CHAPTER II

GEO-POLITICAL CONTEXT
CHAPTER II

GEO-POLITICAL CONTEXT

The importance of comprehending the impact of the geographical factors on historical formations has been very aptly highlighted by Fernand Braudel when he states that "geographical space as a source of explanation affects all historical realities, all spacially defined phenomena; states, societies, cultures, economies". Thus, for a comprehension of the socio-cultural evolution of human settlements it becomes imperative for us to discern, in the main, the impact of the physical surroundings on them. This is mainly because it is the interaction of human society with its natural surroundings, i.e., the way it uses the natural resources within its reach et. al., that motivate at large, the development of the economic and socio-cultural set up of any given human settlement at a particular period of time. The physical setting which surrounds and shapes the settlement patterns of humanity cannot, however, be viewed in terms of an uniform entity. In this context the geographers have identified for us the existence of diverse physiographical entities within a single geographical region. A 'region' in terms of geography may be defined as an area constituting broadly uniform features in its natural setting such as relief, climate, natural vegetation, geo-morphological formations, soils and so on. This apparent uniformity of physiography at the regional level distinguishes
each region from its neighbouring region. However, when viewed in closer proximity we find that these regions are replete with local diversities based chiefly on the local relief, climate and other such local topographical features that cannot be avoided as insignificant entities.

One finds that it is these local topographical entities having a distinct identity of their own, termed as 'sub-regions' or, regions of the second or third order, that go to define the specific nature of human settlements. This makes it crucial for us to comprehend the geography of the region/sub regions under study so as to arrive at sound conclusions over the specific structural formations and thus defy any universalization of this variable to analyse history. Our comprehension of the specificities of historical formations would then ultimately contribute to our perception of the totality of the historical phenomena at any given point of time.

One of the macro-regions of India, namely, the Deccan has come into focus often in the historical literature pertaining to early South India and the Maharashtra region. Our comprehensions of the historical geography of south western Deccan which is the main focus of our study, make it crucial for us to first of all get an understanding of what constitutes the Deccan peninsula as a whole and how it has been perceived by various scholars writing on it. This is mainly because the former was invariably treated as a part of the entire Deccan plateau. The expression 'Deccan' is a corruption of the Sanskrit word *dakshina* or
dakshinapatha which means the 'right hand' or the South. On this basis it has been considered that in a broad sense, the term 'Deccan' includes the whole of India between the southern sea and the Vindhyas. Perceptions on the physical boundaries of 'dakshinapatha' in the texts of early India have varied considerably.

In this context, H.C. Ray Chaudhari has quoted works such as the Bharata's Natya Sastra, the Bhuvanakosha of the Purānas, the Matsya Purana and the Pali Jatakas, all of which include the Tamil country as the southern limit of what is referred to as dakshinapatha. On the other hand, we do not always have as its southern limit the Tamil country. Some of the early works like the Periplus equate, what is termed as Deccan today, to the region beyond Broach on the Narmada which by implication seems to be excluding the Tamil country from its definition.

In drawing upon the works of the scholars situated in the context of modern India, we find a similar variance of opinion in their comprehension of what constitutes the 'Deccan' region. It has been observed through our survey of the secondary literature on the Deccan region that scholars are not agreed upon a single definition of the Deccan. Their perceptions of the Deccan as a historical entity have been largely shaped on the one hand, by their linguistic consideration and on the other hand, by the choice of their area and topic of interest. In this context we have been able to divide these works into two main types: (1) those that have dealt with the Deccan region perse and (2) those that have tackled the history of the Deccan as a part of their main concerns with the history of the southern

For R.G.Bhandarkar, who was mainly interested in the history of the Maratha region, the word 'Dekkan' in its specific sense denoted the region watered by the upper Godavari and that which lay between this river and the river Krishna. The word 'Deccan' is equated in its essential sense with the region of Maharashtra which forms the main focus of the author's attention. In her recent study on historical geography Sumati Mulay also makes this kind of anachronistic reference to the Deccan region. In her own words, "Dakshināpatha, or modern Deccan, in its widest meaning, was used for the whole of the Peninsula and in the narrower sense denoted the region now called Maharastra". Both these writers were interested in writing the history of the Marathi speaking regions and therefore, they conformed the definition of the Deccan region to suit their linguistic interests. On the other hand, we find that A.S.Altekar has equated all the regions which were under the main control of the Rashtrakuta rulers to be the Deccan region. This definition has given primacy to the political configuration of an ancient dynasty at a particular point in time to define the region. He has thus included in his study, southern Gujarat, entire Maharashtra, parts of Karnataka and Andhra in his idea of the Deccan region. Similarly, we find that G.Yazdani has approximated the Deccan with the region north of the Tungabhadra, stretching north-wards as far as
the borders of the Vidarbha country or the Berar. This choice has been motivated by the fact that the primary concern of the editor of this volume on the history of Deccan was to write a comprehensive history of the erstwhile Hyderabad state. Thus he had taken more recent political boundaries as his criteria for defining the Deccan. In other words, both these scholars have perceived the Deccan region in terms of the political boundaries which can be true of one period but not of all periods.

J.Dubreuil uses the word ‘Deccan’ to designate the entire area south of the Narmada which, according to him, is how it has been described in the earliest works on India. His aim in this work had been to begin the ancient history of the Deccan with the time it had come under the influence of the Asokan rule as indicated by the location of his inscriptions. Therefore, the author, while considering the entire southern India as constituting the Deccan, avoids the regions ruled by the Cheras, Cholas and the Pandyas which, according to the him, "have always remained a little isolated". We may find a more rational approach towards the definition of the Deccan region in the work of D.R.Das whose main interest of study was the economic aspects of it. The Deccan, according to the author included the southern part of Gujarat, the whole of Maharashtra, part of Andhra Pradesh, the northern part of Karnataka along with some adjoining tracts of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, to the south of the river Mahanadi. This definition is most expansive keeping in mind that his history was on economic aspects rather than on narrower political boundaries of dynasties. K.A.Nilakantha Sastri, on the other hand, equates
the Deccan/Dakshina with all South India, i.e., the land lying south of the Vindhyas. The terms South India and the Deccan are considered interchangeable by the author.\textsuperscript{15} A very similar approach can be seen in a recent work on South India. The author Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya has defined the land lying to the south of the Vindhyas as the Peninsular India which according to him was "known as Dakshināpatha to the ancients".\textsuperscript{16} In a text book definition of South India, the word 'Deccan' is considered to be an anglicised form of the Sanskrit - \textit{dakshināpatha} which means South India. Authors of this work were concerned mainly with writing the history of the South India as a whole and in the process, they did not differentiate between the Deccan and the other parts of South India. By implication this would mean that the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat have been excluded by these authors from their definition of the Deccan region and thus they differ markedly from the scholars discussed earlier.

As can be seen from the above survey we would like to reiterate here that the changing perceptions of various scholars as to what constitutes the Deccan, have been largely a result of linguistic biases (Bhandarkar, Sumati Mulay), political or dynastic framework of study (Yazdani, Altekar) and regional interests (K.A.N. Sastri, Sudhakar Chattopadhyaya and P.N.Chopra and others). In current historical studies these interests have led the scholars to take into consideration the present day linguistic state boundaries for historical research. As such we find that the south western part of the Deccan region, which forms the main focus of our study, has been studied as a part of the history of the Karnataka state on the one
hand, and on the other, it has also been dealt with as a part of the history of the Andhra Pradesh state. It has further been part of studies which are dynastic histories. These invariably include this region as it was always being contested for political supremacy.

In terms of geography, the Deccan as a whole with a specific focus on the plateau area, alternately termed as the peninsular interior or the vast peninsular upland, forms structurally the oldest land mass in the country. The peninsular consists of a great tabular block with a general slope to the east, bordering on the Indo-Gangetic plain in the north, to the tip of South India in the south, the western ghats in the west and the eastern ghats in the east. Its stretches constitute such broad physical features as the mountains, uplands, plateau, peneplains, river basins, troughs etc. Climatically, today the entire area, except for the eastern hills, the western ghats and the rain shadow of the latter, could be described as tropical savannah with monsoon modifications, but such a description again conceals considerable variations. Thus, having a wide latitudinal extent and consequently a variety of local climates giving rise to great variations in the soil and vegetation patterns, the Deccan has a higher degree of diversity than the northern plains.

