3. Socio-Cultural Background:

'The Vijayanagara emperors upheld the Hindu Culture amidst the increasing influence of the Muslims. It was almost a common scene during the 14th century that the territorial conquest of the Muslims was slowly spreading throughout India. The downfall of the Hoysalas created a political vacuum in South India. It was the two Saṅgama brothers - Harihara and Bukka - the early rulers of Vijayanagara who rose to power and filled this vacuum successfully'.

From the 14th century, till the 17th century the history of Vijayanagara consists of mainly the wars that were fought with the Bahamani rulers. It is generally said that the Vijayanagara empire stood mainly for the protection and propagation of Hindu Dharma.
3.1. Aspects of Social and religious conditions of Nayaka period:

3.1.1 Cause of Hindu Dharma:

The Keladi rulers, like their overlords, stood for the cause of Hindu Dharma. The early ruler Sadasiva Nayaka fought with the Muslim rulers on behalf of the Vijayanagara kingdom. The several titles conferred on him by the Vijayanagara king reveal this fact. Sadasiva Nayaka got the title 'Kote Kolahala' when he captured the Kalyana and Kalburgi fortresses from the Bahamanis. He secured the title 'Barlda Saptangaharana Sadasivaraya Nayaka', when he defeated Barid Shah. Sadasiva Nayaka also defeated Nizam Shah of Ahmadnagar and secured the title 'Ekangavira'.

The numerous inscriptions of the Keladi rulers contain several titles apart from the above epithets. The titles borne by the Keladi rulers - 'Visuddha vaidikadwita siddhanta pratishtapaka, Shivaguru bhakti paraya, Shringeri Punarpratishtapaka' speak of their pious zeal and religious mindedness.

The Keladi kings ruled on the model of Hindu Dharmastra. It was their main duty to punish the
wicked and reward the good. *Duṣṭaśiśaṇa, Śīṣṭaparipalana* was their chief motto. 'Śaraṇaṁgata Śaṅkaraṇa' was another duty of these rulers. When the neighbouring kings sought their help or protection, they never hesitated to give a helping hand.

Cennammājī's decision to give asylum to Rājārām (Śivāji's son), of the Marāṭhas, is a brave and gallant deed in the pages of South Indian history. She decided to do so at the cost of Aurangazeb ruining her state. She helped Rājārām cross the Tunga river (at Gajanūru) in Shimoga district, and by guiding him through the region via, Borenedahalli, Āduvalli, Kalasa, Khāṇḍya and Vasudhare, helped him to reach Ginji safely. As a consequence, she had to face an attack of the Mughal army sent by Aurangazeb. It is a glorious chapter in the pages of history as to how Cennammājī resisted it and ultimately became victorious.  

When Bhairava Nāyaka of Kaḷasa, occupied Śrīṅgerī and ransacked the treasury of the Śrīṅgerī matha, Virabhadrā Nāyaka of Keḷāḍi defeated Bhairava in the battlefield and reinstated Śrīṅgerī Guru Saccidānanda Bhaṛati at Śrīṅgerī. When he heard that again Bhairava of Kaḷasa is troubling Śrīṅgerī, he marched with the army, gave military protection to Śrīṅgerī and maintained peace.
Thus, the Keladi kings ruled their territory, according to the ancient and medieval theories, where the kings had to perform many duties - being righteous, protecting their subjects, safeguarding the social order, administration of justice and protection of the religion of the people.

3.1.2 Succession to the throne:

In the matter of succession to the throne, the Keladi rulers followed the same model of the Vijayanagara emperors. The principle of primogeniture was followed - the eldest son used to succeed his father. But according to situations, this system used to change. The succession to the throne used to be decided in the council of ministers and nobles. Veṇkaṭappa Nāyaka I ascended the throne after the death of his elder brother, Rāmarāja Nāyaka. After Veṇkaṭappa Nāyaka (as his son Bhadrappa Nāyaka had already died), his grandson Vīrabhadra Nāyaka ascended the throne. After Vīrabhadra Nāyaka, his uncle Śivappa Nāyaka became the successor to the throne.

In the case of a king who died issueless, the council of ministers and nobles used to decide as to who would be the successor to the throne. Cennammāji,
in consultation with the ministers and nobles, decided the successor to the throne, by adoption. Instances of some one working as a regent - in the case of 'child' king - are also seen. Cennammaji and Virammaji worked as regents when the successors to the throne were still young.

Virammaji and her husband Basavappa Nayaka II adopted a boy and named him Cenna Basavappa Nayaka, as they had no issues. After Basavappa Nayaka's death, Cenna Basavappa Nayaka ruled for a short period and died prematurely. Virammaji again adopted one of her relative's child, (later known as Somasekhara Nayaka III) and she herself became a regent.

3.1.3 Education:

Like the Vijayanagara empire, in the Keladi kingdom also education was carried out mainly in the religious institutions. Temples worked as the centres of education. The accounts of the foreign travellers, inscriptions and the vast literature in Kannada, Telugu and Sanskrit of this period throw ample light on the educational system of this period.

In the Keladi kingdom religious institutions
like the temples and the mathas acted as centres of education. Some of the rulers themselves were scholars, many a time composers of great works, gave liberal encouragement to the spread of education.

Several agrahāras constructed by the Keḷadi rulers, also encouraged the learning of Sanskrit and Kannada. Sadasivapura, Viśvanāthapura, Virambāpura, Bhadrārajapura were some of the known agrahāras. The rulers encouraged learned scholars to settle in these agrahāras.

Pietro Della Valle, an Italian traveller, who visited Ikkēri in 1623 gave an elaborate account of the education system in a village school.

