxes like \textit{katnam} and \textit{sūṅka sthāvaras} from the villages of Koppōlu and Tippalūru without the knowledge of the government despite the fact that they have been exempted from the payment of the taxes by the king.\textsuperscript{96} Owing to such corrupt practices of the royal officials and the heavy and oppressive taxes imposed on them, many approached the king or his deputies (\textit{kāryakarta}), or the local nayaka chief and brought to their notice of the misrule of the state officials and the unjust tax collections made by them from the villagers.\textsuperscript{97}

An inscription from Bhūpasamudram of Bellary District of the time of Sadāśivarāya dated A.D. 1556, mentions that on the representation of the villagers unauthorised taxes were being levied by \textit{manihagāṇḍḷu, mahāmanḍalēśvara}, Rāmarāju Tirumalayadēva Mahārāja enquired into the complaint and remitted the taxes on the agrahara village.\textsuperscript{98} It also states that the penal fee (\textit{aparāṭham pannu}) collected from the culprits was donated to the development of the canals and tanks of the temples. It is known from the inscription that the revenue officers who were corrupt were punished by the state by collecting from them certain amount of cash as penal fee. The record also informs us that the fines collected from the culprits should be utilised for rearing the tanks and canals of the temple lands and the village.\textsuperscript{99}

The corruption in the revenue administration gave rise to the desertion of the villages and also caused a great loss to the state's revenue and the agricultural lands of the villages. The kings and the Nāyakas have immediately enquired about the matters reported by the villagers. Further, as it had caused a great loss to the personal properties of all the people of the villages, the people
have unitedly reported the matters, as and when happened to the king or to the Nāyaka chief.  

Instances of receiving bribes by the officials of in the provincial courts are also observed from the Local Records. Rāvadi Nārayana Sōmayājulu of Gaṇḍikōṭa has accepted three varahas as bribe to forge the document and to transfer the hearing of the case from Gaṇḍikōṭa to Tippa Samudra. When both the parties went to Tippa samudra to seek justice, a dharmāsana was constituted with seven members of the village for the purpose of hearing their appeal. Having heard the two versions of the parties, the members of the dharmāsana discussed among themselves and came to the conclusion that the jayarēkha of Hanumāṇīgundam was genuine the other party members have offered seventy five varahas as bribe to the seven members of the dharmāsna. As the Pērusōmala people did not have seventy five varahas on hand, they had given seventy varahas in cash and promised to pay the rest of amount i.e., Five varahas, by executing a note. This had changed the final decision of the dharmāsana and the judgement was pronounced in favour of Pērusōmala people. This case clearly shows the unscrupulousness, hypocrisy and the habit of accepting bribe among the people of dharmāsana, constituted for the purpose of giving impartial judgement.

The Vijayanagara kingdom, for the first time, encompassed the whole of South India. Since the ruler and the ruled alike felt that there was a threat to dharma, they supported the founders of Vijayanagara whose authority was established over the whole of South India. Having succeeded in establishing a mighty empire, the rulers now found that they could not control the administration
of such a vast region directly. They had already been, since for long, local chieftains described as *mahāmaṇḍalēśvaras*. They were almost hereditary administrators of their region. They virtually became the masters. Now the kings confirmed them in their positions and allowed them to rule over their regions independently and this is know as the *nāyaṅkara* or *amaranāyaṅkara* system that came into existence in the Vijayanagara period.

The kings now were interested in the collection of tribute from their chieftains and permitted them to collect taxes on their behalf. They not only paid stipulated amount annually to the king, but also other kind of gifts, like the ones paid on the occasions of king’s birth ceremony and birth of a son to the king etc. These were a kind of tributes paid to the king. Also they maintained a contingent of army in the capital on their behalf and at their own cost. Excepting these, they were free in matters of internal administration. In fact, their relation was confined only to the expression of loyalty. When the king at the centre grew weak, the chieftains tended to exhibit their independence. This was in fact the feudal system - in a way. The feudatories collected taxes from the peasantry

and supplied retainers to the king provided that he was strong. These feudal lords were *de facto* masters of the area over which they ruled. They now levied taxes upon the tenants arbitrarily and collected them forcibly. Otherwise, the tenants forfeited their land.