We have observed in our historiographical survey that as a result of the diverse physiographical structures of the Deccan plateau, all its subregions have not been subject to equal attention by historians working on its early history. The
rule of the Satavahanas in the Deccan during the early centuries A.D. was followed later by the rule of the Ikshvakus, Cutus and their successors such as the Vakatakas. Studies on this period have been dealt with considerably by various scholars writing on the early history of the Deccan. From the beginning of the Satavahana period one sees an overall increase in the number of settlements in the fertile tracts of the upper Godavari and the upper Krishna valleys of the Deccan plateau. While the western and eastern peninsula were strewn with thousands of rock-cut caityas, lenas, viharas, stupas and other religious establishments, the mid Deccan remained nearly barren during the early centuries A.D. The lower Deccan emerged into focus particularly during the 6th - 7th centuries A.D. under the rule of the Chalukyas of Bādami who also established their hold on the eastern Deccan region by establishing their rule in the Vengi region. While the south western Deccan has figured intermittently in the political and art histories of the early medieval period beginning from the 6th century A.D., it is chiefly the eastern part of the plateau that seems to have gained greater prominence in terms of historical scholarship for defining this period. Such a bias could be related to the prosperity of this region due to the fertility of the eastern part. Owing to the eastern tilt of the peninsular plateau it has the advantage of its rivers which rise in the western ghats to flow towards the eastern belt providing immense fertility to the soils of the eastern plains. Such a strategic locale has necessarily meant its control by various dynasties of the lower Deccan and the extreme south during the early medieval period, which in turn, has naturally drawn the attention of the scholars of
history. In the process one has observed that other parts of the Deccan region, particularly the south western part of it, constituting the area lying between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers, has been given marginal attention in terms of discussing it only when it figured in the military conquests of the major powers that chiefly had their concerns in the eastern region of Vengi. As much remains to be done in terms of analysing the nature and periods of change in this region we have chosen the south western part of the Deccan region (Map I) for our study with the hope of bringing to light the hitherto historically unresearched aspects of study at a specific micro level.

The area of our study roughly falls between longitudes 70° 30' - 78° 18' E and latitudes 15° 0' - 16° 34' N. The western boundary of this region comprises the plains or the maidan region of the western ghats. The river Krishna forms its northern boundary, the river Tungabhadra where river Varada meets it, forms its southern boundary and the eastern boundary is marked by the confluence of the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra (Map I). The region of our study, which could well be classified as the ‘Krishna - Tungabhadra Doab’, has well defined local physiographical variations leading to the formation of distinctly demarcated sub-regions (Map II) each identified chiefly by one or more dominant characteristics. The region as a whole is constituted of the northern maidan region of the Karnataka plateau and bordering on its eastern and south eastern tips are the peneplains of the Telangana and Rayalaseema of the Andhra plateau. The northern maidan (a terminology derived due to its relatively low and subdued relief), is a landscape of
monotonous, seemingly endless plateau, covered with rich black cotton soil. The entire region of study is drained by several rivers, most significant among them being the Krishna to the north of the region under consideration and the Tungabhadra which forms the southern boundary. Others are the feeders to these rivers; important among these being the Varada, Hirehalla, Malaprabha and Ghataprabha. These rivers rise from the western ghats and flow towards the eastern belt of the Plateau. They render, along with the local relief conditions, a diversified physiographic setting to the region under study which enables us to identify different 'sub-regions' of our area of study.

This region consists of such diverse local features of physiography as the hills, plains and peneplains. On the whole, three broad sub-regions or physiographic zones can be differentiated within the region of our study which, for the sake of convenience, have been classified by us into the categories of sub-region A, B and C (Map II). Sub-region A: The norh western part of our area of study lying amidst the rivers Krishna, Malaprabha and Ghataprabha is marked on the north by the topography of Deccan trap which merges some what abruptly with that of granites towards its south. Beginning with the $itamalai hills, this hilly landscape is typically that of gneiss and granite with irregular rock exposures separated by black soil. Wherever sand stones and quartzites outcrop, the topography consists of low lines of ridges. The valley widens out wherever the gneiss outcrops and gives good agricultural land capable of local irrigation. The valley is well protected all round by the steep scarps of sand stone ridges and that
Delineation of Sub-regions and Physiography
must have been the principal reason for choice of this site by the early Chalukyan
rulers as can be gauged by the existence of historical ruins in these parts.\textsuperscript{37}

Sub-region B: Towards the south and the east of sub-region A lay the
vast stretch of the plains region well supplied by rivers and streams. Beginning in
the west with the river Malaprabha and its main tributary, the Bennihalla and several
other seasonal streams, the region is paralleled on either side by the rivers
Krishna and Tungabhadra. The undulating topography of this northern maidan
region is characterised today by dry beds of meandering streams and fissures due
to intense soil erosion. The monotony of the landscape is broken by an
occasional isolated hill and is marked by scarps of the Manoli and Soundatti ranges.
This region is considered to be extensively cultivated today representing the best
developed tract of the area. It may however, be noted here that these plains were
brought under cultivation gradually over a period of time and did not uniformly
represent habitation in all historical periods. The soils of these plains are mainly of
two types, namely, the black soil and the red soil. While the western portion of
this sub-region predominates in black soils, the eastern is characterized by a
predominance of red soils. Both these soils show a variety both in texture and
appearance according to the nature of the underlying rocks and also exhibit a great
deal of variation in thickness, consistency and colour. The undulating black
cotton soil strips, cut by numerous \textit{nalas} characterize the region of Dharwar schists
which is today practically denuded of trees and presents a monotonous land scape.
While the gneissic region is generally more or less broken and covered with a thin
mantle of red loamy soil, gneissic hills wherever they occur, form bold reliefs in the landscape. The eastern half of the plains, leading to the confluence of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers, is characterized by a few hillocks and scrub jungles and the sedimentary formations of this part of the region occupy more or less flat plateaus. Characterized by low rainfall and general dryness, the Doab is richly endowed with major natural resources such as minerals and vast expanses of agricultural tracts. The moisture retention capacity of the black soils of the west enables the crops to remain unaffected during the drought season. The mighty river systems of the Krishna and the Tungabhadra consist of rich alluvial soils in the river basins. The eastern part of the plains constitute predominantly red soils, interspersed with regur or black soils. Today cotton and groundnuts grow well in this type of soil condition. Jawar, bajra, ragi, wheat and cereals are the other crops grown here.

Sub-region C: The peneplains of the Andhra plateau have been divided into the Telangana and the Rayalaseema peneplains by having the Krishna river as their dividing line. This sub-region pertains chiefly to the south western part of Telangana and the north western parts of the Rayalaseema peneplains which lay contiguous to the plains of the northern maidan. Its physical set up consists of a completely peneplained surface developed on the gneissic basement. In the southern part of the Telangana peneplain the surface is throughout an undulating plain. The rivers Krishna and the Tungabhadra flow through this region towards the east forming a confluence at Alampur region. The Krishna - Tungabhadra (the
middle Krishna valley) today represents a fertile level and highly populated tract with a predominance of the agrarian economy. The major soil group is red earth. Black soils, mostly of clayed loams and deep clays, occur as narrow strips alongside the banks of the Krishna and Tungabhadra and the natural streams. The loamy sands are brown to red in colour and poor in fertility. The river Tungabhadra forms the boundary between the Raichur Doab and the western Rayalaseema peneplain. The Rayalaseema plateau is a vast table land forming a northward extension of the Karnataka plateau. The amount of rainfall in Rayalaseema is much lower than in Telangana. This is because the region is located between two uplands - the Karnataka plateau on the west and the Andhra, or, eastern ghats in the east. Black cotton soils are predominant in the taluks of Nandikotkur and the adjoining areas. The availability of alluvial soils is quite small and is confined to a few villages near the confluence of Bhanavasi and the Krishna river.

To put the above discussion in a nutshell, one has observed that the total region of our study, which forms a part of the macro-region of the Deccan peninsula, broadly constitutes the land lying between the Krishna and Tungabhadra rivers and has certain distinct physiographic variations. These can be highlighted firstly in terms of a predominance of a hilly terrain characterizing sub-region A. The Sitamani hills and the gneissic valleys located within them in this sub-region give a good agricultural land capable of local irrigation. Sub-region B on the other hand, constituting a vast stretch of the plains, falls within the northern maidan region and
has in its western part a predominance of the rich black soils and red soils in the east. The maidan region is considered to be extensively cultivated representing the best developed tract in its neighbourhood. Finally, sub-region C constituting the peneplained surface of the Rayalaseema plateau, roughly includes the region around the confluence of the Krishna-Tungabhadra rivers. The major soil group here is red earth, comprising of clay loams and black cotton soils. The undulating character of the terrain of this sub-region lends itself favourably to irrigation from tanks, wells and streams.

