CHAPTER - III
WOMEN AS DONORS

3.0 Introduction

Women with material wealth and social position often appear as generous donors in the Inscriptions of the period under study. As the temple stood as the cynosure of socio economic life, most of these donations either in the form of land of cash, went normally to the temple. The income derived from these donations was meant specifically towards the performance or religious services as well as to maintain the temple servants. In return for their grant the donors were conferred with ‘temple honour’ such as the offering of the share in the prasadam, etc. This may be illustrated from the inscriptions of this period in Tirumalai Tirupati temples. The Tirumalai-Tirupati temples, the premier temple of the Vijayanagara period received the largest of the royal benefactions and public donations.

Gifts to temple were in the form of lands, villages, income from villages, proceeds from the remission of taxes, ornaments, cloths, articles, etc. These were made over to the deities in the temples by the kings, officials, chiefs, Mahamandaleshwara queens, common women or ordinary women with different religious motives. The benefactions made and endowments created were generally entrusted to the trustees of the temples (sthanikas) for arranging regular worship of the deity, for burning perpetual lamp, for conducting temple festivals and for remunerating temple servants for their services in the temple. They made grants with religious motives. Women made liberal grants to temples to commemorate their visits to temples, to secure a strong empire, to acquire religious merit, to celebrate their birthday, and for realizing the four objects of human desire namely, Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Women played multifarious roles, some of them excelled also as
donors, trustees, and protectors of temples and other religious institutions, Contemporary epigraphs and literary works provide ample illustrations to this effect.

3.1 Tirumaladevi Amman

It seems that the family of the chieftain of Sriranga-patanam entered into matrimonial alliance with the imperial family as Tirumaladevi, the chief queen of Krishnadevaraya. Tirumaladevi was the daughter of Kumara-Vira-Syamaraya, chief of Srirangapatnam (that is he was the governor of Srirangapatnam) who took part in the battle of Raichur.

Tirumaladevi was the first and foremost queen, the queen consort, along with whom Krishnadevaraya ascended the Vijayanagara throne in 1509 A.D. and she lived on apparently for the entire period of his reign and accompanied him constantly. Two queens of Krishnadevaraya namely, Tirumaladevi and Chinnadevi, are generally mentioned in the inscriptions. Of these two, Tirumaladevi was his senior queen, having been wedded prior to his accession to the throne, as it is known from No. 87 of 1912 from Cholasamudram which states that the emperor Krishnadevaraya ascended the Karnataka throne, with his queen Tirumalambika.

The two queens are also noted in the Telugu Kavyas of the time, both of them are accorded the honour of wedded queens (devarulu) and these queens are represented in the two statues placed beside Krishnadevaraya in a group in temple of Srivenkatesha at Tirumala and as Tirumalamba is on the right side of the king, it has been supposed that she was the chief queen, who played a dominant role during this period, she used to accompany the king during campaigns. She also
accepted Achyutaraya as the successor of Krishnadevaraya. She was very much interested in poetry. She had her own treasury, her own female servants and she had complete independence, she was a great devotee and a great donor. As she was Krishnadevaraya’s favourite she enjoyed all the power and privileges in the court. Krishnadevaraya, in the memory of her, gave liberal grants to temples and cities which were named after Tirumaladevi. The following inscriptions records Tirumaladevi senior queen of Krishnadevaraya as a great donor to the temple.

The marriage of Tirumaladevi, daughter of the chief of Srirangapatana, took place in 1509 A.D. Tirumaladevi pattana now it is called as Hospet.

In 1513 A.D., Tirumaladevi-amman presented a gold cup to Sri Venkatesha for offering milk during night worship.

In 1513 A.D. a gold vessel weighing 374 was given as special offering and service and a gold plate weighing 102 for flowers was offered to God Tiruvengalanatha by Tirumaladevi.⁵

In 1514 A.D., Tirumaladevi, Senior queen of Krishnadevaraya, presented a costly Chakrapadakam to Sri Venkatesha and granted PirattiKulattur village for five Tirupponakam offerings to be made daily.⁶

In 1515 A.D., the gift of a Chakrapadakam and the village of Piratti-Kulaltur in the Tondamandalam was given to Tiruvenkata by queen Tirumaladevi. The pendant contained 132 diamonds, 85 rubies, 83 emeralds and 66 pearls, altogether weighing 255 ½ units.⁷
In 1515 A.D., a gold cup weighting 374 units for offering milk, and a gold plate weighing 10 units, for keeping perfumes to Tiruvengalanatha was given by queen Tirumaladevi.\(^8\)

Tirumaladevi visited the temple of Sri Venkatesha at Tirumalai with the king and she made Mahadanas to the temple of Sri Venkatesha at Tirumalai in 1515 A.D.

In Holenarasipur Taluk, inscription No. 8, is a copper inscription, it registers a grant made by Krishnadevaraya in 1515 A.D. on July 25\(^{th}\), Village Kittave, in Hasana some of the Hoysala kingdom renamed as Tirumalapura after his queen Triumalamba by Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara.\(^9\)

An inscription of 1515 A.D., records Krishnadevaraya after capturing the forts, visited Amaresvara at Dharanikota and performed the Tulapurusha ceremony in the temple of the God. On the banks of the river krishnaveni he had the Ratnadhenu and Sapta-sagar Mahadanas performed by his queens Chinnadevi and Tirumaladevi respectively.\(^10\)

In 1517 A.D., at Simhadri-Potnuru he performed Mahadanas by his queens Chinnadevi and Tirumaladevi, and visited with his queens, God Varadaraju at Vishnu Kanchi and paid one thousand Varahas as Kanike.\(^11\)

An epigraph refers in 1518 A.D., Tirumaladevi granted the land called Kumbhararakunte in Vijayanagarapattana, for the service of God Kariya Tiruvengalantha at Anjanagiri of Chikkarayakere in Vijayanagarapattana. The gift was made in the presence of God Vithalesvara on the bank of Tungabhadra for the merit of Tirumalaraya.\(^12\)
In 1521 A.D., Krishnadevaraya presented a Pitambaram set with the nine kinds of gems, a cup and a Navaratnapadkam through his queen Tirumaladevi to Tiruvengalanatha at Tirumalai.

Thus, the above inscriptions throw light on Tirumalamba, Sr. queen of Krishnadevaraya as a great donor to the temples and she also made grant for the merit of her son Tirumalaraya. She made Rathnadhenu, Saptasagara Mahadanas and she donated gold ornaments, rubies, diamonds and precious stones, gold and silver cups and plates and also granted villages to the temples. So, we can say that Tirumaladevi, Sr. queen of Krishnadevaraya occupied a respectable position in this period.

