It is well known that the system of Government during all periods of Karnataka history was monarchical and the king or the emperor was the supreme head of the state with absolute powers of sovereignty. That did not mean that the rule was autocratic or despotic. The sovereignty of the king, as in all Hindu kingdoms of India, was restricted in theory and practice by the laws and conventions of the state as well as by social and religious obligations to the people. The highest duty of the king was always emphasised as the protection of the good and the punishment of the wicked. The Karak Kathatriya ideals of valour, varacity, charity and forgiveness are repeatedly upheld in the innumerable inscriptions, kings, vassals, generals, and even village chiefs are praised times without number of translating these ideals into practice. Thus it was in keeping with Aryan culture that every effort was made to render monarchy benevolent and to make the administration efficient and popular. In the pursuit of this ideal, however, it may be observed that except in times of war, the sovereignty of the king along with the council of ministers was normally limited by a greater concession of freedom to the people and a greater devolution of power to representative assemblies and the like. Though this is a general feature of benevolent administration in India from ancient times, the whole of the south and in particular, Karnataka appear to have contributed to a greater degree than the north to the introduction of the democratic element in the system of Government.
The king was the kernel of almost the whole of the matter. As long as the loyalty of a sufficient number held fast the king was secure and upon him the whole structure was depended.\footnote{\textit{The Holysalas}, F.177}

The king was the unifying factor in the state; there could not be more than one ruler, for the emergence of a second split the unit at once into two parts. In many instances where the records show the king ruling in the company of another person. It is to be understood that the second was a deputy of the king. Wherever this was not in fact the case ·it invariably was so in theory - the kingdom was already in an advanced stage of disintegration\footnote{\textit{The Holysalas}, F.177}. The larger the unit the greater the king's power, and hence the greater his chances of being efficient with his geographical scope.

The ruler's personal and functional activities were fused into one activity. Insufficiency as a king or a man equally undermined the security and tranquility of the subjects. The personality of the king governed the success with which he controlled his ministers and lesser subordinates. Thus the good king is described as the abode of learning, lustre, prudence, acalliveness profundity, highmindedness, valour, fame and delicacy, a friend of things living, spurning the riches of others and keeping their company\footnote{\textit{The Holysalas}, F.177}. Further he was a man of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textit{Derrett, "The Holysalas", F.177}
\item \textit{C. C. V. Channarayapattana, 191 & 229, IV Hg 23, V Ak 31, XII Gapuli 30 and XI Chitaldurg. 4.}
\item \textit{Flodt, J.H.E.R.A.S. IX. P.283, E.C.IV Hs 18.}
\end{itemize}
unimpeachable moral character.

The king had many duties to do. The ruler had to govern the kingdom like a father putting down the evil and upholding the good. The dictum of the king was "Dushyanagraha Sista Paripalaka". The king was taught, trained and constantly reminded the fact that the happiness of his subjects was his own happiness.

The tendency of the kings to rule despotically was also checked by the custom to consult the ministers and the experienced relatives, it was not absolutely binding on the sovereign to abide by their decision. The restraints brought to bear upon him by convention were not powerful enough to prevent him from making use of the extra-ordinary powers which were conceded to him in theory. The King's council, composed as it was of his ministers and the members of the royal family, was a purely consultative body and it possessed no powers over the king either in theory or in practice. But in Hoysala dynasty there was a council of ministry known as Panchapradhana. They were powerful and king used to ask suggestion for everything.

Criminal Justice was administered by the king in person, or the king's deputy in charge of a district self help was a recognised feature of the law and revenge was not looked upon with disfavour by the king. The mischief-doers were punished

1. The Hoysala Dynasty, Dr. B. Sheik Ali, p.22.
strongly by the king. In its external aspect, the duty of keeping the boundaries free from invasion and extending the frontiers so as to conquer land, the king was the commander in chief. The king had the sole charge of the army, and had in his gift all commands in it. It was usual to appoint generals who had experience of civil administration and these had separate commissions for each campaign, their civilian ranks being necessary for their constant liaison with the officials through whose districts the army had to pass. The king could remove them from their commands and there are numerous cases known to us of the threatened and actual dismissal of officials of both high and low degrees. The kings could deal in this way with his officers because he had two great superiorities over them. In the first place the king led his troops in battle, and if he did not enter the breaches before his men he never failed to be present at crucial campaigns, and to watch the performance of his troops. For the encouragement of the patriotic valour the state had a system of providing for the widows and children as soldiers who died in battle, or persons who sacrificed their lives voluntarily for the public good, and rent free grants of land were made to dependents.