In terms of the present day administrative boundaries which cut across the two linguistic states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, our area of study comprises the south eastern portion of Bijapur district in sub-region A, eastern Dharwar and the entire Raichur district along with the southern tip of the Gulbarga district form sub-region B. Sub-region C can be said to constitute by the south-western and north-western parts of the Mahabubnagar and Kurnool districts respectively. Our emphasis on defining this area of study spanning over two administrative divisions of present day India, has been able to do away with an approach of viewing all historical changes within the rigid linguistic state boundaries which are purely a modern day creation. Imposing these over the early past only means taking up an anachronistic view of historical reality which cannot be studied in its true sense within the purview of artificial boundaries of change for any given period of history. Deviation from such an approach has helped us in analysing the source material of our study in direct relation to the physical surroundings of its
setting and thus arrive at sound conclusions over the socio-economic change of our period of study at a specific level.

Against the backdrop of the above geographical survey described by us we have been able to arrive at certain broad conclusions regarding the nature of historical geography of the area under study. A corresponding survey of the inscriptions data available for our study has enabled us to identify potential zones of fertile tracts for the early settlements. In this regard we have observed that sub-region A and the western part of sub-region B along with certain pockets of sub-region C stand out in terms of their richness in settlements. Chiefly, three clusters of temple sites (Map VI) largely indicative of the concentration of rural settlements to support them, have been identified as pertaining to the area and the period of our study.

These are:

I Muddebihal - Bagalkot - Badami - Ilkal - sub-region A
II Gadag - Naregal - Ron - Yelurga - Kopbal - Lingsugur - Shorapur - sub-region B
III Alampur - Nandikotkur - Kurnool - sub-region C

Corresponding upon the above survey we have been able to identify an interesting pattern of historical and chronological evolution of the settlements belonging to each of these sub-regions at various points of time. Firstly, it was sub-region A and pockets of sub-region C, especially the Alampur region, that seem to have emerged
to the forefront in terms of temple settlements much before the period taken up for the present study. In the context of sub-region A in particular, we see that most of its area formed the base for the early Chalukyan rulers (5th century A.D. - 8th century A.D.) who had their capital at Badami in this sub-region (Map III). It has been suggested that in fact, the sites chosen by the early Chalukyas for establishing their capitals and religious monuments had already attained importance in ‘proto art history’ known through the megalithic monuments located here. These, it is further suggested, became obscured by the Chālukyan temples of great artistic beauty, variety and vivacity. In this respect places such as the Nandikeshwar - Mahakut section, Badami, Aihole and Pattadakal stand out in terms of their architectural remains for the early Chalukyan period. The Nandikeshwar - Mahakut section, locked in between two gorges, was in early Chalukyan days a flourishing tract as can be seen from extensive historical ruins at this place. The valley is well protected all round by the steep scarps of sand ridges which must have been the principal reason for the choice of this site by the Chālukyan rulers. Other sites such as Pattadakal, Badami and Aihole are also found around the above discussed location. Of these, Aihole has been considered to be the birth place of the Chalukyan style of temple building. It is supposed to contain nearly seventy temples dating from A.D. 450 to A.D. 650. Pattadakal, located on the left bank of Malaprabha, is supposed to represent the next stage in the development of Chalukyan art and is said to have the best temples of the early Chālukyan age which amount to about ten temples in number. Badami on the other hand, is known for both the temples constructed in it by the early Chalukyas and its
fortification by the Chalukyan ruler Pulakesin I as early A.D. 543. 61

In a similar way, one finds that sub-region C, particularly in the Alampur area, located near the confluence of the Krishna - Tungabhadra rivers, emerges into limelight in terms of its architectural splendour during the early Chalukyan period. In fact, the temple-building activity in this sub-region seems to have started at a much earlier period. In this context it is stated that beginning in the Ikshvaku period, the art history of western Andhra seemingly had its chief centre at Alampur. This is so because as early as about A.D. 299, an inscription records the donations made by an individual to the God of Alampur. The temples built by the early Chalukya rulers in this region however, reveal a distinct innovation in the temple architecture of Karnataka and Andhra.

It is interesting to find that the next phase of evolution of the settlements, that is, during the rule of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty (8th - 10th century A.D.), can be seen focussed chiefly upon the western part of sub-region B, which constituted primarily the eastern part of the Dharwar district (Map III). Thus we find that in Gadag, the headquarters of Gadag taluka, altogether thirty four inscriptions have been found belonging to the reign of the Rashtrakūtas and prior to the rule of the Vijayanagara dynasty. The earliest inscription is of the reign of Rashtrakuta Indra III, dated to A.D. 918. 64 Similarly, at another important temple site Hombala, nine inscriptions ranging between the periods 11th and the 16th centuries A.D., have been found. 65 Lakkundi, another renowned historical settlement has twenty
MAP III

AREAS OF POLITICAL CONTROL
IN THE PRE 10TH CENTURY A.D.
nine inscriptions representing the later Chalukya, Kalāchuri, Yādava and Hoysala dynasties. We have several such examples for this sub-region. The eastern part of sub-region B, particularly the western portion of the Raichur district, lying contiguous to the area just discussed, begins to figure actively in the inscriptive sources of mainly the western Chalukyas of Kalyani, i.e., from the latter half of the 10th century A.D. Several places such as Gabbur, Ittagi, Maski, Kallur, Kopbal, Kuknur, Lingsugur and so on, are mentioned as prominent centres in the inscriptions of the later Chalukyan rulers. It is however, significant to note that it is only during the period of the Vijayanagara rulers that Raichur including its eastern half, developed into a rich settlement zone. 67

The aforesaid statements do not in any way mean that these tracts were not settled earlier to the dates mentioned above. We have conclusive evidences to show the occupation of sub-region B right from the pre-historic times. In this context the sites of Maski and Kallur from Raichur district stand out in terms of their richness in the availability of pre-historic sites. 68 Later, this sub-region seems to have been brought under the sway of the Mauryas and, just as in other parts of the Deccan, the edicts of Ashoka have been discovered at Maski and Kopbal. From this period onwards we have concrete evidence of the rule over this region by various dynasties such as the Satavahanas, Vākāṭakas, early Chalukyas and so on who were controlling various parts of the Deccan region during different periods of time. 70 However, our intention in the main is to emphasize that from
about 1000 A.D. there was an increase in the intensity with which settlements began to proliferate in sub-region B and this makes it stand out as different from both sub-regions A and C for the same period.

It is important to underscore at this juncture that whatever few historical works we have, on the history of pre-10th century A.D. south western Deccan as a whole, they have concentrated chiefly on writing the architectural and political history of the Chalukyas of Bādami with a focus on sub-regions A and C. These two sub-regions have at large figured in a prominent way in historical writings of the south since the region of Vengi in the eastern Deccan had formed a bone of contention for various dynasties ruling over both the Deccan and the south during the pre-10th century A.D. period. In this context we see a slow but distinct shift in the focus of historical writings for the period from 1000 A.D. onwards as now sub-region B begins to emerge as an area of brisk political activity. We have considerable number of works for this period highlighting the rule and wars fought by various major and minor dynasties located in this sub-region. It may be significant to state at this juncture that the earlier politically contested region of Vengi begins to be slowly replaced by the Raichur Doab as the most coveted zone of military activity and figures as such in the historical scholarship of this period for the area of our study. In these works we begin to find that the physical description of the Doab as the most fertile area due to its location between two rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra, and its potential for generating revenue is given undue prominence. Coupled with the above is the characterization of the Raichur area
as the scene of perennial fighting beginning with the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Cholas and culminating with the Vijayanagara times. The over emphasis on writing only on the military aspects has resulted in a neglect of understanding the potential of social and economic history of this area particularly in pre-Vijayanagar times. In fact, existing histriography has tended to underplay the crucial aspects of analysis such as the nature of social and economic formations and other related aspects of historical change which contribute significantly to comprehend the totality of the past.

It is in the context of the above historiographical survey that we wish to clarify our stand with regard to the study of the physiographic setting and its relation to understanding historical developments of the early medieval period for our area of study. We are here trying to comprehend not just an occupation of space by various ruling dynasties from outside, as has hitherto been done in the historical works of the region, but an evolution of well settled tracts as a result of the interaction between various human forces and the natural environ represented by the physiographic setting for different points of time and space. From the 10th century A.D. onwards the concentration of inscriptive sources in sub-region B and the increasing references made in them to various settlements and socio economic and political aspects attest to the fact that this sub-region, unlike sub-region A and C was a centre of historical activity during this period. It is primarily for this reason that we have taken up sub-region B as the nuclear area of our analysis as it
eventually displays a potential for comprehending various structural forces at work which have helped particularly in initiating the processes of regional state and social formation during the early medieval set up. We wish to then compare and contrast the historical developments of sub-region B with those of sub-regions A and C which represent a more developed phase of political activity visible in historical terms from the previous centuries. We wish to further highlight in this context that sub regions A and C which lie contiguously to the eastern and western borders of sub-region B seem to be at the same time, merging with it in terms of the development of its historical cultural pattern during the period under discussion. It is in this sense that sub-regions A and C can be organically linked up to the cultural evolution of sub-region B. At the same time it is pertinent to note here that local strands of such a fusion at a sub-regional level certainly exhibit subtle variations in terms of state formation and this owes much to the local topographical features which define each of these sub-regions.

