CHAPTER - II
LAND GRANTS DURING VIJAYANAGARA PERIOD

2.0 Introduction

It would be impossible to exaggerate the importance of land grants in the rural economy of any country. In Karnataka, land had always been the only source of income. The exploitation of land was the only means of livelihood for different classes of people and institutions of society. In fact everyone looked at land as a means of livelihood, including religious institutions like Temples, Mutts, Charitable institutions, also houses, educational institutions, private persons, kings and their officials all depended on the income of agricultural land.

The feelings of pity and benevolence were primary force which was operating in those times and which led to the creation of land-grants. They found expression in religious and charitable gifts. The Vijayanagara rulers were highly religious. They expressed this ideal in a variety of forms one was the sign manual Sri Virupaksha inscribed in Kannada characters at the end of their copper-plate documents. This manifests their faith in God and belief that they were his instruments. The religious element contributed to the creation of land grants to Brahmanas and religious institution. The Vijayanagara protected the extensive land grants. Thus, the land grants in its various forms was the product of religious feeling which was particularly intensive during the Vijayanagara period.

2.1 Brahmadaaya Grants

Brahmadaaya grants refer to the land which was held by Brahmanas. The Brahmana settlement was known as Aghrharas. Kings, officials and common people granted lands to Brahmanas. Almost all the
rulers of the period maintained Brahmadaya lands. Giving away lands to Brahmanas was considered as an act of religious merit. Numerous inscriptions of the period substantiate this point. Thus for instance an inscription from Srirangapatna, dated 1446 A.D. says that “the dust of the earth may be counted; the drops of the rain may be counted, but the fruit of grant to Brahmanas cannot be counted even by Brahma”.\(^1\) of gold, grain, land, cows were considered to be an act of religious merit.\(^2\)

Villagers as Agraharas were granted with the avowed purpose of acquiring religious merit and union with God after the death of donor.\(^3\)

An inscription belonged to Vijayanagara period which describes the foundation of an Agrahara in 1403 A.D. contains information about the rewards that donors of land would obtain. It quotes verses from Ithihasas and Puranas on the rewards of the grants of land and the penalties for violating them. Rama’s words: Though he grants but a small portion of the earth, he will go to Brahma’s abode and not return. Brihaspathi’s words: To where there are golden pavilions, where Gandharvas and Apsaras are, there goes the donor of the land and whoever gives villages to a Guru, to the Gods or the Brahmanas, at meritorious times, such wiseman, would go to Brahmana’ abode, with 21 generations of his family. After enjoying all the pleasures of his heart desires for many ages, he would be born again as a righteous king. His virtues would be sung in pleasant stories by the Naga Maidens in Patala, hearing which, the serpents there would be filled with pleasure, whose fame is like an awning in Svarga or heaven.\(^4\) Such idealistic religious beliefs contributed to the creation of Brahmadaya tenure.

The same religious zest was exhibited in maintaining such grants. An inscription belonged to the Vijayanagar period records, “A work of merit done even by an enemy one should strive to maintain; the enemy indeed may remain an enemy, but a work of a merit is not an enemy to no one”.\(^5\) As a result of this belief, political changes, or changes in
dynastic rule did not affect the continuity of privileges attached to the beneficial tenures in general and Brahmadaya tenure in particular. Now we shall discuss the formation of Agraharas, which were in the stronghold of Brahmadaya land tenure.

The Agrahara was a sarvamanya or revenue free village assigned to learned Brahmans for their sustenance. It existed in the medieval Karnataka, Tamilnadu and Andhra desha as in other parts of the country. The Brahman landlords were known as the Mahajanas. The Mahajana assembly managed the affairs of the Agrahara. In the Vijayanagar times, we have abundant evidence of their existence and corporate economic activity. Their various donations to the temples and other items of public welfare are clear evidence of the point. They looked after the general management and other municipal duties. The Agraharas served the purpose of small University Centres managed by the Mahajanas. The Mahajanas were men of learning. The Agraharas were free from the encroachment of the soldiers and the tax collectors. They were supported by the kings, queens, nobles and by the rich and the poor. It has been rightly said, “the services rendered by these institutions in historical times are really marvelous and eminent”. The Agrahara was a feudalized segment in Vijayanagar Empire managing local administration, landed estates, collecting taxes, framing its own rules and regulations.

Agraharas were formed in various ways in Karnataka during the Vijayanagara period. The king, or with his consent his officers created them. Either the donee was a single person, who, in his turn distributed shares to others, or the donor himself distributed the land among different shareholders. A few examples of the formation of such Agraharas are given below:
In A.D. 1345, Virammaji Hiriya Pemmaga Nayaka granted to Ranganathabhhatta’s son Bhavabhuti, Jala in Elahankanad as an Agrahara free of all imposts.\(^7\) In this instance, the donee was a single person. There were Agraharas in Yedenad. An inscription of A.D. 1346 at Hejje, Sorab Taluk, records the gift of the village Heddase (Hejje in Sorab Taluk) by Prince Marapa, younger brother of Harihara I. it describes the circumstances that led to the establishment of the Agrahara. The king built a tank, the sacred spot Heddase on the river Varada, and made up his mind to create an Agrahara nearby. The donee, well versed in all the Vedas, came from Andhradesha, and the Agrahara was named Sangamapura. The names of the donees and the distribution of vrittis are given. The charter was got prepared in the presence of the principal chiefs of the province, and the leading men of the two Agraharas. Their names are given. “The Mahajanas of the two great Agraharas Elase and Kuppadadde in Edenad….. including the headmen (named), and the Mahaprabhus among whom were the heads of villages (named), all these having assembled gave away the village Heddase in order that it might come under their guardianship though it had been previously granted by king Marapa”.\(^8\) Here the donor himself distributed the land among different shareholders. Another inscription of A.D. 1368\(^9\) from the village Banavasi in Sirsi Taluk also refers to the joint activity of the Mahajanas of these two agraharas. When Mahamandalesvara Veera Bukkaraya was reigning in Hastinavatipura (Anegondi) and Madhavanka was ruling Banavasi 12000, his servant Ambhalantha (i.e Ahobalanatha) sent word to the Gaudaprajegal in the 18 Kampanas of Gutti and held a meeting at Banavasi. The meeting was attended by the chief citizens of Yedenad comprising the Mahajanas of the Agraharas of Yelase and Kuppadadde. Tammagauda of Sorab, the chief citizens (name given) of village of Tavanidhi, Kesalar, Hechchita in Kondavatinad, Balegahalli, Kuppatur, in Nagarkhanda and Hurule. The meeting was called for conducting the services, personal decorations and festivals of the God in the temple for
ever, applied for help to the Gaudapraje (village headman) of 18 Kampanas (divisions) of Gutti. The nature of the grant made by those assembled is not clear, but some land seems to have been given.

In A.D. 1359\textsuperscript{10} Devaraya II granted the village Kannenahalli near Devabetta situated to the south of Hagaharya in Hagaharya sthala of the Rayadurga Kingdom, giving it another name Pratapadevarajendrapura, to Lakshmihidhararyaya, the knower of the purport of the Veda, Vedanta and all sciences, proficient in grammar, logic and philosophy etc. the donee formed the village into 160 vrittis or shares, retained 30 for himself and bestowed the remaining on learned Brahmanas. This is an instance of a single person being the donee, who, in his turn distributed shares to other persons. In A.D. 1364, Madarasa of Mangalura, under the orders of the King Vira-Bukkanna Vodeyar, made gift of the village Pudu-grama to certain Brahmanas free of all taxes.\textsuperscript{11} Here the doner himself distributed the shares. In another instance,\textsuperscript{12} the donees were Kasmir Brahmanas. The Shikaripur inscription relates how in A.D. 1368 Bukka's minister Madhava established an Agrahara. He petitioned the king, saying, “From the funds of my own property I will carry out your order, give me leave”. After obtaining his permission, he purchased at the price of the day, Muchandi, Palasapalli and Tevatta, situated in Nagarkhanda and gave them the name of Vidyesvarapura. He summoned an assembly of learned Kasmir Brahmanas, formed eighty shares, and granted them. We have also the sale deed of the villages above purchased in another inscription.\textsuperscript{13}

An inscription of A.D. 1377 from Bachahalli in Krishnarajpet Taluk records, the Harihara II made a grant with all the rights of possession, Bacheyahalli village, with its 13 hamlets (named) belonging to the Kabahu District in the Hosana country, and of the village Dandematigatta with its three hamlets (named), and forming them into
an Agrahara under the name of Immadi-Bukkarajapura and dividing it into 60 Vrittis bestowed the later on various Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{14} The Satyamangalam plates of Devaraya II records that in A.D. 1424, he bestowed on eight Brahmanas the Agrahara of Chiteyatpura, which he named Devarayapura after himself.\textsuperscript{15} In A.D. 1474, king Virupaksha made over the grant of Prasanna Channakesavapura to Krishnabhatta, who distributed the forty shares of that Agrahara to the Mahajanas”. In this instance, the grant was made to a single person who distributed the shares to others. In A.D. 1495, the royal treasurer Devappa Nayaka’s son Balanatha granted Narasambu Agrahara to Kaya Nanjinatha Dikshita’s son Narasimha Dikshita.\textsuperscript{16} Here the donee was a single person. An epigraph of A.D. 1511\textsuperscript{17} from Hampedevanahalli, Hospet taluk, records the gift of the village, Hampadevanahalli, surnamed Krishnarayapura to various Brahmanas. Here the king Krishnadevaraya himself distributed the Vritti after establishing the Agrahara.