3.2 Chinnadevi Amman

At present we are not in a position to determine accurately how many women Krishnadevaraya actually married. Nuniz, tells us, that he married four women and ‘Chinnadevi’ was the most beloved of these according to Paes, Krishnadevaraya had twelve lawful wives, of whom four were principal ones namely Chinnadevi, Tirumaladevi, Jaganmohini and Annapurnadevi. Chinnadevi was a devadasi in the temple of Virupaksha at Hampi. Chinnadevi was famous for her dance and beauty, for which Krishnadevaraya fell for her. Two queens of Krishnadevaraya namely, Tirumaladevi and Chinnadevi are generally mentioned in the inscriptions. Krishnadevaraya married Chinnadevi after he ascended the throne and consequently she must have been only the junior queen, who was unsuccessful in acquiring the dignity and prestige of the chief consort. The two queens are also noted in the Telugu Kavyas of the time as deverulu. And these queens are also represented in the two statue placed beside Krishnadevaraya in a group in the temple of Sri Venkateshwara at Tirumalai, Chinnadeviyaru on the left,
Krishnamaharaya in the middle and Tirumaladeviyaru on the right with their names incised on their shoulders. But, Krishnadevaraya in his “Amuktamalyada” (Canto I verse 33), while apparently quoting the eulogistic verses from the poet laureate Allasani Peddana’s “Manucharitam”, which is dedicated to him, slightly modifies the name of his queen, substituting ‘Annapurnadevi’ for Chinnadevi and giving precedence to Tirumaladevi. Chinnadevi deceased sometime after the religious tour in 1517 A.D., and that her place was subsequently occupied by Annapurnadevi.

Chinnadevi has been considered by some scholars as the daughter of Prataparudra Gajapati and by others as a damsel not regularly espoused to Krishnadevaraya. Where as the court poets recognized her as one of the wedded wives of the king, which gives sufficient evidence about her lawful marriage with Krishnadevaraya, which is further strengthened by the testimony of lithic records of the time found throughout the country as well as by her statue being placed at Tirumalai. It is therefore erroneous to treat her as a favourite damsel of low birth and dubious parentage in the face of this available evidence from native sources and give credence to the statements of foreigners like Nuniz and Paes. It may, however be concluded that she was the favourite queen of Krishnadevaraya, being apparently given precedence in the records in the matter of mentioning her name before the senior queen in registering their charities at some of the religious centres. But however, we can say that Chinnadevi was not the daughter of prataparudra, because Chinnadevi got married to Krishnadevaraya earlier to Gajapati princess. Chinnadevi was his junior queen, married after his accession and enjoyed the royal favour for five or six years, until her demise in 1517 A.D., parentage of Chinnadevi remains unknown.
The Dodda Jataka plates of Nagamangala, dated 1512 A.D. records a gift by the king Krishnadevaraya to a learned Brahmana in the person of Gangadhara of Shivaganga of a village called Hirijattiga, and four hamlets adjoining, renaming the village Chinnadevipura, in honour of Chinnadevi, one of his favourite queens.\textsuperscript{15}

According to Nuniz, “This king built a city in honour of this woman, for the love he bore her, and called it Nagalapur and surrounded it is one of the best works that, he has in his kingdom, and he made it a street and very long and very large with houses all of masonry. He further ordered, all chiefs at his kingdom to build themselves palaces therein, and so they did. It was partly intended for purposes of irrigating lands below it and partly for supplying water to the new city of Nagalapura. The revenue yielded by the lands irrigated by it, in Nuniz’s time i.e., within fifteen years or so was 20,000 paGodas. But we cannot accept this because Nagaladevi was Krishnadevaraya’s mother and not Chinnadevi.

Chinnadevi used to accompany the king to temples and to war fields Chinnadevi had her own treasury and female servants. This queen enjoyed liberty. She donated money and jewelleries liberally to temples. She was loved by the people of Vijayanagara.

The following inscriptions, records Chinnadevi, Junior queen of Krishnadevaraya as a great donor to the temple.

An inscription of 1513 A.D., refers to a gift of a gold vessel weighing 374 units made by queen Chinnajiammavaru, to God Tiruvengalanatha for special offering and service.\textsuperscript{16}
An inscription of 1513 A.D., records a gift of a gold vessel weighing 374 units made to Tiruvengalanathadeva for offering milk after night worship by Chinnajamma.\textsuperscript{17}

An epigraph of 1514 A.D., records that Krishnadevaraya, after defeating Gajapati ruler, visited Tirupati, with his queen Chinnadevi. Chinnadevi presented a padakam and a Kanthamala and gave Mudiyar village in Tonda-Mandalam to serve for the daily offerings instituted by her.

An epigraphy of 1514 A.D. states that Krishnadevaraya and his two queens erected the gopuram and presented one gold plate worth 991 paGodas besides 25 silver lamps, 200 cows and 4 villages to Vithaladeva for worship.\textsuperscript{18}

An inscription of 1514 A.D., refers to Chinnamajidevi, junior queen of Krishnadevaraya, presented a costly necklace to Sri Venkatesha and granted Madiyar village for five Tirupponakam offerings to be made daily.\textsuperscript{19}

An inscription of 1515 A.D., refers to Chinnadevi visited Amareshvara at Dharanikota with the king and performed the Tulapurusha ceremony in the presence of the God, on the banks of the river Krishnaveni. He had the Rathnadhenu and saptasagara Mahadanas performed by his queen Chinnadevi.

An epigraph of 1515 A.D., states that Krishnadevaraya along with his queen Chinnadevi made Mahadananas to the Tirumalai. In 1517, Chinnadevi made Mahadananas at Tirupati.
An inscription of 1515 A.D. registers the gift of ornaments and of the village in the Tondaimandalam for offerings to the Sriventatesha by Chinnajidevi-amman, the queen of Krishnadevaraya, when he paid a visit to the Tirumala temple, on the return Journey to the capture of Udayagiri. The ornaments were Kanthamalai with a pendant set with 111 pearls, central ruby. 2 emeralds and 4 diamonds, altogether weighting 200 units.20

An inscription of 1517 A.D., refers that at Simhari Portunru he performed Mahadanas by his queen Chinnadevi and Visited with his queen to God Varadaraju at Vishnu Kanchi and paid one thousand varahas as kanike.

Thus, the above inscriptions throw light on Chinnadevi, Junior queen of Krishnadevaraya as a great donor to the temple. She made Rathnadhenu, Saptasagara Maha danas and she donated gold ornaments, rubies, diamonds and precious stones, gold and silver cups and plates and also gave villages to the temples. So, we can say that Chinnadevi queen of Krishnadevaraya was rich enough on her own in order to be in a position to donate lavishly to the temple.