The impact of the geographical configuration of the region under study can be seen considerably and most conspicuously in the nature of the political power structure that evolved during the period under study. However, before we discuss this we give a brief outline of the political history of the region and period of study. During this period south western Deccan witnessed the rise of numerous dynasties in different periods. Of these dynasties the most powerful between the period 1000 - 1200 A.D. had been the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani (A.D. 973 - A.D. 1200), the Kalachuris of Kalyani (A.D. 1156 - A.D. 1183), Yadavas of Devagiri
(A.D. 1175 - A.D. 1312) and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra (A.D. 1022 - A.D. 1348). Each of these ruled different parts of what we have described above as the south western Deccan and many of them naturally had control of territories outside this region as well (Map IV).

It would be appropriate to state that the Chālukyas of Kalyani emerged as the most powerful ruling dynasty for a major period of our study. This dynasty came to power in the western Deccan after overthrowing the Rashtrakuta dynasty in the second half of the 10th century A.D. (973 A.D.). At the time of accession, its first ruler Taila II was ruling over a small area at Bagewadi in the Bijapur district. Taila II, before he actually became the sovereign king, was governing in these parts as a subordinate of the Rāshṭrakūṭas. After establishing himself on the throne, with Manyakheta as his capital, Taila spent several years consolidating his sway in the western Deccan over the whole area between the rivers Narmada and the Tungabhadra. Roughly speaking, the area under the rule of the later Chalukyas of Kalyāṇi comprised the whole of the Kannada speaking country, a considerable portion of that part of the Deccan which is now known as Maharashtra and the coastal Konkan tract called Goa. The Chalukya rulers of Kalyani, like their predecessors, were also involved in hard fought battles as a policy of aggrandizement over their neighbouring territories. This was with the Pāramaras in the northern Deccan and the Cholas in the extreme South India. In particular, their wars with the Chola rulers over the Vengi region have been considered the

no
AREAS OF POLITICAL CONTROL
BY MAIN RULING FAMILIES
1000 A.D. -1200 A.D.
most fierce. During this period, i.e. from A.D. 973 to A.D. 1198, the Chalukya kingdom was ruled over by Taila II, Satyasraya, Jayasimha II, Somes'vara I, Somesvara II, Vikramāditya VI, Somes'vara III, Jagadekamalla II, Taila III and Somesvara IV. The capital of the Chalukyas was shifted from Manyakheta to Kalyanapura which is located in the present day Bidar district of Karnataka State during the reign of Somesvara I (A.D. 1044 - A.D. 1068), and it continued to be a capital of all his successors. It is important to underscore at this juncture that the capital city of the Chalukyas remained outside the present area of study delineated by us. During the rule of Somesvara IV, the last ruler of the Chalukyas, Kalyani was captured by the Kalachuri rulers around A.D. 1162 and the former shifted his capital to Jayantipura, i.e. Banavasi which was again located outside the area of study defined by us. Except for the southern areas ruled by the Chalukyas (Kadur, Hassan, Bangalore, Mysore and Coorg districts), the Kalachuris conquered the entire territory of the Chalukya rulers but ruled for only a brief period (A.D. 1157 - A.D. 1182).

Rulers of the Kalachuri dynasty originally hailed from northern India. Having been dispossessed of their homeland due to the expansive activities of the Gurjara-Pratiharas, some members of this family migrated towards the south and settled at Mangalivada in the Sholapur district around the beginning of the 9th century A.D. This area continued to be their core area of political control when they functioned as subordinates to the rulers of the western Chalukyan dynasty.

One of the chiefs
of this dynasty, Bijjala II assumed imperial titles by about 1157 A.D. and established his rule at Kalyana. His rule was, however, not recognized by other equally powerful rulers of such dynasties as the Yadavas of Devagiri and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra. These dynasties eventually succeeded, in the latter half of the 12th century A.D., in partitioning the Chalukyan territories among themselves.

The Yadava chiefs, also known as the Seunas, originally belonged to the Nasik district in the present day Maharashtra State. These chiefs holding a subordinate status under the Chalukyas of Kalyana were able to establish their independent rule by about A.D. 1185-86. They were able to secure the northern territories of the Chalukya kingdom upto the river Krishna and established their capital at Devagiri, which is also located in the present day Maharashtra State. The Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra, the chief rivals of the Yadavas discussed above, originally belonged to the Sahyadri mountain region below the Tungabhadra river, located in the present day Chikmagalur district of Karnataka. These rulers, who were also the subordinates of the Chalukya rulers of Kalyana, were able to declare their independence and consolidate their position in the Chalukyan territories south of the river Krishna by about A.D. 1190. In fact, the river Malaprabha where it meets the river Krishna formed the boundary between the Hoysala and the Yadava territories of rule.

The patterns of political control and the ensuing wars between various dynasties throughout the early medieval period that also affected our area of study,
namely, the south western Deccan, were to a large extent shaped by the physiographical set up of the Deccan as a whole. In this context it would be pertinent to point out that S.M. Alam has brought out the existence of heterogeneous politico-geographical zones within the Deccan region by relating the nature of the political imperatives to the geography of the area. Accordingly, the Deccan has been divided primarily into three zones. Firstly, he defines the 'marchland Deccan' or, the area of 'political assimilation' comprising chiefly the area between the Vindhyas and the Godavari. This has been defined as the region wherein its control was essential for the political powers in northern India to get access to the Deccan region for the ultimate invasion of South India. Then came the land lying between the rivers Godavari and the Krishna which has been defined by Alam as the 'heart land Deccan' or, the area of 'political control'. Due to it being a fertile region supporting a large population, Alam is of the opinion that it has served as a core or the nuclear area for the rise of powerful dynasties which also began to wield considerable influence over the area south of the river Krishna. The area south of the river Krishna according to the author constituted the 'peripheral Deccan' or, an 'area of political influence'. This was so because the area south of the Krishna river was in actual control of the local lords who owed allegiance to the imperial powers of the heartland region.

One may accept the definition taken by Alam with regard to the area of our study which lies to the south of the river Krishna, to the extent that the political configuration of this region was subject largely to the influence exercised
by various major dynasties whose actual base of political power remained essentially outside the south western Deccan. In this context all the three capitals of the Chalukyas of Kalyani such as Manyakheta, Kalyani and Jayantipura were located outside the area taken up for the present study. Of these, Manyakheta and Kalyani were located north of the river Krishna. Other rulers of the region such as the Kalachuris and Yadavas too had their bases of power north of the Krishna. While the former was based in the Sholapur region, the latter at Devagiri located in the Maharashtra State. On the other hand, the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra had their core area of political control in the area south of the river Tungabhadra. It is significant to note in this context that it is chiefly those dynasties which were not native to the area between the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra that have, during the period of our study, tried to control it, albeit from outside. Urges of various political powers to control the south western Deccan region could be effectively linked up to the presence of the fertile Raichur Doab in this region which had immense potential of generating agrarian surplus. In such a context, an examination of the processes of the exercise of political control which find an explicit expression in the form of military conquests undertaken by an outside power (in the period under consideration, it is chiefly the Kalyani Chālukyas who emerge as the main rulers), would help us in comprehending the geo-political configuration peculiar to our area of study.

While basing themselves to the north of the Krishna river, with Kalyana in the present day Bidar district as their capital, the Western Chalukyas
(A.D. 973 - A.D. 1198) tried to control the fertile tracts between the rivers Krishna and the Tungabhadra on the one hand, and on the other, the Vengi kingdom of the eastern Deccan. In the process they were engaged in constant wars with the Cholas and other smaller rulers who owed allegiance to these rulers depending upon their strength. The frontier between the Chalukya and the Chola kingdom fluctuated about the line of the Tungabhadra as a result of many wars. It is commonly known that the Vengi and the Raichur Doab changed hands on several occasions. Taila II's successor Chalukya Satyāśraya invaded Vengi in 1006 A.D. Around the same time the Chola ruler captured a good part of the Raichur Doab. Later, Chalukya Jayasimha II wrested Raichur Doab and reached up to the Tungabhadra to annex some territory to its south. On the whole the region lying between the Krishna and the Tungabhadra constituted the first line of defence in the north for the empires that were reared in the South. For the powers beyond the Krishna, the Tungabhadra was the boundary, and for the kingdoms south of the Tungabhadra, the Krishna was the ultimate limit.