This is what Nuniz conveys when he says\textsuperscript{103} "The kings of this country are able to assemble as many soldiers as they want, as they have them there in the kingdom and have much wealth where with to pay them. The king chiterrao has foot-soldiers
paid by his nobles, and they are obliged to maintain six *lakhs* of soldiers, that in six hundred thousand men, and twenty four thousand horses, which the same nobles are obliged to have. These nobles are like renters who hold all the land from the king, and besides keeping all these people, they have to pay their cost; they also pay to him every year sixty *lakhs* of rents as royal dues. The lands they say, yield a hundred and twenty *lakhs* of which they must pay sixty to the king, and the rest they retain for the pay of the soldiers and the expenses of elephants which they are obliged to maintain. For the reason the common people suffer much hardship, those who hold the lands being so tyrannical of these sixty lakhs that the king has of revenue every year he does not enjoy a larger sum than twenty five *lakhs*, for the rest is spent on his horses, and elephants, and foot-soldiers, and cavalry, whose cost he defrays.

Because of the alienation of relationship between the ruler and the chieftains, a new social order emerged specially in respect of holding of land. In fact, as seen above, the emigration of the original settlers on land was due to excessive taxes they had to pay which broke their backs. New settlers were invited to stay and they were offered several benefits and concessions. The harsh treatment meted out to these cultivators bordered on slavery.

As of old, the important social unit that kept the society binding together was the *agrahāra*. The *agrahāras* played a part in maintaining worship in the temple, restoring such worship and supporting the temple dependants. No doubt, as in the earlier centuries *agrahāras* were given as grangs to Brāhmaṇas. But, now, they took up the cause of education, learning, and culture. This had a softening effect on the society. It also brought peoples and communities together.
The Śrīśailam epigraph\textsuperscript{104} refers to Ōduva Hanumavva, noted above, who purchased a plot of land for making over to the Mallikarjuna temple for worship and for feeding five jaṅgamās. The Kurnool copper plate inscriptions\textsuperscript{105} gift the village Perakarinūtula alias Virūpākshapura in Kannadu, a subdivision of Pānugallu-rāja as tax-free agrahara to Rāmayārya, a learned Brāhmaṇa, who in turn, apportioned, the lands thereof to other Brāhmaṇas. The Khairappala epigraph records interesting information that Kōneti Timmarāju, governor of Ādavāni-rāja, restored the grant of talavārike and sthāla-suṅka amounting to 18 madas to the vidvān-mahājanas of agrahāra Dēvarāyapura alias Khairappala for the merit of his father Chikka Kondarāju. The original grant had been unjustly snatched away by the previous governor.\textsuperscript{106} Income from tyāgavattena collected by the mahājanas of Kōsinepalle alias Harihararāyapuram was made over to the festival of charapu (śirappu), tirunal festival of God Tiruvengalānatha, by a vipravinōdi.\textsuperscript{17} Dommarī Komāragiri-reṇḍi and Kutari Sūraparāju gifted the income from dommarī tax to Gods Śiva and Perumāḷ (Vishṇu) in 1527 A.D.\textsuperscript{108} The village Guttirājupeṇṭa was constituted into an agrahāra by avasaram Chandrasēkharayya and gifted to Vīrannodaya of Basava-maṭham to be enjoyed by the donee and his disciples. This record dated 1529 A.D. is from Śrīśailam.\textsuperscript{109}

The examples would show that in this period the agrahāras were rent free villages not only to be enjoyed by one or more Brāhmaṇa donees learned in Vēdas, Śāstrās etc., but also acted as institutions through which temple services were conducted, rituals performed, festivals, celebrated and so on. This would also show that the people at large took active part in these festivities. As we shall see in the next chapter, such festivities brought people of villages, towns etc.
together, irrespective of caste, creed, or profession. This acted as a binding force.

According to Mahalingam "there is evidence to believe that the institution of slavery was prevalent in Vijayanagara". What makes Mahalingam say that 'what the agricultural serf was in the rural areas, the slave appears to have been in the urban area does not appear to be clear in connotation'. But, we get much more information from the accounts of later travellers. Says Conti:

The inhabitants ... have a vast number of slaves and the debtor who is insolvent is everywhere adjudged to be the property of his creditor. The numbers of these people and nations exceed belief. Their armies consist of a million men and upwards.

Here the reference is obviously to what we could term as economic slaves those that could not repay the debt. From what is said above, it would appear that they were admitted into military service. Further, it would also appear that the number 'one million' is an exaggeration. 'The agricultural serfs, seem to mean those agricultural labourers engaged in agricultural activities. But, this would lead to a lot of misconception. The landlord did keep a few tenants in his house and they had become virtually members of that household. There is no evidence to show that they were slaves. Mahalingam refers to a besavaga of a record of 1470 A.D. and translates it as a 'bond servant'. Basavaga-basamaga-basamakkal (plural) is obviously a Kannada term and it does not mean 'bond servant'. Besa means order and hence it would simply mean those serfs who carried out the orders. It is possible that there were bonded labourers. When one was not in a position to repay the loan, the money lender, as a surety, took one of his sons as a slave. Even here, it would be difficult to apply the term
'slave' in the connotation which it now has. At best he may be described as 'jitada-ālu' a servant who served the master, losing his own identity.