3.3 Varadaji Devi Amman

Varadambika or Varadadevi Amman daughter of Salakaraju was the first known wedded queen of Achyutaraya. To princess Varadambika’s marriage with Achyutaraya, is devoted the Sanskrit work, entitled “Varadambika-Parinayam” composed by Tirumalamba, a poetess of considerable talent.

Inscriptions help us in clarifying the relationship of the queen Varadambika with the member of the Salaka family. (1) A lithic record
dated saka 1463, plava (=21 – 12 – 1541 A.D.) states that Salakaraja Siru Tirumala, the mother of Varadajiamman purchased a plot of ground in the west street in Tirumalai for 120 pon and laid an angina-tiruvidhi (i.e., a row of houses around an open space in the middle) for the merit of Varadaji-amman, the Pattamahadeviyar of Achyutaraya Maharaya.21

Varadambika, as the queen, was a close associate of the emperor Achyuta Raya in his religious and other activities. Achyutaraya appears to have gone in the company of his queen Varadamba and son Venkatadri, to worship the deities at Tirupathi, Kalahasti, Kanchi, Tiruvannamalai and Srirangam before launching upon the southern campaign.22 This campaign ended with great victory. To commemorate his victory of the Southern campaign, king Achyutaraya paid a visit to Tirupati temple accompanied by his queen Varadaji-amman and his son Kumara Venkatadri, as stated in an inscription dated 31st Jan. 1533. A.D.23

Epigraph and literary works shed considerable light on those aspects of the life of the queen. A couple of inscriptions from Aulala Perumal temple at conjeevaram dated Jan 20, 1533 A.D., & Aug 17, 1533 A.D. register the Mukta Tulapurushadana ceremony performed by king Achyutaraya-along with his queen Varadambikadevi and his son an assignment of the income of 17 villages to the Arulala perumal temple for providing special offerings and also gifted away 1,000 cows.24

An epigraph dated April 5, A.D., states that Varadajidevi-amman granted 6 villages yielding an annual income of 920 rakshaipon for the benefit of the Sri Bhandaram [Tirumalai Temple Treasury] for the purpose of propitiating Sri Venkatesha with 20 Tirupponakam [Van-Pongal-Taligai] daily as her Ubhaiyam known as Varadajidevi amman Avasaram [offering] to be performed after conducting the Achyutaraya’s
avasaram and Krishnadevaraya’s avasaram at Tirumalai.\textsuperscript{25} Among the 6 villages two villages were in the Grandikotta Sirmai, 3 villages were from the Kondavidu Srimai and one from Narayanapuram.\textsuperscript{26}

Thus the queen appears to have issued grants of her own and shared the religious duties of her husband, emperor Achyutaraya. It is stated in the contemporary Sanskrit work Vardambikaparinayam that the birth of a son to Achyutaraya and Varadambika was due to a favour of God of Tirupati and hence the child was named Venkatadri after the deity of Tirumalai.\textsuperscript{27} This apparently refers to the immense faith, the royal couple entertained in the hearts for the God Vishnu.

There are several inscriptions issued for the spiritual merit of king Achyutaraya, his queen Varadambika and their son Venkatadri by the king’s officials in their purely private capacity. One such was issued by a military officer Sriranga Nayaka son of Tuluva Vengalu-Nayakkar of Padvidu, who arranged for offerings through a deposit of 650 narpanam in saka 1458, Durmukhi, corresponding to December 14. 1536 A.D., for the merit of Swami Achyuta raya Maharaya, Varadaji-amman avargal and Chikka Venkatadri Udaiyar.\textsuperscript{28}

So far we have noticed instances which reveal the close association and active participation with the ruler as their right companion in various fields. In turn as regards to their wives, the rulers also took initiative in erecting temples, monuments, buildings, cities etc. for example, in the records No. 544 are mentioned seven mantapams, two of which were named after king Achyutarayur-Swami, two after his queen Varadaji-amman.\textsuperscript{29} Cities were named after Varadaji-amman as Varadajiavara Pattana. Varadajiavara pattana in Kamalapura, was constructed by Achyutaraya in honour of his queen.\textsuperscript{30}
3.4 Ordinary Women as Donors

In relation to economic activities of the state we can see two categories of women namely, the royal women and the ordinary women. There are so many instances to show that in addition to the royal women even ordinary women played an important role as donors to temples. Temples received money, gifts and some received large amounts. Donors of money were often designated as recipients of a share of the food offerings made to the God (Prasadam) as a part of the Bhakthi temple ritual of the age. Ordinary women had freedom to donate money to the temples. The following are some of the inscriptions, which records ordinary or common women as donors.

In 1390 A.D. Padumladevi, daughter of the Mukanna Kadambavana, made a gift of land to the temple of Amritanathadeva at Omanjaru for the worship and offerings of the God and for the maintenance of feeding Choultry.\(^{31}\)

To quote an example, an inscription records that an Jan 19, Thursday A.D., 1458, in the reign of Pradhana Devaraya Maharaya, the lady reader of the palace named Honnammavva purchased a plot of land and made a gift of it for offerings to God Mallikarjuna and for feeding five jangamas in the temple.\(^{32}\)

An inscription of 1417 A.D., states that a grant was made by Nacharamma, wife of Timmanna Dannayaka to the fifty two Sri Vaishnavas of Melkote.\(^{33}\)

It has been recorded that on Jan 10, A.D. 1510, in the name of Bhujabala Narasinga Maharaya ruling from Vijayanagara, Sankamma Modaliti daughter of Bemanna Bhandari, made a gift of 60 varahas and
an yearly grant of fixed quantity of rice for the service of the God Mahadeva.34

In 1510 A.D., Nalla-Gangamman, daughter of Ekkadi Timmamman, deposited a cash of 1,500 Panam for the daily offering of Tiruponakam to Srivenkatesha at Tirumala for the merit of Krishnadevaraya.

An inscription in 1513 A.D., registers the gift of golden vessel, pearls and precious stones and also 1000 panam by Virupajayamman, wife of Timmaraya, for offering at the early morning service to Nayanar Tirukalatti Udaiya-Nayanar for the merit of her parents and herself.35

An inscription refers to an indistinct, seems to refer to the construction of a well by a lady (name lost) for the merit of Krishnadevaraya in 1513 A.D., Figures of Sankha and Chakra are engraved closeby.36

Two maids in the palace of Venkatapatiraya, Krishnaveni and Vengayamman, granted 40 varahas for providing offering on the anniversary day, on the natal day every month of Tirumangai Alvar37 in 1518 A.D.