These urges of the rulers to gain vast fertile tracts can be linked up chiefly to the geographical configuration of the core area where the Chalukyas of Kalyani ruled in the western Deccan, namely, the capital Kalyaṇa situated around the north of the river Krishna. This was largely a plateau area devoid of vast tracts of fertile land to enable a constant flow of agrarian surplus required to maintain the ruling strata. The Vengi region and the Raichur Doab on the other hand, being fertile regions, were frequently the bone of contention between the plateau
kingdoms north of the river Krishna and the coastal kingdoms of South India who had the desire to control the entire water way. In this context it is further significant to note that even later the Kalachuris of Kalyani and the Yadavas of Devagiri had their respective bases of power in the Deccan trap area of Sholapur and Bijapur districts respectively which were located north of the river Krishna and the Hoysalas of Dwarasamudra had their core area of control in the mountainous area south of the Tungabhadra river. It is chiefly in the context of the conquests conducted by the Chalukyas of Kalyani and in the subsequent establishment of their power over south western Deccan, particularly in the sub-region B, that we come across several locally entrenched powerful groups whose support the former required in maintaining their political hold to ensure a share for themselves in the agrarian surplus of the conquered area. Prominent among these local dynasties were the Sindas of Yalburga, Kadambas of Karadikallu and Haihayas of Raichur. These dynasties have been termed by eminent scholar B.R. Gopal as 'minor dynasties' in the sense that they never "ruled far beyond their own small areas on which soil they were born. As they were familiar with the topography of their regions, they could be of great military help to their overlords". We next turn to take a closer look at these 'minor dynasties' (Map V) or chiefs who played a critical role in the polity of those times.

The Sindas of Yalburga (roughly A.D. 1033 - A.D. 1194) had the hereditary right to rule over certain areas which were known separately as Kisukad-70, Kelavadi-300, Bagadage-70 and Narayamgal-12 and collectively known as the
AREAS OF RULE BY MINOR DYNASTIES
1000 A.D - 1200 A.D.
Sindavadinad. Of these places, the first three centred around Pattadakal, Badami and Bagalkot talukas of Bijapur district and the fourth was a small group of villages in Naregal of the Ron taluka in the Dharwar district. The capital of the members of this branch was at Erambarage, modern Yelburga of the Raichur district. The Kadambas of Karadikallu (roughly A.D. 1066 - A.D. 1215) had a hereditary right to rule over Karadikallu located in the Lingsugur taluka of the Raichur district. It was in the 11th - 12th centuries A.D. that the headquarters of a small province called Karadikal-400 emerges into prominence. Records of these rulers are found mostly in Lingsugur taluka. One of their titles, \textit{Kris\=\text{n\=a}nady - ubhaya - tata - r\=aja\text{hamsa}} (the royal swan of both the banks of the river Krishna) clearly states that these Kadambas ruled over a region which spread over the river Krishna. The Haihayas of Raichur (roughly A.D. 1052 - A.D. 1192) emerge as rulers of Ededore-2000 and the areas around it. This area lay between the river Krishna on the north and the river Tungabhadra in the south constituting a large part of the present day Raichur district. Records of these rulers are found mostly in the Manvi taluka of the above district.

It is significant to note at this juncture that the rule of the local dynasties discussed above can be seen emerging in the inscriptive sources chiefly in the nuclear area of sub-region B and importantly, the period of rule by these groups coincides squarely with our period of analysis (A.D. 1000 - A.D. 1200). In the context of the other sub-regions we have some areas of sub-region A controlled by the Sindas of Yalburga for a certain period of time, i.e., in the latter
half of the 11th century A.D.. On the other hand, in sub-region C we have the Vaidumba and the Telugu Chola chiefs controlling the area from the middle of the 11th century A.D. onwards. We have been able to observe however, that these two dynasties did not have their core areas of political power located in sub-region C perse. The Vaidumbas claiming their descent from the western Gangas, were supposed to have ruled over parts of North Arcot, Cuddapah, Nellore and the region south of Krishna from the 9th century A.D. onwards.111 The Telugu Cholas on the other hand, appear to have ruled over different parts of Andhra right from the second half of the 10th and the first half of the 11th centuries A.D. onwards. 112

It would be pertinent to state that alongside the rule of the local lineages of power discussed above, we also have significant mention of the members of the main ruling dynasty on the one hand, and on the other, the members of prominent families who had migrated from other regions such as the Yadavas, Kalachuris, Hoysalas and so on, even before their attaining sovereign status. They all functioned as subordinates to the main rulers during different periods of study. It is only towards the last half of the period under study, i.e, from A.D. 1170 onwards, that we see these dynasties attaining independent status. All the above mentioned dynasties holding subordinate status as mahāmaṇḍalesvaras or mahāsāmantādhipatis had one crucial element in common which was to give support in the form of providing military aid to one or the other of the prominent dynasties ruling over the region. This resulted in the formation of ruling groups constantly indulging in warfare which had become one of the established means of
portraying one's supremacy during this period. This can be seen from the way utmost importance was given in the description of the military valour of various rulers in the inscriptional sources of the period under study. It should however be pointed out in this context that the families of the locally entrenched ruling groups differed essentially from the subordinate rulers migrating from outside. Thus, one can see that none of the former category chiefs styling themselves as the 'tadpādapadmōpajivi' (subordinates) of the chiefs of the major dynasties were able to rise to political eminence and establish over-arching states. Having a firm base in the self-supporting and economically viable tracts of their locality, which did not necessitate their undue expansion into other areas, these minor dynasties rendered support to one or the other major dynasty contesting for power over the Raichur Doab. In such a situation, especially for the dynasties coming from outside these areas, marriage alliances with the powerful ruling families became a crucial means of integration with the already established families of the region. This effectively ensured for them a strong base to enhance their politico-economic control which otherwise may have been difficult to achieve by military conquest alone. In this context we have several instances of such marital alliances which were struck between different dynasties of the area of study during the period under consideration. Prominent among these were the marriage alliances between the families of Chalukyas of Kalyani and the members of Nolamba Pallava rulers, with the Kadambas of Hangal and the Kalachuris of Kalyani on the one hand, and on the other, the marital relationships between the Kalachuris of Kalyani, when they attained an independent status in A.D.1170, with the Sindas of Yalburga. These
can be considered to have formed one of the important social mechanisms of establishing hold for a longer duration of time by the respective dynastic powers in regions which they had newly conquered.

It is chiefly in these processes of exercising political control by both the major and the minor dynasties during the period under study that we see the south western Deccan emerges as an important enclave for the legitimation of political power. A comprehension of the nature of polity that emerged out of the geo-political exigencies we have discussed above has a significant bearing on our understanding of the socio-economic and cultural edifice that came into being during this crucial period of transition in the context of this specific region. Our comprehensions of the political power structure for the period under study are however, closely linked to the characterization of the nature of polity for the South India as a whole during the early medieval period. It is pertinent to underscore here that historical writings in this regard have focussed upon the comprehension of the nature of political authority as exercised by the main ruling dynasty over their respective areas of control. It is chiefly to analyse this assertion of authority that the perceptions of historical scholarship have undergone significant transformations in recent years. These have been necessarily dependant upon their respective themes of study and which were in turn crucially linked to the methodological approaches adopted by historians. In this regard one or the other elements, necessary for the formation of an effective polity, have been emphasized upon by the different scholars analysing the State structure for various regions of India.
during the early medieval period.

Serious attempts at such a study were first made by the Nationalist writers of India who had focussed chiefly on describing the administrative functioning of the State in terms of the paradigm of a centralized 'imperial' polity. In this context works of such scholars as A.S.Altekar, K.A.N.Sastri, G.S.Dikshit and K.R.Basavaraja would best exemplify our contention. Altekar, whose main concerns were with the Rashtrakuta dynasty of the Deccan region, describes their political power structure in terms of a centralized bureaucratic set up. The author states that "King in ministry was the normal form of government in the Rashtrakuta empire". Speaking about the governance of the local bodies for the same region, Altekar defines them in terms of their existence on democratic lines. K.A.N Sastri, whose main concerns lay with the history of the deep south, details the centralized bureaucratic structure of the benevolent-despotic rule of the Cholas in the Tamilakam region. Speaking about the rule of the Cholas, the author says that the Chola monarchs "gave political unity to the whole of South India. For the first time they perfected a highly organized administrative system of central control and fostered the autonomy of village assemblies as none had done before". A very similar approach can be seen in the characterization of the nature of polity in the context of the Kalyani Chalukyan rule, too. While focussing his attention on the study of the local bodies during the early medieval period in Karnataka, G.S.Dikshit divides the study primarily under two headings, that of the 'central government' and 'provincial government'. According to him the political power of the central
government was of a limited nature as it could intervene in the matters of the local bodies only when something went wrong with the latter. In a much later work of this nature K.R. Basavaraja, writing on the administrative set up of the Chalukyas of Kalyani, articulates his aim as having "effectively drawn for us a picture of the pyramidal administrative set up in which power issued forth from the apex of imperial dispensation and percolated through several well conceived intermediary stages down to decentralized village level". Thus, the modern concepts of a centralized governmental structure were sought to invariably explain the early medieval political structure of South India in this strand of historiographical writings.