According to an inscription of A.D. 1512 from Dodda-Jataka in Nagamangala Taluk, Krishnadeva Raya granted the village Hiri-Jattiga, with its four hamlets surnamed Chinnadevipura to Srinivadhavari. He having set apart 10 Vrittis for himself, bestowed the remaining 20 Vrittis on worthy Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{18} In A.D. 1513, Krishnadeva Raya, on the application of the minister Tippasoma granted to Visvesvara the village named Bhandaripalli.\textsuperscript{19} In A.D. 1516, Krishnadeva-raya granted three villages, namely, Chikkabbehalli together with its three hamlets situated in the Nagamangala kingdom Halavumarahosahalli situated in the Chennapattna Kingdom and Vengenahalli in the Billagondanahalli Kingdom to the virtuous ascetic, Vyasaatirtha.\textsuperscript{20} In A.D. 1519, minister Saluva Govinda Raja made a grant of Madhavapura in the Ummattur-sime as an Agrahara to Nanjayarasu.\textsuperscript{21} In A.D. 1530, Achyuta Raya granted to Venkatesvara-Varayajava, in the Hosakota-Sime, Sambapura as an Agrahara, giving it the new name Achyutamaharayambudhi.
Accepting the proprietorship of the Agrahara, he formed it into 24 shares which he bestowed upon the Mahajanamas.\textsuperscript{22}

We come across the creation of Agraharas “for the merit of the monarch”. A few examples may be given of such Agraharas.

Narayana-dev-wodeyar, son of Mahamandaleshwara Mallappa-Odeyar, in A.D. 1397, for the long life, health and wealth of his father (that is, uncle) Harihara Maharaya established an Agrahara named Pratapa-Hariharapura at the village of Kolatur belonging to Channapattna, and dividing it into 36 shares, bestowed upon the Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{23} In A.D. 1495, the Mahamandalesvara Gode-Raya made, to the sons of Timmarasa, the temple priest and others (named), a grant of the Gangadihalli village in Kukkala-nadu belonging to his Nayakship. He gave it another name Timmannarajapura, as an Agrahara in order that merit might be to Immadi Narasingaraya Maharaja.\textsuperscript{24} According to Magadi Taluk inscription in A.D. 1520, Saluva-Timmarasaya granted for the merit of Krishnadevaraya, Nagisettihalli to his Aradhya Tataya’s wife Nalladayamma in sole possession, as an Agrahara.\textsuperscript{25} An epigraph from T. Narasipur Taluk records that merit might accrue to Krishnadevaraya, named the village of Kaluru as Krishnapura, divided it into 37 shares, and presented them to Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{26}

Village and Nadu assemblies also established Agraharas. An inscription of A.D. 1379 from Jodi-Lokkondanahalli records that Gauda-prajegal of Hullur were associated with the establishment of an Agrahara, Lakkagondanahalli alies Ramachandrasamudra.\textsuperscript{27} In A.D. 1408, all the farmers and subjects of the Araga Eighteen Kampana, and those of the three cities agreeing among themselves, established the Agrahara Nagasamudra.\textsuperscript{28}
There is also an instance of the formation of an Agrahara by dancing girls. An inscription of A.D. 1599 from Kunigal relates, that Sringaramma of the Elahankanad, Prabhu Immadi Hiri Kempaya Gauda’s state dancing saloon (Pattadanataka-shale), founded Sringarasagara Agrahara.\textsuperscript{29} Pattadanataka-shale refers to the dancing hall.

Sometime a village appears to have been founded by the Mahajanas by reclaiming the forests. For example, an inscription at Rajabavanahalli Taluk, Bellary District records that in A.D. 1419, the Mahajanas headed by Hariyanna were granted the village of Hariyasamudra for having founded it by reclaiming the forests, and constructed a tank. The land, under the tank was made free from certain taxes.\textsuperscript{30} In another instance, the Brahmanas agreed to spend money to restore a dam which had been breached, and consequently were granted an Agrahara. In A.D. 1417, the Arati Dam breached. Several Brahmanas agreed to expend money and restore the dam so as to form a tank and build there a village named Muluvayi-Nachipura. They were granted the tract of land in which they might cut down the jungle and form fields. It was divided into four parts. One part was given to the temple, and the remaining three parts were to form an Agrahara.\textsuperscript{31} In this case the temple priests of Muluvai Nachi-devi agreeing among themselves made the grant. Obviously the land belonged to the temple priests. Muluvai Chavadi consisted of eleven villages.

During the Vijayanagara times, not only were new Agraharas established, but also many old ones which had gone to ruin were revived.

An inscription of A.D. 1346 to which reference was made earlier, gives the circumstances leading to the establishment of the Agrahara of
Heddase (Hejje in Sorab Taluk) by Prince Marappa, younger brother Harihara I.\textsuperscript{32}

We have the history of two other Agraharas of Sringapura and Vidyaranyapura Harihara and established the two Agraharas, and forming 250 shares made them over to Vidyaranya-Bharati swami for the worship of the Gods, Mallikarjuna, Vidyasankara-swami and Sharadamma in the Matha. In course of time all the shares had become dispersed, and the common people themselves were in possession. They had made areca plantations, gained large profits, and mortgaged and sold them to one another, without, as was due, making over the money to the maths, Agrahara and temples. Keladi Shivappa Nayaka (A.D. 1645 – A.D. 1660) in A.D. 1652, inquired the whole matter. He put them down and made over the lands to them. He apportioned the money according to the 250 shares formerly fixed for Sringapura and Vidyaranyapura\textsuperscript{33} and also for the Matha, Agrahara and Temples.\textsuperscript{34} Now we shall discuss the rights and obligations of Brahmana landlords under this tenure.

Generally, the lands or villages held under Brahmadaya tenure were always free from all taxes. The Brahmanas under this tenure did not even pay land revenue on many occasions. They would sell, gift, exchange or mortgage the lands received under this tenure.\textsuperscript{35} But sometimes the Brahmanas had to pay a quit-rent which was fixed for eve, so that the holders enjoyed a permanent light assessment. However, they were free from other taxes.\textsuperscript{36} Though usually to secure religious merit lands were granted to Brahmanas, a few inscriptions of the Vijayanagar period mention the services that were expected from Brahmanas in return for land grants. But even such services part-took the nature of religion. Among services executed from Brahmanas in return for land grants mention may be made of, reading puranas, Vedas and shastras in temples,\textsuperscript{37} for the office of astrologer\textsuperscript{38} and for giving
religious instructions. Sometimes land were granted to them for their services in temples as priests. If it were for the purpose of imparting religious instructions, the land grant was termed as Srotiyam and Viyata-Srotra.

Generally under Brahmadaya tenure, the donees at the time of receiving lands or villages, received the ownership rights like gift, mortgage, sale and exchange. However, in exceptional cases inscriptions specifically mention the transfer of only states right to collect revenue from the cultivators of the village so granted to Brahmanas. For example, Kanvapura grant of Harihara II of Vijayanagar dated A.D. 1399 records the gift of the village Kanvapura to certain Brahmins, after it was formed into an Agrahara and dividing the same into Vrittis, at the rate of each Vritti or share to a Brahmana. The inscription, however, mentions that aggregate annual revenue of the village Kanvapura which included land revenue and 19 other taxes, of the value of 276 hons and 5 hanas were to be collected by the Brahmanas from the farmers of Kanvapura village. Here the ownership rights were not transferred to the donees, but they were entitled to the states rights. The grant was termed as Niyata-Srotra and the 27 Vrittidars had to pay cuit-rent of 20 hons to the state. The farmers of Kanvapura village were formerly (i.e., before the formation of Agrahara) paying revenue to the state, but with the effect of this royal grant they had to pay the same amount of revenue to the 27 Vrittadars, mentioned in the inscription. In other words, the tenure before the issue of royal grant was that of ryotwari or individual tenure or joint-tenure. But the royal grant converted the ryotwari tenure into an Inam tenure which in this case may be termed as Brahmadaya tenure, as the grant was made for the Brahmanas. As a result of the conversion of ryotwari into Inam tenure, the Vijayanagara government lost its revenue to that extent the farmers of Kanvapura were not tied to 27 Vrittidars or share holders. Those Vrittidars did not have ownership in
the lands of the village. They merely received right to collect the revenue. But in many cases the Brahmanas under this tenure received not only ownership rights, but also the exemption from paying land revenue and other taxes. This was the general feature of the period under study.

Brahmadaya villages were usually divided with a number of Vrittis or shares, and donated to the Brahmanas. The shares of land in Brahmadaya villages were either enjoyed as Ekabhogyam or Ganabhogyam. Under Ekabhogyam, lands were held by one family only, in perpetuity; whereas under Ganabhogyam lands were enjoyed in common. Under Ekabhogyam tenure the Brahmana donee was to be in full and unlimited possession of the land granted and had the sole and entire right of enjoyment of landed property with anyone else. If the terms of the land grant allowed it, he could sell it to others, only right of enjoyment of the fruits from the lands in times of necessity. Thus for instance, one Ramachandra Dikshita was granted a village as Sarvamanya on Ekabhogyam tenure by Achyutharaya of Vijayanagar to be enjoyed by him and his descendants. But he shared the part of the land among the Brahmanas of his sect.

In this connection, we may present here a detailed analysis of an inscription from Kollegal dated A.D. 1392, belonging to the reign of Harihara II. It refers to various aspects of Brahmadaya land tenures. It records the establishment of a Brahmakshetra around Kamparaja-pattana. Brahmakshetra means land holdings belonged to the Brahmanas. On the order of the King Harihara II, the prajegaudas of Kamparajapattana gave a stone charter to about 102 Brahmanas belonging to different gotras. Each Brahmana donee received a land holding with the sowing capacity ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ khanduga or $2\frac{1}{2}$ khandugas. Details are given below.
List showing the quantity of land, names of the Brahmanas and their gotra living in Kamparajapattana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Quantity of land</th>
<th>Name of the Brahmana</th>
<th>Gotra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>One Khanduga</td>
<td>Lakshuma</td>
<td>Atreya</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1 ½ Khanduga</td>
<td>Alagaperumale</td>
<td>Atreya</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2 ½ &quot;</td>
<td>Vedasaraswathi</td>
<td>Vadhula gotra</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Keshavanatha Dikshita</td>
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<td>Attalanantha Dikshita</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>Krushna Dikshita</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>Tiruvali Dikshita</td>
<td>Kasyapa gotra</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>2 ½ &quot;</td>
<td>Mange-Vupadhyya</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>½ &quot;</td>
<td>Alagiya-Vedada Upadhya</td>
<td>Bharadvaja</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
<td>Srirama Bhatta</td>
<td>Bharadvaja</td>
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<td>Modaliya Upadhya</td>
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<td>Kaundina</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>2 &quot;</td>
<td>Sarvarakritu (one who perform all kinds of sacrifices)</td>
<td>Gavishthira Gotra</td>
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<td>Ayama-Dikshita</td>
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<td>Allalanatha of Rigveda</td>
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<td>Varada-Vanpadhya</td>
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<td>Hastigirinatha</td>
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<td>Sriranganatha</td>
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Under Ganabhogyam the donees hold lands in common lands was distributed equally among the donees. A variation in this type may also be noted. Lands were divided among the Brahmana donees. But the cultivation was carried in common. The produce was shared by the donees, according to the share each had. Thus an inscription from Kadur dated A.D. 1346, records that “All the Brahmanas of the immemorial Agrahara of Hiriyanallur, at the time of the settlement of Tayyalarakere and Batteyur made an agreement on stone as follows: Of the 300 shares of wet-land under the Heggade tank at Tayyalarakere all the
money rent and grain rent belong to the Brahmanas who hold these shares (the same as 30 shares in Battiyur). The fixed rent that is received for the two villages will be divided equally between the holders of the 60 shares.