While the servants were packing the luggage, he wandered here and there and saw small children learning Mathematics in a nearby temple yard.\(^{16}\)

3.1.4 Literature:

As the Vijayanagara emperors patronised language and literature, the Keḷadi rulers also encouraged the scholars to compose literary works. Kings like Basavappa Nayaka, were great scholars and composed many literary works.
The literature under the Keladi rulers can be broadly classified into four types - Poetry, Science, History and Commentary.1

Most of the religious works were composed in poetic forms. We notice more Śaiva and Vīraśaiva literatures produced during this period.

Kannada works of this period were Karnataka Śivagīte, Śivapūjā Vidyāna of Nirvāṇayya, Śivapūjādarpana, Śivakalyāṇa, Daksādhvara Vijaya, Pārvati Parinaya by Liṅganna.

Sanskrit literature of this period comprised of Śivāśṭapadi of Tirumala Bhaṭṭa, Tattvakaustubha, Siddhānta Kaumudi of Bhaṭṭōji Dīkṣita, Vīraśaivācāra Kaustubha of Maṇunappa Pāṇḍita, Śivollāsa of Kaunḍa Bhaṭṭa, Vīraśaiva Dharmāśirōmaṇi of Śadākṣari, Vīraśaivaṇandacandra, Kāivalasāra, ŚaṭṭhalaKaumudi of Maṇitotṛadārya.

Śukasaptati by Sāraṇa Nāgappayya, Śūkti Sudhākara and Subhaśita Suradruma by Basavappa Nāyaka I belong to the ethics literature.

The works which have scientific themes were written by Cannavīra Mahēśvara (under Venkaṭappa Nāyaka II), who translated Dhātu Kalāpatha of Kasakrutsna
into Kannada. He also wrote works on grammar -
Śārasvatī Vyākaraṇa and Namaśke Camaka. Áśva Paṇḍita
composed treatise on horses, Mānapriya.

Regarding the historical works, Keladi Rājyrā-
bhūdayam by Gangādevi is an incomplete work. Keladi
Nripa Vijayam, a historical chronicle by Liṅgāna Kavi,
is a valuable literary source to rewrite the pages of
history of South India in general and the history of
Karnataka in particular.

Commentaries written during this period were
Vīramahēśvara Sudhāvāridhi Tīkā by Caramūrthi Basava-
linga, Puruṣa Sūkta Vyākhyaṇa of Venkaṭappa Nāyaka II and
Vīrāśāve Sudhānīdhi Tīkā by Saṅgana Basappa (son of
Nirvāṇayya) - all in Kannada.

Śivaṇi Vyākhya by Venkaṭappa Nāyaka I, Saṁga-
meśvara Vīlāsa Bhāyaṇam by Saṁgamaśvara Yatī, Tantrasāra
Vyākhya by Raṅganātha Dīkṣita, Kriyāsāra Vyākhya by
Nirvāṇayya, Saiva Sanjīvini (Pañcaśloki Vyākhya) by
Basavappa Nāyaka II, Siddhānta Śikhāmāni Vyākhya and
Tarka Candrike by Maritōṇḍadārya were the commentaries
in Sanskrit.17
3.1.5 Festivals:

The common people during this period were interested in celebrating the festivals. Like the Vijayanagara emperors, the Keladi rulers also followed the traditions of Navaratri or Vijayadasami festival. On this occasion, religious leaders and scholars were honoured by the king. The inscriptions of this period reveal the fact that the grants were made to several temples to perform special pūjas on special occasions like Śivarātrī, Kārtika and new moon days.

Pietro Della Valle witnessed a temple festival and describes the enthusiasm of the people, their customs, manners, dress, ornaments and musical instruments.  

Another festival which he witnessed was celebrated at Ikkeri and it was the Gowri festival. He describes the girls dressed in silk clothes with yellow, white and other coloured flowers woven in different styles adorning their hair. They had colourful sticks in their hands, which, they beat according to the orchestra and sang in chorus - 'Kōle, Kōle, Kōle'. They went to the huge temple of the town, played and danced for sometime. This festival was celebrated for three days.
Pietro Della Valle also describes the festivities on a new moon day. "This night an infinite number of torches and candles were lighted not only in all temples but also in all streets, houses and shops of Ikkeri, which made a kind of splendour over all the city. In each of the temples was its idol, which in some was a serpent, and they had adorned the outward porches not only with lights, but also with certain contrivances of paper on which were painted men or horse-back elephants, people fighting and other old figures behind which paper lights were placed in certain little porches like those which we make in our sepulchres; these with other gey ornaments of silk hung round about made a sufficiently pretty show. In the great temple not only the inside, in the middle whereof as a very high and slender cupola; but also all the outerwalls and all those round about the Piazza which lies before it, as also the houses in the adjacent sides, were all full of lights. The concourse of people of all sorts and degrees, but men and women, was very great and they appeared to go about visiting all the temples. When it was very late, the King came to the great temple accompanied only by his two grandsons, to wit Sedsiva Naieka, son of one of his daughters and Virabandra Naieka, a young boy, his son's
son, whom he designs for his successor. The King stayed in the temple about an hour, being entertained with music, dancing and other things. At length he came forth, and running in as much haste as he came returned home. After the King had come out of the temple, they carried the idols a while in procession about the Piazza but with small pomp and company. 19

Della Valle also observes a folk tradition, in which, on festival days, the devotees hang their bodies to a hook in a pillar and stayed there for some time. The blood flows, but they sing in praising the god. They hold a sword in their hand, which is swung in the air.

Pietro Della Valle, who is a keen observer, comments on a folk tradition of the priest and worship in a temple. Accompanied by Đülü and Vädya, the priest or the servant of the god dances in front of the deity. He swathes a cloth around the waist. He has a sword in his hand and dances before the deity.

3.1.6 Status of Women:

During the Vijayanagara period, the women enjoyed relatively a high status in society. 20
According to Paes, the women were not participating much in the social activities. Hundreds of women were employed in the palace. They were experts in military, justice, arithmetic, poetry, music, dance and in playing the instruments.\(^{21}\) The *Devadasi* system and prostitution were in vogue.\(^{22}\)

Like their overlords, the Keladi rulers also respected the women in society. Keladi Rajaguru's wife was honoured by the Keladi king.