In all the above works what stands out distinctly is that the authors were interested in defining the State structure as if it was imposed from above on the existing socio-economic and ideological base. It has aptly been stated in this context that "there is no effort in this conventional interpretation to demonstrate the manner in which the formal and concrete institution of the State is related to existing social arrangements and cultural features of south Indian society". Resorting to the adoption of generalizations made at an all India level, these historians, dealing with regional history, have neglected the specificities of State formation which, among other factors, was dependent on geographical variations. Importantly, the contradictory stand taken by these scholars on the nature of polity of early South India is evident in their usage of such concepts as 'centralized' and 'imperial' rule on the one hand, and on the other, in highlighting the 'autonomous' and 'democratic' nature of the political structure at the village level. Inherent biases, i.e., attempts
at denigrating the Indian past by the Western scholars and attempts at eulogizing
the south Indian past by some of the above mentioned scholars, were all written
within a positivistic methodological framework. This impeded them from making a
constructive analysis of the political structure at a regional level and its effective
relationship with small localities or sub-regions that were integrated in to the so-
called 'empire'.

The paradigm of a centralized 'imperial' polity of this period has, in
recent times, been replaced in some quarters by the Marxist interpretation of polity
in terms of decentralisation under the framework of the concept of 'Indian
Feudalism'. This view has given primacy to the economic factors in comprehending
the complex political power structure of the early medieval period in India as a
whole. The widespread prevalence of land grants attached with extensive
administrative and economic immunities to various groups, both religious and
secular, by the State leading to the creation of independent pockets of political
power on the one hand, and peasant subordination on the other, has been the basic
premise on which the concept of feudal polity has been built for the various regions
of India during the early medieval period. Thus, it is argued by R.S. Sharma that
such a process of politico-economic change actually began with the decline of the
Mauryan empire and by the 11th-12th centuries A.D., the whole of North India in
this view was parcelled among various feudatory chiefs. Empirical data indicating
the above trends have been culled out for various regions of India and sought to be
fit into the feudal framework of analysis. Armed with this interpretation, works of
M.G.S. Narayanan, Kesavan Veluthat and R.N.Nandi are notable for highlighting the feudal characterizations of the south Indian polity for the early medieval period. In this regard, M.G.S. Narayanan makes use of terms such as 'temple-dominated feudalism' and 'proto-feudalism' to comprehend the nature of politico-economic relationships as they emerged in Cera-Chola times during the 9th-11th centuries A.D. in the regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. The coexistence in these kingdoms of the land-grants attached with extensive immunities to various religious institutions leading to the fragmentation of authority, and with an unusual proportion of foreign trade during this period (absence of such a feature had been considered to be a significant factor in the growth of feudal polity in the north Indian context), has led the author to conclude upon an early or a 'proto feudal' state for the early medieval south Indian context. Kesavan Veluthat, also focussing on the Cera State, has highlighted its disintegration into many principalities in the context of the proliferating brahmana - militia dominated settlements which had emerged into independent units entailing feudal privileges under the Cera rule (A.D. 800 - A.D. 1124). R.N.Nandi on the other hand, highlights the feudal developments in the context of early medieval Karnataka which, he argues, are organically linked to similar developments in other parts of country. The author refers to the feudalisation of the State in Karnataka in the context of a "system of government based on inseparable association of landholdership with the powers of government and numerous hierarchically structured private domains of governmental jurisdiction." In this context he attributes the decline of 'monarchical centralization' which in his opinion was encouraged in the Satavahana period when
a considerable measure of autonomy was granted to the provincial governors under them.\textsuperscript{134}

The study of the nature of the polity in the above interpretations has been effectively analysed in relation to the socio-economic changes taking place during this period. However, discussion of the political power structure of the early medieval period merely in terms of a 'decentralized' polity, arising out of a hitherto centralized state, only means an over-simplification of the complex political relations of the period. In particular, this ignores the dynamics of State formation at a regional level. The assumption of the Marxist scholars that there was always a centralized State before the emergence of a feudalized polity is untenable for the south Indian context as during the early medieval period this region saw a positive process of State formation in many of its sub-regions. On the other hand, by attempting to bring about a uniformity of developments in terms of emergence of feudal polity, in the context of the early medieval India as a whole, the Marxist scholars have failed to take into account the dynamics of the ecological variables and their impact on the subsequent nature of political relations at various levels of their formation. Related to this is the failure of the Marxian methodology in grasping the complex nature of the local agrarian relations which have led them to conclude erroneously that the existence of local landed magnates were created by State initiative; a basic premise of defining the feudal polity. This lacunae in their interpretation has been highlighted as a major handicap in comprehending the complexity of the political relationships for the south Indian context under the feudal
model. The existence of such writings did however, have an impact on the subsequent nature of studies on the early medieval State. It became a subject of serious scrutiny in the hands of various historians, who, by totally discarding the earlier held *conventional* views, began to analyse State system in the light of fresh research on the subject. Indeed, the Marxist writings provided an effective critique of the earlier writings that had characterized the nature of early medieval polity as centralized. Significantly, it is the limitations in the Marxist interpretations that have generated considerable debate over the validity of the generalizations of feudal state structure for various regions of India and have brought into focus the need for conducting fresh empirical studies with emphasis on historical geography to understand the regional variant. Such a thinking has stimulated serious studies at the regional level with particular focus on the Chola State of South India.

Foremost in this regard have been the works of Burton Stein, who by rejecting the earlier held concepts for State in South India in terms of 'centralized' or 'decentralized' forms, has put forth the model of a 'segmentary state' to comprehend the Chola State of medieval Tamilakam. In his characterization of south Indian polity, Stein has first of all laid emphasis on the ritual sovereignty as exercised by the Chola Kings on the ecological segments of political relations which were largely understood as belonging to varying physiographic zones, ranging from fertile tracts to the dry areas of cultivation. As such, the ritual sovereignty of the State was supposed to have had direct impact only on the 'nuclear' areas surrounding it and it is said to have shaded off as the distance increased to the
periphery or the dry areas of cultivation. In such a situation it is suggested that the local segments, or, the 'nadu' ecotypes exercised actual economic and political control over their respective regions having little to do with the centre of royal power. Further, "the absence of links between local networks and the formal institutions of the State" is the basic premise on which the author has rejected the idea of a centralized structure for the Chola period. Therefore, in this view it is logically assumed that there can be no 'decentralized' or 'feudalized' State structure prevalent in early medieval South India, as in the first place, there was no centre itself to initiate such a process. The segmentary nature of Chola polity as propounded by Stein, while marking a significant change from the generalized notions of the nature of polity at a regional level, has triggered off considerable debate over the empirical validity of such a categorization which has been considered by critics as being speculative in nature. In this context, over emphasis laid by Stein on the importance of nādu territorial units and their independent nature on the one hand, and on the other, the comprehension of Chola polity merely in terms of its ritual hold have been contested upon. Stein's contribution to the study of south Indian polity can be stated to have been chiefly in terms of the conceptual frameworks that it has generated. He has also been one of the first scholars to emphasise on the question of geographical variations by using the path breaking work of Y.Subbarayulu on political geography of the Chola country.
Studies on Chola polity in the various writings of N. Karashima occupy a significant place in the historiography of South India. By adopting the method of statistical analysis for the epigraphical data on the Cholas, the author has made an analysis of the land holding patterns of the region. This has helped him to arrive at sound conclusions over the nature of social stratification and the nature of polity of a particular region. An analysis of the titles and the personal names mentioned in the inscriptions of the period has enabled Karashima to conclude that the Chola rule was centralized in nature as it indicated the existence of bureaucratic titles conferred on various officials. The latter part of the Chola rule he suggests came close to the concept of 'Indian Feudalism' as according to the author, the titles of the rulers during this time indicated the existence of locally powerful groups. The process of feudalization of the central rule of the early Chola state has been effectively linked to the changes taking place in the agrarian context such as the breakdown of the communally held land-holdings leading to a more complex tenurial system of individual landholdings during the 11th-12th centuries A.D. in the Tamilakam region. The above conclusions arrived at by the author have however, been aimed at providing an effective critique to the concept of segmentary state propounded by Stein with regard to Chola polity. In this context Karasimha, relying heavily on the statistical analysis of empirical data, has furnished adequate evidence to substantiate his point about the exercise of actual political authority by the Chola kings in early medieval Tamilakam. It has been suggested in this regard that the above study, lacking in any significant conceptual analysis, still remains traditional in its interpretation as it fails to provide any new framework of
understanding for furthering fresh studies on the Chola State in the Tamilakam region. Karashima, it may be noted, by treading close to his data, while writing on the same region and period as Stein, however, gives a totally contrary picture to what the latter had suggested. Indeed, on the other hand, the solid foundation of his data has been used by scholars to build a theoretical framework that the Chola polity was feudal.