In 1518 A.D., Tirumakka shetti, wife of Narana shetti of paduvakeri constructed a Matha, and made endowment of land for its maintenance.38

Tirumakka-Ravaliti, though who was child less, was a generous lady. She made good use of the gold through enabling her grandfather Shankar Shetti to build a matha and endow it with some Plots and land
and also made a gift for the service of God Nagareshvara on Sunday, April 11, 1520 A.D.\textsuperscript{39} in Basruru in south Canara district.

In 1524 A.D., vengalamman, daughter of Pagera-Amman, contributed 1,500 panam, to be made towards the one Tiruppouakam to daily service to Srivenkatesha in her name.\textsuperscript{40}

Sankama-Nayakiti second wife of Sankara Setti, along with her step son Mallappa Setti and her younger sister Devu Adeviti granted some plots of land on Wednesday Oct. 14 1528 A.D., for the purpose of the maintenance of the Mathas built by her husband.\textsuperscript{41}

In 1529 A.D., Lakshmamma wife of Subbaraya, erected the dhvajastambha in the temple of Chennakeshava and celebrated the Garudotsava of the God.\textsuperscript{42}

In 1531 A.D., in praise of the Jina shasana, Jinasenadeva’s disciple Manikya-Lajinathar granted land. Also Danimaiya’s wife Payama gave 20 gatti gadyanas for food offerings to the deity and feeding of guests to Mallikirit.\textsuperscript{43}

In 1532 A.D. Vallabhamman, the wife of Salakka-Raja, made a gift of land in Valagari Sedangudi, for the offerings and worship to the image of Sri Ranganaththa on the occasion of an annual festival of the God in the month of Tai.\textsuperscript{44}

One Betel-bearer also donated to the temple. During Achyutaraya’s regime Adaippam Rukminiamman, was a betel-bearer. The trustees of Tirumalai temple have under taken to perform certain charities in the name of the donor as described by the Emperor Achyutaraya, on 26\textsuperscript{th} December 1535 A.D.\textsuperscript{45}
On 8th January 1536 A.D., Ellamman, daughter of Kottiya Mallayyan, paid 1,600 nar panam for propitiating Sri Venkatesha everyday with one Tirupponakam-taligai.46

On 25th December 1538 A.D., Ellamman, daughter of Kovai, made a contribution of 440 nar panam for 30 Tirupponakam to Sri Venkatesha as Dhanurmasa puja offerings.47

Krishnamangai, daughter of Govindi, of Odukarai village deposited sum of 110 panam to Sri Raghunadhan on the day of hunting festival celebrated in Tirupati, as her ubhaiyam in 1545 A.D.48

In 1545 A.D., Lakshmiamman one of the ladies (in waiting) in the Royal harem, made a gift of 25 rekhaipon for the construction of a mantapam.49

Tirumalamman, wife of senpakakamayyar, was residing in Vanamahadevi village. She constructed a mantapam in front of the temple of Sri Govindaraja Tirupati and paid 400 panam for 50 dosaipadi to be made to Govindarajan, on the day of the star Visakham, being her annual birth star in 1545 A.D.50

Govindi, daughter of Konda Dasari-Timmayyan, belonging to shepherded caste was residing in Tirupati. A cash deposit of 2180 panam was made in 1545 A.D., for the purpose of propitiating Sri Venkatesha and other deities with certain offerings on all the seven days of 10 Brahmothsavam.51

Tirumala-Amman, daughter of Kamasayyanagar of Bhardvaja gotra, paid 300 nar panam for 60 tirupponakataigal to Sri Venkatesha as Dhanurmasa Puja offerings in her name in 1547 A.D.52
Chinnamman, daughter of Pratapa Ellamarasar, granted in 1547 A.D. Ramachadrapuram yielding an annual income of 300 rekhai for offering to Sri Govindaperumal and Sri Vithalesa Perumal in Tirupati.\textsuperscript{53}

Lingamma wife of Lakkisetti, made a gift of paddy and gold for the service of the God Kalideva with the prayer that her son Lingayya might prosper and handed over the gift of Devarasijiya, to the head of the temple on Tuesday, December 23, 1550 A.D.\textsuperscript{54}

The inscription of 1550 A.D., records the gift of land by a Brahmana lady to the shrine of Annamalainatha built by her in the temple of Svayambhunathesvara for the merit of herself and her husband Kumara Dindimar Annamalainatha.\textsuperscript{55}

Lingamma, wife of Veligotikomara Nayaka, granted 14 putti and 10 tumu of aland, a village by name Lingapuram to the Gods Ishta-Kameshvara and vishveshvara of Macherla in Nagarjunakonda Sima in 1554 A.D.\textsuperscript{56}

Elli-Tirumagal, daughter of Elli authorized the trustees of Tirumalai temples, to deliver some prasadam to the devotees, temple-councilors and the donor out of the preparations offered in the name of Elli-Tirumaganila 1561 A.D.\textsuperscript{57}

Bokkasam yallamma erected the temple of Mallikarjuna in 1561 A.D., and purchased a garden for 40 paGodas and granted it to Mallikarjuna.\textsuperscript{58}

An inscription in 1569 A.D., registers a gift of the village Danayakanahalli in Jevanige-nade of Vastare-sime, renamed
Papatimmapura, for services in the Keshava temple at Beluru by Venkatamma, daughter of Papatimma Nayaka.\textsuperscript{59}

\section*{3.5 Mahamandaleshvara Women as Donors}

The women as Mahamandaleshvara played a dominant role in the life of the kingdom. They gave liberal grants to temples. The following are some of the inscriptions, which records Mahamandaleswara women as great donors to temples, mathas and bastis.

An inscription of 1467 A.D., refers Srirangambadevi-amman, queen of Sriman Mahamandelesvara. As king saluva Narasimha excavated an irrigation Channel in a temple Village, the document was executed for the supply of artciles for 4 tirupponakam to be offered daily to Sri Venkatesha for her merit.\textsuperscript{60}

An inscription of 1470 A.D. records Mahasamanta-nayaka’s mother Kallarasiyamma renovated the whole temple of Sidda Mallikarjuna at sampige, Gubbi taluk.\textsuperscript{61} An epigraph 1479 A.D., states that Ramadevi, mother of a Certain Mandalika Samantha made a gift of land for offerings to the temple of Suryanarayanadeva at Niravi.\textsuperscript{62}

Sayamma, mother of Mahamandaleshvara Vira Somana Nayaka, made a permanent exemption of 15 varahas to be paid to the royal treasury towards tax etc., on land belonging to God Janaradana of Srirangapura for the worship of God and conducting festivals in 1482 A.D.,\textsuperscript{63} states an inscription.