The women belonging to the royal family were brave and fearless. Vīrammājī was able to commend a high position amidst distress and confusion during the tragic years of Keladi history. Cennammājī was able to unite the squabbling nobles and ministers and chose the successor to the throne. She also acted as a successful 'regent' who subdued many internal revolts in the kingdom and external aggressions. Her consent for giving asylum to Śivāji's son Rājārām and successful battle against Aurangazēb's forces show her gallant way of protecting the persons who came under her rescue. In her advice to her adopted son, Basavappa Nāyaka I, we can see her experience in administration, her wisdom and knowledge about the stately and worldly matters.\(^{23}\)
Virammājī's wisdom and bravery could be gleaned through at the time of the death of her first adopted son, Cennabasava Nāyaka. She consulted the council of ministers and nobles in the court and adopted another child. She renamed him, as Sōmeśēkhara Nāyaka III and became a regent. Her attempt to defend the fort of Bidanur against the seige of Haider Ali shows her bravery.

The poetess Gaṅgādēvi, the authoress of Keladi Rajyābhyudayam stands as a testimony to the women scholars of the period. It is clear that the women in the royal family and upper class society, were well versed in the art of writing.

Several queens among the Keladi rulers were pious, religious minded and generous. Hundreds of inscriptions reveal the land-grants endowed by them to the religious scholars and religious institutions. The queens were also great builders, who built temples, palaces and forts.

3.1.7 Sati System:

From the several inscriptions of this period, it is clear that Sati system was in practice. The
Mastikals of this period stand as the memorable monu-
ments to those women who sacrificed their lives with
their husbands or after hearing the authentic news of
their death.

Pietro Della Valle, an eye witness to this
practice, gives a detailed account of this system.
He records his sympathies to the woman, Gaicamma (about
thirty years old) who sacrificed her life by following
this system. She belonged to the Telugu tribe, her
husband worked as a drummer. He had three wives,
among whom, Gaicamma was ready to sacrifice her life.

"As we returned home at night we met a woman
in the city of Ikkeri, who, her husband being dead,
was resolved to burn herself as it is the custom with
many Indian Woman. She rode on horse back about the
city with a face uncovered, holding a looking glass in
one hand and a lemon in the other, I know not for what
purpose; and beholding herself in the glass, with a
lamentable tone sufficiently pitiful to hear went
along, I know not whither, speaking or singing certain
words which I understood not, but they told me they
were a kind of farewell to the world and herself.....
She was followed by many other women and men on foot,
who perhaps, were her relations; they carried a great
umbrella over her, as all persons of quality in India want to have, thereby to keep off the sun..............
Before her certain drums were sounded .... a calm and constance countenance without tears, evidencing more grief for her husband's death than her own, and desire to go with him to the other world, than regret for her own departure out of this; a custom indeed cruel and barbarous, but with all of great generosity and virtue in such women and therefore worthy of no small praise......". Della Valle says that he tried to change her mood and turn her mind towards her two children and the remaining years of life. But it was in vain. She had firmly decided to go for Sati. Della Valle, after returning, cursed this Indian custom.

3.1.8 Religious catholicity:

A large number of grants to the temples, mathas, bastis and mosques speak of the generosity of the Keladi rulers towards different religious groups. Liberal endowments to the religious institutions was a state policy.

Like the Vijayanagara rulers, these rulers were also broad-minded in the matters of religion. Even though their main aim was to protect and propagate
Hindū Dharma, they were not religious bigots. Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Vīraśaivism, Jainism, Islām and Christianity co-existed during this period. Personally the Keḷadi rulers were the followers of Vīraśaivism. But it did not come in their way of religious toleration and religious catholicity. Regarding the grants to the Christians, we do not have inscriptions records, but the Portuguese sources speak of the consent of the Keḷadi king Basavappa Nayaka I to build churches in the Keḷadi kingdom.

3.1.8.1 Christianity:

Under the Keḷadi rulers, the Christians lived peacefully. In the 17th century, there was a large scale migration of the Christians from Goa to settle down in coastal Karnatka. The rulers welcomed the Christian migrants from Goa and the Christians found the rulers of Tuluva more tolerent than the Portuguese officers of Goa who persecuted them under the pretext of inquisition.

One of the conditions for a treaty in 1678, between the Portuguese and the Keḷadi ruler was as follows: "The Keḷadi ruler should give permission to build churches at Mirjān, Candraṇa, Honnavara, Bhāṭ-
kaḷa and Kalyāṇapura. The head of the Church should have the right to punish the unruly Christians in the Keladi kingdom. In this matter, the Thañadārs and Maṇegārs (officers) of the Bidanūr kingdom should cooperate with them. 27 Dr. B.S. Shastri says that during the reign of Śivappa Nayaka, the Christians lived peacefully. 28

The Keladi rulers were keen on preventing foreign influences on the religious observances of the Hindus. One of the terms mentioned in a treaty between Basavappa Nayaka I and the Portuguese was that the Christian missionaries should not convert the subjects of Bidanur without their will, should not take away the orphans and should not kill the cows. 29

Among the several conditions for a treaty between the Portuguese and the Keladi ruler, Somaśeṅkhara Nayaka I, in 1671 wrote to the Portuguese Viceroy that they should not convert the people to Christianity. They should not convert the orphans and kill the cows or the Brahmins. 30

Thus, the Keladi kings were liberal towards Christianity and permitted the Christians to build churches in their kingdom. As their laws were different, they had their own Fathers in the churches...
who could safeguard the interests of the Christians.

3.1.8.2 (i) Śaivism : Śrūgēri and the Keladi kings :

The Keladi kings, like their suzerains, respected the Śrūgēri matha and the pontiff. They gave many land-grants to the matha and the pontiff.