We have an interesting piece of evidence which indicates how Vijayanagara kings took minute attention in the procedure of granting Brahmadaya lands. Thus an inscription from Koppa Taluk dated A.D. 1418 and belonged to the time of Harihara, gives the following account of the procedure that was usually adopted while granting Brahmadaya lands: “Harihara created an Agrahara called Hariharapura. It was granted free of imposts. The donees were Peddanna Naganniah and other Brahmanas. After granting the Agrahara, the king sent an order to the Governor of Araga, directing him to distribute the tenants paying assessment to that Agrahara. The reason for distributing tenants for the Agrahara was that there might not arise any trouble between government tenants and those of the villages of the Agrahara. To execute the order of the king, the Governor called Heggades (headmen, named) of the villages of the Agrahara. The Governor asked him to make a division of tenants who would pay assessment to the Agrahara. Accordingly Arasanna Heggade distributed the tenants to Agrahara. Then he gave a patte or roll of assessment to the donees stating that these tenants (mentioned in the patte) were not to be molested either by the king or the nada. Then follows the names of tenants as contained in the patte and the amount to be paid by them in money to the Agrahara.49

The Vijayanagara kings also undertook of restoring ruined Agraharas and completely controlled its activities by appointing a manager to look after the affairs of the Agraharas which had been restored.50
The Brahmana donees of the Agrahara during the Vijayanagara period, often regulated the affairs concerning the lands for themselves. An important regulation in the villages held by Brahmanas as shareholders was that outsiders were not to be allowed to get any right or share by purchase or by grant. The Brahmanas were anxious that no outsider should get any benefit by the purchase of such lands or shares. An inscription in Malavalli Taluk in Mysore district registers an agreement among the Brahmanas and Shareholders. If any one mortgaged or sold his share to Sudras, he was put out of the Brahmin community and such share was not considered to have belonged to that place.51

The Brahmanas of Brahmadaya villages provided loans to cultivators when they were in distress and constructed irrigation works with their own funds.52

Another inscription from Mandya district records an agreement among the Mahajanas of the Agrahara. It is stated that the right of possession remained only for as long as the person remained in that place while it ceased when he left the place.53

The Brahmanas of Brahmadaya villages provided loans to cultivators when they were in distress and constructed irrigation works with their own funds for the purpose of improving agriculture.54

What emerges from the above is that of the saptangas or seven organs of the state power mentioned in literary and epigraphic sources, taxation system and coercive power based on the army are rightly regarded as two vital elements. If they are abandoned, the state power disintegrates. But this is the position created by the grants made to the Brahmanas in Agraharas. The inscriptions of the period which created
this tenure mention the time limit as “A Chandrarka Vagi” or as long as the existence of the sun and moon, which implies the permanent break-up of the integrity of the state.

Thus the widespread practice of making land grants in the Vijayanagara period paved the way for the rise of Brahma feudatories, who performed administrative functions not under the authority of the royal officers but almost independently. Whatever might be the intentions of the donors, the grants helped to create powerful intermediaries, wielding considerable economic and political power. As the number of the land owning Brahmanas went on increasing, some of them gradually shed their priestly functions and turned their chief attention to the management of land; in their case secular functions became more important than religious functions. But above all, as a result of land grants made to the Brahmanas, the comprehensive competence based on centralized control gave way to decentralization. The functions of the collection of taxes, levy of forced labour, regulation of agriculture etc., together with those of the maintenance of law and order, and defence were given over first to the priestly class, and later to the Amaranayakas or the warrior class.

Vijayanagara grants from Karnataka confer the right of enjoying the revenues from land in perpetuity on the Brahmana grantee, but rarely do not authorize him to alienate or grant his rents or land (or Vritti) to others.

Under this tenure, in return for land grants the Brahmanas were obliged to render religious services, which might secure the spiritual welfare of the donors or their ancestors. The secular obligations of the Brahmana beneficiaries under this tenure are rarely laid down. The negative obligations like that Brahmana landed intermediaries living in
Agraharas were not to conspire against the king and the kingdom, commit theft and adultery, slay brahmanas, and poison kings, not wage war and do wrong to other villages, were probably taken for granted in the charters of Vijayanagara period. These negative obligations imply that the Brahmanas enjoyed land under this tenure on condition that they would not act in opposition to the established social and political system.

But it is natural to expect that the Brahmana landlords more than repaid their generous donors and patrons by maintaining law and order under their charge and impressing upon the people the sacred duty of carrying out their varna functions and of obeying the king who in this period, as recorded in Amuktamalyada of Krishnadevaraya, was represented as embodying in his person the attributes of various Gods. Hence whatever may have been the intentions of the donors, it would be wrong to think that this land tenure served only religious purposes. Certainly the priests who held land under this tenure prayed for the spiritual well-being of the donors and their ancestors, and never supplied any soldiers as the Bishops in England did, but there was no need for military service if the people could be persuaded to behave themselves and to acquiesce in the existing order.

2.2 Devadaya Grants

So far we have discussed the Brahmadaya tenure. Now, we shall take up for consideration the Devadaya land tenure or the lands granted to temples. During the period under review, most of lands of which grants have survived were endowed to temples. Most of the donations were made by kings, queens, or their officials or by private persons or by village communities.
As in the case of Brahmadaya lands, here also we notice the fact that the main purpose of granting lands to temples was to acquire religious merit. Though this was the common purpose, we get references to many interesting purposes for which lands were granted to temples.

Kings usually granted lands to temples with a view to ‘secure a strong empire’ or kings’ birthday presents to temples in lands and villages with an expectation that their government might continue as long as sun and moon. To record their visits to temples, they often granted lands and villages. People donated lands to temples to secure the four objects of human desire, namely Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, or in order that merit and prosperity might accrue to the donors’ relatives. But, however, temples received lands for specific services to be conducted in temples. Besides, usual services to the deities, we get interesting references to services that were conducted in temples. Among them mention may be made of the following: (a) for those who played tambourine, Nagaswaras and drums, (b) for dancing girls in temples, (c) for continual recitation of the Vedas, Puranas and Shastras in temples, (d) for conducting the car-festival of the Gods of the temples, (e) for white-washing and sweeping, (f) for the management of the land of the temples. The manager of the temple was known as Sthanika.

From the above we can conclude that services in temples for which lands and villages were granted by the donees in this period, took several forms. These services may be classified into two: (a) occasional and (b) continual. Under occasional services come, services such as conducting car-festival, white washing, or sweeping and repair etc. Management of temple lands, reciting Vedas, Shastras, Puranas in temples, playing musical instruments, drums etc. come under continual services.
On holidays like Shivarathri or auspicious days like the Sun’s Eclipse lands were granted to temples as it was considered to be an act of merit. With pouring of water and a coin very commonly, lands were granted to temples. However, the same practice was followed in the case of all the land-grants. The composers and engravers of land grant of temples often received lands from the donors.

Besides the gifts and endowments received from kings and private persons, the temples of Karnataka acquired property in various other ways. Many people who had so sons bequeathed their property to the temple. Besides, temples were acting as land mortgage banks. Many inscriptions substantiate this point. Whenever cultivators fell short of money to carry out agricultural operations, they used to borrow money from the temple treasury. When the time of the mortgage was expired, the temple fortified the lands to the treasury. Thus an inscription records that some persons (named) borrowed 22 ½ varahas from the temple treasury, through Appaji Senabova of Koppa. They pledged an areca garden (specified). But the inscription further records the time expressed in these agreements have expired, Appaji Senabova assigned the lands as endowments to the temple. The record of such agreements was known as Bhogyadiyapatra or “Deed of Mortgage”. Some times parents pledged their lands to temples in order to meet the expenses of the marriage of their children and for other purposes. Whenever lands were granted to temples the grantee had to provide details regarding how he acquired such lands. For example, one Pandya Nayaka set up a God and granted the following lands to provide the offerings: the details of the property of Svastivivara, runs thus:

(a) Manjravalligalli Hostage Navu-Kadidu madisida bhumi Bijavari Kha 6 (b) Bharadvaja gottrade etc .... Narasamangala Kayyiyari Kryakke Kond-bhumi.... kraya gadyana 42 varaha: (c) Bommarasa Heggade Kyyi (Yalli) Krayakke konda gadde.
The village assemblies also created Devadaya land tenures during the Vijayanagara period. A few examples may be given:

Chakkare village was situated in Barakura-rajya. It has an Uru (assembly). In A.D. 1364 the thirty families of the village Chakkare and other made a gift of 12 honnus and plots of dry and wet-fields (specified) for the service of the God Kotisvara.75

Kundapura, situated in Barakura rajya had an assembly. In A.D. 1425, the inhabitants of Kundapura or Gramajagattu assembled at the instance of the officer (governor), Narasimhadeva Odeya, and restored the land, once granted by Devanna Senabova of Kudekur for the service of the God Kundesvara.76

In A.D. 1429, the village Gajanur was gifted with all the rights by the Gaudas of the village Honganniyahalli for the service of food offerings and perpetual lamp for the God Divyalingeshvara of the village Haradanahalli in Yennenad. The expression used in the inscription is Halligramada Samasta Gavudugal.77