In case of civil justice also the king was the final court of Appeal. The king himself is known to have settled

1. Derrett "The Hoysalas". P.182.
disputes over the ownership of real property apart from inheritance, and over the boundaries between districts - an important matter where the incidence of customs dues and district rates was involved.

Apart from the king, the pradhana played an important role. The council of Ministers was a powerful institution which acted as a real check on the king. They had vast administrative experience and had shown their bravery and loyalty on many occasions. The council with the king formed the highest court of justice in important cases. Most of the grants made by the king had to be approved by the council. There is reason to believe that the council accompanied the king on all his tours and expeditions. The council also settled the boundary disputes. There is an instance in 1182 A.D. as seeking a dispute between Gangavadi and Holambavadi.

The queens also had an important position equal to that of Governors. They had their own ministers and advisers, and the favourite queens exercised a powerful influence over the policy of their husbands. There are instances of queens ruling the province. For example, Bomma adevi, wife of Vishnuvardhana was ruling Asandinad 600 and Nirgunda 300.

1. E.C.VII. Cl 72, 73
2. E.C.IV. Cn 260; 199, Ng. 3; HS 137
3. E.C.VII Cl 72, 73
4. Ibid
5. E.C.V. Ak 18, 31, 124
Next coming to the position of Yuvaraja or heir apparent he was legally co-proprietor with his father in the kingdom. He often acted as a district Governor. He was sometimes entrusted with the powers of the king. For example Ereyanga ruled as a prince till his death.

This brief survey gives the idea of the Central Government, or the administrative system of the major ruling dynasties of the period. Now let us pass on to the administrative machinery under the minor dynasties of the period in Gangavadi.

Gangavadi after the Kaliyur battle was divided into two halves. One half came under the Cholas. These Cholas had their own names for the division of the kingdom. As was their policy the Cholas imposed their titles, names and system of Government in Gangavadi.

We can divide the administrative system of Gangavadi into two systems.

Cholas had a strong administrative system. They divided their kingdom into many parts for the sake of administration. The same system was introduced even in the conquered areas. They gave their own names to those areas and divisions.

They distributed the portion of Gangavadi in four
bigger units namely Nigari, sola mandalam, Kudigonda sola mandalam, Jayagonda sola mandalam and Muddi Vikkirema sola mandalam. These mandalas were often reshuffled so that it would not be possible to distinguish clearly the outlines. Mandala was the largest division.

These mandalas were divided into Valanadus. We come across many Valanadus in the epigraphs like Kajendral sola valanadu, Gangaikonda sola valanadu, Uyyakkondar Valanadu, Kahatriya-sikhamanai Valanadu, Sola Valanadu, Nettavinoda Valanadu, Arumulideva valanadu etc.

These valanadus were divided into nadus. There are many references to these nadus. Kuvalala nadu, Avaniva nadu, Kilalainadu, Kannainadu, Irumadi nadu, Sembur nadu, pudal nadu, Kalamarradu, Kaivaradu etc.

(Nadus comprised to Villages. We come across the Chaturvedimangalam like sola mahadevi Chaturvedi mangala, Tirayikkiyamadevi Chaturvedimangalam etc. These Chaturvedi mangalas are often Brahmins endowment or endowments made to the)

1. E.C.X El 1099, Mb 105 c.CB 21, Kl.75, Kl.186, Mb12b, Mb178, Mb.154, etc.
2. E.C.IX, CP.32, 33
3. Ibid mb 64, sd 91, Mt 36, Bp 7 etc.
4. E.C.IX, N1.7, N1.25, Dv 76, N1 78
5. E.C.X B 7, IX Cp 77, Cp 82 & 83, Kn 12
6. E.C.III, Jn.1, Jn.7
7. X Kl 106 a
8. X.Kl 112 f, IX Cp 82, 83
9. X mb 47
10. X Mb 42 b
11. X BP 16, Mb 42 b, 42 d
12. X ml 148 a, Kl43, 75, 143 etc.
13. X Mb 44 b, Mb 56, Nb 41, 73, 42 c, 42 b, 42 c & 47
14. IX Cp 129
15. IX DV 14
16. X Bp 7
17. Ibid
18. I Kl 105, Kl.86
19. X CB 21, sd 66, CB 25
Nudus comprised of Villages. We come across the Chaturvedi mangalam like Sola mahadevi Chaturvedimangalam. Tirayikkilamdevi Chaturvedimangalam etc. These Chaturvedi mangalas are often brahmin endowments or endowments made to the gods and temples.