Venkaṭappa Nayaka (1590-1629) granted to the Śrūgēri matha, 45 varahas of income from the property in 1621.31

Venkaṭappa Nayaka again granted one of the 64 Vṛttis of the Viśvanāthapura agrahara to Saccidānanda Bharati Svāmi of Śrūgēri for the maintenance of a Chatra in 1628.32

Vīrabhadra Nayaka (1629-1645) granted to Śrūgēri Guru the right to convert certain waste lands into plantain and coconut groves in 1629.33

He also confirmed the grant of lands formerly made by Venkaṭappa Nayaka to the Śrūgēri Guru in the Cauḍiśeṭṭikoppa village.34

Cennammaji (1672-1697) ordered Ahubalarāya to see that the villages belonged to Śrūgēri as sarvamānya, were not taxed.35
Whenever the Śrṅgerī matha was in financial crisis, the Keladi kings lent a helping hand.

During the time of Vīrammāji, (1755-1763) the last ruler of the Keḷadi dynasty, Sri Abhinava Saccidānanda Bhārati Svāmy of Śrṅgerī asked for financial help. Vīrammāji invited him to Bidanūr and treated him with reverence and offered precious jewelry and cleared the loans of the matha.36

Whenever there was an external danger from the enemies to the matha, the Keladi kings soon appeared on the scene and cleared the enemies and helped the pontiff to lead their normal life again. When Bhairavarasa Oḍeyar of Kārkaḷa troubled Śrṅgerī, Veṇkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1590-1629) defeated him and liberally granted lands to the matha and re-established it.37

When Bhairava of Kaḷasa conquered Śrṅgerī and troubled Svāmīji, Vīrabhadra Nāyaka (1629-1645) defeated him and established peace at Śrṅgerī.38

Once there arose a conflict in the matha about the real pontiff. The Keladi ruler settled the matter wisely.39 The Keladi rulers honoured other pontiffs also.

In 1622 Bhadrappa Nāyaka (1662-1664), granted
as a sarvamānya certain villages in the sīmes of Madhuvaṅkanādu, Sīturū, Hōkuḷī, Ālumāni, Muttūru and Gājanūru, altogether rated at 2004 varahās and 3-1/4 hanas to Kṛṣṇānanda Svāmi of Muḷuvāgil.\(^{40}\)

Somaśekhara Nayaka II (1714-1740) granted lands as an uttāra in 1730 to a Brahmin Caundanna for bearing the expenses of the worship of the gods Avimuktēśvara and Bindumādhava installed by the grantee's father Veṅkaṭayya in the temple built by himself in the Malavālamathagrama belonging to Harlipālu of Muttūru sīme and for the maintenance of the agrahāra of Candrasekharapura established near the temple.\(^{41}\)

In 1571 Rāmarāja Nayaka (1580-1590) granted Kṛṣṇadeva of Uḍupi, Paramahamsa Vādirajatirtha Śripāda and Raghunidhitirtha Śripāda of Baṅkāpura, the Keṃchana-hāḷḷi village in the Soraba sīme, as an agrahāra composing of 12 shares - 5 shares for Uḍupi Kṛṣṇadeva, 4 shares for Vādirajatīrtha Śripāda and 3 shares for Raghunidhitīrtha Śripāda of Baṅkāpura.\(^{42}\)

In 1683, Cennammajī (1672-1697) re-granted the Mallūru sīme to the Sṛṅgērī māṭha on the representation of Kūḍali Narasimha Bhāṭṭa and others.\(^{43}\)
3.1.8.2 (ii) Kollūru and the Keḷadi Kings:

The Keḷadi rulers considered Śrī Mūkāmbika of Kollūr as their family deity and liberally granted lands, jewels and ornaments to the temple.

The dvarapalaka images (life-size bronze) at Kollūr were donated by Vīrammāji, the queen of Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1590-1629) in 1623.44

The inscription on the steps leading to the navaraṅga of the Kollūru Mūkāmbika temple reveals that Cennammāji had visited Kollūr - "Keḷadi Cennammāji Ševe".45

Cennavīrammāji, queen of Basavappa Nāyaka II (1740-1755), granted a silver pot to the Mūkāmbika temple.46

Basavappa Nāyaka II granted a silver plate to the Mūkāmbika temple at Kollūr.47

The Keḷadi rulers visited Kollūr a number of times. Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1590-1629) visited Kollūr and extended the temple premises with stone structures and granted lands for the worship of the deity.48
Virabhadra Nayaka (1629-1645) visited Kolluru. Bhadrappa Nayaka also visited Kollur, while he went on a pilgrimage to Basrur, Koteesvara, Kundapura, Sringeri and other religious centres. He again visited Kollur, Basrur, Kundapura and Sringeri.

Somasekhara Nayaka II (1714-1740) went on a pilgrimage to Subrahmanya, Koteesvara, Basrur, Kollur and Gokarna. Again, he visited Kollur in Kilaka Saumvatsara (probably in 1728). He fed the Brahmins and made arrangements for the Rathotsava (car festival) of the deity at Kollur. Somasekhara Nayaka II again went on a pilgrimage during Pingala Saumvatsara (probably in 1737) to Sringeri, Subrahmanya, Mangalore, Kodeyala, Basrur, Saankaranarayaana, Kundapura, Baindur, Gokarna and Kollur.

Basavappa Nayaka II (1740-1755) went on a pilgrimage to Kollur, Koteesvara, Basrur, Saankaranarayaana, Kamalasile, Keladi and other places during Siddarthi (probably, in the year 1739), Raktaakshi (about 1744), Prabhava, Vibhava, Sukla, Pramoduta and Prajotpatti (probably between 1747-1751) Saumvatsaras.

3.1.8.3 Virasaivism:

The establishment of Virasaiva mathas all over
the kingdom was a new phenomenon. Virakta mathas, Vaśīkṛta mathas and Mahāmahattina mathas are noteworthy, which stood for the spread and teachings of Vīraśaiva philosophy. These mathas served as the centres of learning, religious discourse and had free choultries providing food for the poor. Inscriptions speak about the permission of bullocks (belonging to the mathas) to move freely (tax remitted by the king or the queen) along the high way, carrying goods needed for the mathas.