It has aptly been stated in the context of the above studies that "it is the inadequate understanding of the links between centre and periphery — the intermediate zone that has marred a correct assessment of the nature of the State." As a result of this realization we see in recent times more and more studies coming into being attempting to provide an effective perspective for comprehending the nature of the early medieval State chiefly in terms of identifying the links established between the centre and the periphery through the intermediaries located in varying ecological niches. In this context works of James Heitzman and R. Champakalakshmi for the Chola polity, Cynthia Talbot for the Kakatiya rule in Andhra, Hermann Kulke for Orissa and B.D. Chattopadhyaya for the northern and eastern India have a significant role to play.

Heitzman's studies on Chola polity have chiefly focussed upon comprehending the Chola state as an 'early state' in which the intermediate authorities representing the dominant groups at the "village level production relations could interact with the central state apparatus and wield effective power
in their own right". In such a study the ecological variable has been taken into serious consideration in shaping the nature of the intermediate authority and the consequent links established between the centre and the periphery. As such it is suggested that the nature and the degree of control exercised by the Chola rulers varied from the riverine tracts to the drier zones of their territory. In the former case he opines that the established lineage groups wielded power and in the latter, assemblies of local leaders asserted authority and it is these groups that are encountered in the process of their inclusion into the overarching State system.

The role played by ideology in integrating the intermediaries into the centre state of Chola rule has been studied as a crucial aspect of the Chola State structure during the early medieval period in the works of R. Champakalakshmi. The author in this context has observed that the dominant ideology of the State emanated from various levels of social strata which was adopted and elaborated upon by the ruling sections of the State. This was then disseminated through various ideological apparatuses such as the brahmaṇas and the brahmanical temples to reach the peripheries of the State as a means to expand and strengthen the State system. Such a process of the dissemination of the dominant ideology she argues was combined with the diversification of the "economic base and the restructuring of society".  

It is however, in the works of Hermann Kulke with focus on the medieval State of Orissa, that we get a comprehensive picture of the way various levels of State power were linked up to form an overarching State structure through
the crucial role of ideological forces of legitimation in the context of the various manifestations of political power. The author has, in this regard, effectively emphasized upon the integrative aspects that enabled most of the early medieval Hindu kingdoms to operate at several levels, such as territorial, cultural, social and economic. In the case of medieval Orissa, Kulke has effectively linked up the process of State formation to the dynasties controlling the nuclear tracts. They were the ones who had the capacity to rise to become sub-regional powers and then they tried to extend their sway into the outerlying tribal pockets of power. He further argues that it is chiefly in the process of the exercise of control by the conquering chiefs over the conquered tracts that we see several factors of integration coming into operation in various forms of ideology manifest through the process of 'royalization' of the tribal deities at the tribal cult centres. Secondly, through a systematic and large scale establishment of brahmanas, followed by the process of the construction of new imperial temples within the core region of kingdoms, Kulke significantly puts forth the view that these ideological apparatus acted as a counterbalance to the rise of local forces of tribal polity. The author in this context has taken up various instances of such integrative mechanisms adopted by the rulers of Orissa right from ancient times. In the context of early medieval Orissa he writes: "it was the cult of Jagannatha which was acknowledged by the kings of Orissa since the 13th century A.D. as their overlord," and provides for us an excellent example of cultural integration through a regional tradition.
In the works of B.D. Chattopadhyaya one comes across the nature of early medieval Indian polity understood as essentially a problem in local State formation. On the other hand, the multidimensional processes involved in such a formation are also brought out in clear contours to get at the reality of the complex political relations during this period of transition for a given spatial context. In this context the author has identified three major processes of State formation under operation for the early medieval period. Accordingly, it has been proposed that the expansion of State society took place through local State formation resulting from a process of the peasantization of tribes along with the crucial process of cult appropriation and integration at various levels of its structure. The nature of such a study of polity involves in the first place, taking into serious consideration several aspects of local State formation which involve such crucial issues as comprehension of the local and supra-local groups against the background of their geographical location on the one hand, and on the other, their expanding agrarian base expressed through land grants made to brahmanical ideologues on the other. Importantly, according to Chattopadhyaya the levels of power exercised by these groups are indicated to us through the feudatory titles and ranks conferred on them by the overarching political authority. This represents one of the many dimensions of the early medieval State. Thus according to the author "the fact that political relations were regularly expressed as between the overlord and his feudatories suggests that the dominant mode in the formation of the structure was by encapsulation of the existing bases of power, the spearhead in the structure being the overlord." In a much earlier study of his on the nature of early
medieval State with focus on the Rajput polity, Chattopadhyaya had highlighted the crucial role played by the social variable in comprehending the emergence of various ruling lineages at the local level of the State structure. Thus, in this context the author had highlighted various processes involved in the transition from a tribal to State society in the early medieval context which, in its initial stage, was dependent on conquests and territorial expansion of the concerned clan. Subsequently, he argued that there was an attempt at corresponding the rise in the political status through a rise in the social status which involved the processes of fabricating genealogies on the one hand, and on the other, strengthening the base of their power through maintaining kinship ties within one's own group and through the establishment of marital relationships with other powerful ruling groups. The emergence of various sub-clans in the 12th century A.D. according to the author, can be looked upon as a "product of the mechanism of absorption of local elements" and it is chiefly "the inter-clan relations governing the distribution of power that helped consolidate the structure of Rajput polity in the early medieval period." In these processes of local State formation, Chattopadhyaya has aptly demonstrated the need to comprehend the ideological dimension of the early medieval polity as a crucial process in legitimizing the State system at the local level. This was achieved according to him through the appropriation and integration of local cults as representing heterogeneous beliefs and rituals of disparate groups at the local level, which were then transformed into a regional idiom with a corresponding rise of the local power to a regional power.
Taking cue from the continuing interest in regional studies few recent works have, by taking into account different regions of study located in the early medieval period, ably demonstrated the applicability of one or the other of above discussed variables in comprehending the nature of polity. In this context, Upinder Singh, in her analysis on the state structure of early medieval Orissa, has displayed the way various factors of integration such as the use of religious symbols conferring political titles on local bases of power and the land grants made to brāhmanas operated on parallel lines in the crystalization of state structure from an earlier tribal stage in her case study. This very well corresponds to the hypothetical stand taken by B.D.Chattopadhyaya which we have discussed above. In a study of similar nature Nandini Sinha has focussed her attention on the rise of Guhilas of Mewar from a local base of polity into a regional power. She has effectively analysed here the intertwined processes of such a rise that involved among other things, territorial and agrarian expansion, political ranking and so on. She further points out that the crucial process the of appropriation and integration of the local cult of Ekalingāji and Pasupatas became a significant means of the legitimation of their rule at various levels of State formation. On the other hand, we have the work of Cynthia Talbot who, by focussing her attention on the Kakatiya polity of the early medieval period, has brought out effectively the way in which a local political power, with its base in the dry-upland region could rise into a regional power. Importantly, by giving primacy to the ecological variable in comprehending the rise of Kākatiya State, the author has emphasized upon the need to comprehend the crucial role played by military conquests and marital
alliances established by the Kakatiya rulers with the powerful lineages of the conquered regions as a means of strengthening their socio-political hold over the conquered tracts.

Thus the recent spurt of non-Marxist historical works have significantly demonstrated the viability of looking out the nature of State structure during the early medieval period, from a regional dimension. It is pertinent to note in this context that by showing the positive processes of State formation as charactering the early medieval complex for different regions of India, these scholars have underlined the fact that one needs to look at State formation for this period as a movement from within rather than viewing it in terms of either a centralized or decentralized set up as imposed from above, totally unrelated to the changes below.