Mandalas were under the administration of the Governors who were appointed by the King. Adiyama, Narasimha varsa, Damandal, Ilavanjirayya, Brahmadrayas etc., are some of the governors we meet with in inscriptions.

There were also a few minor dynasties like Kangalvas, Changalvas and Cholagangas ruling the provinces under the Cholas. The area outside the Chola control by several small chieftains, some of them coming from the Ganga stalk were ruling sometimes independently and sometimes under the big powers like the Chalukyas till the Hoyaale rose to power who became their champion.

The Government of these minor dynasties were the replica of the Central Government of the major dynasties. Viceroy's were appointed to govern the provinces. They were called Mahamandalesvaras. Mostly these governors were hereditary. These hereditary governors always harboured designs of independence. They had sinister ambitions of building a small principality for themselves. These Governors were generally styled as Dandanayaka or Dannayaka who combined both civil and military functions and in newly

1. n.s.c. IX Cp 129
2. n.s.c. IX Cp 127, Cp 139, Cp 42.
acquired territories acted as Sanadhipathi, Charupathi or General. These frontier Governors would make most of the opportunities of a political revolution or a dynastic change. All these had to be watched and kept strictly under the control. If the integrity of Hoysala power and continuance of the royal family at the head of the state were maintained. For instance the Chandalas helped Ballala II to acquire throne. But when he became the king they started their rebellion.

This type of dividing the empire into divisions was inherited by the Gangas, Rashtraikutas and the Chalukyas. The name Mahasamanthas according to Rice connotes control over feudatory chiefs. But in the case of the Rashtraikuta governors it was a mere title and bore no such significance. For the inscriptions of this period do not allude to feudatory chiefs under them. The Governor was assisted by officers like the nad negada and the nad gaunda in smaller divisions. Rashtra was the largest administrative unit and Visaya was its sub-division. Some system was there in Ganga and Chalukya kingdoms. Hoysalas followed them.

The Governor had numerous judicial and administrative functions to do. The Governor settled the minor disputes in his province. The grants were made only after his and in his presence only the grants were made.

1. E.C. VII sk 18, 11; VIII 2b 202
2. A.D. IV E3 30
3. E.C. VII 28 219
The provinces had their own capitals. For instance, Asamudar 500 had the capital at Asandi while Mandali 1000 had Mandalithirtha for its capital.

The next officer under the Governor was Heggade who was in charge of a district. He is called Heggade karnan, Rajadhya-

kahada karnana, Rajadhyaaksha Heggade etc. Like his superior officer, Governor, he was also a civil and military officer.

The heggades of frontier districts had to undertake raids into enemy’s territory, whenever the king or the Governor ordered them to do so. He was responsible for the collection of revenue and the administration of justice. He had to execute the orders of the king or the Governor with regard to the imposition or remission of taxes. Working with him were Srikarna da Heggade, Sunkaveggade, Khandveggade, Laddaveggade and others. The Sri-Karnaheggade was the superintendent of the accountants. Every treasury had a Srikarna heggade. His position was different from that of Bhandari. It was one of his duties to write down in his savadi the taxes due from each individual to the Government remissions had ordered. His superior officer besides the Governor of the province was the Srikarna Suvadhikari who was a member of the Panchnaradhana council.

Sunkaveggade was a collector of taxes and specially

1. E.C.V Ak 119, VII Sk 195
2. E.C.V Ac 79, 81
such taxes as magadere, andrae, balavane, ganeere, okkaluvere etc. It was also his duty to collect taxes and dues at fairs on are, sandle salt, black pepper, turmeric, horses, elephants, precious stones and sandle wood. They had clearly defined duties and functions to have worked along with the Nada Meggede in the first and equitable administration in Nadu and province.

These meggedes are also called Malprabhus. Regular bodies constituting the representative body of landholders met at intervals and went under the name of the 60, the 300 or the 1000 and so on, according to the size of the locality. These bodies appointed proctors, or under sheriffs, who acted on an equal footing with Pattana Swami and other dignities such as the monthly managers of agraharas, under the general superintendence of the nadprabhus, or sheriff, appointed and paid by the Government. His pay came from a fixed tax in great part, and it seems that he was intended to be a check on the dannayaka himself and a source of information for the inspectors, who were certainiy appointed by the Central Government to keep a control over the conduct of the dannayaka, especially in the field of revenue. This was by no means unnecessary, for the King's appointment to the districts seems occasionally to have been abused.

Every nadu had one or more nad prabhus called nad gamedjas. They were the semi-official headman of the nadu.