In 1592 Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka (1590-1629) granted for the service of the Mahattina matha of the Campakasaras at Ānandapura the Khayīra village in the Mosarūr sīme of the Āragavēṇṭhe. In 1593 he renewed an old grant issued to the matha of Malebige Rudrasunideva.

Virabhadrā Nāyaka (1629-1645) granted Bēcahālli village in Ādimale sīme, (rates specified), to the Mahattumathā built at Basrūr by Kappagalale Basavaṇṇa specifying that share from this should be given, as was done formerly, to the god Śaṅkaranārāyaṇa in 1641.

Somaśekhara Nāyaka I (1662-1677) granted as an uttāra in 1664, the Mādaravālī village in the Maha-
devapura sime, to the campakasarasai mahamahattina mtha of Anandapura for the Caturmasya Siva worship. In the same year he also returned custody of Gaudravali village to the old Mahattina matha of Bidirur.

In 1707 Basavappa Nayaka I (1697-1714) granted a sasana for the uttara land of Mallikarjunadv. Again, Basavappa Nayaka granted as an uttara, the village of Kurakalamani in the Kalavasipal of Bal Hoba in the Danivasa sime, to Mauromani Tiranamale Siddbasavarajadeva in 1709. In the same year he again granted as an uttara, in the Misane village in the Madhuvanka nanda sime, to the Mahattumatha built by Virammaji in Tirtharajapura.

3.1.8.4 Vaisnavism:

Vaisnavism also enjoyed the patronage from the Keladi rulers. In 1616, Veekappa Nayaka (1590-1629) granted a dharma sasana, to the matha of the Ramanuja sect at Ikkiri and to the god Venkaṭēsa, specifying as to how the sum was to be spent. The Tyagarti inscription belongs to the subordinate chief under Sadāsiva Nayaka (1540-1565). It informs that Cikkadāsaiyya, grandson of Tirukanaaiyya
of Tirikiseṭṭiyakoppa, made a grant of land (specified) to provide for a 'satra' for daily feeding three Brahmins. This grant was made at the time of the moon's eclipse, so that the blessings might favour Sadāśiva Nāyaka, who was protecting the Āraga sīme.

The Gaṅgolli inscription reveals that Bhadrap-pa Nāyaka (1662-1664) gave a land grant (specified) as umbali to Nārāyaṇa Malleya, son of Viṭhala Malleya. The stone inscription belongs to 1662 and is kept in the temple yard of 'Malleya Maṭha' at Gaṅgolli (Kun-dāpur Taluk, Daksīna Kannāda District).

A copper plate in possession of Partagāli maṭha of Goa informs that Cennammāji (1672-1697) granted lands (specified) to defray the expenses of the worship of Śrī Veṅkatēśvara, installed by Nārāyaṇa Malle, at Gaṅguvali of Mugu sīme, in the Śaka year 1596, Pramādi Saṃvatsara, Jyeṣṭha sudha 15. The year corresponds to 1674.

3.1.8.5 Jainism:

Jainism, eventhough declining, had its share of patronage from the Keladi rulers. Under their patronage, rich Jaina officials liberally granted
to foster Jainism.

On October 4, 1556, Madda Heggađe, the chief of Kapu, made a grant of lands for offerings to Dharmanātha, the 15th Tīrthaṅkara.67

In 1610, at Mēlige, five sons of Bommaṇa, son of Bommaṇa Śrēṣṭhi, in consensus, built of stone, the basti originally erected by their grand father and set up through Padmaśrēṣṭhi, according to the rules of the śāsanas, the Tīrtheśvara named Anantha. They made grants for the worship, offerings and perpetual lamp of Anantha, the Tīrtheśvara.68

3.1.8.6 Islam:

Some of the inscriptions of the Keladi period reveal the fact that the Keladi rulers were patrons of Islam also.

In 1627 Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1590-1629) granted69 a plot of land in the Halasinahalī village of Madhuvaṅkanāḍ as an inām to the mosque erected in Bhuvanagiri dūrga.

In 1631, Virabhadra Nāyaka (1629-1645) made a grant of land (specified) in the Eḍehalī village of
Anandapura sime to the mosque built at the Tavaregere pond of Mahagopa (Malavagoppa ?) in the Anandapura sime.70

3.1.9 Great Builders of religious institutions :

3.1.9.1 Epigraphical sources :

Apart from the land grants, the Keladi rulers built a number of temples, mosques, mathas and agrahāres.

Mādappayya, minister of Sadāsivarāya Nāyaka (1540-1566) built an agrahāra on the bank of Kuśāvati river - 'Sadāsivapura', to commemorate his ruler.71

In 1619, Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka I (1590-1629) rebuilt the temple of Rāmeśvara at Varādamūla.72 In 1621, he re-established Śrīnerī matha and liberally granted lands to it.73 Veṅkaṭappa Nāyaka built a mosque at Bhuvanagiri durga in 1627.74

Sōmaśēkhara Nāyaka I (1662-1671 ?) built Lingēśvara temple in Memory of Lingammāji, his mother in 1667.75 A dhvajastambha was erected in front of Vīrabhadra temple at Keḷadi, by the queen Cennammāji (1672-1697) in 1681.76 In 1673, she granted 'ettina-
mānyada ̀sāsana' for the temple of Mallikārjuna, built by Harihara Kramita (probably a minister under the Kelādi ruler). Pradhāni (Chief Minister) Gurubasa-vappadevaru, under Cennammaji's rule, made an utsava-mūrti image of bronze for the Kigga Śrīngēśvarasvāmi temple in 1678.