An epigraph records the grant of a plot of land for the services of the God by Narapagavuda of Avati for the merit of his father in the reign of Devaraya, king of Vijayanagara. The gift was made with the consent of the inhabitants of the village Kakati (Prajegala Anumatiyinda).78

The Maddur assembly appears to have continued to function under the Vijayanagara rulers as before. The Mahajanas and Gauda Prajegal of Maddur granted some land and tax collections of the village Maddur for the services of feeding pilgrims, recitation of Vedas, etc., in the temple of Desinatha.79
Again in A.D. 1506, the Gauda Prajegalu of Chikkahalli made a grant of land for the God Mallikarjuna of their village.\textsuperscript{80}

An epigraph from Kadur Taluk records that in A.D. 1540, the subjects and farmers made a grant to the God Virabhadra of Kadur.\textsuperscript{81}

Thus these temples had acquired, (at least some of them, though not all) a huge landed property. They may be compared with big landlords. As the owner of a vast agricultural lands, temple was also a large employer. Thus for instance, an inscription from Kolar District, informs us that a particular temple had employed fifty two families for service in it and that it remunerated them by grants of land.\textsuperscript{82}

An landlords, temples leased out lands to tenants on various conditions. Temple lands were managed by Sthanikas. They gave saguvaliya vole or cultivation roll to the men who undertook cultivation of the temple lands, with a description of quality, measurement and the share of the produce to be given by the tenants. According to the rule for cultivation of rice-fields to the temple, lands under tanks were granted on contract for cultivation on half-share. When the water in the tank failed and crop was lost, the temple and tenants agreed to share equally the loss. “If the water in the tank is insufficient, and it has to be lifted, we (temple authorities) will reduce the contract in the same proportion as those in the neighbourhood”. For sugarcane, ginger and turmeric the rates were mentioned.\textsuperscript{83} This type of agreement between the landlords and tenants was known as Vara\textsuperscript{84} or the crop-sharing system which continued throughout the period. Buchanan at the end of A.D. 1800 noticed this system in different parts of Karnataka. This system was the best mode of assessment in a country where the quantity of rain was uncertain. If the rains did not come, the tenant could not pay his rent
and vice-versa.\textsuperscript{85} Temples received shares from tenants both in cash and in kind every year.\textsuperscript{86}

Besides the rent, for the occupation of temple lands, the tenant had to pay certain dues. Such dues in Karnataka during the Vijayanagara period were collectively known as Dhanyadaya. Dhanyadaya consisted of eleven dues and they were: (1) Tirumala-Kanike, (2) Haludu, (3) Hostu, (4) Gramavechcha, (5) Bitti, (6) Birada, (7) Sollage, (8) Avudu, (9) Bedige, (10) Bijavari, (11) Solage.\textsuperscript{87} We can assume that roughly the same number of dues must have been collected by temples in other parts of Karnataka also.

The attention of temples was not merely confined to the collection of rent and dues, they also paid attention to the maintenance of irrigation works. According to an inscription dated A.D. 1442 the Sthanikas or managers of a certain temples granted lands to a certain person in connection with a virgin tank.\textsuperscript{88} Sometimes agreements concerning who should maintain irrigation works were recorded between temples and tenants. But before such agreements were reached, it was essential, during the Vijayanagara period to take the consent of the King.\textsuperscript{89}

Temples were, in one way, instrumental in extending agriculture. Because, often kings by restoring the ruined villages, granted them to temples. It not only provided employment to many, but it also helped many tenants who got liberal leases from temples.\textsuperscript{90} Thus in away, the restoration and subsequent donation of villages, which though considered to be an act of religious merit, acted as an economic improvement by adding more arable lands to the lands that had already been under cultivation.
The rulers of Vijayanagar were very careful to see that whether the income of lands was properly utilized by temple authorities for the purposes for which it had been granted. Thereby they used to control the temple administration concerning lands. Thus, for instance, when Devaraya II granted some lands, he asked one Ramanujayya to remain in the Matha, and be responsible for the distribution of food, the offering to the Goddess, and payments to servants. If any funds left over, he should use them for white-washing, sweeping and keeping the place clean.  

2.3 Mathapura Land Grants

Lands held by the Mathas or monasteries of different sects of Hinduism is known as Mathapura land tenure of all the Mathas in Karnataka during the Vijayanagara period, Shringeri Matha was very famous and it emerged as very big landed magnate as a result of extensive donations made by the Vijayanagara rulers and their feudatories. Hence an in-depth analysis of the inscription of Shringeri Jagir give us an idea of the growth of Mathapura tenure during the period under review. The same is discussed here below.

The term ‘Shringeri Jagir’ refers to the Sarvamanya or rent-free landed estates belonging to the Matha or monastery of the Smartha Brahmanas located in the present day Chickmagalur district of Karnataka. Throughout its existence the Jagadguru or the pontiff of the Matha was the proprietor of the landed estates. In fact it was organized as a sort of state within the state without any outside interference. As a socio-economic unit the study of the Matha’s records yield very interesting information and throw considerable light on the inner mechanism of Inam tenure held by such religious organizations. The rise and fall of the dynasties in the region hardly affected the agrarian integration of the Matha. In recent times under the Wodeyars of Mysore
the Shringeri Jagir was administered in imitation of the Mysore revenue system. On this basis it may safely be assumed that the Jagir was administered on the model of Vijayanagara revenue system between the 14th and 16th centuries and on Keladi model between 16th and 17th centuries.

As regards the extent of the Jagir, it may be noted that at the beginning of the present century, it was about 8 miles long and 6 miles wide. The Tunga river ran through the Jagir from South-West to North-East. It consisted 2 hoblis namely Shringeri and Melupala. There were altogether 24 villages, with a population of 9264 and out of which 5749 people were living in Shringeri hobli and 3515 in Melupala hobli. The Jagir was entirely within the region of pure Malnad or hilly areas. The Jagir received abundant rainfall and primarily produced rice and arecanut. The Jagir yielded yearly revenue of Rs. 50,000 in the beginning of this century. The Wodeyar’s Government of Mysore was giving Rs. 1000/- a month to the Matha. With the Jagir, there were 40 temples of different sizes, and each temple had some Inam land or money grant of its own. In addition to this there were several Agraharas or Brahmana settlements with land grants attached to them. Thus the Shringeri Jagir represented a fully integrated agrarian set-up controlled by a prominent religious organization.

There are three important kinds of sources for the study of the Shringeri Jagir: 1) Inscriptions, both stone and copper plate. There are more than 30 published inscriptions concerning the Jagir which range from the 14th to 18th centuries. They throw light on the agrarian administration to the Jagir. (2) The Matha has about 200 sannadis or orders of the various royal families of the region. Most of them record the grant of land or concessions made to the Matha, by the rulers of Ikkeri, Coorg, Belur, Jagali, Mysore and Hyderabad. These Sannadas are
interesting from the point of view of socio-economic study of the Shringeri Jagir. For instance one Sannad says that no interest higher than 12 percent per annum could be made over to the charge of the Matha and that the unclaimed property within certain limits of the Jagir should go to the Matha. Another Sannad says that Devangas or persons belonging to the weavers caste should not wear sacred thread and Markas should not follow the customs of Brahmanas within the limits of the Jagir. These Sannads are yet to be trapped fully for this purpose. 3) There are several cart loads of Kaditas in the Matha which are more than two centuries old. A Kadita is a cloth covered with charcoal paste folded in the form of book written with pencil of poststone. Most of the Kaditas contain the accounts concerning the Jagir. In this section an attempt has been made to study the origin, growth and management of the landed estates of the Jagir, based mostly in the published inscriptions belonged to the medieval period.

The agrarian origin of the Jagir may be traced back to the early 14th century when Vidyaranya, the pontiff of the Matha received rich endowments in lands around Shringeri from the Sangama brothers namely Harihara and Bukka, in recognition of Vidyaranya’s services in laying the foundation of Vijayanagara empire. Now the question arises as to the exact nature of service rendered by Vidyaranya. Broadly speaking, he helped Harihara and Bukka and other Sangama brothers in two ways: 1) In order to bring back Harihara and Bukka to the fold of Hinduism from Islam (who had been previously converted to Islam by Sultan Muhammad Tugluq at Delhi where they had been taken as captives after the fall of Kampili Anegondi kingdom), it needed a spiritual leader of his eminence and to render the act generally acceptable to Hindu society. It was not a small service. (2) He brought mass support for the efforts of Harihara and Bukka. Here we see Brahma dharma supporting Kshattra dharma and Danda and Brahma, spiritual domain and the temporal
domain or religious and political forming an alliance in their mutual interests. The tangible expression of this gratitude to Shringeri Matha was the creation of an extensive rent-free agrarian unit for the purpose of providing it a material basis and a sense of prestige to the Matha. The footsteps of the Sangama brothers were welcomed by others until recent times.