The accounts of foreign travellers are somewhat late and this was a consequence of the inroads of the Portuguese and others who needed servants for various activities, who could not be brought all the way from their native lands. By now we have gathered a fairly good picture of the configurations of the dynamics of change in the socio-politico-economic scenario of Rāyalaseema in the Vijayanagara empire.
NOTES AND REFERENCES

2. Sri Thipperudraswamy's article in *Srikanthika* (Ed. K.V. Ramesh, *et al*), p. 253
3. Ibid. p. 254.
6. 5 : 216.
8. Quoted from *Local Records*, 54, pp. 112-13-extract from an inscription at Vellala dated Saka 1470, i.e. 1554. A.D., according to Venkataramanayya. There is some obvious error here.
11. Sewell: *Forgotten Empire* (VII Reprint, (1992), p. 390; Barbosa's account in Portuguese is translated by Longworth Dames into English under the title 'The Book of Barbosa'. Dames was retired civil service officer in India, and published this in 1918. But, earlier Henry Stanley had already brought out a translation in 1865. Sri H.L. Nage Gowda has published the Kannada translation of this latter, which according to him, is better than that of Longworth.
13. Sewell: *op.cit.*, preface, P.V.
15. ibid: p. 245.
20. ibid., 1937-38, No. 206.
26. ibid., No: 268.
27. ibid., No: 31.
28. ibid., No: 245.
30. Venkataramanayya; op. cit., p 234.
32. ibid., No: 232.
33. ibid., No: 215.
34. S.I.I., XVI, No:156.
35. ibid., No. 776. The record states that Kesavayya Gōpajiyā, Nalarayya, Peda Anantayya and China Anantayya were the svāmis of their community (Kulasvāmulu).
36. ibid., No.182.
37. ibid., No. 190.
40. *ibid.*.
42. P.V.P. Sastry, *op.cit.*, No.68.
43. *ibid.*, No.213.
45. P.V.P. Sastry; *op.cit.*, No.36.
49. For example, P.V.P. Sastry, *op.cit.*, Nos163, 177, 179, 194, 250; *S.I.I.*, XV, Nos. 135, 136, 147, 148, 149, 160 etc.
50. P.V.P. Sastry: *op. cit.*, No.81
51. *ibid.*, No.177.
52. *ibid.*, No. 228.
53. *ibid.*, No.271.
54. *S.I.I.*, XVI, No.300
55. *ibid.*, No. 46.
56. *ibid.*, No.177.
59. *ibid.*, No.119.
60. *ibid.*, No.121; *ARSIE.*, 1906, No.488.
61. **ARSIE.,** 1932-33, No.35.


63. ibid., 1962, No.268; **ibid.,** 1926, No.715.

64. **S.I.I.,** XVI, No.24.


67. **M.Mss. Mnt.** 117-6 Dāsaripalli p.114; **AM** 4-221.


69. Vignānēśvara, *'the Mitakshara'* Quoted by Appadorai in *'Economic conditions in South India'* , p. 318.

70. R. Sewell: *Forgotten Empire*, pp. 247 ff.

71. ibid., p. 370.

72. ibid., p. 273.


75. **EC VIII, Sb,** 104, p.15.

76. ibid, Sb.106, p. 16.

77. **EC.,** XI, Dg.117, p. 73.

78. **MysArch Report** for 1923, p.90.

79. **EC.,** VII, Sb.483, p.81. **op.cit.,**

80. **M.A.R.,** 809 of 1917; For the symbolism of the lemon, read *Irvine*, J.R.A.S. for 1905, p. 364, where reference is given to a valuable essay in German on the symbolism of the lemon by Prof. Theodor Zachariae. For sati stones in Gujarat, read Arch. Survey, west India, for 1897. p.90.

81. **EC. VIII, Sb.24,** p.5.
84. *ARSIE.*, 1943-44, No.4.
85. *ibid.*, No.13.
86. *ARSIE.*, 1908, No.134.
88. *ibid.*, TI.175.
89. Annual Report of the Arch Survey of India (ARASI), 1907-08, No.230.
95. *ibid.*, Nos.212, 304, 334.
96. *ibid.*, Vols. 210, 213.
100. *ibid.,”
101. *ibid.*, No.213.
102. *ibid.,”