In 1640, Vīrabhadra Nāyaka (1629-1645) granted lands for the worship of the deities Lākṣīnārasimha and Saccidānanda, which were built by Rāmakriśṇayya (son of Puruṣottamayya) of Tīrtharājapura. A copper plate proclaiming the grant of Vīrabhadra Nāyaka (1629-1645) reveals that in 1641 Paramēśvara Paṇḍita, built Acyutēśvara temple, in the name of his father Acyuta Paṇḍita, at Kōvaḍegrāma, Vīrabhadra Nāyaka liberally granted for the worship of the deity. Tirumalaiyya of Sarajā Veṅkappayya (probably an official under the Kelādi kings) built a temple in the name of Sōmaśēkhara Nāyaka II (1714-1740). The king liberally granted lands for the worship of this deity in 1721.

3.1.9.2 Literary Sources:

The Kelādi Nripa Vijayam speaks of a number of temples, mathas and agrahāras built by the Kelādi
kings and their officials.

Caṇḍappa (1500-1540) the first ruler of the dynasty, built the Rāmeśvara temple. Sadasiva Nayaka (1540-1566) built the nandimantapa of the Rāmeśvara temple. Sadasiva Nayaka also built Pārvati shrine to the left side of the Rāmeśvara temple. He also built Keladi mahattina matha at Keladi.

Doḍḍa Saṅkanna Nayaka (1566-1570) erected Jāṅgama ghat at Kāśi, a matha and other five mathas. He renovated many temples there through a sōnbōva, Aiyyappa. Doḍḍa Saṅkanna Nayaka built Vīrabhadra temple at Keladi to the right side of Rāmeśvara temple. He also constructed the Ikkeri Aghorēśvara temple.

Veṅkatappa Nayaka I (1590-1629) constructed Mahāgaṇapati temple at Sāgara and Viśvēśvara temple on the banks of Varadā river and Visvanāthapura agrahāra. He also constructed the rāngamantaṇapā of Rāmeśvara temple at Keladi, an agrahāra named Vīrāmābāpura on the banks of Tuṅgā river. Veṅkaṭappa Nayaka extended Mukāṃbikā temple of Kollūr.

Bhadrappa Nayaka (1622-1664), the son and successor of Śivappa Nayaka constructed several agrahāras and named them as Bhadrarājapura, Śivarajapura and
Venkaṭāpura.

Cennammāji (1672-1697) the wife and successor of Sōmaśekhara Nayaka I completed the construction of the sikhāra of Vīrabhadra temple, its raṅgamaṇṭapa and erected a dhvajastambha in front of the bhōgamaṇṭapa.

Basavappa Nayaka I (1697-1714), the adopted son and successor of Cennammāji completed the stone work of Vīrabhadra temple at Keḷadi.

Sōmaśekhara Nayaka II (1715-1740) built an agrahāra to the west of Bidanūru and named it as Candraśekharapura. He also renovated the raṅgamaṇṭapa and other parts of Nīlakanṭēśvara Svāmy temple at Bidanūru and covered the sikhāra of the temple with the gold plates.

The Keḷadi rulers were religious-minded and performed many religious sacrifices. Kings like Venkaṭappa Nayaka and Šivappa Nayaka made sacrifices like vajapeya, Hiranyagarbha dāna, Tulapurusadāna and Sahasra gōdana. The rulers observed the eclipse of the moon, Sōmavāra Vyṛta, full moon days and new moon days. They celebrated āśādha and Kārtika (months) with flower worship and dipōtsava to their family deities.
The innumerable land grants were usually given with all the 'Aṣṭabhōgatējasvāmya' (eight rights of full possession): **Aksi** = present profit, **Agami** = future profit, **nidhi** = hidden treasure, **nikṣepa** = underground stones, **jala** = springs, **pāṣana** = minerals, **siddha** = actualities and **sadhya** = possibilities.

3.1.10 Construction of the Agrahāras:

The epigraphical records of the period speak of the agrahāras to the meritorious persons in the names of the kings or their ancestors.

Madappayya, minister of Sadāśiva Nayaka, founded the Sadāśivapura agrahāra, in the name of Sadāśiva Nayaka, to the east of Virūpasamudra tank of Āraga, on the bank of Kuśāvati, granting it to the Brahmins. In course of time, there was chaos in this agrahāra. In 1577, Rāmarāja Nayaka granted lands to the agrahāra, assigning by a permanent sāsana to the share holder Brahmins and temples, renewing the distribution of the Vṛttis.

In 1577, he also granted a sarvamānya agrahāra of Heddese for the god Nīlakaṇṭha of Heddese.
In 1641, Vīrabhadra Nāyaka granted to Rāmakṛṣṇa, the five hamlets of Nandīgēri, Koḷatāḍi, Sakharēbayal, Taṭṭikērē and Hebbayal in the Āraga mandala of the Gājanūr sīme for an agrahāra named Triyambakapura.96

Narasimha Bhārati Svāmi established the Sōmaśēkharapura agrahāra and Sōmaśēkha Nāyaka I granted lands to it in 1668.97 Karanīka Veṅkappayya of the treasury found an agrahāra in 1687.98

3.1.11 Patrons of Music, Dance, Painting and Theatre:

The Vījayanagara kings patronised the fine arts like music, dance and painting. In fact Karnataka music was popularised during the Vījayanagara period. Experts in music composed works on music. Kṛṣṇadēvavṛīya himself was well-versed in music. Aliya Rāmarāya also patronised the musicians. It is a known fact that Purandarādāsa and Kanakadāsa of this period composed hundreds of devotional songs.

The Keḷadi rulers, like the Vījayanagara emperors, patronised fine arts in a similar way.

During the reign of the Keḷadi rulers, we do not get any significant literary work on music so far
as we know at present. But Pietro Della Valle, who visited in 1623, says that folk songs used to be sung during the festivals. He describes the songs and folk dances of young girls performing on streets. His description of the dance in a temple festival comments on the practice of dancers of those days. The dancers used to dance in the temples on special religious occasions.