Numerous inscriptions give us an idea of how this Matha came to acquire landed property and how it managed them. The Matha acquired landed property in two ways: 1) Royal benefactions, (2) grants from local bodies, private persons and purchase. Regarding royal benefactions, it may be said that Vijayanagara rulers established the tradition of granting lands and villages to the Matha which was later on followed by their successors in Karnataka. Numerous Inscriptions of this Matha have been published in Epigraphia Carnatica series.94

Recognizing the services of Vidyaranya in the establishment of Vijayanagara Empire, Harihara I, along with other Sangama brothers visited the Matha in 1346 A.D. and richly endowed it with land grants.95 They also at the same time founded the Agraharas of Shringeri and Vidyaranyapura which adjoined one another. Bukka I granted in 1356 A.D. lands to the Matha in Kikundanadu which was valued 222½ varahas.96 In order to understand the extent and value of the property in terms of varahas, we have to find out the purchasing power of a varaha. One inscription points out that about 41 varahas could buy an areca garden consisted of 2500 trees and a rice land with a sowing capacity of 137 ½ khandugas.97 From this, we may well imagine the extensive holdings donated by Bukka I in the second half of the fourteenth century.
In A.D. 1380 Harihara II consolidated and confirmed all the previous grants. The total value of all the lands of Shringeri Mutt at this time was 3003 paGodas and this gave to the Mutt the name of Murusavira Sime. In A.D. 1392 Harihara II founded an agrahara called Hariharapura which was attached to the Matha. Devaraya II granted the village Manjugani in the Honnavara kingdom, and the villages Kelagundani and kaigai in the Goa kingdom. The Conjeevaram plates of Krishnadeva Raya record the grant of two villages of Podavur and Kattupattu and at the time of the grant the name of the village Podavur was changed into Krishnarayapuram. Further in 1527 he granted the village of Udayambakkam and changed the name of the village at the time of the grant as Krishnarapura. This indicates that Shringeri Mutt had landed property extending over a wide areas like in and around Shringeri, Goa, Tamilnadu and different parts of Karnataka. Even the Muslim rulers of Bijapur did not disturb the Manya lands of the Mutt. A letter issued by the Bijapur general Ranadulla Khan in response to a letter from the Shringeri Mutt directing his officers to enforce obedience to the orders of the Mutt in the collection of produce etc., in their Manya lands, has been published. The rulers of Vijayanagara paid close attention to the administration of the lands of the Mutt. The disputes concerning Mutt lands were decided by the rulers of Vijayanagara. Thus for instance, an inscription records the fact that a village headman and peasants of the Mutt villages often raised opposition against the Mutt lands. Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara directed the village headman etc., of certain villages belonging to the Mutt to obey the Shringeri Mutt Gurus as their masters, as the above were entitled to these disputed villages from the beginning. Apparently, there must have been some dispute between the Mutt and peasants about the ownership. During the ascendancy of the empire the Mutt flourished. But, after 1565 when the empire declined and when political confusion set in, particularly between A.D. 1565 and A.D. 1642, the landed property of the Matha fell into
ruins. Lands were appropriated by any one who could seize them. Keladi kings remedied the state of things. In A.D. 1621 Venkatappa Nayaka re-established Shringeri Mutt (Punar prathistapaneya madida). 104

“In course of time the whole of that having become dispersed and the common people (Prajadharmadavaru) themselves being in possession in the lands formerly granted by the king for the Matha, Agrahara and temples. These common people having made areca plantations, gained large profits, and mortgaged and sold them to one another, without paying the money to the Matha”. 105

And later in A.D. 1652, on the representation of Sachidananda Bharathi, the Guru of the time, who visited the king at the capital Bidanur, for the purpose, Shivappanayaka held an enquiry into the matter, regained the lands of the Matha from those who had unlawfully got hold of them and restored them to its possession and enjoyment. 106

Another Nirupa or order dated A.D. 1656 of Sivappanayaka runs thus: “Information has been received that some tenants of the Shringeri Mutt in Mangalore-sime are playing mischief without making due payments” and he ordered his son-in-law to send for the tenants and see that the amount due was paid. 107 Thus Keladi rulers and even Mysore Wodeyars continued the tradition of Vijayanagara in this respect.

In addition to royal benefactions, the Mutt also acquired lands and villages from local bodies and private grants. It also acquired property by purchase. A few instances from A.D. 1392, 108 A.D. 1401, 109 A.D. 1406, 110 A.D. 1408, 111 A.D. 1419, 112 A.D. 1458, 113 and A.D. 1547 114 occur in inscriptions. All these instances come from Sagar taluk, Shimoga district.
Thus the Shringeri Matha was a rich land-owner. Expenses were mostly connected with uneconomic activities like feeding the Brahmanas and distribution of food and clothes on festival days and payment to those Brahmanas who imported mostly religious instructions in Sanskrit to their own caste and which did not have any universal appeal. However, as the Matha symbolized the substance of Hindu Dharma in its orthodox form and whose promotion was the foremost objective of the Vijayanagara rulers and their successors, they considered it a duty to provide the Matha with a material basis in the form of land grants which was after all a primary necessity for its material existence and functions.

The fact that Shringeri Mutt as a landlord bestowed minute attention to the administration of landed estates thus acquired through royal benefactions, grants from village assemblies, private persons and purchase, may be gathered from inscriptions. All the landed properties were properly valued in terms of money which indicates that mostly crops raised on Mutt lands were cash crops. Thus in the case of garden lands, particularly arecanut gardens which the Mutt held in the around Shringeri and in many places of Sagar taluk, Shimoga district where arecanut, as a cash crop was raised in plenty, the number of trees were the basis of calculation. Thus an inscription of the Matha (1695 A.D.) mentions an areca garden consisting of 2500 areca trees whose value was 27 varahas and 5 hanas. 10 hanas was equal to one varaha. On that basis 275 hanas was worth 2500 acreca trees, or one hana was equal to roughly 81 trees.\textsuperscript{115}

The rice lands of the Matha were measured in terms of sowing capacity of the land and its value was expressed in terms of money. Thus an inscription (A.D. 1695) mentions 137½ khandugas of rice-land was rated 13 varahas, 7 hanas and one haga.\textsuperscript{116} Another epigraph (A.D. 1758) mentions that 170 salage of rice land rated 120 honnu and 55
salage of rice land was rated 55 honnu. Here Khandugas and salages denote the sowing capacity of the land in question.

Sometimes the Matha’s landed property was mentioned in terms of how much it would yield per year in cash and its value in terms of money. Thus an inscription dated A.D. 1621 mentions lands yielding an annual income of 45 varahas and they were purchased for 300 varahas. Here the epigraph does not mention the area of lands.

The Matha lands were let on contract or Guttige basis to the tenants. Inscriptions of the Matha mention Guttige rates for areca trees. In A.D. 1547 65,000 arecanuts were fixed as Guttige for a garden consisting of 500 trees. Besides Guttige, the Matha also collected Siddaya of 7 hanas for 500 areca trees. Another inscription dated A.D. 1642 mentions that Siddaya or fixed rent for 1000 areca trees was one varaha. At the rate of existed in A.D. 1547 namely 7 hanas for 500 trees, the Siddaya for 1000 trees should have been 14 hanas or 1 varaha and 4 hanas, in A.D. 1642. But Siddaya in A.D. 1642 was actually one varaha or 10 hanas. It indicates the reduction in the role of Siddaya between A.D. 1547 and A.D. 1542. this reduction was probably due to the fact that Matha tried to attract more peasants to look after its garden lands and this was possible only by reduction of rent.

Two variations of Guttige, namely Mula-guttige and Srotra-guttige occur in the inscriptions of the Matha. The term Mula-guttige refers to the fact that the tenants who held lands under this contract were not evicted at the will of the Matha and they held lands on hereditary basis, even though such lands were to be sold to others by the Matha. Srotra-guttige means lands leased out to a Brahmana by the Matha so that the former would render a specific duty, (mostly imparing religious
instructions) to the latter. All these indicate the nature of the management of lands by the Matha.

What emerges from the above is that in the pre-Vijayanagar period the gurus of the Matha did not have to manage any Jagir and land endowments. Shringeri was mainly a centre of religion and philosophy. But in the first half of the 14th century it acquired manya lands and villages and temporal power within its jurisdiction. Rich lands, money, gold materials, Birudus and other trappings of monarchical-like powers converted the simple hermitage into an “imperium etc., impera”, or “semi-sovereign state”. Shringeri became a Samsthana, a Murusavira-sime and the pontiff became Jagadguru.

From the humble beginning of about nine villages namely Heddase, Honnahole, Babbi, Haravari, Beluru, Ambaluru, Belanduru, Halaka, and Hosuru in Kelanadu in A.D. 1346, the feudal holdings of the Matha at the beginning of the present century consisted of 24 villages with a population of 9264 in an area of about 8 miles long and 6 miles wide. The Jagir was entirely within the region of pure Malnad or hilly areas. Availability of plenty of water and wood and with an annual average rainfall of 116 inches, natural beauty, comparative isolation from major cities promoted the agrarian integration of the Jagir under its religious leader. The physical and natural environment of the Jagir were well suited to the wet cultivation, particularly food and commercial crops like rice, sugarcane and arecanut.

Some quantitative data contained in the Jagir’s inscriptions may help us to interpret a few things connected with the agrarian conditions, within the samsthana. First, the term “Murusavira sime, used in connection with its annual income of 3003 paGoda in the 14th century. PaGoda is another term for gadyana which was a gold coin in circulation
during the Vijayanagara period. It is pointed out that one gadyana of the
time of Vijayanagara period, weighing 96 grains was equal to ½ tola of
gold on this basis it may be noted that a gadyana issued by Harihara II
and in whose reign the Jagir’s income was calculated as 3003 paGodas,
was equal to 52.8 grains or roughly ¼ tola of gold. So 3003 paGoda or
gadyanas means in terms of solid gold comes to about 750 tolas and this
was the revenue of the Jagir during the reign of Harihara II. On the other
hand the income of the Jagir was about Rs. 60,000 in A.D. 1897. The
money was spent mostly on uneconomic purposes like feeding the
Brahmanas, and distribution of food and clothing on festival days like
Navarathri. The Matha often experienced deficit budget and in order to
balance the budget, the jagadguru was constantly engaged in long and
protracted tours through various parts for the purpose of receiving
contributions from his disciples.

There was a process of sub-infeudation of landed estates within
the samasthana’s Jagir. This may be noted in several inscriptions.
Generally Brahmanas leased the lands from the pointiff on Guttige or
srotria Guttige basis. It appears from the inscriptions that the pointiff or
the owner of the Sarvamanya estates exercised considerable amount of
influence in allotting lands to Brahmana tenants. The Guttige given by
one pointiff was not necessarily honoured by another pointiff who
succeeded the former. Since Brahmana Vrittidars could not till the lands
thus leased from the pointiff as Vrittis, they further leased this out on
Guttige basis to the actual tillers of the soil or primary producers. These
primary producers on many occasions mentioned as belonging to the
caste of Devaramakkalu. The Brahmana Vrittidars who had received
lands on condition of payment of annual rent to the Matha, did not
actually live in the village where they held Vrittis or land holdings. They
were a sort of absentee landlords.
Shringeri Jagir inscriptions often record dispute between the Devaramakkalu caste of tillers and the Brahmana Vrittidars. If a Brahmana Vrittidar found it unable to manage a village on his own, then he adopted the technique of multiple control. It means with the permission of the overlord, namely the jagadguru, this intermediary divided the unmanageable village into several Vrittis or fragments and then distributed among many Brahmanas. So the whole process indicated the subinfeudation within the Jagir. In this system there were various Brahmana intermediaries between the jagaduru as overlord and the primary producers. The average land holding of a Brahman Vrittidar in the 14th century, according to an inscription belonging to the reign of Harihara, was yielding a net rent of five gadyanas. 96 Brahmana Vrittidars and 4 temples were holding Vrittis on this basis as evident from this inscription. From this it may be assumed that a Brahmana landed intermediary in Shringeri Jagir with approximately 4 dependents could live on an annual income of 5 gadyanas.