Lakshmi-amman, the sister of Kommaraja Timmaraja Udaiyar made provision for daily offering to Venkatesha in 1493 A.D., by a cash investment of 1000 pannam, for improving the temple village Tiramaneri.
Periya-Narasamman (wife) of Kommaraja Periya she made provisions for certain offering required to be offered daily and on festival days at the Anantam pillar Mantapam which she reconstructed at her own cost in 1463 A.D. at Tirumalai records an inscription.

An epigraph of 1498 A.D., states that Maladakali Umba Liganapati’s wife granted some lands for the service of offering food to the Kalasanatha.

An inscription registers a gift of 7 hons and hanas, for daily offerings to God Kalasanatha, by Balamadevi younger sister of Bhairarasa wodeya who was governing Kalasarajya in 1501 A.D.

An inscription of 1525 A.D. refers Sankhanadevi, sister of Devannarasa, made a gift of the produce of some of her lands to the basti at Kiyaravuru for offerings and worship.

Narasamma, wife of Mahamandaleshvara Goburaivobaya constructed a Vasantha Mandapa to the north of the Diguva Tirupati, endowed 120 Varahas to the temple for conducting out of the interest there on the festivals in honour of the God Ahobaleshvara in that Mandapa in 1548 A.D. records an inscription.

An inscription in 1562 A.D., registers a gift of land by Samkamma daughter of samkubale and grand daughter of Kumchada sarasu, for feeding of Brahmanas in the temple of somanatha. The gift lands were purchased from the temple itself.

Arasadevi made a gift of land to the temple of Narasimhadeva at Banavasi at the instance of Ramagapparajayya in 1571 A.D. records an inscription.
An inscription in 1597 A.D., registers a gift of the village Manuvuru for the worship of and offerings to various God like Virabhadra Channa mallikarjuna, Kedaradeva etc., by Devarasi, queen of Viranna Wodeya.\textsuperscript{71}

An inscription in 1599 A.D., registers the grant of an agrahara to the west of Kunigal by Venkata Krishnajamma Gaudarajya, the Yelahankanad Prabhu, for the merit of her father in law and mother-in-law.\textsuperscript{72}

An inscription of 1606 A.D., say that Hiriyamma, consort of the Mahauadu Prabhu Mumadi Chikkappa gauda of Bijevare, caused to be erected as a Shiva Dharma a Virakta matha. It is probable that this Matha is identical with the one which is now known as Gaurammana Matha.\textsuperscript{73}

Thus the above inscriptions throw light on Mahamandaleswara women as donors to temples, bastis, and mathas. Women were given good respect in this period.

### 3.6 Donors for Family Welfare

Kings, Mahamandaleshvaras, temple accountants, servants, Nayakas, Dandanayakas and the common people donated money, lands, gold, villages and constructed temples in the honour of their parents and mothers. There are number of inscriptions which can substantiate these aspects.

An inscriptions of 1351 A.D., states that Savemna Wodeya, granted the village Naguru, to God Bhairava for the merit of his father Kamparaju and mother Mengadevi.\textsuperscript{74}
An inscription from Enamadalu of Narasaropet taluk of Guntur district dated 1388 A.D., mentions one Tummalacheruvu Rami Setti of Sale (weaver) caste as the devotee of Mallikarjunadeva and who gave central pillar to the Mandapa of the temple together with cows for perpetual lamp for the merit of his parents.\textsuperscript{75}

An inscription of 1397 A.D., records that a gift of land was made by Mahamandaleshvara Apratimalla Gangaya Devachoda Maharaja to the stone cutter Chamayabattudu, who constructed the temple of God Bhairavadeva of Goturu for the merit of his parents, Maldevaraja and Maldevamma.\textsuperscript{76}

An inscription of 1401 A.D., refers to a gift, made by a Nayaka of some vritis to the village Shivapuram to Mallubhatta for worship and offerings of God Mallinatha for the merit of his parents.\textsuperscript{77}

An inscription of 1404 A.D., refers that Harihara II, had renamed Jambur in the Hoysala country into Honnalapura after his mother and gifted it to the Brahmanas.\textsuperscript{78}

An epigraph of 1411 A.D., records a gift of land to the God Bhairavadeva of Goturu by Mahamandaleshvara Obaleyya Devachoda Maharaja, for the merit of his father and mother Avubhalamma.\textsuperscript{79}

An epigraph of 1413 A.D., states that the village Bekkanahalli was renamed Gaurapura by madanna in the memory of his mother Gauradevi, and was gifted to a Virasaiva Guru Manjinathadeva of Rayasamudra for the maintenance of his mutt.\textsuperscript{80}
Devaraya changed the name of Manangi to Lakshmi narayanapura and gave it to his Acharya. His mother’s name was Narayanambika and probably he changed it in honour of his mother in 1444 A.D.\(^81\)

An epigraph of 1444 A.D., registers that a gift of land was made to the God Ramayyadeva of Velupura by Kesajhulu of the village, for the merit of his parents.\(^82\)

An inscription of 1460 A.D., states that a Dennayaka (name is lost) granted a village as an agrahara named after his mother Sitayayemma.\(^83\)

Krishnadevaraya in 1513 A.D., registers the royal gift of a golden prabhavali set with precious stones and granted some village for daily worship and offerings to the God Kalahastisvara-Mahadeva for the merit of his parents, Narasanayaka Odeya and Nagajamma.\(^84\)

An inscription of 1514 A.D., registers the gift of gold, copper, and money to the temple for gilding the Punya koti Vimana of the temple of perarulala Perumal by the king Krishnadevaraya for the merit of his parents Narasanayaka Wodeya and Nagajima and himself.\(^85\)

An epigraph of 1517 A.D., refers to Lakshmikantarsu, who constructed a temple of Prasanna Keshava Perunal for the merit of his parents Tipparasayya and Ramayamma.\(^86\)

An inscription in 1521 A.D., states that Timmaraju granted a share of the income from the land conducting festivals in the temple of Hajara Ramasvami, for the merit of his parents Chikka Timmaraja Wodeya and konajjamma.\(^87\)
An epigraph of 1524 A.D., confirms that Benkachiya Gauda, gave a pura to Virana Odeya for the worship of Siva temple, so that its merit might to be his father and mother.\(^{88}\)

An Inscription of 1527 A.D., registers a gift of 200 panam by Chandrashekharayyan, Kannadiga Brahman of Devikapuram, for the merit of his father and mother Shankaramman, and this money was arranged to be spent on bringing lands under cultivation and digging pits in the tank of chiltattur, a devadana village and from the yield of this land a lamp to be burnt on the Kailaimbalai.\(^{89}\)