Only one inscription of this period speaks about a musician. It speaks of a land grant by Virabhadra Nayaka in 1641 to a musician by name Surappa.

The art and architecture of this period helps us to know to some extent to understand the nature of musicians. The relief sculptures on the outer walls of the temples and pillars reflect some of the persons who are singing, holding 'tambūra' (instrument used for tune) in their hands, and persons playing on 'mṛdaṅga'.

The temples were the centres of the cultural activities. Nr̥tyamanṭapas were constructed especially for the dancers. The relief sculptures on the walls of the temples reveal the different poses of dancing.
Apart from the classical dance, there were folk dances which were popular among the subjects. Pietro Della Valle's account of the festival reveals the folk dance 'Kōlāṭam' which is still popular in Karnataka.

Peter Mundy, who had visited the court of Vīrabhadra Nāyaka, observes that "a good space was fixed in the court for the dancers. . . .".101

During the period of Sōmaśekhara Nāyaka I, there were many reputed dancers. A certain 'Pūttitāyi Jambukhandi C'enni' for instance was a renowned dancer of the period.102

Peter Mundy also observes that "among his (king's) retinue there were also the dancing and singing women of all ages. They also wore rich and massy girdles, jewels, etc.".103

On the outer walls of the temples like Agho-reśvara temple at Ikkeri, Kalmaṭha at Bidanūr, Mūkāmbika temple at Kollūr, dancing poses of relief sculptures represent some of the dancers of the period.

Regarding painting, we do not have a good number of paintings of the period yet. Painting was used for decorating the walls of the religious and
secular buildings. Pietro Della Valle's account about the Ikkeri palace speaks of the paintings and expertise of the painters of the period.

The S.T.R. speaks of varieties of colours, how to paint them, how to mix the colours and how to prepare brush and canavass. \textsuperscript{104} But how far the Keladi painters used these colours and knew this method of painting remains still a question, as we do not possess the significant wall paintings of the period.

The K.N.V. speaks of a nātyāsālā or theatre, \textsuperscript{105} constructed by Veṅkaṭappa Nayaka I, which was used for dance or dramas. The S.T.R. also speaks of a theatre and its characteristics, decorations and paintings. \textsuperscript{106}

3.1.12 Patrons of Art and Architecture:

(i) Religious Architecture:

(a) Temples:

The Vijayanagara emperors built a number of temples, palaces and forts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. \textsuperscript{107} They followed the existing Vesara as well as the Drāvida styles. There was a further mixture of Vesara style and the Drāvida vimāna
style of architecture in their buildings. The Vijayanagar rulers added a few structures like dvaragopurams, a super structure over the gateway of the temple. Garbhagrha and śukanāsa were conspicuous by Dravidian in style; the navaraṅga maṇṭapa became a pillared hall. But, the Vijayanagar rulers did not use the star-shaped raised platform for their temples. Instead, the temples were usually rectangular or square without raised platform around the temple for the pradaksīṇā-patha. In a few temples we observe the Dravidian style of vimānas over the garbhagrha. But the rulers did not retain this huge structure in the later constructions. Their general medium for building work was hard granite stone instead of soapstone of the Hoysalas. Single śikhara or groups of śikharas were common features on the roof of the temples.

A number of small slender pillars were carved in a single pillar as in the Viṭṭhala temple at Hampi, which exhibits the skilful workmanship of the Sthapatis of the period. Rāmēśvara temple, Pārvati temple, Virabhadra temple at Keḻadi, Aghoreshvara temple and Pārvati temple at Ikkeri, Mūkāmbika temple at Kollūr, Āṉjanēya temple, Viśvēśvara temple and many such temples at Kavaleśuruga, Paṇcamukhi Āṉjanēya temple and Veṅkaṭaramaṇa temple at Nagara are some of the temples
constructed during the Keladi period, on the model of the Vijayanagara temples. But there are local variations in these temples.

(b) **Mathas** :

The Vīraśaiva *matha* which was built during the Keladi rulers is still found at Keladi and is called *Keladi Rajaguru Matha*. It is having a quadrangular open yard with pillared balconies around and a storey above it. The remains at Ānandapura *matha* (near Campakasaras) also has a central quadrangular open yard, surrounded by building on all the four sides. It has stone slabs forming the floor and steps on all the four sides to enter the buildings. The Gurupura *matha* near Mangalore which is still in good condition is also quadrangular in plan, but is quite large compared to other *mathas* and is renovated. The *mahāmahattina matha* at Kaulēdurga is also having a quadrangular open space at the centre, the other structures attached to one of the sides.

(ii) Civil Architecture :

(a) Royal buildings :

The civil architecture of the
period reflect a new aspect because of the emergence of Indo-Saracenic styles of architecture. A mixture of existing Indian and Muslim style of architecture can be seen in the palatial buildings of the period. Contact with the Bahamani kingdom influenced the style of civil architecture. Tribate structures gave way to the archeate structures. Rectangular or square plan of buildings gave way to octagonal type. Arches came to be carved with the support of the pillars. Queen's bath, watch-tower and Kamala Mahal are the examples for this new style.

The Keladi rulers also constructed a number of temples, palaces, and mathas in their model. Their temples had the influence of Dravidian and Vesara style. Temples of Ikkeri and Keladi are modelled on these styles. A new factor added here was the Indo-Saracenic style in the temples, like arches in the doors and windows; minarets and trefoil discs edging the roof.