The emergence of Shringeri Jagir in the area had many socio-economic implications. It intensified the Aryanization process of the area which had begun on a small scale in the 8th century A.D. with the advent of Shankaracharya. Now in the 14th century, as a result of providing the material basis in the form of Jagir, a large number of Brahmana settlements and temples came into existence. The jagadguru, the Brahmanas and the devasthanams of the Murusavira sime samsthana became the instruments of this intensified Aryanization movement in the area. They also promoted the secular sovereignty of different political powers in the region and the secular sovereigns in their turn used the Matha as an expression of their over lordship though the medium of large scale donation of manya lands. The Jagir symbolized alliance between the Kshatra and Brahma, Danda and Dharma, temporal and spiritual powers. The Samsthana in one sense represented orthodoxy,
conservatism, hierarchy and inequality in the contemporary society though in another sense it helped to conserve the high intellectual traditions of Hinduism as interpreted by Shankara. Predominantly wet cultivation in the area probably contributed much to the development of Vedic Brahmanic-ritual based social formations in the region.

The emergence of Brahmana landed intermediaries probably helped to spread the knowledge of agriculture. Because, these Brahmana Vrittidars were not mere religious recluses, but also land managers. They were the custodians of Vrikshayurveda or science of agriculture in medieval Karnataka. For instance the author of Lokopakaram, was a Brahmana by name Chavundaraya II who lived in the 17th century during the Kalyani Chalukya period and who in this work devoted one whole chapter to Vrikshayurveda. This shows that they were well-versed in this knowledge also. Many Sanskrit works in the past on this subject were composed by them. Hence it is reasonable to conclude their influence in respect of Shringeri Jagir also.

The foundation of Vijayanagara Empire was a new era in South Indian history. It was the last great Hindu Empire in India. Almost all historians have documented the fact that one of the primary ideals of Vijayanagara state was to protect, conserve and promote Hindu Dharma and culture. There is no doubt that there appears to have been a historical necessity in establishing a stable state in the 14th century. But very few historians have taken pain to analyse in depth what was the nature of this Hindu Dharma that the state of Vijayanagara wanted to promote, conserve and protect and what were the ideological considerations and repercussions.

There was certainly an intense Brahmanization process in the Empire which was in tune with the above described ideal. It does not
mean the Brahmanization process began only during the Vijayanagar period. But the point is the process was very intensive in this period as revealed in land grants. This had some repercussion on the Vijayanagara society.

The state during the Vijayanagara periods was deliberate agent in the extension of Brahmanization process. The establishment of new agraharas, restoring the ruined ones land grants to individual Brahmana donees, assignment of huge revenues and lands to Mathas and Devasthanams or temples were part of this Brahmanization process. This socio-cultural process heavily inclined towards orthodoxy. Even the titles of early Vijayanagara rulers like Vaidika marga pravartaka, Vaidikamarga Samsthapanacharya and Hinduraya-surathrane point to this inclination.

Almost all historians who have worked on this period speak of the oppressive conditions of the peasantry. But few of them have tried to link up peasants with the state and Brahmanization process in order to understand why this class remained dumb spectators of oppression if any. There is no doubt the peasants by their hard labour produced the material basis for the institutions like Agrahara, Mathas and Devasthanams which were instrumental in enlarging this socio-cultural process.

Thus there is a need to establish a link between the state, Brahmanization process and peasants. The peasants were thoroughly brain washed by this process and gauda-prajegalu or headmen of peasant class became the supporters of this process in society.

As a result of this process the peasants were ideologically controlled by the non-producing classes and institutions of the society.
The Brahmanization process helped to strengthen the concepts of ritualism, inequality, orthodoxy, high and low, superior and inferior, the spread of karma theory. All these had adverse effects on the peasants. The alleged magical power possessed by the Brahmanas and their astrological knowledge made them strong conservative forces in rural areas of the empire where the Agraharas in particular came into being. These institutions and individuals sided with the royalty and royalty upheld their ideology. Royalty benefited from this process because to that extent the administrative cost was minimized and the institutions which helped this process of Brahmanization acted as bulwarks against possible organized resistance of the peasantry of South India.

No doubt the mass-reformistic-socio-religious movements of the Dasas like Kanakadasa and Purandaradasa during this period advocated an ideology which was mainly anti-thesis to the well established ideas of the Brahminization process. But in terms of its impact, its attacks hardly changed the well-ingrained Vedic-Brahmanic concepts in the peasantry.
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2.4 Umbali, Kodage and Manya Grants

Umbali, Kodage and Manya Grants in lands come under the classification of service grants. Service tenures arose for different reasons during this period. First, the prevailing custom of making gifts and paying wages for various public services by assignments of land or land revenue, instead of making payment in money as at present, was the main factor behind the origin of these grants. Secondly, the abundance of land and relative scarcity of money was another factor which was responsible for emergence of Umbali, Kodage and Many grants. Thirdly, less mobility on the part of the people prompted the state and its agents to make payments for services in the form of land grants. Because, land holdings brought a fixed income to the persons who held them.

Umbali, Kodage and Manya Grants were created for different purposes: (a) the land grants which were given in return for military service, (b) lands granted for having rendered service in the cause of improving and extending agriculture, (c) lands donated for the services rendered in the past and other miscellaneous services and (d) lands assigned to members of the village community, namely twelve aiyangars or hereditary servants of the village.

Umbali and Kodage are synonymous, on the other hand Manya refers to the extent of concession given to the donees under service tenures, like Sarvamanya, free from all kinds of taxes or ardha-manya or half concession from payment of taxes on the donated lands or village. In certain cases Manya simple means lands granted on the condition of quit-rent.

Umbali generally means revenue-free grant of a village or a plot of land.\(^1\) It also means a land grant to individual for his subsistence.\(^2\)
Umbalige is another variation of Umbali and it is defined as “land granted by the government revenue free as a reward for, or in consideration of public services”. Umbali-grama refers to a village granted by the government revenue-free in reward for or a condition of performing public service. Now we shall discuss Umbali tenure.

The feudal chiefstains of the Vijayanagara empire in Karnataka created Umbali tenure in their respective jurisdiction. On many occasions they obtained the permission. They mentioned the name of the reigning monarch in Umbali grants as a mark of their allegiance to the overlord from whom they held villages and territory in lieu of some specific obligations. We may quote here a few Kannada inscriptions in support of the above statement:

(1) An inscription from Kollegala dated 1381 belonging to the reign of Harihara II records the gift of land as an Umbali by the local officials.

(2) An inscription from Chamarajanagar dated 15th century records the donation of five villages (named) as Umbali to an individual.

(3) The fact that feudal chiefs of the Empire donated revenues from villages to temples as Umbali in order to carry on some specific rituals is recorded in an inscription from Gundlupet dated 1482 A.D. According to this inscription Mahamandaleshwara Vira Nanjaraja-Wodeya, chief of Ummattur donated the annual revenue of the village Chikkanahalli in Terakanambinad as Umbali to God Angadiya Virabhadra. The income from this village was utilized for food offerings to the God on every Tuesday. The grant specifies how the Umbali should be utilized: “At the rate of 5 hanas to be spent on every Tuesday, for 54 such days in the year, the cost would be 270
hanas or 27 hons which was the annual revenue of the Umbali village”.7

(4) An inscription from Yelandur dated 1531 A.D. refers to a grant of village (named) as Umbali to an individual (named) by an Amaranayaka.8

(5) An inscription from Gundlupet dated 1540 A.D. records the grant of a village as an Umbali.9

(6) Another inscription from Nanjangud dated 1543 A.D. refers to a grant of a village as Umbali by an Amaranayaka.10

(7) In another inscription from Chamarajanagar dated 1544 A.D. we notice the grant of 3 villages (named) as Umbali to Chikkapparasa-gauda, of Hadinad. The Umbali was given by the chiefstain dalavayi Tippanna Nayaka on the Nirupa or order of Mahamandaleshwar Ramaraja Timmalayadeva.11

(8) It is recorded in an inscription from Gundlupet dated 1546 A.D. that village Horeyala was given as Umbali to Chikamalya by Dalavayi Krishnappa Nayaka, who was Amaranayaka of Ummattur which he had received as a fief from the Vijayanagara monarch Achyutaraya.12

(9) An interesting information is given in the inscription from Gundlupet dated 1610. Here a father is said to have granted as Umbali, a village by name Kabbali to his son, on the Nirupa or order of Vijayanagara king Tirumala. It was a perpetual hereditary and Sarvamanya grant: “Achandrarkasthayi-Yagi Putra-pautra-parampare-yagi-yi-gramavanu-kodge-yagi-sarvamanya-yagi Anubavisi-kondu-baruviri”.13

(10) An inscription from Srirangapattana dated 1565 A.D. records the grant of a village and 3 hamlets (named) as Umbali to God Thiruvengalanatha by Nanjaya Thimmappa of Kandachara (military department). Thimmappa was an Amaranayaka. The
income from customs, house tax, Kuridere (tax on sheep) etc., due to royal treasury, given to the God.\textsuperscript{14}

Thus during the Vijayanagara period Umbali tenure in land was created for different purposes. But the basic purpose was to remunerate a specific service rendered to the government at all levels. The above inscriptions show how with the permission of the superior authority this tenure was created by the Amaranayakas and officials. What is interesting is that sometimes Umbali lands were given to temples in return for specific service rendered in the temple in the name of the donors.