An inscription in 1528 A.D., records that Mallappanna. In Mallapura gave some land at Morabe to the God Suryainarayanadeva for the merit of his mother Viramma.\(^{90}\)

An inscription states that in 1529 A.D., Siddhavatam Yallamarusayya granted a village Nuvusulapadu in Sakali Sima to God Chennakeshava of Kattrakandla for the merit of his mother Achchama.\(^{91}\)

Ellapa Nayaka, servant of Achyutaraya, for the service to the God Mallikarjuna made a grant of land of Pushpagiri in order to increase the merit of his parents in 1533 A.D.\(^{92}\)

In 1535 A.D., Salakaraja, gave for offerings to the God Narasimhadeva the village of mallinayanipalle which he had founded, for the merit of his father Salakaraja and his mother Tippajamma.\(^{93}\)

An inscription of 1535 A.D., states that Achyutaraya constructed seven mantapas and one of the seven mantapas was name after his mother Obchchiamman.\(^{94}\)
An epigraph of 1544 A.D., states that Matta-Varadaraja constructed a mantapa in the name of his mother Chenaman at Tirumalai.\(^9^5\)

An inscription in 1545 A.D. refers that Mahamandaleshvara Timmaraju had the Rangamandapam to God Madhava built to the west of the big bazaar street for the merit of his parents Vallabhanju and Vengalamma.\(^9^6\)

Turuvanantalvan Kuppayan, one of the temple accounts for the merit of his mother Periyaperumal, he deposited 2210 panam for the daily offerings in Tirupati in 1545 A.D.\(^9^7\)

Tallabhakkam Tiruvenkatanatha, granted 2 villages, Sendaluru yielding an annual income of 500 rekhai and Mallavaram, yielding an annual income of 120 rekhai pon for the offerings of Sri Alamelumanai – Nachchivar on the day’s of annual ceremony of his father and mother in 1546 A.D.\(^9^8\)

Vallabhayyadeva-Maharjau, in the name of his mother Krishnamma, maintained the garden and supplied garlands to God Varadaraju in 1549 A.D.\(^9^9\)

In 1555 A.D., Eramanayaka, made a gift on the occasion of Uttanadvadasi, for the merit of his mother Desammal and offerings to the Goddesses sudikkodutta Nachchiyar in Pengalanadu village.\(^1^0^0\)

An epigraph of 1558 A.D., states that Vithalarajayyadeva maharaju, made a gift of half the village of Murtirayapuram to God Vithaladeva, for the merit of his parents Mutiraju and Tirumalamma.\(^1^0^1\)
An inscription in 1559 A.D., refers to Timmayagauda, the chief of Suguturu, granted Simasandra in Nanjiguli, for the service of Amrita mallikarjuna in order that merit may accrue to his parents and guru.\textsuperscript{102}

An epigraph of 1561 A.D. states that Krishnappa Nayaka, in order that merit might accrue to both his father Baippa-Nayaka and his mother Kondamma, made a grant of the kadaji village in Billichodu-sime for the Chatra and necessary offerings to God Harihara.\textsuperscript{103}

An inscription of 1572 A.D., states that Srirangaraya registers the grant of the village of Vadigepalli as an agrahara to Tirumala Komara Tetacarya of Penugonda for the merit of the kings mother Vengalaj Ammavaru.\textsuperscript{104}

An inscription of 1579 A.D., refers to Lakhenayaka, who made a gift of village hanumasamudra, for the worship and offerings to the God Hanumanta of Satenahalli for the merit of his parents.\textsuperscript{105}

An inscription of 1579 A.D., registers the grant by Sriranga, he renamed after his mother Vengalamba, for the benefit of Ramanujakuta at Sriperumbudur and a flower garden there. This gift was made at the request of one Tirumalanambi Srirangamma connected with the Tatacharya family, who was famous for her piety.\textsuperscript{106}

An inscription in 1626 A.D., refers Murtliyappanayaka and Puttanna nayaka, had Kaisala (Verandah) of 26 squares constructed in the temple of Chennarayasvami of Velapura for merit of his parents.\textsuperscript{107}

An inscription of 1641 A.D., states that Lingarajayya, granted two villages Mavinahalli and Karisiddanapura, for the merit of his parents.\textsuperscript{108}
3.7 Donors Donated for the Merit of Daughter and Sister

An inscription of 1524 A.D., states that one Pedilikoduku Chenaiyan, for the merit of Tirumalamman, daughter of Saluva Govindaraja, granted the village hanumanigunta for the purpose of propitiating Srivenkatesha.\textsuperscript{109}

An epigraph refers to Singaraja, third brother of Varadaji-amma, made certain offerings for Sri Venkatesha in 1537 A.D., for the merit of his sister.\textsuperscript{110}

An epigraph of 1555 A.D., refers Vengalaraju registers the gift of village Konasamudram in Siddhapurmsima, for the merit of his daughter Konama, for the worship of God Tiruvengalanatha of Konasamudram.\textsuperscript{111}

An inscription in 1556 A.D., records the establishment of the village Achyutamapura by Baskara Ramappayya for the merit of his daughter.\textsuperscript{112}

An inscription of 1372 A.D., states that Bukka, made a grant of Honnapura-Halandulige in Manjaradad taluk. The village evidently came to be known after his daughter.\textsuperscript{113}

3.8 Devadasis as Donors

Devadasis were quite rich. They played a dominant role as donors to temple. They made liberal grants for temples in order to become immortal. During the reign of Saluva Narasimha, Venkata Valliyar, who was the daughter of Savaripperumal and one of the damsels attached to the temple of Sri Narasimhasvami in Tirupati. The trustees of Tirumali temple arranged for daily offerings to Sri Venkatesha as she paid a sum of 1000 panam as into the temple treasury on 7\textsuperscript{th} November 1457 A.D.\textsuperscript{114}
In the same reign, Valandi, daughter of Anaimadi and one of the temple damsels made a gift in the form of money for providing an offering to Sri Venkatesa as Dhanurmasa Puja during Margali month in 1486 A.D.\textsuperscript{115}

During Sadashivaraya’s reign Selli, the daughter of one of the temple damsels, residing in Tirupati, she deposited a sum of 1120 panam for the celebration of new harvest festival at Tirumalai for Sri Venkatesha as her Ubhaiyam in 1543 A.D.\textsuperscript{116}

In the same reign Lingasani and Tiruvenkata Manikkam the daughters of Tiruvenkatadasi belonging to the temple damsel class residing in Tirupati, gave 1600 panam to the temple treasury as the Ubhaiyam of these two sisters\textsuperscript{117} in 1543 A.D.