Like the assembly of the village the nad assembly often assembled to give grants to important temples to provide for their services or to reward such actions as building or repairing tanks. Nadaprabhu was helped by an accountant of the nadu called Nada Senabova. According to the custom the nada senabova was also provided with a Kodege by the inhabitants of their nadu. The nadu assembly helped by the Government officers successfully interfered in boundary disputes between villages. The nad in times of need provided the necessary body of troops. It helped in detection and punishment of crimes.

Town was next to District. As we find the Pattana-Swamy in inscriptions we can say that there were municipal bodies with a Pattana-Swamy or mayor as its head, for the administration, mixxi of towns. He was one of the wealthy merchants of the place and he looked after the fairs and other commercial activities and was one of the important members of the town assembly.

The village or the grama formed the backbone of the kingdom. Village autonomy was the foundation on which the whole structure of the Government stood. The village panchayat system must have been in vogue from early times.

1. E.C. on 53, 75, 76, Ht 209.
The village was developed into a self-contained unit with the Ayagars forming the village panchayat, looking after law and justice, the nada gouda or gaunda, that is, the headman looking after revenue collection, the senaboma or the clerk keeping accounts, the Talavara that is watchman doing police duty, and the eighteen castes playing their hereditary trade or handicraft in order to provide for all the agricultural and other needs of the village. This complete vision of village life as an entity by itself has been a common feature of Gangavadi. It should be necessary to note that Gangavadi enjoyed village autonomy from very early times and that many of its features might have developed independently in Karnataka in course of its cultural growth.

Though the composition of the assembly is not exactly known, there is possibility to believe that almost all the villages had one each. The assembly usually met in the village halls or the village temple. Village assemblies or councils in Tamil country consisted neither of the whole adult population, as was the case in Maharashtra and Gujarat, but of about 20 to 30 individuals elected by kind of selection by ballot .............. The constitution of the village councils in Karnataka differed considerably from the above type .............. The absence of election or selection in Karnataka was due not to the village bodies being less but more democratic than was the case in the Tamil country. Mahajanas, as the members of the village council were called in Karnataka, seemed to have included in that province, in
the vast majority of cases, the heads of all the families, residing in the villages.1

Under the territories of the Cholas the village assemblies were distinguished by the names Ur and Sabha. A third kind of local assembly was the Nagarāṃ confined to mercantile towns. The Ur was the simplest type of these assemblies. This means village or town; it is also employed in the sense of the assembly of the Ur; The Ur functioned in several places alongside of the Sabha acting by itself or jointly with the Sabha according as the business on hand required. On the other hand, the Ur was the only assemblies in other places.

The Sabha constitutes the type of which we get the most detailed accounts in the inscriptions. It is invariably an assembly associated with the Brahmīn village - the Chaturvedi-mangalām.

The village Assembly collected the taxes like Bettuvatta, Talarike, Balapanā and granted exemption chiefly to temples.1 The assembly acted as one of the witnesses to transactions.2

The assembly of some agraharas composed of more than one village made agreements and divided their agraharas into equal divisions. The assembly after dividing the agrahara into

2. E.C.VI Kh 12, M.A.R. 1924 No.10.
a number of equal parts regulated the amount of tax payable by each division to the Government. It also regulated the relation between the divisions with regard to making improvement living compensation to one another for the damage done and for using water, forests, roads, pastures and stones found on dry fields. Sometimes the assembly set aside the former divisions as being unequal and agreeing on the principle of equality had all the fields measured by agents before dividing them equally. There was to be no dispute about equality after the settlement. The inscriptions say that those who transgress the agreement will be communicated and will come under the wrath of the emperor and the governor.

The Gauda or masavaggana was the head of the village administration. He was provided by the village with a kadige and was subject to the village assembly. He was helped by the senabova of the village. All the services and charms of the village were conducted by these two persons. Among the other village servants the watchman is constantly mentioned and was an important person especially in disturbed areas. To help him during the night watch other villagers took turns and one inscription says that the Brahmanas were exempted.

1. VI 78 53 & 55
2. Ibid VI Om 170
3. Ibid 52
4. C. 52.
from this duty. The tatare of important towns like Arasikere which was also a treasury centre was appointed by the king. The negreses of these towns also were appointed by the king.

**Judicial Administration:**

The Governors or the Officers of the mand with the help of the assembly of the people settled other disputes about possession. It was an arbitration and the award of the arbitrators was always accepted. The Government Officer of the mand, the people of the place and often inspect the property, hear the evidence and give their decision. Such a decision was recorded by the Senabova of the village and the parties had to accept it. Otherwise there was the likelihood of being punished by the Government. Thus the courts were easily accessible and there was a regular gradation. There are inscriptive evidences prove that the officers never tried the cases themselves, but with the help of the assembly of the place.