In addition to Amaranayaka tenure which implied military service, we had other types of land grants which also owe their origin to military service. Thus it was very common to grant lands to a person who had given up life serving his community or government. The lands were granted to such a man’s wife and children for their maintenance. These grants were almost like military pensions. This kind of land tenure was called Rakta-Kodage or blood-grants. The lands under this tenure were free from all taxes or Sarvamanya.\textsuperscript{15} In some cases we find the whole village was granted as Rakta-Kodage. Thus an inscription from Gundlupet refers to the grant of village Arepura as Rakta-Kodage.\textsuperscript{16}

Viragals or hero-stones were also often set up to commemorate the heroism of the man who died in battle or serving the community. Sometimes lands were granted to viragals.\textsuperscript{17} Another land-grant known as “Billamanya” or the Manya for the bow also implies military service.\textsuperscript{18} Fort was a very important part of the warfare in those times. For persons who took care of forts and those who built them also received land grants on quit-rent or Manya basis. Such grants were known as Kote-Kodage.
Umbali, Kodage or Manya lands were granted to those persons who rendered service in the extension and improvement of agriculture. This tenure took two forms: (a) the lands held by persons who maintained irrigation works, like tanks and canals and also by those who built new tanks or repaired old ones, (b) lands held by persons who built new villages or by persons who restored the ruined villages to their former prosperity by making many improvements.

An inscription furnished information regarding the workers who helped to built a tank. Those who did the work were: “Gante Madanna Basavanna made pillars: Komaraiya the ornamental work; the stone Vadda Chama-Boyi built stones of the embarkment: the earth vaddas Side-boyi and Dase-boyi”.20 Elephants were employed to drag huge boulders to the construction site.

At all times the labour needed for the repairs and constructions of tanks and channels had presented special difficulties. The rulers resorted to forced labour and in addition to this they allotted revenue-free (Manya) lands to persons who in turn were held responsible for proper maintenance of irrigation works. This old institution of giving rent-free lands to the persons who maintain irrigation works and construct new tanks remained for a long time in Karnataka. Such grants of lands under the tanks were variously called as Kattu Kodage, Kere-Kattu Kodage and Kere-Kodage. Innumerable inscriptions in Karnataka mention these grants.21 To one Mangarasa the temple priests of the Goddess Gauri of Uttanur Madavala, the mortgagees and citizens, gave a sasana for rent-free rice land at Kattu-kodage for the tank as follows: - “whereas you have built the tank in Vaniyarahalli, in Hode-nad, and made the Hiri-Mangasamudra of the rice lands below and within that tank we grant to you two (parts) in ten as a Kattu-Godagi; and of the two (parts) in ten, we grant one part free of all taxes, to be enjoyed as long as
sun and moon exist, to your children’s children. Thus Kattu-Kodage grants were not only hereditary in character but also it produced incentive in the grantees to look after irrigational works on which many had depended for their livelihood. This simple but ingenious method of protecting irrigation works bear witness to one of the most useful institutions of the agrarian system.

Kattu-Kodage grants were given not only when the tanks were made but also when the existing tanks due to the natural calamities breached, the persons who undertook repair received such grants. The Bhimapura Sunnapadi tank embankment being breached, the Shanubhoga (Village accountant) Shivayya had it built up, for which this is the shasana of a Kattu-Kodage-manya rice land. Kattu-Kodage grants were also known by the name dasavanda grants. This inscription records that in the year 1636 A.D. the Maha-nayakacharya Gummuni-Nayini Narasimha Nayini’s son Kadirappa-Nayani granted to mittlmari Makala Bomma a dasavanda as follows: “In Mittemari-sthala the Linganu-vadu being breached and you having repaired and enlarged it, from the wet land under it one-fourth part is granted to you as dasavanda, to be enjoyed by you and your posterity”. This system continued in the eighteenth century. An inscription dated 1730, records a grant of dasavanda grant as follows: Mir Laliya caused to be written and given to the people of Tarulemmadahalli a sanad as follows:- “whereas you have expended money from your own hands and built a pond (Katte) at Kavurahalli belonging to Hanubande-hali, a hokum-nana has been issued to the local authorities to grant to a dasavanda of one-fourth of the cultivable rice land under the tank, to be enjoyed to posterity”. Hence ¼ under the tank was generally granted for the maintenance of tank and this became an established practice everywhere. The people as a whole often came forward and provided a
fund to keep the tanks in good condition. This common enterprise is another important feature of the agrarian system of Karnataka.

The upkeep of tanks and channels generally includes the removal of silt, besides safeguarding the bunds against any breach. The evil of pond-system of irrigation is that the ponds slowly but gradually have their storage capacity lessened by the deposit of silt. Hence in those days either the land-holders, or the village assembly as a whole, who used the water of tanks, made contributions in money for land or in labour to remove the silt. Thus lands were given to those persons who cleared out tanks every year. For this purpose buffaloes and oxen were used to cart away the silt. Thus Mummadi Kempegowda of Yelahanka is said to have granted four he-buffaloes to remove silt from a certain tank. Sometimes lands were granted to keep carts for the purpose. Payments to provide for the livelihood of the buffalo man of the tank-cart, for oil, for wheel grease, crow-bar, pick-axe, oil and for other necessities were made in the shape of a share of the duties on articles.

Rulers for the proper distribution of water also existed. Where the repair and maintenance of irrigation works was done in partnership, the distribution of water was regulated in proportion to expenses met by either party. An inscription for Davanagere dated 1410 A.D. tells us that the annual repairs and other expenses in connection with the wells and tanks formed under the channel were borne in the proportion of 2/3 by the God and 1/3 by the Brahmans, and hence the water of the channel was also to be distributed in those proportions.

Quarrels over the rights of irrigation between villages were decided by arbitrations and understanding. The decision was carefully recorded. Thus we see that when quarrel arose between two villages about right over tank, one village would purchase the right by paying money. The
sum of money thus paid might be a lumpsum as in the case of or an annual contribution.\textsuperscript{30}

Construction of tanks of different sizes naturally required co-operative enterprise on the part of the people of villages. Epigraphical references to irrigational facilities provided for the people are very many, and in all we find the government working in close harmony with the local people for their prosperity. The idea of forming reservoirs must have presented itself to the rulers of the country or to the occupiers of the soil at a very early stage. In Karnataka tanks of great antiquity bear witness to the readiness of former rulers to encourage the construction of works of this kind.\textsuperscript{31} Private beneficiary came in largely to supplement the resources of the state. In those times irrigation system was not a complicated one. It comprised generally, as we have seen of tanks, wells and channels, which were built mostly by individual benefactions and maintained by communal enterprise. Even temples used to undertake the repair and maintenance of tanks in villages through land grants.\textsuperscript{32} If a single well-to-do person of a village undertook the responsibility of building a new tank, or repair an old one, the people of that village as a whole used to grant lands to him. An inscription from Tumkur District, Kunigal taluk, dated 1429 A.D. refers to the common fund of the village out of which a tank was built.\textsuperscript{34} Sometimes contracts were given to individuals to construct tanks or big channels, and before starting the work, proper ceremonies had to be performed.\textsuperscript{35} Even women undertook the construction of tanks and wells. There are records which show how women granted Kattu-Kodage free of imposts to those who built tanks and wells.\textsuperscript{36} The rulers not only undertook the construction of irrigation works, but also duly honoured rich persons who did the same. Thus king Harihara of Vijayanagara seems to have honoured one Bacheyappa with a golden palanquin, golden chamaras, and a golden umbrella; for his meritorious works namely the construction of several tanks and
channels (named) and laying out gardens. Malavalli 22 repeats the same but adds that the same person made sluices to the tanks he had constructed.

Thus the irrigation works constructed by private or communal enterprise were carefully managed and provision was made for their upkeep and improvement. The communal enterprise was duly supported by the rulers of the time. Hence, both the rulers and their subjects from different walks of life like rich persons, officials, women, and religious institutions like temples and mutts gave proper attention to the construction and repair of irrigation works. It was considered as an act of Dharma.

The land grants given to those who rendered service in extending agricultural lands was variously known as surugumanya, puri or pura manya. Brahmanas often received lands as Stotriya agrahara for having founded it by reclaiming forests, and constructing tanks. But in this case only lands under the tank were made free from all taxes. Gaudike or the office of gauda was sometimes conferred on the person who had built many villages. This office was also given to the person who restored the ruined village to their former prosperity. For example an inscription records that Kittanakere belonged to Brahmanas was in ruins and one Kala-gauda repaired it. Hence Brahmanas with the consent of Dannayaka who was ruling at that time gave a shasana to the effect that he should get a village and a hamlet attached to it as rent-free estate with all rights. For reclamation of lands, the gifts in the form of lands were given.

Thus these lands grants were almost serving as economic incentives for the promotion of agriculture which was the mainstay of the
people. They helped both to bring fresh lands under the plough and to improve agriculture by turning dry lands into wet lands.

Village community is one of the important agrarian institutions in Karnataka that survived changes of empires, ravages of time and influence of alien dominion until the dawn of the modern period. The study of the village community is closely linked up with land tenures because the persons who administered the affairs of the village held land holdings for their services. Such persons were known as Ayagars and they held manya lands in the village.

Inscriptions of the period under study refer to the institution of Ayagars in village. An epigraph from Sira mentions the name of twelve village Ayagaras thus:

1. Badagi = Haradi Hosmallayya
2. Kelasi = Mudali Giriyanna
3. Asagara = (or Agasa) = Kempayiraiya
4. Talavara = Budali Nagayya
5. Begara = Lakkayya Badadasa
6. Shanubhoga = Brahmayya
7. Joyisa = Hariyannabhatta
8. Kammara = Muddanna Thimmayya
9. Akasali = Thirumala Rangappanayaka
10. Kumbara = Thirupathayya (?)
11. Kondikara = Honnayya
12. Samani = Thimmallayya

Ramarayanana Bakair, a Kannada work written about the period of Vijayanagara, gives slightly a different list, but the number remains the same, the difference is only in names of officials; 1) gauda, (2) Badagi, (3) Nayidrava, (4) Joyisa, (5) Kammara, (6) Talavara, (7)

The Ayagara fall into three groups: (1) Officials: Headman, Accountant, (2) Artisans: Blacksmith, Carpenter, Potterer, Shoe-maker, Goldsmith, (3) Others: Waterman, Watchman, Barber and Purohit. While all no doubt served the village, the essential difference in the nature of the services performed by them should not be forgotten.