During the same period, Senbaka Vengu, daughter of Timmi, who was the daughter of Tunga Selvi, one of the temple damsels residing in Tirupati. A contribution of 600 panam was deposited by her for the purpose of propitiating Sri Venkatesa. On all the 9\textsuperscript{th} festival day during 10 Brahmotsavam as her Ubhaiyam in 1545 A.D.\textsuperscript{118}

Nagasani, daughter of Obulayyam, one of the temple damsels, she constructed a mantapam at a Tirumalai in 1545 A.D.\textsuperscript{119}

Tiruvenkata-Manikkam, daughter of Tipasani, who was one of the famous damsels was residing in Tirupati, pollapadi Timmaraja and the trustees of Tirumalai temple granted for her use a dandikai (Palanquin) as a token of honour for the services rendered by her for her use towards the temples in Tirupati and at Tirumala in 1546 A.D.\textsuperscript{120}
Lingasani, daughter of Tiruvenkatadasi, one of the temple-damsels was residing in Tirupati. She arranged for 10 Manoharapadi to be made to Sri Utsava Murti on all the 7th festival day during Brahmotsavam at Tirumalai as her ubhaiyam in 1548 A.D.\textsuperscript{121}

Seuvusani, daughter of Angali, one of the Tirupati temple damsels paid a sum of 200 panam as capital for the daily offerings to Sri Vigneshvara installed by her in the temple of Sri Kapileshvarasvami at Kapilatirtham in Tirupati in 1563 A.D.\textsuperscript{122}

An inscription of 1535 A.D., states that Peruchchi, one of the temple damsels, residing in Tirupati, deposited a sum of 230 panam for one Tiruvolakkam offering on the day of Makara-Sankraman festival celebrated in Tirupati temple.\textsuperscript{123}

Another inscription of 1535 A.D., states that Chikkayasavani and her younger sister Govindasani, daughter of Polunayaka, and two of the temple damsels, residing in Tirupati, inaugurated a festival called Chittirai-Vishnu (Tamil New Year’s day) in Tirupati temple which was arranged to be conducted by depositing 1750 panam into the temple treasury.\textsuperscript{124}

The above inscriptions throw the light on the practice of donations to temples, mutts and other religious institutions by the women of the said period. We have an exhaustive list of these donations in the inscriptions. Name of not only royal women, noble women but also women of trading communities and of ordinary families. The evidence shows that the women of this period enjoyed a level of economic Independence, means of livelihood and property rights, which helped them to make generous donations to religious institutions.
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3.9 Religion and Women

Vijayanagara broadly sympathized with all religious faiths, doctrines and dogmas. The cult of devotion of Bhakti assumed universal proportion and played a predominant role in religious practices and spiritual aspirations. Vijayanagara Empire consisted of all types of people of various religious faiths. While the capital has become a cosmopolitan city. The policy of religious tolerance was followed by the kings of Vijayanagara.

The early Vijayanagara kings were Saivas but later Kings became staunch Vaishnavas with a predilection for God Venkatesha of Tirupati.

The various sculptures and paintings in the temple and the performance of dance and drama, which were generally based on religious themes from the Puranas, epics, etc., greatly helped the dissemination of knowledge both religious and secular, among the devotees and especially the illiterate pilgrims frequenting the shrines. In view of the teaching arrangements made in some of the Hindu temples of this period, it is quite reasonable to infer that they also maintained their libraries. The Sankirtana Bhandaram attached to the temple of Sri Venkateshvara of Tirupati, where the copper plates of thousands of Sankirtanas (devotional songs) composed by the Musician poets of the famous Tallapaka family were preserved, can be regarded in a way as a library.¹

Piligrimages formed an important factor in the socio religious life of all classes of people during this period. Vratas too has always occupied
an important place in the religious practices of the people. Contemporary literary records and epigraphs contain references to many Vratas performed by the people of this period. Most of these Vratas have survived even to this day. Some of the Vratas were Shaiva and some Vaishnava while a few were common to people of all sects. Again some were of a general character, while others were performed from the attainment of a particular end.

The making of gifts or danas was an important element in Hindu religious practice. Literary and epigraphic record of the period under review contain numerous references to various kinds of gifts made by king, nobles, courtiers, Devadasis, and commanders, wealthy citizens and pious pilgrims and learned brahmans, common women on different occasions to the temples.

An inscription in 1372 A.D., registers a gift of land for feeding 12 Brahmanas and 1 cook in the matha within his garden at Kellamgire of Choliyakeri by Maji, mother of Ayyapa, after purchase from Koteyappa, daughter of Chavakka and others.²

The queens and the Royal women gave grants to temples during this period. Queen Bukkavve gave grants to Basadi. Bhimadevi, queen of Devaraya I established the image of Shanthinatha in the Magayi basadi at Shavanabelogala.³

Kamaladevi, wife of Devaraya II made gift of land to temple of Kalinatha of Bidire in Tumkur district.⁴

An inscription of A.D., 1378 states the Bommarasa was ruling, the Barakura rajya. It states that the Mahapradhana Mudde-Dannayaka purchased three plots of land and made a gift of them and some gold for
the offerings and other services to God Kotisvara, for feeding 13 Brahmans everyday in the temple and for the wages of two women who waved chauris before the God.\textsuperscript{5}

An inscription in 1378 A.D., records gifts of money for rudrapuje, feeding 3 Brahmans, burning lamps of ghee, offering panchamrita, supply of garlands of tulasi etc., in the temple of Somaideva of Manigarekeri by Nagave, wife of Ramanna Setti.\textsuperscript{6}

An inscription in 1397 records the consecration of a lamp-pillar in the temple of Jadeyasankaradave by the queen Bukkayawve for the merit of her preceptor Bhaskaradevayya.\textsuperscript{7}

An inscription in 1430 A.D., records Devaraya II the king is described as turuka-Maha-Raya Prabalarainyavidari, he is said to have inaugurated the Tribhuvana-Chudamani-Chaityalaya at Bidire in Nagire rajya. His wife Nagaladevi had a Mana-stambha erected and daughters Lakshmi and Panditdevi arranged for feeding.\textsuperscript{8}

Naranadevi, mother of Devaraya II was a devotee of Vishnu, she made the gift of villages Kelagundani and Kaigai, to provide offerings to God Ramachandra and to feed the Brahmanas,\textsuperscript{9} in 1432 A.D.