Among the palaces built by the Keladi rulers, mention may be made of Śivappa Nayaka's palace at Shimoga. Even though it might have been a rest house, the archeate structures of the wooden arches of the balcony are noteworthy.
Pietro Della Valle's account of the Ikkeri palace gives the plan of the palace of those days:

"In this manner we rode to the palace, which stands in a fort or citadel of good largeness, encompassed with a great ditch and ill-built bastions. At the entrance we found two very long, narrow bulwarks. Without the citadel are many houses, and I believe there are shops also in several streets, for we passed through two gates, at both of which there stood guards, and all the distance between them was an inhabited streets. We went through these two gates on horseback; which I believe was a privilege, for few did so, besides ourselves, namely, such lonely as entered where the king was; the rest either remaining on horseback at the first gate or alighting at the entrance of the second. A third gate also we entered, but on foot, and came into a kind of court, about which were sitting in porches many prime courtiers, and other persons of quality. Then we came to the fourth gate, guarded with soldiers, into which only, we Franchi or Christians and some few others of the country, were suffered to enter and we presently found the king".108
(iii) Military architecture:

Among the existing forts of the Keladi rulers, Bidanur fort (Nagara fort) is in good condition. A part of another old fort is seen near the bank of the Tunga river, to the side of Sivappa Nayaka's palace at Shimoga. Ikkerei fort has only the moats. Kasaragod and Kumbale forts are in ruins. Cittari fort is extinct. Bekal fort is in good condition which might have been renovated by Tipu Sultan. Manoharga, Badaraga and Basavarajadurga are the forts amidst the Arabian sea (Jaladurgas) which are in ruins. Bhuvanagiri durga (Kauledurga) is also in ruins.

Pietro Della Valle's account of the Ikkerei fort reveals that it has three walls of enclosure, apart from several moats. It was circular in shape. The Manoharga, Badaraga and Basavarajadurga - the Jaladurgas, helped the Keladi rulers in maintaining commercial contacts with the Portuguese, the Dutch and English. The forts of Bidanur (Nagara) and Bhuvanagiri durga (Kauledurga) were giridurgas, built amidst the western ghats. The fort of Kauledurga can also be called Vanadurga as it is amidst the forest and was not easily accessible to the enemies. The Bidanur fort deserves
special mention. It had seven fort walls and seven
darwazas, traces of which could be identified even
today. The forts in the coastal areas had garrisons
to defend themselves against the native enemies and
European powers.

Apart from the above forts, the K.N.V., speaks
of several forts which were constructed by the Keladi
rulers for safeguarding the interests of people and
the territory - i.e., Cennagiri fort (now extinct except
the front bastions), Keladi fort, Beṇnegere fort at
Kundapur, Gaṅgolli fort, Mangalore fort, Śivarājendra-
giri fort, Kalyanapur fort, Mulki, Kumta, Kārwar,
fort of Anandapura, Baggavādi, Hosangadi, Bārkūr,
Mudabidare, Ualla, Kumble, Kollūr, etc. Almost all
these forts are extinct, except some remains of a wall
or a moat or a bastion.

3.2 Impact of Islamic and Portuguese Culture on
the life and conditions of the people :

Generally speaking, the influence of the Islam
and Portuguese were lesser on the life and conditions
of the people. The kings were benevolent rulers.
So the people were generous and religiously tolerant.
'Live and let live' was their policy. In the Keladi
kingdom, Muslim soldiers and officers, horse traders were having separate colonies, where they lived peacefully. The S.T.R., or K.N.Y., or the epigraphical records do not speak of any religious ill will between the communities during this period. Among the Keladi rulers, CennamaJi showed more concession to the Arab traders.

In the coastal area, the influence of the Portuguese was considerable. They lived in their own colonies. But the conversion to the Christianity went on slowly. We have documents about the treatise between Keladi kings and the Portuguese officials at Goa, about the non-intervention of the Keladi kings in their religious matters and the kings ordering them not to convert any Hindu to the Christianity against his will, they should not convert the orphans, and should not kill the cows or the Brahmins.  

The Portuguese constructed churches at several places in the Keladi kingdom. The treaty between Basavappa Nayaka and the Portuguese reveals this fact.

The Keladi court had envoys who knew many languages. Viṭṭala Śencī could speak Portuguese very well, who worked as an envoy during the period of
Venkatappa Nayaka I and his successor (and grandson) Vîrabhadra Nâyaka. Dèvarasa Šenoi (during the period of Vîrabhadra Nâyaka), Râma Pai (during the period of Śivappa Nâyaka), Viṭṭala Malya (during the reign of Śivappa Nâyaka), Mallappa Malya (during the reign of Śivappa Nâyaka), Narâyaṇa Malya (during the reign of Sômaśêkhara Nâyaka I), Kṛṣṇa Nâyaka (during the period of Cennammâji and Basavappa Nâyaka I), Nirvânapya (also the minister of Sômaśêkhara Nâyaka II) were the envoys who were well-versed in Portuguese and attended the meetings with the Portuguese officials on behalf of the king.

Many Portuguese officials and envoys settled in the coastal area like Gangoṭli, Kundâpur, Basrûr, Honnavar and Mangalore. A wooden window bearing the royal insignia of the Portuguese is seen even today in a priest's house at Basrûr. This window might be the remains taken from the ruins of the Portuguese colonies.

The Hindus followed the traditional customs and manners. Caste system was rigid. According to Pietro Della Valle, separate meals were provided in the palace to the foreign envoys. When they settled in the capital city for some days, grains, milk, vegetables and other items were supplied to them. Most of the people were vegetarians. Cow dung was used as a varnish on the floor.
3.3 Cultural life of the period - an estimate:

The cultural life of the people continued without much variance. *Varnāśrama* system was followed among the Hindus. Customs and manners of each group were separate. Festivals and religious ceremonies were celebrated with enthusiasm. System of marriage was different in each group and polygamy was common among the people.

The Muslims and Christians had their own priests to conduct their daily prayer and to celebrate religious festivals. So, the cultural stream flowed on without much change.

The socio-cultural life of the period was generally conducive to the development of art and architecture in all its implications. Despite political disturbance, there appear to be continuous art activities on the part of the rulers of Keladi dynasty. The influence of different sects and sections of society on socio-cultural life is also revealing.
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Thanks to Dr. K.G. Vasantha Madhava for drawing my attention to this inscription.


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