It is in the light of these views, particularly those of Kulke and Chattopadhyaya, that we wish to look at both the local and supra-local groups in the State structure as being a part of the dominant political and social elite operating within given economic relations of production. Viewing these groups merely in terms of representing a centralized or, a decentralized polity proves inadequate for our comprehension of the nature of power structure in our area of study as during this period we do not have any evidence for the existence of a single centralized State structure per se. On the other hand, we have the members of the main ruling family trying to wrest control of the fertile tracts in the south
REFERENCES


2. Moonis Raza and Aijaz Ahmed, *General Geography of India*, NCERT Publication, New Delhi, 1978, p.73. There could be political or administrative regions as well. These, however, do not correspond to the natural divisions and therefore, naturally have overlapping features of physiographical setting.

3. Ibid, pp.74 - 76.


5. Ibid, p.3.


9. A.S.Altekar, *Rashtrakutas and Their Times*, Poona, 1934, pp.354 -355. The author nowhere explicitly states in this work as to what, according to him constitutes the Deccan, and thus we can only deduce this from his work.


31. In this context we have works of such scholars as A.V.Krishnamurthy, *Social and Economic Conditions of Eastern Deccan*, Secunderabad, 1970; K.Sundaram, *Studies in Economic and Social Conditions of Medieval Andhra*, Machilipatnam, 1968, p.ii. and so on which lay stress on the social and economic conditions of the early medieval period of their respective regions of study when compared to several other historical works which write on the dynastic histories of the region.

32. Such a recognistion is well attested by the historical scholarship pertaining to the eastern Deccan region. For example, AAA Krishnamurthy, clearly states in her work that her choice of the study of the eastern Deccan region has been motivated, among other reasons, by the fact that this area is more fertile and better developed than the central and western Deccan. *Op.Cit.* 1970, p.ix.

33. Several works written on South India and the Deccan region in general have references to the Krishna and the Tungabhadra rivers which have been considered to have played the role of frontiers between various kingdoms located in the Deccan and the deep south that fought for wresting control over the Vengi region. A vivid description of this is given in K.A.N. Sastri, *Op.Cit.*, 1966, pp. 6-7.


35. The terminology for defining the main region of our study has been borrowed from R.L.Singh (ed.). *India: A Regional Geography*, Varanasi, 1989, p.43.


37. *Gazetteer of India* (Bijapur district), Mysore State, Bangalore, 1966 pp.15-16.


40. Ibid, p.11.

41. Ibid, p.11.

42. *Gazetteer of India* (Raichur District), Bangalore, 1970, p.9.


46. *Census of India* (Raichur District), Series - 9, Karnataka, 1981, p. 12


52. *Census of India* (Dharwar District), Series-9, Karnataka, 1981, p.11.


54. *Census of India* (Kurnool District), Series-2, Andhra Pradesh, 1981, p.6

55. *A.P.District Gazetteer* (Mahboobnagar) Hyderabad, 1974, p.56 and for Kurnool District, p.74

56. In this context we have observed that our region has been studied by various scholars either as a part of the Karnataka State, or, as a part of the history of Andhra Pradesh period. For example, G.R.Kuppuswamy's *Economic Conditions in Karnataka* (A.D. 973-A.D. 1336), Dharwar, 1975, G.S. Dikshit *Local Self Government in Medieval Karnataka*, Dharwar, 1964, for the Karnataka State and K Sundaram, *Op.Cit*, 1976, for the Andhra region, best
exemplify our contention. There are several other works written in this genre particularly for the early medieval period.


58. *Gazetteer of India* (Bijapur District), Bangalore, 1966, p. 15.

59. Ibid, p. 95.

60. Ibid, p.98.


63. Ibid, p.11.

64. *Gazetteer of Bombay State* (Dharwar District), Bombay, 1959, p.794.

65. Ibid, p.809.


68. Ibid, pp.30-32.


70. Ibid, p.4.

71. We have already highlighted these works in the context of our discussion on historiography. See ft. note. 30 above.


73. Most of the historical works written on the history of Chalukyas of Kalyani and their feudatory chiefs have given primacy to these factors. Fleet's *Dynasties of Canarese Districts of the Bombay Presidency from the Earliest Times to the Musalman Conquest of A.D.1318*, Bombay, 1896, pp. 426-583 has a discussion on various dynasties ruling this region. Dinkar Desai's *The Mahamandalesvaras Under the Chalukyas of Kalyani*, Bombay, 1951, pp. 67-111 describes the minor dynasties of sub-region B and so on.
74. P.M. Joshi, The Raichur Doab in Deccan History - Re-interpretation of a Struggle', *JIH*, XXXVI, iii, Dec. 1958, pp. 379-381. In this article the author highlights the strategic importance of the Raichur Doab in terms of the fertility of its land and the abundance of the mineral sources in it because of which it became the most coveted area in the hands of the Vijayanagara and the Bijapur rulers whose hostilities centred around the 'Raichur Doab' during the medieval period.

75. V. Yasoda Devi, *Op.Cit.*, 1971, pp. 94-101. In this the author has given a description of the military struggles that centred around the Raichur Doab, right from the 11th century A.D. to about the beginning of the Vijayanagara rule in the 14th century A.D.


84. Ibid, p. 194.


86. Ibid, p. 10.


89. Ibid, p. 6.

90. Sant Lal Katare, 'Early History of the Yadavas of Devagiri', JIH, XXX,


94. Summarised from ibid, pp. 264-265.


97. *Ibid, pp. 24-26.* It would be pertinent to state here that Alam has based his characterization of the Deccan political zones chiefly on his studies on the emergence of various Muslim polities as a result of the influence of the Tughluq and Mughal rules in the Deccan, and importantly, there were not native to the area of their control.


103. It is significant to note in this context that a majority of the major dynasties that have ruled various parts of the Deccan region during the early medieval period, such as the Chalukyas of Bādāmi, Rāṣṭrakūṭas even much before our period of study, had their core areas in the dry upland regions and their attempts to control the fertile tracts such as Vengi in the eastern Deccan could be comprehended in the light of their geo-political base. Such a trend can however, be seen on the rise during the 12th and 13th centuries A.D. when more and more kingdoms, such as the Hoysalas, Kakatiyas and so on began to have their core areas in the dry upland regions and extended their sway over the fertile riverine and coastal tracts. See Cynthia Talbot, ‘Political Intermediaries in Kakatiya Andhra, 1175-1325’, *IESHR, 31, 3*, 1994, p. 262.


108. Ibid, p. 16.


110. A region wise survey of the Inscriptional data of our study has enabled us to come to this conclusion.


113. Contemporary historical writings written on these dynasties are replete with evidence of such military support extended to the major dynasties of our period of study, See for example, J.F.Fleet, *Op.Cit.*, 189, pp. 535 - 584.


119. Ibid, pp.198-199.


121. Ibid, p.6.


126. R.S. Sharma, Indian Feudalism (A.D. 300-A.D.1200), New Delhi, 1980. Studies in this direction have been initiated by D.D. Kosambi, An Introduction to the Study of Indian History, Bombay, 1985 (2nd. ed.). These scholars have primarily focussed on the historical developments of northern and central India.


132. Ibid, p. 5.

133. R.N.Nandi, 'Growth of Rural Economy in Early Feudal India': Presidential Address, PIHC, 45th Session, Annamalai Nagar, 1984, p. 5.

134. Ibid, p. 5.


137. In his analysis of 'feudal' polity, Sharma repeatedly refers to the concept of


140. Ibid, p. 88.


144. Y. Subbarayalu, *Political Geography of the Chola Country*, Dept. of Archaeology, Tamilnadu, 1973. In fact this work has been the basis for both Stein and Karashima's studies on Chola polity.

145. N. Karashima, *South Indian History and Society*, Madras, 1984, pp. 22-23. A very similar study has been conducted by Y. Subbarayulu for Tamilakam region - 'the Chola State and the Agrarian Order - Some clarifications, presented at Seminar on the State in Pre-colonial South India, Centre for Historical studies, JNU, (28th - 30th March), 1989, pp. 1-21.

146. R. Champakalakshmi, 'Review Article' on N. Karashima's South Indian History and Society, in *SIH*, 2, 2, July-Dec., 1986, p. 283.


150. Ibid, pp. 59-60.

151. R. Champakalakshmi, 'Ideology and the State in South India. presented at Seminar on the State in Pre-Colonial South India, Central for Historical studies, JNU, (28th - 30th March) 1989, p. 2
152. Ibid, pp. 2-3.


159. Ibid, p. 44.


161. Ibid, pp. 65-75.

162. Ibid, p. 81.

163. Ibid, p. 79.


165. Ibid, p. 32.

166. Upinder Singh, Kings, Brahmanas and Temples in Orissa - An Epigraphic study: (A.D. 300- 1147), New Delhi, 1993, pp. 289-291.