The sale of immovable property had always to be made in the presence of witnesses with the consent of wife, sons, the neighbours, the relatives and the mahajans and was always

1. E.C. Cp 93
2. E.C.V Ak 79
to be accompanied by a gift of gold and water. Otherwise the transaction was invalid. Umbala lands also were sold, and sometimes even parts of gauthika were sold accompanying rights. Lands were often sold to the creditor himself in settlement of debts. The sellers always agreed to settle the disputes about the boundaries if any such dispute arose after the transactions. The sale of immovable property always accompanied with the eightfold rights of possession. But the gift of immovable property was not always accompanied by these rights. In some cases the land was given only for cultivation. In others the property had to be enjoyed by doing the duty prescribed it could not be mortgaged and if sold it had to be sold only to those who could carry on the services. In some cases mortgage and sale were absolutely forbidden. Gift of immovable property had to be made only with the consent of the wife, the son, relatives and svagama. There is an unusual instance of the donor saying that he would extract fine and expel from his wriitti who leaves the village, slanders another or commit adultery.

2. E.C.VII 8t 387
3. E.C.V AK 82, VI Kd 12
4. E.C.VI Kd 86
5. E.C.VI Kd 86, V AK 8
6. E.C.V AK 115, 120
7. Ibid AK 123
8. Ibid CK 2
9. E.C.V Bl 92
10. E.C.IV AK 110, V AK 8
boundary disputes between the individuals were settled by the village assembly or the nadu.

In the absence of reliable evidence, the judges decided by means of an ordeal. When the dispute was between two groups, they selected some individuals as their representatives to undergo the ordeal. There are two instances of ordeal recorded during this period. In one instance, no evidence was forthcoming to support either plaintiff or the defendant. Both supported their statements by oath. One said that he had paid the money to the other's grandmother and a witness; the other declared that he had not received the money from the witness and had not made over the land with the pouring of water. In the other instance regarding the boundary between two villages, the defendant produced a copper plate to support its contention, but the people of the other village declared an oath that there had been no such agreement about the boundary and that the boundary marks had been set up by force. In the above instances, the ordeal was performed by the defendants and the plaintiff accepting the decision of the ordeal. The inscription does not mention the exact kind of ordeal that was performed in the presence of a large body of people and in front of a temple. An epigraph states the writing or Sirshpatra.

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1. l.C.III No 79
2. l.C VII ab 387
3. Ibid III No 79.
in this connection. After the ordeal the judges examined the results and gave a decision, and a certificate of victory was issued to the successful party.¹

Regarding the law about partition and inheritance, there are some interesting statements with regard to the disposal of the property of those who died without male children. It is interesting to note that some of the inscriptions of 13th Century record the practice that prevailed in some parts of Gangavadi which completely ignores the rights of the widows, the daughters and parents. Those who die without male children, the successors will be the younger or the elder brother. On failure to the father-in-law and then to the uncles (Kiriya and Hiriyyaya) and their sons². Another epigraph says that on failure of the brothers the nearest relatives and the son by the female slave have the chief claim.

Even the rule that a learned Brahmana should take the property of a Brahmana and that the king should take the property of all others, on failure of heirs does not seem to have been observed throughout the state. By agreement among themselves the property on failure of heirs was used for some

１. It is called Jayapatra
２. E.C.III Tr 21
３. Ibid Op 73.
charitable purposes. The assembly at Belgam decided that the property of the banajigas who died without children should go to the temple of Gavaresvara. In other instance it was decided that on the failure of even the nearest relatives and the son by a female slave the cattle should be given to the temple and that a fair should be established free from all imports. It was engraved in the pancha of a temple that the property of those who died without issue in Ilavangol nadus and for charitable purposes.

Thus the local administration was carried on by means of primary assemblies in the villages and towns and representative assemblies in the larger divisions.

By the above details it is evident that the administration was sound and perfect and mostly it appears to have been a continuance of the early dynasties like the Ganges, Rashtrakutas, and Chalukyas except for a few minor changes. The state looked to the welfare and interest of the people, commerce and trade prospered.

This brief survey proves that these corporate activities in Gangavadi that kingship and democracy were

1. Z.C.VII SK 119
2. ibid IX Cp 73
3. X BF I 34.
not always contradictory terms and that the spirit of democracy was allowed to continue. Undiminished in the various administrations of the kingdom in this period.