The common women or the ordinary women give liberal grant to temples during this period. In the reign of Pradhana Devaraya Maharaya, the lady reader of the palace named Honammava purchased a plot of land and made a gift of it on Jan 19, 1458 A.D. for offerings, to the God Mallikarjuna and for feeding five Jangamas in the temple.\textsuperscript{10}

Thimmanna Dannayaka’s wife Nacharamma made a grant in 1471 A.D., to the fifty two Sri Vaishnavas of Melkote.\textsuperscript{11}
Valandi, daughter of Anaimdi and one of the temple damsels gifted money for providing an offering to Srivenkatesa as Dhanurmasapuja during Margali month in 1486 A.D.\textsuperscript{12}

An inscription in 1493 A.D., refers a gift of 20 panas by Sovanna, son of somachara Hariyanna for feeding a Brahmana on the occasion of Rudrapuja in the temple of Kalasanatha. It registers a gift of land by the wife (Maduvalige) of Graunpati for feeding married women (Muttaide) and of offerings.\textsuperscript{13}

An inscription in 1510 A.D., registers the gift of some land by purchase in the village of Muddanayahalli to Saibhatta, son of Tirumalabhatta of Hampe, for the purpose of daily offerings to God Virupaksha, Bukkajamma, mother of Narasa-Nayaka.\textsuperscript{14}

Tirumaladevi queen of Krishnadevaraya, presented a gold cup to Srivenkatesha for offering milk in the worship of God in the night in 1513 A.D.\textsuperscript{15} to Tirumala temple.

In 1514 A.D., Chinnadevi Junior queen of Krishnadevaraya, presented a costly necklace to Srivenkatesha and granted Mudiyar village for five tirupponkam offering to be made daily.\textsuperscript{16} Varadajideviamman, the queen of Achyutaraya, arranged for an avasaram for Tiruvenkata Mudiyar in 1534 A.D.\textsuperscript{17}

An Inscription in 1520 A.D., records a gifts of money by Madarai, wife of Rama Senabova of Karkala and Bommarasi, wife of Sangarasa Senabova, for special offerings etc., to God Kalasanatha.\textsuperscript{18}

An inscription of 1550 A.D., records the gift of land by a Brahmana lady to the shime of Annamalainatha built by her, in the same temple of
Svayambhunathesvara for the merit of herself and her husband kumara Dindimar Annamalainatha.\textsuperscript{19}

An inscription of 1590 A.D., states that, when twin daughters Padmaasi and Devarasi were born to Devarasi, wife and Ambuvana Sreshthi he fixed a ball metal on a pillar in front of the Nemisvara Chaityalaya, with a golden Kalasa on it.\textsuperscript{20}

A popular phase of the religion prevalent in the Vijayanagara days as it was the worship of the Nagas (snakes). Virupaksha himself was considered to be the Lord of the Nagas. The Vijayanagara, sovereigns worshipped the Nagas and considered Shiva as Naganatha, the lord of the Nagas, their queens set up nagakals in the temples, which they attended, and also special female Naga deities.\textsuperscript{21}

It is curious to note that some of the members of the royal family of the Kalas Karkala chiefs also patronized Jainism by endowing grants to the Jaina institutions. In support of these the following examples may be cited.

Viramba, the queen of Gururaja Wodeya (1523-27 A.D.,) took up the cause of Jainism at Bhatkal. In 1490 A.D., she is said to have erected a grand Mansion with halls, Pattasala and rooms for the residence of the ascetics in front of the Chaityalaya built by Chennaayala at Ambalakatti (near Bhatkal).\textsuperscript{22} in 1511, the same queen showed her zeal for Jainism by donating land to Jain basadi at Mudu Bhatkal for the performance of milk bath to the Tirthankaras of the basadi.\textsuperscript{23} In 1531 A.D., Kaladevi, the younger sister of Bhairavaraya, endowed grants to Parshva Tirthankara in the kallu basadi in Bhggunje sime. The above donation was made to the basadi for the merit of her deceased daughter.\textsuperscript{24}
A stone inscription dated 1530 A.D., from Ambala Katte (near Bhatkal) informs us that Viramba got erected bronze images of twenty four Tirthankaras in the same basadi mentioned above.\textsuperscript{25}

It is interesting to note that in some cases women took interest in the erection of the Mathas and for that the Nayaka also made liberal grants. For example, in 1641 A.D., a Matha was built under the authority of Mahamattu in the name of Siddamma at Someshvara.\textsuperscript{26}

Gokarna was a great centre of Shaiva learning. An inscription form Midjan, dated 1526 A.D., states that one Mahalappa Senabove purchased a piece of land from the queen of Gerasoppe (1523-29) and donated as gift for the study of shastras and the performance of rituals in the Mahabalesvara and other temples at Gokarna.\textsuperscript{27}

Chennadeviamma, the queen of Sangitapura (1541-1551 A.D.,) donated 3 gadyanas to God Mahabaleshvara. Further the queen instructed that the amount should be utilized for the maintenance of Dharma in the temple.\textsuperscript{28} Queen Chennabhairadevi, the next queen of Sangitapura renewed the above grant.\textsuperscript{29}

Robert Sewell also pays tribute to the policy of religious toleration pursued by Krishnadevaraya, Sadashiva Raya and Ramaraya allowed the Muslims to construct mosques and follow the principles and practices of their religion. Ramaraya also kept a Quran in front of his throne. Many rulers of the empire gave grants to the Dargas of the Muslims.

The rulers of Aravidu dynasty were also known for religious toleration. The Christian priests who visited the court of Venkata II were so much impressed by the respect shown by the king that they presumed that he would become a convert to Christianity. In this way the
Vijayanagar monarch’s treated all religions with due respect and patronized various religious and philosophies in their empire. Devaraya II not only employed Muslims in his army, he even kept a Quran before his throne so that Muslims could bow to him and to the quran at the same time. He even caused a Mosque to be built for his Muslim subjects at the capital.

Krishnadevaraya though a Vaishnava, repaired Virupaksha temple at Hampi and got the gopuram constructed. He also gave liberal grants to many Shiva temples. Everyone could live following his religion. There was no compulsion in this matter. There was no distinction of Christian Jew and a Hindu. Shaivism, Veerashaivism, Vishistadwaitha philosophy, Dwaita philosophy flourished during this period.

Thus, we come across women of different ranks making endowments either to temples, choultries or other work of public utility and to Brahmins. From the above instances it can be said that women of all ranks contributed freely and liberally in their individual capacity to pious works. Women were highly religious in the period under review. Women played a dominant role in the field of religion during this period under review. The Royal women, queens, ordinary women or the common people, temple dancers and women musicians served the temples. Religion effected women in every aspect of life.
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