The office of the headman in our sources is known as gaudike. Headman was obliged to have the village lands cultivated for the sum of money or grain fixed by the government as tax. He had to collect the taxes according to the agreement and had to pay to the government in time. Office of headman was often conferred on a person who restored ruined villages and thereby extended the cultivation. For such services they were duly honoured with horse, umbrella and rent-free lands. The lands allotted for the office of the headman were variously known as gauda-kodage, gauda-manya and gaudaumbali. The village headman was normally a peasant himself, but sometimes, since the office of gauda could be purchased, an outsider, even a townsman could become headman of a village. He was never properly speaking a government servant. But the revenue authorities could at times depose a headman for failing in his obligations and they also exercised the power of nominating headman for villages that were newly settled. His office was hereditary in character.
Shanubhoga or Karanika\textsuperscript{53} as he was also known kept the village accounts. He also kept the record of all transactions concerning lands in his count books called kadata\textsuperscript{54} and for which he received kadatadakike,\textsuperscript{55} from the ryots of the village. Government informed him of the lands granted in the village. He copied the original order given by kings to the donee in his account books and handed over the original to the donee.\textsuperscript{56} For his services he received Manya lands. Lands granted for his office was known as gramada-senabovanakodage,\textsuperscript{57} Shanabhogara-umbali\textsuperscript{58} and Karanika-manya.\textsuperscript{59}

The carpenter and the blacksmith attended to all artisans work in the village. They manufactured ploughs and other agricultural implements. They also helped in the construction of the houses of the ryots. They received ayam or shares in grain from peasants. They also had Manya lands.\textsuperscript{60} The cobbler furnished the ryots of the village with ropes, buckets and sandals. Barber shaved the ryots and the washerman washed their clothes. The purohit had to explain to the ryots the time when the sowing of the seed would yield abundant corn; he had also to tell them the work which they were expected to do in every season. He officiated at the marriages and other religious ceremonies that were performed in the houses of the farmers. He read daily the calendar before the rich men of the village. He also received Manya lands and ayam in kind.\textsuperscript{61} All the Ayagars, except the purohit or the priest had to pay jodi or quit assessment on their Manya lands.\textsuperscript{62} Talavara or watchman had to protect the village from dangers of all kinds and assist the work of administration as occasion arose. If any theft was committed during the sojourn of aliens in the village, watchman was held responsible.\textsuperscript{63} Potter supplied the pots necessary for the use of all the ryots. The goldsmith measured the cultivator’s half-share of the produce. He also tested the soundness of the coins collected as taxes from the farmers. The waterman closed the sluices of the irrigation tanks by diving into the
water. He lived in huts on the tank-bund, during the rainy season to prevent it from breaching and regulated the supply of water according to the requirements of the fields. He had also to account for the deficiency of the water in the tank; and if he failed to give satisfactory explanation, he was removed from his office. All these Ayagars received shares in grains from farmers.64

Thus these twelve ayagars were attached to the village. Their offices were hereditary. They were called ayagars in Karnataka. But in the Mughal accounts they were referred to as Barabalavati,65 or Barabaluti.

Self-sufficiency of the village was the underlying factor of agrarian life in medieval period. The twelve Ayagaras contributed to the growth of this concept of self-sufficiency in the village. The village hardly received anything in return from the towns. The village produced all its own needs from within. The affairs connected with agricultural production were conducted by the cooperation of a body of these twelve village functionaries. Each one of them rendered service to the economic well-being of the village. For their services, they received a share in the agricultural produce of the village. Their share was mainly dependent upon the function and status of each Ayagar. The system worked well until the modern times. The British administrators in the early 19th century were struck by the vitality and usefulness of the Ayagar system.66 The office of these Ayagars was hereditary. Hence this hereditary character infused in each Ayagar a devotion and love towards his own village. These feelings naturally led to the idea of oneness in the village. It infused unity, self sacrifice and cooperation among village folks.
The local government unit called nadu in the Vijayanagara period appreciated work done for public purposes and also made Kodage grants for similar purpose. The people of Pulliyurnadu together with Dati Singeeya Dandanayaka, Nambi Sanasetti, Pulimara gauda, Anaiyar, the accountant of the nadu and (others named), granted to Nambi Devi Shetty, the pool situated between Attivahalli and Sulivali adjoining Settipuram, which after clearing out the silt, he had made into a tank, as a Kudangai.67

In A.D. 1560, farmers and Senubova of Taluku and the farmers and Senabovas of the fourteen places in the Doderi-Sime, granted for a tank a Manya to the Mahanayakacharya Yellappa Nayaka.

In A.D. 1342, all the subjects of Elahankanand the Mahasamanthadipati Chikka Bayiraya Nayaka’s son Honnamaraya Nayaka, granted specified land at Jakkur to the Nad-Senabova Allala as Sarvamanya Kodage.68

The Vijayanagara kings and their officers generally appointed nadagauda to his office. The position has hereditary.69 Nad-gauda received Kodagemanya lands from the government.

An inscription from Maddagiri, of 1419 A.D. tells us about “the gaudas Kodagemanya granted to Singe Gowda’s son Rama Gauda, Maddagirihalli, and under Vodina channel space for 2000 areca trees, with nad-gaudike in each village.”70

In 1543 A.D. Bayirappa Nayakayya’s agents Kampanna Nayaka and Nandyapa nayaka granted to Sitakal Gangappa Nayaka to whom for Nad-gaudike a village and inscribed on stone as follows:
“Having given the nad-gaudike of the Kolala Sime which was favoured as their magani by Achyuta Maharaya, we grant you freedom from tax for dry and wet-fields in all the villages of this Sime, and as a dandige-umbali we grant you Vommachihalli belonging to the Kolada-nad-sime, together with all rights”. (specified as a permanent endorsement). It is clear from this inscription that the king’s officers also appointed the nad-gauda and he received Umbali lands for his office.

Umbali and Kodage grants were made to Brahmanas who rendered specific services to the community which were often sectional in character. The services of the Brahmana teachers in expounding in grammar, Mimamsa, Vedanta, Rigveda etc., were obviously had a sectional character since only a particular section of the village community was benefited by such services, whereas the service of barbers and others was meant for all the members of the village. Also the example of land grant where the village people as a whole donating it for reciting puranas, and for the establishment of a village fair. The conditions which were attached to these land tenures held by village servants are note-worthy. An inscription from Tumkur district records some lands and a house for the officer of Jyotisa or astrologer, in a village. They had to be enjoyed by living in the town, and doing duty. They were not to be mortgaged. If they were sold or given away as grants these were to be given only to a fit brahmana who could discharge the services.

Service tenures were also created for those persons who had rendered various services in the past. Such persons received Umbali lands from the rulers. They were not required to do no more services. As instances of this class of people mention may be made of scholars, poets, musicians, and doctors to whom the rulers of the period
made frequent grants of land. As a mark of honour, high officials of the state often received land grants to maintain palanquin and umbrellas. Lands granted for the former purpose were known as Dandige-umbali or Pallakki-umbali to which we get innumerable references in inscriptions of our period. Land granted for the purpose of maintaining umbrella were known Sattige-Umbali.  

In addition to these we get some land grants given for miscellaneous purposes, such as Garadi-umbali for the maintenance of Gymnasium, rent-free lands to the salt-makers, with rules to the removal of saline earth, land-grants for having engraved shasanas or inscriptions, lands to the tumbler or Dombara and lands allotted to the office of setti or the head of the merchant guild. An inscription of 1430 A.D. from Nagamangala village in Bowringpet (Bangarupete) records that the Salumule of the 56 provinces with all the cultivators and the Panchalas established a fair or Santhe, and in connection with it, as a Manya for the Pattanaswami of the fair, Chiyi Bassi Setti granted land (specified). Lands were also given for Pattanaswamitana or for the office Pattanaswami of a trading center. The head of the merchant guilds with the titles like Ubhayananadesi, the Pattanasvami Mahavaddayavahari and Vaddavyavahari held Umbali or Kodage tenures in land in return for their services.

The principal source of Pattanaswami’s income was his Manya land. In 1362 A.D. Periya Nayaka, the Pattanaswami of the fair at Kayivara was granted land, free of all imposts. In 1412 A.D. Dandi-Setti and Tirumala setti were granted land specified as a Manya, with freedom form tolls. In 1426 A.D. Budapa Setti was given the office of Pattanaswami together with a Manya. In 1430 A.D. Chiyi Bassi Setti of maragal, was granted Manya land. In 1554 A.D. Vithanna Nayaka granted Manya lands to the Pattanaswami (name not given).
What emerges from the above is that in Karnataka during the Vijayanagara period the custom of making land grants in lieu of various services rendered by individuals to the society was widely prevalent. Such grants were known as Umbali and Kodage. They were given on Sarvamanya or simply Manya basis. The persons who held Umbali and Kodage tenures came from different walks of life. Among them mention may be made of the family members of soldiers who died in the battlefield or fighting anti-social elements, persons who had rendered some specific service to the state, the twelve village servants, Pattanasvamis of trading centers, nada-gaudas or head of nadus and peasant leaders who contributed in concrete way to the extension of agriculture and building of or maintenance of irrigational works. The Vijayanagara monarchs, Amaranayakas, officials and local government agencies created Umbali and Kodage tenures in kind. It appears that to the extent to which these revenue free, hereditary land tenures were created, to that extent the state and its agencies lost revenue from land tax other dues. That is why Tipu Sultan of Mysore in the second half of the 18th century resumed many kinds of these Umbali and Kodage tenures. In this connection what an eminent British administrator of the 19th century, namely Thomas Munro has said is interesting: “It does not appear that the Hindu princes were much more scrupulous than Tipu in resuming Umbalis and Inams .... for, as almost every prince and given away land as Umbali and none had resumed, the whole country would in short time have been converted into Inams”.

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